

Suffolk Local Area Partnership Improvement Board

Report Title:	SEND Priority Action Plan Improvement Update
Meeting Date:	2024-09-06
Director:	Sarah-Jane Smedmor, Director Children Services
Assistant Director or Head of Service:	Ros Somerville, Assistant Director Inclusion, Garry Joyce, Assistant Director Transformations SNEE ICB
Author:	Ros Somerville, Assistant Director, Inclusion ros.somerville@suffolk.gov.uk , 01473 264817 (Supported by Wendy Allen)
Purpose	For Information, reporting on the 4 commitments from the SEND Strategy specifically linked to the priority actions from the SEND Priority Action Plan.

1. Progress

Governance – Priority Action Plan 1.1

- 1.1 A new meeting schedule coproduced with the partnership has been put into place for the academic year 2024-25 for the SEND Improvement Boards, these dates are now set to run bi-monthly as agreed at the July-24 SEND Improvement Board. (PAP 1.1)
- 1.2 A meeting is scheduled for September-24 to review the partnerships memorandum of understanding with the Suffolk Parent Carer Forum to ensure that a current and detailed agreement is in place to support the coproduction requirements across the SEND Local Area Partnership and to strengthen the voice of children and young people and parent/carers across Suffolk. (PAP 1.3)
- 1.3 New board members for education and early years have been appointed, including representatives for Primary, Secondary, Special School, Alternative Provision, Post 16 and Early Years. (PAP 1.4)
- 1.4 All new education members joined the SEND Improvement Board in July-24 (PAP 1.4)
- 1.5 Following the Improvement Board a joint Senior Responsible Officer and Education Board member session was held, the session agreed processes of communication in and out of the Improvement Board and the role of the Education representatives. (PAP 1.4)
- 1.6 Each Education rep will have a bio held on a dedicated page of Suffolk Learning website for the Education reps to have key links to share across Suffolk on current activity and updates as relevant. This is expected to be live by the end of September-24. (PAP1.4)
- 1.7 The performance report has been further developed to accommodate the challenge and feedback from the SEND Local Area Improvement Board to

ensure that the data presented for children and young people who are waiting a decision or a final EHCP is now in place, this includes the longest wait and those waiting over 20 weeks. (PAP 1.5)

- 1.8 A meeting has taken place between SCC and ICB to review the Children's Outcome work achieved to date. Next steps have been agreed which are to form a working group, to review the Children's Outcomes against the performance report and current surveys, to identify any gaps in information. A paper is being submitted to SEND Committee in September with a further update for SEND Improvement Board in October 2024. (PAP1.7)
- 1.9 Following the review of the Annual Review form, a revised form was launched in May-24, which provided an additional section for schools to ensure how children and young people with and EHC plan are achieving or working towards their individual outcomes. A manual review of this data has been input, to enable a power BI dashboard to present this information. Results show that 90% of children and young people report that they are making progress towards their EHCP outcomes. (PAP 1.6/PAP1.7)
- 1.10 Following the investment of £3.4m in April 2024, 70% (41) of the 59 new posts have started. Further recruitment is underway to ensure all posts are appointed to by December 2024. (PAP1.9).
- 1.11 Following SCC Cabinet a further £2.7m has been agreed to appoint 33 new posts across SEND Services and into Transformation teams to improve the pace of change. (PAP 1.9)
- 1.12 Suffolk North-East Essex (SNEE) Integrated Care Board and Norfolk and Waveney have confirmed that they will invest in the Transformation posts with SNEE contributing towards an agreed amount towards posts and Norfolk and Waveney contributing £15,587. (PAP1.9)
- 1.13 SEND Services have held 4 training days in July focused on SEND and the Law, reflective practice, consults and person-centred approaches. Staff were asked to scale their confidence and knowledge at the beginning and end of the day. 66% reported that their confidence had improved. (PAP 1.10)
- 1.14 Further training sessions are scheduled for September and later in the Autumn term. (PAP 1.10)
- 1.15 An updated induction plan has been introduced for the new officers joining SEND Services. The induction includes contributions from Health, Social Care and Education representatives as well as a new plan writing course, supported by the Quality Assurance team.

Strategy commitment - Timeliness and Quality

- 1.16 The £3.4m recruitment strategy for Suffolk County Council Inclusion Services is making timely progress as of 22 August 70% (41) of the new posts created have started, with a further 6% (4) due to start in September/October 2024, and a further 23.7% (14) in the recruitment process. (PAP 1.9)
- 1.17 A further Assessment Day was held at the end of July 2024 and appointed a further 8 Assessment Coordinators. This brings the total of Assessment Coordinators to 17. (12 agreed from the £3.4m and a further 5 agreed from the £2.7m). (PAP 1.9, 7.5)

- 1.18 The new Annual Review Lead started in July-24, work is underway to establish an Annual Review hub, to further develop the team from completing annual reviews that need to be maintained to also triaging annual reviews. The hub will also work closely with the SEND Change team and Liquid Logic board, to continue the roll-out of the annual review portal to schools that are early adopting in September 2024. (PAP 8.1 – 8.7)
- 1.19 The new annual review form is in use, with most returned annual reviews being completed in the new format, with an expectation that from September all schools use the new form. (PAP 1.5, 1.6, 2.6, 2.7)
- 1.20 The new annual review form enables schools to capture the view of children making progress towards their outcomes in their EHCP. (PAP 1.5, 1.6, 2.6, 2.7)
- 1.21 A further 3 Education Settings will become early adopters from September 2024, for the Annual Review portal with work starting early in September to prepare these schools to onboard onto the Annual Review portal. (PAP 2.6)
- 1.22 Following the Trajectory modelling showing a growth of requests for Education, Health and Care needs assessments and subsequent growth in EHC plans, a paper was submitted to SCC cabinet to further increase capacity within SEND Services and to provide transformation support. As a result, an additional £2.7m was agreed by SCC Cabinet, with ICB SNEE providing an agreed amount and Norfolk and Waveney ICB £15k. (PAP 1.8 – 8.7)
- 1.23 The Designated Clinical Officers' (DCO) can sign off section G in EHC plans, as is required to fulfil the statutory duty, using the new dashboard. Further work to improve ease of access continues. (PAP 8.5-8.7)
- 1.24 The Quality Assurance processes have been reviewed, the SEND Programme Committee agreed to a new SEND Performance & Quality Assurance Board to focus on developing Quality Assurance (QA) framework and to embed learning. A proposal will be reviewed by the SEND Committee in September, with a following report and update for the SEND Improvement Board in October-24. (PAP 2.1)
- 1.25 The quality of the EHCPs have remained consistent for a period with a slight increase during the last audit cycle. This is due to elements within the EHCP having more focus on the quality of advice when being written. Advice being received needs a more focused approach regarding the outcomes being SMART and the provision being more quantified and specific, this is a recommendation within many advice areas at the end of the report. This will be presented to the SEND Multi-Agency EHCP QA Group (separate to the new QA Board) in September with the view that there is an agreed approach focusing on this in each of the service areas moving forwards. This will also be placed into the action plan for the new QA cycle.

Strategy commitment - Communication

- 1.26 The Suffolk Local Offer website continues to show a high level of use, site views for June and July were both over 30,000 each month, with Activities unlimited and NDD being the most viewed pages. (PAP 10.2)
- 1.27 The use of the Local Offer & Activities Unlimited Facebook page continues to be a platform with high levels of engagement, in June the Facebook pages received 64k views and in July 73.2k. The communications and web team also advised that they are seeing a consist rise in the number of likes and heart emojis to posts. (This data can only be manually counted, therefore is not available as a data form). (PAP 10.2.)
- 1.28 A focus session was held in August with parents and carers who have used the Liquidlogic EHC portal. 11 Parents and carers joined and provided positive feedback and suggestions for improvements. These improvements are being looked at for development. (PAP 10.4)
- 1.29 Parents and carers who attended the focus session, are keen to continue their involvement in future developments. (PAP 2.7)
- 1.30 A further 3 feedback forms have been received, the feedback was not connected to the web pages. (PAP 10.2)
- 1.31 There have been 6 Time to Listen sessions held with the Assistant Director, Inclusion since April 2024. Parents and carers can request a Time to Listen meeting with any Assistant Director across the SEND Partnership to share feedback. These sessions have led to increasing the information about the length of wait for families and the need to have a visual diagram and more information about what to expect once an EHC needs assessment is agreed being share with families. (PAP 10.4)
- 1.32 Suffolk Engagement Hub are working with the Multi Schools' Council. The multi-schools model provides schools with the opportunity to sign-up to have ambassadors to help break down perceptions of SEND and create projects around what is important to young people. Suffolk Multi Schools will sit under the Young Persons Network (YPN) along with all of the other groups bringing the voice of children and young people to the partnership and be the offer to co-produce services for education settings. The YPN is the umbrella network for all young people that want to give their views whether it's in one of the already established groups i.e.: partiipate8 / C2C / Suffolk youth forum ect and the engagement hub will bring all of these views together.

Strategy commitment - Right Support, Right Time

- 2.1 Early indications from the Delivering Better Value programme are that the work completed with the first cohort of schools as part of the Delivering Better Value programme has seen outcomes improve for children selected by their school to take part. The programme has, to date, focused on developing literacy and numeracy skills with over 200 pupils.
- 2.2 SNEE ICB investment in to clearing the backlogs for autism assessments in the under 11 service is now working well, of the 540 cases on the backlog, the service has now fully assessed 22, 55 more have been assessed and are now

just awaiting feedback and 284 cases have already been transferred over for assessment.

- 2.3 SNEE ICB investment in clearing the backlogs for autism over 11 and the ADHD service are now at the contract award stage and it is expected that they will begin within the next few weeks.
- 2.4 NDD support services commissioned have now been evaluated and the proposal around re-procurement will be going to the SNEE ICB execs in September for approval to commence the re-procurement exercise.
- 2.5 The review of crisis mental health support has been concluded and the recommended future delivery will be presented to the SNEE ICB execs in September.

3. Impact & Milestones

- 3.1 In Jul-24 saw the highest number of EHC plans ever issued at 211, this was nearly double those issued in June-24 (119) The percentage timeliness of final plans has decreased slightly however this is due to the number of plans being issued being a lot higher. There have been more final plans issued in 20 weeks in July compared to June (add the actual numbers). It is critical that those who have been waiting beyond 20 weeks are also a priority. (PAP 7.1)
- 3.2 There have been 154 annual reviews completed using the revised review template, which was launched in the summer term. This includes additional scaling questions to capture the views of young people, parents and carers and professionals about if the support provided from the EHC plan is helping the child or young person make progress and progress towards EHC plan outcomes and effectiveness of provision. Of the 154 forms completed the data indicates that the support provided by the EHC plan is helping children and young people to make progress against their outcomes. The sample size is too small to fully conclude, however, currently 90% of children and young people and 89% of parents and carers report progress towards the outcomes in EHCPs. (PAP1.7)
- 3.3 The Quality Assurance team have finalised the Quality Assurance report for March -May 2024, the audit on the quality of advice given has significantly improved across paediatrics, physio and occupational therapy. (Please see supporting QA report for cycle 1 2024 for further detail. (PAP 2.1)
- 3.4 Senior Educational Psychologist (EPs) continue to quality assure advice from Educational Psychologists. (PAP 2.1)
- 3.5 The Delivering Better Value programme impact shows, that after 3 months of being part of one of the interventions, on average, Suffolk primary school pupils in cohort 1 have increased their age equivalent scores in the follow areas.
 - Maths problem solving skills by 12 months.
 - Numeracy skills by 7 months.
 - Reading comprehension skills by over 10 months.

- Reading accuracy skills by 9 months.
- Spelling skills by 11 months.

3.6 The Educational Psychology team report that EPs have provided 94 pieces of advice in the statutory timeframe of 6 weeks July. (PAP 7.2)

4. **Risk and Barriers**

- 4.1 As previously reported whilst recruitment to new posts is well supported by the system especially by the recruitment team within HR. There is a significant impact on Service Managers and officers involved in interviewing and selection. This has an impact on what other activities they can focus their attention on. This is likely to lessen from March-24. (PAP 1.6)
- 4.2 Communication remains a main area for improvement, at individual child and family level and at the partnership level. Improvements should be seen from October-24. (PAP 10.1)
- 4.3 Training access on Suffolk CPD will be restricted, work needs to commence between SCC and ICB to ensure eLearning training is available on CPD and ICB training hub platform. This remains a barrier until a follow up conversation takes place between key officers. This will be picked up in September-24 (*Recorded on Risk Register*).
- 4.4 Pace to continue with RISE work has been impacted, and an agreement has been reached to repurpose this coproduction work, to widen coproduction with SPCF and parents and carers and children and young people with SEND across Suffolk. Solution proposed. This risk remains until the RISE work commences in September-24. (PAP 1.6) (*Recorded on Risk Register Impact 1*)
- 4.5 Due to the increased need across the SEND system this has also impacted the SENDIASS service, SENDIASS have shared that they are looking at a reduced model, whilst they recruit and look how to manage the increased need for support. Although additional funding has been identified for SENDIASS it will be some time before the positive impact of this money will be experienced, due to the time it takes to recruit, and the knowledge and training required. (*Recorded on Risk Register Strategy Impact 3*).