

Nottinghamshire Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF)

November 2024



**SEND
partnership**

Right support, right place,
right time

Contents

Introduction	3
Structure of our self-evaluation framework	6
Part 1:	7
SEND system leadership – How our leaders work together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire	
A shared strategy and governance: Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND	7
Co-production: leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families	10
Data and intelligence: leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area	12
Joint commissioning: leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including commissioning arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision	13
Partnership working: leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish	15
Quality assurance and improvement: leaders evaluate services and make improvements	17
Part 2:	
Improving experiences and outcomes for children with SEND in Nottinghamshire	18
Navigating the local SEND system: children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support	19
Graduated response: children and young people receive the right help at the right time	21
Reduce waiting times for specialist health services (SEND improvement area for priority action 2)	23
Individual impact: children and young people achieve strong outcomes	26
Statutory assessment: children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way	29
Area for Priority Action 1 – improving the timeliness and quality of our statutory assessment processes – education health and care plans	29
Preparing for adulthood and transitions: Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps	31
Preparing for adulthood (PFA)	31
Early years	34

Introduction

Executive summary

Our Nottinghamshire local area SEND Partnership brings together the organisations from across education, health, care, and the voluntary sector, which provide services to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire. Our local area partnership involves two large organisations, Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB). As a partnership, we are passionate about improving experiences and outcomes for children with SEND and their families in Nottinghamshire.

Our vision is underpinned in our new [outcomes-based strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Nottinghamshire 2024-2027](#). The outcomes we want to achieve are to ensure that our children and young people with SEND:

- are listened to and heard
- they are the healthiest they can be
- are safe and feel safe
- are accepted and valued
- are able to enjoy, have fun, and
- will be prepared for their futures.



At the heart of this vision is our commitment to co-production, collaboration and communication. By taking a co-produced, outcomes-based approach, we want to ensure that children, young people and their families and carers are at the centre of everything we do. This is visualised in 'Our Nottinghamshire Approach' (see below) and the [Nottingham and Nottinghamshire integrated care system co-production strategy 2022-2024](#), which outline how we commit to working with children, young people and their families and carers.



As a local area partnership, we are learning to work together with openness, honesty and transparency, holding each other to account to achieve positive outcomes for our children and young people with SEND and their families. Our [Area SEND Inspection of Nottinghamshire Local Area Partnership 2023](#) identified areas for significant improvement and we have been working hard as a partnership, including with SEND children, young people and their families, to improve their lived experiences.

We are proud of the progress we have made since our inspection, to improve experiences for our children and young people with SEND.

- We have established **stronger partnership governance structures and working arrangements** to ensure our leaders co-operate and hold shared priorities and accountability for the outcomes for our children with SEND. The **voices of children and young people and their parents and carers are included** within our partnership and within co-production and co-design of service improvement.
- More children and young people with SEND are receiving **timely assessment and identification of their needs** through education health and care plans.
- Children and young people are **waiting less for specialist neuro-developmental assessment and speech language and communication needs support**. Families also say they are experiencing better communication and support while they are waiting.
- We have a new **ambitious joint commissioning strategy** through which our leaders, including commissioners and providers, are working to identify and address the delays and gaps in access to health services for children with SEND.
- Our new shared **data dashboard** means the local area partnership can now better monitor outcomes for our children and young people with SEND. Partnership leaders can review available performance data to identify where gaps exist and whether actions taken to address these are effective.

The local area partnership has worked hard together to make significant improvements detailed within this self-evaluation framework, however we recognise that currently there continue to be inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and some children are still waiting too long for assessment and support. This self-evaluation framework sets out where we are now and what we intend to do in the next 12 months.



Structure of our self-evaluation framework

This self-evaluation framework (SEF) uses the 11 [evaluative criteria](#) provided under the national local area SEND inspection framework as a structure. We aim to use this SEF document as a key driver for strategic planning and decision making across our local area partnership. It will be a working document, regularly updated to facilitate a collaborative understanding of our progress, challenges and priorities. Several key documents provide further detail of the context behind this self-evaluation including the local area's [priority action plan](#), our shared [outcomes-based strategy](#) and the [annual delivery plan](#) as well as our [annex A data: information requested to support local area SEND inspections](#). For each self-evaluation criteria, we have asked ourselves:

- What do you know about the impact of your arrangements for children and young people with SEND?
- How do you know what impact your arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having?
- What are your plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

We have used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to answer these questions, gathered from multiple sources. The data presented in this document is accurate as of September 2024. As per the national self-evaluation framework, we will explore the SEND system leadership in Part 1 and outcomes for our children and families in Part 2 of this SEF.



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Rosa Waddingham
Director of Nursing
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Integrated Care Board



Part 1:

SEND system leadership

How our leaders work together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire

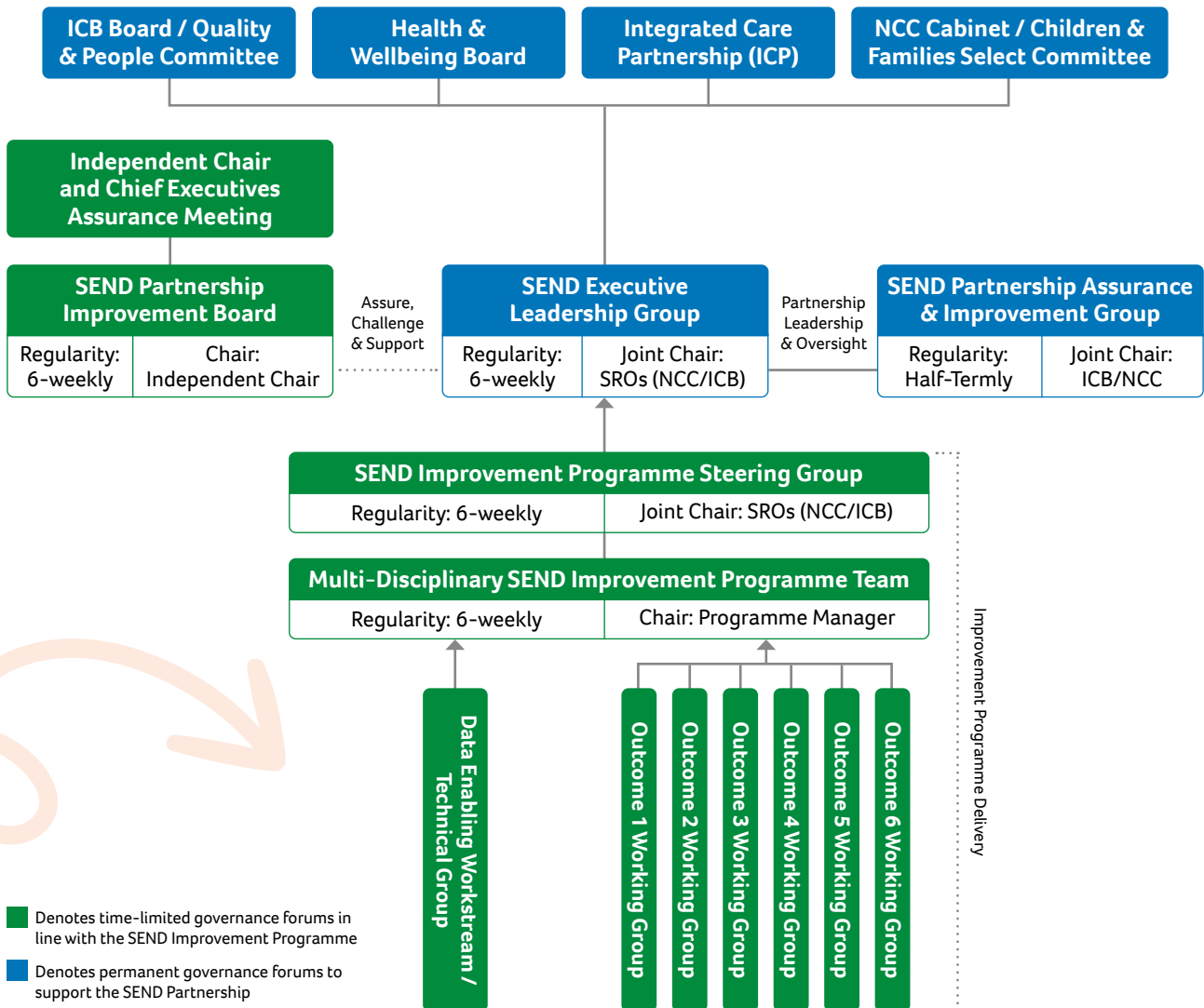
A shared strategy and governance:
leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

We have established strong partnership arrangements to ensure shared knowledge, priorities and actions across the local area partnership, focused on improving outcomes for our children and young people with SEND. We have also published our shared co-produced outcomes-based strategy for children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire, 2024-2027.



In 2023-2024, we invested in shaping new governance and partnership arrangements to hold shared accountability for our local SEND system. These arrangements have been designed to focus on improving outcomes for our children and young people with SEND as set out in our [outcomes-based strategy 2024-2027](#). Our new arrangements are presented below:



Collaboration, co-production and communication across all our workstreams and evaluative areas are key areas of focus and development with representatives of all partners involved throughout the new structures, including the voices of parents and carers, and children and young people with SEND. As a result, we are now able to demonstrate better analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation as shared partnership endeavours. Our structures for governance allow for focus on improvement areas for priority action through a priority action plan as well as broader improvements through our strategic planning cycle (i.e. our outcomes-based strategy and annual delivery plan). Partnership boards and multi-disciplinary groups meet regularly and are well-attended by representatives from across the SEND system. Whilst the last 18 months have seen a focus on governance to deliver our priority action plan, more recent developments have sought to better embed our ongoing strategic oversight of outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

This approach means we have an accurate and timely understanding of where we are now and what we can do next. We know ourselves better, we have better shared strategic oversight of the needs and outcomes for our children and young people with SEND and we have the ambition, commitment and structures in place to demonstrate and make further progress.

We are particularly proud of the development of **our outcomes-based strategy for children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire, 2024-2027**. This has been developed with partners across the local area including education settings, parents and carers of children and young people with SEND, children and young people with SEND, health providers, the local Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Nottinghamshire County Council services. The strategy sets out the local area partnership's vision, outcomes, and key actions to improve the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families.

Our outcomes-based strategy was shaped by the views of over 160 children and young people with SEND and is framed by personal impact statements. Our children and young people and their families, want these outcomes and we are committed to doing everything we can to enable this to happen.

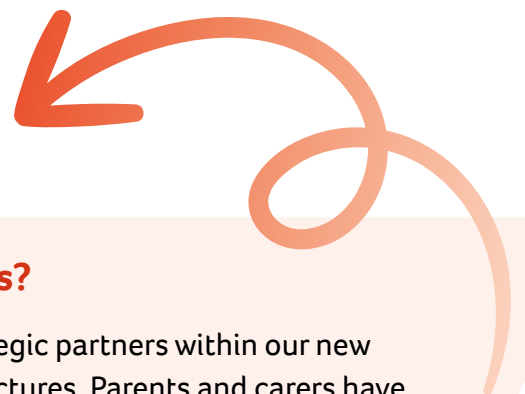
-  **I need to be listened to and heard** 
-  **I need to be the healthiest I can be** 
-  **I need to be safe and feel safe** 
-  **I need to be accepted and valued by people I trust** 
-  **I need to be prepared for my future** 
-  **I need to enjoy life and have fun** 

Our ambition is for these outcomes to be embedded in practice across all education, health and care services supporting children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire. For example, school special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) have started to use the outcomes to inform individual support plans and targets for children with SEND in their school.

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND?

- We will continue focusing on making improvements in line with our priority action plan while also establishing routine monitoring of our wider outcomes-based SEND strategy.
- We will use our shared understanding of the needs of our children and young people with SEND to improve their individual outcomes and experiences.

Co-production: leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families



What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

Our parent carer forum have been established as key strategic partners within our new local area partnership arrangements and governance structures. Parents and carers have been involved in SEND Improvement co-production, consultation processes and have led improvement projects across the partnership, with details provided.

Our Nottinghamshire Approach forms the basis for setting expectations in the way we work and the standards we work to. Our commitment is demonstrated through investing in co-production by recruiting to a dedicated SEND co-production officer; holding engagement events including locality-based school events and strategy co-production events; improving relationships with, and investing in, our parent carer forum and young pioneers (voices of children and young people).

“The benefits of being in pioneers is meeting with like-minded young people who share a passion for accessibility, equality and diversity for all in the Greater Nottinghamshire Area. It enables us to have conversations held in a structured environment to help curve and advise Nottinghamshire County Council on new policy’s, projects and buildings they wish to take on. We also look at national matters of interest from the UK Youth Parliament and discuss how this may affect young people with all types of disabilities.”

The Chair of Young Pioneers



Parents and carers are represented on our senior boards such as the Partnership Assurance Improvement Group (PAIG) and the SEND Executive Leadership Group. They are also actively leading and supporting specific projects such as:

- Parent carer annual survey – 650 responses indicating our improving engagement routes and relationships.
- Leading the rollout of the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project across 39 Nottinghamshire schools.
- Producing the ‘Review into the arrangements regarding children and young people on part-time timetables – report and recommendations, September 2024’.
- Involved in multi-agency arrangements to explore how we can better meet the needs of children with complex health needs in education settings and transport.
- Forty-three parents, carers and young people have been directly involved in shaping our new **SEND journey map**, our refreshed multi-agency graduated response document. They have shared their experiences and ideas for improvement throughout the process, which have been incorporated into the development of the map.

We want to build on this progress to date, including the voices of more and more parents, carers, representing the full range of experiences for families across Nottinghamshire.

For evaluation of speech, language & communication needs (SLCN), the ICB engagement team used the responses from the 2023 parents/carers and professionals survey. Findings from 235 responses have led to training and education sessions around early identification and early intervention with schools; co-development of a transitions framework; additional capacity being added to local SLCN provision; and commissioning of a sleep support service.

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families?

We will continue improving our co-production approach with children and families so that it is clear how their views have informed SEND provision and what we have done in response to their engagement.



Data and intelligence: leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

Our local area partnership children and young people's system information data dashboard was praised by the Department for Education and NHS England as a unique example of partnership data sharing for children with SEND.

Our new partnership governance structures ensure robust oversight is in place across our system. Our outcomes-based SEND strategy, priority action plan, annual delivery plan and quarterly SEND system intelligence report all have clear objectives underpinned by key performance indicators (KPIs) and milestones that allow us to assess the progress and impact of deliverables. All of these frameworks report to and have oversight from our newly established **partnership assurance and improvement group (PAIG)**. These reports are also reviewed regularly as part of our reporting to the Department for Education and NHS England i.e. blue, red, amber, green (BRAG) activity reporting and holistic assessment as part of improvement support meetings (known as stocktake and deep dive meetings).

In September 2024, we launched our local area partnership children and young people's system information data dashboard, praised by the Department for Education and NHS England as a unique example of partnership data sharing for children with SEND. This was a joint initiative between business intelligence teams across the Integrated Care Board and Nottinghamshire County Council. Bringing data together from partner organisations allows us to have joint discussions about improvements that cover the whole journey of a child with SEND. We will use the shared dashboard to track and improve outcomes for particular groups of children. For example, work is underway to identify individual children who may be on multiple waiting lists, to ensure a more holistic, multi-agency approaches between services. This dashboard now also enables new shared data sets regarding the outcomes for children with SEND who do not have an education health care plan.

We aim to improve the operational utility of this shared data reporting through use by and feedback from key stakeholders across our partnership in the coming year.

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area?

We will develop and iterate our shared data dashboard to ensure it is effective in supporting strategic planning and decision-making.

Joint commissioning:

leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including commissioning arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

- We have established our new Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Strategic Commissioning Group, which strengthens our collaborative commissioning for integrated care.
- We have developed our ambitious new Nottingham and Nottinghamshire SEND joint commissioning strategy 2024-2027.
- We continue to expand our specialist educational provision through creating additional special school places and enhanced provision within mainstream schools and on mainstream school sites.

The dashboard complements our [joint strategic needs assessment](#) well in terms of tracking improvement areas and we are developing further data maturity by sharing appropriate data at an individual level to better meet the needs of different groups e.g. children in care, children at risk of exploitation. The needs of children and families with SEND are better jointly understood by the partnership than they were previously, but we can improve the accuracy of this shared understanding and embed the consistent use of data in commissioning and service delivery. The establishment of our Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Strategic Commissioning Group in 2024 has been a critical step in improving joint commissioning. This partnership forum serves as a mechanism for commissioners of children and young people's education, health and care to explore and strengthen collaborative commissioning for integrated care leading to improved health and well-being outcomes. Our ambitious [Nottingham and Nottinghamshire SEND joint commissioning strategy 2024-2027](#) sets out the joint commissioning arrangements and priorities across our local integrated care system for children and young people with SEND. We have identified key joint commissioning priorities needed to meet the needs of our children with SEND.

- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) services
- Development of a sensory support service/pathway
- Development of an integrated sleep support pathway
- Development of an integrated/seamless occupational therapy (OT) pathway
- Integrated system data dashboard

Our Nottinghamshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) place planning strategy (2021-2026) identifies our priority to create additional specialist provision across the county, responding to increased demand for educational provision to meet communication and interaction and social emotional and mental health needs. We are rolling out a programme of expansion including:

- Expanding capacity at existing local special schools
- Building new special schools
- Creating specialist satellite centres (SSCs) on existing mainstream school sites (SEMH needs)
- Enhanced provision units in mainstream schools for children with SEND support needs (without EHCPs).

Our commissioning team hold a local alternative provision framework, with 79 providers currently approved. Nottinghamshire County Council directly commissions alternative education provision where there is a duty to do so under Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act. There is a specific budget allocated for this purpose and access to provision is overseen by the Vulnerable Children Education Commissioning Group which meets every three weeks and contains representatives from a range of teams involved with vulnerable pupils. We employ a team of education officers to monitor, support and quality assure the quality of these alternative provision places and children have individual support plans with goals to be reviewed. We have locally established quality assurance frameworks to review provision and teaching and learning. Where pupils have an education health and care plan the decision that alternative provision is required to meet the needs of the pupil is decided by the Integrated Children's Disability Service based on the needs described in the plan and discussions with parents. The progress of these students is monitored through the annual review of their education health and care plans.

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including commissioning arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision?

- We will implement our joint commissioning strategy to better meet needs, understand where we are doing well and identify either unmet or emerging needs.
- We will focus on progressing our key joint commissioning priorities for children with SEND.
- We recognise that increased capacity for alternative provision is a priority. We will map out our available Alternative Provision by district and identify and commission additional provision where it is most needed.
- We have mapped our SEND provision across the County and have identified a significant need in Bassetlaw. A feasibility study is underway in relation to a site in Worksop. Once new capital funding is received from DfE this has been identified as the next capital project to be proposed to Members.

“My 8-year-old child has never slept. It isn't unusual for them to still be awake gone midnight and wake three or four times in the night. I have been working with the team developing the sleep pathway to share my experiences and what I think the support should look like. I am really excited to see what comes of this work and am looking forward to a good night's sleep.”

Parent

Partnership working: leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

Our new partnership arrangements better enable multi-agency practitioners from education, health and care to work together to address shared issues and challenges, to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

Through our new joint partnership arrangements, we have created a strategic environment where multi-agency working is now the default starting point for considering improvements and responding to need. We have laid strong foundations on shared values, shared responsibilities and shared leadership that will drive practice improvement forwards. Our Department for Education and NHS England improvement support meetings have consistently noted improving multi-agency collaboration within our Local Area Partnership. Our challenge moving forward is to ensure that all individual children and families experience this level of joined-up, multi-agency working from frontline practitioners.

We have facilitated a range of multi-agency projects where operational colleagues have come together to share knowledge and shape priorities e.g.

- Multi-agency engagement events to co-produce the outcomes-based SEND strategy, facilitated by the Council for Disabled Children RISE programme (Spring 2024)
- Multi-agency outcome working groups to progress the key actions from our SEND improvement priority action plan, including representatives from education, health and care partners.
- In person events for all Nottinghamshire school leaders to review and discuss inclusive practice in our local schools and education settings (Summer 2024)
- Ongoing work to support workforce development to acknowledge SEND as everybody's responsibility e.g. community health therapy services have rolled out SEND awareness training for all of their practitioners; NHS workforce development requirement for all health and social care practitioners to receive the Oliver McGowan training to improve understanding of autism by professionals is being rolled out since April 2024; Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospital Trust has committed to an annual SEND week with their acute and community services.

My swimming story

Mason needs a ventilator to breathe. He 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:

- NHS physiotherapy
- Long term ventilation nurse and physiotherapists
- Nottinghamshire County Council manual handling advisors
- Nottinghamshire County Council's school swimming team
- Carlton Forum Leisure Centre
- Apollo Healthcare (continuing care funded staff)
- Head teacher, SENCO and two teaching assistants from Mason's school
- Advice from a Paediatrician, Respiratory Consultant and the Spinal Injuries Unit.



“It's a great place to be with your friends. It's much better than hydro. We enjoy racing.”
Mason

[Real life SEND experiences](#)
[| Nottinghamshire County Council](#)

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish?

We will ensure that more of our workforce across the local area SEND partnership are knowledgeable confident and have the right skills to understand and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND by scoping development requirements and delivering appropriate training. Explore how the [SEND training assurance framework](#) could be expanded to a multi-agency training offer across Nottinghamshire.

Quality assurance and improvement: leaders evaluate services and make improvements

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

We have placed a multi-agency focus on the EHCPs as a tool for improving SEND provision for our children and young people, with further work to embed learning from multi-agency audits into practice across the partnership.

As part of our priority action plan, from 2023 to 2024 we have invested significant financial and personnel resources to improve the timeliness of our statutory assessment process, through education health and care plans, with significant success. A key priority for service improvement moving forwards is enhancing the quality of education health and care plans and annual reviews. In addition to significant temporary capacity through agency staff, we are committed to making sustainable change. Therefore, we are reviewing our ways of working within the teams that co-ordinate our statutory assessment process, to facilitate relationship-based, strengths-based working practice. We believe this work will have a meaningful impact on the quality of our support for children and young people with SEND.

We have placed a multi-agency focus on the quality assurance of education health and care plans (EHCPs) as a tool for improving SEND provision for our children and young people. The partnership co-produced our quality assurance framework for education, health and care plans and we have a cycle of quarterly multi-agency audits attended by education, health and care representatives. We recognise the need to ensure we are using the learning from these audits to improve practice and outcomes across our SEND system. 'Our Nottinghamshire Approach' is a key opportunity for translating our values to practice standards that can be quality assured through our quality assurance framework. Our future SEND quality assurance framework will be integral to improving professionals' understanding and practice with children with SEND and feed into both improvement plans and workforce development priorities.

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure leaders evaluate services and make improvements?

- We will refresh our EHCP quality assurance framework to ensure learning is communicated and embedded in practice across our system.
- We intend to establish a sub-group of our Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group (PAIG) to drive forward progress at pace in this particular area.

Part 2:

Improving experiences and outcomes for children with SEND in Nottinghamshire

Our Nottinghamshire Approach is designed to hold children and young people with SEND and their families at the heart of everything we do. This relationship and strengths-based approach is designed to ensure that children and young people are valued, visible and included in all areas of our SEND system. Our [outcomes-based SEND strategy](#) is grounded in the six outcomes that our children, young people and their families told us that they want for themselves.

Full details of our local area profile are shared in our [outcomes-based SEND strategy](#) (p19-23) including our universal, targeted and specialist services and providers across education, health and care systems. In our Nottinghamshire mainstream schools, there are currently 1848 children who have an EHCP and 13,273 children who are accessing SEND support. Of these children, 4,053 currently access additional high needs top up funding to support specialist provision within their mainstream school i.e. Additional Family Needs (AFN) and High-Level Needs (HLN) funding. As part of the SEND improvement plan, we are committed to improving outcomes for our children with SEND and our schools are key partners in this work. Our schools are organised into 43 families of schools, each including 1-2 secondary schools and up to 12 feeder primary schools. Each family of schools is supported by a family SENCO and a district SENCO, employed by Nottinghamshire County Council.



Navigating the local SEND system: children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

With representatives from across the partnership including parents and carers, we have developed a new interactive SEND journey map to help families and professionals navigate the education, health and care services available locally for children with SEND. The [SEND journey maps](#) allow people to see our local SEND graduated response processes in a clear, visual format.

Our Nottinghamshire SEND system has well-established networks of early support available to young people, through their local education, health and social care services, outside of the statutory assessment process. This support is based on the principles of inclusive practice and ensures that specialist services, interventions and additional funding can all be accessed locally without an EHCP. Critical to this is ensuring children, young people and parents/carers are clear on what support is available and that they can access that support in a way that makes them feel included and valued. At the forefront of this approach is our [SEND Local Offer](#) which details services and provision available to children with SEND in Nottinghamshire. Our children, young people and their families have told us that they find it difficult to navigate this online resource and to find the right support that they need.

As part of our graduated response, Little Sparkles (play-based support for families) is delivered by our family hubs i.e. play-based support for families. Some feedback we have had includes:

“Little Sparkles has been amazing. We have a lot more ideas for play and how to have fun as a family. O’s communication is improving loads every week.”

“It has helped my confidences in everyday play/routines with D. His communication and understanding has come on leaps and so have I.”

In response to this feedback, our Notts Help Yourself website has been reworked in consultation with children with SEND and families via a long standing SEND local offer development group. The SEND local offer is now, by far, the most visited area of the Notts Help Yourself website. Between September 2023 and August 2024, 10% of all visitors to the website viewed at least one page relating to the SEND Local Offer (i.e. 42,880 visitors). We have also developed a new interactive [SEND journey map](#) to help families and professionals navigate the education, health and care services available locally for children with SEND.

Seeing our local SEND graduated response processes in a clear, visual format, has enabled school staff, parents, carers and young people to share their experiences and ideas for improvement.

Feedback on journey maps has been overwhelmingly positive:

“We think it’s great that this information is being put out there and made available to everyone.”

Young Person Group

“It’s a valuable resource... If I’d had this earlier, I’d have been armed with so much more information.”

Parent/carer

In addition, our communication and engagement strategy sets out further steps we are taking to ensure families can easily understand what support is available, with particular reference to waiting times for specific health services. For example, after feedback from families that they felt ‘left in the dark’ when waiting for an ADHD or autism assessment, we began publishing monthly newsletters providing information on wait times, resource support information and pathway infographics, which have also been helpful to professionals. Similarly, pathways for concerning behaviour and neurodevelopmental support have also been revised and updated based on feedback from families, with infographics being used to capture concerns and areas for improvement. [The Nottinghamshire neurodevelopmental assessment pathway and support guidance.](#)

What will we focus on in the next 12 months to help our children and families navigate our local SEND system?

- We will embed the SEND journey map within our local education, health and care services so that it is being used by frontline practitioners to support children and families to navigate our local SEND system.
- We will continue to act on feedback and improve upon our Notts Help Yourself Local Offer and to use feedback to drive improvement in the online presence and accessibility of service and provider information.



Graduated response: children and young people receive the right help at the right time

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

- We have continued to provide educational support services and top-up funding to meet the needs of children with SEND through our network of families of schools and devolved behaviour partnerships, with increased funding this financial year particularly in the early years.
- Our health services identified for priority waiting time improvement, neurodevelopmental support team (NST) and speech, language, communication needs services (SLCN), have undergone extensive review. Waiting times have reduced with further improvements planned.

Our SEND educational **graduated response** is accessible on our Local Offer and its collaborative nature means we are able to work together to resolve challenges. The identification of SEND in our graduated response is built on local partnerships. Schools and education settings can access specialist advice and additional top-up funding to help identify and meet children and young people's SEND needs, outside of the statutory assessment process i.e. without the need for an EHCP. This support is reviewed and monitored through SEND Support plans held by individual education settings and is facilitated through a network of families of schools and school behaviour and attendance partnerships that are supported by Nottinghamshire County Council staff. These groups have devolved decision-making and funding available to support children to ensure local and responsive decisions for young people with SEND. Quality assurance of these processes is enabled through the local network of school SENCOs, families of schools, family SENCOs and district SENCOs. Where this works well, this process enables children and their families to be supported as early as possible by their school/education setting. Full details on our local SEND funding model is provided [online](#). In 2024-2025, Nottinghamshire County Council increased the high needs funding budget for mainstream schools for the fifth year in a row, to support the cost of provision and support for children and young people with SEND across Nottinghamshire.



Similarly, we offer a graduated response in terms of health provision. These services are designed to work collaboratively with schools, providing a continuum of care to help children with SEND access their right to an inclusive education, participate fully, and achieve their potential. EHCP outline the individual needs of each child, specifying necessary adjustments and provisions. A collaborative effort between education, health, and social care services ensures that each child receives person-centred support that facilitates their learning and wellbeing. Furthermore, schools may have access to training from health professionals, enabling identified care givers the skills and knowledge to manage a numerous health condition within the education and care settings.

We are aware due to increase in demand that our wider partners may not always experience a consistent response. We are committed to communicating pathways to ensure understanding, sharing data and being transparent with relation to the system wide challenges and work together to be solution focused.



Reduce waiting times for specialist health services

Area for Priority Action 2 - improving timely access to relevant health services

Nottinghamshire SEND strategic outcome:



I need to be the healthiest I can be

What Ofsted and CQC told us:

Leaders, including commissioners and providers, should act urgently to identify and address the delays and gaps in access to some health services, particularly speech and language therapy, neuro-developmental pathways and equipment services. They should also ensure that they use available performance data to identify where gaps exist and whether actions taken to address these are effective.

What we have done in response:

Alongside our priority for improving assessment timeliness is the consistency of effective support following assessment. EHCPs are pivotal to this, but we believe EHCPs will improve as the effectiveness of the wider SEND system improves. This is why we have focused on the key leverage points of reducing waiting times for services, better collaboration between services and an improved understanding of the difference being made by EHCPs.

Our priority services for improving wait time have included the neurodevelopmental support team (NST) and speech, language, communication needs services (SLCN). Both service areas have undergone substantial review to understand their challenges, opportunities and impact, which has included extensive engagement with children and families and professionals within health and education; for example, the Integrated Care Board engagement team heard from a total of 235 parents/carers and professionals including speech and language therapists (SLT) and professionals who refer into SLT services. Feedback was gathered via a survey, telephone interviews, online focus groups and community groups. The engagement activities provided leaders with a better understanding of the experiences of those accessing and delivering the SLCN services, to help shape and co-produce a refresh the current service model.

Improvement activity identified for SLCN services, are heavily tied to the agreed priorities within the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire local area joint commissioning strategic priorities and so will require a longer lead-in to monitoring the impact. We therefore took steps to improve the experiences of children and their families whilst waiting for support; for example, improved the support available to families by signposting to resources and keeping parents informed of the expected waiting times; increased capacity in local SLCN provision to provide support to families whilst waiting.



For NST, establishing the Nottinghamshire Neurodevelopmental Network working group has been fundamental to the review of the service provision offer. The network comprises of parents and carers with lived experiences and service providers, from health and education across Nottinghamshire local area. The network collaboratively developed a survey aimed to understand the support that families would find beneficial while accessing the pathway. Two hundred and forty-eight families responded to the survey and provided valuable insight into understanding their experiences and preferences for pre and post diagnostic pathway. We heard from parents that whilst waiting times were acknowledged as a barrier, to receiving advice and support timely, many parents expressed a desire for more consistent communication and support, during that waiting period. Our response to this was to ensure understanding and communication for the [neurodevelopmental referral and support pathways](#) was made available and accessible for our children, young people and their families.

Feedback:

“I’ve felt listened to and supported when I’ve had a SENCO who makes time for you and a class teacher who offers space for you to talk to them.”

“More information about how the process looks, what happens, what help, or support is there for parents.”

Further improvements undertaken as part of the NST service review recommendations has reduced waiting times: currently average wait time of 13 months and a maximum wait time of up to 27 months for assessments.

Feedback from parents and carers on NST:

“Good level of knowledge and caring attitude from staff.”

“Feel I am now in a better position to understand some of my child’s behaviours.”

“I could speak and hear other parent’s views and felt less alone.”

In addition, the feedback received from families has initiated different ways of working that families find more supportive, including reducing duplication for occupational therapy (OT), services and development of new services areas, such as sleep support. We were advised that families felt the Nottinghamshire OT offer was confusing, as therapists all seemed to be doing the same thing. We therefore created a resource to support understanding of roles and responsibilities and developed an OT service network to collaboratively progress improvements.



Occupational Therapy



What will we focus on in the next 12 months to help children and young people receive the right help at the right time?

- Undertake system-wide reviews to reduce waiting times for specialist health therapy assessment and ensure experiences of provided services are improved. This includes developing one system-wide speech, language and communication needs service, a sensory support pathway, an integrated sleep support pathway and an integrated occupational therapy pathway.
- A new multi-agency working group will work towards solutions relating to complex healthcare provision in schools, using a collaborative approach. We have commissioned an independent facilitator to support us in this work and the project will report to the PAIG for accountability.



Individual impact: children and young people achieve strong outcomes

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

- Young people co-production groups have been actively involved in service improvement with a focus on making service information more accessible online.
- We have established better shared data reporting systems so that the partnership can track and monitor outcomes for all children with SEND, with and without an EHCP, with a focus on school attendance, exclusions and suspensions and academic attainment.

Nottinghamshire SEND strategic outcome:



I need to be listened to and heard

Our strategic outcomes for children and young people with SEND, start with the aspiration that our young people 'feel listened to and heard.' We are committed to using the voices of our children and young people to inform service design and improvement through genuine co-production. A key theme within feedback from children and young people is that information about services needs to be available online and easier to access. In addition to the SEND journey map, our children and young people have also been directly involved in co-designing two key website resources to meet particular needs:

- [NottAlone.org.uk](https://nottalone.org.uk) is a website providing information, advice and links to support services for people with social emotional and mental health needs in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Local children and young people with SEMH needs, and parents were involved in the co-design of this children and young people's website in September 2021, and in its re-launch as an all-ages website in October 2024.
- Minds of All Kinds – a new website providing information and support for children with neurodevelopmental needs including social communication and interaction in Nottinghamshire. This website is planned to launch in 2025 and the young people involved in co-producing the website have valued the process.



“My daughter and I met with the commissioner as part of a co-production group for the Minds of all kinds neurodevelopmental website. As part of the discussions for the website, we mentioned that my daughter and I used to attend a parent run ‘Supergirls’ youth group once a month. It’s for autistic girls, to have a safe quiet space to meet with other autistic girls and get to know others who are going through similar experiences to themselves, helping them feel less isolated. Unfortunately, this had to be discontinued at the beginning of covid lock-down. Debbie listened to my daughter’s view about how much she got from this group, and how much she missed her friends. Debbie supported us in getting the group restarted and facilitated meetings with the local young people’s centre to support us in getting a suitable meeting place. The group has now been meeting again monthly since December 2023 and it’s going really well. The participation in co-production has really enabled us to regain this much needed resource, which is a great support not only for us as a family but for many other families in the area too.”

Parent of a young person with SEND

Nottinghamshire SEND strategic outcomes:



I need to be safe and feel safe



I need to be accepted and valued by people I trust



I need to enjoy life and have fun

Our improved partnership data and intelligence systems allows us to monitor and track the educational progress of our children with SEND, who have EHCPs and those who access additional support and top-up funding through SEND support plans, in mainstream schools. We use key metrics that are recorded, reported and compared nationally by the Department for Education i.e. school/education setting attendance, academic attainment and suspension/exclusion from school. These metrics are used as high-level proxy indicators of children and young people with SEND’s inclusion and engagement with their community. Unfortunately, in line with national trends, our data shows that our children with SEND are attending school less, being excluded and suspended more and are achieving less academically compared to previous years. Our ambition is that these outcomes will improve and become closer to those for children without SEND.

- Our Education, Learning and Inclusion leadership team aim to address these outcomes with school and education setting leaders through our district-based inclusive practice initiatives this academic year 2024-2025.
- We have established a new Nottinghamshire Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) SEND lead network to mobilise our MAT leadership as key strategic partners for change and improvement in our Nottinghamshire local area.

- Our Nottinghamshire Children Missing Education Monitoring Board (refreshed terms of reference established March 2024) has established oversight of educational outcomes and pathways for our vulnerable groups including our children in care and previously in care, children with a social worker, children at risk of child exploitation and harms outside of the home. We are also working to embed processes within our local help care and protection systems that support these groups of children, to ensure their SEND needs are identified, considered and responded to e.g. this was recognised as a strength within our [Youth Justice Services in our 2024 inspection](#), that we want to build on more widely.
- We have launched [Nottinghamshire improving school attendance strategy 2024-2027](#) which states the commitment ‘successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly, requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against, families’. We are working to improve the accuracy of our school attendance data reporting systems over the coming year and our education, learning and inclusion, and education and attendance teams, continue to work closely together to progress this strategy, in partnership with education settings and families. We also hope that our multi-agency arrangements to explore how we can better meet the needs of children with complex health needs in education settings, and transport needs, will support children with SEND to spend more time in school.

Working together case study:

One of our secondary schools had concerns about a small group of young people with SEND regarding their behaviour, ability to engage with learning and antisocial behaviour, which led to suspensions, time in isolation and the young people being sent home from school. Youth Services, Youth Justice Service, school SENCO and parents worked together to provide support both in and after school. This led to a reduction in suspensions, isolation and changes to school timetables for the young people.

“Coming into Youthy after school has helped come in and talk about how I feel and helps me calm down because when I am in school my ADHD, autism and anger issues are really bad because I don’t get any help and when I’m here I get help.”
A young person

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to help children and young people achieve strong outcomes?

- We will continue to work with professionals across our local area partnership to embed a shared responsibility for special educational needs and disabilities.
- In partnership with education setting leaders, we will support district-level initiatives promoting inclusive practice in individual and groups of education settings, supported by multi-agency professionals working in those districts.
- We will review and relaunch the Nottinghamshire Improving Educational Opportunities for All strategy to include a priority focus on reducing school exclusions and suspensions, including for children and young people with SEND.

Statutory assessment: children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way

Area for Priority Action 1 – improving the timeliness and quality of our assessment processes and provision – education health and care plans

What Ofsted and CQC told us:

Children and young people wait too long to have their needs accurately assessed, including those children and young people applying for EHCPs. As a result, their needs are not being met in a timely way.

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

More families are receiving EHCPs within statutory timescales and delays have been significantly reduced. Currently, 36% of our children and young people received their EHCP within 140 days compared to the year-end position of 4.5% in 2022. Notably, this improvement has happened within the context of a 23% increase in EHC Needs Assessment requests and a 64% increase in EHCPs issued.

We have committed significant financial resource to increase staffing within key teams involved in our statutory assessment process, i.e. our Integrated Children's Disability Service and our Educational Psychology Service. We have established SEND education pathway officers to liaise with schools and families at the early stages of SEND assessments. This additional capacity has helped us to improve our communication and level of service for families. The ICDS and schools and families specialist services (SFSS) have also worked together to ensure waiting times and escalation procedures have been equitable and systematic. We have significantly increased our number of educational psychology assessments completed each month using a combination of efficient assessment processes and additional staffing capacity through temporary agency capacity. We have also successfully recruited trainee educational psychologists to expand our core service by 60% by 2027, in the context of a nationwide shortage of qualified educational psychologists.

We have undertaken an operational review of our people processes and systems within ICDS. Feedback from families has been incorporated around what works and does not work with our processes. We have appointed SEND consultants to support with service design and the improvement planning within our statutory SEND team that will benefit our education settings, parents, carers and young people.

Our timeliness for annual reviews has seen lower performance than last year as the number of newly issued EHCPs increases. However, the proportion of reviews that are out of timescale for greater than 6 months has continued to decrease, and we have positive feedback on the quality of reviews that are completed. We know we need to strengthen working practices with children's social care, health and education, to improve, on our performance particularly in relation to the responsibility of each partner for the quality of their input into plans and reviews.

Parents and carers have said:

“F has read your report fully and I have replied on his behalf, I kept it short, basically saying that F had no issues with the report and for me [Dad] it was “music to my ears”... truly [Educational Psychologist] there were words in your report that I had wished and hoped to hear from someone other than me for many years.”

“I am incredibly impressed with the efficiency and dedication of our EHCP case worker. Her meticulous attention to detail and proactive approach have significantly streamlined our processes. She handled every case with a high level of professionalism and compassion, ensuring that I receive timely and effective support. Her ability to support my daughter on securing a school that can meet her needs in a timely manner is truly commendable. We are fortunate to have such a reliable and competent case worker. Thank you.”

Despite investment and resulting improvements, we know our timeliness, quality and the experiences of our children and families need to improve further. We are on the right trajectory, but resource investment is not enough to mitigate increasing demand and meet our ambition for significant improvements in our performance, and consequently, outcomes for our children and young people with SEND.

What will we focus on in the next twelve months to ensure children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way?

- We will re-design and implement a new statutory SEND service structure that will respond and meet need locally and create cultural change that embeds relational and strength-based practice to improve the experiences and outcomes for our children and families.
- We will continue to build strong relationships with our partners in education, health and social care to improve the quality and timeliness of our EHCPs and the experiences of children, parents and carers.
- We will improve our quality assurance arrangements and embed learning to improve practice and outcomes.
- We will continue to seek feedback from children and their families to listen and learn.

Preparing for adulthood and transitions: children and young people are well prepared for their next steps

What have we achieved in the past 12 months?

- We have published the Nottinghamshire preparing for adulthood guide – protocol and pathway, revised and re-published in May 2024, following extensive mapping and co-production with a range of stakeholders across the local area including parents and carers, young people, education setting leaders and staff from Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire NHS staff.
- We have reviewed and made changes to our 0-5 early years support services for SEND, making changes to our multi-agency communication processes, and funding streams, to support more seamless transition for children starting statutory education by the age of five.

Nottinghamshire SEND strategic outcome:



I need to be prepared for my future

If a child or young person and their family have been well-supported on their journey through our local SEND systems, they should be well-prepared for their next steps at every transition point. This is reflected in our strategic outcome 'I need to be prepared for my future' and our outcomes-based SEND strategy outlines KPIs for improved outcomes for children and young people. We have a particular focus on developing our support pathways within preparing for adulthood post 16 context and within early years.

Preparing for adulthood (PFA)

As a local area partnership, we have worked to embed the [preparing for adulthood framework](#) (PFA) across all of our SEND services, considering, in particular, services for children aged-16-plus. We also encouraging individual support plans and services to incorporate the outcome framework from an early age, focusing on employment; friends, relationships and community; independent living and good health (wellbeing). We have a dedicated practitioner post working to secure employment outcomes for young people with SEND working collaboratively with internal and external partners including appropriate teams in Adult Social Care and Health services and providers. Over 50 young people with EHCPs are currently accessing supported internships, study programmes based in the workplace which offer pathways to paid employment alongside the opportunity for participants to gain functional skills qualifications.



Nottinghamshire hosts three flagship project search programmes involving health and education settings alongside a range of private sector employer partnerships in sectors ranging from hospitality to logistics. [Monthly shout out: DFN Project Search Supported Internships Programme - NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICS - NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICS](#). The Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust has an embedded [‘preparing for adulthood’ service](#) offer and pathways where young people from 13 years-old are identified for further support in preparing to move into adult services. All education settings are encouraged to use the preparing for adulthood outcomes, from Year 9 onwards, to support transition, and our teams are encouraged to incorporate them into EHCP assessments and annual reviews for children post-16.

“It was evident in the meeting the lengths that all have gone to for the young person to have a smooth transition into adults. Due to their dedication and commitment, I am confident the young person will have a strong committed team to work with to achieve the best outcomes.”

Independent Reviewing Officer

The 17 to 25 portion of our SEND journey map illustrates a map of the local education, health and care services and process that are available to support children and young people with SEND in Nottinghamshire, aged 17 to 25.



[Watch the animated version of this map](#)



Providing more detail and linking closely with the map, the Nottinghamshire preparing for adulthood guide – protocol and pathway was revised and re-published in May 2024. This followed extensive mapping and co-production with a range of stakeholders including parents, carers, young people, education setting leaders and staff from Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire NHS staff. The refreshed guide is primarily aimed at parents, carers and young people, and those working with young people with SEND aged 14 to 25, who want to know more about what to expect as they move into adulthood and the support that may be available.



Max's inspiring DJ story

Growing up was tricky, I have been diagnosed with autism, dyspraxia, inattentive ADHD and hyper-mobility. I had started self-harming and my mood was incredibly low everyday and found day to day tasks really difficult and hated socialising.

Since I was three years old, I have always wanted to be a DJ after watching Kevin and Perry, thanks to the short breaks service I started Four Four DJ Academy to learn the skills of being a DJ and producing music.

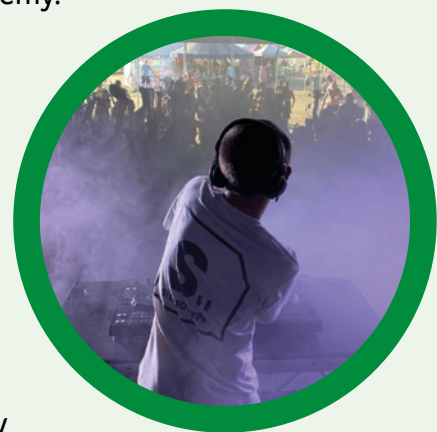
I have had several songs signed by a small label and they are available on Spotify, Amazon music and Deezer etc for streaming and purchasing and another one or two coming out in the future.

I played at Glowworm festival in August 2022 with Four Four DJ Academy.

I am looking forward to playing in clubs and now with a little help be able to travel round the world.

All of this has happened in my life due to the amazing funding from the short breaks service at Nottinghamshire County Council, I am so thankful and appreciate all the funding, help and support, I would have found employment so hard given all my needs and disabilities but DJ'ing is a massive passion so now I have these skills me and my family have hope for my future, yes I will still require help and support but to be able to work and enjoy my life is something else.

I thank everyone so much at short breaks and Nottinghamshire County Council for helping me achieve my dreams and give me a future.



Early years – transition to school

We have reviewed our multi-agency early years SEND processes in response to education settings and education, health and care services increasingly experiencing challenges in meeting children's additional needs, and supporting successful transitions into school by the age of five. Two multi-agency working groups, including one chaired by the Nottinghamshire Parent Carer Forum, have worked to develop the early years SEND journey map and an information flyer for parents, to help them navigate our local early years SEND processes. Several additional actions have resulted from this work, with a view to increasing multi-agency communication and collaboration and streamlining transition processes into schools.

- We have introduced new early years bridging funding to support children who are attending private, voluntary and independent nursery settings with additional SEND funding to have automatically continued funding into their school setting, to support their transition. This has been introduced this year as a two year pilot.
- We have improved the efficiency of our Section 23 Early Health Notification processes and aim to make better use of this data to plan our local educational provision and support service input as early as possible [Nottshelpyourself | Early Health Notification](#)

What will we focus on in the next 12 months to ensure children and young people are prepared for their next steps?

- Improve transitions into further education and adult support services for young people with SEND through our preparation for adulthood pathway and protocols and secure executive leads across adult services for its success.
- Publish an integrated care service position statement on transitions.
- Review and evaluate the impact of new SEND bridging funding to support the transition of young children with SEND from early years and childcare settings into school.



