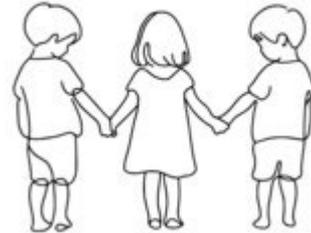


## SEND Transformation update

### Earlier identification and support

We want children's needs to be spotted early so they get help fast. From January 2025 to date we have issued more than 750 Education, Health and Care Plans – the highest number in a single year.



What we've achieved:

- Early identification has improved: Education health and Care Plans for early years children in Sandwell is forecast to increase by a third compared up by **38%** from last year (previously 0.08%, well below national average).
- Faster plans – 63% of new EHC plans are now completed within the 20-week statutory target (up from 27% last year).
- Better quality – 74% of new EHC plans are rated “good” in our quality checks.
- Health and social care advice is now returned on time consistently in above 90% of cases.

This means families don't have to wait as long and plans are clearer and easier to understand.

### Listening to families and young people

At the heart of our vision is a simple but powerful goal: **families and young people should have a genuine voice in shaping decisions that affect them.** We believe that co-production—working together as equal partners—is key to achieving this.

What's happening?

- **2026: Sandwell's year of co-production**  
This year marks a major milestone as we are set to launch the Co-production Charters for children and young people and parents and carers, setting out clear promises and a shared language to guide how we work together.
- **“You Said, We Did” updates**  
Transparency matters. Families can now see how their feedback leads to real changes through regular updates. *(please see the article from the parent carer forum for more information)*
- **A new SEND Local Offer website**  
We're redesigning the SEND Local Offer website to make information easier to find and more accessible for everyone.

- Parent carer and young people reference groups  
Engagement is growing. We now have 72 parent carers in our Parent Carer Reference Group and 125 children and young people nominated by parents to take part in reference groups. Throughout the year, we've held multiple sessions where their views have shaped the soon to be published Co-production Charter.
- Want to get involved?  
Parents can join [Sandwell's Parent Carer Forum SPVU](#) or [Sandwell Parents' for Disabled Children SPDC](#) (see articles in main newsletter) and help influence decisions that matter. Together, we're building a stronger, more inclusive community where every voice counts.

## More local school places

Children should be able to learn close to home.

Our progress:

- A new sufficiency strategy is nearing completion. It will help us plan to make sure there are enough places, resources, and support for children with SEND in schools and other settings. It looks at current and future demand (how many children need help), and ensures there are specialist provisions, trained staff, and funding so every child gets the right support close to home.
- Extra places have already been created at The Meadows and The Orchard schools.
- We anticipate more local specialist hubs so fewer children need to travel far or go to schools outside Sandwell.

**Picture caption below:** recent visit to the Meadows School new post 16 setting



*Left to right: Councillor Hanoor Bhullar, Head Teacher James Horspool, Councillor Jalal Uddin, Rachel Hill, Robert Richwood, Vice Chair of Governing Body and Sally Giles*

## Better information and short breaks

Families need clear information and good support outside school. Short breaks are activities and services that give children and young people with disabilities fun, safe experiences outside their home. They also give parents and carers time to rest,

recharge, or spend time with other family members.

#### Successes:

- Parents carers now also have their own [separate SEND Service front door and](#) can contact them by completing an online form, response within 3 - 5 working days.
- With our refreshed Additional Short Breaks offer over 465 vouchers have been given out. Our offer includes fun activities like sports, sensory play and whole family events too.
- A new short breaks group for young people aged 18–25 is due to start this year. If you want to be involved in the develop please contact [shortbreaks@4communitytrust.co.uk](mailto:shortbreaks@4communitytrust.co.uk)



## Inclusive education and preparing for adulthood

We want schools to include every child and help them prepare for life after school.

What's new:

- We're developing a Whole School SEND model with audits to check how inclusive schools are.
- More supported internships and job opportunities are being planned for young people with SEND.
- A new Additionally Vulnerable Team is in place to help children who need extra support.

## Health update – How health supports SEND in Sandwell

Health is a key part of everything we do in the Sandwell transformation programme, and we want to share some important updates:

- **New Health EHC Triage System:** All relevant community paediatric services are now involved from the start – from universal services like Health Visiting and School Nursing to specialist therapies and medical teams. This means children's EHCPs include more comprehensive and robust health advice.
- **Training for health teams:** Every team has had refresher training on SEND and writing EHCP health advice. This helps clinicians understand their legal responsibilities and make reports child-centred and easy to understand.

- ‘Power of Words’ Training: Rolled out across health services in Sandwell, co-delivered by the Parent-Carer Forum and NHS. It focuses on listening to lived experiences and understanding how language impacts families. The training which aims to promote a culture of reflection around the language that we use when discussing young people who have additional support needs.
- Autism Pathway Review: A Black Country-wide review is underway to improve autism assessment pathways and respond to the growing need nationally.

## **Strong leadership and partnership**

Good leadership and teamwork make everything possible.

Our progress:

- A permanent EHC management team is now in place.
- New dashboards track performance and help us make decisions based on data.
- 82% of improvement projects are on track, completed or already part of everyday practice.

