

## Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: 13 December 2023 stakeholder update.

The SEND Partnership Improvement Board has been established to oversee SEND improvement activity across the whole system in Nottinghamshire, with a focus on the priorities and areas for improvements identified in the [Ofsted and CQC inspection report](#). The Board meets monthly and is chaired independently by Dame Christine Lenehan, formerly Director Council for Disabled Children. For the period Oct – December 2023, the Board will be chaired by Deputy Deborah Glassbrook, who is also the Local Government Association SEND Improvement Advisor.

The aim of the Nottinghamshire SEND Improvement Board is to robustly track, monitor and oversee the Nottinghamshire SEND Improvement Programme so that the aims are achieved at pace and provide challenge and support to increase the likelihood of the aims being achieved.

The purpose of these stakeholder briefings is to update you on progress of the SEND Improvement Programme so you can share the work that is taking place via your networks. You can see previous [stakeholder briefings](#) from Improvement Board meetings from June 2023 onwards.

The most recent Board meeting took place on 15 December which focused on an overall update on the SEND improvement work so far.

### Nottinghamshire Partnership Progress & Assurance Report

The Board received a presentation on the SEND improvement work to date.

Following the inspection, improvement activity was initiated through the joint development of our Priority Action Plan (PAP), where the partnership was required to jointly consider:

- how the partnership proposed to address the areas for priority action and areas for improvement
- the responsible partner for each proposed action
- the period within which each action is to be taken.

Through the PAP, the partnership outlined the 6 key outcomes\* that it is seeking to achieve through the SEND Improvement Programme.

What has gone well so far:

- The partnership is much stronger now with improved working relationships and ways of working.
- The profile of SEND has increased locally – it is a priority to more people and awareness continues to grow.
- The partnership is full of people with passion to make improvements for children and young people with SEND.
- Positive strides have been made in relation to the reduction in waiting times, as evidenced through data and reporting.
- Additional programme/project capacity has enabled dedicated capacity to drive forward improvements.

Some lessons learnt by the partnership:

- The programme was based on the PAP structure – it doesn't make it easy to be dynamic to emerging issues or integrate activity across ICB/LA. The 'areas for improvement' need to be more embedded.
- The partnership needs to move even further away from a deficit-based model into a more strengths-based approach in order to deliver sustainable improvements.
- The partnership needs to make sure it is balancing the time spent reporting on progress and impact and the time focusing on making improvements at pace.
- There is more the partnership can do to improve partnership communications – with families, partners and the professional workforce.
- The partnership needs to recognise and ensure that SEND is everyone's responsibility – ensuring that it engages effectively with the workforce 'on the ground' to inform / drive forward improvements.

[\\*Update on outcomes](#)

Outcome 1: Children and Young People with SEND in Nottinghamshire have their needs identified and assessed in a timely way through statutory processes.

Difference made so far:

- More families are receiving EHCPs within timescales: year-to-date in 2023 (as of November) 28.3% of our children and young people received their EHC Plan within 140 days compared to the year-end position of 4.5% in 2022. The aim is to reach 30% by the end of December 2023.

- Less time waiting: On average families were waiting 5 weeks less to received their EHC Plans in September 2023 than they were in January 2023 (36.8 weeks down to 28.3)
- Reduced backlog for EHC needs assessments: The number of children and young people waiting for educational psychology EHC needs assessments reduced from 488 in September 2023 to 359 December 2023.
- More educational psychology assessments are being completed each month: on average 84 received an assessment in 2022/23 compared to 72 in 2021/22

What is planned next:

- Use feedback from parents and carers to focus attention on improvements that will make the most difference to them.
- Connect with activity under Outcome 3 'SEND Educational Pathway Officer roles' to help children and young people have their needs better met within the Graduated Response Pathway - helping them access support earlier rather than through an EHCP.
- Continue to review operational processes, systems and structure to identify changes which will improve efficiency.

Outcome 2: Our children and young people with SEND receive robust and consistent support through their EHC Plans, which have the right input, at the right time and from the right place.

Difference made so far:

- The partnership is working more effectively together, rather than separate organisations: (per the results from the Partnership Survey). An effective multiagency approach is key in providing our children and young people with effective EHC Plans and robust Annual Reviews.
- Improving Annual Reviews: greater focus operationally on ensuring Annual Reviews (and issuing of amended EHCPs within statutory timescales) are completed on time. There is still work to do on data and reporting to help us manage and forecast this more effectively.

What is planned next:

- Use feedback from parents and carers to focus attention on improvements that will make the most difference to them.

- Reviewing the end-to-end process for Annual Reviews, including how Health Teams manage/allocate/complete referrals and how we better forecast and monitor Annual Reviews more effectively together.
- Understanding where any gaps might exist in our reporting and data.
- Develop a combined data set for the SEND population in Nottinghamshire which will combine data from across organisations and providers.

Outcome 3: Children and young people with additional needs, but without an EHC Plan, have their needs identified, met, and monitored effectively.

Difference made so far:

- Providing more support for families and managing demand better: created a new SEND Educational Pathway Officer role, with 3 officers already in post and 2 more currently being recruited. These officers will provide dedicated 1:1 support to families and educational settings, helping them understand and better navigate their way through applying and accessing SEN support. This role will also help to manage demand for EHC needs assessment (see Outcome 1).
- Support for children in education - there has been a 20% uplift in 'High Needs Funding' agreed for the current academic year 2023/24, to support children and young people with SEN needs in mainstream school settings. There is now a SEN Funding Tracker which can track the allocation of this funding (currently being piloted by two groups of schools).

What is planned next:

- Use feedback from parents and carers to focus our attention on improvements that will make the most difference to them.
- Undertake a multi-agency deep dive, in order to: review of the effectiveness and understanding of the graduated approach to inform improvements, and scope detailed action plan to improve inclusive practice and oversight of inclusion within settings.
- Review the training offer for SENCOs and address any gaps to improve workforce development.
- Improve SENCo, parent and carer and pupil confidence around the Graduated Response Pathway, through sharing examples of best practice to improve consistency.

Outcome 4: The needs of children and families with SEND are clearly understood so that immediate and long term changes to health service provision can be made through effective joint commissioning.

Difference made so far:

- A dedicated Data Analyst is now in post within the ICB to embed data flows from providers to ICB to generate data, insight and intelligence to drive quality improvement, monitor impact, reduce waiting times and improve access to services.
- A data sharing agreement between partners has now been signed which will result in a draft first performance report for the end of January 2024 to enable robust oversight and management of provider performance to deliver a quality and timely offer to children and families.
- System partners have worked collaboratively to review all provision. This has allowed a better understanding of services and commissioning gaps and duplication in service offer.
- Variations to contracts with Nottinghamshire Healthcare Foundation Trust, CityCare and the Healthy Family Services have been transacted to include explicit reporting requirements relating to SEND. This will be replicated in the 2024/25 contracts with Nottingham University Hospitals and Sherwood Forest Hospitals in line with the requisite notice period.
- The bolstering of existing mechanisms to monitor and performance manage services that are underperforming in their offer to the children and young people with SEND will increase the likelihood that families receive a quality service and experience going forwards. Trusts are contractually required to produce a bi-annual narrative to support the partnership leadership's oversight and understanding of provision.
- Joint commissioning of Speech, Language and Communication Need services is in place for early years and will be expanded to include services for children over 5 from April 2024. The System jointly commissions an Integrated Community Equipment Service through The Red Cross, and the partnership has implemented improvement measures such new proforma in place, including photos so that the right components is stored with / sent out with the right equipment.

What is planned next:

- Data to be refined so that areas of pressure can be more clearly understood - local authority data (including education data) and health data to be combined to better understand overall local population need so that commissioning intentions are fully informed.

- A performance report format will be agreed in December 2023, with a stocktake of available data. The partnership will be held to account for provision of data through the fortnightly data meeting.
- There is commitment from all partners and plans will be developed to jointly commission a sensory therapy service by September 2024 (dependent on funding availability).

Outcome 5: Children and Young People receive timely assessment and treatment offer for assessment by the Neurodevelopmental Behaviour Service (NBS).

Difference made so far:

- An extensive review of the neurodevelopmental pathway has resulted in recruiting additional staff to NBS. This means that children and families are now waiting less time for an assessment – waiting times have reduced from 22 months to 13 months due to increased efficiency in triage and assessment. Based on the current position waiting time expected to be at 7 months by the end of December 2023.
- Significant engagement with families, children and young people has informed a broader understanding of the lived experience of people accessing these services. Feedback resulted in children and families now being supported through the introduction of resources to ensure they can wait well.
- A co-production group, including young people and parents/carers with lived experience, has been formed to support the development of the Children & Young Peoples Neurodevelopmental website “Minds of all Kinds”. The website will be live in January 2024

What is planned next:

- Sustainable, long-term service improvements have been identified and plans are in place to implement these by March 24.
- Full recommendations of engagement will be available in January 2024 and, in conjunction with data, will inform commissioning plans.
- A shared care record across the system to speed up the assessment process and subsequent waiting times by the end of April 2024
- By May 2024, the partnership will address the needs of the cohort of young people (17+) who currently can't access either Community Paediatrics or the adult NESS service – they will turn 18 before/during a community paediatric assessment and are not 18 currently so can't be added to adult list.
- Implementation of e-referral process to facilitate direct onward referral from NBS to Community Paediatrics by the end of January 2024

- Implementing the [Vanderbilt Questionnaire](#) as part of the pre-assessment process to reduce waits further., the impact will be assessed on an ongoing basis.
- Explore further the opportunity for joint assessments with CAMHS/NBS from June 2024 to ensure the primary need for the child/young person is identified, be it neurodevelopmental or mental health.
- Scoping the additional support required to schools' pathway process, reasonable adjustments and education required in schools for supporting children and young people with Autism/ADHD.
- Nottingham Neurodevelopmental Network – ICB, University of Nottingham research team and key stakeholders – to codevelop and inform the redesign of the development of the ideal neurodevelopmental pathway for children & young people.

Outcome 6: Children, young people and families with SEND experience services that are easy to navigate, free from duplication and are adaptive to their needs.

Difference made so far:

- System partners have worked collaboratively to review all provision. There is now a better understanding of services and commissioning gaps and duplications have been identified in the service offer.
- Additional speech and language therapists are now in post to reduce the time children and families have to wait to 13 weeks. There has been a reduction of 2 weeks wait time seen in November / December 2023 and there are now over 100 fewer children on the wait list than in September 2023. The service will take a targeted approach by seeing families, children and young people who have waited the longest. Initial triaging is being undertaken to ensure that need hasn't changed and that the child / young person's situation hasn't deteriorated significantly / is on the right pathway.
- Resources are now actively being used to ensure that families, children and young people are 'waiting well'.
- Occupational therapy (OT) and physio waiting lists are being re-prioritised to ensure those waiting longest are seen quickly. Capacity will be in place to see all children within 13 weeks by April 2024.
- An ethos of continuous quality improvement is embedded to ensure lessons learned, robust performance management and comprehensive data, translates to service change and improvement going forwards.
- Quality assurance mechanisms have been put in place in local equipment provider services to ensure families receive equipment that is fit for purpose.

What is planned next:

- Embedding advice and drop-in sessions for schools to access generic advice and support about SEND by April 2024
- Completion of the enhancement of the traded offer within schools by September 2024 (funding dependent) 2024
- Addressing the outputs of the Speech Language and Communication Needs pathway review through a 12-month transformation programme of work to December 2024
- Re-design of the collaborative service specification for currently commissioned OT services to ensure a seamless and efficient pathway. Free from duplication.

The Chair reflected about the positive work that is taking place but it has taken some time to get to this point. Now that the partnership is working at pace, this pace needs to be continued. The partnership needs to demonstrate it can make a difference in the time that children and young people need.

Matt Rooney, Principal, St Giles School reflected that it has been a huge piece of work to gather all the information together. He stated that there are good leaders involved and he is confident that they are really focused on this improvement work.

### APA2 Deep Dive Feedback

Representatives from the Department for Education will need to reflect on today's meeting to determine if milestones on APA2 are being met.

A project plan for the six outcomes showing where the partnership is performing on progress and impact for each outcome is needed. This will be brought to the January Board meeting.

### Improvement Board attendees

- Deborah Glassbrook, Independent Chair, Council for Disabled Children
- Councillor Tracey Taylor - Lead Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and SEND
- Nick Harrison - Senior Programme Manager, Children and Young People and SEND, NHS England (NHSE)
- Rebecca Hogan - SEND Professional Adviser, Department for Education
- Georgina Palmer - Lead of Nottinghamshire Parent/Carer Forum, Nottinghamshire Parent/Carer Forum
- Paul Heery - Chief Executive Officer, White Hills Park Trust



- Matt Rooney - Principal, St Giles School
- Colin Pettigrew - Corporate Director, Children and Families & Joint SRO of the SEND Improvement Programme, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Rosa Waddingham, Chief Nurse, ICB
- Ifti Majid, Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust
- Peter McConnochie, Service Director for Education, Learning and Inclusion, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Ian Dixon, East Midlands Regional Lead for SEND, Department for Education (DfE)
- Lucy Dadge, Director of Integration, ICB
- Natasha Mathers - SEND Improvement Programme Manager, ICB and Nottinghamshire County Council
- Matt Rooney, Principal at St Giles School
- Sarah Dalgress - SEND Improvement Programme Business Support Administrator, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Julie Cuthbert - Head of Communications, ICB
- Tina Ward, Children & Young People Learning Disability & Autism and SEND Senior Manager (East Midlands), NHS England
- Lynda Poole, Group Manager Integrated Children's Disability Service, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Orlaith Green, Group Manager for Psychology and Inclusion Services, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Lucy Peel, Service Director for Transformation and Service Improvement, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Nicola Ryan, Deputy Chief Nurse – Operations and Delivery, ICB
- Maxine Bunn, System Delivery Director, Mental Health and Children, ICB
- Helen Lappin, Deputy Head of Children's Commissioning and Transformation, ICB
- Holly Shuttleworth, SEND Improvement Project Manager, ICB

If you or a colleague would like to be added to the distribution list for this stakeholder update, please email [nnicb-nn.comms@nhs.net](mailto:nnicb-nn.comms@nhs.net)