

West Northamptonshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Partnership Improvement Board Summary

26 June 2025

Item 1: Minutes and action log

The minutes from the previous meeting was approved without changes. The action log was updated.

The chair outlined a strategic focus on data-driven service planning, with key milestones in September for prioritisation analysis and October for reviewing alternative pathways, aiming to ensure cross-sector clarity on available services ahead of winter.

The board discussed and expressed concern about the continued delays in restarting the primary age Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) pathway previously provided by Northampton General Hospital (NGH). The board and West Northants Voices in Partnership (WNVP) stressed the need for a clear timeline and communication to families.

Item 2: Update from WNVP

Families continue to face challenges in navigating and locating local or age-appropriate resources. The understanding of social care eligibility was flagged, prompting commitments to improve usability, clarity, and communication across platforms.

Concerns were raised about safeguarding incidents, school transport safety, DFG process (PBSS/finance), and confusion around accessing SEND services without a diagnosis, while efforts are underway to streamline surveys, enhance feedback mechanisms, and present findings from the recent survey.

PBSS/finance was raised as a critical issue. Efforts to solve are on the way and scheduled for the update in the next board meeting.

A new Padlet-based feedback archive was introduced to enhance transparency and communication with families and professionals by thematically categorising feedback, which the board welcomed; integration into the Local Offer website was proposed to improve feedback visibility and compliance.

Item 3: Review of workstreams

Partnership and Leadership

Two key milestones, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Joint Commissioning Strategy, have been approved in Health and Wellbeing Board, shifting focus to delivery. The Balanced System work progresses with a co-lead appointed and early help pathways considered for integration.

Right Support, Right Place, Right Time

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has allocated recovery funding that will enable 600 assessments and 150 emotional coaching interventions to be delivered across Northamptonshire by March 2026. The ICB is currently undertaking an exercise to identify those Children and Young People (CYP) that will be targeted for this support.

Timeliness and Quality of Assessment and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

The rollout of the new case management system, set for September, marks a major improvement in EHCP timeliness and quality, with co-produced communications and operational efficiencies already reducing delays; additional measures include a new consultation policy, revised placement panel, and updated children in care policy. The system is designed to enhance transparency, collaboration, and response tracking. High caseloads have prompted proposals for more resources.

Transition and Preparation for Adulthood

The workstream has been formally split to enable more focused discussions, with The transitions group developing a cross-sector guide on best practices across educational stages, and the PfA group focusing on post-16 transitions. Efforts are also underway to improve impact metrics, data quality, and reporting through positive case studies.

Item 4: Items for board consideration

Re-baselined programme plan – The reworked programme plan and change requests were approved, reflecting key updates across workstreams. The updated plan and milestone will support communications and tracking.

Communication plan – The plan focuses on partnership-wide communicating around key developments such as new school openings, strategy, policy, and inspections. It aims to streamline communication and promote initiatives across the partnership.

Item 5: Risk log

All current red-rated risks were confirmed as addressed during the meeting, with no new risks identified.