Statutory SEND Service
Phased based PODs

October 2026 update

Strengthening Statutory SEND Service

Current Challenges

- ✓ Co-ordinators current work across the full 0-25 age range
- ✓ Demand profiles, complexity and statutory requirements differ significantly across age phases
- ✓ Maintaining consistent relationships and communication across 0-25 service model can be challenging
- ✓ Transition points between education phases require stronger oversight and continuity
- ✓ Existing arrangements limit opportunities to build specialist age-phase expertise

Supporting SEND improvement (LAIP), locality implementation and financial sustainability

Proposed Response

- ✓ Introduction of age-phased PODs within geographical locality areas
  - ✓ Early Years and Primary
  - ✓ Secondary
  - ✓ Post 16

Intended Benefits

- ✓ Focused phase-based caseloads
- ✓ Stronger specialist expertise
- ✓ Better management of key transitions
- ✓ Greater consistencies for children, families and education settings
- ✓ Improved service resilience and responsiveness
- ✓ Supports delivery of SEND improvement priorities, national reform and financial sustainability
- ✓ Supports direction of LGR

Statutory SEND - Pod Staffing & Oversight

Phase based pods were introduced into the area reviews teams June 2026 with full implementation of staffing by the end of November 2026 when new staff have completed induction. This will ensure the teams are specialist in phases.

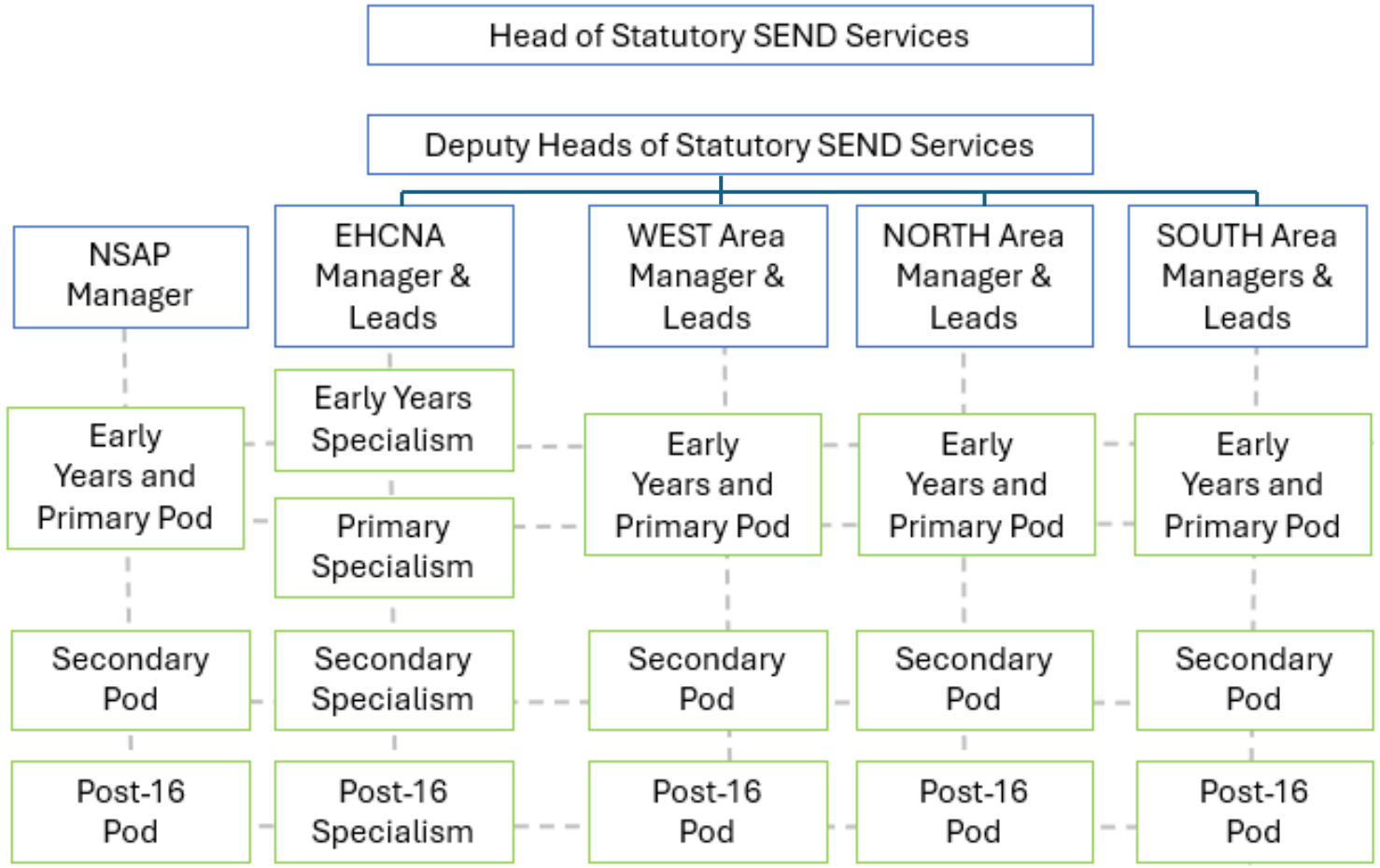
This will **support improvements** in:

- Cross service working
- Transitions
- Caseload management and oversight

Each **area team** will have phase-based Pods, appropriate to the level of children and young people within that team.

The **NSAP Team** is functioning as a separate Pod covering caseloads for those under S61, S19 and 42.

The **EHC Assessment team** are also exploring phase-based specialism within coordinators to mirror the Pod format.



October Pod staffing update

West Area Team Pods Active

West EY & Primary POD
Permanent; 3.8FTE
Staff in induction; 1FTE
Vacancies; 0

West Secondary POD
Permanent; 4.6FTE
Staff in induction; 1FTE
Vacancies; 0

West P16 POD
Permanent; 2FTE
Staff in induction; 4FTE
Vacancies; 0

South Area Team Pods Active

South EY & Primary POD
Permanent; 3.5FTE
Staff in induction; 1FTE
Vacancies; 0

South Secondary POD
Permanent; 4.6FTE
Staff in induction; 1FTE
Vacancies; 0

South P16 POD
Permanent; 6FTE
Staff in induction; 0
Vacancies; 0

North Area Team Pods Active

North EY & Primary POD
Permanent; 0.8FTE
Staff in induction; 1.8FTE
Vacancies; 1FTE

North Secondary POD
Permanent; 1.7FTE
Staff in induction; 1FTE
Vacancies; 1FTE

North P16 POD
Permanent; 2.6FTE
Staff in induction; 0.8FTE
Vacancies; (1 sickness)

October Pod update - staffing

Staffing

Cohort 1 induction has run from 7th September and finishes 2nd October. The new 4 week programme has been followed and after completion the staff will join their respective team pods from 5th October. At this point they will buddy up with a current member of staf within the pod and support work covering phase transfer or NsAP referrals to cement the learning from their induction. As part of this they will have a staggered re-assignment of cases.

Cohort 2 induction runs from 26th October to 20th November, from the 23rd November this cohort will join their pod teams and complete the same hand over period as cohort 1.

Following the final round of recruitment it is likely there will be a need for a third cohort of new starters. The start dates for this cohort span November to January based on notice periods.

Due to the above, not all pods will be fully staffed until induction of cohort 3 is completed, likely end of January. For this reason a managed caseload reassignment plan has been put in place, which is outlined on the next slide. It is important to note that re assignment of work can not take place during phase transfer and therefore completion of pod set up will not take place until April 2027.

We currently have high levels of absence in the North team.

October Pod update – case management

Case holding

The table shows the planned handover of cases between teams to complete the set up of the pods.

Time period	Activity
7th September – 2nd October	Induction of cohort 1
Wb. 5th October	Cohort 1 join pod team and buddy up to support pse transfer work in area teams and NsAP referral work in NsAP team
Wb. 19th October	Non phase transfer S19, S62 and S42 reassigned to NsAP team from West
Wb. 2nd November	Non phase transfer S19, S62 and S42 reassigned to NsAP team from North
Wb. 23rd November	Cohort 2 join pod team and buddy up to support pse transfer work in area teams and NsAP referral work in NsAP team
Wb. 7th December	Non phase transfer S19, S62 and S42 reassigned to NsAP team from South
November - January	Cohort 3 join and complete induction
Wb. 5th April	All other S19, S61 and S42 cases from phase transfer reassigned to NsAP team from all areas

October Pod update - Activity

Since the set up of the pods the following activity has also been completed;

1. Pod structure and contact sheet has been updated on the local offer pages and shared via Headteachers meetings and SENCo Forum
2. All pod leads have been assigned as key links to wider service such as EHE, Youth justice, Virtual schools, Social care, Health, EPs, ATS, QA and SES
3. Pod Leads for P16 have met with the youth and community leads for the equivalent areas as an introduction and regular meetings to discuss those at risk of NEET have been organised.
4. Pod Leads have been linked in with valuing care team to attend the CWD valuing care panels to discuss key CYP for their team pods
5. Pod Leads for Early Years and Primary have met with the Early Years team to discuss Section 23, EY funding and placements
6. Pod Leads for P16 have met with health colleagues to discuss health referrals and support within P16 and beyond

Workforce Transition and Development Plan
Service training delivery points

Induction – 4 week period for all new staff, delivered on rolling basis in line with recruitment.

Statutory & Mandatory Training – SCC led for all staff (Oracle), SCC Deadlines.

Resource Centre – Web based access for all staff within the service as a toolkit for completing their roles with ongoing live access.

Individual courses & professional Development Opportunities –e.g: Reimagining Leadership.

Weekly (15 mins) Service Briefing – All staff in the service led by managers with invited guests. Covers messages, updates and on-going training.

Fortnightly (1 hour) Service Managers Meetings – for all managers to discuss ongoing project work, data, updates and learning to deliver in teams meetings.

Fortnightly (1 hour) Leads & Managers Quality Assurance Meetings- Joint session to focus on identified QA themes and learning loop.

Monthly Team Meetings – led by the team managers filtering information and learning down from managers meetings and QA.

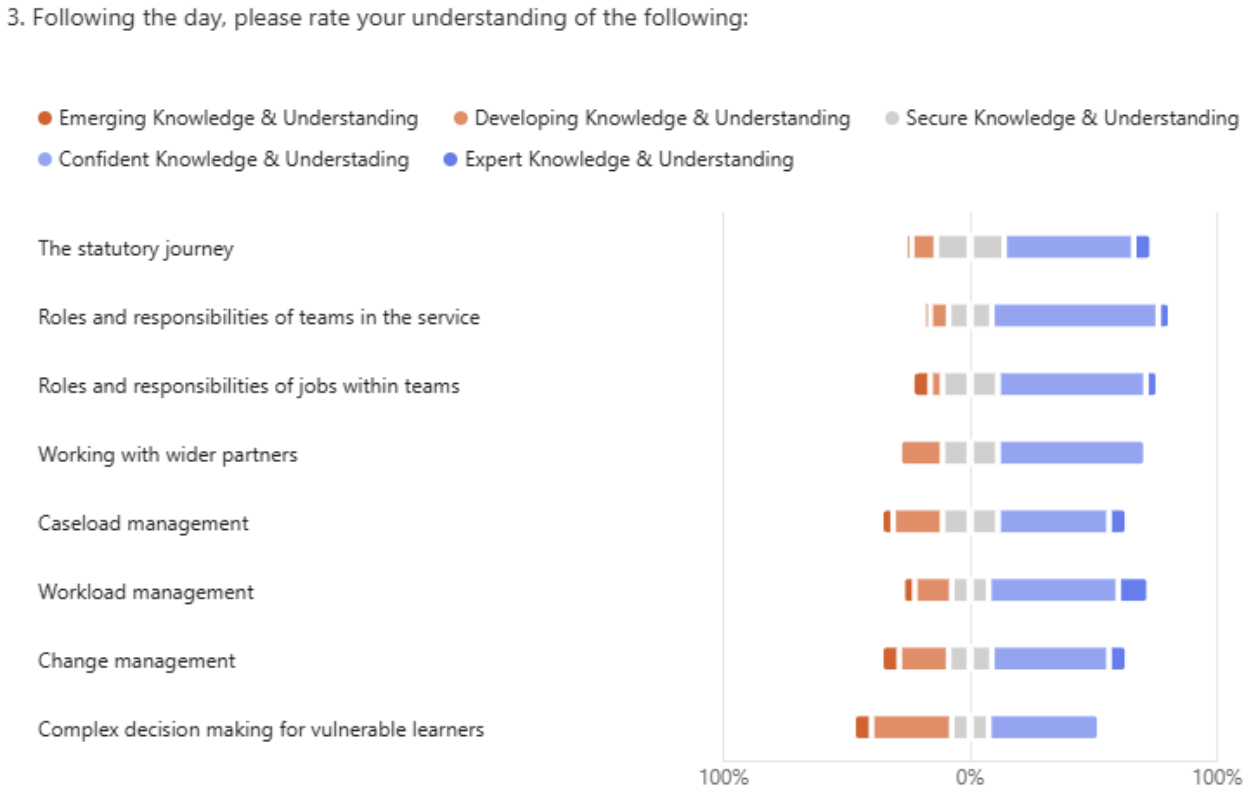
Termly Service Days – themed over the last 18 months on key areas of service recovery and development.

Summer workforce development programme in support of Pod Development and Service change.

Autumn Service day feedback

The Autumn service day involved current and new members of the service as part of their induction.

Feedback from the days shows that 78% now feel secure or above in all aspects of their work. From an Area Team perspective with 31.5% of the workforce being new and still in induction, this is a good percentage at secure and above.



The lower scoring elements of the work remain;

1. Caseload management
2. Complex decision making
3. Change management
4. Workload management

Workforce Transition and Development Plan

Phase 1 Understand (March 2026-June 2026)	Phase 2 Equip (July 2026 – Sept 2026)	Phase 3 Embed (Sept 2026- March 2027)	Phase 4 Review (March 2027 & establish ongoing review points)
Staff engagement sessions	Locality and POD operating model training	Coaching and mentoring	Staff feedback
Skills and knowledge baseline	Transition management support	Peer learning networks	Lessons learned
Identify concerns and current support needs	Resource Centre and toolkits	Problem solving support	Continuous improvement and audits
Wellbeing conversations	Leadership and development training	Performance measures and service monitoring	Refine operating model
FAQs and Communications	Recruitment and induction	Consistent practice models	Future workforce planning
Change champions	LAIP and SEND Reform awareness sessions	Ongoing supervision and support	Benefits realisation

How do we make sure every SEND Coordinator is ready to work effectively in a phase-based POD by September?

Workstream	Purpose	Key Outputs	Actions to date
Workforce Baseline	Understand current capability	Skills audit, mandatory training, caseload analysis, comms and FAQ	All key outputs completed
Operational Readiness	Prepare POD implementation	Role guidance, operating procedures, pathways	Role guidance for coordinators completed, Leads to follow. Operating procedures updated and reflected on resource centre.
Technical Training	Develop required knowledge	SEND practice, phase expertise, systems	Practice standards completed and waiting sign off. Key teams to identify links for expertise. Also links to knowing the settings.
Transition Support	Support staff through change	Coaching, FAQs, wellbeing, managers	Preparation for strengthened teams made through supervision support to Leads, Managers undertaking 'Reimagining Leadership' Training, Managers Day (June 2026).
Induction & Recruitment	Support new starters	Standard induction, buddy system, competency framework	Recruitment started, timeline to end with induction September. Resource centre complete and ready for induction including competency framework used during probation and on-going WFD. Buddy system running.
Performance & Assurance	Monitor implementation	KPIs, audits, feedback, learning loops	KPIs stated in LAIP and monitored regularly through the use of dashboards. Work already underway with Data & iHub and LL Teams to ensure that transition is technically supported.

Progress in key areas

Action	Who	Timescale	Progress
SSS Workforce Development Survey 2026	BSM/JHOS/ OM	Deadline 17th July 2026	Undertaken in May 2026 with 54 respondents. Individual questions range – 13 – 23 ? Looks like low number vs team size? SM request its re-run for 100% compliance Re-run the survey to those who did not participate to ensure 100% compliance. Deadline 17th July. OM to coordinate with Learning & Development additional training records for baseline establishment Survey results to be analysed alongside QA audit findings to inform training priorities.
Develop Training and support offer for implementation July-September	JHOS/OM	20/7/26	Programme of events established running until the autumn focusing on key identified areas Service day planned for September with programme around key priority areas Engagement with L and D team Engaged to Marrian Mcullen to understand where value/capacity can be added.
SSS Induction Programme	SSS	Live wc 29th June	Induction Programme goes live w/c 29th June targeted at new starters following recruitment. As of the 30/6 this has had 263 views, 10/7 304 views. The services uses IPSEA training - a budget was agreed last year prior to JHOS in post along with requirement to complete all modules via Council for Disabled Children (CDC) Council for Disabled Children - NCB. Legal training was also provided to the teams. **Next actions:** 1. Review induction from individual level (rolling BAU recruitment) to expand to focus on key roles and rolling annual refresher training .
Develop full-service training matrix and ongoing rolling programme	JHOS/OM		Building on the existing induction and September readiness programmes, develop a full training matrix covering induction and ongoing training for all roles.