

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Grant Funding Agreement relating to the Department for Education funded Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme – Speech and Language Therapy in mainstream Secondary Schools, Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS), and Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)
Date of decision:	7 th November 2025
Decision maker:	Service Director for Education, Skills and Learning, Children and Young People's Directorate
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The Children and Families Scheme of Delegation, paragraph 48, states that all children must 'get a suitable education' and delegates decisions to the Director for Education, Skills and Learning.</p> <p>The Service Director is authorised to approve revenue payments between £250,001 and £500,000 as per Herefordshire's Financial Procedure Rules (Section 7).</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	None
Decision made:	Allocate up to £140,000 of the DfE SEND and AP Change Programme grant funding to Wye Valley NHS Trust's Speech and Language Therapy Team to pilot three projects, being 'Speech and Language Therapy in mainstream Secondary Schools', 'Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)', and 'Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)' for the 2025/2026 academic year.
Reasons for decision:	<p>The Department for Education's (DfE) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme has allocated grant funding for the 2025/2026 academic year to each of the following four local Authorities: Telford and Wrekin, Shropshire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire. Each authority is required to use this funding to test and refine SEND and AP reforms, in the form of pilot projects in their respective local areas.</p> <p>Data and evidence gained from these projects will be used to assist each local authority to understand and to respond to cohort trends, so they can deliver improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people, their parents and carers in community, early years and mainstream settings.</p> <p><u>Speech and Language Therapy in mainstream Secondary Schools</u> – where the Speech and Language Therapy Team will work alongside educational providers to upskill their staff in supporting CYP with language and communication needs.</p> <p><u>Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)</u> – this is a continuation of a project to develop 'Autism Mentors' who will train staff to support autistic pupils and upskill colleagues, offering early and effective intervention and aligns with national priorities to improve outcomes for autistic children and young people.</p>

	<p><u>Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)</u> - a UK government initiative to improve early identification and support for Reception age children with speech, language, and communication needs who present with mild to moderate speech and language delay. Additionally, this project will support children (age 4-5) with a diagnosis of Autism along with their families and other professionals in promoting early intervention strategies that encourage communication skills.</p> <p>Progress reports will be discussed with teaching staff AND submitted to the Council's SEND Partnership Group on a termly basis to monitor the project and evaluate the outcomes achieved from using the Project Grant.</p>										
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>The financial assistance will be administered by the Council through the grant, however alternative funding sources may need to be sourced if this pilot proves to be a success and DfE funds are withdrawn in the future.</p> <p>WVT have been made aware that the following grant funding will be non-recurrent, for one academic year from September 2025:</p>										
	<table> <tr> <th>Project</th><th>Grant funding allocated £</th></tr> <tr> <td>Speech and Language Therapy in mainstream Secondary Schools, including both Elkan and Language Link training packages</td><td>£43,160</td></tr> <tr> <td>Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)</td><td>£11,840</td></tr> <tr> <td>Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)</td><td>£82,500</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>£137,500</td></tr> </table>	Project	Grant funding allocated £	Speech and Language Therapy in mainstream Secondary Schools, including both Elkan and Language Link training packages	£43,160	Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)	£11,840	Early Language Support for Every Child (ELSEC)	£82,500	Total	£137,500
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Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>None.</p> <p>This is a brand-new service provision that will be piloted for one year using grant funding.</p>										
Details of any declarations of interest made:	Not applicable										