

Practice Guide

Education and Inclusion

Education Access - ELLIE and CELLIE, Lancashire

Background, purpose and rationale

ELLIE (East Lancashire Learning Information Exchange) and CELLIE (Central Lancashire Learning Information Exchange) were developed in response to the needs of communities experiencing high levels of inward migration across Lancashire, particularly in areas such as Burnley, Nelson, Accrington and Preston. Many families arriving in these areas faced barriers to accessing education, including limited English language skills, unfamiliarity with the education system, and difficulty navigating admissions processes. Prior to the development of ELLIE and CELLIE, several children and young people were remaining out of education for extended periods and were recorded as Children Missing Education (CME). The purpose of ELLIE and CELLIE is to improve access to education and support inclusion by providing targeted, community-based support to children, young people, and their families. The model aims to:

- Ensure timely access to school places and education services
- Support children and families who are new to the area or country
- Reduce the number of children missing education
- Improve understanding of the education system among families
- Build confidence, independence and community engagement

The service also reflects a broader commitment to inclusion, recognising that support for children's education must also address wider family needs, including language, confidence, and access to services.

What we did to improve children's outcomes

Services are delivered from multiple locations in areas of highest need, including Burnley, Nelson, Accrington and Preston. This ensures that support is available locally and reduces barriers such as travel and cost. Drop-in sessions and pre-booked appointments allow families to access support in a flexible and responsive way. A core function of the service is to help families navigate the education system. This includes completing school admissions applications; supporting school appeals; providing advice on school places and options; and assisting with free school meal and transport applications. The service also supports early years access, post-16 education pathways and transitions between settings. ELLIE and CELLIE provide tailored support for families with English as an additional language (EAL), including use of translation services; ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision for adults; and school readiness and language support. This enables families to engage more confidently with education services and supports children's inclusion in school. The service works closely with schools and nurseries; pupil access teams; health and community services; and advice organisations such as Citizens Advice. Support is also provided to schools, including assistance with induction processes for new arrivals.

The model is designed to be inclusive and accessible; responsive to local community needs; and focused on the whole family. Support is tailored to individual circumstances, helping families to build confidence and develop the skills needed to access services independently.

The work sits within a broader inclusion strategy, including support for diverse groups (e.g. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, military families); promotion of inclusive practice in schools; and networking and sharing good practice across settings. This helps strengthen system-wide inclusion beyond individual case

What was the impact?

In the academic year 2024–2025, the service supported 753 children and young people. Of those of school age, 86.5% were successfully placed in school by July 2025. This has supported a reduction in the number of children missing education and prevented further increases. Families report increased confidence in understanding the education system; accessing services and support; and engaging with schools and professionals. The availability of translation and ESOL support has been key in enabling families to participate more fully in their children's education. The model has strengthened collaboration between education services, schools, and community organisations, resulting in more coordinated and responsive support for families. ELLIE and CELLIE contribute to a wider culture of inclusion by supporting schools to better meet the needs of new arrivals; sharing good practice across networks; and promoting inclusive approaches to education.

Key learning from the model includes:

- The importance of providing local, accessible support
- The value of addressing family needs alongside children's education
- The need for clear guidance and practical support for navigating systems
- The effectiveness of partnership working and community engagement

Resources

- Burnley and Nelson flyer
- CELLIE Flyer
- Accrington drop-in poster

Find out more

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