



Derbyshire SEND Improvement and Assurance Board

MINUTES

SEND Improvement & Assurance Board

Wednesday 16th July 2025

Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock, 10:00-13:00

| Item No. | Item | Action |
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| DSIAB2425/19 | <p>Young People's Focus</p> <p>Updates from the first meeting of the Children and Young People's Group, held at Staveley Fire Station were shared. The group is currently small but growing, with plans to expand gradually.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three key themes had been identified by young people: Mind of My Own, • Transport, • Opportunities and Aspirations. <p>There had also been positive feedback from a recent SEND Assembly at Derby University. An invitation extended to board members to attend youth group meetings.</p> <p>There was then feedback from Derby College students on their transition experiences. It was noted that support from parents and college staff was crucial in making a transition work well. There were mixed experiences across the different transitions between primary, secondary, and college settings. There was also positive feedback on EHCP support and advocacy. A suggested area of improvement for professionals concerned better collaboration and communication. The Board noted the number of people involved and proposed that the next survey be expanded to allow for more young people to share their views.</p> <p>The Board agreed on the importance of closing the feedback loop with young people and ensuring they are actively involved in the improvement work. Plans to use tools like "Mind of My Own" and School Council networks could help broaden engagement.</p> | |

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------|
| DSIAB2425/19 Continued | Action DSIABA086 - Due 13th August 2025 Alignment of young people's feedback with JSNA and other data sources. | |
| DSIAB2425/20 | Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies were noted and listed above. | |
| DSIAB2425/21 | Declarations of Interest The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest or declarations of interest that needed to be noted. None noted. | |
| DSIAB2425/22 | <p>Six Month Stocktake Feedback</p> <p>Feedback was provided following the recent six-month Stocktake. The Board was informed that the Department of Education had issued its letter of response in the evening prior to today's Board.</p> <p>The progress that had been made by the Partnership in Derbyshire which included: strengthened partnership working, leadership commitment, permanent appointment to the Director of Education post and Independent Chair for the Improvement Board, Phase 1 of JSNA completed, governance structures developing was noted.</p> <p>The next steps, for which progress is expected, in the coming months were listed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • embed new structures • clarify delivery plans • stabilise SEND workforce • improve data systems • develop Co-production Charter and SEND Strategy • enhance communication <p>The Board were advised that at this stage, the Department for Education had assurance that progress was being made and there would not be an escalation of intervention. The Department for Education Advisors will continue to monitor progress and provide support. The 12-month Stocktake will be another critical point.</p> | |

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------|
| DSIAB2425/22 Continued | <p>The Stocktake letter is not published online by the Department for Education, so it was agreed that the letter would be circulated to Board Members for them to review and discuss further at the August Board meeting.</p> <p>ACTION DSIABA087 – Due by 13th August 2025 Stocktake letter to be circulated to Board members.</p> <p>ACTION DISABA088 – Due 6th August 2025 Board Members to review and submit questions relating to Stocktake feedback by 6th August.</p> | |

FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE:

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|---------------------|--|--------|
| DSIAB2425/23 | <p>Priority Impact Area Progress Reports:</p> <p>a) Priority Impact Area 1 – Governance</p> <p>SIAB received an overview.</p> <p>Phase 1 of the JSNA had been completed and published online – this will help to inform strategic planning and the development of the commissioning strategy. The SEND Operational Delivery Group is now in place and beginning to establish itself – risk management is being embedded as part of its remit in monitoring delivery of the Priority Impact Plan.</p> <p>A timeline for the development and production of the SEND and Alternative Placement Strategy was included in the report. Work is due to start in September with a Working Group being established to oversee the development, with key focus group / co-production meetings taking place during the autumn. The expectation is that the final Strategy will be presented to Cabinet for formal approval in December. The Board discussed the importance of meaningful co-production and advised that to allow for this, and suitable analysis of feedback, the deadline be pushed back to January 2026. Whilst this was agreed, it was noted that it would impact the timelines in the Priority Impact Plan for the development of the SEND Commissioning Strategy.</p> <p>The Chair drew the Board's attention to the RAG rated Impact Plan appended to the report. Performance in relation to reducing EHCPs in Derbyshire was rated as red. There was a question about whether the County Council were getting enough support from the NHS to help reduce demand. It was advised that whilst we are not seeing a reduction locally, the picture is the same nationally.</p> | |

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|---|---|--------|
| DSIAB2425/23 Continued | <p>The work that is now underway will start to have an impact, but progress will take time.</p> <p>b) Priority Impact Area 3 – Assessment and Provision</p> <p>The progress report for Priority Impact Area 3 was presented highlighting areas of progress since the previous report to Board in May. This included the establishment of a fortnightly performance meeting and development of a PowerBI dashboard to ensure process and rigour is in place.</p> <p>The number of assessments completed have doubled in June compared to previous months. It was noted that following the introduction of a new Team Manager there has been a lot more additionality and robust process within the Assessments team. However, addressing the backlog of assessments has impacted on the number of assessments completed within the timeframe. It was also reported that there was a backlog in relation Educational Psychologist advice for which measures were now in place to address to bring assessments back into specific timescales.</p> <p>With regards quality assurance of EHCPs, it was reported that a rolling process had started in July utilising the Invision 360 tool – whereby all EHCPs will go through the tool for quality assurance.</p> <p>The process mapping has been completed in support of the implementation of SEND triage for the assessments process. This includes the integration of Inclusion Support Service interventions and the introduction of a 'Moving on Together' meeting following a decision not to assess.</p> <p>Associated staff training needs have been identified, with implementation planned for September 2025. This process was shared at SENCO Network meetings held in June 2025</p> <p>Core data has been successfully imported into the EHC Hub. A data cleansing exercise is scheduled for completion in July 2025, ensuring the accuracy of EHC performance data. Bulk data transfer is planned for August 2025. Monthly meetings with Health partners continue as part of the implementation process. A product optimisation training session is scheduled for 9 September 2025 for all service users.</p> | |

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|-----------------------------------|---|--------|
| DSIAB2425/23 Continued | <p>Work is taking place via a multi-agency working group to review the current Graduated Response document. The revised version is expected by the end of July 2025 and will be used to develop a clear support roadmap for parents and carers.</p> <p>In regard to assessment decisions, all cases are now being assessed (100%), with decisions made within the statutory 6-week timeframe which is a significant improvement. A new Communication Contact Form has been launched and available on the Local Offer website. This will be actively used and integrated into performance data monitoring and enables identification of contact "pinch points" and reasons for contact. Responses are currently being made within 48 hours. Plans are in place with Parent Carer Voice to expand awareness among parents and carers.</p> <p>MP Surgery Sessions are currently being held weekly sessions and are running effectively. The sessions provide a platform for MPs and their Officers to engage via MS Teams. If demand changes these could move to fortnightly over time. A dedicated email Inbox and contact form have been set up and shared and are expected to be operational from mid-July.</p> <p>The current risks and workforce considerations were highlighted which related to high staff turnover, reliance on agency staff and delays in advice from Educational Psychologists. Mitigations outlined included staff risk assessments, well-being surveys, skills audit, and additional Educational Psychologist capacity.</p> <p>c) Priority Impact Area 4 – Education Provision</p> <p>The dataset on children not in full-time education was now available and includes those awaiting specialist provision, on part-time timetables, and Electively Home Educated. Alongside this a data dashboard will be operational from September to support Education Partnership clusters. This dashboard will facilitate the sharing of cluster-level data during Cluster meetings, promoting data-informed decision-making.</p> <p>A cross-disciplinary review of the Inclusion Framework is underway to ensure it reflects current and future needs, this would be completed by the end of the summer term (July 2025).</p> | |

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|---|---|--------|
| DSIAB2425/23 Continued | <p>The revised framework would then be implemented from the start of the 2025/26 academic year.</p> <p>Targeted support is being provided to Early Years providers not accessing funding and latest data showed an increase in successful applications, supporting early intervention.</p> <p>The Alternative Provision Framework is being developed ahead of publication in September 2026.</p> <p>The Engagement and Inclusion service are now reaching 100% of Derbyshire Schools compared to 50%. The service will lead on implementing the Attendance Strategy and act as the main contact for schools. Recent data highlighted positive trends with 21% decrease in suspensions and a 32% decrease in permanent exclusions. Targeted interventions have helped reduce exclusions, especially where support centre capacity was limited.</p> <p>It was suggested that where Assurance reports are RAG rating actions, any mitigating activity should be clearly referenced in the body of the report</p> <p>d) Area for Improvement 2 - Transitions</p> <p>The transition work is ongoing with good practice guidance co-produced across the partnership. There has been focused transition activity across all key age ranges and educational phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years to School: A dedicated workflow is currently in development to support smoother transitions for young children entering formal education. • Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 (Year 5 to Year 6): A structured transition programme was successfully launched in June 2025, aimed at easing the move from primary to secondary school. • Post-16 Transition: A pilot project is in preparation to support young people moving into further education, training, or employment. <p>Across Derbyshire, there has been positive progress in the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) workstream. The Local Offer pages have been updated to make them more useful and accessible, following reflections on how they could better support families and young people.</p> | |

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------|
| DSIAB2425/23 Continued | <p>Pilot projects focused on 'Home for Adulthood' are nearly ready and currently being developed. A recent event highlighted the success of supported internships, where young people shared their experiences with the SENDCO network, helping to raise awareness and promote internships as a valuable post-education opportunity. Additionally, the inclusion framework is being actively used in schools to embed PFA principles, and updates to health toolkits and the Local Offer are underway to further strengthen support.</p> <p>Work is progressing on Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) transition planning in Derbyshire. The migration to the EHC Hub is ongoing and aims to better align EHCPs with Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) outcomes, making plans more consistent and coherent for young people. Quality assurance of EHC plans for Year 9 and above will follow as part of the next phase. Additionally, a whole-system transition strategy is being finalised in line with NHS transition expectations, and toolkits are being developed to support its implementation.</p> <p>It was raised that not all Schools have been made aware of the pilot projects and wider transition work. It was agreed that communication needs to be improved with the school clusters being the vehicle for this.</p> <p>It was identified an urgent need to in relation to the summer support and school placement challenges facing children in crisis ahead of September transitions.</p> <p>A question was raised about providing a range of supported internships for young people and whether the Council could help with this. It was agreed that the Council as a leader could engage with the local business community to explore this and there would be further discussions.</p> <p>Action DSIABA089 – Due by 16th September Discussions and exploration about options for Supported Internships.</p> | |

FOR DISCUSSION:

| Item No. | Item | Action |
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| DSIAB2425/24 | <p>Intervention Support Fund – Derbyshire Eligibility</p> <p>SIAB received an overview of the Intervention Support Funding and confirmation that it is a grant available to Local Authorities with systemic failings identified via Area SEND inspections.</p> | |

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|-----------------------------------|--|--------|
| DSIAB2425/24 Continued | <p>SIAB received an overview of the Intervention Support Funding and confirmation that it is a grant available to Local Authorities with systemic failings identified via Area SEND inspections. The funding must be used to build capacity and support improvement, not for statutory duties or business-as-usual activity. The funding is only for the Local Authority and cannot be spent on NHS activity.</p> <p>The Business Case has been developed which focusses on four areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-production and Engagement Support To strengthen co-production across the local area and ensure communication is timely, transparent, and responsive - aligned with our Priority Action Plan. 2. Data and Intelligence Support To develop and embed data dashboards that provide clear oversight of key performance indicators, with a focus on the findings highlighted in the inspection outcome. 3. Transformational Capacity To enhance capacity for developing and implementing a robust system as part of our impact plan. 4. EHC Assessment Process Review To review and improve statutory processes and systems, with a focus on enhancing performance and communication throughout the EHC assessment journey. <p>The Board that needs to sign-off the Business Case before it could be submitted to the Department for Education grant assessors. The Board discussed the proposal and specific questions were asked about the length of funding, amount available towards salaries and whether that was sufficient. It was suggested the Council would consider match-funding posts if they were deemed a priority and essential to the improvement activity required. Board agreed to the submission of the Business Case.</p> <p>Partnership Updates</p> <p>a) Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice An overview of the work of Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice was presented</p> | |

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|-----------------------------------|---|--------|
| DSIAB2425/24 Continued | <p>Supported Internship Events had been hosted and have been received positively, supporting awareness and engagement around Supported Internships.</p> <p>The group have been supporting the work on Partnership Inclusion and Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) – this has included surveys at start/end of school year and allowed space for parents to meet/discuss.</p> <p>An initial meeting has been held in relation to Alternative Provision commissioning and survey questions are currently being developed to inform the commissioning approach.</p> <p>There has been a meeting to explore establishing focus groups to co-develop a Values charter.</p> <p>Annual SEND Survey is scheduled for September; discussion ongoing around which questions Priority Impact Areas leads would like included.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged and praised the impactful, largely voluntary work of the PCV group.</p> <p>b) NHS integrated Commissioning Board</p> <p>The NHS 10-year plan had been published. ICBs and NHS England now have new operating model, and significant reduction in the size of the organisation is required.</p> <p>Locally the ICB for Derby and Derbyshire will cluster with Nottingham/Nottinghamshire ICB and Leicester ICB with a new Chair being appointed over the summer. There is an expectation that there will be a 50% staffing reduction in ICBs moving forward and therefore lots of uncertainty amongst the workforce.</p> <p>The NHS changes have made reference to the use of Neighbourhood teams which could assist in the work required to improve waiting times for neurodiversity and for EHCs.</p> <p>c) Derbyshire County Council</p> <p>Cllr Simon Mabbott has recently been appointed as the Cabinet Support Member for SEND and will work alongside Cllr Jack Bradley, Cabinet Member for SEND.</p> | |

| Item No. | Item | Action |
|-----------------------------------|--|--------|
| DSIAB2425/24 Continued | <p>Local Government Reorganisation is also taking place at similar time to the NHS changes. The Council is currently consulting on options for the future make-up of Local Authorities across Derbyshire ahead of submitting a proposal to Central Government in November.</p> <p>The Board was advised that Emma Alexander has been appointed Chief Executive of Tameside Borough Council and will start in October. It is likely that interim arrangements will be put in place whilst the managing Director post is recruited to. The Chair thanked Emma Alexander for her support to the SEND improvement work.</p> <p>Board Evaluation</p> <p>The Chair advised that an evaluation form would be sent out for Board members to complete to gather their views on the effectiveness of the Board to-date. The results of the survey will be discussed at the September Board.</p> <p>ACTION DSIABA090 – Due 31st July 2025 All Board Members to complete the evaluation form.</p> | |

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING:

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| DSIAB2425/25 | <p>Minutes of the meeting of 11th June 2025</p> <p>The Chair advised the Board that the minutes of the June meeting, and the review of the terms of reference would be considered at the August Board meeting.</p> | |
| DSIAB2425/26 | <p>Action Log</p> <p>Reviewed in the meeting and updated.</p> | |

DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

13 August 2025, 14.00-17.00, Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock

09 September 2025, 14:00-17:00, Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock

14 October, 14:00-17:00, Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock

11 November, 14:00-17:00, Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock

10 December, 10:00-13:00 TBC

TBC January 2026 12-month Stocktake Meeting

20 January 2026, 10:00-13:00 TBC