

Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: 27 February 2024 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, Strategic Advisor for the National Children's Bureau and formerly Director Council for Disabled Children.

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 27 February which focused on the SEND stocktake and refresh of the Priority Action Plan.

Outcome from SEND stocktake

The Department for Education (DfE) on behalf and with the agreement of the Minister for Education responded on the results of their SEND stocktake yesterday and confirmed he is assured of progress.

The Department for Education and NHS England stated that they were pleased to hear that progress has been made against the activity in the Priority Action Plan (PAP) and how the partnership has matured with stronger collective leadership of the improvements needed across the local area. They stated that the documentation submitted and the evidence provided during the stocktake demonstrated evidence of progress including:

- Clear senior corporate interest and engagement reflected in regular meetings between the local authority and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) at Chief Executive level. This is coupled with changes to the County Council cabinet to reflect the Leader's priorities with the creation of two children focused members (one for Education and SEND and one for CSC and Families).
- A strong sense of partnership, and leaders working more collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

- Leaders investing in new roles focused on local area SEND transformation and improvement, including a SEND programme lead, an independent SEND Improvement Board Chair and pathway leads.
- A focus on the wider SEND system in Nottinghamshire including undertaking a SEND Improvement Programme 'Reset' to evaluate progress since the inspection.
- Leaders have made a decision to restructure programme activity to enable a greater focus on the Partnership's six key coproduced outcomes.
- Knowing it can be difficult to maintain a stable SEND workforce following an outcome of this nature, we were pleased to hear that professionals remain dedicated and committed to improving provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Improved 20-week timeliness through an increase in resource to support EHC needs assessments, on average families were waiting five weeks less to receive their EHC Plans in September 2023 than they were in January 2023 (36.8 weeks down to 28.3).
- At the time of inspection, 4.5% of EHC Plans were issued within 20 weeks. This has increased to 28% in line with planned improvements, and the leadership ambition is to exceed the national average, currently at 49%.
- Co-production with families and young people has improved with effective working relationships with the parent carer forum (PCF) and Young Pioneers. Leaders have committed to additional investment in the PCF to expand the offer to local families.

There are further specific improvements they would like to see:

- SEND governance structures and reporting processes should ensure robust oversight, monitoring, and responsiveness to escalation in relation to the Priority Action Plan (PAP) and wider SEND Transformation.
- Effective capturing of the SEND Improvement Programme 'Reset' narrative to demonstrate how it will support the Local Area Partnership's progress.
- The partnership should refine how it reports progress against the PAP to describe clearly the meaning of 'at risk' activities and to ensure any reporting has a clear narrative demonstrating current position and next steps.
- Improved and consistent communication about progress and plans with families and the workforce.

The DfE thanked Board for the approach and engagement during the process.

Governance arrangements

The Board meetings will move to a six-weekly programme. The operational and executive meetings will escalate any issues that need to go to Board for approval.

Refresh of Priority Action Plan

As part of the SEND Improvement Programme Reset in January 2024, programme activity has been restructured to enable a greater focus on the Partnership's 6 Outcomes. The revised structure and approach was presented to, and supported by, the SEND Partnership Improvement Board on 15 December 2023.

Programme reset activity has highlighted the need to review and refresh the Nottinghamshire Priority Action Plan in order to:

Review the actions under each of the aims to ensure they are SMART, do not duplicate other actions, are clear in terms of success criteria and reflect the activity that is underway/planned within the Outcome Working Groups.

Revise the due dates for actions where the deadline set out on the PAP has passed but activity is ongoing or only partially completed.

Revise the responsible action owners, where there has been a change of personnel.

The Board endorsed this approach.

Preparation for the deep dive

The deep dive is aimed at assessing the actions that were agreed with Ofsted around the Priority Action Plan, in discussion with the area leads. The deep dive will include a focus on what the impact has been following the completion of different actions.

The deep dive will take place on 19 March and the Board had a discussion to ensure all areas are prepared.

Communicating progress and impact

An updated communications and engagement plan will be discussed at the executive leadership meeting later this week. This will include plans for marking one

year on since the inspection being published, developing a narrative around the reset and including the voices of parents, carers, children and young people.

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