Sefton Council

Southport Response and Recovery Programme

Children and Education response

Overview of activity and funding provided

The Southport Response and Recovery Programme (the local partnership response and associated funding, together with national funding) was established in response to the tragic events of 29 July 2024 and the civil unrest that followed on 30 July 2024 as both had distinct impacts on communities, the local economy and the health and wellbeing of those affected. Delivery was organised through four partnership workstreams:

- **Psychological response** – led by health partners
- **Children and Education response** – led by the council working with Southport schools
- **Community resilience** – led by the council working with the voluntary and community sector
- **Economy and regeneration** – led by the council working with local business.

Schools were central to the Children and Education response. As trusted and consistent points of contact for children and families, school leaders and staff were often among the first to identify emerging needs and provide reassurance, safeguarding, pastoral support and continuity. The Council therefore worked in close partnership with schools and trusts, recognising both their critical role in supporting recovery and the impact the events had on school staff and communities themselves.

The reports to Sefton Council Cabinet in January 2025 and February 2026 provide further information on the wider response and recovery programme, but this document focuses on the Children, Families and Education element of the Response and Recovery.

The document is set out in four sections:

1. The initial response
2. The original plan
3. Overview of delivery against the plan
4. Ongoing support.

1. The initial response

The initial response was locally coordinated and evolved in response to issues identified during the first three months following the incidents. This was done by the council and partners and was not funded by the Southport Recovery Fund. An Education Recovery Plan was developed with schools by the Educational Psychology team, and the response was coordinated by the council working closely with all Southport schools (who had direct and trusted relationships with the children and families affected) but also included family wellbeing centres and health services.

For example:

- Linaker Family Wellbeing Hub was opened on 30 July 2024 and remained operational until mid-September, with extended opening hours to improve access to support.
- The Education Psychology team was re-deployed to support all schools that had children directly impacted by the incident including those that had lost their lives, and those that were physically and/or mentally injured.
- The Professional Development Centre (PDC) in Formby was opened and drop-in sessions with an open-door approach were provided for schools and their staff for 2 days at the end of August. These sessions were for staff to raise any issues or anxieties about the start of the school year and were delivered by the Educational Psychology Service.
- A resource pack was also distributed to schools and the Equality and Inclusion Officer offered support at the PDC sessions and in 10 Southport schools in response to the issues around civil unrest on 30 July 2024 in Southport.
- In partnership with Southport Learning Partnership (all Southport schools) work was done to ensure consistent messages and communication so all children were confident, and supported where needed, to return to school, and then a letter was sent to all children and families from the Leader of the Council to provide reassurance about the return to school.

The period immediately following the incidents was unprecedented and required decisions to be made at pace in response to emerging needs identified by schools, families and partner agencies. Schools were responding to the immediate and ongoing impact on children, families and staff, and many support requirements emerged as the situation evolved. The priority was to provide timely support, maintain stability for affected communities and ensure that schools had the capacity to respond to rapidly changing circumstances. As the recovery programme developed, efforts were made to strengthen oversight, record-keeping and the tracking of support provided.

The education response developed as a graduated model of support: universal support available to all Southport schools; targeted support for schools, groups of children and staff experiencing greater impact; and individualised support for children and families with specific or more complex

needs. This enabled support to be proportionate to need while ensuring all schools knew how to access additional help where circumstances changed.

- Universal: trauma-informed practice, Educational Psychology advice, communication and resources.
- Targeted: TAS, additional pastoral/therapeutic capacity and direct school support.
- Individual: Education Passports and multi-agency support for affected children.

Schools played a critical role throughout the immediate response. They provided trusted environments in which children and families could seek support, identified children and families requiring additional help, maintained safeguarding oversight, coordinated pastoral responses and worked with Council, health and other services to ensure needs were escalated appropriately. School leaders also supported their staff while managing the operational and educational impact of the events on their wider school communities. This role continued beyond the immediate response as children returned to school and their needs evolved over time.

2. The original plan

As the initial response was happening a plan for the medium term was being developed. The high level objective agreed was: "Ensure that we create an appropriate, accessible, effective, and family led support for children and their families in Southport." This included all children and families affected and the wider community of schools and their communities.

An important objective throughout the response was to minimise disruption to children's education. Maintaining safe, stable and welcoming school environments provided children with routine, trusted relationships and a sense of continuity at a time of significant uncertainty. Additional capacity therefore supported not only immediate emotional and pastoral needs, but also schools' ability to maintain attendance, engagement, safeguarding and access to learning.

£1.885m of the £5.716m total funding available was allocated to this objective. However, it is important to note, this is only the money linked to delivering the ongoing actions linked to the Recovery funding, it does not include the initial response and the additional resources deployed by the Council and other partners alongside this funding and the ongoing support offer.

The actions in the original plan were set out as follows:

i. Recognising that there will be an impact for children and their families across Southport and Sefton. We expected that there would be more complex referrals and possibly an increase in the number of referrals. Therefore, Sefton Family Advice and Support Team (FAST) / Sefton

Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) needed to build capacity at the front door to deal with this increase in referrals and complexity so that we could respond quickly and appropriately.

ii. Roll out of Trauma Informed Practice training for all frontline staff working in Southport. This is so staff are equipped with the skills to operate in a trauma informed way.

iii. Team Around the School (TAS) – roll out to include all Southport schools – TAS offers support to all children and young people. Each team consists of one team manager, five social workers and five family support workers and they work with schools and Voluntary, Community, Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations. TAS wraps appropriate support around schools identifying children and families that need support at the earliest opportunity.

iv. Direct support for individual schools, particularly those schools with children directly affected by the incidents.

3. Overview of delivery against the plan

The funding provided varied from the original allocations in some areas to reflect emerging needs. The plan was delivered in partnership with local schools because individual schools have individual governing arrangements, are part of different Trusts, start from different places, and were experiencing different impacts on pupils and teachers.

3.1. Sefton Family Advice and Support Team (FAST) / Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team

Children's social care and the service saw increased complexity in referrals and cases. Additional resource was placed within the Sefton Family Advice and Support Team (FAST)/ Children Help and Advice Team (CHAT) and the additional resource enabled the service to maintain response times and the quality of decision-making and interventions. A total of £0.175m was spent against an allocation of £0.178m.

3.2. Roll out of Trauma informed from the council

Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) training was delivered to schools through the Council's Inclusion Team. This training is offered to all schools in Southport and across Sefton. Schools were able to specify the exact nature of the training in line with their individual requirements and the council has committed to continuing the implementation of a comprehensive trauma informed offer across the Borough.

Between July 2024 and July 2026, £0.102m was invested by the Council in delivering Trauma Informed Practice training across schools and education settings throughout Sefton. This was funded separately from the Southport Recovery Programme allocation. A small amount of Recovery Funding (£0.008m) was also used to support specific training activity. While the programme is borough-wide, Southport schools demonstrated particularly strong engagement,

reflecting the additional support requirements arising from the events of July 2024. This will continue in the coming academic year through our targeted engagement plan.

3.3. Team Around the School (TAS)

TAS was implemented as planned. Prior to the Southport Recovery Programme, four Southport schools were already participating in the borough-wide TAS pilot, funded by the Council at a cost of £0.081m. Recovery funding was subsequently used to create additional capacity, enabling TAS support to be extended to the remaining 23 Southport schools, at a cost of £0.451m.

In addition, the Council commissioned Sefton CVS to provide dedicated coordination, community link worker and voluntary sector support to the TAS programme at a total cost of £0.100m. This support helped schools, families and community organisations access support, navigate services and address emerging needs.

The £0.451m Recovery Fund allocation enabled TAS to be expanded across all Southport schools, while the pilot activity and Sefton CVS support were funded separately. Following the successful rollout, TAS has been embedded as part of the Council's ongoing support offer. The estimated annual cost of continuing TAS support across Southport schools was £0.549m, which is being funded by the Council in 2026/27.

TAS provided an important bridge between schools and wider children and family services, enabling schools to identify concerns early, discuss emerging needs with professionals and connect children and families to appropriate support before difficulties escalated wherever possible. This strengthened the wider early help and prevention response as well as supporting recovery.

3.4. Direct support for schools

A revised allocation of £1.059m was set aside for direct support to schools. Funding was made available to support schools experiencing impacts arising from the incidents.

All schools affected by the incidents were contacted and advised to contact Sefton Council should they identify any additional pressures, support requirements or recovery needs, that they could not manage themselves and where they needed additional support. Through ongoing engagement with schools, trusts and education leaders, a number of schools identified specific support requirements arising from the incidents.

Alongside engagement with schools and trusts, understanding of need was informed by ongoing conversations with affected children, families and partner agencies. Schools were often the primary route through which concerns, emerging issues and requests for support were identified

and escalated. This helped shape the support offer over time and ensured that responses remained proportionate to the needs being experienced by children, families and school communities.

Requests for support were considered on the basis of identified need, the nature of the impact being experienced and the support already available within individual settings. Where schools identified additional pressures and submitted requests for support, they supplied information on the need and the response to that need. This was assessed to ensure they were directly linked to needs arising from the incident, and appropriate funding was provided accordingly. All requests received were approved on the basis of evidenced need which met the grant funding requirements, this was a proportionate response to rapidly evolving humanitarian assistance needs.

The schools that requested funding had an immediate need for additional support, although this looked different in each setting. Funding enabled schools to maintain safe, stable and familiar environments for children at a time of significant uncertainty, whilst continuing to operate effectively and minimise disruption to education.

This included supporting schools to maintain attendance, educational continuity and access to learning for all pupils. In a number of settings, the impact extended beyond children directly affected by the incident, with wider groups of pupils being supported by staff who had themselves been affected through their relationships with the children, families and school communities involved. Schools used the funding to increase pastoral, therapeutic and staffing capacity, provide counselling and supervision, support staff wellbeing and resilience, deliver targeted support for children and families, and create opportunities for children to remain connected to trusted adults, friendship groups and school routines.

Visits undertaken with schools during 2026 reinforced these needs. Feedback from schools highlighted that the value of the funding extended beyond individual interventions. Schools described how it helped them maintain continuity, preserve trusted relationships and respond flexibly to emerging needs over time. This was particularly important as the impact was felt by all those affected, extending to friendship groups, classmates, families, staff and the wider school community.

Schools highlighted the importance of building staff confidence and capability so that support could be sustained within the school over the longer term, rather than relying solely on external provision. Schools also reported that the support helped create the conditions for children to remain engaged in school, maintain routines and access education consistently throughout the recovery period.

A key principle was that support should respond to locally identified need rather than impose a single model across schools. Headteachers and governing bodies were best placed to understand the impact on their children, staff and communities, and the resources they already had access to and what additional support they needed. The Council therefore worked with individual schools and trusts to understand emerging pressures and agree proportionate responses, while maintaining appropriate oversight of the use of public funding.

Funding allocations therefore varied between schools and should not be viewed as a measure of impact or need. Allocations reflected a range of factors including the number of children and staff affected, the nature and scale of support required, existing provision already available within individual settings and the recovery activities proposed to address identified needs within each school community.

The wellbeing and resilience of school staff was a key part of the response. Staff were supporting children and families through exceptionally difficult circumstances while also managing the impact on themselves and colleagues. Support therefore recognised that sustaining the workforce supporting children was integral to sustaining effective support for children. This included access to Educational Psychology advice, trauma-informed practice and opportunities for school leaders and staff to reflect on emerging needs and seek specialist support.

Detailed records and supporting evidence were maintained for all approved expenditure.

The table below shows the funding provided to individual schools where additional support needs were identified and approved.

School	Type	Funding (£)
Churchtown Primary School	Primary	546,815
Farnborough Road Junior School	Primary	183,622
Farnborough Road Infant School	Primary	101,561
Marshside Primary School	Primary	100,098
Presfield High School & Specialist College	Special	52,360
St John's CE Primary School, Crossens	Primary	26,839
Meols Cop High School	Secondary	2,625
Total		**1,013,920**

To provide greater transparency about how funding was used, school allocations have been grouped into common themes. While support was tailored to the needs of individual schools, the table below illustrates the main areas where funding supported children, staff and school communities.

Funding Allocations by Theme:

Funding Theme	Purpose
Staffing Capacity and Educational Continuity	Additional staffing, cover arrangements and temporary capacity to maintain educational provision and continuity of learning, while providing direct pastoral, therapeutic and safeguarding support for children and families.
Pupil Therapeutic and Emotional Support	Counselling, therapeutic interventions, pastoral support and activities designed to support the emotional wellbeing and recovery of children and young people.
Staff Wellbeing and Professional Support	Wellbeing initiatives, supervision, training and specialist support to assist staff responding to the impact of the incident and supporting affected pupils.
Safety, Security and Environmental Improvements	Measures to enhance the safety and security of school environments and provide reassurance to pupils, families and staff.
Recovery & Community Support	Flexible funding used to address locally identified recovery needs, including family engagement activity, pupil enrichment opportunities, transition support and other interventions that contributed to the wider recovery of school communities.

The table below provides a breakdown of approved school allocations by common funding themes. Whilst support was tailored to the needs of individual schools and communities, grouping expenditure in this way demonstrates the principal areas where funding supported recovery activity across the education system.

Note: Allocations have been grouped according to their principal purpose. In practice, many activities supported more than one outcome and therefore contributed across multiple themes. For example, funding categorised as Staffing Capacity and Educational Continuity frequently enabled direct pastoral, therapeutic and safeguarding support for children and families, whilst also ensuring schools could maintain stable staffing arrangements, trusted relationships and continuity of education for the wider pupil population.

Themed allocations by School:

School	Staffing Capacity & Educational Continuity (£)	Pupil Therapeutic & Emotional Support (£)	Staff Wellbeing & Professional Support (£)	Safety, Security & Environmental Improvements (£)	Total Allocation (£)
Churchtown Primary School	322,967	180,972	41,894	982	**546,815**
Marshside Primary School	74,083	-	15,611	10,404	**100,098**
Farnborough Road Infant School	15,898	34,928	39,482	11,253	**101,561**
Farnborough Road Junior School	61,272	38,100	21,585	62,665	**183,622**
Presfield High School & Specialist College	-	16,500	35,860	-	**52,360**
St John's CE Primary School, Crossens	4,800	19,879	2,160	-	**26,839**
Meols Cop High School	-	-	2,625	-	**2,625**
Total	**479,020**	**290,379**	**159,217**	**85,304**	**1,013,920**

3.5. Total cost of actions

The total investment in support delivered under this objective was £2.226m, comprising Recovery Fund expenditure and additional Council-funded activity, as outlined below:

Recovery Funding:

Action	Funding Allocation (£m)	Funding (£m)
FAST / CHAT	0.178	0.175
Trauma Informed Training	0.008	0.008
Team Around the School	0.523	0.451
Sefton CVS support to TAS	0.000	0.075
School Support	1.059	1.014
Other (Support to pupils indirectly impacted/affected, Family Wellbeing Centre & Medical Supplies)	0.117	0.103
Total Recovery Funding	**1.885**	**1.826**

Additional Council-funded Activity:

This funding was provided directly by the Council and is separate from the school allocations detailed above.

Action	Funding (£m)
Trauma Informed Training (Council funded)	0.102
FAST / CHAT (committed)	0.002
Team Around the School (committed)	0.098
Sefton CVS support to TAS	0.025
School Security Improvements (completed works across education settings)	0.173
Total Additional Council Funding	**0.400**

School Security Improvements

In addition to the funding provided through the Southport Recovery Programme, the Council allocated funding from its existing School Capital Allocation programme to support additional security improvements at a number of educational settings across Sefton. These measures were intended to enhance site security, strengthen safeguarding arrangements and provide reassurance for pupils, staff and families following the incidents. The improvements delivered to date are summarised below:

School	Security Improvement Delivered	Cost (£)
Ainsdale St John's Primary School	Replacement perimeter fencing	19,267
Birkdale Primary School	Replacement perimeter fencing	11,676
Cambridge Nursery	Entrance door video intercom	1,308
Farnborough Road Junior School	Perimeter fencing and wall improvements	2,976
Green Park Primary School	Perimeter fencing	4,468
Hatton Hill Primary School	Perimeter fencing, gates and entrance intercom	5,168
Kingsmeadow Primary School	Perimeter fencing to front and side elevations	25,076
Larkfield Primary School	Perimeter fencing to front and side elevations	12,426
Marshside Primary School	Automated vehicle gates and video intercom system	20,000
Northway Primary School	Perimeter fencing and automated pedestrian and vehicle gates	26,908
Norwood Primary School	Perimeter fencing and automated pedestrian and vehicle gates	23,476
Springwell Park Primary School	Perimeter fencing	17,052
Summerhill Primary School	Temporary fencing	2,778
Total		**172,579**

Further funding has also been committed to support additional security improvements at a number of schools, with works currently being planned and progressed. These works are currently being developed and will be delivered as arrangements are finalised.

Overall Total:

Category	Funding (£m)
Recovery Funding	1.826
Additional Council Funding	0.400
Total Funding	**2.226**

The Council, schools, trusts and partners delivered a coordinated education recovery response, with schools acting as the trusted front line around children and families and the Council providing the specialist support, additional capacity and infrastructure needed to sustain that role.

4. Ongoing support

In addition to TAS, which continues and is funded by the Council, and at the heart of the ongoing support, is the commitment to the children who experienced the tragic events and the long-term effects this could have. The ongoing Council/education support is focused on two strands, which are linked to the wider health and psychological support.

The Education Passport:

All children directly affected by the events of 29 July 2024, continue to receive educational support through arrangements designed to ensure their needs are understood and responded to over the longer term.

For children attending schools in Sefton, this is delivered through an Education Passport overseen by Sefton Virtual School in partnership with schools, families and relevant professionals. Information is developed collaboratively with children, families, schools and relevant professionals and is reviewed formally at least annually, with additional reviews taking place where circumstances or needs change. The Passport records educational progress, attendance, support received, strengths, interests, identified triggers and strategies that support the child to succeed in education.

The Education Passport provides the long-term mechanism for coordinating educational support for children directly affected by the events of July 2024. The lead for each Passport is the child's school, with ongoing oversight and support provided by the Virtual School to help ensure continuity over time. This arrangement is funded through core council resources and the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block rather than the Southport Recovery Grant.

Children attending schools in Lancashire are supported through arrangements led and overseen by Lancashire County Council and their schools. Whilst the operational arrangements differ from those in Sefton, both councils have worked together to promote a consistent approach to supporting children directly affected by the incident, particularly in relation to educational

transitions, understanding individual needs and identifying emerging support requirements. This reflects a shared commitment to ensuring that support follows the child regardless of where they attend school.

The Education Passport and corresponding arrangements in Lancashire recognise that the impact of trauma may change over time and may become more apparent at different developmental stages or key transition points. Particular attention is therefore given to transitions between educational settings, including movement between schools and progression from primary to secondary education, helping to ensure that important information and support arrangements are maintained wherever possible.

These arrangements help reduce the need for children and families to repeatedly explain their experiences whilst ensuring that schools and partner agencies have access to relevant information about educational, pastoral and wellbeing needs. Information gathered through the Passport process also helps identify emerging educational, pastoral or therapeutic needs and informs discussions with relevant services where additional support may be required. Alongside ongoing engagement with schools, health partners and the wider Team Around the School model, this provides continued oversight and assurance that children remain connected to appropriate support as their needs evolve over time.

Further information

If you have any questions about the information contained in this document, please contact the Southport Recovery Team:

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