



The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education

Cllr Steve Jarvis, Leader of the Council
Jo Fisher, Director of Children's Services
Jan Thomas, Executive Lead, ICB Central East

15 April 2026

Dear Cllr Jarvis, Ms Fisher and Ms Thomas,

Local Area Partnership SEND Improvement Notice: Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Area SEND Monitoring Inspection findings and ongoing progress

Following the Area SEND inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in July 2023, an Improvement Notice was issued to Hertfordshire Council with the expectation that urgent action be taken to improve services for children and young people with SEND.

Following the Improvement Notice being issued, I am pleased to hear of the progress that has been made. I have been reassured to read the findings from the Area SEND monitoring inspection which concluded on 22 October 2025, alongside insights and data from my Departmental officials in your region.

Since entering intervention, I understand that key improvements have been made leading towards positive change for children and young people, and that you have:

- Ensured that leaders have accelerated their use of the data dashboard and develop a shared understanding of SEND provision in Hertfordshire.
- Ensured the 20 week timeliness for EHCPs has exceeded national averages for the past eight months.
- Established a strong SEND Improvement Board and Quality Assurance Board, meaning that governance and quality assurance arrangements are firmly in place.
- Improved coproduction through "Voices of Hertfordshire", which is meaning that children and young people shape services, and also ensured that the Parent Carer Forum also plays a central role in strategic decision making.

I have therefore taken the decision to lift the Improvement Notice on the understanding that the provision of effective SEND services will remain a priority for the council, ICB and for all others in the local area partnership. I understand that this improvement work has taken significant commitment, determination and hard work, and I am grateful to all the staff who have made this possible.

To continue to support this journey to a reformed and improved SEND system both in Hertfordshire and nationally, in March 2026, we commissioned each local area

partnership to develop and submit a Local SEND Reform Plan by June 2026, underpinned by a Local Partnership Maturity Assessment. We expect these documents to be used to clearly set out how you will further improve and strengthen your system.

During the period in which Local SEND Reform Plans are being delivered, we expect your Local Area Partnership to show continuing progress on your Priority Action Plan.

If your Local SEND Reform Plan does not meet all the minimum requirements stated in the guidance, the Department will work with you to re-submit a plan that does meet these requirements, and may consider use of further intervention measures at that stage if we do not see sufficient progress and engagement.

During this period, you will continue to receive support from your DfE-provided SEND Adviser and Finance Adviser. The Council and its partners should continue to work with these advisers in producing and submitting a Local SEND Reform Plan. The Department, alongside regional NHS England colleagues, will also continue with their formal monitoring and engagement approach with the local area.

Thank you for the continued commitment and hard work of your council, ICB and local area partners. I look forward to seeing the continued improvement of services for children and young people with SEND in Hertfordshire.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bridget Phillipson".

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
Secretary of State for Education