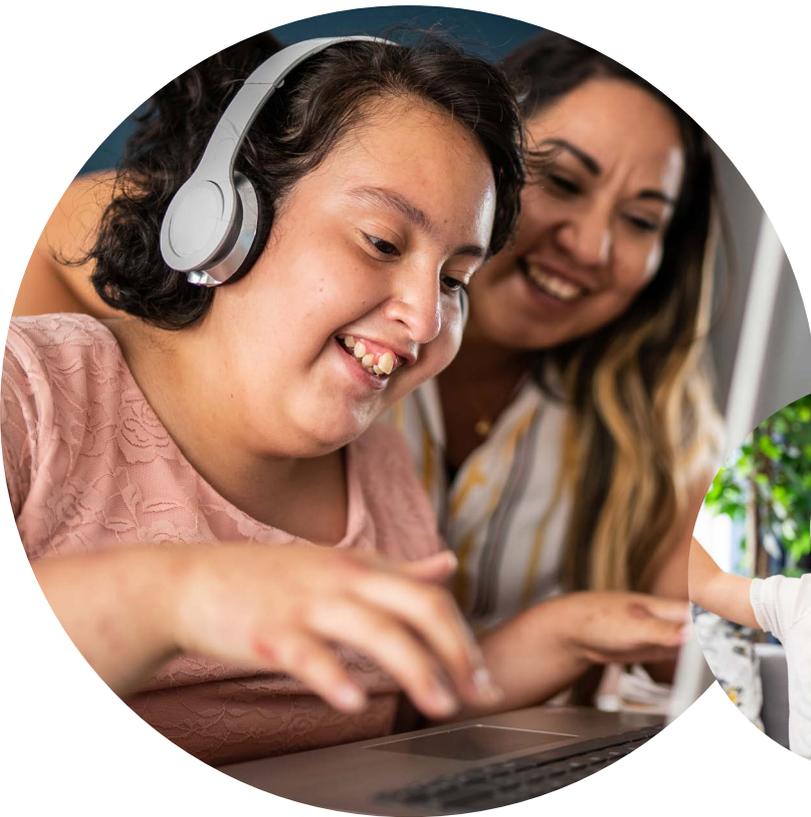


**SEND**

**Westmorland and Furness  
SEND Partnership**

**SEND Practice Week**  
**20 October 2025 – 24 October 2025**



Westmorland and Furness SEND Practice Week provides the opportunity to understand the lived experience of our children, young people and their families, to undertake quality assurance, take part in observations of practice, and gain feedback from children, young people and their families.

## Executive Summary

This was the third SEND Practice Week delivered by the SEND Partnership. The focus for the week was to evaluate the quality, impact and effectiveness of annual reviews for children and young people with SEND and support schools and settings in delivering high quality person centred annual reviews. It is crucial for colleagues in education, social and healthcare to understand the importance of this in order to keep the child or young person at the heart of the discussion, ensuring their EHCP identifies their special educational needs, outcomes and provision to achieve these.

## Closing the Loop

### What have we done to embed learning since the last practice week?

To support ongoing practice development, key priorities were identified following the last practice week from lessons learned from audit and observation.

- Where gaps in SEMH provision exist, partners work together to enable and commission service-appropriate solutions. If evidence indicates that specialist SEMH provision may be needed, partners will ensure teams know what is available, from which services, and when/ how to make a referral. **Programmes of improvement/development are currently in place for both the diagnostic and needs led pathways and support.**
- Creation of the new Westmorland and Furness SEND handbook / SEND ordinarily available toolkit in 2025/26 (ongoing as part of SEND Improvement Plan). **SEND Handbook and Ordinarily Available Provision working groups in place, with aim to roll out these documents in 2026.**
- SEND multi-agency partners will locate and use resources in the SEND Practice Week Learning Bulletin. **Practice Week bulletin shared with practitioners and is accessible via the Local Offer.**
- Build upon SEND Masterclass work to further strengthen support for those with SEMH needs:
  - Circulate and publish the 'SEMH' Practice Week Research / Resource Learning Bulletin on local offer. **Completed.**
  - EBSA: A task group will implement a clear and consistent Westmorland and Furness graduated approach to EBSA – timely needs assessment, prompt support for children, young people and families, and a consistent approach to supporting and monitoring attendance, enabling re-engagement, reintegration into education, positive outcomes / lived experiences. EP service to lead with key stakeholder involvement. **Task and finish group established involving colleagues from across Education and Inclusion. Approach now being finalised ready to share with schools and wider partners for feedback.**
  - 'Trauma Informed Practice' A task group to extend work will be led by Sarah Roscoe, Virtual School Headteacher, with input by SEND partners including Sean Twomey TBC). **Following practice week and the success of our first cohort to gain Trauma Informed Practitioner Diploma's funded through the Virtual School we have set up a Trauma Informed network. Since June 2025 Education and Inclusion have a Trauma Informed Network which meets termly to share good practice, support peers who are now the 2nd cohort completing their Trauma Informed Practitioner Diploma this feeds into our Belonging and Inclusion Strategy for Westmorland and Furness. This Network consists of colleagues across Education and Inclusion and professionals working in our schools who are now passionate that Trauma/Relational practice is the foundation for our children's learning.**

- 'All About Me 1-Page Profile' The next roll-out phase to widen use will be led by Lindsey Ormesher. **Completed, and shared at CASH/PHA/SENDCo networks/with health providers/on Local Offer etc.**

## Methodology

The purpose of a Practice Week is to support the quality assurance process, provide an understanding of practice across the service in addition to colleagues sharing, delivering and participating in practice sessions to support learning and good practice.

As with the first practice week, a series of activities were planned by the working group which consisted of the SEND Partnership and Improvement Manager, Senior Manager - SEND and Inclusion, and SEND Service Manager. Colleagues from health, social care and schools were also vital to the effective planning and delivery of the sessions.

Practice week activities undertaken included:

- Six multi-agency audits were completed, and the findings were discussed during a multi-agency meeting.
- Annual Review Quality Assurance session. This session took place to quality assure completed Annual Reviews. Four children and young people were considered during this multi-agency meeting.
- Three Practice Week Masterclasses took place in respect of "Delivering Child Centred Annual Reviews" for Early Years, primary school and secondary and post 16. These sessions provided an overview of processes, opportunities to ensure child/young person and parent/carer views are at the heart of the review, a chance to 'myth bust' and the chance to reflect on how we can ensure our developing Annual Review paperwork continues to put the child/young person at the centre of all we do.

## SEND Multi-Agency Audits

The purpose of the multi-agency audit is to provide a more detailed analysis of the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, fostering reflective practice and shared learning across education, health, and care over the past two years.

### Methodology

The provision, services and support offered to six children/young people were subject to multi agency audit. Professionals were requested to complete a single agency audit tool and chronology in respect of the child/young person. Information was provided by a range of services, including: the SEND Service, schools, Children's Social Care, and Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. Following receipt of all single agency audits and individual chronologies, chronologies were combined to create an overview of involvement from all services over the past two years. A multi-agency audit meeting was then held to review provision and agree a shared judgment across the key areas: Identification of Need, Voice, Meeting of Need and Outcomes. Judgements were made from the choice of positive experience, inconsistent experiences or significant concerns/weaknesses on the overall experiences for the child/young person over the past two years. An overall best fit judgement was then considered and agreed by auditors.

Feedback was additionally sought from parents/carers and educational settings to help secure a robust view of the child/young person's experience of services and whether those services are contributing to improving outcomes.



## Summary Data

	Positive Experiences	Inconsistent Experiences	Significant Concerns/ Significant Weaknesses
Identification of Need	4 (66%)	2 (33%)	
Voice Participation in decision-making about their individual plans and support.	4 (66%)	2 (33%)	
Voice Feel valued, visible, and included in their community.	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	
Meeting of Need	3 (50%)	3 (50%)	
Outcomes	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	
Overall Judgement October 2025	4 (66%)	2 (33%)	
Overall Judgement April 2025	2 (40%)	2 (40%)	1 (20%)

N.B. In respect of outcomes for October 2025 Practice Week, one multi-agency audit advised that no judgement could be made due to absence of evidence.

## Findings

### Identification of Need

Audits indicated that two thirds of the children/young people had positive experiences when considering the identification of need. When considering their rationale, one audit, referring to a child that had been adopted advised that in an assessment that was completed on time, the need had been recognized which was positive because early identification of need had been made for a child that had significant adverse childhood experiences. Another audit, though indicating that prior to services being accessed “there were inconsistencies, potentially significant weaknesses” however when need was brought to services attention, the right support was put in place in a timely manner which is apparent because the young person “is now thriving”. The other two audits both referred to referrals that had been made timely.

When considering children’s inconsistent experiences, one audit reflected on whether school could have “been more timely in looking for/responding to the draft” which contributed to a delay in the application for an EHCP, while the second despite the EHCP being completed on time, meant complex needs resulted in the child accessing a range of settings/provision, which therefore suggested the identification of need was inconsistent.

## Voice

### Participation in decision-making about their individual plans and support

Most audits indicated that the child/young person and their family were supported to participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support. One audit advised that school have identified this as positive reporting that they “liaise well with parents and parents attend annual reviews and other meetings, as well as having clear opportunities for child voice throughout”. A second audit noted a “very comprehensive” Section A with views clearly articulated. A third audit acknowledged that there was “a good range of direct work using a range of methods to clearly capture voice and support [young person’s] emotional and social well-being and reduce social isolation and anxieties”.

However, two audits reported that the child/young person had inconsistent experiences in respect of their voice being available. Although one audit did indicate that there was consultation with parents it was felt that the annual review report was limited in respect of parent’s views and there was no update of Section A, while a second, again acknowledging there were positives in respect of active listening, but there was a failure to identify the complexity of need.

### Feel valued, visible, and included in their community.

5 of the 6 audits felt that the child/young person was supported to be included in the community. One parent advised that the child attends football and dance after school. A second audit commented on the young person having “extensive knowledge on farming” and has engaged in activities around this. A third audit acknowledged a young person’s anxiety and its impact on community activities but also noted that everything had been done in terms of signposting the family. There was however an acknowledgment of a “secure network of friends within school” and participation in activities in that setting which was deemed a positive.

When considering why one child was deemed to have inconsistent experiences, auditors acknowledged that the family, because of historic bad experiences are isolated although information has been provided in respect of what is available locally and that parents want to integrate within the community.

## Meeting of Need

When reflecting on whether there is evidence that the services in the SEND Partnership have enabled the child/young person to receive support at the right time, auditors felt that half of the children/young people had positive experiences. Audits recognized positive outcomes because the involvement of speech and language therapists and implementation in settings of communication plans and strategies secured positive outcomes for two children, demonstrating effective joint working.

In respect of the three children where it was felt that there was inconsistent experiences, comments included “the gap between the first ask for support and getting the EHCP in place was too long”, referrals should have been put in earlier for another young person while a third noted that the needs had changed rapidly over the audit period resulting in the meeting of need changing “from at times, it being met, to at times not” resulting in the inconsistent judgment, risking a delay to providing the support they require to meet needs and achieve strong outcomes.

## Outcomes

Three of the audits felt that the services in the SEND Partnership have contributed to the child/young person achieving strong outcomes. One audit advised that all the child's needs had been identified early on meaning that “it's going to set them on the right path for the full duration of their education” while a second noted that the EHCP reflects the young person well and that there was evidence of clear progress. The third audit referenced a discussion with a parent, advising that conversations were taking place in respect of preparing for adulthood while the young person is sharing their views and engaged in discussion around options.

When considering the two audits with inconsistent experiences, although the meeting acknowledged that one of the children is “the best they have seen them” and that there was a positive impact currently, it had taken a very long time to get to that point. In respect of the second child, the meeting considered the nature of support due to be provided and felt that their needs would be met through a different provision.

In respect of the final record, auditors felt that in the absence of professionals at the multi-agency meeting, “we don't feel we have all the required information to make this judgement”.

## Overall Judgement

When considering the overall judgement in respect of the children's/young people's experience of services and how they have contributed to positive outcomes, 4 of the audits or 66% judged that the children's/young people's experience was positive. This is an increase in comparison with multi-agency audits undertaken during practice week in April 2025. 2 or 33% were judged as inconsistent experiences with no audits identifying significant concerns/ significant weaknesses.

# Summary and Evaluation

## What is working well?

- On an individual basis, the multi-agency meetings considered what was working well. Some of the observations included:
- The child is visible within his community and engages in lots of social activities.
- The post adoption team support has been key for the family and with the support offered to school. Mum had also has talked about good communication.
- The young person was part of the farming community, supporting his participation in the community.
- The EOTAS package seems to be working well.
- The voice of the young person being involved in the planning.
- A needs led approach from Speech and Language Therapy.

## What could be strengthened?

Similarly, the multi-agency meetings considered what could be strengthened. Thoughts included:

- PFA outcomes need to be included within annual reviews and within EHCP outcomes moving forward.
- Opportunities for increased voice of the child/young person through their plan.
- Health representation and the sharing of their views through greater participation in the audit process.
- Continuity of EP involvement rather in addition to timeliness from school.
- Signposting work to support the family and how can the family then use that to integrate the child and themselves as a wider family more within the community.
- Speed at which the EOTAS package and funding was put in place was also considered.
- Timeliness and the fact that the young person had to almost reach crisis point before any support was put in.

## What needs to happen?

Audits finally considered what needs to happen within individual cases, although learning is applicable to all cases. Auditors suggested:

- PFA needs to be reflected in the EHCP identifying what parties to the plan should be doing.
- Support around Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – for both the individual family and the wider professionals.
- Annual review information to be more focused on child's development.
- Query in respect of offering payment for EOTAS half a term in advance to remove the anxiety of payments not being received.
- Seek advice from universal services for early years children to ensure that we have as big a picture as possible.

## Child/Young Person and Family Feedback

As part of the audit process, feedback was sought from parents, carers and the child/young person. Questions asked included:

### **Do you think/feel like your child/young person received support when they needed it and continue to feel supported by the services involved?**

Parents were asked to consider the timing and continuation of support:

- One parent advised that “No. Everything has been a fight, with no sense of urgency from some services... FASD is poorly understood if at all by a large number of professionals that I have come across... I honestly believe adopted children with SEND are square pegs in a system designed for round holes. There is a serious lack of professional curiosity, creative thinking and empathy”.
- Another parent advised that “No not really. We have things in place now but it has been difficult getting to this point”.
- “Yes, L has his EHCP and this does make a difference. School have a lot of input and ensure it’s working well for him. Paediatricians (hospital and community) both good and they’re accessible”.

### **What has worked well for your child/young person/family?**

Parents were asked what had worked well. Some comments were:

- “Our case co-ordinator and the SEND manager from my mediation session have been very helpful. They have communicated very well and been very helpful”.
- “EOTAS is working well, now child is not in fight or flight mode they’re seeing more of his personality... Once child saw SALT, Ed Psych, and other specialists it worked, and the LA had to listen, but getting any one to listen and acknowledge parents’ views prior to this took years and years”.
- “The EHCP is good, the class teacher has been amazing, giving child opportunities and developing skills that will really help him in the future”.

### **In what areas do you think we could improve?**

When asked what could be improved, some thoughts included:

- “Waiting times from health are totally unacceptable... Properly commissioned services for FASD diagnosis need to be put in place”.
- “Getting the professionals onboard and understanding child’s needs and the barriers, took too long”.
- “Been told about right to choose, feel he needs help with his mental health... Information on supported internships and how small local business can support YP with additional needs”.

N.B. Although given the opportunity, 3 parents declined to give feedback.

### **Learning from multi-agency audits and next steps:**

Learning from the multi-agency audits undertaken during this practice week include:

- Professionals work well together, and on the whole, multi-agency support is strong
- Children and young people have clear outcomes, and provision and support is identified in a timely way to help them achieve these.
- Family and child/young person voice is mainly strong. On occasions where it was identified it wasn’t strong, steps have been put in place to rectify and improve this, offering support to families to help them ensure their voices are heard.

- Some conditions are still not known or fully understood (FASD). Ensure schools and agencies working with children are given support and training to fully support children and their families.
- Review referral procedures for EOTAS packages and funding streams

Professionals can respond to this identified learning through:

- Ongoing work to develop the TSBA and Local Offer opportunities.
- Use trial annual review paperwork and feedback on the effectiveness of this.
- Ensure that all agencies complete audit forms and return them – several were not completed or returned for this round.
- Continue to develop communication strategies (this is included within the SEND Improvement Plan).
- Continue to offer support and training for schools and families on lesser known health conditions.

## Quality Assurance of Annual Reviews

EHCPs of four children and young people were considered as part of a multi-agency meeting that reviewed the quality of the annual review paperwork. Attendees included Senior Manager SEND, Virtual School Team representative and Designated Clinical Officers for SEND from both Lancashire and South Cumbria and North East, North Cumbria Integrated Care Boards. Professionals were areas of strength/good practice, would be even better if..., and areas of concern.

### Child A

Child A is a Year 11 student in a mainstream setting. When considering key elements of the documentation, observations included:

#### Areas of strength/good practice

- Child and parent voice included and a comment from parent that they meet regularly with school to review progress
- Evidence that parent and school meet regularly
- School understand child's health needs and support them

#### Would be even better if...

- Attainment data needs additional context/explanation
- The need for clarity in respect of statements in terms of progress, for example advising that the young person is "doing better than last year". How do we know? What is the supporting evidence?
- Uncertainty as to whether both parents had the opportunity to contribute to the review.
- There is additional need for clarity in respect of how potential ADHD is being supported. The information is not clear.
- There is a suggestion that an outcome could be removed however there is no recommendation of how this could be replaced.
- There are several references to issues that are concerning without necessarily enough information about the support that's in place for the young person to address the issue. For example, there are concerns around Emotionally Based School Avoidance although her attendance is not documented and there is no information to identify what is in place to support attendance.
- Similarly, there are several issues which need more context or explanation. For example, touch typing is too ambitious, however there are no details as to why this is the case.

## Areas of concern

- The young person's voice is limited with no focus on aspirations. How have they been involved?
- Documentation suggests that parents were asking questions, but it is not clear from the paperwork whether these questions were addressed.
- Preparing for Adulthood information has not been included in the review paperwork although was on a separate document
- No ophthalmology provision specified in Section G as we would expect for a young person with a visual impairment.
- Mathematics would appear to be a problem for the young person, and it is not clear how this is being addressed.
- There has been a lack of curiosity from the professionals around the young person.

## Child B

Child B is a Year 6 student in a mainstream setting. Strengths and worries identified in her documents included:

### Areas of strength/good practice

- The inclusion of health information as an appendix.
- The child's views are clear and are 'first and foremost'. Her voice is clear.
- There is a strong network of multi-agency support around the child.
- Attainment data has been included and provides evidence that good progress has been made.
- Recommended amendments enabled prompt finalisation of the plan.

### Would be even better if...

- Outcomes are not fully evaluated and progress towards them is not evident.
- New information has been added year on year which has resulted in a confusing document. Each needs to be presented on a separate document to ensure clarity e.g. who was present at each review.

### Areas of concern

- None identified for this child.

## Child C

Child C is a Year 11 student who attends a Pupil Referral Unit. Professionals identified the following within his documents:

### Areas of strength/good practice

- A lot of additional information has been included in the review documentation informing next steps.
- Standardised scores have been included.
- The case co-ordinator attended the review meeting.

### Would be even better if...

- Some of the needs are not clear.
- More clarity is needed regarding the home circumstances.
- There is a request for an amendment, but the paperwork does not include information as to why this is required.

## Areas of concern

- The parents were not involved in the review in addition to the child's voice being absent.
- The use of language was blaming with negative comments which included that the young person's progress was "limited by the choices he is making".
- No information in respect of Preparation for Adulthood has been shared.
- There was lack of attendance from Inspira at the meeting.
- It was considered that the young person was at risk of 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' but this risk is not addressed within the review paperwork.

## Child D

Child D is a Year 1 pupil in a setting providing special education. Comments from professionals included:

### Areas of strength/good practice

- Specific detail has been provided in respect of progress towards outcomes. There is clear information about what she is currently able to achieve.
- Information regarding provision is specific.
- Speech and Language were present at the review.
- There was additional information provided in "are there any other outcomes/good things" which was agreed was helpful for the next setting.

### Would be even better if...

- The voice of the child had been captured, acknowledging that this can be challenging for a non-verbal child but needs consideration how this can be achieved.
- Include annotated plan if requesting amendments.

### Areas of concern

- None identified for this child.

## Learning from Quality Assurance of Annual Review meetings and next steps:

- Effective reviews are child-centred, with the young person's views clear and captured throughout the document.
- Effective reviews also have parent/carer voice clearly captured throughout and parental aspiration is clear and specific.
- In good reviews, progress towards outcomes is described specifically, so that it is clear what the young person has achieved and what they need to be supported with next.
- Where different agencies are involved, it is vital that they provide a written report a report, even if they cannot attend the meeting.
- Some annual reviews do not capture the voice of the child/young person – they cannot be considered to be effective annual reviews if this is missing.
- Some reviews do not capture progress or provide information about academic outcomes or attainment.
- Less effective reviews do not provide a clear picture of the support in place for the young person, or how they will be supported towards their next steps.

Professionals can respond to this identified learning through:

- We have developed improved Annual Review paperwork which has been shared with schools and is in trial phase. This will be quality assured by the SEND team and multi-agency partners and SENCOs will be surveyed to give their feedback, before we seek to finalise the new templates in January 2026.
- Ensure that all agencies involved with children and young people submit reports for annual reviews.
- Schools to ensure that the child/young person's voice is always captured in the meeting and paperwork.
- Preparation for Adulthood must be considered at every stage of a child's education.

## Masterclasses

"Delivering Child Centred Annual Reviews" were the subject of the three masterclasses that took place during practice week. for Early Years, primary school and secondary and post 16. It was perceived that there was good engagement from the audience with additionally it being considered more proactive sessions than the previous practice week, with good discussions around how colleagues can be supported in their roles. Some positives outcomes of the masterclasses included:

- An opportunity for attendees to ask questions prior to the sessions was provided to ensure any queries/myths were covered.
- There was clarity in respect of individual's roles during the masterclasses.
- The new style annual review paperwork was discussed with schools and this was shared for SENDCOs to begin trialling

Attendees were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the session that they attended. Some of the comments from those who attended the Early Years session included:

- When reflecting on key learning, one attendee advised that this was the "focus on the particular sections of the EHCP and review cycle", while another, when considering how they would apply the learning advised that "we have an EHCP review tomorrow so I'll be able to use the information".

An attendee from a Primary setting reported that their key learning was in respect of:

- "Promotion of being flexible in capturing the child's voice" while the learning would be shared with teachers "to support in delivering effective and meaningful reviews".

There were however some questions in the primary school setting session in respect of the role of the SENCO and amendments to the EHCP with one attendee commented that:

- "I thought this was how to deliver child centred annual reviews? It appears to be more instruction to SENDCO's about how to amend and write EHCPs".

## Next Steps: What key steps will we be taking to embed learning following this practice week?

- Newly developed Annual Review templates shared with schools and in pilot phase.
- New SENCO surgery launched to support SENCOs with their roles, including annual review queries.
- SEND team triaging Annual Reviews to prioritise attendance at complex cases; all primaries have a CCO in attendance for at least one phase transfer.
- 5-minute briefings to be developed, focusing on effective Annual Reviews for multi-agencies
- Ensure transition and preparation for adulthood are key themes for future Practice Weeks and multi-agency audits