

# DERBYSHIRE SEND IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD MINUTES

TUESDAY 17 MARCH 2026

MS TEAMS ONLINE MEETING, 13:00-16:00

## MINUTES:

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/103	<p><b>Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest or declarations of interest that needed to be noted. None declared.</p>
DSIAB2425/104	<p><b>Children and Young People’s Patient feedback</b></p> <p>The presentation outlined work undertaken over the past 18 months to develop a system-wide approach to capturing, analysing and responding to patient experience feedback from children, young people and their families. While individual organisations routinely gather feedback, the presenters highlighted that this had historically been done in isolation, with limited visibility at system level and insufficient feedback to families on how their views had informed change.</p> <p>The Board was informed that engagement had taken place with a wide range of providers and VCSE organisations to map existing feedback mechanisms and agree a proportionate quarterly reporting model. This approach enables services to submit feedback they already collect, avoiding duplication and additional burden, while allowing the ICB to collate themes and report at system level.</p> <p>Members were shown a draft quarterly feedback report, bringing together insight from a broad range of children’s services across Derbyshire and Derby City, including SEND and non-SEND provision. The report identifies common themes, highlights positive practice, sets out areas for improvement, and includes examples of changes already made in response to feedback. It is designed to be accessible and understandable for parents, carers and children.</p> <p>The presenters emphasised the importance of closing the feedback loop, noting that families frequently report giving feedback without seeing evidence of impact. Plans were outlined to publish the report via an online engagement platform, with links actively shared through partner channels rather than relying on families to locate information independently.</p> <p>The report has been shared with Derbyshire SEND Voice and Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice, with their feedback being reviewed for inclusion. Further work will take place with parent carer and youth voice groups to ensure the report and process are meaningful and accessible.</p> <p>Board members welcomed the work and commended the child-centred, visual presentation of the report. The Board highlighted the importance of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive communication to families, including use of the Local Offer, schools and local authority channels</li> <li>• Alignment with SEND communication and engagement activity</li> <li>• Clear linkage between feedback themes and the Board’s priority action and impact plans</li> </ul>

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<p><b>DSIAB2425/104</b> Continued</p>	<p>It was agreed that the presenters would cross-reference feedback themes against priority actions to ensure known areas for improvement are fully reflected in future insight gathering.</p> <p>The Board thanked the presenters and agreed that further updates would be brought back to demonstrate how patient feedback is influencing system improvement and decision-making.</p> <p><b>DSIABA183 - Board member to provide short update paper on how comms activity is being shared across Children's Social Care – due 21/04/2026</b></p>
<p><b>DSIAB2425/105</b></p>	<p><b>Priority Impact Area Progress Reports</b> <b>A. Priority Impact Area 3</b></p> <p>The Board received a detailed progress update in relation to Priority Impact Area 3, focusing on SEND assessment and review processes, workforce capacity, quality assurance and service experience.</p> <p>Board members noted that performance against statutory timescales for EHC plan assessments had declined during February. It was explained that this reflected an increase in the number of assessments being issued as part of ongoing recovery activity, including the active clearance of historical backlogs. The Board acknowledged that this short-term impact on timeliness was an anticipated consequence of increased throughput and was advised that this position would continue to be closely monitored.</p> <p>The Board was reassured that progress had been made in relation to Annual Review activity. Review decisions issued within timescales had improved compared to the previous month, with a significant year-on-year increase in the volume of completed reviews. Board members were advised that this improvement was linked to increased staffing capacity within review teams and improvements to processes, particularly in relation to phase transfer arrangements.</p> <p>The update highlighted a sustained reduction in tribunal requests and formal complaints over recent months, alongside an increase in compliments received. The Board welcomed this trend as an early indicator of improved service experience, while recognising that continued focus is required to ensure improvements are sustained and reflected consistently across the system.</p> <p>An update was provided on the Graduated Response activity, including ongoing co-production with SENCOs and schools. The Board noted that work is underway to develop an updated, more accessible Graduated Response toolkit, with delivery planned for July 2026. Workforce development activity was also reported, including SEND-specific training, strengthened induction arrangements and a repeat staff wellbeing survey. Members noted that the survey results demonstrated improved staff morale and reduced sickness absence, providing assurance that workforce pressures are beginning to stabilise.</p> <p>The Board discussed the review of banding arrangements, acknowledging that this is a complex area with significant financial and system implications. It was noted that benchmarking activity is underway and that any substantive changes will require further engagement through Schools Forum and alignment with national SEND reforms. Members emphasised the importance of understanding the risks associated with delay in this area and requested clarity on future timescales.</p>

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<p data-bbox="70 98 272 159">DSIAB2425/105 Continued</p>	<p data-bbox="301 98 1506 331">The Board reflected on the need for clearer articulation of progress against original delivery timescales, greater consistency in RAG-rating across workstreams, and stronger alignment between performance data, recovery trajectories and lived experience. It was agreed that further refinement of reporting would be undertaken to better demonstrate progress, risk and impact, with updates to be brought back to the Board.</p> <p data-bbox="448 378 831 414" style="text-align: center;"><b>B. Priority Impact Area 4</b></p> <p data-bbox="301 418 1506 495">The Board received an update on Priority Impact Area 4, covering attendance, exclusions, vulnerable children and early years.</p> <p data-bbox="301 530 1506 763">Members noted continued improvement in system performance, with permanent exclusions and suspensions reducing year on year for a second consecutive year. It was reported that early indications suggest a reduction in the use of part-time timetables, with trends beginning to move back towards previous levels. The Board was advised that this improvement reflects strengthened multi-agency working, enhanced triage processes and earlier intervention.</p> <p data-bbox="301 799 1506 996">The introduction of enhanced data dashboards was welcomed, enabling better identification of children who are not in full-time education and those with additional vulnerabilities. The Board was informed that further work is underway to embed a vulnerability index to support more targeted intervention and coordinated responses across children's services.</p> <p data-bbox="301 1032 1506 1229">An update was provided on Section 19 provision, including plans to review out-of-school tuition and alternative provision arrangements. Members noted that this work aims to improve efficiency, consistency and sufficiency, and that an updated Alternative Provision Framework is scheduled for implementation from September 2026.</p> <p data-bbox="301 1265 1506 1543">Early years developments were highlighted, including improved data visibility through Power BI, increased engagement with Early Years providers and positive early impact from outreach support. The Board noted evidence that targeted outreach work has contributed to reductions in suspensions and part-time attendance in early years settings. Improved access to Early Years Inclusion Funding was also reported, with increased success rates for applications and strengthened engagement with the sector.</p> <p data-bbox="301 1579 1506 1776">During discussion, Board members emphasised the need for future reports to better demonstrate impact over time, capture pressures experienced by schools and SENCOs, and clearly articulate how interventions are contributing to reductions in exclusion and improved attendance. The Board agreed that reporting should more explicitly link initiatives, data trends and outcomes for children and families.</p> <p data-bbox="448 1821 860 1856" style="text-align: center;"><b>C. Area for Improvement 2</b></p> <p data-bbox="301 1861 1506 1937">The Board received an update on Area for Improvement 2, focusing on transitions, Preparation for Adulthood and use of the Local Offer.</p> <p data-bbox="301 1973 1506 2170">Members noted progress in the development of transition and Preparation for Adulthood guidance, including engagement with schools, young people and SEND forums. While some delays were acknowledged, the Board was advised that revised timescales are now in place and that the work is aligned with wider strategic activity across the system.</p>

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<p data-bbox="70 98 279 159">DSIAB2425/105 Continued</p>	<p data-bbox="300 98 1506 248">Data demonstrated continued improvement in Preparation for Adulthood planning from Year 9 onwards, although the rate of improvement has slowed. The Board agreed that further targeted support is required to accelerate progress and ensure consistent practice across settings.</p> <p data-bbox="300 293 1506 443">Feedback from Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice was referenced, highlighting transitions as an ongoing area of concern for families. This reinforced the importance of the workstream and the need to ensure that improvements are clearly felt by children, young people and their families.</p> <p data-bbox="300 488 1506 674">Health partners provided assurance regarding joint work on transitions, including arrangements for children and young people eligible for continuing care. It was noted that this activity was not fully reflected in the written report, and members agreed that greater visibility of joint health, education and social care contributions would strengthen future reporting.</p> <p data-bbox="300 719 1506 869">The Board emphasised that reporting under this area must increasingly focus on the impact of activity for families, clearly articulating “so what” outcomes rather than solely describing actions completed. A more detailed update on health-related transition activity will be brought to a future meeting.</p> <p data-bbox="448 913 628 947" style="text-align: center;"><b>D. Data Set</b></p> <p data-bbox="300 954 1506 1104">The Board reviewed the updated SEND data set and noted significant improvements in data quality, completeness and narrative since previous meetings. Members acknowledged the challenges associated with recent system changes and data migration and welcomed the progress made in stabilising and improving reporting.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1149 1506 1529">Key areas of progress included stabilisation of assessment request volumes, increased agreement to assess, corresponding reductions in tribunal requests, improved completion rates for reviews, and sustained reductions in SEND-related complaints. The Board recognised that these trends provide increasing assurance that recovery activity is beginning to translate into improved system performance. However, Board members also noted that the size and complexity of the data set limits its usefulness at Board level. It was agreed that future reporting should increasingly focus on key trends and trajectories, provide clearer explanations of why changes are occurring, and demonstrate how specific interventions are influencing outcomes.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1574 1506 1771">The Board supported the introduction of improved improvement-tracking tools and welcomed plans to refine reporting through the Data and Performance Group and Operational Delivery Group. The potential use of statistical process control methodology was suggested to support interpretation of trends and avoid over-reaction to short-term variation.</p> <p data-bbox="300 1816 1506 1966">It was agreed that the full data set would continue to be available for assurance in the short term, while Board reports should increasingly present summarised, impact-focused analysis. Further refinement of health data presentation was requested to strengthen clarity and assurance.</p> <p data-bbox="300 2011 1506 2085"><b>DSIABA165 - Support whilst waiting - summary paper to be circulated post-March Board and discussed at April SIAB – Due 21/04/2026</b></p>

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DSIAB2425/105 Continued	<p><b>DSIABA174 - Bring a comms update (with plan for constant feed, schools/Local Offer routes) to April SIAB including information shared by NHS Reps regarding Children's experiences with NHS services – due 21/04/2026</b></p> <p><b>DSIABA184 Inclusion Support Fund - update on changes to spending plans to be provided to SIAB – due 21/04/2026</b></p>
DSIAB2425/106	<p><b>Stocktake Letter reports –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Updated PIP/PIP tracker</b></li> </ul> <p>The Board received an update on progress in response to the Stocktake Letter, including the introduction of an updated Priority Impact Plan (PIP) tracker. The Board was reminded that, while regular progress reports against Priority Impact Areas and Areas for Improvement are provided, a consistent mechanism for tracking delivery against individual actions within the PIP had previously been lacking.</p> <p>A draft tracker was presented, designed to provide a clear, structured overview of progress against all actions within the PIP. The tracker enables actions to be monitored individually, with visibility of lead responsibility, original and revised timescales, current delivery status, and RAG ratings. Members noted that this approach allows complex actions to be broken down into discrete components, addressing previous concerns that single RAG ratings were masking varied progress within large workstreams.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the tracker will be used routinely by the Operational Delivery Group (ODG) to focus discussion on actions rated red or amber, ensure timely escalation of risks and delays, and support more effective challenge and support. It was confirmed that work is underway to ensure that action owners review and, where necessary, update delivery timescales, with changes being formally agreed and recorded rather than informally drifting.</p> <p>Board members welcomed the introduction of the tracker and agreed that it represents a significant improvement in assurance, transparency and accountability. The Board emphasised the importance of the tracker being kept up to date, consistently applied across all Priority Impact Areas, and clearly linked to evidence of delivery and impact.</p> <p>It was agreed that the tracker should be embedded as a core management tool within ODG and shared with the Board as part of assurance reporting. The Board noted that, over time, the tracker has the potential to replace elements of narrative progress reporting, enabling Board discussion to focus more explicitly on risk, impact and decision-making rather than descriptive updates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sufficiency strategy</b></li> </ul> <p>The Board considered the draft SEND and Inclusion Sufficiency Strategy, which has been developed to articulate the system's longer-term vision and approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>Members noted that the strategy reflects extensive engagement and co-production activity, including values-based workshops and feedback from children, young people, families and partners.</p>

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<p><b>DSIAB2425/106</b> <b>Continued</b></p>	<p>The Board welcomed the emphasis on lived experience and agreed that the voice of children and families was clearly evident throughout the document.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the strategy is intended to provide a clear, shared framework for future planning and decision-making, aligning improvement activity with a consistent set of values, ambitions and outcomes. Members welcomed the clarity of intent and the alignment with existing Priority Impact Areas and Areas for Improvement.</p> <p>Partners from Health, Education and Provider organisations confirmed that the strategy resonated with their own organisational priorities and provided a strong basis for joint working. Members highlighted the importance of ensuring that the strategy is owned and understood across the system, including by schools, early years providers and the voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>The Board discussed areas for further strengthening prior to finalisation, including ensuring sufficient emphasis on early years, clearly evidencing co-production activity, and demonstrating how the strategy will translate into tangible improvements for children, young people and families. Members also emphasised the importance of clarity around how success will be measured and how progress against the strategy will be monitored and reported.</p> <p>It was noted that further engagement will continue as the strategy moves into its design and finalisation phase, including targeted discussions with partners and representative groups. The Board supported this approach and agreed that the final strategy should return for formal endorsement once this work has been completed.</p> <p><b>DSIABA176 Review of 'all through banding' - RM &amp; JW to review banding position and confirm timeline and route to Schools Forum in July for feedback at May Board – Due 19/05/2026</b></p> <p><b>DSIABA178 - Bring SENCO workload / wellbeing evidence (incl. recent survey and network feedback) to next SIAB – Due 21/04/2026</b></p> <p><b>DSIABA179 - JH to liaise with Maz Sarson to bring an update paper to May Board on work of NHS services in respect of transitions activity – Due 13/05/2026</b></p> <p><b>DSIABA182 - Sufficiency Strategy: incorporate evidence of coproduction and clarify involvement of voluntary and community sector and bring final version back to SIAB – Due 13/05/2026</b></p>
<p><b>DSIAB2425/107</b></p>	<p><b>Delivery Group update</b></p> <p>The Board received its first formal written update from the Operational Delivery Group (ODG), presented by the Chair. Members were advised that the ODG had recently undertaken a reset of its approach in order to strengthen oversight, improve assurance and ensure clearer escalation of issues to the Board.</p> <p>The update confirmed that the ODG has been reviewing progress across all Priority Impact Areas and Areas for Improvement, with a particular focus on ensuring that actions arising from the Stocktake Letter are embedded within delivery plans.</p>

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<p><b>DSIAB2425/107</b> Continued</p>	<p>Priority Impact Area leads have been asked to review their workstreams to ensure that Stocktake Letter recommendations are explicitly reflected, with revised actions and timescales brought back for scrutiny where required.</p> <p>The Board was informed that the ODG is now routinely reviewing the SEND data pack at each meeting, using it to support more focused discussion on performance, trends and emerging risks. This includes examination of assessment demand, review activity, attendance, exclusions, vulnerable children and waiting list pressures. Members were advised that this approach is intended to improve consistency between operational discussions and Board-level assurance.</p> <p>The update highlighted that the ODG has begun to place increased emphasis on risk management and escalation, including identifying areas where delivery timescales may not be achievable and ensuring these are formally reviewed rather than allowed to drift. The Group has also agreed to undertake targeted deep dives on priority areas where issues are appearing across multiple workstreams, including the Local Offer, which has been identified as a recurring theme across reports and feedback.</p> <p>The Board was advised that the ODG has considered inspection readiness as part of its recent discussions, with work underway to ensure that evidence of progress, challenge and impact is clearly documented. This includes strengthening links between action tracking, performance data and narrative assurance.</p> <p>Members noted that the ODG has also agreed to review its terms of reference and membership, alongside those of the Board, to ensure appropriate alignment, clarity of roles and effective system leadership. This work will be taken forward and reported back once proposals have been developed.</p> <p>In terms of escalation, the Board was informed that increased EHC assessment demand since Christmas continues to be closely monitored due to potential implications for workforce capacity and recovery plans. While no immediate decision was required from the Board, the issue will remain under active review and be escalated if necessary.</p> <p>The Board welcomed the update and agreed that the ODG report provides improved visibility of operational activity, challenge and decision-making. Members noted that this strengthens assurance and supports clearer understanding of how risks, performance issues and delivery challenges are being managed between Board meetings.</p> <p>It was agreed that future ODG updates should continue to focus on key areas of risk, decision-making and escalation, rather than duplicating detailed workstream reports, and that the Board would use these updates to provide strategic challenge and support where required.</p> <p><b>DSIABA180 - JW to rotate monthly reporting from ODG to SIAB : KPI Data Pack in April, Assurance Report in May – Due 21/04/2026</b></p>
<p><b>DSIAB2425/108</b></p>	<p><b>Local Partnership Updates -</b></p> <p><b>A. Parent Carer Forum update</b></p> <p>The Board noted that Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice were unable to attend the meeting. As a result, no formal verbal update was provided.</p>

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<p><b>DSIAB2425/108</b> Continued</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>B. Derbyshire County Council</b></p> <p>Members were informed that the Council is currently undertaking the recruitment process for a permanent Director of Children’s Services, with interviews expected to take place in April. The Board was reassured that continuity arrangements are in place to ensure stability and effective handover during this period.</p> <p>It was also reported that the Council is actively engaged in local government reorganisation planning, with a decision from Government anticipated later in the year. Members noted that this work has potential implications for future planning and governance arrangements, including SEND improvement activity, and will continue to be monitored.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged the scale of change activity within the Council and recognised the importance of maintaining focus on SEND improvement alongside wider organisational developments.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>C. Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board</b></p> <p>Members were advised that the ICB is currently progressing through a formal organisational consultation on future structures, with the consultation period due to close at the end of March. This process affects a number of roles that support SEND-related work across the system.</p> <p>It was noted that voluntary redundancy applications have been approved, with staff departures scheduled across a range of dates extending into the autumn. Interim arrangements will be put in place where required to ensure continuity of key functions, with experienced staff from within the wider NHS system expected to support ongoing work.</p> <p>The Board was assured that, despite organisational change, SEND improvement remains a priority, and that arrangements will be made to maintain stability, clarity of leadership and effective partnership working throughout the transition period.</p>
<p><b>DSIAB2425/109</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> of February</b></p> <p>The minutes from the previous meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February were accepted as an accurate record with an amendment made to a member’s name.</p> <p>The minutes will be anonymised and placed on the Local Offer website.</p> <p>It was agreed March's meeting will be a MS Teams meeting.</p>
<p><b>DSIAB2425/110</b></p>	<p><b>Action Log</b></p> <p>Reviewed in the meeting and updated.</p>
<p><b>DSIAB2425/111</b></p>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>None raised.</p>