

Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: September 2023 stakeholder update

Following the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) local area inspection undertaken by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) between 30 January 2023 to 3 February 2023, the SEND Partnership Improvement Board has been established to oversee SEND improvement activity in Nottinghamshire, with a focus on improvements identified in the inspection report. The Board is chaired independently by Dame Christine Lenehan, who is Director of the national organisation, the Council for Disabled Children

The aim of the Board is to provide both support and challenge across the partnership, facilitating solution-focussed practice to resolve issues and barriers that impact on the timely delivery of the Nottinghamshire SEND Improvement Programme. The Board will ensure that the SEND Improvement Programme achieves its aims with the required pace and ownership of partner members, whilst maintaining a relentless focus on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire.

The latest meeting of the Board took place on 24 August and covered the following topics:

Spotlight on Schools

There was a comprehensive and wide-ranging discussion about the vital role schools have in driving improvements in SEND provision and the need for high standards to be applied consistently across Nottinghamshire.

The Board recognised the key role that schools play as the main, constant interface with children, young people, parents and carers. This means there is a clear need to increase awareness about improvement activity for people working in the sector, which they in turn communicate to parents and carers they interact with regularly.

The importance of sharing best practice across the education, health and care sectors, and a combined commitment to support change and improvement was acknowledged. The Board reflected that this relied on leadership, culture and effective communication to health and care practitioners at all levels.

The Board acknowledged that better promotion and understanding of the graduated response was required, so that parents and carers can feel more confident that it can deliver good outcomes for children and young people.

Learning best practice from other high-performing areas will be important and Dame Christine Lenehan referenced the excellent SENCO work in Lincolnshire schools as a potential model we can learn from.

There was discussion about the need for Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) to be engaged in delivering the improvement programme, acknowledging the new national “quality” descriptions for MATs published by the DfE which promotes different ways of evaluating their effectiveness– not just exam results, but how they deal with their most vulnerable children.

The Board agreed that a mapping exercise should be carried out to identify any geographical gaps in how SEND work is co-ordinated and best practice shared across schools. The learning from this is to be brought back to Board at a later date.

Current Ofsted positions at Nottinghamshire Special Schools

Recent inspection failings are a concern for the Board but were assured that learning is being captured and used to inform improvement work and greater collaboration across the partnership.

The importance of the bi-annual safeguarding visits to schools was stressed, which intend to provide shared accountability across the local authority and NHS, as well as being a supportive, learning mechanism for schools.

The Board reflected that while the report was helpful in providing an overview, more detail is required and it was agreed that information covering a number of key areas for schools to self-assess (or peer assess) against, will be provided to offer greater insight and assurance to the Board.

SEND Joint Communications and Engagement Plan

A joint communications and engagement plan, including aims, objectives and key messages was considered by the Board.

The plan set out how engagement with children, young people and families relating to the improvement plan could be delivered over the coming months, together with communication activity about the programme over the next 18 months.

The importance of making reasonable adjustments to ensure children, young people, parents and carers from all backgrounds can play a part in activities was stressed, particularly where families may be restricted due to financial or health restrictions.

The links to the wider activity of the SEND Coproduction Workstream were noted by the Board and it was agreed that comms and engagement leads work with co-production workstream leads to develop a co-production statement of intent to be considered at the next board meeting on 22 September.

Nottinghamshire SEND Improvement Programme - Spotlight Report

The Spotlight Report uses data to monitor how the SEND partnership is delivering against its improvement aims. The report highlighted:

Positive progress on EHC Plans, performing at 50% in June and July, which is the England average.

Good progress has been made around data intelligence but further work required to understand trajectories.

The Board welcomed the work done so far but recognised the need for greater detail in a number of areas to understand the bigger picture. Workstream leads will be asked to develop a statement of strategic intent and how they are evidencing impact of their activity at the September Board meeting.

District Council input

The Board discussed a representation from a District Council to consider representation of district councils on the board

It was agreed that a check-and-balance process would take place to ensure opportunities are available for a place/district influence on a programme level and within the appropriate governance forums.

Improvement Board attendees

- Dame Christine Lenehan: Independent Chair, Council for Disabled Children
- Nick Harrison: Senior Programme Manager, Children and Young People and SEND, NHS England (NHSE)
- Tina Ward, Children and Young People Learning Disability and Autism and SEND Senior Manager (East Midlands), NHSE
- Ian Dixon, East Midlands Regional Lead for SEND, NHSE
- 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
- Rosa Waddingham: Director of Nursing & Joint SRO of the SEND Improvement Programme, NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board
- Colin Pettigrew: Corporate Director, Children and Families & Joint SRO of the SEND Improvement Programme, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Melanie Williams: Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Public Health and Member of Integrated Care Partnership Board, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Ifti Majid, Chief Executive, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Natasha Wrzesinski: SEND Improvement Programme Manager, NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board *and* Nottinghamshire County Council

- Sarah Dalgress, SEND Improvement Programme Business Administrator, Nottinghamshire County Council
- Alex Ball, Director of Communications & Engagement, NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board
- Rob Shirley, Media & External Affairs Communications Manager, NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board

Apologies:

- Lucy Dadge, Director of Integration, NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board
- Kevin Rowland, SEND Professional Adviser, DfE
- Cllr Tracey Taylor: Lead Member, Nottinghamshire County Council