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**Background & Purpose**

Following a significant review of the NWADCS Framework for Self-Assessment, a new, co-produced model was developed. This included introduction of an Innovation and Improvement Questionnaire’ (IIQ) which asked all authorities to categorise all areas of service delivery as a strength, improving (likely to be most aspects in local authorities) or a priority. In total, 22 of the 24 authorities completed the IIQ.

The IIQ has been analysed, alongside Peer Challenges, Inspections of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS), Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI), and Area SEND inspections, to create this report which analyses areas of strength, good and emerging practice, and areas in need of improvement across the North West. It also identifies where targeted support opportunities for targeting of support.

**Summary**

Leadership across the region demonstrates strengths in learning and development, workforce voice, and quality assurance. However, workforce stability and supervision remain high-priority areas, with many authorities seeking to strengthen management oversight and support mechanisms. There is a growing emphasis on co-production and the voice of children and families, with several authorities showing promising progress. Early Years is consistently the strongest area of education, inclusion and SEND services, particularly Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) and Childcare.

In Family Help and Social Care, Family Hubs emerged as a significant strength, alongside Early Help and Youth Offending services. Multi-disciplinary teams are a common priority, reflecting a regional shift towards integrated models of support. Neglect, family group decision-making, and support for children with disabilities are key areas requiring further development. Despite challenges, innovative practice in reunification, kinship care, and care leaver support are evident and offer valuable learning opportunities.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) services show strengths in educational psychology and participation through Parent Carer Forums. However, diagnostic pathways, health support, and preparation for adulthood (PfA) are widely identified as priorities which is where universal support could be offered. Authorities are actively developing inclusive practices, improving EHCP processes, and enhancing mainstream provision, though further progress is needed to ensure timely and effective support across the region. Overall, the review analysis shows a foundation of practice and innovation across the North West, with clear opportunities for shared learning and targeted support to address common challenges and accelerate improvement.

**Leadership**

Within leadership, there are strengths and priorities within all areas, except in Workforce Voice. The main areas that have been identified as strengths, by two fifths, are Learning and Development and Workforce Voice: with Quality Assurance, Local Practice Framework and Workloads identified by just over a third. The areas of greatest priority were Workforce Stability and Supervision. **Warrington** were judged Outstanding for their impact of leaders reflecting their systemic model of practice, strengthened with the introduction of the Systemic Hub, which supports social workers with reflective consultation. Senior leaders have developed strong and effective relationships with safeguarding partners at strategic and operational levels. **Salford** also attained Outstanding in their ILACs inspection for leadership and were praised for their strong multi-agency partnership through a willingness to learn; regular multi-agency audits; and responding to emerging themes and data. Those authorities who identified several priorities within leadership, which often correlate with an inadequate ILACs judgement, may benefit from peer support from Warrington or Salford regarding leadership.

In terms of Supervision, **Westmorland and Furness** have benefitted from their use of the [Social Work Academy](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/social-work-academy-westmorland-and-furness) which is described as a supportive and empowering environment, providing comprehensive training, professional development, and support for frontline practitioners in Children’s Social Care. Leaders in **Oldham** have prioritised the management of caseloads to create the conditions for improved workforce stability and an environment conducive to good quality practice. The borough’s approach to the significant proportion of social workers in their Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) was regarded as an asset within their Peer Challenge, with considerable support mechanisms and acknowledgment of their voices shaping workforce strategy. Elsewhere, **Lancashire’s** most recent inspection highlights how management oversight of practice is evident at all tiers and supervision is effectively to maintain oversight of decision-making and practice. The eight authorities who identified this area as a priority, including five in Cheshire and Merseyside, may benefit from drawing on learning from these approaches.

With Workforce Stability a common priority, that leaders in **Manchester** are recognised as bringing coherence and a sense of shared values, signals to other LAs the enabling nature of strong, stable leadership. Workforce stability in **Wigan**, supported by reductions in agency staff, has been achieved through social work academies, apprenticeships, and Second Supported Year in Employment. Theywere praised in their Peer Challenge for their engagement with partners, underpinned by embedded governance arrangements, to ensure resources are used creatively to prioritise early intervention, creating a seamless journey for families. Within workforce voice, it was noted in **Liverpool’s** Peer Challenge that this has shaped leaders’ approaches to reducing caseloads and enabling effective support, including IT improvements. In their recent ILACS inspection, it was noted that staff in **Blackburn with Darwen** feel listened to, there is an open, warm and honest culture where they feel well supported through wide training and development. These authorities offer scope for other LAs to learn from in creating environments where effective management oversight is accompanied by support from leaders and managers.

Voice of Children and Young People & Families has an equal identification of 18% in both strengths and priorities, although there is clearly scope for development across much of the region, 64% identified this as an area of improving. This is an area of accelerating improvement for **Blackpool**, as stated in their recent ILACS (2023); ‘Co-production between leaders, families, children, and the workforce is highly valued. This is shaping how services are delivered, developing new initiatives, and influencing priorities.’ In **Salford’s** ILACS, it was similarly recognised that the views of children and their families are routinely sought and acted on, with key political and corporate leaders regularly meeting with children and young people which leads to decisive strategic action to improve children’s lives.

Promising Practice

* Quality Assurance (Alternative Provision) - **Salford** has a [Flexible Procurement Solution for AP](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/provider-engagement-and-support-salford) where they have ensured clear, high expectations and positive relationships between the LA, schools and providers. Their AP Manager has Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and is a single point of contact. The key focus is to raise attendance, reduce suspensions and build aspirations in the future, reducing the chance of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

**Family Help and Children’s Social Care**

Family Help

Local authorities (LAs) demonstrate greatest confidence in Family Help, with more than a third of LAs citing the Front Door as a strength, rising to almost three quarters of LAs considering Family Hubs as strong. Other areas identified by just over half the authorities as a strength are Early Help and Youth Offending. In the latter service area, **Wirral Youth Justice Service** have a collection of practice guides based upon multiple initiatives in the area such as [their Ketamine Response](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/ketamine-response-wirral), and [In the Zone provision](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/zone-wirral).

In apparent anticipation of Families First Partnership (FFP) reforms, the most common priority overall was Multi-disciplinary Teams, albeit key authorities like FFP pathfinder Wirral and Lancashire- as lead LA for the Regional Improvement Plan Pilot (RIPP) reforms workstream- confirmed sources of support exist within the region. **Wirral** are using financial innovation through Family Network Support Packages (FNSP) to drive improvement, alongside building multi-disciplinary teams with dedicated social work practitioners and managers. Through their Peer Challenge, it was noted in **Salford** that their focused pilots are supporting trialling multi-disciplinary approaches already established within complex safeguarding and edge-of-care services. Also, **Westmorland and Furness** have introduced a multi-agency children’s hub to prove clear support and protection pathways.

Promising Practice

* **Liverpool** worked with the [Fiona Programme](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/fiona-programme-liverpool) to improve the parent’s mental health, parenting, and relationships by developing skills to manage emotions, stress and conflict through psychological intervention. The parents chosen to engage with the programme were parents with children needing Early Help support.

Children in Need of Help and Protection

The second largest priorities were Neglect and Family Group decision-making, with just under a third of LAs identifying these as priorities. Neglect has been identified as a strength by only one authority, Lancashire, where the **Children’s Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (LCSAP)** has clear governance arrangements, strategic objectives and plans in place, which helps to bring a high degree of consistency and continuity to the partnership’s response, as validated by their Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). In **Sefton’s** Peer Challenge, it was noted that the Team Around the School (TAS) model was depicted as having shifted early help resource from the authority to schools, meeting need earlier within a community setting and driving reducing ‘targeted’ early help.

**Manchester** has neglect as a priority but has recently developed the [All-Age Neglect Tool](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/all-age-neglect-tool-manchester) which is a resource to identify neglect at the earliest stage possible. In **Blackburn with Darwen’s** JTAI highlighted responsive and well-coordinated universal and multi-agency targeted early help services, including out of hours, which are helping to reduce harm. These could be models of support for other areas in the region, particularly in the Liverpool City Region where four of six LAs identify this area as a priority.

Four LAs have identified Children with Disabilities, yet only **Trafford** cite this as a strength, suggesting that their transformation of [Complex Needs Service](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/children-complex-needs-trafford); including a SEN-specific Edge of Care Pilot trialled in the Short Breaks Team, could provide a model for others to consider.

Promising Practice

* The [Restore Programme](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/expectant-parents-restore-warrington) launched in **Warrington** in April 2020 for expectant parents who were less than 20 weeks gestation, who had children removed from their care previously and there is a likelihood the current pregnancy would result in removal, and they work with the families until the child reaches five-years old. The same allocated Family Support Worker is in place during all transition points such as stepping up, pre-birth assessment, legal gateway, pre proceedings, until the outcome is for the children to be permanently removed from parents’ care.

Family Networks

Family networks is an area that lacks strength within the region in comparison to other areas in Family Help and children’s social care. Within this, private fostering is a priority for three authorities, although four authorities identifying this area as a strength – suggesting there is scope to share learning within the region. **Lancashire**, as a Sector Led Improvement Partner (SLIP),could provide support to others, as demonstrated through their innovative work on the 25-day [Pause and Reflect (PAR)](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/pause-and-reflect-par-fostering-arrangements-lancashire) fostering approach, which won the innovation award at the LGC (Local Government Chronicle) Awards 2025.

Neighbouring Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, each identify more than half of help & protection categories as a priority. The prioritisation of Domestic Abuse in **Cheshire East** is apparent in their response to a domestic abuse strategy review, which highlighted gaps in provision, as well as a need to focus on early intervention, therefore they created the [Domestic Abuse Family Safety Unit (DAFSU).](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/domestic-abuse-family-safety-unit-cheshire-east)  In contrast, Lancashire and Salford demonstrate a high degree of confidence across this area with 60% of the elements identified as a strength, offering scope for other LAs to learn from or benefit from more formalised support.

Within Family Networks, Reunification was the most common priority, although there is positive scope for transferrable learning as – along with Family Time and Kinship Carer Support – a notable proportion, contrastingly, identify it as a strength. In **Warrington**,often well-planned use of residential respite and clear review arrangements are enabling more dynamic assessment of children’s needs with reunification considered in many circumstances. [*All Child*](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/family-help-all-child-wigan)is used in **Wigan** to provide school-based family support, part funded through charitable contributions, with early evidence pointed to greater impact and continuity of support through non-statutory agency involvement.

Within Kinship care, **Blackburn with Darwen**, pay significant attention to supporting kinship carers to become special guardians at the earliest opportunity, as recognised in their recent inspection. Carers’ assessments are thorough, timely and comprehensive. Special guardians are given the same high-quality training and practical and financial support as foster carers. Evidencing the complexity of this area, the Peer Challenge for **Rochdale** explored the reduction in achievement of legal permanence via Special Guardianship Order, with their approach to kinship care being shaped by a flexible and community-sensitive approach to financial support.

Children in Care

The highest priority by two fifths, is sufficiency and commissioning, followed by health needs and complex needs. Whilst only three authorities identify strength in sufficiency and commissioning, there is some distribution across the region with Blackburn with Darwen, Rochdale and Wigan offering some scope to collaborate in future at a sub-regional level, including through Regional Care Cooperatives. There are five authorities in this section who identified more than half of this area as a strength: one in Cumbria and Lancashire; three in the Greater Manchester sub region; and one in Cheshire and Merseyside. **Cumberland** were praised in their recent ILACS inspection for having timely and effective care planning, alongside establishing relationships with Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), children in care are encouraged to attend their review with their wishes and feelings considered. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking (UASC) children are very well supported in **Blackburn with Darwen** by committed social workers, who are sensitive to the children’s cultural needs and to their experiences. Placements are appropriate and social workers strive to match children with carers who are culturally aware and able to support them to access the appropriate resources, education and training within their community. **Oldham**, in their recent ILACS inspection, were praised for promoting the participation of cared for children and actively seek their voice in developing and shaping service delivery. Disabled children in **Cheshire West and Chester** benefit from social workers who know them well and work effectively with partners, especially in health, to ensure that their needs are met. Children and families are prepared effectively for the transition to adult services in a timely way. The areas with two thirds of children in care as a priority are Halton, Rochdale and Westmorland and Furness. There are strong models of excellent practice that can be offered as support from neighbouring areas.

Promising Practice

* **Rochdale** have used their No Wrong Door provocations and their seven outcomes for CYP to work with providers to support their [sufficiency and enhance relationships](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/sufficiency-planning-provider-relationships-rochdale). Using a successful DfE bid for capital funding, they’ve included provision for CYP with learning disabilities and autism.
* The Integrated Care Board (ICB) worked with the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) provider to introduce a hybrid IHA model in **Sefton**, recruiting and training of GPs to complete IHAs. This has included trialling Saturday morning Dr/Nurse IHA clinics to increase the number of children that could be seen. IHA appointment letters are now addressed directly to children and young people to engage them, with incentives offered to children aged over 11 to encourage attendance.

Care leavers

One of the weaker areas in the region is within Care Leavers, with the highest identified strength only at 23% which is in Former UASC, interestingly UASC on its own was identified as a stronger strength by 13% more. Not one LA put transition as a strength but 38% of authorities identified it as a priority. Salford signal their assessment of strength in the Care Leavers area with five out of six areas identified as strengths, with Wigan, alongside St Helens, with four out of six areas identified as strengths. UASC in **St Helens** benefit from sensitive support from their Personal Assistants (PAs) as they are helped to settle with their religious and cultural needs prioritised alongside their experiences of trauma being recognised; and efforts are made to secure placements for young people in communities where their beliefs, language, experiences and culture are shared and understood. In **Rochdale**, it was noted in their Peer Challenge how older care leavers (aged over 21) who chose not to receive a service will, where possible, be reconnected with previous Personal Adviser if re-presenting to the authority with emerging need; leaders also described an increasingly multi-agency response to needs, including housing support, of care experienced young people. **Cumberland** were praised in their ILACS for making early links with transition workers to support planning for children in care with additional needs before they reach adulthood. Effective working with adult services ensures that disabled children have their ongoing needs met as they move to receive adult services.

**Salford** were rated outstanding for Care Leavers in their recent ILACS inspection (January 2024). Skilled social workers begin working with children at 16 years old until their 25 or no longer want a service; this is valued by care leavers. At the [Next Step Service](https://www.salford.gov.uk/children-and-families/youth-services/in-care-and-informed/next-step-leaving-care/), workers are proactive in creating opportunities to engage with care leavers and offer resources such as laundry and cooking facilities to encourage care leavers to drop into the service. Other professionals, such as those from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and housing agencies, are regularly available for care leavers to drop in and seek advice from. In their Peer Challenge, it was noted that this is an outstanding area of practice for **St Helens;** there is a clear, evidence-based understanding of those care experienced young people who return for support including a dedicated 21+ worker and education, employment and training (EET) role. Within their ILACS, where they achieved outstanding for care leavers, it was stated that young carers benefit from emotional wellbeing support if they need it; free gym memberships; and are fully involved in the design of services, such as the care leavers’ hub, new flats and residential homes. St Helens therefore would be well placed to provide support or share learning with sub-regional neighbours Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Knowsley and Liverpool, who are amongst six LAs in the North West identifying 50% or more of elements of leaving care provision as a priority. Overall, this also suggests a universal offer could be implemented here, such as webinars or podcasts, to support many authorities due to the large percentage of priorities and lack of identified strengths.

Promising Practice

* **Stockport** used [The Bright Spots Programme](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/care-leavers-bright-sports-programme-stockport) to survey their care experienced young people to co-produce a meaningful Leaving Care Action plan that captures the key priorities from their young people’s voices, so shape service design and delivery and support a strong and well-informed local offer.
* **Bolton** started their [Staying Close](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/staying-close-care-leavers-bolton) service which offers support to young people living in residential care for a period of 13 weeks or more after their 14th birthday. They developed a Staying Close plan and practice tool kit which young people have been involved in recruitment and worked on the branding on the service.

**Education and Inclusion**

Early Years

This is a strong area for the North West with 50% of authorities stating strengths in Free Entitlement, Sufficiency and Childcare, it is worth noting that Childcare does not have any authority identifying it as a priority. The two areas with the highest priority (14% each) are EYFS and Health which is equivalent to three authorities. **Manchester** could offer a model for improvement from a challenging starting point, given year-on-year improvement in children achieving Good Levels of Development (GLD). This has been achieved through strengthening the universal offer and more targeted activity focused on communication, language and literacy. The ‘Flying Start Programme’, rooted in robust data analysis, enabled development of a network of Communication Champions alongside an intensive offer of both educational psychology and speech and language support in individual schools and settings.

Promising Practice

* When there was the expansion of the 30 hours offered to parents, **Lancashire** had concerns raised about this by childminders and nurseries so they conducted a [consultation](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/early-years-provide-led-flexible-payments-lancashire). They now have a flexible payment offer which allows providers to decide, out of three options, how they would like to receive their funding allocation.

Schools

System Leadership and Primary schools are common strengths. System Leadership was identified by nine areas as a strength, somewhat distributed across sub-regions (two LAs in each of Lancashire & Cumbria and Cheshire and Merseyside; and five in Greater Manchester). Overall, six authorities identified the whole school section as a strength, which includes four Greater Manchester authorities. **St Helens** were praised in their ILACS for local improvement activity demonstrating impact in early years and primary phase. Blackpool identified the greatest number of areas within Schools as a priority, with Bury, Liverpool and Salford also signalling strong prioritisation in this area. Within their Peer Challenge, it was noted that **Bury** have emerging plans for system leadership. The culture of schools as hubs within their communities is being used as a foundation for a more place-based approach to collaboration, with the LA connecting settings to wider public service reforms.

Attendance and Inclusion

This area saw several authorities identifying multiple areas of priority, with only Children Missing in Education cited as a comparatively common strength. The two largest areas of priority are Persistent and Severe Absence at 36% and Exclusions at 41%. Interestingly, Persistent and Severe Absence has not been identified as a strength by any authority. To improve attendance, **Cheshire East** use their Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) programme, which tracks attainment but also attendance, and is supported by attendance officers attached to schools. In **Oldham**, Care Navigators play a critical role in addressing lower-level emotional wellbeing concerns, linking interventions to school attendance and Emotionally-Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA). Comprehensive mental health support within schools includes Mental Health Officers in every school; a dedicated local authority team; and training initiatives for young people in Mental Health First Aid - contributed to improved school attendance. In **Westmorland and Furness** the expanded role of the LA in relation to attendance is also being utilised as a lever for effective support and challenge. Attendance remains an area where several authorities are improving their practice.

Exclusions were identified as a strength for only four authorities, whereas it is a priority for nine authorities, including five in Greater Manchester. In **Blackburn with Darwen,** the Year 6 to Year 7 transition model introduced for all vulnerable children, is evidencing reduced exclusions. In **St Helens** rigorous interrogation data has brought insight on the impact of suspensions on attendance, with this being used to challenge schools from the perspective of children’s experiences.  Allied to this, the LA is ‘equipping’ schools to be more inclusive, with a range of programmes, and evidence-based interventions being deployed.

Further Education (FE) and Skills

This is a weaker area for the North West with areas including Key Stage 5, NEET, Destinations and Apprenticeships identified as a strength by fewer than one in five LAs. Although **Oldham** have identified several of these aspects as improving, in their Peer Challenge leaders highlighted the strategic voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) partnerships as pivotal in supporting positive outcomes for NEET cohorts. Initiatives such as [‘Get Oldham Working,’](https://www.oldham.gov.uk/gow) facilitate access to apprenticeships within the LA and local employers, complemented by enhanced wraparound support for work readiness. For Wigan this is an area with 100% strength, contrasting starkly to Salford who have identified three out of the four areas as a priority revealing potential for a supportive dialogue between neighbouring LAs.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP)**

Overall, across the North West SEND and AP is where several authorities have identified their priorities and the highest identified area as a strength was Educational Psychology (EP), by two fifths of the authorities. The top three priority areas are Diagnostic Pathways, with just under a third identified as a priority, half the authorities identifying Health, within Preparation for Adulthood (PfA), and Health Support as a priority.

Diagnostic Pathways not only has the highest identified priority 14 authorities have identified it as a priority across each Integrated Care Board (ICB) footprint, with no authorities identifying this as a strength. It was noted in **Bolton’s** Area SENDinspection that their ADHD pathway, delivered by CAMHS, has undergone a period of transformation. The use of the new community assessment referral tool and a ‘one stop shop’ approach means that the pathway is streamlined and clear to follow. All children and young people on the ADHD pathway have a mental health assessment at the start of the process and are offered mental health support when needed.

The whole area of identification is a priority for Cheshire West and Chester and Wirral. A response to this apparent sub-regional challenge has seen **Cheshire East** develop a [SEND Centre of Excellence](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/family-hub-send-centre-excellence-cheshire-east) within their Family Hubs approach to trial and develop practice: included health visiting; school nursing; speech and language; occupational therapy; paediatrics service; alongside input from voluntary, community and faith sector providers; and Designated Clinical and Social Care Officers. No authority has every element of identification of need as a strength. **Blackburn with Darwen**, however, identified 75% of identification and timeliness as a strength so there is scope for them sharing best practice, indeed their Peer Challenge recognised robust arrangements in place to ensure timely education, health and care needs assessment and plans.

Participation and co-production

Within the participation section, the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) was the largest identified strength at just over a third. Co-production and children’s voice have a strength identification of only 14% with a higher degree of prioritisation across Local Areas with Sefton, Stockport, Trafford and Wirral identifying children’s voice as a priority. **Blackpool** identified this area as a 100% strength which was highlighted in their Peer Challenge; suggesting they may be well placed to provide support to others.

Although the strengths are low in this area, there are numerous areas with emerging practice to reflect upon. In their Area SEND inspection, it was noted that **Bolton** ensure children’s voices are increasingly present in their EHCP, with their aspirations and views are evident in records. Positive multi-agency work, including in school and nursery settings, is supporting children, young people and their families to contribute to decisions made about their care and education. **St Helens** identified co-production as a strength, which is confirmed by their Peer Challenge. Based on workshops designed and delivered by students and staff from one of the colleges in their area, [The Have a Go, Avocado](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/co-production-have-go-avocado-st-helens) book was written, illustrated, and produced by students from the Foundation Learning Department, bringing real-life meaning to the pupil voice part of Section A in the EHCP.

To enhance co-production, **Blackburn with Darwen** created the [Young Inspectors](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/young-inspectors-blackburn-darwen) Framework which was co-produced with young people and senior managers with services feeding back this has made significant improvements to their offer because of the visit from Young Inspectors. The prioritisation of this whole area from **Bury** is evident in theirdevelopment of the [Changemakers;](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/changemakers-bury) which is a working group of young people aged 11-25, with additional needs and disabilities. Their primary role is to hold the SEND Improvement and Assurance board accountable and assist in Bury’s improvement journey.

Right help, at the right time

This is a weaker section across the region with no strengths in Health or Social Care support, with both identified as a priority at 50% and 14% respectively. Although there are strengths within the other sub sections, they are low: ranging from 9% to 18%. The areas of highest strength, with an equal identification of 18%, are Local Offer; EHCP; Inclusive Mainstream Education; and Alternative Provision. **Warrington** identified strength in 50% of the areas and this was noted within their Peer Challenge. In their Area SEND inspection, they were praised for their EHCP process as this has now transformed; supported by additional capacity and training across the SEND team and social care services. Warrington and Bolton would be well placed to offer support to those who identified half or more of this area as a priority: Bury; Halton; Knowsley; and Westmorland and Furness.

**Oldham** have developed a Speech, Language and Communication Needs [(SLCN)](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/speech-language-and-communication-oldham) service which allows for a greater join up of specialist Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) support for CYP with any speech, language and communication needs which delivers support directly in schools/settings.

**Blackpool** created an [Enhanced Reception Year](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/enhanced-reception-offer-blackpool) offer for children with additional that can be delivered within mainstream schools which is used to upskill staff in schools and allow children to remain in mainstream, rather than attending special schools if it is not necessary; this is a model other authorities could consider. To support mainstream inclusion, **Warrington** created the [Committed to Inclusion Mark](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/inclusion-mark-warrington) which is an accreditation providers can sign up to with a list of several elements to show evidence. The LA have supplied enhanced training for providers to engage with, alongside peer-to-peer reviews and the use of a SEND Dashboard. **St Helens** were highly praised in their Peer Challenge for their work on triage for all education support and specialist advice ([TESSA](https://s4s.sthelens.gov.uk/Page/7429)). They have highly skilled, experienced teachers and specialist support staff who support mainstream schools through upskilling staff and enabling children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to be fully included in their classrooms. Neighbouring authorities, including Cheshire East and Knowsley, who both identified this as a priority, may benefit from learning about this model.

Promising Practice

* **Wirral**’s Children and Young People’s Mental Health Alliance launched [Branch](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/mental-health-branch-wirral)- a single point of access for CYP’s emotional wellbeing. They developed a website and algorithm to match CYP to the right support, as well as resourcing an in-person ‘matching team,’ and designed operations, including daily multi-disciplinary team (MDT) panels for more complex matching and to enable robust safeguarding.

Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

This is a key area of priority within the whole of Children’s Services with identified strengths ranging from 5% to 9%, with no identified strength in Health. To improve their overall PfA offer, **Westmorland and Furness** created the capacity to work across teams to produce an action plan to develop [Supported Internships (SI)](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/supported-internships-westmorland-and-furness) and use every available means inform schools, practitioners, parents/carers and young people of the benefits of the programme. Furthermore, the local authority has expanded housing options to enable more young adults to live in community-based homes, improving transition experiences. In **Knowsley,** [Flourish FE](https://www.nwadcs.org.uk/preparation-adulthood-flourish-fe-knowsley) is a cost-effective 19+ high-needs Further Education (FE) provision aimed at supporting young people’s transition into adulthood in their community. By offering education within borough, Flourish reduces disruption and enables young people to build lasting community connections while continuing their learning journey.