

SEND White Paper Round Table Event

Friday 17th April, 2026

Summary

This note summarises the key points raised at the SEND White Paper round table event, drawing on the three Padlet boards used during the session and on additional comments received from invitees who were unable to attend on the day. It is intended to be a shared record of themes, not an attributed set of individual comments.

Purpose and context

The round table explored what Shropshire's inclusion approach could look like in practice, including the development of an Inclusion Strategy and the design of an "Experts at Hand" offer. Discussion focused on what schools/settings need from the system to support children and young people with SEND to achieve and thrive.

Headline messages

- **Make it simpler and more consistent:** reduce duplication, clarify pathways, and publish clear guidance, templates and examples that work across phases.
- **Protect school capacity:** address specialist workforce gaps and avoid transferring additional workload to schools (especially SENCOs) without time, funding and practical support.
- **One clear way in:** a single "front door" for specialist advice/support, with transparent thresholds/eligibility and response standards.
- **Equity across the county:** ensure the offer works for early years through post-16, for rural communities, and for all types of settings (including EOTIS).
- **Quality and credibility:** define what "expert" input means (competencies, supervision, consistency) and how impact will be evaluated.
- **Keep communication and feedback loops strong:** create regular opportunities for locality learning and publish "you said, we did" updates.

Key discussion themes

Experts at Hand – what attendees said would help

- **Practical, in-setting input:** modelling/coaching with staff, consultation, supervision and solution-focused problem solving.
- **Upskilling at scale:** flexible training (including recorded options) and building capacity in existing roles (e.g., developing HLTAs).
- **Fast, simple access:** minimal paperwork, clear triage and a named route for advice/support.
- **Locality-based delivery:** practitioners who understand local context and equitable access across the county (including rural/transport barriers).
- **Whole-system working:** better coordination across services and stronger partnership/communication with families.
- **Coverage and resilience:** explicit inclusion of early years, post-16 and EOTIS, and service models that do not rely on a single individual.



Inclusion Strategy – what is needed to make it workable

- **Clear minimum specification:** required headings, templates and exemplars; clarity on how the strategy aligns with SEN policy and the SEND Information Report.
- **Sequencing and timelines:** publish standards/expectations early, with a clear implementation plan and milestones.
- **Accessibility for families:** ensure information remains easy for parents/carers to understand and find.
- **Funding clarity:** early confirmation of what is funded, what can be spent, and how sustainability will be managed.
- **Practical support to write and implement:** step-by-step guidance, digital tools, peer review options, and opportunities to share practice through networks.

Implementation questions and risks raised

- **Workforce supply:** where additional specialists will come from, and whether special schools could be supported to provide outreach.
- **Leadership accountability:** a clear message that reforms must not land solely on SENCOs; senior leaders need shared accountability and protected capacity.
- **Preferred engagement:** keep using small-group, face-to-face forums/roundtables where possible.
- **Clarity on commissioned services and costs:** what is available now and in future, who commissions, and any cost implications for schools.
- **Targeted networks:** interest in additional networks/roundtables (e.g., for schools with higher SEND demographics, and special-school specific discussions).

SENDIASS system intelligence *(SENDIASS shared non-setting-specific themes from adviser enquiries across phases, to support system discussion.)*

- **Certainty and belonging:** uncertainty around whether needs can be met (especially at transitions) affects planning and pupil wellbeing.
- **Attendance/EBSA:** families want clearer expectations and support around reasonable adjustments and interim plans while assessments are underway.
- **“Waiting well”:** delays in EHCP and assessment processes can stall support and increase tension between families and settings.
- **Reduced timetables:** concerns about reduced timetables becoming a holding position rather than a planned, time-limited reintegration approach.

Suggested actions and next steps based on feedback

1. **Share an Inclusion Strategy minimum specification** (scope, mandatory headings, template and exemplar, and how this aligns with SEN policy and the SEND Information Report).
1. **Publish an implementation plan** (milestones, responsibilities, what changes when, and what “good” looks like in practice).
1. **Design a single access route (“front door”)** for specialist support, including triage, transparent thresholds and published response standards.
2. **Commission for equity** so that early years, post-16, rural settings and EOTIS are explicitly covered.



3. **Build capacity through scalable models** (in-setting coaching/modelling, recorded training, supervision) supported by workforce development routes and protected release time.
4. **Strengthen engagement and feedback loops** (targeted networks, regular roundtables, and “you said, we did” updates).
2. **Design a single access route (“front door”)** for specialist support, including triage, transparent thresholds and published response standards.
3. **Commission for equity** so that early years, post-16, rural settings and EOTIS are explicitly covered.
4. **Build capacity through scalable models** (in-setting coaching/modelling, recorded training, supervision) supported by workforce development routes and protected release time.
5. **Strengthen engagement and feedback loops** (targeted networks, regular roundtables, and “you said, we did” updates).

Thank you to everyone who contributed. If you would like to add anything you feel is missing from this summary, please email sarah.court@shropshire.gov.uk so it can be captured. This feedback will be used to inform the Local Area SEND Reform Plan and we will continue to share with you how this is being done.

AI notice: This document was generated using AI and reviewed/edited prior to sharing.

