

## Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: July 2024 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 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 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 25 July which focused on partnership progress, understanding the view from schools and stocktake feedback.

### Partnership progress update

The Independent Chair requested more information about delays to improving the quality and timeliness of advice received for Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCPs) from health and social care partners. There will be a meeting this month to understand the issues and what is needed to mitigate them. Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust have also now appointed a SEND coordinator which should support with some of the actions.

The Board received a case study about Mason Dooley, a child who was supported to attend his first school swimming lesson with the rest of his class at Carlton Forum Leisure Centre recently. This followed a successful period of hydrotherapy as part of post-surgery rehab. This is the first time a ventilated child has accessed either hydrotherapy or mainstream swimming in Nottinghamshire and it was made possible through joint working between a range of partners.

The Board were presented with a deep dive report into speech and language therapy services. Report highlights include:

- 75% of Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) waits were less than 18 weeks, considerably better than statistical neighbours (midlands region) at 67% and national level at 62% (see Figure 11).
- The Home Talk Early Intervention (early years) Speech, Language and Communication Needs Service consistently had very positive survey results from parents of children accessing the service, with over 85% of parents reporting an improvement of some kind during their child's time within the service.
- Increase in waits within the SLCN service is likely due to the consistently higher referral rate compared to discharges. Discharges only outnumber referrals during the summer holidays which is not sufficient to reduce the caseload all year round.
- Family surveys from those accessing SLCN services show high dissatisfaction with the service provided and waiting time. However, in Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust's PACE survey, 92% of parents were extremely likely or likely to recommend the service in the Friends and Family Test and the service scored a quality rating of 91% (out of 99 responses).
- At the current rate of increased demand (high referrals and low discharges), trajectories show that the total waiting list is going to increase by 29% for the entire SLCN service and by 40% for the ASD pathway.
- There is a system-wide commitment to move to a joint commissioning approach for all children's SLCN services. This would enable a holistic joined up pathway, greater efficiencies, reduced duplication, easier promotion. Currently we have 3 different commissioning arrangements which makes it very challenging to promote the service as one pathway.

The Board welcomed the in-depth nature of the report.

### [Understanding the view from schools](#)

Paul Heery, Headteacher and Chief Executive of White Hills Park Trust, provided the Board with a view from a headteacher's perspective.

From conversations with other school leaders, they have reflected that the lack of resources for SEND is front and centre of schools' concerns.

The local authority has also spent three weeks meeting with school professionals to have conversations about SEND challenges and best practice and how they can work with schools to do things differently.

## Stocktake feedback

The stocktake is to test the decision-making and oversight of the improvement programme. The Department for Education (DfE) were pleased with the openness from the Partnership as part of the stocktake process.

The feedback from the most recent stocktake in June shows that there were a number of strengths, including improving the timeliness of EHCPs and data sharing.

Some areas for improvement include further development of the speech and language and autism spectrum disorder recovery plans and considering any specific population groups where bespoke approaches to better engage may be needed.

DfE welcomed the progress that has been made since the last stocktake in January 2024.

Dame Christine Lenehan

Independent Chair of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board