

# SHROPSHIRE ALTERNATIVE PROVISION STRATEGY



**2026-2028**



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## Introduction

Shropshire’s Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy has been developed in response to Department of Education (DfE) Guidance, specifically

- Arranging Alternative Provision: A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools (February 2025) [Arranging Alternative Provision - guide for LAs and schools](#) and
- Voluntary National Standards for Non-School Alternative Provision (August 2025) [Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards](#)

The DfE’s 2025 AP statutory guidance defines AP as:

*“education arranged by local authorities for children of compulsory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; alternative provision can also be used by schools for children on a suspension (fixed period exclusion); and for children being directed by schools to off-site provision to receive education intended to improve their behaviour.”*

Standards in the Guidance are intended to

- Set clear and consistent expectations for non-school APs (NSAP)
- Support commissioners in monitoring children’s attendance and progress
- Ensure that all children placed in NSAP settings are safe and receiving high quality education that supports their welfare

Shropshire has statutory duties under section 19 of the Education Act 1996 to provide education for children and young people needing alternative education. This includes ensuring there is

suitable provision, sufficient numbers and types of specialist placements to meet the needs of Shropshire children and young people.

This strategy outlines how Shropshire LA meets both its statutory and best practice responsibilities when commissioning sufficient high-quality AP as well as how we go about delivering excellent outcomes with effective use of public funds.

This Strategy links with other Shropshire strategic plans, including

- Shropshire's SEND & AP Strategy, including the SEND Outcomes Framework
- The Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan (currently in draft)
- The Children's Services Reform Delivery Plan

This will be approved by the SEND Partnership and the effectiveness of it will be reviewed through the activities undertaken by Quality Assurance Group.

## Ambition and Vision

Shropshire SEND and Inclusion Partnership's vision is to develop an inclusive system where every child and young person can thrive – and that there is a focus on improving outcomes for those with SEND and/or accessing Alternative Provision.

Alternative Provision can help children who need some extra support to engage with education in mainstream school - or would benefit from some time in a setting where more specialist advice and intervention can be accessed.



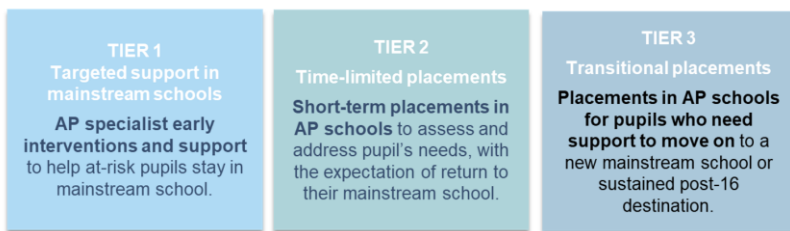
This strategy supports that vision by ensuring that Alternative Provision takes an early intervention approach, focusing on providing preventative support within mainstream schools so that pupils can benefit from a strong sense of belonging and are making progress towards their desired outcomes.

It is key that our children and young people have high quality AP that has their best interests at the heart of practice and provision – and that the right support is available at the right time in the right place.

Shropshire LA have been part of the SEND and AP Change Programme to provide earlier help and intervention, to better meet the needs of young people and to support them to be successful in mainstream school where possible. This is defined by the 'Three Tier Model':

The three tier model is a graduated framework designed to support pupils to be included, preventing exclusions and shifting the dial to earlier intervention and identification of needs so

## AP Three Tier Model



Targeted outreach support is critical for a shift to interventions upstream, away from expensive long-term places

that children and young people get the right support in the right place at the right time ie reducing need for more specialist services and the waits this can sometimes involve. When children and young people get the support they need, this also help stability at home and so is more likely that families can stay together as a result.

AP is a central feature of this three-tier approach, it aims to shift AP to being used as part of a collaborative system rather than a last resort and to enhance offers of education with creative and often more personalised approaches with time limited and interventions to support integration and transitions. Shropshire has used this opportunity to provide a raft of supports for children and young people, much of which is detailed in the next section.

## Pathways of Alternative Provision Support in Shropshire

The aim of everybody involved in supporting the education of Shropshire's children and young people is for them to be positively engaged, feel they belong and be included in suitable education.

This means that a pathway for inclusion is needed to enable the right support at the right place, at the right time, especially when significant challenges arise. It's at these times that partnership working with early intervention is essential to help children and young people achieve their full potential, aspirations and goals.

### SHROPSHIRE INCLUSION PATHWAY

Our Shropshire Inclusion Pathway helps schools, parents/carers and partners to understand how this works and how to access the help they need. This includes access to

- early advice and signposting, including multi-agency advice through **Integrated Consultation Panels**
- **Inclusion Pathway Meetings** to access
- Section 19 support in line with statutory duties, including for health and 6<sup>th</sup> day provision for exclusion

- Early support for children at risk of suspension/exclusion

The Shropshire **EBSA pathway** (emotional based school avoidance) is included in this documents and spans support across Integrated Consultation Panels and Inclusion Pathway Meetings, as well as attendance pathway via the Education Access Service which includes legal approaches.

This document includes all the information in full , including processes and how to ask for help - **[shropshires-inclusion-pathway-2026.pdf](#)**

This link takes you information on the website - [Inclusion pathway \(includes Section 19\) | Shropshire Council](#)

## **OUTSHINE**

Shropshire has used the SEND & AP Change Programme Funding to create the ‘**Outshine**’ service

The Outshine service is a central feature of support for children and young people in relation to Alternative Provision.



The Outshine offer incorporates advice, support and direct intervention from a team of mentors, family support, an AP Directory and support for re-integration. Outshine sits in the Education Access Service so that there is a synergy across attendance, engagement and statutory inclusion services (Elective Home Education, Children Missing Education, Section 19, Fair Access Panel and 6<sup>th</sup> day provision).

This model shows the approach taken with the three-tier model for AP:

(note:



names of

*practitioners or posts may change over time)*

### Shropshire's ambition for Outshine is to

- support a shift upstream with young people successfully staying in mainstream settings where appropriate
- to support a culture change towards earlier identification and intervention.
- empower mainstream schools to positively include pupils within a graduated approach
- work towards creating cultures of belonging and mattering in schools/settings.
- Align with a Families First approach as system enablers, collaborating with partners to support families at point of need and aiming to reduce need for more specialist services.

### The activities of Outshine include:

- building capacity in schools through swift advice and responsive support
- bespoke direct support for students to be successfully included in mainstream schools.
- reducing exclusions and suspensions, supporting inclusive practice and culture in mainstream schools
- working alongside colleagues in TMBSS to support prevention of exclusion and integration
- supporting the integration of pupils returning to mainstream schools – including those excluded or on managed moves, as well as EHE and CME returners with complex challenges or pupils with emotional based school avoidance (EBSA) needs
- developing the use of high-quality short term or curriculum based off-site AP provision to meet the geographical challenges of Shropshire

The **REACH hotline** supports immediate advice and triage e.g. exclusion prevention. Schools can also access the service through a referral with parental consent. Referrals are triaged with a swift turnaround and with the aim for support/advice to be in place within 5 working days. The contact number is 07816 204 706

## **INCLUSION DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

All mainstream secondary schools in Shropshire have received funding to strengthen inclusive practice, supporting pupils at risk of suspension or exclusion and responding to emerging attendance concerns.

In 2023/2024, £400,000 was allocated to schools using a formula based on NOR (numbers on roll) and FSM (Free School Meals). This increased to £600,000 in 2024/2025, with the same level of funding confirmed for 2025/2026.

Use of the funding is monitored and quality assured by the EQA team. Where required, schools can also apply for capital funding to support environmental adaptations as part of developing their provision.

This approach has also been made available for primary schools so that they can request funding through the SEND and AP Change Programme to develop 'support base' provision. Twelve schools have an enhanced level of support to develop their bases, this is led and supported by the Education Quality Advisors. Learning from these projects will inform Shropshire best-practice guidance, and the schools' work will be used as case studies to support other settings seeking to develop support bases in future.

## **GRADUATED SUPPORT PATHWAY**

When a school wishes to commission non-school AP in order to meet the needs for a child/young person, they can access high needs top-up funding without an EHCP through the LA's Graduated Support Pathway (GSP) panel to support with costs.

Any school making a GSP request should be able evidence how they have already implemented their universal and targeted offer and how any funding provided through Inclusion Development Grants has already been utilised. GSP funding will only be provided to support with AP costs for a maximum of 12 weeks.

## **EOTIS/EOTIC**

EOTIS is educated otherwise than at school

EOTIC is educated otherwise than at college

Alternative Provision can also be requested for a child or young person with an EHCP as part of an EOTIS/ EOTIC pathway in line with the policy. This arrangement can be requested by a parent and/or young person at any point within an EHC process in accordance with the Children and Families Act 2014 Section 61.

There must be sufficient evidence to demonstrate that an EOTIS/EOTIC package is needed. In order to consider the request, the EHCP Team will submit paperwork to the Resource and Commissioning Panel (RCP). Decision making is recorded and provides a clear rationale for the decision that is made, this also supports audit purposes. Shropshire Local Authority remain ambitious for young people to achieve their full potential and any package of support is reviewed in line with the statutory Annual Review process.

## **Needs Assessment and Mapping**

Shropshire's rural geography and longer travel times limit practical access and choice, increasing reliance on transport and, in some cases, specialist or out-of-area placements. This creates sufficiency pressure for high-quality Alternative Provision (AP) that is local, flexible and able to reduce travel while keeping children connected to learning.

Key AP implications include:

- More demand for local places and outreach/in-reach support to schools
- More short-term and part-time placements to prevent escalation and support reintegration
- More need for flexible curricula and therapeutic/behaviour support within AP

In rural areas, barriers to housing and local services can add to access issues and increase reliance on transport, reinforcing the importance of AP options closer to home. The Shropshire SEND JSNA highlights rural deprivation patterns (including barriers to housing and services) and identifies social, emotional and mental health needs as a key area of need locally—both of which contribute to AP demand and the need for local capacity.

Current demand for AP is commonly linked to social, emotional and mental health needs and behaviour that can increase the risk of suspension or exclusion.

AP planning should prioritise:

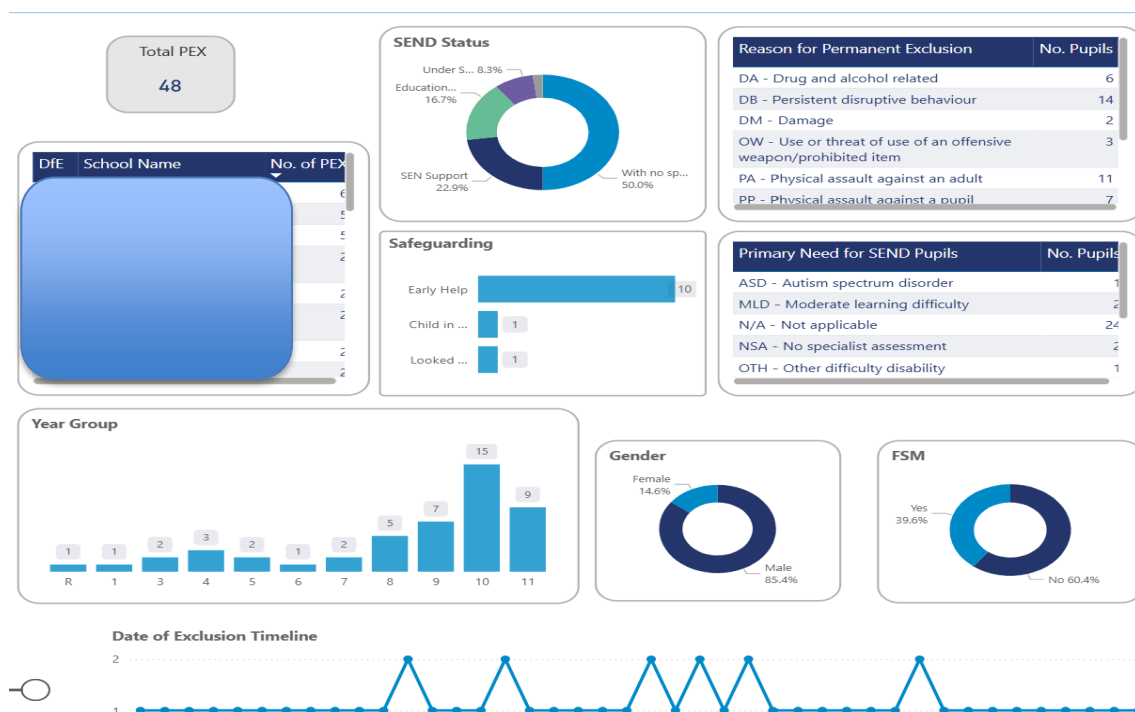
- Local capacity across the county (not only central locations)
- Outreach and blended models that support earlier intervention and inclusion
- Clear reintegration pathways back into mainstream where appropriate

## Exclusions and suspensions data

Source: PowerBI

Shropshire LA uses a range of Power Bi data dashboards to support tracking and analysis of trends. This supports our needs mapping and planning for AP sufficiency, as well as due diligence regards effective use of funding.

### Exclusions for 2024-25 academic year



There were 48 Exclusions in Shropshire schools in 2024-25 including

- 8 pupils with an EHCP
- 4 in EHCNA
- 1 with Graduated Support Pathway funding
- 11 with SEN support
- 50% of excluded pupils were in Key Stage 4, most were in year 10
- 29% in Key stage 3
- 1 pupil in year R and 1 in year 1
- 10 receiving Early Help, 40% on Free School Meals (FSM), 1 Looked After to another LA and 1 Child in Need
- 29% had reason as persistent disruptive behaviour, the second most significant reason was physical assault against an adult

## Suspensions data for 2024-25 academic year



### Analysis of the data indicates:

- 7311 lost days through suspensions
- These were for 51% pupils on FSM, 65% for males, predominantly for children receiving Early Help support or Looked After
- Most common reason given was persistent disruptive behaviour
- Most common group was no SEND support, followed by SEN support
- 57% of total suspensions were for Key stage 3 pupils with the most in year 9

This data and the profile of need is being used to support planning for revision of commissioning arrangements with TMBSS for September 2026, as well as other Non-School Alternative Provision to meet the forecasted needs of children and young people most likely to benefit from these services.

### Young people's and their parents/carers voices

It is essential that the voice of the young person is used to inform planning and provision. This is gathered as part of Outshine's practice, for example at Pupil Support Meetings where they may be discussions around placement within an AP. Similarly, working with parent/carers is also essential if placements in AP are to be effective and successful.

Shropshire LA aims to ensure there are clear expectations for all parties from the outset regarding use of AP - and that the young person and their parents are involved in setting targets/goals. It is our expectation that it is a joint responsibility of the commissioner and the provider to ensure that pupils are involved in this process.

Following a permanent exclusion, the LA gathers pupil and parent/carer voice to ensure that any placement is appropriate and meets the need of that young person. The relevant documents that are submitted to Fair Access Panel include consideration to a pupil's views and wishes, their likes/dislikes and aspirations so that supporting practitioners can work towards maximising their engagement and success.

Where Education Other Than In School (EOTIS/EOTIC) is agreed through the EHCP process, procurement of AP is undertaken in partnership with the child or young person and their parent/carers. Packages are co-produced to reflect individual strengths, needs and outcomes, and may combine education, therapeutic input and family support to promote engagement, wellbeing and progress. Provision is regularly reviewed and adjusted, ensuring the package remains personalised, proportionate and responsive as needs change, with a clear plan for progression and reintegration where appropriate.

### **Cross border working**

The provisions and processes described within this document apply to all young people for whom alternative provision is appropriate and are normally resident within Shropshire. Where those young people attend school outside of the borough, it is recognised that the funding for that young person is allocated to the school and LA where they are on roll.

Shropshire LA therefore reserve the right to charge any school located externally to Shropshire for provision for a Shropshire resident young person. This is based on the principle that the funding follows the student and will therefore be proportionate to the funding received by those schools for the young person rather than the true cost of the provision.

For young people normally resident outside of Shropshire who attend a Shropshire School, any requests for support through Alternative Provision should be made to their home Local Authority. It might be that provision normally only commissioned by Shropshire is most appropriate for that young person - and where this is the case, Shropshire Council reserves the right to recoup any funding from the LA where that child is normally resident.

## Commissioning and Procurement Arrangements

Shropshire's commissioning arrangements for AP support the LA to deliver appropriate placements within the county that support the identified needs of our children and young people. Alternative Provision is provided through full or part-time places, and short or longer-term placements and could include support to schools through outreach work or a variety of other settings including pupil referral units, independent schools, other providers from the private and voluntary sectors.



**1** Develop local, high quality, inclusive provision across the system. Strengthen the graduated response and Shropshire ordinarily available provision (SOAP), whilst ensuring consistency and effectiveness of the emotional health and mental wellbeing offer in mainstream education settings, across all phases.

**2** Enable early identification and the right help at the right time, including reducing waiting times for speech and language therapy and neurodiversity assessments.

**3** Enable children and young people to communicate confidently, contribute to decisions, and feel visible and valued members of their community.

**4** Develop a proactive, supportive and clear alternative provision offer.

**5** Develop a system that makes sense and works together, improving co-production, communication and engagement with families and professionals from all services. Including improving the quality and timeliness of EHC plans, annual reviews and transition pathways.

**6** Develop a data informed and intelligence rich approach.

**7** Enable children and young people to feel visible and valued members of their community, ensuring they are supported to be as socially and economically independent as possible to achieve their next steps in life.

The Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin joint commissioning group work together to consider how specialist support can be provided through tier 1, such as Speech and Language, EP and Occupational Therapy support. This will be brought together into the Experts at Hand Offer in 2026/27 as part of the SEND Reforms.

Shropshire's [Outcomes Framework](#) outlines a range of indicators that children and young people themselves, and also families and professionals, would like all children in Shropshire to do, to have, to feel and to achieve, for them to be living the best life they can. The Framework aims to take a single, joint approach to improving outcomes for children and young people, including tracking impact across all the services that are part of the SEND and AP Area Partnership.



**Shropshire AP currently being used to support children and young people include:**

| AP              | Reasons for use of AP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aspire          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Careers information advice and guidance</li> <li>• Focus on planning for destinations post 16</li> <li>• Support for young people with barriers to education who are in KS4, with a focus on post 16 journey and ensuring they are EET</li> </ul>                       |
| Bettws Lifeline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To re-engage CYP with education/ learning</li> <li>• Support emotional regulation and development of resilience</li> <li>• Developing independence.</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |
| Bloomin Lovely  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horticultural therapy</li> <li>• Emotional wellbeing support, enhances curriculum offer and sensory support</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  |
| Bright Star     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring to support engagement with learning</li> <li>• Support emotional regulation and development of resilience</li> <li>• 40% activity and 60% learning (foundation level teaching)</li> </ul>                                                                     |
| Chalk Line      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEMH focus</li> <li>• Tutoring &amp; mentoring (Entry level to Level 2)</li> <li>• CEIAG</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Cross Bar       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sports focused training leading to Post 16 opportunity</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Learning</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                              |
| Smash Life      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-1 mentoring</li> <li>• Supporting transitions (school/home moves)</li> <li>• Mentoring support for young people new to in care, those struggling with attendance at school and/or where there are emotional needs creating barriers to accessing learning.</li> </ul> |

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Life Shed                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal based personalised curriculum</li> <li>• Mentoring and Life Skills support</li> <li>• Building positive relationships and enabling social and emotional development.</li> <li>• Build resilience, self-confidence and self efficacy</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                      |
| Lower Bush                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical focus on self development and working within a team</li> <li>• Supports CYP with complex needs</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| My Aspirations                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowers CYP with physical difficulties to achieve</li> <li>• Supports into adulthood</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Nisai                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online group tuition</li> <li>• Supporting young people towards achieving and progressing, including accreditations and ESOL</li> <li>• Support for young people during transition periods where access to current school is limited e.g. emergency placement move</li> </ul>                                                                                                            |
| Positive Leap                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports children and adults with Specific Learning Difficulties - Dyslexia, Dyspraxia (DCD), Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech and Language Difficulties and Dyscalculia.</li> <li>• Specialist tuition is available to support literacy and numeracy development</li> <li>• Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy available</li> </ul> |
| Purple ruler                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On line teaching</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Reach for Inclusion           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on re-engagement with education through mentoring/ bespoke packages of support</li> <li>• In centre but also in setting/ school provision to prevent placement breakdown</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Really NEET                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post 16 offer to support with preparation for work</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| RENU                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hair and Beauty, construction, motor vehicle maintenance courses</li> <li>• KS4 provision support SEMH, ADHD, ASD</li> <li>• Entry level learning to Level 2</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| SAILS                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line learning</li> <li>• Personalised learning programmes to support in a holistic way where CYP have experienced trauma and are challenged with anxiety</li> <li>• English. Maths, vocational learning</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Shropshire Academy Adventures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equine and outdoor qualifications</li> <li>• AQA awards in a number of subjects</li> <li>• Supports CYP with SEMH</li> <li>• Post 16 opportunity</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Targeted Provision            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face and online 1:1 tuition</li> <li>• To support academic achievement/close attainment gaps through extra tuition</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support young people during transition periods where access to school is limited e.g. emergency placement move</li> </ul>                                                                                                                             |
| The Hive            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of creative activities that support cultural capital opportunities in a safe space for young people who may also benefit from support for anxiety/SEMH/engagement and attendance</li> </ul>                                                      |
| The Cavalier Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equine facilitated physical and wellbeing activities for enrichment</li> <li>Stabilising relationships, for example in the home where looked after children live</li> <li>Accredited learning packages to support achievement and progression</li> </ul> |
| TMBSS               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 19, 6<sup>th</sup> day provision and children who have early intervention support for SEMH behaviour or to prevent exclusion</li> </ul>                                                                                                          |

*(note: this list can change over time)*

Providers are identified by services in Learning and Skills on the basis of children's needs, for example through their EHCP.

### **Procurement process (where the EHCP Team do not directly commission providers)**

1. Identify the need and confirm the route: the EHCP Team confirms outcomes required, funding source, timescales and under which duty (e.g., Section 19/EHCP) .
2. Check existing compliant purchasing arrangements: procurement confirms whether the requirement can be met through an approved framework, Dynamic Market or other compliant route already in place.
3. Provider due diligence (not commissioning): the referrer checks safeguarding, registration status (where applicable), insurance, suitability, and capacity; ensures the provision meets required standards and that risks are assessed and recorded. This is carried out by the Education Quality Advisors (EQAs).
4. Obtain value-for-money quotes: where required by financial thresholds, obtain and compare quotes from suitable providers available via the compliant route (or in line with standing orders) and document the rationale for selection.
5. Approve spend and record decision: panel/authorising officer confirms funding, duration, and any conditions; the decision trail and agreed outcomes are recorded for audit.
6. Place request for individual contract child/young person's package (a 'spot purchase'), using standard terms—this purchases provision but does not create a commissioned block of places.
7. Set expectations and monitoring: a brief/service specification is issued for the individual package (attendance, progress, reporting cadence, safeguarding/incident reporting, review dates) and the referrer monitors delivery.
8. Review and end/extend: provision is reviewed at agreed points (including statutory reviews where relevant). Packages are adjusted, stepped down, ended or extended based on evidence of impact and ongoing need.

Contract management is supported by the Commissioning team in Shropshire. Service leaders who procure AP collaborate with the Education Quality Advisors to ensure that any provider has met the standards as part of the Quality Assurance process, see this section for more information. Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that enable AP interventions to be delivered incorporate expected standards, impact measures, safeguarding arrangements and the SLAs are reviewed annually. Where Grants are used to procure SLAs, the purpose and arrangements must meet the Terms and Conditions of the specific Grants.

**TMBSS is the Shropshire LA commissioned provider for**

- Section 19
- 6<sup>th</sup> day provision
- children who have early intervention support for SEMH/behaviour or to prevent exclusion

The focus of TMBSS intervention is

- Supporting reduction in exclusions / suspensions across the LA
- High quality learning experiences appropriate to the needs of individual students and supporting their best possible progress and achievement
- Short-term interventions aiming for ‘right place right support right time’ approach
- Supporting young people onwards into appropriate suitable education or post 16 provision and positive timely reintegration into mainstream schools
- Excellent links with schools /settings, partners/stakeholders and the LA to enable supporting best outcomes for the individual students.

Impact is measured against a range of Key Performance Indicators, including academic, attendance and qualitative information.

The current commissioning arrangements support the following pathways for Shropshire children:

- 102 places for secondary students with an arrangement for approximately 60 places for 6<sup>th</sup> day provision for exclusion and 42 medical places
- 6<sup>th</sup> day provision
- Secondary schools purchase exclusion prevention places
- Primary schools have funded shared placements 60/40 (60%school/40%TMBSS)

## Funding and Sustainability

The Local Authority funds statutory Alternative Provision placements for children and young people who are not on a school roll, for example those who have been permanently excluded or who are unable to attend school for medical or complex reasons. This ensures that the council meets its legal duty to secure suitable full time education for pupils who cannot access mainstream schooling. For pupils who remain on a school roll, mainstream schools continue to fund placements directly, reflecting a shared responsibility for securing strong educational and wellbeing outcomes.

The secondary Inclusion Development Grant has historically been funded through the High Needs Block. The APST (Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce) and Primary Inclusion Development Grants are currently funded through the SEND and AP Change Programme. Time limited funding streams come to an end and the Change Programme is now leading into the SEND reforms.

As a result, Shropshire are conducting a cost/impact analysis of all programmes and will be using thorough evaluation to inform the Local Area SEND Reform Plan. This will include our future offer and associated staffing model. This plan will set out how our Local Inclusion Support Offer / Experts at Hand Offer will build capacity of mainstream schools to meet the needs of a wider range of pupils so that there is less reliance on Alternative Provision.

It is essential that decision making on use of AP is fair, just and reasonable. For example, the EHCP team use a Panel process and Shropshire Virtual School use a Referral request process overseen by Senior Leaders. Information is provided including the educational history of the child, why the request is needed, consideration to guidance eg Section 19 duties, consideration of the family situation (for example to support stability in a child's home, especially when they are looked after) and full costs are taken into account. Providers that been Quality Assured by Shropshire's Education Quality Advisors are considered as the primary providers for allocation.

Shropshire has used the SEND & AP Change Programme Funding to create '**Outshine**'



Outshine is a service focusing on shifting towards earlier and pro-active intervention / identification of need, empowering mainstream schools to positively include pupils and work towards creating

cultures of belonging and mattering in their settings. This approach aligns with a Families First approach as system enablers, collaborating with partners to support families at point of need and aiming to reduce need for more specialist services. The Outshine offer incorporates advice, support and direct intervention from a team of mentors, family support, an AP Directory and support for re-integration. For further information see 'Pathways of Support'

The SEND & AP Change Programme funding ends on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026 and so sustainability of this service is currently being addressed.

Shropshire commissions **TMBSS (Pupil Referral Unit)** through use of the Dedicated Schools Grant. TMBSS is the LA commissioned provider for

- Section 19
- 6<sup>th</sup> day provision
- children who have early intervention support for SEMH/behaviour or to prevent exclusion

The commissioning arrangements for September 2026 are currently under review, taking into account needs mapping and analysis of sufficiency data so that Shropshire children and young people are supported in the best way possible going forwards. For more information on TMBSS see 'Pathways of Support'

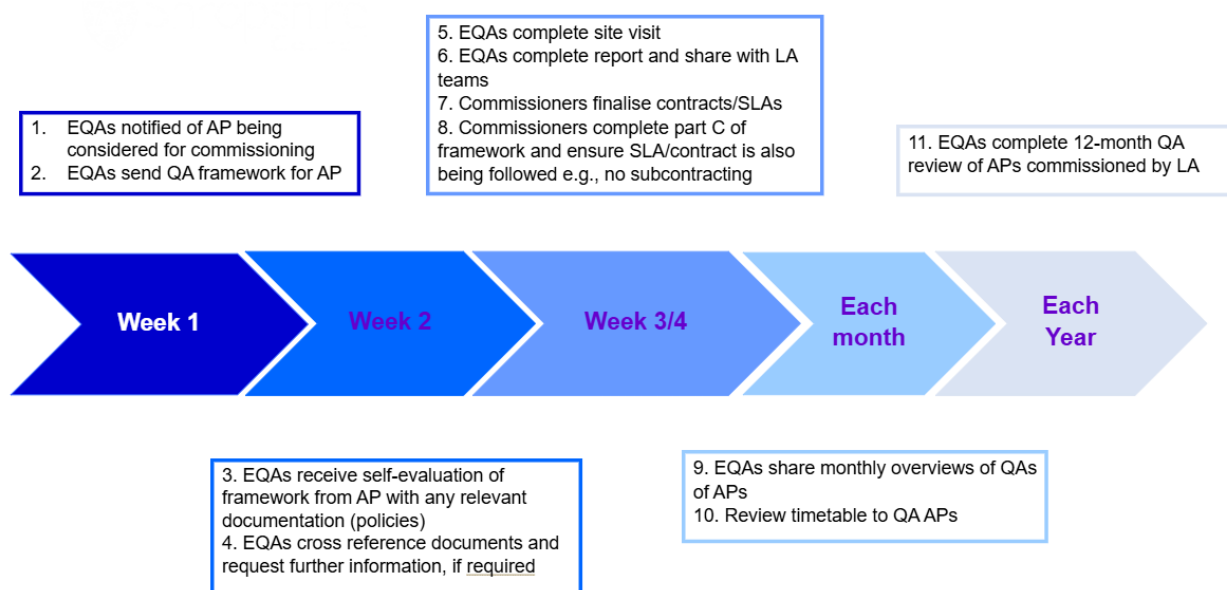
Scrutiny meetings, for example those in the Education Access Service, ensure that data is continually reviewed, this supports the LA to identify gaps in provision and needs so that new AP can be sourced and assists our offer to evolve to meet the changing picture of needs across Shropshire. In the EHCP team, provision is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure the package remains personalised, proportionate and responsive as needs change, with a clear plan for progression and reintegration where appropriate.

Joined up working between the EHCP team and the Education Access Service through the Inclusion Pathway meetings enable awareness and oversight of commissioned places at TMBSS.

## Quality Assurance

Non-school AP (NSAP) is quality assured by the EQA Team following a robust process which closely follows the DfE's guidance as outlined in [‘Non-school alternative provision: voluntary national standards.’](#)

The process is outlined here:



Details of providers that have been Quality Assured and have been assessed as meeting the required standards on the day can be found on the Shropshire Learning Gateway's [AP Directory](#).

If the Education Quality Advisors find that a NSAP is not meeting expected standard there is a time-scaled process of support and challenge.

Information for schools can be found on here regards the process [Non-School Alternative Provision Directory | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

Schools are alerted if the status of an AP changes from meeting to not meeting standard and the provider is removed from the Directory after 10 days.

AP settings that are not maintained by local authorities may not be registered with the DfE. Unregistered settings are therefore not inspected by Ofsted in their own right. Local authorities and schools acting as the commissioner must assure themselves that the setting is registered where appropriate, and delivered by high quality staff with suitable training, experience and safeguarding checks. Schools are assessed during all section 5 Ofsted inspections to determine how effectively they ensure that the AP they use is safe for children, and that those children are

making progress and behaving and attending well. The Shropshire Learning Gateway page provides support and information for schools in relation to their duties regarding safe use of AP and are advised the ultimate responsibility for any child on their roll sits with them. Their duties in relation to substantive provision, OFSTED and illegal schools are also included here so that there is clarity around responsibility for not contracting any provider that might be operating as an unregistered independent (potentially illegal) school.

[Non-School Alternative Provision Directory | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

Schools should always inform the LA when the commission a place for a child/young person in a NSAP so that the LA ensures oversight of sufficiency and safeguarding.

## The Future

It is important that Shropshire continually evolves practice and strategy in the light of reforms and new guidance (for example in SEND, also in anticipation of the AP standards becoming statutory). This ensures that our children and young people continue to have a high-quality offer for Alternative Provision using best practice and compliance with law.

Some consultation activity has been carried out with partners with regards to the development of this strategy and it is our intention to move towards more co-production going forwards.

Shropshire is part of the West Midlands AP Forum and so takes part in Regional developments, feeding into new developments and receiving updates on best practice.



Key developments for Shropshire in 2026 relating to AP Strategy will also include:

- Annual review and assessment of AP outcomes, trends, needs and affordability.
- Preparation for AP standard becoming statutory
- Further development of commissioning / procurement practice to support market shaping, framework development and sufficiency
- Evaluation of SEND & AP Change Programme to support development of the resources and funding streams that align with SEND Reform and incorporates multi-agency working with Health/Social Care partners.
- Refreshed commissioning of the TMBSS service
- Sourcing new NSAP to meet identified gaps eg for Early Years and Post 16

## **Appendix – Examples of Good Practice of use of AP in Shropshire**

### Exclusion Prevention through use of AP for a young person on a Child Protection Plan

K was involved in a significant one-off incident at his secondary school. The support and intervention from Outshine helped the school to prevent a permanent exclusion. The LA and school jointly developed a plan addressing safeguarding risks. An internal suspension was given and TMBSS supported with the collaborative plan by having the pupil on site for this period, rather than him being at home during the school day. Outshine also worked on a transport plan with TMBSS so he could access the site given distance from home.

### Supporting a year 9 at risk of exclusion with direct support to help integration as part of a successful off-site direction

A year 9 pupil had had several suspensions in year 8 for Persistent Disruptive Behaviour. She was becoming at great risk of permanent exclusion. Outshine held a Pupil Support Meeting and an off-site direction was agreed with all involved. Outshine allocated an Inclusion Mentor to support with emotional regulation and develop resilience. Strategies were modelled and this supported the building of capacity. At the Pupil Support Meeting Review 3 months later the young person's achievements were celebrated in that he had received no suspensions, had only 3 behaviour points and 39 reward points – and she went on roll at her new school

## Further Information and Useful Links

### **DFE Guidance – Arranging Alternative Provision**

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67a1ee367da1f1ac64e5fe2c/Arranging\\_Alternative\\_Provision - A Guide for Local Authorities and Schools.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67a1ee367da1f1ac64e5fe2c/Arranging_Alternative_Provision_-_A_Guide_for_Local_Authorities_and_Schools.pdf)

### **Alternative Providers used by Shropshire LA**

This is a link to the Shropshire Learning Gateway which has information for schools on the Alternative Provisions that have been Quality Assured by the LA.

### **Non-School Alternative Provision Directory | Shropshire Learning Gateway**

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/supporting-attendance-engagement-and-inclusion/non-school-alternative-provision-directory/>

Partners can find information here: <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/supporting-attendance-engagement-and-inclusion/non-school-alternative-provision-directory/>

### **The Shropshire Inclusion Pathway**

This outlines how schools or parent/carers access support for early advice, signposting and support, alternative provision for exclusion prevention and Section 19.

[shropshires-inclusion-pathway-2026.pdf](#)

See also [Inclusion pathway \(includes Section 19\) | Shropshire Council](#)

### **This pathway links with the Shropshire SEND & AP Strategy.**

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/the-send-local-offer/strategy-policy-and-guidance/send-strategy/>

### **Outshine**

Outshine offers advice, observations, strategies and Pupil Support Meetings as early intervention approaches and prevention of exclusions/suspensions.

The aim is for pupils to have the best opportunity to be included in mainstream schools.

Outshine incorporates an Inclusion Hotline called REACH to support with swift response to requests for support.

[Outshine | Shropshire Council](#)

[Outshine | Shropshire Learning Gateway](#)

[ees@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:ees@shropshire.gov.uk)

The contact number is 07816 204 706

## **Our PP+ Support Map at Shropshire Virtual School - [Pupil Premium Plus](#) | [Shropshire Council](#)**



At Shropshire Virtual School we have created a PP+ Support Map to show what is on offer from us through the Pupil Premium+ we retain. The PP+ Support Map shows additional resources and support available for our Shropshire Looked-After Children and is an 'at a glance' guide for our partners to access.

### **TMBSS**

#### Tuition Medical Behaviour Support Service - Home

TMBSS is the Shropshire LA commissioned provider for

- Section 19
- 6<sup>th</sup> day provision
- children who have early intervention support for SEMH/behaviour or to prevent exclusion

**This policy is subject to review every two years.**