

Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: June 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 12 June which focused on the partnership progress reports, communications and engagement plan and planning for the SEND monitoring inspection.

Stocktake meeting

A stocktake meeting took place last week with the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE). The stocktake is to test the decision-making and oversight of the improvement programme. The meeting involved a range of improvement programme representatives, including the Parent Carer Forum, and the Board welcomed their involvement. A letter will be sent to the partnership next month with feedback from the DfE and NHSE.

Partnership progress update

The Board were updated on the partnership's work and welcomed progress in areas including:

- Creation of dedicated SEND Educational Pathway Officer Role within the Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS).
- Increase staffing capacity to improve Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) performance.

- Co-production of a transition strategy underway with young people with lived experience of transitioning from paediatric to adult services.

There are some areas that are currently experiencing obstacles including:

- **Reduce the length of time it takes to issue Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.** There has been a sustained increase in EHCP requests (almost a tripling in requests since 2018). Resources in the Integrated Children's Disability Service and Educational Psychology support have been increased, but there needs to be further work to secure long-term sustainability of resource see sustainable improvement.
- **Health data shows that waiting times are increasing in some areas such as speech and language therapy and neurodevelopmental assessments.** These increases are in line with national trends and are due to an increase in referrals. Non-recurrent funding has been invested to recruit additional staff to increase assessment capacity and reduce the waiting list and times. Families on the waiting list are now receiving improved communication about the waiting process.

The Board agreed that a more detailed analysis is needed into those issues that are providing challenges, such as therapy service waiting times. A summary will come to a future Board meeting.

The partnership will also need to explore the waiting lists for services to find out more about the families waiting, such as the percentage of families with a high level of need and whether families are waiting for multiple services. This will help the partnership to understand the demand better and consider future improvements.

Communications and engagement update

The Board were updated on the recent communications activity one year on from the inspection. This included media coverage, SEND newsletter, videos from key representatives and a progress infographic.

The Board received an updated timeline of improvement programme communications and engagement activity which has taken place since the Board was established in 2023.

The Board were presented with an outline communications strategy which included:

- A move from communicating about the improvement programme to also incorporate work in the wider SEND system e.g. Local Offer, expansion of special school places, short breaks support.
- Using more stories from people with lived experience and professionals and increasing the frequency of content.

The Board welcomed the widening of the scope for communications and engagement.

It was recognised that there needs to be a better process to collect the positive work taking place across different services and organisations so this can be shared by the communications teams.

The Board also emphasised the importance of capturing the impact of the communications and engagement activity.

Planning for the SEND monitoring inspection

The partnership will receive a monitoring inspection by Ofsted and the CQC over a two-day period during autumn 2024. More clarity will be needed on what the criteria is for rating progress and whether this will take into account the national context of increasing demand.

The next deep dive is also scheduled for early September. This is where the Department for Education and NHS England review progress against the SEND improvement plan.

Dame Christine Lenehan

Independent Chair of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board