

SE19 Experts at Hand Readiness Survey, 2026

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Why we ran this survey, and a BIG thank you!

WHY WE ASKED

- Experts at Hand asks a lot of us: getting help into schools quickly, without it all going through an EHCP.
- We wanted a shared picture of where we are all up to, and what is getting in the way.
- It covered readiness, the offer, governance, delivery models, staffing, getting help to settings, and working with schools and families.

WHO ANSWERED, AND THANK YOU!

- **16** local area partnerships responded
- Each scored themselves across seven sections and told us what would help most
- Six areas also offered to share models and materials they have already built
- **Thank you to everyone who took the time. This session is built entirely on what you told us**

What you told us

IN YOUR OWN WORDS

"Supportive peer observations, and direct work based from assessments, building confidence in mainstream settings, is key to making this successful."

"Hub and spoke model from a single 0–25 SEND centre of excellence with a co-located multi-professional team. Central triage process, with partnership governing body."

"Settings feel that there is almost too much training out there. They have asked for a focus on coaching and embedding practice learnt through training."

"COP is a model we have tried and it has been highly impactful and we want to build on this. This has involved family and young-person-led learning."

"Regional support would be most helpful in the form of shared resources, templates and training materials that can be adapted locally, reducing duplication and enabling more consistent implementation."

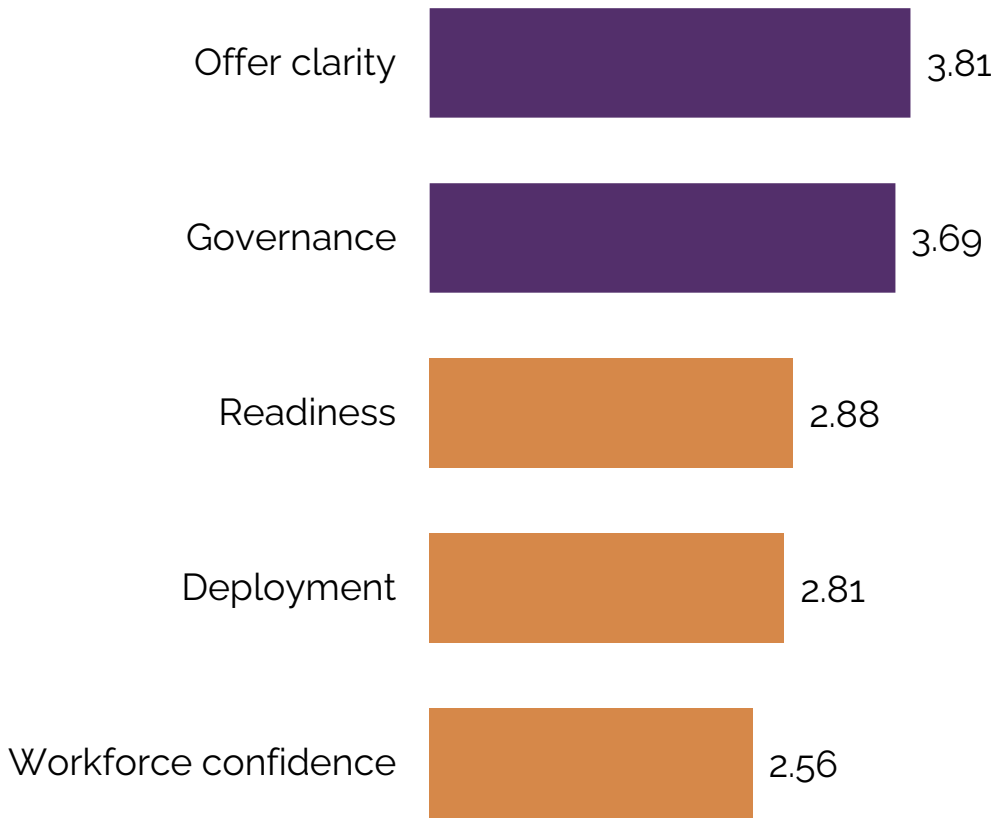
Talk about: which of these sounds most like your area?

Good plans, not enough people

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

- Areas are clear about what they are offering, and how it is run.
- Being ready to start, getting people out to schools, and having enough specialists all score much lower.
- The ideas are there. Making them work week in, week out is the hard part.
- ***Talk about:*** where do you see the gap between the plan and what actually happens?

EVIDENCE: MEAN READINESS SCORE (0–5)

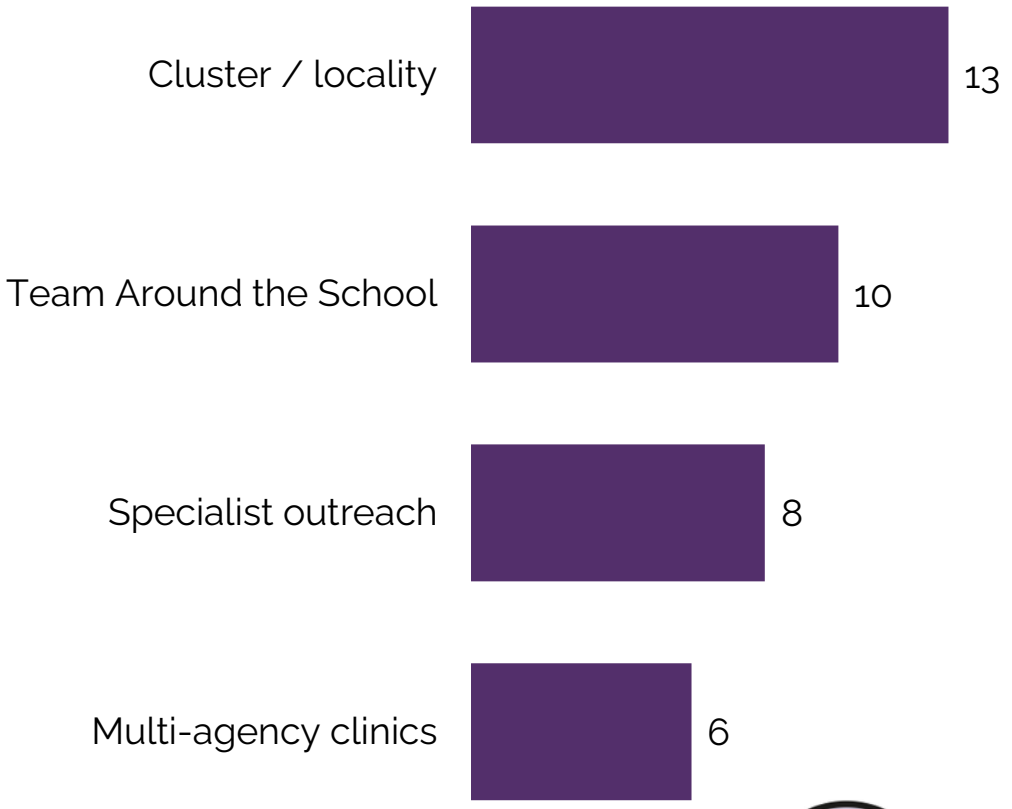


How areas are setting things up

WHAT IS BEING BUILT

- Most areas are working through clusters or localities.
- Many pair that with a team around the school, or specialists going out to settings.
- Nobody is being told to use one model, but a lot of us are making the same choices.
- ***Talk about:*** which part is already working where you are, and which part still needs thinking through?

AREAS USING EACH MODEL (OF 16)



Not enough specialists

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

- Every area said educational psychology is a worry.
- Therapy waits, hard-to-fill posts and a national shortage all slow things down.
- Statutory work keeps pulling staff away from early help and inclusion.
- ***Talk about:*** if specialist capacity does not grow, what do we stop, change or share?

WHAT AREAS FLAGGED

- EP capacity: 16 of 16 areas
- National shortage: 14 of 16
- Hard to recruit: 14 of 16
- OT and speech and language: 13 of 16 each
- Half of areas scored their specialist capacity low

Getting help to schools, in practice

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

- Who gets seen first, and by whom, decides whether schools get help in time.
- Supervision, chasing things up and knowing who does what is what makes it stick.
- Everyone needs to know where this sits alongside statutory work.
- Areas scored this 2.81 out of 5; six areas scored it 1 or 2.
- ***Talk about:*** what should we agree across the region, and what is better left local?

HOW A REQUEST TRAVELS

Request from setting

Triage and prioritisation

Specialist intervention

Supervision and role clarity

Follow-up in setting

Outcome and review

Schools unsure, families further behind

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

- Schools do not all understand what is on offer or how to ask for it.
- Confidence in talking to parents and carers is the lowest score in the survey.
- Not one area felt confident about talking with parents and carers.
- People want plain, shared wording: what the help is, how to get it, how it fits with EHCPs and what to expect.

WHAT THE SCORES SHOW

- Some schools understand the offer: 2.94 out of 5
- Talking with parents and carers: 2.50 out of 5
- ***Talk about***: what is the one thing schools and families keep hearing differently?

Learning that changes practice

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

- People want someone to show them, work alongside them and keep checking in — not another training day.
- Build it round real children and real cases, in the setting.
- Show it, try it, coach it, watch it, talk it through.
- ***Talk about:*** how do we free up time for coaching, and how do we know practice has actually changed?

WHAT PEOPLE ASKED FOR

- Someone modelling or observing: 12 of 16
- Coaching: 11 of 16
- Groups to learn together: 9 of 16
- Being able to ask a specialist: 9 of 16

Things we can already share

WHAT AREAS OFFERED

- Six areas offered to share what they have built.
- West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, Bracknell Forest, Reading, Hampshire and Southampton.
- We will check with each area first before sharing anything more widely.
- ***Talk about:*** which would be most useful to hear about in full?

WHAT IS ON OFFER

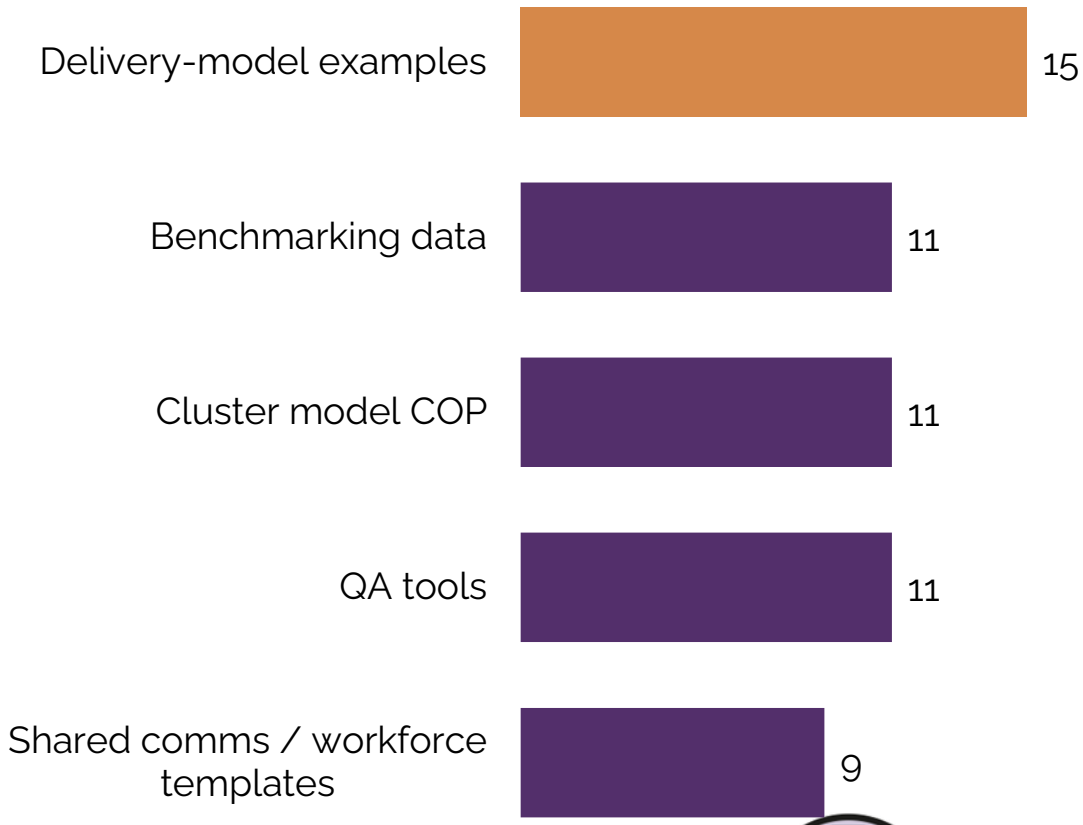
- Cluster models and how requests are handled
- The RISE model
- Reform plan material
- Work done with parents and carers

What areas want from each other

WHAT PEOPLE ASKED FOR

- **Most of all**: real examples of how other areas run this.
- Then numbers we can compare, ways to check quality, and time with people running clusters.
- People want sessions where we work things out together, not sit and watch slides.
- ***Talk about:*** what could we build together that would save you the most time in the next two months?

WHAT AREAS ASKED FOR (OF 16)



How we will know EAH is working?

WHAT WE COULD LOOK AT

- Who is getting help, how schools and families find it, and whether practice changes.
- Then the things that matter for children: being in school, staying in school, fewer repeat requests.
- A short check-in after each session helps, but people liking a session is not the same as it making a difference.

THINGS WE COULD COUNT

- How many schools use it, and how often
- How confident staff in settings feel
- What parents, carers and young people say
- What is seen in classrooms
- Attendance, exclusions, repeat requests, EHCP numbers
- ***Talk about:*** what could every area report?

What happens next, and when?

THE PLAN TO APRIL 2027, *RESPONDING TO WHAT YOU ASKED FOR*

Set up & share
Jul–Sep 2026

- **Examples:** examples of how other areas run this, by the end of the autumn term
- **Working sessions:** two or more task and finish sessions, with learning shared at SEND Forum

Test & check
Oct–Nov 2026

- **Cluster peer learning:** Community of Practice sessions on running cluster models
- **Comparable data:** agreed measures, so areas can see how they are doing against each other

Show & prove
Dec–Mar 2027

- **Checking quality:** a quality framework, co-produced with the DfE and regional partners
- **Shared comms and workforce:** wording for schools and families, plus workforce planning templates
- **More examples:** three case studies, at least one from a school or provision, shared widely

Celebrate & report
Apr 2027

- **Reporting back:** a whole-day celebration event in February and the final report in April

Talk about: what is missing from this plan that you need by April?

SE19 Inclusion Community of Practice

For details of upcoming events and to join the mailing list, email:

sonia.dayal@sdsa.net

