

Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: July 2025 partner update.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (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 every six weeks and is chaired independently by Dame Christine Lenehan.

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 partner 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 [briefings](#) from Improvement Board meetings from June 2023 onwards.

The most recent Board meeting took place on 3 July which focused on the SEND communications evaluation, Ofsted new inspection framework and SEND data report.

Partnership progress updates

The Board received a progress report on the Areas of Priority Action (APA)

Overall Progress (as of May 2025)

- **APA1 (Outcomes 1–3):** 100% of actions are either complete or embedded.
- **APA2 (Outcomes 4–6):** 92% of actions are complete or embedded, with 8% experiencing obstacles
- **No actions are rated Red or Grey**, indicating no significant risks or actions that have not been started.
- The Local Area Partnership continues to focus on continuous improvement activity in all areas.

APA1 – Education-Focused Improvements

1. **Outcome 1:** Timely identification and assessment of SEND needs.
 - Recruitment of Educational Psychologists and pathway officers has reduced EHCP backlogs.
 - Structured conversations and revised Stage 1 criteria have improved decision-making.
 - EHCP timeliness improved from 4.2% (2023) to 47.3% (2025 year to date).

2. **Outcome 2:** Quality and consistency of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs).
 - A 5-Level quality assurance framework has been implemented.
 - Invision 360 and AI tools are being used to support quality assurance.
 - 50% of EHCPs are rated “good” at draft stage.
3. **Outcome 3:** Support for children without EHCPs.
 - A new SEND Journey Map is live on NottsHelpYourself.
 - SEN Support cohort data is now tracked.
 - School staff confidence in inclusive practice has increased.

APA2 – Health and Commissioning Improvements

4. **Outcome 4:** Joint commissioning and data intelligence.
 - A SEND Data Dashboard is live and widely used.
 - A Joint Commissioning Strategy (2024–2027) has been published.
 - Governance structures are in place for ongoing oversight.
5. **Outcome 5:** Neurodevelopmental Support Team (NST) access.
 - Average wait times reduced from 68 to 56 weeks.
 - E-referral systems and access to care records have improved efficiency.
 - Families report improved communication and support while waiting.
6. **Outcome 6:** Service navigation and integration.
 - Drop-in sessions and advice lines support families awaiting Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) services.
 - A system review of local SLCN services has been undertaken, and recommendations collaboratively developed using available data and feedback from lived experience. A service redesign is being undertaken iteratively, informed by the recommendations made through the review process.
 - Transition frameworks are being embedded across health services.

Impact and Feedback

- Parent/carer satisfaction with EHCP processes has improved.
- Complaints about statutory timescales have decreased.
- Families report better understanding and support through clearer pathways and communication.
- Co-production with families and young people is embedded across all outcomes.

The Board agreed to focus on SLCN services at the next meeting.

Local area partnership position statement

The Board were updated on the story of the improvement programme so far:

Area for Improvement (AFI)1: Voice of Children and Families

- Ongoing investment in co-production, including a dedicated officer and collaboration with the Parent Carer Forum and Young Pioneers Youth Forum.
- Co-produced resources like the “Minds of All Kinds” website and SEND Journey Map.

AFI2: Quality Assurance of EHCPs

- A 5-Level quality assurance framework has been developed and embedded.
- Multi-agency audits and moderation sessions are underway.
- AI tools are being piloted to support EHCP quality and workflow.

AFI3: Governance

- Stronger partnership governance structures now in place.
- Regular multi-agency meetings and a published outcomes-based strategy guide improvement efforts.

AFI4: Use of Data for Commissioning

- The SEND Data Dashboard is now live and praised nationally.
- KPIs and performance metrics are embedded in contracts.
- A refreshed Joint Commissioning Strategy and Delivery Plan are in development for 2025–2027.

There were also updates about key projects already underway

- **ICDS Redesign Project:** Overhauling statutory EHC processes and staffing.
- **Inclusive Practice Project:** Strengthening graduated response and inclusive education.
- **Pathway Improvements:** Reviewing and improving neurodevelopmental and SLCN pathways.
- **Data and Strategy:** Expanding the dashboard and aligning commissioning with lived experience and performance data.

Actions from the improvement programme will need to transfer into business as usual.

Communications evaluation

The Board received a report on communications evaluation. This included social media engagement figures, website hits, interaction with the SEND journey map and results of a survey for the [SEND newsletter](#).

The SEND newsletter feedback shows that most of those responding (of which 76% were parents and carers) were happy with the content, style of newsletter, length and frequency.

Recommended actions:

- Continue to promote the newsletter to parents, carers and professionals.
- Keep the survey running and use the feedback to shape future content.
- Discuss with Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group and the Parent Carer Forum how we can include the content requested by parents and carers.
- Continue to evaluate the SEND journey map to see if this is a useful tool for parents and carers.
- Explore with children and young people what format they would like to receive SEND news.

Ofsted new inspection framework

The Ofsted / Care Quality Commission monitoring inspection has now started, with notification received by the Local Area Partnership on 30 June and in person visits by inspectors 14 – 16 July. The inspection will focus on the two [Priority Areas for Action](#) identified during the Nottinghamshire local area SEND inspection, January 2023, under the current Ofsted/CQC framework. The inspection will evaluate the progress the partnership has made in addressing these priorities and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The Inspectors have informed SEND local area partnership leaders that the fieldwork activity will include.

- Online and in person events for frontline practitioners for Education, events will take place at Nottinghamshire County Hall and be conducted by the HMI inspectors for Education.
- Online and in person events for frontline practitioners for Social Care.
- Online or in person events with a Single Point of Access for health service providers who provide advice and support for Therapy and Neurodevelopmental services and be conducted by the CQC inspector.
- Meetings with parents and carers.

SEND data report

The Board received a performance update which tracks progress across six outcomes aligned with the SEND Improvement Priority Action Plan, using quantitative metrics and stakeholder feedback.

Outcome 1: Timely EHC Assessments

- **EHC Plan Timeliness:** 33 new plans were issued on time in May 2025, with a year-to-date rate of 52.86%.
- **Assessment Volume:** 149 new EHC assessment requests were received in May 2025.
- **Backlog:** No EHC plans were overdue by more than 30 weeks.
- **Average Completion Time:** 199 days to finalise an EHC plan, with delays concentrated in the second panel and drafting stages.

Outcome 2: Annual Reviews

- **Timeliness:** Only 16.2% of annual reviews were completed on time in May 2025, down from 54% in May 2024.
- **Amendments:** 97.9% of EHC plan amendments were completed within 12 weeks.
- **Feedback:** 81% of families said reviews were completed on time; 83% felt their views were reflected.

Outcome 3: Inclusive Practice and SEN Support

- **Confidence in Graduated Response:** School SENDCOs rated confidence at 4.2/10; overall average was 4.5.
- **Challenges:** Top issues include lack of support, funding, and time.
- **Suggestions for Improvement:** Shorter timescales, better communication, and clearer processes.

Outcome 4: Joint Commissioning and Service Access

- **Satisfaction:** 31% of families were very dissatisfied with waiting times; 35% strongly disagreed that services met their needs.
- **SLCN Referrals:** 66% of professionals knew how to refer; ease of referral varied across services.
- **Sleep Services:** 537 referrals in 2023, mostly for children with ASD; highest referrals were for 4-year-olds.

Outcome 5: Neurodevelopmental Support

- **NST Waiting List:** Increased to 5,500 by Jan 2025; average wait reduced to 55 weeks.
- **Community Paediatrics (NUH & SFH):**
 - ADHD/ASD assessment wait times ranged from 30–60 weeks.
 - ADHD treatment wait times ranged from 15–76 weeks.
- **DBH (Bassetlaw):** ASD and ADHD wait times remained between 15–24 weeks.

Outcome 6: Therapy Services

- **Waiting Times:** Increased for most services, especially for those waiting 53–104 weeks.
- **EHCP Decision Panels:**
 - Pre-needs panel: 91 of 132 cases returned for further review.
 - Second panel: 80 of 88 cases resulted in an EHC plan.

Overall Trends

- **Improvements:** Notable in EHC plan amendment timeliness and reduction in long-overdue plans.
- **Challenges:** Persist in annual review timeliness, therapy wait times, and stakeholder satisfaction.
- **Data Use:** The report reflects strong use of Power BI dashboards to monitor performance and inform strategy.

The Board were informed that the SEND data dashboard has been shortlisted for a Health Service Journal award.

Dame Christine Lenehan

Independent Chair of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board