

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – What does it mean for Cumbria’s SEND Partnership?

What will change about the structure of local government in Cumbria?

The government decided in parliament that from 1 April 2023 local government in Cumbria will change. The decision is set out in a document called the Structural Change Order (SCO) which states that the current six district councils and Cumbria County Council will be replaced by two new unitary authorities; Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council.

Cumberland Council will be responsible for the areas of Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland and Westmorland and Furness Council will be responsible for the areas of Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland.

Through the work taking place, the aim is to achieve a seamless service transition from Cumbria County Council to the two new local authorities on 1 April 2023. On this first day for the two new councils, known as ‘vesting day’, there should be no changes in services available for you or your child. Initially policies and processes that were used by the County Council will be used by the two new councils

Contacts for services will be provided on the two new council websites and the Local Offer.

What services will the two new councils be responsible for?

The two new councils will be responsible for all the services previously delivered by the District Councils and County Council, including services for children and families. The staff, funding and assets (buildings and other property) will be divided between the two new councils – this process is currently taking place.

Who are the Chief Executives of the two new authorities?

The Chief Executives for the two new councils have been appointed – Sam Plum in Westmorland and Furness and Andrew Seekings in Cumberland.

Although they don’t start their new roles until December 2022, they will begin appointing the senior officers to lead council services at Director level in September. This will include the appointments for children’s social care, education and skills.

Who are the Councillors that will represent Childrens Services, including services for SEND in the new authorities?

Shadow Councillors for the two new councils have been elected and the leaders and portfolio holders for each appointed.

From 1 April 2023, Cllr Sue Sanderson will be responsible for Children's Services, Education and Skills (including services for SEND) in Westmorland and Furness Council. In Cumberland Council, Cllr Elaine Lynch will be responsible for Education, Skills and Training (including services for SEND).

Cllr Sanderson told us:

"I'm delighted to have been appointed to represent Westmorland and Furness Council as the portfolio holder for Children's Services, Education and Skills from 1 April 2023. I look forward to working with parents and carers in the new local authority to ensure children and young people in Cumbria are supported to achieve the best outcomes they can."

Cllr Lynch said:

"As a retired secondary school teacher and a Governor at two schools in Wigton, education, health and the well-being of children and young people is a key priority of mine. I'm extremely pleased to have been appointed as the portfolio holder for Education, Skills and Training and hope that we can work together to achieve positive outcomes for all of our young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Cumberland."

Until 1 April 2023, please continue to contact current county council portfolio holders, Cllr Anne Burns for Children and Families and Cllr Sue Sanderson for Schools and Learning.

What is soon to be decided?

The majority of services, including services for SEND, will be separated into the two new councils – in a few cases there may be a transition period before this happens particularly where there are concerns about the risk to service delivery. At the moment consideration is being given to keeping a single SEND Partnership Team and SENDIAS Service in place for up to a year, so that the requirements of the SEND Green Paper can be reflected in any changes and to allow enough time to recruit to roles that will be needed in both councils. This will need the agreement of both councils and will not be decided until September.



Image description: A head and shoulders photograph of Cllr Sue Sanderson



Image description: A head and shoulders photograph of Cllr Elaine Lynch

When will we receive more updates on LGR?

Cumbria's SEND Partnership is committed to keeping parents and carers updated. When further decisions have been made that will or may affect the services you and your child or young person use, we will inform you.

The two new Authorities have their own websites that are updated regularly with progress information:

- [Visit the website for Cumberland Council that will be responsible for services in Allerdale, Carlisle and Copeland.](#)
- [Visit the website for Westmorland and Furness that will be responsible for services in Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland.](#)

I have a question about LGR that I would like to raise, how do I do this?

In the next Cumbria SEND Partnership LGR update for parent carers, we will be answering your questions on LGR.

To raise your question, please email nicola.wood@cumbria.gov.uk and we will aim to answer as many as possible. Please be aware that we may not be able to answer all questions at this time because some decisions are still yet to be made.