



Report subject	BCP Experts at Hand Model
Meeting date	22 June 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report provides Schools Forum with an overview of the proposed BCP Experts at Hand partnership model, developed to strengthen early, inclusive and needs-led support for children and young people with SEND across schools and settings. The model is rooted in co-production with children, young people, families, practitioners and partners, and is designed to build confidence and capability within mainstream settings through timely access to specialist expertise, coaching, training, consultation and practical support. It aligns with the Graduated Approach to Inclusion and the emerging cluster-based targeted funding model, creating a coherent locality-based system focused on prevention, early intervention, reduced escalation and improved outcomes.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>That Schools Forum notes the development of the BCP Experts at Hand partnership model and its intended alignment with the wider SEND reform programme, the Graduated Approach to Inclusion and the targeted funding cluster model, and provides feedback from the perspective / remit of a Schools Forum.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To provide Schools Forum with early sight of the model and to support shared understanding of how specialist expertise, cluster working and funding arrangements will come together to strengthen inclusive practice, improve consistency of support and reduce reliance on statutory escalation over time.</p>

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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For information

Background

1. The Experts at Hand model has been developed as part of BCP's wider SEND reform work. It responds to feedback from children and young people, families, schools, settings and practitioners, who have consistently highlighted the need for earlier, more accessible, joined-up support that helps needs to be understood and met in the places children learn and belong.

BCP Experts at Hand partnership model

2. The model will provide a place-based, multidisciplinary offer across BCP clusters, with Inclusion Leads acting as a consistent point of contact for schools and settings. Support will include coaching, training, modelling, consultation, specialist advice and targeted activity, underpinned by data, local intelligence and clear governance arrangements. The aim is to build long-term capacity within schools and settings, rather than creating dependency on specialist services.

Options Appraisal

3. The preferred approach is to implement the Experts at Hand model as a cluster-based partnership offer aligned to the Graduated Approach to Inclusion and targeted funding arrangements. This provides the strongest opportunity to connect specialist expertise, school leadership, local data and funding decisions within one coherent system. Alternative approaches, such as continuing with more separate referral-based services, would be less likely to provide the early, preventative and consistent support required.

Summary of financial implications

4. The attached model sets out proposed investment to strengthen staffing, digital infrastructure, administration, data analysis and transformation capacity. Further financial modelling and alignment with the High Needs Block and targeted funding arrangements will be required as implementation progresses.

Summary of legal implications

5. There are no direct legal decisions arising from this information report. The model supports the Council and local area partnership in meeting duties relating to SEND, inclusion and access to education. Legal advice will be sought as required during implementation, particularly where commissioning, data sharing or governance arrangements require formal agreement.

Summary of human resources implications

6. The model includes strengthened staffing across inclusion, educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, seconded school and setting practitioners, administration and data support. Implementation will require clear role design, recruitment, induction, training and ongoing workforce development to support consistent practice across clusters.

Summary of sustainability impact

7. No significant negative sustainability impacts are identified at this stage. A locality-based model may reduce unnecessary travel by bringing support closer to schools and settings and making greater use of digital tools for requests, monitoring and communication where appropriate.

Summary of public health implications

8. The model is expected to support positive health and wellbeing outcomes by promoting early intervention, stronger inclusive practice, improved engagement, reduced escalation and better links with health partners, including speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, CAMHS and Mental Health Support Teams.

Summary of equality implications

The model is intended to improve equity of access to support by using data, local intelligence and contextual information to identify where help is most needed. It has a strong focus on inclusion, belonging and reducing barriers for children and young people with SEND. Equality implications will need to be kept under review as the model is implemented.

Summary of risk assessment

Key risks include insufficient capacity to meet demand, inconsistent implementation across clusters, delays in recruitment, and the need to demonstrate impact clearly. These risks will be mitigated through phased implementation, clear governance, data-informed monitoring, defined request and triage processes, and regular reporting through inclusion and SEND governance arrangements.

Background papers

BCP Experts at Hand Partnership Model.

Appendices

BCP Experts at Hand Partnership Model.