

SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Board Update – June 2025



This update provides an overview of progress, developments, and key areas of focus from the SEND Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Board.

This update reflects the collaborative efforts of local authority teams, education providers, health and care partners, and families.

The June meeting featured a range of key updates, including a powerful Voice of Experience session led by Christine Legore and Nathalie Messanvi, a data update highlighting progress to date, a Deep Dive on Preparation for Adulthood presented by Natalie Williams, an update on the Co-Production Plan from Jodie Newson, Lakhvir Sahota, and Pam Armstrong, and an introduction to the SEND Communications Strategy by Nina Buckley, with a request for board approval.

1. Voice of experience

The Be Empowered workshops continue to make a strong impact, supporting parent carers of children and young people with SEND to build confidence, knowledge, and active involvement in their child's journey. The six-week programme empowers parents to engage as equal partners, understand the SEND system, and sustain positive change. Feedback shows families experience meaningful improvements in just 15 hours of support, with growing peer networks and increased confidence in working with professionals. To improve accessibility, sessions are now offered face-to-face, online, hybrid, and during evenings or weekends. Parents report feeling more empowered, less isolated, and better equipped to support their children.

2. Deep Dive: Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

The Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) deep dive is progressing well, with key developments including the establishment of a multi-agency PfA Task Group and completion of a full audit cycle. The audit highlighted strengths and areas for improvement, notably a lack of feedback from children, young people, and education settings. Understanding their lived experience remains a key focus. Encouragingly, there's growing alignment across the partnership on what's working and where development is needed. Next steps include targeted engagement with young people and education settings over the summer term, with findings due in September 2025, and preparations underway for the next audit in March 2026.

3. Co-Production Plan

Progress on the SEND Co-production Plan includes training 928 people through ten citywide and service-specific sessions. The Co-production Award Scheme has seen strong engagement, with 50 organisations receiving bronze and several silver awards underway. Work is also progressing on improving the Parental Engagement: Working Together document to define what good co-production looks like across the system.

It has been recognised that leaders who previously signed the co-production framework and charter may not still be in Birmingham so, the ask is for current leaders to sign up and disseminate the charter and framework down through their various teams.

4. SEND Communications Strategy

The SEND Communications Strategy has now been formally signed off, marking a significant step forward in our commitment to improving communication with children and young people with SEND, their families, and key stakeholders. This approval sets the foundation for delivering clear, consistent, and accessible messaging across all services involved in SEND.

With our very best wishes

Dr Sue Harrison – Strategic Director for Children and Families

John Coughlan – SEND Commissioner