



Annex A: Local SEND Reform Plan

Developing a Local SEND Reform Plan is an important first step for local areas to set out how they will lay the foundation for reform, and design an approach tailored to their local context. A shared plan which focuses on co-designing the local approach as system partners and with children, young people and families will help foster collective responsibility for delivering the reforms.

It is critical that all system partners, including health, education and childcare settings, work together to design and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan, under the local authority's leadership. It is also crucial that representative family carers e.g. the local Parent Carer Forum, are involved in the development of the plan.

The expectation is that this plan is discussed, agreed, and signed off at your relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan must be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer). We encourage other colleagues and partners who have contributed to also review and sign-off the plan, particularly early years, school, college and trust leaders.

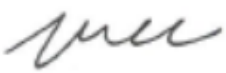
Name of Local Authority: Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Name of Integrated Care Board: West Yorkshire ICB

Local SEND Reform Plan SRO: Nathan Heath, Service Director, Education and Inclusion, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Signatories

Role	Name	Signature	Email contact	Date
Local Authority Chief Executive	Tony Reeves		treeves@wakefield.gov.uk	09/06/2026
Local Authority Director of Children's Services	Victoria Schofield		vschofield@wakefield.gov.uk	09/06/2026
Local Authority Chief Financial Officer	Sarfraz Nawaz		snawaz@wakefield.gov.uk	09/06/2026
Local SEND Reform Plan SRO	Nathan Heath		nheath@wakefield.gov.uk	09/06/2026

Integrated Care Board (ICB) Interim Chief Executive	Jonathan Webb		jonathanwebb@nhs.net	15/06/2026
Accountable Officer Wakefield Place West Yorkshire ICB	Melanie Brown		melanie.brown18@nhs.net	15/06/2026



Executive Summary

A brief summary of your local system 'change story' – your local context, where you are now, where you want to get to in the next 3 years, how you know you are succeeding and how you will know you have achieved your vision for the next 3 years. Please include a brief qualitative summary. This summary should also include your assessment of current and forecast performance against the headline metrics.

Please structure your 'change story' using the following aims:

- *Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships*
- *Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need*
- *Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system*
- *Stabilise finances and improve value for money*



Wakefield is committed to building a coherent 0–25 SEND system where children and young people are supported to achieve, belong and thrive within their local communities. Our ambition is rooted in a place-based approach built on strong partnership focused on strengthening inclusive universal services while ensuring specialist support is timely, proportionate and locally available.

At the heart of our work is a focus on mainstream inclusion. We will improve the capacity and confidence of mainstream settings to identify and meet needs early, alongside a skilled specialist workforce able to respond to complex need. This includes investing in workforce capability, practical tools including a strong training and professional development offer, shared practice and strong partnerships across education, health, care and the voluntary sector.

We are focused on Wakefield Schools meeting local need, reducing reliance on distant, high-cost placements by developing sustainable solutions that deliver stronger outcomes closer to home. Children, families and partners will see greater clarity, consistency and trust in how the system works, supported by transparent decision-making and meaningful co-production.

Financial sustainability is both an enabler and priority of Wakefield's partnership plan. By aligning resources to need, improving value for money and embedding inclusive practice across the system, Wakefield will stabilise finances while delivering a more responsive, confident and outcomes-focused system for children and young people.



Section 1 – Vision and Goals

1. What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?

Please set out your goals for your local system. These should be clear, aligned to the vision set out in the Schools White Paper, small in number and measurable. These goals should include clear reference to:

- Outcomes for children
- Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system
- Management of financial risk



The Wakefield local area SENDAP partnership is working to deliver a sustainable, inclusive 0–25 SEND system that improves outcomes for children and young people, builds confidence for families and professionals, and secures better value for money within future funding

Improved outcomes for children and young people

Our primary goal is for more children and young people with additional needs to achieve well and thrive in inclusive local provision. We will:

- Increase the proportion of needs met early and within mainstream settings through a strengthened graduated response and Local Inclusion Support Offer (Experts at Hand)
- Expand local capacity, including new Inclusion bases and special school places, reducing reliance on out-of-area provision.
- Improve attendance, reduce exclusions and ensure stronger preparation for adulthood, particularly for those with ASD, SLCN and SEMH needs.

Increased confidence in the system

We aim to ensure parents, carers and young people have confidence, clarity and trust in how the system works. We will:

- Deliver consistent, transparent decision-making through multi-agency panels and clear pathways.
- Co-produce improvements with the Parent Carer Forum and embed child/youth voice across strategy and practice.
- Reduce complaints and appeals by improving communication, advice and early support.

Financial sustainability and value for money

We are committed to stabilising the High Needs Block and using resources more effectively. We will:

- Reduce high-cost external placements by investing in local provision meeting local need.
- Strengthen commissioning and develop a sustainable funding model across our SENDAP system.
- Align funding to impact and early help/prevention, ensuring investment delivers better outcomes at lower long-term cost.

Together, these goals support Wakefield's shared vision of an inclusive, place-based partnership that delivers improved outcomes, with our Children and Young People at its centre.

Section 2 – Strategy

2. Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years

A description of what your local system would look like in the next 3 years in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper and set within the context of where you are starting from as a local system.

In particular, as commissioning system partners, you should reflect on and agree what your fully fledged **Experts At Hand Offer** model should be and how this will be deployed via mainstream settings and providers (including those not based in your area – e.g. further education colleges attended by your young people) to build their capacity as well as identify and meet the needs of children and young people earlier and without the need for a statutory assessment for Education, Health and Care.

To help you fully consider the scope and scale of change required, you may find it useful to structure your response using these 4 building blocks of an inclusive system, reflecting on what is working well in your system, what you are most worried about, what needs to change, and how the enablers will help you achieve your 3 year vision.

When summarising where your local area partnership currently is, please include an assessment of where you are in reference to the core minimum requirements above and how you bridge the gap, making reference to and attaching additional documents that provide underlying evidence for your summary.

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production – putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.



Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
Building blocks Wakefield will deliver a system where inclusion is the default, not the exception. Children and young people's needs will be identified early and met effectively within early years, mainstream, special and FE settings, reducing escalation and improving attendance, attainment and well-being for pupils with SEND. Wakefield will shift decisively to local provision meeting local need, using specialist capacity as part of an inclusive continuum rather than a destination of last resort. Cultural change will underpin reform, ensuring inclusive behaviours, relational practice and SEND confidence are embedded across the education system. Capital, workforce and data will be aligned to inclusion, sufficiency and value for money.	Wakefield has a clear inclusion ambition underpinned by a strengthened graduated response and Local Inclusion Support Offer. However, inclusion is not yet consistent across the system. Variation in confidence and practice contributes to higher rates of suspensions, permanent exclusions, elective home education (EHE), poorer attendance for pupils with SEND, and persistent attainment gaps for cohorts including ASD, SLCN and SEMH. SEND sufficiency capital planning is embedding but not yet fully meeting need as there is still a need to development capacity across mainstream and specialist provision. Workforce capacity is under acute pressure, particularly across EP, SaLT, OT and SEMH. Data systems are strong but need further development to provide coherence across child's education, health and care pathways.	By 2028/29, inclusive practice will begin to be embedded consistently across all phases. Suspensions, exclusions and EHE linked to unmet need will begin to reduce year-on-year. Attendance for pupils with SEND will improve across mainstream and special settings, and attainment gaps for identified cohorts will narrow, supported by confident workforce practice and strong accountability with schools and MATs.

What is the local area partnership's strategy for delivering on the above?

A brief summary of your local system's theory of change or reform strategy. Reflect on the output of your **Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**, particularly your *Local System 'change story.'*

Wakefield's reform strategy is grounded in the findings of our Local Partnership Maturity Assessment and reflects a clear shift from a reactive, siloed system to a place-based, preventative and partnership-led model. Our theory of change is that strong system leadership, shared accountability and early, needs-led intervention will improve outcomes for children and young people while reducing escalation and system pressure.

The partnership has moved from fragmented arrangements to maturing governance, led by the SEND & AP Partnership Board and supported by multi-agency sub-groups. This provides clear collective ownership of priorities, aligned commissioning and a shared understanding of need, underpinned by improving use of data and quality assurance.

Delivery is focused through place-based clusters, which act as the engine for inclusive culture and early support. Within each cluster, schools and services work collectively, supported by the Education & Inclusion workforce, to identify need early, provide timely intervention and prevent escalation. This is delivered through Experts at Hand, operating across three pillars: advice, training and direct delivery. These pillars ensure that schools are not left managing complexity in isolation and that support is proportionate, timely and evidence-led.

Data and QA are used deliberately to hold the system to account, identify pressure points (including exclusions and children missing education) and target support where it will have the greatest impact. Co-production with parents, carers and young people is embedded at strategic level and is being strengthened across delivery and evaluation.

Through this approach, Wakefield will deliver sustained cultural change, earlier intervention and improved outcomes, while building a more inclusive and financially sustainable system

3. Please upload a completed copy of the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool.

****Appendix One**

4. What is the local area partnership roadmap for the next 3 years?

Reflecting on the broad timescales and expectation for deliverables set out in the Schools White Paper, key documents and core minimum requirements set out in this document, please provide a high-level roadmap for the next 3 years. Please highlight key milestones and a trajectory to the target metrics identified above, including leading indicators.

In the 2026-27 column, in particular, please reference how you plan to meet the core minimum requirements in your narrative, including details and evidence in supporting documents.

You can insert or upload supporting documents including graphics/visuals that illustrate your data trajectory.

Local roadmap for the next 3 years	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Building blocks <i>Strengthening inclusion across education settings</i> <i>Access to specialist support and local placements</i> <i>System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production</i> <i>Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours</i> Enablers <i>E.g.</i> <i>Capital – investment strategy across EY, mainstream, FE</i> <i>Workforce</i> <i>Data/digital systems</i>	26/27 focuses on stabilisation, consistency and delivery grip across the Wakefield SEND system. Inclusion will be reinforced through the consistent application of the graduated response and the Local Inclusion Support Offer across mainstream settings. Priority will be placed on reducing avoidable suspensions, permanent exclusions and the use of elective home education linked to unmet need, alongside improving attendance for pupils with SEND. Early focus will be given to cohorts with ASD, SLCN and SEMH, where attendance,	27/28 is where inclusion becomes more consistent and improvement is visible across the system. Inclusive practice will be embedded more securely across schools and MATs, with clearer accountability for meeting need in mainstream. Attendance for pupils with SEND will improve year-on-year, suspension and exclusion rates will continue to fall, and reliance on EHE as a response to unmet need will reduce. Attainment gaps for priority SEND cohorts will begin to narrow as confidence,	28/29, Wakefield will move towards a mature, confident and sustainable SENDAP system. Inclusion will have begun to be embedded as standard practice across all phases, supported by skilled leadership, confident workforce practice and strong accountability. Attendance for pupils with SEND will be consistently improve, suspension and exclusion rates will be significantly lower, and the use of EHE linked to unmet need will be rare. Attainment gaps for identified SEND cohorts will be reduced. Many children and young people's needs will be met locally through

	behaviour and attainment outcomes are most fragile. Local capacity will increase through the expansion of, Inclusion bases (including specialist) and targeted alternative provision, supported by earlier and more visible specialist outreach into schools. While demand continues to rise, growth in new independent special school placements will be slowed and scrutinised more robustly, with a clear expectation that local options are maximised. System leadership will provide strong grip and pace through SENDAP governance, DSG oversight and clear partnership working with schools and MATs, supported by structured co-production with families and young people. Capital delivery will prioritise Phase 3 SEND sufficiency. Workforce activity will focus on recruitment and stabilisation across Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and SEMH support, alongside SEND-focused CPD. Unified dashboards will be used to track exclusions, attendance, EHE, placements and demand. Success will be evidenced through early reductions in suspension and exclusion rates, improving attendance trends for pupils with SEND, increased specialist outreach within maintained settings and a slowing	consistency and access to support improve. Most new demand will increasingly be met locally. Independent special school placements will reduce in volume and proportion, with fewer tribunal-led outcomes as confidence in local provision grows. Specialist services will operate in a more integrated way, embedding outreach models directly into schools and supporting earlier intervention and reintegration. System leadership and partnership working will mature, with joint commissioning and shared accountability embedded across education, health and care, and co-production informing commissioning and service redesign. Capital investment will continue, aligned closely to demand and sufficiency data. Workforce capacity will stabilise further, supported by sustained professional development for schools and MATs. Data and analytics will evolve to support more advanced forecasting and impact analysis. Success will be demonstrated through sustained reductions in suspensions, exclusions and EHE, improved attainment and progress for ASD, SLCN and SEMH cohorts, reduced independent special school spend, increased EP/SaLT/OT support in	inclusive provision, inclusion bases, specialist schools and integrated outreach. Reliance on independent special schools will be minimal and targeted. Transitions and preparation for adulthood outcomes will improve, contributing to reduced SEND NEET rates and stronger post-16 participation. Partnership working will be confident and embedded, with sustained co-production shaping services and rapid, data-led decision-making across the system. Capital investment will focus on optimisation, quality and long-term value for money. The SEND workforce will be resilient, skilled and embedded across maintained provision. Fully integrated digital and performance systems will provide real-time insight into demand, outcomes and financial position. Success will be evidenced through sustained positive attendance for pupils with SEND, low and stable exclusion, suspension and EHE rates, a significant reduction in independent placement spend, strong specialist reach in mainstream settings, improved attainment and a sustained reduction in SEND NEET rates at age 16.
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	of independent placement growth.	mainstream settings and improved reintegration outcomes.	
Success measures <i>Drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template</i> <i>E.g.</i> <i>Improve attendance of pupils in all maintained schools (mainstream and special) with SEN</i> <i>Reduce spend on ISS places</i> <i>Increase # children and young people supported by Education Psychologists/SALT/OT in maintained provision</i> <i>Improve overall effectiveness of provision</i> <i>NEET data</i> <i>Leading indicators</i>	By the end of 26/27, Wakefield will be able to evidence that the SEND system is more stable and better controlled, despite continued growth in demand. There is clear grip on inclusion, attendance, exclusions and placement decisions, supported by stronger data visibility and governance. Schools and MATs report improved clarity and confidence in the graduated response and Local Inclusion Support Offer, with more needs being met without immediate escalation. Attendance for pupils with SEND shows early signs of improvement or stabilisation, with fewer schools experiencing acute issues. Suspensions, exclusions and use of elective home education are better understood and more consistently challenged where linked to unmet need. The system demonstrates improved use of specialist expertise, with more schools accessing Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and SEMH support earlier. Reliance on independent special school placements is more controlled, with fewer unplanned or emergency decisions. Overall, success in this year is shown through improved system	By the end of 2027/28, Wakefield will demonstrate greater consistency in inclusive practice across schools and MATs. There is clearer alignment between inclusion policy and day-to-day practice, with fewer children experiencing exclusionary pathways due to unmet need. Attendance patterns for pupils with SEND show sustained improvement, and exclusions and suspensions are reducing in a measured and consistent way. Use of EHE linked to SEND reduces as confidence in local support grows. Local provision is increasingly used as the first option, with fewer families seeking external placements. Schools report that specialist support is more visible and impactful, and early intervention is more effective. Attainment gaps for identified cohorts begin to narrow at key transition points, supported by better stability and support. Success is evidenced through consistent practice, improved outcomes and fewer crisis responses, rather than reduced demand.	By the end of 2028/29, Wakefield will operate a confident and more sustainable SEND system. Inclusion is embedded as standard practice, supported by skilled leadership, stable workforce capacity and mature partnership arrangements. Attendance for pupils with SEND is consistently stronger, with reduced persistent absence. Exclusions, suspensions and EHE linked to unmet need are lower and stable, rather than reactive. Local provision meets most need, significantly reducing reliance on independent special schools. Young people with SEND experience improved transitions and destinations, with stronger preparation for adulthood and reduced risk of becoming NEET. Families and schools report greater trust in the system and clearer understanding of pathways. Success is demonstrated through predictability, resilience and sustained improvement, rather than absolute reductions in need.

	grip, slower deterioration and emerging positive trends, rather than step-change improvement.		
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5. What will the local area partnership deliver in the first year?

Please outline the key workstreams, milestones and trajectory your local area partnership will deliver and achieve in 2026-27 as well as how you plan to spend the investment allocation that will help fund this year's delivery. Please share key milestones and anticipated dates, success measures, cost breakdown and category. These should incorporate the core minimum requirements, be mapped to the building blocks above and should reflect a more detailed trajectory to the narrative, milestones and target metrics outlined in the 2026-27 column above.

2026-27 Local delivery plan		Q2		Q3		Q4	
Workstream outline – mapped to building block	Responsible lead per workstream – accountable for the delivery of the workstream and the identified outcome.	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?	Milestones per workstream What key milestones will enable you achieve your targeted trajectory	Target trajectory per workstream Where do you expect your data to be?
Outcome - what you want to achieve with this workstream							
Success measures – how you measure progress drawing on metrics from the accompanying data template							
Building block - Developing experts at hand		Detailed workforce mapping by discipline and geography (EP, SEMH, C&I, advisory, APST); identify	Clear workforce plan agreed; priority clusters identified; interim capacity in place. Design	Recruitment continues with first appointments made; phased onboarding; Experts at Hand	Improved access to advice; early signs of reduced escalation of need. Inclusion	Further appointments made where possible; Experts at Hand model embedded across all six	Stabilisation rather than full staffing; improving trends in exclusions and CME. No waits for
Outcome A phased, multi-disciplinary Experts at Hand model supports clusters with early advice, training and direct							

delivery, strengthening inclusive practice and reducing escalation, exclusions and children missing education over time. Initially 2 pilot clusters identified to form Sept 26 Then will build to 6 clusters cross district (these are mapped against existing hubs, and integrated neighbourhoods) Success measure Increased early advisory consultations; improved SEN Support evidence; gradual reduction in exclusions and CME; improved access to EP/advisory input; positive feedback from clusters; reduction in waiting times for formal diagnosis of ASD and ADHD.		priority clusters and cohorts using data; Pilot two cluster areas building to 6 clusters (mapped against neighbourhood model. agree phased staffing model; finalise JDs; secure funding; commence targeted recruitment and grow sessional/bank capacity. Options appraisal for autism diagnostic pathway complete.	of autism diagnostic pathway agreed.	operating in priority clusters (including neuro-diversity hubs); cluster routines established (data review, advisory clinics, escalation pathways); integration with AP and Inclusion Panels	measures around exclusion and attendance starting to improve, reduced referrals to ASD and ADHD pathways	clusters at proportionate levels; workforce remains partially staffed; impact review completed to inform 2027–28 expansion	Autism and ADHD diagnosis in excess of 52 weeks.
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Building block – Creating inclusive mainstream Outcome Clusters operate as the primary mechanism for inclusive culture, peer challenge and early intervention, supported by the Education & Inclusion workforce. Success measure Clusters established and active; consistent graduated response within clusters; improved attendance trends; reduced variation between schools; improved confidence supporting needs without diagnosis		Define cluster footprints and governance; Pilot two cluster areas; agree inclusive expectations with headteachers and MATs; baseline cluster data packs shared; align Inclusive Schools CPD to cluster priorities	Clusters formed and mobilisation underway	Regular cluster meetings embedded; peer challenge and shared problem-solving active; Experts at Hand aligned to cluster plans; leadership development delivered		QA evidence reviewed at cluster and system level; examples of effective practice shared; refinements agreed for 2027–28	Sustained improvement trajectory established
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Building block –Partnership working Outcome A mature partnership model enables joint planning, delivery and assurance of SEND and AP reforms, supporting cluster-based delivery and workforce development. Success measure Effective multi-agency decision-making; strong engagement from schools and partners; co-production evident in delivery and QA		PCF workshops, peer researcher activity, VCSE engagement and school surveys inform cluster priorities; DfE-supported leadership engagement events engagement with Place Provider Partnership.	Shared understanding of priorities and constraints	Partners support cluster delivery and phased workforce growth; re-designed pathway for autism and AHDA, co-production embedded into QA and service refinement	Increasing consistency within clusters Improved system alignment	Partnership self-review against maturity framework; recommendations agreed to support cluster and workforce sustainability	Maturing partnership demonstrated
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Projected Investment Spend per quarter <i>Please specify funding source for each category</i> <i>Example categories:</i> Programme oversight/additional leadership capacity. Workforce Recruitment Workforce training and development Data/Digital • LA Transformation costs • Admin costs • Direct delivery on EAH including workforce, recruitment and training/development of workforce Total Spend £2,777,061	This area will be finalised within final Q2 plan as DfE Expert at Hand guidance has been recently received		£555,412 £444,330 on Direct Delivery £55,541 on admin costs £55,541 on LA Transformation costs		£1,110,824 £888,659 on Direct Delivery £111,082.40 on LA Transformation costs £111,082.40 on admin costs		£1,110,825 £888,660 on Direct Delivery £111,082.40 on admin costs £111,082.40 on LA Transformation costs
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6. How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?

Please set out how you will ensure the required capacity and capability is in place from organisational corporate functions to support implementation of the plan. This could include reference to how you plan to build or bring in project delivery capability to manage delivery against the plan, support prioritisation, and effective use of resources; and how you plan to build the capacity and capability in data and analytics to support effective tracking against the measures in the plan and reporting that informs decision making.

Delivery of the first-year plan will be underpinned by immediate strategic investment in SEND commissioning capacity, infrastructure and workforce development, recognising the scale and pace of demand growth in Wakefield. With EHCPs rising sharply and needs such as ASD, SLCN and SEMH driving system pressure, the partnership will prioritise capacity where it has the greatest system impact including investment into specialist services and workforce development.

We will strengthen the SEND commissioning across our partnership and programme delivery function to provide clear grip, pace and assurance. This includes dedicated programme and project capacity to manage the SEND transformation interdependencies across LA and Health, workforce initiatives and inclusion reform at system level, ensuring delivery is aligned to place priorities and financial sustainability.

Workforce capability is a core enabler. Investment will focus on recruitment and retention across key pressure areas, including Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy, alongside enhanced SEMH support for schools. This will be complemented by a coordinated workforce development offer for schools and settings, aligned to the graduated response and Experts at Hand, and delivered in partnership with MAT and school leaders.

Strong corporate support functions will enable implementation, including finance, HR, commissioning and legal, ensuring resources are directed to impact and value for money through targeted project investment. A strengthened data and analytics function linked to DfE reform data return will support delivery through improved forecasting, EHCP trend analysis and real-time performance dashboards, enabling timely, evidence-led decision-making.

Governance and feedback loops will ensure alignment. Clear reporting through LA/ICB governance, Schools Forum, MAT Leaders and SENDAP Partnership board will support prioritisation, transparency and shared ownership. This approach will ensure Wakefield delivers early impact, builds confidence and establishes the foundations for sustained reform.



7. Other funding **Local Authorities.**

Block Transfers: If you have made a block transfer (Schools Block to High Needs Block)

for 26-27, please set out how your plans for this funding align with the activities outlined above.

Wakefield has made a planned Schools Block to High Needs Block transfer for 2026–27, in line with Schools Forum approval, reflecting the continued and exceptional pressure on the High Needs system. This transfer is a targeted, time-limited measure and is fully aligned to the activities and priorities set out in the DSG Management Plan and SEND Reform delivery approach.

The transferred funding will be used in conjunction with SEND transformational funding to stabilise the system while reform is implemented, rather than to sustain business as usual as demand increases. It will directly support the strengthening of mainstream inclusion, enabling schools and settings to meet a broader range of needs earlier and more effectively, reducing escalation to statutory assessment and specialist placement.

Funding will link into:

- The expansion of local provision and SEND sufficiency, including local specialist provision, Inclusion bases, targeted alternative provision, reducing reliance on high-cost independent placements.
- Workforce capacity and capability, particularly specialist outreach, SEMH support and compliment inclusion-focused CPD for schools and MATs tested through DfE Change Programme Partnership.
- Delivery of the graduated response and Experts at Hand, supporting consistent practice and confidence across the mainstream system.

The transfer supports the transitional reality that Wakefield, like all local areas, is managing a dual SEND system while reform beds in. It provides the financial headroom against High Needs block pressures required to implement invest-to-save activity that improves outcomes and reduces long-term cost.

Use of the transferred funding will be transparent, outcome-led and closely monitored through DSG governance, Schools Forum and SEND partnership boards, ensuring it contributes directly to improved inclusion, stronger outcomes for children and young people, and improved financial sustainability.



Capital: We have announced at least £3 billion in high needs capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30 to support children and young people (CYP) with SEND, or those requiring alternative provision (AP). This funding is intended to support place delivery across the full 0-25 age range, including early years and post-16. We expect funding to support the following outcomes:

- a. Inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream settings, across all phases of education
- b. Every child or young person who needs a place in an inclusion base can access one
- c. Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement
- d. Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

We also welcome innovative uses of high needs capital to drive inclusion, for example, investment in assistive technology for use in mainstream settings.

Please outline your strategy for how this funding will meet the outcomes above, with reference to the core minimum requirements and other workstreams in this reform plan where appropriate. We would like to see detail around your plans to increase capacity for inclusion bases (formerly known as SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs), such as schools, colleges or early years providers identified, engagement with relevant settings and trusts, and target cohort of needs.

If your plans include increases to places in special schools or specialist post-16 institutions, please include a clear rationale, showing the need that is being met, and why it cannot be met through other types of provision, such as inclusion bases.



If you are receiving additional capital funding to replace one or more planned special or AP free schools, please set out how this funding will meet need in your area, and plans for engaging relevant trusts in your sufficiency

planning.

Our phased approach to SEND sufficiency ensures delivery of provision to meet the growth in demand and the needs of children and young people with SEND. This is set against the context and challenges in delivery of special school places, and we have local agreed works for expansion of two of our special schools. The delivery date of these projects is aligned to long term master planning, and we have moved towards further delivery across academic year 2026 as we enter our third phase of SEND Sufficiency across Wakefield partnership.

Capital works and master plans for our specialist provision continues to be a requirement and the continued focus of the council is to enhance the offer at all our schools to meet needs and growth of cohorts. The programme continues to be developed and delivered successfully in collaboration with Multi-Academy Trust and School Leaders through:

- High Needs Capital Grants Scheme (HNCGS) funding of up to £50k which mainstream settings can bid for the purpose of improving or increasing provision for children and young people with SEND in mainstream, this mature grant programme which has now worked through four cycles of activity enhancing mainstream SEND capacity and strengthening stronger SEND outcomes in mainstream through capital investment.
- New Inclusion Units (Utilising unused space) Investment into current unused mainstream school spaces for the development of new Inclusion Bases across both primary and secondary phase, this is building on existing capacity and infrastructure to develop targeted provision in the right localities and against clear SEND cohort need. We have also linked into school rebuilding programme to invest in two inclusion bases in secondary phase to add further capacity to Wakefield provision map.
- Early Language HUBs – Speech & Language Therapy (SALT) investment into current unused school spaces for the development of centres as hubs of excellence for Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), responding to a significant and rising need across the district
- New (AP) Alternative Provision creating and utilising spaces with an agreed partnership with schools or academy trusts who have capacity and expertise to develop new alternative provision.
- Developed Academy Partnership Independent special schools (Primary and Secondary) to support children who would be profiled to be educated outside the district in Independent Specialist Provision, this aimed at supporting children closer to home, against stronger educational outcomes and at a lower cost base.
- Wakefield has worked with Department of Housing, Communities and Local Government on an innovative capital project to utilise unused property in the department to support development of additional specialist SEMH places, the focus of this project is to futureproof and support place-based approach to meeting need on a local footprint whilst enhancing SEMH capacity across whole Wakefield SENDAP system.



8. System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production.

Please outline how the local area partnership plans to engage system partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the plan – include planned engagement with schools and early years settings, alternative providers, FE and post-16 providers (including those your young people attend that are not within your local area), Parents and Carers and children and young people with SEND, with reference to the core minimum requirements. Consider changing roles and responsibilities in the context of the Schools White Paper and how you work collaboratively to manage the transition. Please indicate where additional support is required to engage partners or stakeholders - senior officials at the Department for Education will be available to contribute to summer term events with education leaders and parent carer forum leaders.

Wakefield's approach to engagement and co-production is grounded in early, continuous and meaningful involvement of system partners, parents, carers and children and young people, reflecting our maturing partnership arrangements and learning from the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment.

Significant engagement activity has already informed the development of this plan. This includes co-production workshops with the Wakefield Parent Carer Forum (PCF), targeted engagement with wider parent groups, and online events with VCSE partners to ensure a broad range of lived experience has shaped priorities. We have also strengthened children and young people's voice through the development of peer researchers, enabling young people with SEND to share insights on lived experience across mainstream, alternative provision and post-16 pathways.

Education partners have been actively engaged through meetings with headteachers and MAT leaders, a district-wide survey issued to all schools, and collaborative events involving mainstream, special and alternative provision. A SEND & AP Partnership world café event brought together education, health, social care and VCSE partners to test emerging proposals and support shared ownership of system change. Joint working with health partners has been embedded throughout to ensure alignment with commissioning priorities and shared accountability.

Ongoing engagement will continue through established governance, cluster and network structures, including early years, alternative provision, FE and post-16 providers (including out-of-area providers attended by Wakefield young people). As roles and responsibilities evolve through the Schools White Paper, these structures will support transition, clarify accountability and maintain collaboration/co production.

9. Risks and Mitigations

What are the key risks that could affect the successful implementation of your Local SEND Reform Plan, and what mitigation strategies are in place to manage these risks? Please include a maximum of 5 risks with impact and likelihood RAG for each risk. See Annex C for suggested risk matrix.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Demand pressures	Critical	60-90%	Red	Wakefield system aligns with key impact measures as set out by SEND reform and this decreases demand pressures into year 3 of SEND reform cycle reforms	Yellow
Insufficient funding	Critical	60-90%	Red	Linked to demand pressures and risk of residual/new system operating in tandem that increases pressures into High Needs funding, review of schools funding and DfE subsuming High Needs deficits post 2029	Yellow
Lack of alignment across DfE Transformation agenda	Moderate	30-60%	Yellow	Internal Wakefield work to align DfE transformative agenda into single Children system transformation project	Yellow
Political instability –	Moderate	30-60%	Yellow	DfE statutory and legislative agenda mitigates	Green

National/local level				risk across medium term	
National NHS reform	Critical	60-90%		Number of factors yet to be determined although strong local partnership and clear West Yorkshire ICB Commitment to SENDAP agenda provides resilience against a range of risks that may inhibit Health alignment with timeline as set by Reforms.	

10. Dependencies

Please detail the key areas of the local area partnership's proposed SEND future state and roadmap that may be impacted by wider reforms nationally and locally and outline how you will manage these. We expect these will include but not be limited to:

- NHS reforms
- Local Government Re-organisation
- Reforms to Children's Social Care
- Best Start in Life, including Family Hubs
- Best Start In Life Strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review



Wakefield has published its Best Start Strategy which sets out our ambitions and plans to deliver the Best Start in Life and Healthy Babies commitments. The Best Start Strategy is informed by co-production with children, young people and families and the professionals who work to support them. This listening exercise highlighted that identifying the needs of children with SEND needs is a key priority. In response we have set the ambition that: Our Early Years Offer is Inclusive. Our aim is to ensure that babies' and children's needs are understood, and adjustments are made to ensure they can access a learning and play offer that suits them. Our partnership has committed that leaders will offer training and support to embed an inclusive approach in all Best Start Early Years settings. We will also strengthen our layered and step by step approach to supporting developmental needs so that children and young people have access to a clearly defined and responsive offer. In the community we are committed to co-produced creative programming for early years & SEND across Museums & Castles, Libraries and WX.

Wakefield has established a Transformation Board, and a formal project management team and structure to provide leadership and coordination of the reform agenda, including social care, SEND reform and Best Start arrangements. This structure will support an aligned and effective approach to service design, implementation and communication plans.

Wakefield works effectively as a partnership and has representation at the Early Years Board, Early Help Partnership and SEND and AP Board from all key partners, including health providers. Direct relationships with health providers are well embedded through the longstanding arrangement of having a Children's Alliance, made up of providers and commissioners of children's health and wellbeing services. The reduction in capacity in West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board will change the way that we need to work as a partnership but is mitigated by the strength of these existing relationships, and leadership provided by a jointly funded Service Director of Children's Health & Wellbeing. Wakefield is progressing arrangements to create a Place Provider Partnership; this will work in shadow form in 2026/27, with a plan for there to be formal delegation from 2027/28. These arrangements, which will encompass children's therapies, children's mental health and emotional wellbeing and the health elements of needs-led support for children with neuro-diverse conditions and complex needs, will ensure that decisions will continue to be made locally in response to Wakefield need and context.

Wakefield District is not in scope for Local Government Re-organisation.

Section 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation

11. How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?

Please set out how you will monitor and track progress referencing:

- **Monitoring tools and processes** - the specific tools, systems, and data you will use to track delivery milestones and measure the impact on outcomes.

Some Local Area Partnerships hold data in a central SEND operational dashboard. This is used by teams on a weekly basis to identify trends in demand or inform conversations with local school or setting leaders.

In some Local Area Partnerships, a view of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is reviewed monthly by a SEND Board to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of services informed by regular data.

Please set out how you will use data to track demand (e.g., EHCP applications for assessment), Service delivery (e.g., Speech and Language Specialists deployment; places created), Service quality (e.g., parental satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., pupil attendance; pupil exclusions)

- **Feedback and adaptation mechanisms** - what feedback loops and stakeholder input you will use to review progress and adjust your approach.



Wakefield will know delivery of the SEND Reform Plan is on track through a strong, disciplined performance and data framework, aligned across governance, commissioning and operational delivery, and directly linked to DfE SEND Reform Plan metrics and outcomes. This builds on existing mechanisms set out in its previous work with the DSG Management Plan and strengthens the system's ability to respond at pace to rising demand.

At the heart of delivery is a central SEND performance and analytics framework, bringing together operational, financial and outcomes data. This includes:

- SEND operational dashboards (EHCP and SENART dashboards) used weekly by leaders to monitor demand and flow, including EHCP requests, assessments, decision outcomes, timeliness, phase transfers and tribunal trends.
- Forecasting and sufficiency dashboards, drawing on SEN2, SCAP and placement data, to track growth in EHCPs, demand by primary need (notably ASD, SLCN and SEMH), and progress on local place creation.
- Workforce and service delivery monitoring, tracking deployment and impact of Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and SEMH support into schools, alongside delivery of SEND units, IRPs and alternative provision capacity.
- Financial tracking aligned to the DSG Management Plan, including cost avoidance, placement mix, independent placement reliance and unit cost trends, reported alongside outcomes.

A core KPI suite is reviewed monthly through SENDAP governance, aligned to DfE Reform Plan measures. This includes demand (EHCP applications and growth rate), service delivery (capacity created, workforce deployment, timeliness), service quality (parent and young person confidence, complaints and appeals), and outcomes (attendance, exclusions, reintegration rates and participation post-16).

Importantly, Wakefield will track improved inclusion metrics across the system, including reductions in avoidable escalation, improved mainstream attendance for pupils with SEND, reduced exclusions and reduced dependency on high-cost external placements.

Delivery will be supported through close, structured engagement with DfE SEND Advisers and Financial Advisers, using data as a shared lens to test assumptions, challenge progress and support prioritisation.

Progress monitoring is matched by strong feedback loops to enable timely adjustment. Intelligence flows from schools, MATs, health partners and families through established partnership forums, Schools Forum, High Needs sub-groups and SENDAP governance boards. Parent Carer Forum feedback, youth voice mechanisms and SENART engagement are used to triangulate performance data with lived experience.

Where data indicates pressure — for example rising EHCP demand, emerging needs or service capacity gaps — this is escalated through governance to inform reprioritisation of resources, commissioning decisions and workforce deployment. Performance reporting is integrated across corporate, partnership and operational levels, ensuring accountability is clear and action-focused.

Together, this approach ensures Wakefield not only tracks delivery but actively manages change, maintaining system grip, improving outcomes for children and young people, strengthening inclusion across schools, and securing long-term financial sustainability.



12. Reporting to DfE

Using the attached data template, the local area partnership is required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against selected key metrics. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This will include data the department holds on **Attendance**, **Exclusions**, and **Unauthorised absence**.

Please use the attached data template to upload your initial data return to DfE.

APPENDIX Two

Section 4 – Governance

13. How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?

Please outline the governance structures in place to oversee delivery. Clearly set out who is responsible for overseeing reform delivery, what each governance group or individual is accountable for, and how these arrangements ensure progress is monitored and decisions are made transparently. Please identify where the named SRO for the Local SEND Reform Plan sits within the governance structure and ensure your response incorporates the core minimum requirements.

Governance Mechanism <i>This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).</i>	Purpose/ Responsibilities <i>What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?</i>	Membership <i>Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this. (Include n/a if an individual).</i>	Cadence <i>How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?</i>	Decision Rights <i>What decisions can this governance mechanism make?</i>	Escalation Route <i>Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?</i>
SEND and AP Partnership Board	The SEND and AP Board lead on Wakefield's response to Government policy directives, legislation and guidance in respect of children and young people with SEND along with their families including the implementation of the Green Paper, SENDAP improvement plan and SEND Inspection Framework.	Jointly chaired by Corporate Director Children and Young People and Director System Reform & Integration, Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership. Reps from: LA – Education and Inclusion Educational Psychology Alternative Provision Youth Justice DSCO and Early help Inclusion Team Early years Education settings Primary, secondary and post 16 Paret carer forum VCSE Health colleagues from ICB and provider services	6 times a year	Provide regular update reports to Children, Young People and Families Partnership, the Health and Wellbeing Board and individual stakeholder organisations in line with the governance requirements of these organisations. Develop, monitor and review SEND strategic documents including strategies, plans, self-evaluation, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), action plans for development, etc. Take agreed key messages and actions from the meeting and communicate to relevant partnership forums and to colleagues in their own organisations	Children, Young People and Families Partnership and/ or the Health and Wellbeing board.

Schools Forum	The Schools Forum has a statutory governance role to advise and, where prescribed, take decisions on local authority proposals relating to the allocation and use of the Dedicated Schools Grant, ensuring compliance with national regulations. It provides collective accountability and challenge on schools funding matters, representing the views of schools and providers within the local system	In Wakefield, the Schools Forum is made up of elected and appointed representatives drawn from across the local education system, including headteachers and governors from maintained schools across different phases, academy representatives, and non-school members such as early years and 14–19 education providers. Local authority officers and an elected member attend to support and advise the Forum, but members act collectively to represent the interests of their sector or peer group rather than individual institutions, providing informed challenge and assurance.	6 times a year	The Schools Forum has a limited but important decision-making role, with statutory powers to decide on specific matters such as de-delegation for maintained schools and the amount of central spend retained within the Dedicated Schools Grant. On wider funding issues, including the local funding formula and block movements, it acts in a consultative and advisory capacity.	Final decisions remain with the local authority or, where required, the Secretary of State
High Needs Subgroup	The primary reason for the subgroup is to discuss pressures within High Needs block and to ensure sustainable decisions are being made regarding High Needs funding.	Schools forum representative Co-opted members Corporate finance team SEND Service manager AP Service Manager Service Director Education and Inclusion	Termly (4 weeks prior to schools' forum)	The forum has no decision-making powers but feeds into and advises Schools Forum. It also provides a space of wider discussion, focus on key priorities and options appraisals.	Schools Forum
West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board	Strategic Commissioning Decisions for all of West Yorkshire	Wakefield representation from Wakefield ICB Accountable Officer		All decisions related to Strategic Commissioning arrangements for all of West Yorkshire	Department of Health & Social Care

Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership (formal decision maker in 2026/27)	Integrated Health and Care Delivery for the Wakefield population	West Yorkshire ICB Local Authority (including DCS or deputy and DAS or deputy and DPH) GPs and Primary Care MYTT SWYPFT VCSE	Quarterly	All decisions related to commissioning and quality of health services, and some integrated health and care services for residents in Wakefield	West Yorkshire ICB
Wakefield Place Provider Partnership (shadow form in 2026/27)	Integrated Health and Care Delivery for the Wakefield population Delegated responsibility for budgets including children's community services (including therapies, mental health and emotional wellbeing and needs-led services for children with complex needs (including neuro-diversity)	MYTT (Chair & Host) West Yorkshire ICB Local Authority (including DCS or deputy and DAS or deputy and DPH) GPs and Primary Care SWYPFT VCSE	Monthly	In shadow format will make recommendations to Wakefield District Health & Care Partnership for decision	West Yorkshire Health & Care Partnership
Children's Alliance (subject to review, to be confirmed on 20.5.26)	Delegated responsibility for design and delivery of children's health and wellbeing offer (including therapies, mental health and emotional wellbeing, needs-led services for children with complex needs (including neuro-diversity) and public health funded children's offer (including 0-19) No formally delegated budget; responsible for design & delivery & can make recommendations to Place Provider Partnership	Local Authority (Chair & Host – includes public health, family hubs, SEND and commissioning) West Yorkshire ICB MYTT SWYPFT VCSE 0-19	Fortnightly	Influencing role only; operational decision making	Place Provider Partnership / Local Authority Governance & Partnership Boards



If you have a diagram to show the relationship between these governance mechanisms, please upload this here.

****Appendix Three**

Section 5 – Central Government Support

14. How can we help you?

Please outline any practical support you need from central government to implement your plan effectively.

This may include:

- Access to specialist expertise or advisory support
- Help with workforce development or recruitment challenges
- Tools or templates to support data collection, reporting, or evaluation
- Facilitation of peer learning or regional collaboration
- Support with system-level coordination across education, health, and care
- Guidance on navigating regulatory or policy barriers



To implement our SEND Reform Plan effectively and at pace, Wakefield would welcome targeted, practical support from central government that recognises both the scale of demand growth and the reality that local areas will be operating a dual SEND system for a sustained period. Delivery must balance statutory duties within the current framework alongside phased reform, and this complexity needs to be reflected in national expectations, funding and assurance.

Continued specialist advisory support from the DfE SEND Adviser and Financial Adviser remains critical. Close, ongoing partnership working will support pace, challenge and confidence as we manage reform alongside rising EHCP volumes and legacy pressures set out in the DSG Management Plan.

Workforce development and recruitment support is essential. Wakefield faces acute challenges recruiting and retaining Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists. National support to strengthen supply pipelines, incentives and training routes — alongside funded SEND/Inclusion-specific CPD — would directly accelerate delivery and build inclusive capability across schools, MATs and early years.

We would benefit from standardised tools and templates for SEND data collection, reporting and evaluation, aligned to SEND Reform Plan metrics, to reduce duplication and support consistent tracking across a broad system.

Facilitated peer learning and regional collaboration would add value, particularly around mainstream inclusion, SEND sufficiency and commissioning practice.

At place level, proactive DfE support from its regional teams to strengthen joint working with schools and MATs would help unblock barriers, align expectations and maintain collective ownership of reform.

Finally, clear, timely guidance or sequencing on regulatory and policy developments or statutory guidance — including SEND thresholds, accountability and funding reform — is vital to support confidence, stability and sustainable change during this extended transition period. In Wakefield we value our partnership with the DfE and welcome a shared commitment to embedding the SEND reforms across the district.



Annex B - Supporting Documents

Document	Link
The Schools White Paper	Every Child Achieving and Thriving
SEND Consultation Document	SEND reform: putting children and young people first.
LA and Schools Budget 2026-27	Schools Operational Guide 2026-27
Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Guidance and Tool	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan – Data template	Included in commission pack
Local SEND Reform Plan Quality Assessment Framework	Included in commission pack
Local Inclusion Partnership Grant 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Experts at Hand Guidance	To be published Spring 2026
High Needs Capital Allocations 2026-27	To be published Spring 2026
Guidance on Inclusion bases	To be published Spring 2026

Annex C – Risk Matrix

IMPACT DESCRIPTION	IMPACT LEVEL	PROBABILITY/LIKELIHOOD				
		< 10%	>10% - <30%	>30% - <60%	>60% - <90%	>90%
		Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Possible	Likely	Very Likely
Cannot deliver Reform Plan; Failure of mission critical activity.	Crisis					
Significant impact to objectives; Significant and sustained disruption to activity.	Critical					
Delivery targets are compromised; Project delay / budget overrun.	Moderate					
Limited impact on delivery targets; Deviations from project resource, timescale or targets.	Marginal					
Minimal impact on delivery targets; Minimal impacts to project / programme efficiency.	Negligible					