



National Reforms & Inclusion for All : Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships

*Working collaboratively to
ensure our young people thrive*

**Sarah Callaghan, Service Director
Education**

2 February 2026

Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

National Reforms & Inclusion for All/Area SEND Action Plan Review

- **Aims & Objectives of the session**
- **In 'scope' – what can we realistically cover / tackle today ?**
- **Out of 'scope' – what bigger system issues are there (national and local) that we may need to park for future discussion ?**



Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

National Reforms & Inclusion for All/Area SEND Action Plan Review

- Children's Wellbeing & Schools Bill
- Education White Paper (inc. SEND Reforms)
- Local Government Reorganisation
- ICB Reorganisation
- Area Ofsted/CQC Inspection_Inclusion for All improvement programme
- Review and Redesign of Education Services in Cambridgeshire



SEND Reforms Discussion



Department
for Education

Classification: Official

NHS
England

To: Stephen Moir, CEO, Cambridgeshire County Council and Jan Thomas, CEO
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Integrated Care Board

cc. Michael Hudson, CFO, Cambridgeshire County Council, Martin Purbrick, Director of
Children's Services Cambridgeshire County Council, Rowan Proctor, Director of
Nursing C&P ICB and Karlene Allen, Deputy Director of Maternity and Children's
Commissioning / Deputy Chief Nurse C&P ICB

15 December 2025

Dear Stephen Moir and Jan Thomas,

- In the autumn term the Secretary of State wrote to the Chair of the Parliamentary Select Committee to formally response to the 'call for evidence' that occurred in spring of 2025
- That letter set out five principles for the upcoming SEND reforms
- Just prior to the end of the autumn term senior officials at the DfE and NHS England wrote to all CEO's and ICB leads to ask Local Area Inclusion Partnerships to being preparations for responding to the reforms – anticipated to be via the publication of a White Paper this spring term

SEND Reforms Discussion:

principles to underpin the SEND reforms

Early: Children and young people should receive the support they need as soon as possible.

Local: Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a setting close to their home.

Fair: Every setting should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including when they change over time.

Effective: Reforms should be grounded in evidence.

Shared: Education, health and care services should work in partnership with local government, families, teachers, experts, and representative bodies.



SEND Reforms Discussion: principles to underpin the SEND reforms

We want all schools to be inclusive by design, so children in every corner of the country can have their needs met in their community. That is why the Department for Education is prioritising investment in specialist and adapted places, with last week's announcement confirming at least £3 billion investment over the next four years to create 50,000 SEND places in mainstream schools across England. This builds on the £740 million we've already invested to create 10,000 places to deliver adaptations and expand specialist units.

SEND Reforms Discussion: principles to underpin the SEND reforms



We recommend that you:

- bring your local partnership together to start planning the changes needed to strengthen your local SEND system
- **review your data and agree a baseline for your current system performance**
- use the Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool to assess the maturity of your current practice across education, health and care
- **draw on inspection outcomes, learning from departmental programmes, and sector best practice to ensure you are working towards the delivery of high-quality services that are underpinned by the five principles for SEND reform**

The SEND and AP partnership should jointly consider the 7 pillars:

Pillar 1: Co-production with parents and carers and Children and Young People

Pillar 2: Effective system leadership and governance

**Pillar 3: Accurate understanding of needs through effective use of data
(Understanding and evidencing the needs of children and young people with SEND
and children and young people who may benefit from AP)**

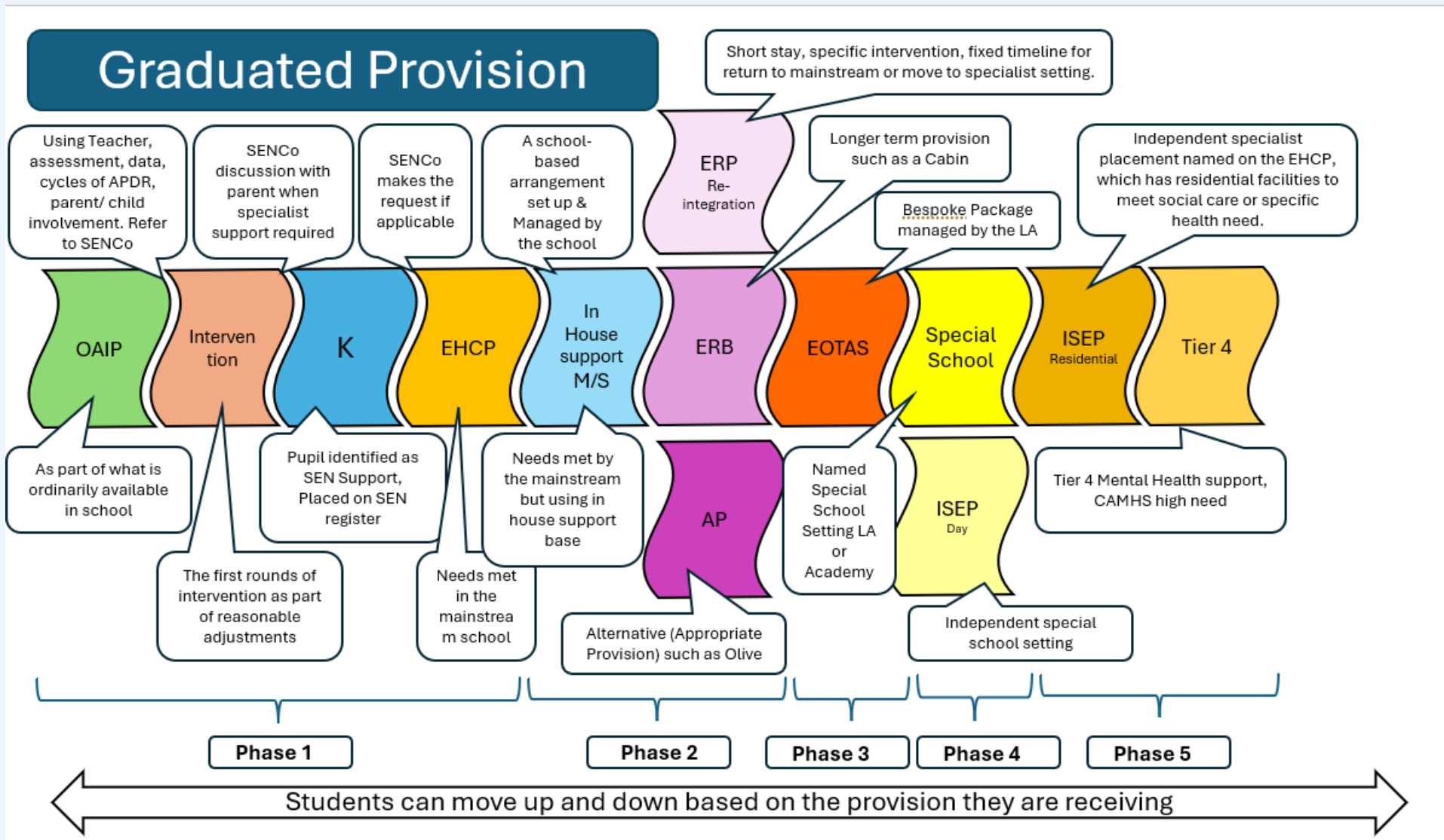
**Pillar 4: High Quality Service Delivery at universal, targeted and specialist level to
promote inclusion**

Pillar 5: Effective partnerships working across education, health and social care

Pillar 6: Skilled workforce across the partnership

**Pillar 7: Targeted, judicious and sustainable use of resources including sufficiency,
place planning and capital**

CCC Graduated Provision:

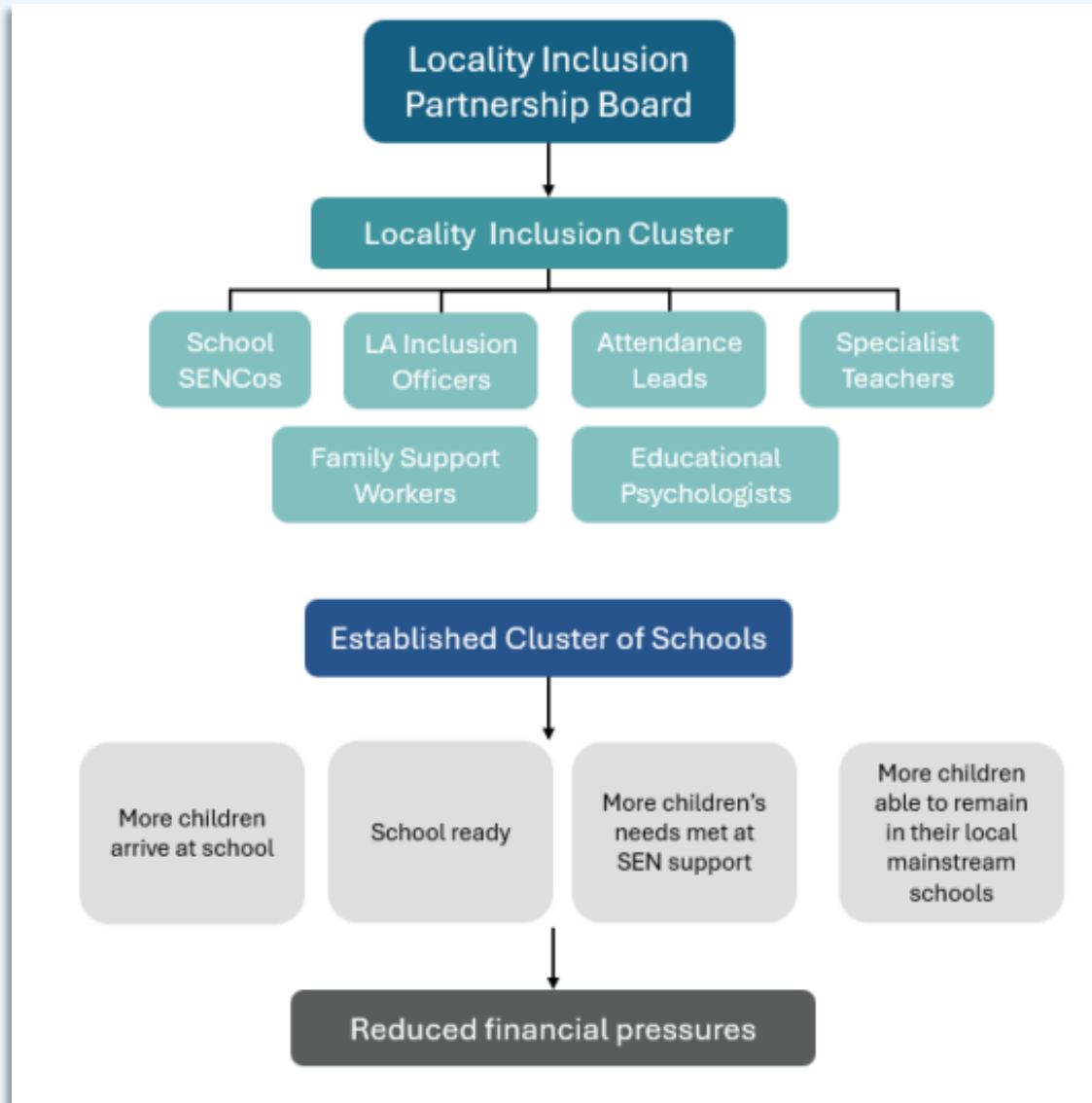


In Cambridgeshire we have been working through our HNWB sub-groups to develop a clarity of approach.

This is supported by General Principles.

Education Services Redesign

Key Facts & Features for redesign



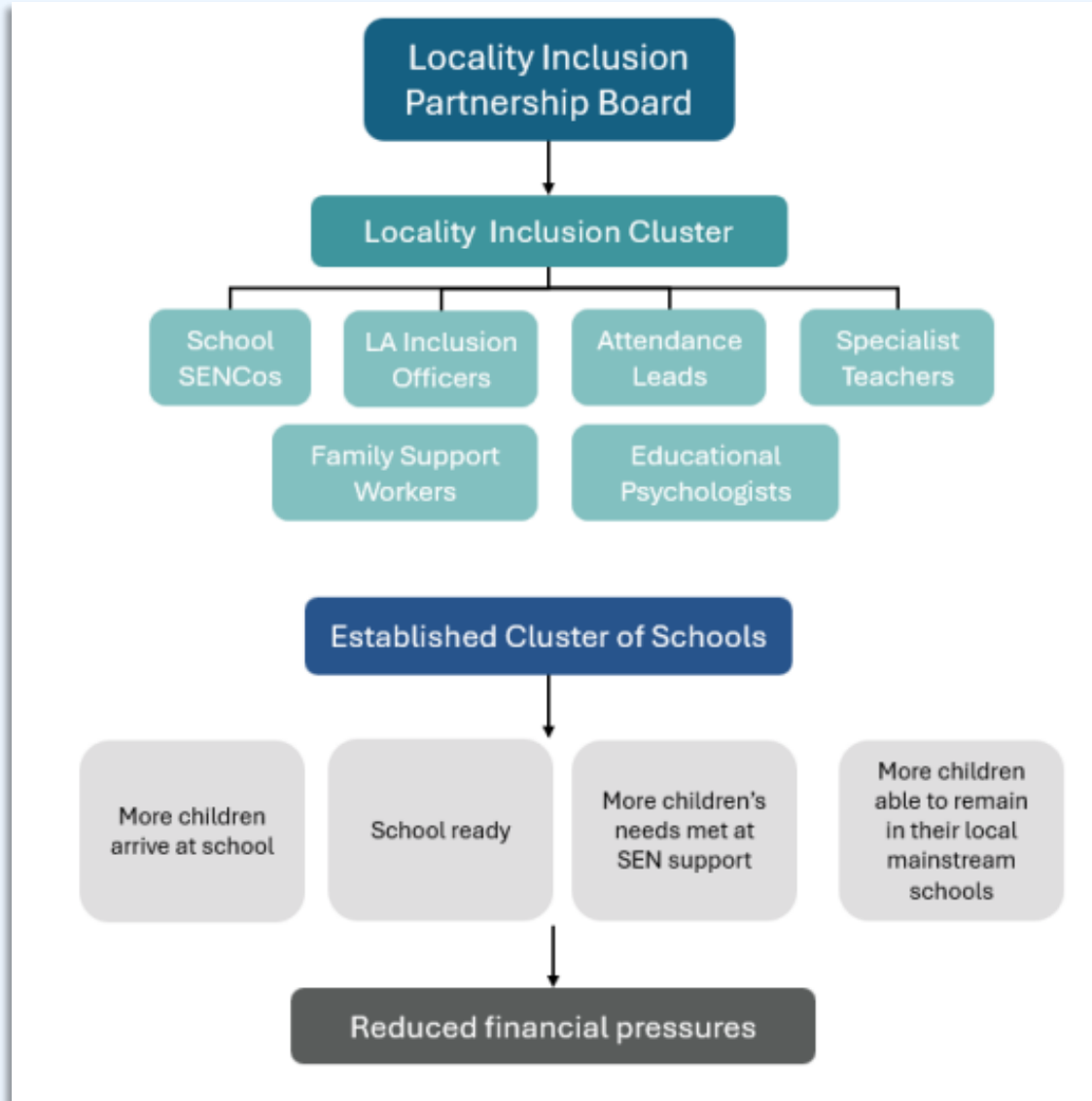
What difference this will make for children and young people

By joining up services around schools and early years settings, Locality Inclusion Clusters will:

- **Help more children arrive at school ready to learn, through early identification and support in the early years.**
- Improve attendance and engagement, through earlier help for social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- **Ensure more children's needs are met at SEN Support, reducing the escalation to EHCPs.**
- Enable more children to remain in their local mainstream school, close to family and community networks. This means that children receive the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

Education Services Redesign

Key Facts & Features for redesign



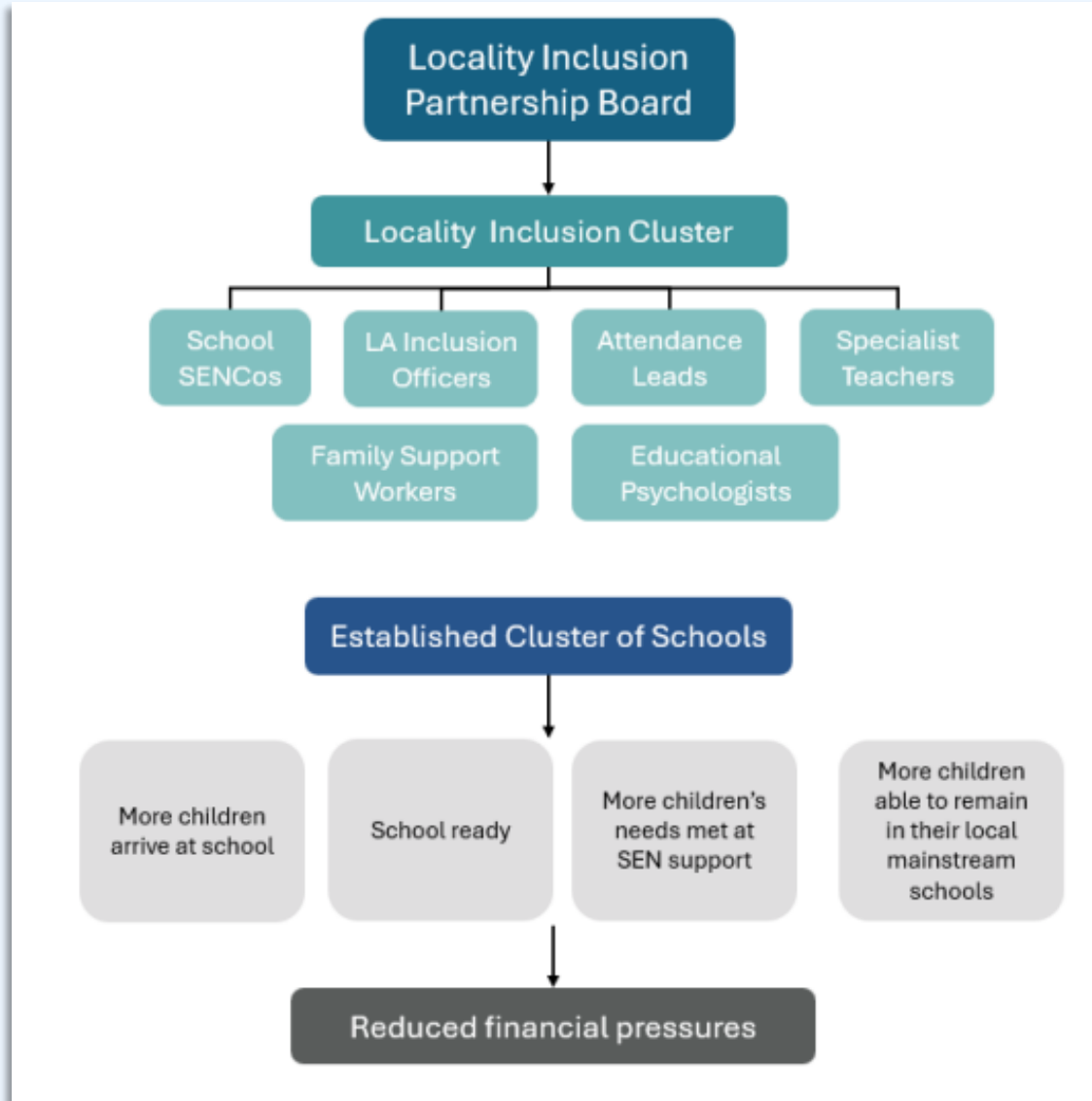
What difference this will make for families

By joining up services around schools and early years settings, Locality Inclusion Clusters will:

- Reduce the stress and uncertainty by coordinating services, so families don't have to navigate multiple systems on their own.
- Help families keep their children in local mainstream schools, maintaining strong community and family connections.
- Give families confidence that their child's needs are being understood and met effectively.
- Foster a more collaborative relationship between families, schools, and support services, making it easier for families to share their concerns and ideas.

Education Services Redesign

Key Facts & Features for redesign



Why this is better for schools and settings

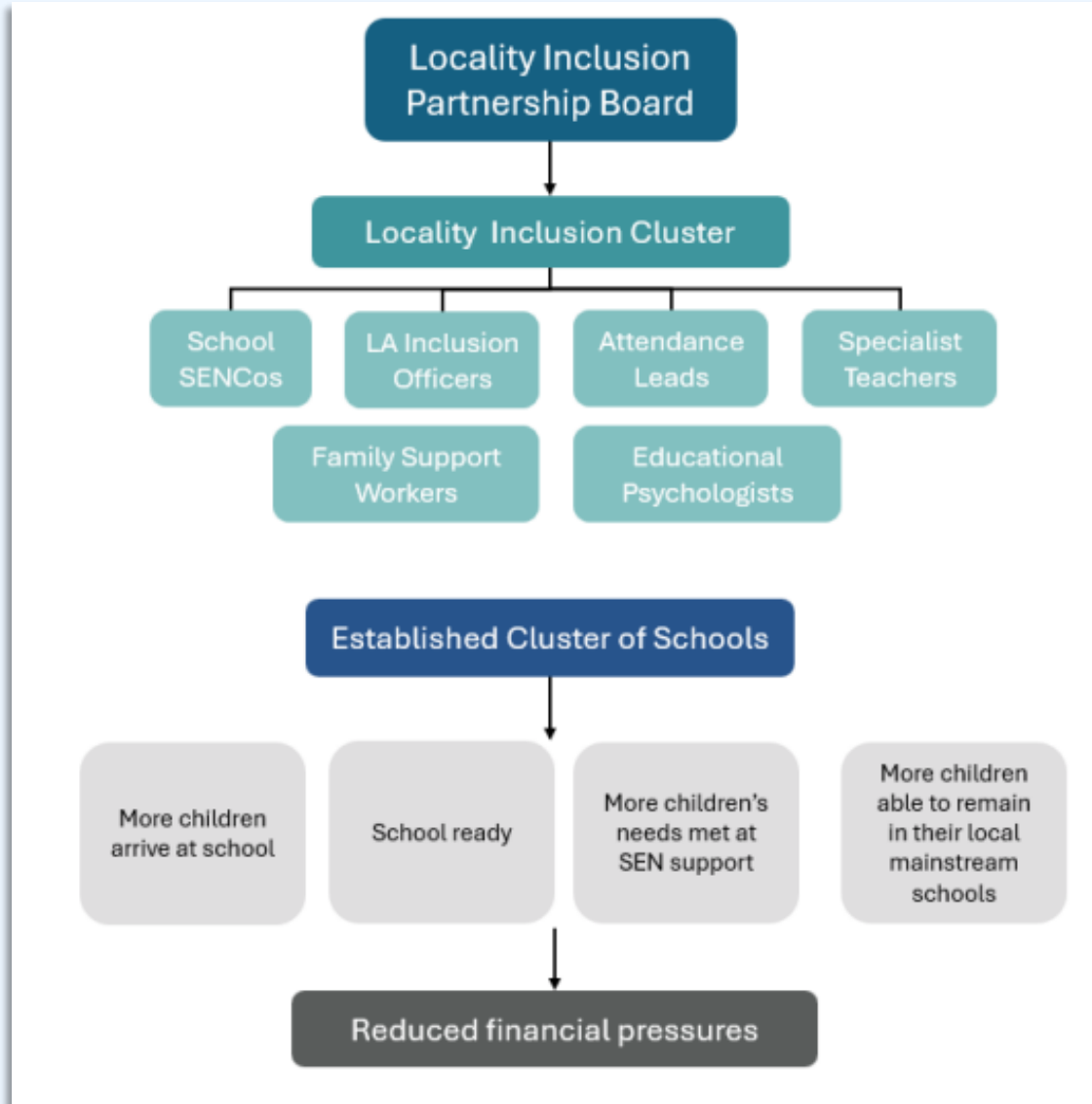
For schools and early years providers, Locality Inclusion Clusters offer a clear, single point of access to joined-up support.

Instead of navigating multiple agencies and referral routes, schools can access multi-disciplinary expertise through their local cluster — including specialist teaching, educational psychology, family support, and health input. This will:

- Build confidence and capacity in schools to meet diverse needs.
- Provide earlier access to specialist advice and support.
- Foster a culture of shared ownership and collective problem-solving, rather than case-by case escalation.

Education Services Redesign

Key Facts & Features for redesign



What are the benefits for the local authority:

A more inclusive, preventative system will not only improve outcomes for children — it will also make the SEND system more financially sustainable by:

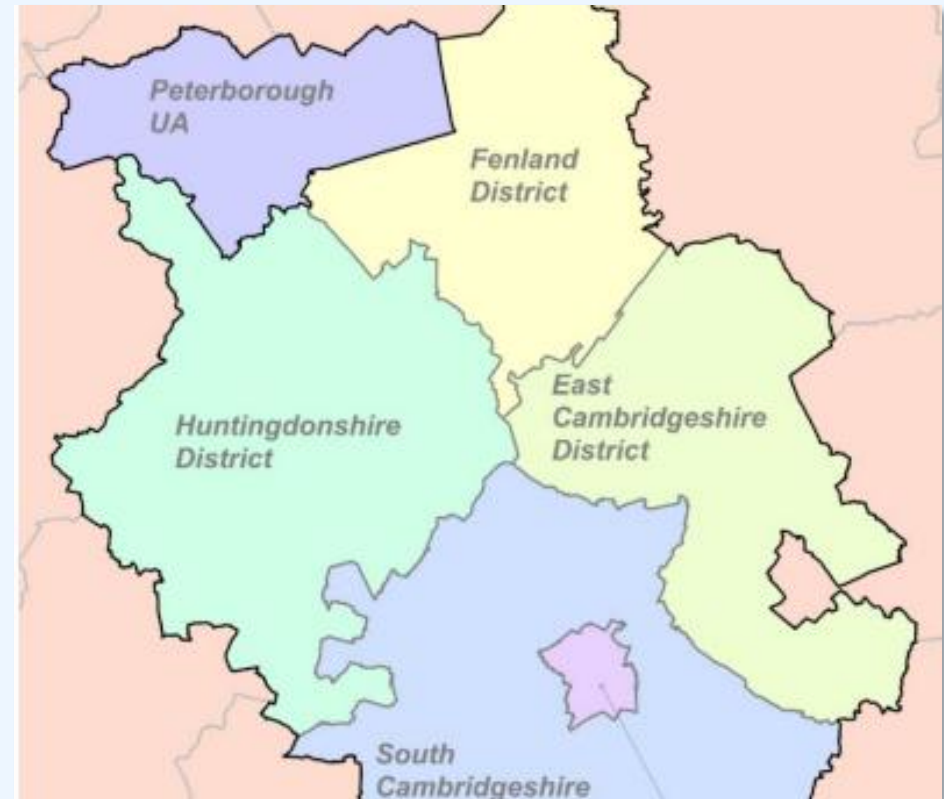
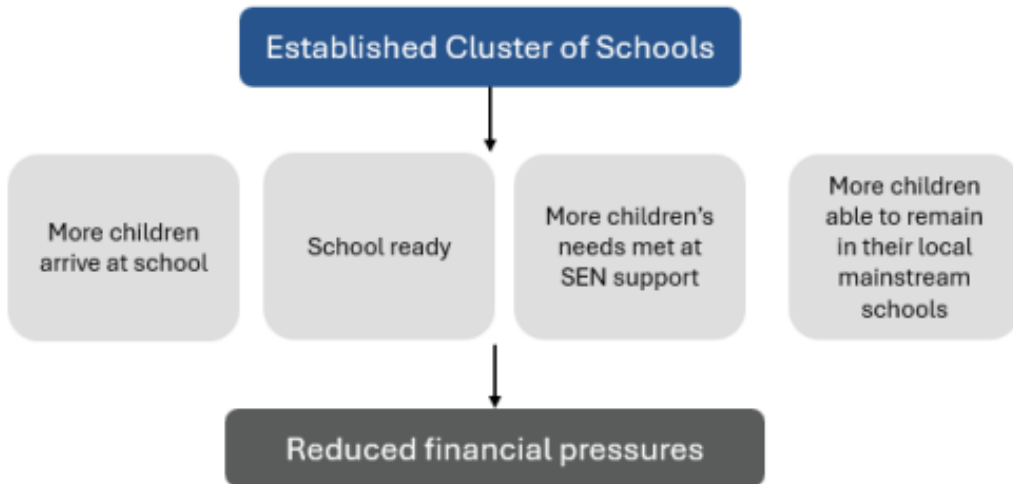
- Reducing reliance on high-cost independent and out-of-area placements, as local schools are better equipped to meet a wider range of needs.
- **Lowering home-to-school transport costs, as more children can attend their local schools.**
- Reducing the number of EHCPs required, as more support is delivered effectively through the graduated approach and SEN Support.

Over time, this creates a virtuous circle — improving outcomes, strengthening local inclusion, and restoring financial balance in the high-needs system.

Education Services Redesign

Key Facts & Features for redesign

Locality	Total No. Schools	Total No. of Pupils
South Cambridgeshire	76	22,534
Cambridge City	43	14,200
Huntingdonshire	74	22,269
East Cambridgeshire & Fenland (combined)	77	25,722



Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Why Are We Here?

- Too many children are not thriving in education
- Increasing absence, exclusion, and time out of school
- Support often arrives too late and is fragmented
- We need a different system response



Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Why We Need to Think Differently



- Escalation-driven systems place pressure on schools and families
- Thresholds delay access to support
- Complex needs require coordinated responses
- Inclusion must be designed in, not reacted to

Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

What Is a Locality Inclusion Partnership?



- A locality-based partnership between schools and services
- Focused on recurrent challenges, not individual cases
- Coordinated by a Locality Inclusion Partnership Manager
- A mechanism for early, joined-up support

Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Who Will Be Involved?

- Schools
- SEND 'district' teams, EHCP Casework and Educational Psychology
- Early Years and School Improvement
- Attendance, specialist teachers, and health partners



Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

How the Model Works – At a Glance?

- Schools identify recurrent challenges
- Issues are submitted ahead of a termly surgery
- Right services attend the surgery together
- Early, coordinated support is agreed
- Learning informs ordinarily available provision



Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Headteacher Perspective: The Challenges



- Recurring patterns of unmet need
- Escalating behaviour and attendance concerns
- Support arrives too late or in isolation
- Some challenges cannot be resolved by schools alone

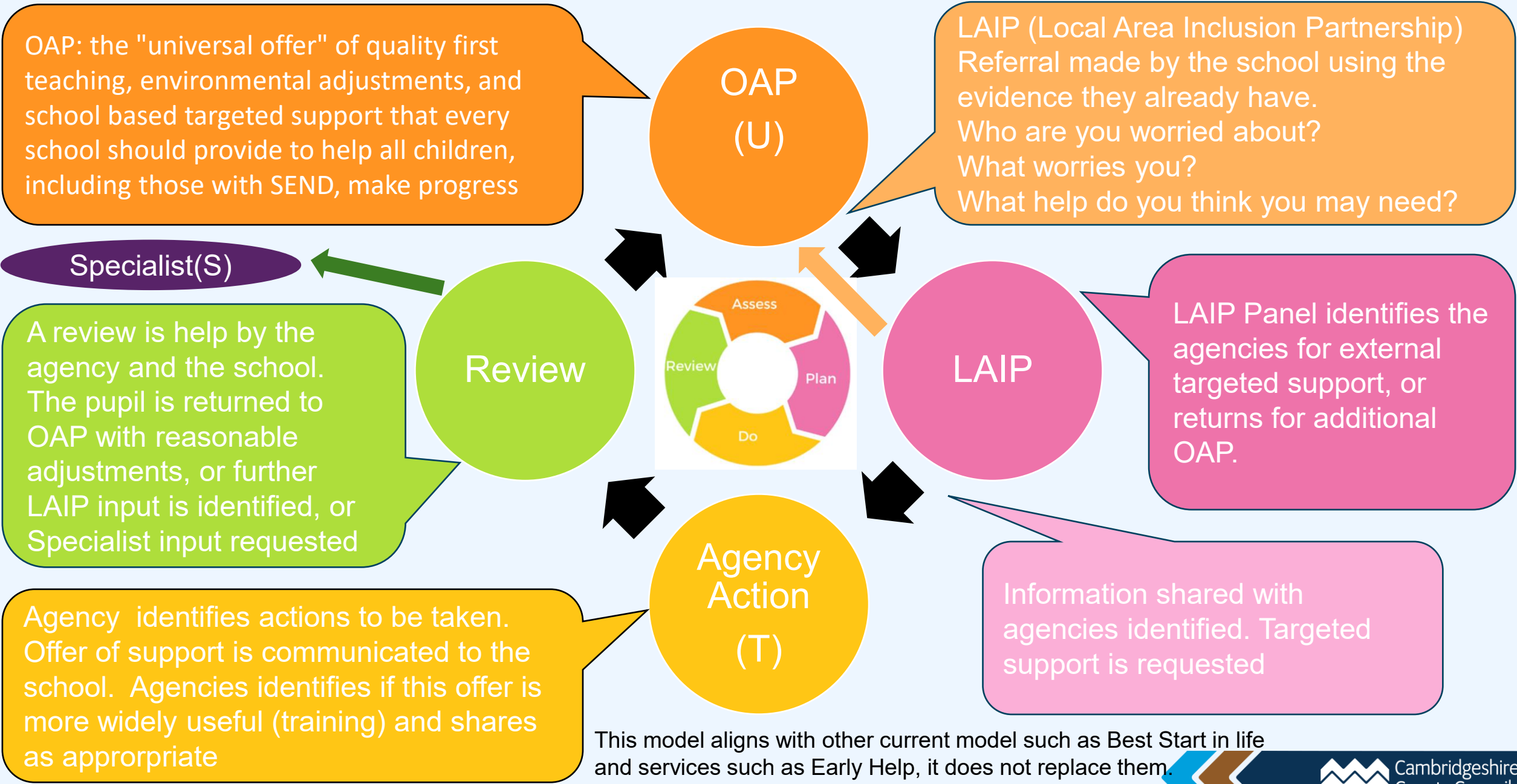
Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Special School Perspective:



- Ordinarily available provision, with Outreach support, builds system capacity
- Specialist knowledge can be shared earlier
- Support should be accessible before escalation
- This reduces reliance on exclusion and specialist placement

This model follows the APDR approach defined in the code of practice and sits in phase 1 of the CCC Graduated provision;



Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

From Concept to Practice: A Case Study

I have Autism

I am 6 Years and 2 months old

I exaggerate my facial expressions

I have delayed language

I rarely make eye contact

My attendance is 6.5%



I am non-verbal

I find social interaction challenging

I walk on tiptoes

I did not attend Nursery

I have two siblings, both have SEN

Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Key Questions for the Partnership

- What services and partners need to be in the surgery?
- What information do we need in advance?
- How do we take a thematic, not individual, approach?
- What would earlier support look like?

Cambridgeshire Locality & Cluster Partnerships :

Case Study feedback

- What should the response be (school, LA, health etc) ?
- What is the current likely service response ?
- What is the gap and can that be resolved through a partnership model ?

- Work as a Locality Inclusion Partnership
- Focus on recurrent issues, not individuals
- Capture your service response
- Design support that prevents escalation

- More children accessing and remaining in education
- Improved attendance for vulnerable groups
- Fewer children waiting out of school
- A clear, local ordinarily available offer



Cambridgeshire Online | SEND Information Hub (Local Offer)

