

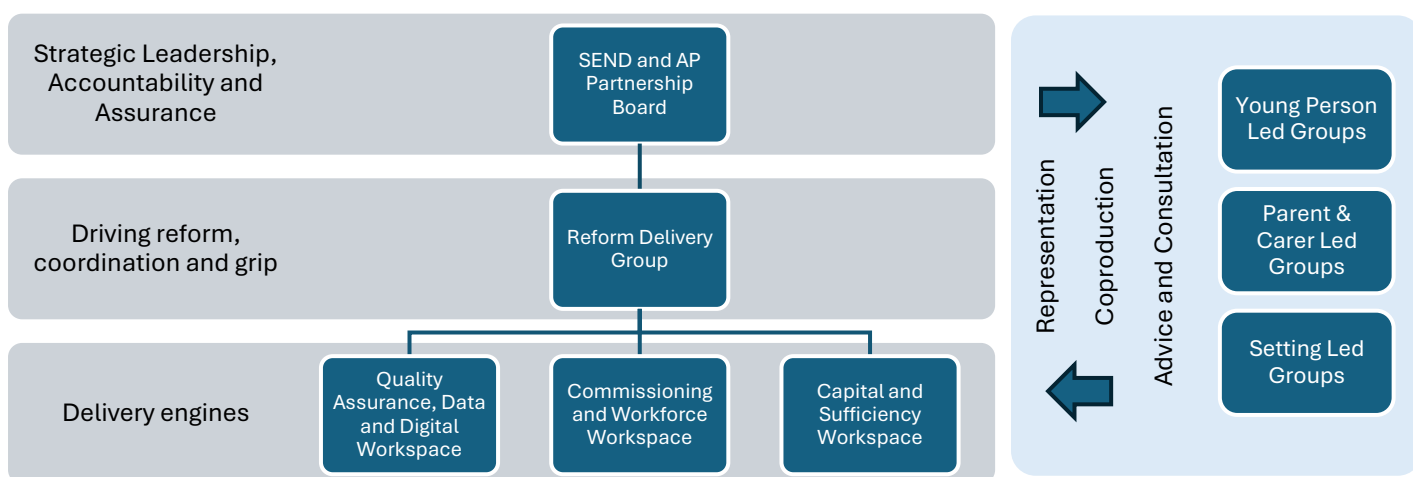
# Coventry SEND and AP System Governance and Reform Delivery

May 2026 | Final

# System Overview

Coventry has established strong SEND governance arrangements over time, with clear strategic leadership, partnership working and delivery structures. As the local area enters a new phase of national SEND reform, we have taken the opportunity to refresh and realign our governance model to ensure it remains coherent and resilient and well positioned to drive forward local SEND Reform.

The refreshed model builds on existing good practice, by introducing a new 'tactical' layer, the Reform Delivery Group (RDG) to ensure a strong grip on the local reform plan and through realignment of the three SEND workspaces.



Together, the three layers form a coherent system:

- The Board sets direction and holds accountability
- RDG provides delivery grip, coordination and assurance
- Reform Workspaces deliver agreed reform activity at pace

## How the governance structure works together

### SEND & AP Partnership Board – strategic leadership and accountability

The SEND & AP Partnership Board provides the strategic leadership, system accountability and assurance for SEND and Alternative Provision across the local area. The Board:

- sets strategic direction and priorities
- approves and oversees the SEND & AP Strategy and Local SEND Reform Plan
- holds collective accountability for statutory compliance, outcomes, sufficiency and sustainability
- retains final decision-making- authority for nondelegable matters and -system level- risk

The Board operates deliberately at strategic level, providing challenge and assurance rather than undertaking operational delivery.

## SEND Reform Delivery Group (RDG) – delivery grip and coordination

Operational delivery of the SEND Reform Programme is formally delegated by the Board to the SEND Reform Delivery Group (RDG). RDG is:

- *“the single place where SEND reform is driven and kept on track”*
- responsible for translating Board intent into coordinated delivery
- accountable for managing pace, dependencies and emerging risk
- expected to resolve delivery issues wherever possible before escalation
- links priorities in reform plan to work ongoing elsewhere in the wider system

RDG operates as a trusted executive delivery group, not a strategic governance body, and escalates to the Board only where issues are strategic, systemic or carry significant risk.

## Reform Workspaces – where delivery happens

Beneath RDG sit three standing SEND Reform Workspaces, established as the primary delivery engines of the Reform Plan:

- Quality Assurance, Data and Digital
- Commissioning and Workforce
- Capital and Sufficiency

Each Workspace has a clear brief defining its focus and contribution to reform delivery. Workspaces are:

- Accountable for delivery within delegated scope
- May agree and implement approaches, reprioritise activity and reach agreement between partners
- However, any decisions introducing significant statutory, financial, sufficiency, reputational or delivery risk are escalated to RDG

Each Workspace is chaired by a senior operational leader and supported by a named RDG Senior Sponsor, ensuring alignment, challenge and a clear escalation route.

## How school-led and parent-led groups fit into the system

### School-led groups – operational insight and implementation intelligence

School-led groups (including SENCo networks, mainstream and specialist partnerships) play a critical role in informing and shaping reform, particularly around feasibility, implementation- and impact in practice.

Within the refreshed model:

- School-led- groups are not governance bodies
- They do not hold decision-making authority for the overall SEND Reform Programme
- They provide operational insight, challenge and co-design input

Reform Workspaces and RDG may engage these groups flexibly and purposefully to support delivery, testing and implementation, without creating parallel governance or diluting accountability.

Head Teacher representatives from mainstream and special school groups are permanent members of the SEND and AP Board, contributing to the strategic governance of our local SEND system.

## Parent-led and lived experience groups – influence without dilution

Co-production and lived experience remain central to Coventry's SEND system.

The Parent Carer Forum (PCF):

- is formally represented at SEND & AP Partnership Board level
- contributes to strategic discussion, challenge and assurance

At delivery level:

- Reform Workspaces may engage directly with parent-led or lived- experience- groups where this supports effective delivery
- Engagement is structured but flexible, avoiding standing governance roles within Workspaces

This ensures that lived experience influences decisions and priorities, but keeps input parent and carer led and avoids overburdening Coventry's developing PCF with administrative demands.

# Coventry SEND & AP Partnership Board

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The Coventry SEND & AP Partnership Board (“the Board”) provides strategic leadership, system accountability and assurance for SEND and Alternative Provision across the local area.

The Board exists to:

- Set strategic direction and priorities for SEND and AP
- Approve and oversee delivery of the SEND & AP Strategy and Local SEND Reform Plan
- Provide challenge, assurance and system leadership across education, health and care partners
- Hold the partnership collectively to account for impact, outcomes and sustainability
- Ensure that coproduction with children, young people and families meaningfully informs strategic decision-making

The Board operates at strategic level and does not undertake operational delivery.

### Decision making authority

The Board is the top tier decision-making body for SEND and AP within the local area partnership.

The Board retains and exercises final decision-making authority for:

- Approval and review of the SEND & AP Strategy
- Sign-off of the Local SEND Reform Plan
- Agreement of systemwide priorities, trade-offs and strategic focus
- Acceptance of system level risk
- Escalation to the Health and Wellbeing Board, political leadership or national bodies where required

These decisions are not delegable.

### Delegation and delivery

Operational delivery of the SEND Reform Programme is delegated by the Board to the SEND Reform Delivery Group (RDG).

The Board:

- Sets outcomes, expectations and strategic direction
- Receives assurance on delivery, risk and impact

- Does **not** prescribe how delivery is undertaken

The RDG is responsible for managing delivery activity and holding delivery risk within parameters set by the Board.

## Risk, assurance and escalation

### Mandatory escalation to the Board

The Board requires escalation where there is risk relating to:

- Statutory compliance
- Significant financial risk
- Sufficiency (including places, workforce, provision and services)
- Partnership failure risk

### Board response to escalated risk

Where such risks are escalated, the Board may:

- Direct the Reform Delivery Group by setting required outcomes and expectations
- Escalate within member organisations through their internal governance routes (e.g. Local Authority, ICB, NHS providers)
- Hold partners to account for delivery failure or non-alignment, proportionately and explicitly

## Scope and boundaries

To maintain strategic focus and governance discipline:

The Board:

- Does not consider individual cases
- Does not engage in direct operational problem solving

Operational matters sit with the Reform Delivery Group and delivery structures beneath it.

## Assurance, reporting and information flow

The Board receives a small, consistent assurance pack, providing a system-wide view of progress, risk and impact.

This will include:

- Progress against Reform Plan milestones (reported by the Reform Delivery Group)
- Risks identified through the three Reform Workspaces:
  - Quality Assurance, Data and Digital
  - Commissioning and Workforce

- Capital and Sufficiency
- Quality Assurance reports
- Other exceptional issues requiring Board attention
- Concerns escalated by individual partner organisations

The Board will also receive direct input through standing agenda space from:

- Children, Young People and Family-Led groups (including the Parent Carer Forum)
- Setting-led (school-led) groups

This ensures triangulation between data, professional insight and lived experience.

## Challenge and accountability

The Board provides constructive but robust challenge across the partnership.

- Challenge will be explicit and visible
- Follow-up will be proportionate, with significant issues resulting in agreed actions
- Board members are expected to escalate issues internally within their own organisations where required to support system delivery

## Co-production at Board level

At Board level, co-production means:

- Assuring that meaningful co-production is embedded across the SEND system
- Using lived experience and setting insight to inform strategic decision-making
- Jointly shaping priorities and strategic focus with CYPF input

The Board does **not** act as a service co-design or delivery forum.

## Governance position

The SEND & AP Partnership Board reports to the **Coventry Health and Wellbeing Board** and provides system level assurance on SEND and AP.

## Membership and attendance

Membership comprises senior leaders across education, health and care. Members attend as system leaders, representing their organisations within the partnership context.

## Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required. These terms of reference were last reviewed by the Board in May 2026.

# SEND Reform Delivery Group (RDG)

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The SEND Reform Delivery Group (RDG) is the single place where SEND reform is driven and kept on track. The purpose of the RDG is to:

- Drive coherent delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan
- Translate Board intent into practical, coordinated action
- Maintain grip on delivery, pace and dependencies
- Resolve delivery issues wherever possible without escalation
- Provide the Board with confidence judgements, options and recommendations
- Links priorities in the SEND Reform Plan with ongoing work in the wider system and delegates priorities to reform workspaces where needed.

The RDG operates as a trusted executive delivery group, not a strategic governance body.

### Role within the governance model

The RDG operates under delegated authority from the SEND & AP Partnership Board. The RDG does **not** hold strategic decision making- authority reserved to the Board.

### Decision making authority

Within Board agreed- direction, the RDG may:

- Prioritise activity within the agreed Reform Plan
- Sequence and re-sequence work to manage dependencies
- Resolve conflicts or duplication between Reform Workspaces
- Agree mitigations and adjustments to address delivery slippage
- Propose Task & Finish Groups where focused action is required

### Task & Finish Groups

- Task & Finish Groups may be proposed by the RDG
- Board ratification is required before any Task & Finish Group begins work
- Once established, Task & Finish Groups are accountable to the RDG and disband upon task completion.

### Relationship with Reform Workspaces

The RDG provides delivery coordination and grip across the three Reform Workspaces:

- Quality Assurance, Data and Digital
- Commissioning and Workforce

- Capital and Sufficiency

In relation to the Workspaces, the RDG will:

- Set priorities and focus areas
- Resolve overlap, conflict or duplication
- Re-sequence or pause activity to manage dependencies

The RDG does **not** performance manage- individual workspaces or teams.

## Managing delivery risk and escalation

### Delivery risk at RDG level

The RDG is responsible for:

- Actively identifying and tracking delivery risks
- Maintaining visibility of slippage and pressure points
- Taking action to resolve issues within delegated authority

The RDG does **not** formally accept or hold system risk on behalf of the Board.

### Escalation to the Board

The RDG will escalate to the Board where:

- Delivery confidence drops, even if formal risk categories are not yet triggered
- Issues require decisions outside the agreed Reform Plan
- Judgement indicates Board intervention or direction is required

Escalation is expected to be proportionate and judgement-based, not rules-driven.

## Reporting and assurance

The RDG provides assurance to the Board through:

- Clear reporting on progress against Reform Plan milestones
- Visibility of risks and delivery confidence
- Identification of issues requiring strategic decision or direction

The RDG brings options, confidence judgements and recommendations.

## Membership

RDG members are:

- Senior leaders within their organisations
- Close enough to delivery to understand how change must be implemented

- Able to unblock issues, manage dependencies and drive progress.

## Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required. These terms of reference were last reviewed by the Board in May 2026.

# SEND Reform Workspaces

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The SEND Reform Workspaces are the delivery engines for the Local SEND Reform Plan. They exist to turn reform priorities into coordinated, practical action across education, health and care, within a clear governance and accountability framework.

Each Workspace is accountable for delivering its defined area of the Reform Plan within delegated authority, contributing to system improvement, pace and coherence.

### Role within the Governance Model

The Reform Workspaces operate as part of the SEND reform governance structure:

- Strategic leadership, statutory accountability and system risk sit with the SEND & AP Partnership Board
- Overall delivery coordination, assurance and escalation sit with the SEND Reform Delivery Group (RDG)
- Reform Workspaces are responsible for operational delivery of agreed reform activity within their remit

Each Reform Workspace reports directly to the SEND Reform Delivery Group and is supported by a named RDG Senior Sponsor

### Authority and Decision Making

Within their agreed scope, Workspaces may:

- agree and implement changes to how reform activity is delivered
- re-prioritise or sequence activity to manage delivery risk and capacity
- reach agreement between partners on actions, contributions and approaches

Workspaces must escalate to RDG where proposed decisions introduce significant risk.

Reform Workspaces are accountable for delivery within their delegated scope.

Overall assurance, escalation and accountability for the Reform Programme sit with the SEND Reform Delivery Group, reporting to the SEND & AP Partnership Board.

## Membership and Chairing

Membership of each Reform Workspace will comprise senior operational leaders from relevant partner organisations who are:

- close enough to delivery to understand operational realities and constraints
- senior enough to represent their organisation and unblock issues internally

Each Workspace will have a named Chair and an RDG Senior Sponsor, providing alignment, challenge and escalation support. Membership may be flexed to include additional contributors where this supports delivery.

## Cadence and Ways of Working

- Reform Workspaces meet monthly
- Extraordinary meetings may be convened where delivery needs require
- Meetings will be focused on delivery, progress and risk, not general discussion

Reform Workspaces are not general engagement or stakeholder forums.

## Core Outputs and Expectations

Each Reform Workspace provides:

- a clear delivery plan for its area of the Reform Plan
- routine progress updates to RDG
- active identification and management of delivery risk

The emphasis is on grip and pace, not reporting volume.

# SEND Reform Workspaces

## Workspace Briefs

### Reform Workspace: Quality Assurance, Data and Digital

#### Purpose

The Quality Assurance, Data and Digital Reform Workspace exists to strengthen system assurance and intelligence across SEND and AP, ensuring that reform delivery and decision-making are informed by robust quality assurance, reliable data and effective digital processes.

#### Scope and focus

Within its delegated scope, the Workspace will:

- Lead the development and use of a coherent SEND quality assurance framework, aligned to statutory duties, inspection frameworks and the local SEND Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)
- Use data, performance intelligence and lived experience insight to identify strengths, weaknesses, emerging risk and the impact of reform activity
- Oversee the development and effective use of SEND data and dashboards to support shared, outcome-focused decision-making
- Drive improvements to digital systems and processes that support timely, lawful and efficient SEND practice and improved experiences for children and young people

#### Key outputs

The Workspace will provide quality assurance insight, data-led intelligence and practical improvements to data, assurance and digital ways of working.

### Reform Workspace: Workforce & Commissioning

#### Purpose

The Commissioning and Workforce Reform Workspace exists to strengthen system capacity and capability to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, through improved commissioning and workforce development.

#### Scope and focus

Within its delegated scope, the Workspace will:

- Support implementation of national and local reform approaches, including design and implementation of the Experts at Hand model.
- Address workforce capacity and capability challenges aligned to the Local Area SEND Workforce Development Strategy
- Identify and manage market, provider and workforce risks affecting delivery and sufficiency

- Lead SEND commissioning activity, including joint and aligned commissioning across education and health
- Oversee the commissioning and development of Alternative Provision that supports inclusion and positive outcomes

## Key outputs

The Workspace will provide commissioning and workforce activity aligned to Reform Plan priorities, with clear insight into market, Alternative Provision and workforce risk.

## Reform Workspace: Capital and Sufficiency

### Purpose

The Capital and Sufficiency Reform Workspace exists to ensure a sustainable, planned approach to meeting current and future demand for SEND and Alternative Provision.

### Scope and focus

Within its delegated scope, the Workspace will:

- Lead SEND and AP sufficiency planning to ensure the right provision is available in the right places
- Oversee capital planning and investment aligned to inclusion priorities and national reform expectations
- Support the local roll-out of inclusion bases as a key mechanism for strengthening mainstream inclusion
- Use data and forecasting to inform planning and identify emerging capacity pressures
- Identify and manage sufficiency and capital risks impacting sustainability and delivery

## Key outputs

The Workspace will provide clear sufficiency and capital activity aligned to Reform Plan priorities, with insight into emerging capacity and place-related risks.

