

Education Strategic Partnership Board Newsletter – January 2026



Click here for the Telford & Wrekin Education Strategic Partnership Board Charter: [10567_partnership_charter_a4_8pp_v5.pdf](#)
Click here for the Telford & Wrekin Partnership Board Website: <https://www.telford.gov.uk/TESPB>
Click here for the Telford & Wrekin Partnership Board Workplan: [Appendix B - TWESPB Workplan - October 2025.pdf](#)

Working in partnership is a key component of practice within public sector services which is defined as a working relationship where more than one professional work together to improve the lives of vulnerable citizens. For partnership working to be effective, several key elements must be observed and adopted by those working in partnership. These elements are described by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (2016) as respect for one another, empowerment, joint decision making, sharing of power and independence.



**Independent Chair:
Gill Eatough**



**Education & Skills Director:
Simon Wellman**

The vision for our Education Strategic Partnership Board

The vision for our Board is to bring together education leaders from across all sectors in Telford and Wrekin to work together to provide the best possible education and care for the young people of the Borough. The aim is to work strategically with key groups of Head Teachers and leaders that recognises their priorities and supports and challenge their work so collectively we can focus on whole system improvements across our schools. The Board believes that by collaborating, sharing and developing great practise in our organisations all our children can achieve their potential, at each stage in their education and development, to becoming successful young adults who have a real sense of belonging in Telford.

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Welcome and Introductions:

- A full list of attendance and apologies can be found detailed [here](#).
- SW's last working day in Telford & Wrekin will be Friday 13 February 2026. GE thanked SW on behalf of Board members, for his tremendous commitment, to both schools, and to the children and young people of Telford. GE also thanked SW for his work on further developing the Partnership Board.
- SW thanked Board members for their hard work and support, and their drive and commitment to developing a high quality of education in Telford & Wrekin.

Minutes of the last meeting and actions arising:

- Planning has commenced for the Autumn Term 2026 Leadership Conference, which will take place Wednesday 21 October 2026 and GE asked for any suggestions regarding possible keynote speakers and / or issues which clusters would wish to see discussed at the event. It was generally agreed that education performance in Maths should be a key focus of the conference, as well as leadership and management.

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Family First Partnership Programme:

- From an Education Safeguarding Team perspective, the lead will sit with Joedy Parton and Joanne Hanslip.
- The FFPP is a UK government-led initiative aimed at reforming children's social care to be more proactive, family-focused, and joined-up. It focuses on providing early, targeted support to prevent issues from escalating, ensuring families receive the right help at the right time.

- In summary, the system will be less stigmatising for children, young people and families. The network of connections for professionals is key and, whilst we are unable to give more time, it is about the use of that time.

There are several key features of the FFPP, including:

- The use of one assessment and one plan shared across partners, enabling all agencies (*social care, police, health, education and other agencies brought in at various points*) to work together to support the family.
- Co-located Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPT), delivering swift coordinated multi-agency safeguarding responses.
- Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) – bringing the (wider) family together at the earliest point to strengthen support through early Circle of Support meetings.
- The previous Threshold Guidance will be revised under the banner of System Reform; the thresholds will remain the same, but the support and responsiveness will change, with SEND introduced as a fourth pillar.
- The role of education will strengthen the partnership by playing an increasingly central role in early help, attendance, safeguarding and high-quality data sharing, supported by new statutory duties.

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Kinship Strategy

- LS provided a brief introduction to the local Kinship Strategy, explaining that all local authorities have a [statutory duty](#) to co-produce and publish a local offer.
- The local [kinship care offer](#) has been published, co-produced by Telford & Wrekin's Kinship Care Team working with carers from a wide range of kinship arrangements - ensuring that the voices of those with lived experience were not only heard, but actively shaped the support available.
- The Kinship Local Offer, which has been recognised as best practice nationally, has five key elements: the therapeutic offer; peer support and advocacy; family group decision making; culturally diverse communities and the virtual school.
- It was noted that, although some families will need a formal modality, for example, Systemic Psychotherapy / Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP), other families will benefit from a more informal therapeutic approach.
- It was confirmed that families who have been in kinship care can access the support.

Actions:

- The Board will return to this agenda item later in the year (6 months+) to reflect on the impact.

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Elective Home Education

- STW provided a brief background the Elective Home Education (EHE).
- As schools are aware, parents can choose not to opt into the school system and consciously chose to educate from home.
- Numbers of EHE have increased over recent years, particularly within the secondary cohort. 1.8% of the school population were EHE in Telford & Wrekin in 2024-25; this year the figure is around 2% - 1% in the primary phase and around 4% in the secondary phase. In the primary phase numbers increase steadily as children move through the year groups, but in secondary there is a significant jump at the end of Year 7. There are more girls in the secondary phase who are EHE and high numbers on SEN support.
- This local data is reflected against both statistical neighbours and nationally.
- The overarching national directive is to try and keep children in school, but they are frequently bouncing in and out.
- The reasons parents give for EHE are interesting, with the vast majority not giving a reason (which they are not required to do); the largest reason given is mental health, followed by philosophical/preference, dissatisfaction with school (general) and dissatisfaction with school (SEND). As Board members are already aware, the quality of education EHE children and young people receive is varied.

The Lloyds Foundation:

- STW introduced Ann Johnson (AJ) from the Lloyds Foundation. AJ is the Local Implementation Lead for Telford & Wrekin.
- The Foundation does not duplicate existing services or simply deliver activity to the community, rather it acts as a catalyst - convening local leaders, residents, public sector partners and community organisations to unlock potential within the system, focusing on the issues that matter most to communities, and supporting them in ways that often go far beyond what funding alone can achieve.
- The Foundation has also completed a series of Human Stories with 13 local families, designed and facilitated by parents to ensure a safe and authentic space. The resulting report highlights key themes such as decisions driven by severe mental health concerns, unresolved bullying and unmet SEND needs.
- A significant milestone in the Foundation's collective work has been the successful sourcing of funding for a new EHE liaison officer post based at the Learning Community Trust, starting in February 2026 to provide dedicated support and bridge communication gaps between families and schools. It will also help to strengthen shared learning.

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Primary Sufficiency

- &W experienced a decade of significant growth in the primary school age population up until 2019/20, largely driven by substantial new housing development. More recently, lower birth rates have led to smaller reception cohorts starting school. This is a trend reflected in many areas across the region and nationally.
- Some local schools have experienced a significant reduction in pupil numbers, particularly in areas of low housing development.
- The reception intake for 2026/27 is expected to be approximately 100 pupils (3.3FE) greater than last year; however, with further substantial decreases anticipated over the next three years reception cohorts are forecasted to be 6.7FE smaller in 2027/28, and 8.5FE smaller in 2028/29 in comparison to the 2026/27 cohort.
- Nationally, the ONS predict that national birth rates will remain low up to 2035.
- The LA has taken a proactive approach to manage and support schools experiencing falling rolls, to both promote financial viability and sustainability of schools and high educational standards.
- Informal Published Admission Number (PAN) reductions were implemented in 2025/26 – with 265 places (8.8FE) removed from the system. The removal of 165 places (5.5FE) across 13 schools has been agreed for 2026/27. Place reductions have been designed to ensure that sufficient surplus remains to accommodate in-year growth and to support efficient class structures i.e. in 0.5FE increments.

Next Steps:

- Annual conversations with schools will be needed to agree ongoing informal PAN reductions for the foreseeable future. Consideration will need to be given about whether to formalise place reductions in time.

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Any other business:

Upcoming Telford & Wrekin Education Strategic Partnership Board meeting:

Date:	Time:
Tuesday 24 March 2026	2:00pm – 4:00pm