

DERBYSHIRE SEND IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD MINUTES

Tuesday the 20th of May 2025,

The Members Rooms, County Hall, Matlock, 14:00-17:00

MINUTES:

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/01	<p>Young People's Focus</p> <p>The SIAB received an update about the creation of a young person's Assembly, which will not replace existing models of engagement but rather complement them. The assembly is designed to be a structured platform for youth voice, with approximately ten young people participating. It will be supported with funding and will include a representative who will attend the factory assembly, a forum that meets regularly.</p> <p>The assembly will identify three priority areas. While some logistical and funding details are still being finalised, the enthusiasm among young people is already evident. The project has seen growing interest, and there is expressed excitement about the potential for meaningful youth-led projects and contributions.</p> <p>Following the presentation, Board members responded with strong support. The aspirational nature of the youth researchers involve was highlighted, noting their commitment to connecting with peers and influencing change. The Chair then raised an important question about representation: how would the young person selected to represent Derbyshire ensure inclusivity across different backgrounds, including ethnicity, religion, and lived experience? Rosie acknowledged the challenge and assured the Board that they are working through various youth networks to ensure broad and fair representation.</p> <p>The discussion then shifted to the role of the Board in supporting young people. The Chair reminded members of their prior commitment to submit questions for the upcoming engagement session with young people and college students.</p> <p>This was framed not just as a task, but as a demonstration of leadership and role modelling.</p> <p>The Chair emphasised that all Board members—especially those who had not yet submitted questions—should do so by the following evening. This was particularly important as the young people were preparing for the session, and their efforts deserved reciprocal engagement from the Board.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the Chair proposed that the Board consider establishing a regular rhythm of direct engagement with young people perhaps through quarterly events or presentations. Rosie confirmed that such direct involvement would indeed happen, and the Board agreed to explore how to formalise this approach. The idea was to ensure that the Board hears directly from young people on a consistent basis, reinforcing the principle of co-production and shared decision-making.</p> <p>In closing, the Chair reiterated the importance of the Board's commitment to youth engagement.</p>

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/02	Welcome, introductions and apologies Apologies were noted.
DSIAB2425/03	Declarations of Interest The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest or declarations of interest that needed to be noted. None declared.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/04	<p>Support whilst waiting - ND Assessments and Mental Health</p> <p>The Board received a comprehensive update on the current state of support available to children and young people who are waiting for neurodevelopmental (ND) assessments and mental health services. The update began by clarifying the scope of the discussion, noting that the focus was on services that are under oversight and assurance, and which are intended to provide interim support while children remain on waiting lists. It was emphasised that while these services do exist and are funded, the primary challenge lies in how well they are communicated to families and professionals.</p> <p>A key concern raised was the lack of awareness among parents and carers about what support is available, how to access it, and where to find it.</p> <p>It was explained that the next steps would involve gathering feedback on how well the support offer is communicated and mapping out user journeys to identify gaps and barriers. This would help the system better understand the experience of families and ensure that information is shared more effectively. The goal is to use this insight to identify service gaps and improve access to support while waiting.</p> <p>Board members contributed to the discussion by raising concerns about how children are prioritised on waiting lists. They questioned whether the system is responsive enough to escalating needs and whether it is fair to expect parents to advocate for reprioritisation. There was a strong call for a system-led approach to identifying and responding to the most vulnerable children, rather than placing the burden on families. This was particularly relevant for children whose needs may escalate into safeguarding concerns if not addressed early.</p> <p>The Board also discussed the importance of understanding how experiences vary across different parts of Derbyshire. Plans were shared to hold in-person and online engagement events with parents and carers in various geographical locations. These events aim to explore localised challenges and gather insights that could inform service improvements. The Board welcomed this approach and encouraged further guidance on how to ensure these events capture the full complexity of families' experiences.</p> <p>Another important theme was the need for better data. Board members highlighted the importance of having a clear dataset that evidences groups waiting, for what services, and for how long. This data would be essential for tracking changes in need, planning services, and allocating resources effectively. Without it, the system cannot fully understand the scale of the issue or measure the impact of interventions.</p> <p>The discussion also touched on the importance of involving parents and carers in shaping the support offer. Suggestions included bringing the parent carer voice into triage and assessment processes and sharing assessment tools across agencies to ensure consistency and transparency. The Board agreed that co-production must be embedded in all aspects of service design and delivery.</p>

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/04 continued	<p>Finally, the Board agreed to schedule a focused discussion on prioritisation in the September meeting, followed by a session on workforce in October. These discussions will help shape a more strategic and equitable approach to managing waiting lists and delivering support. The Chair concluded by reinforcing that this is not just a Council issue but a system-wide challenge that requires shared responsibility and coordinated action across health, education, and social care</p> <p>Action - DSIABA053 - Focussed agenda items in September on Prioritisation and in October on Workforce</p>
DSIAB2425/05	<p>Derbyshire SEND Operational Delivery Group – Update</p> <p>The Operational Delivery Group (ODG) has now been formally established and has held its first meeting. IT was confirmed that the group is now active and a Chair appointed from the Integrated Care Board (ICB). The purpose of the ODG is to provide a structured forum for operational leads to coordinate and drive forward the delivery of the SEND improvement plan.</p> <p>The first meeting of the ODG focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreeing the terms of reference. - Clarifying expectations for the group's role and responsibilities. - Beginning to shape the agenda items for future meetings. <p>The group is intending to meet approximately two weeks before each Board meeting to ensure timely updates and alignment with the Board's strategic direction.</p> <p>A key point raised by the Chair was the importance of ensuring that detailed delivery plans, which sit beneath the overarching improvement plan, are in place and actively monitored by the ODG. These plans are essential for providing the Board with assurance that progress is being made and that actions are being implemented effectively.</p> <p>The Chair requested that by the June Board meeting, the ODG should be in a position to present updates on these delivery plans, including how they are being used to track progress and identify risks or delays.</p> <p>Action - DSIABA054 - Assurances to be provided to Board in June on detailed action plans</p>
DSIAB2425/06	<p>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment - JSNA</p> <p>The JSNA was introduced as a foundational document that provides a detailed analysis of the needs of children and young people with SEND in Derbyshire. The Chair commended the team for producing such a thorough and insightful piece of work in a relatively short timeframe. It was acknowledged that the JSNA is an iterative document, intended to evolve over time as more data becomes available and as the system's understanding deepens.</p> <p>Board members recognised the JSNA as a living document. There was consensus that while the current version is already highly valuable, it should not be seen as final. Instead, it should be updated regularly potentially on a quarterly basis to reflect new insights, data, and service developments. The Chair emphasised that the JSNA should not be used in a tokenistic way but should actively inform decision making, planning, and quality assurance activities.</p>

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DSIAB2425/06 continued	<p>Concerns were raised about the reliability of some data sources, particularly due to the transition from the Synergy system to IDOX. The Chair clarified that data up to the SEND2 return is considered reliable, but more recent data may require validation. There was a call for continued scrutiny of data quality and for the Board to receive assurance that data cleansing and validation processes are in place.</p> <p>Board members highlighted the importance of using the JSNA to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand variations in need across different localities. - Identify gaps in provision. - Inform joint commissioning and resource allocation. - Support early intervention and prevention strategies. <p>There was also a discussion about how the JSNA could help the system move beyond simply responding to symptoms and instead begin to address underlying causes of need.</p> <p>The need to communicate the findings of the JSNA effectively to schools, families, and other stakeholders was raised. It was suggested that the language used in the document should be carefully considered to avoid misinterpretation—particularly around sensitive topics like the higher rate of SEN support in Derbyshire compared to statistical neighbours. The Chair recommended framing such data in a way that acknowledges both the challenges and the strengths of the local system.</p> <p>The Board agreed to take additional time to read and reflect on the JSNA before formally endorsing it. Members were encouraged to submit questions and feedback that could guide future iterations and inform deep dives or audits. The Chair also stressed the importance of aligning the JSNA with the Priority Impact Plan to avoid duplication and ensure coherence across strategic documents.</p> <p>Action - DSIABA055 - Board Members to review SEND JSNA report and provide questions for further analysis and understanding by 28th May.</p> <p>Action - DSIABA056 - Issues on JSNA to be considered by the Operational Delivery Group at the next meeting.</p>

FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE:

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/07	<p>Priority Impact Area Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Impact Area 1 <p>The Board received a limited assurance update on Priority Impact Area 1, which focuses on governance and delivery infrastructure. The update acknowledged that while some progress had been made, the overall assurance was limited due to transitional leadership and the early stage of development. Notably, the newly formed Operational Delivery Group (ODG) had held its first meeting, which focused on establishing terms of reference and setting expectations.</p> <p>A key point raised was the need for detailed delivery plans to sit beneath the overarching improvement plan. These plans are essential for providing the Board with assurance that actions are being implemented effectively. The Chair requested that these delivery plans be ready for review at the June Board meeting. The Board discussed the importance of clarifying the process for conducting quarterly deep dives. While topics such as prioritisation and workforce had been suggested for upcoming sessions, there was no formal agreement on the methodology or scope of these reviews.</p>

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/07 continued	<p>The Board also introduced a new highlight report format that includes RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings for progress and impact. Feedback on this format was invited, and it was noted that the definitions of progress and impact should be clearly understood and open to challenge. Furthermore, the Board clarified the terminology around “deep dives,” distinguishing between those conducted by Department of Education and NHS advisors and internal multi-agency audits or thematic reviews. This clarification was intended to ensure consistency in language and expectations across the system.</p> <p>Improvement Area 2 Improvement Area 2 focuses on transitions, particularly the movement of Children and Young People from primary to secondary school (Key Stage 2 to 3) and from secondary education to post-16 destinations such as further education, training, or employment. The Board heard that work is underway to improve transition planning, including the development of a training package for secondary schools and engagement sessions for parents. These sessions are being co-produced with the Derbyshire Parent Carer Forum to ensure they reflect the lived experiences of families.</p> <p>The discussion centred on Preparation for Adulthood. Board members emphasised the importance of understanding what young people themselves consider to be key transition points, rather than relying solely on organisational definitions. This insight is expected to inform future planning and ensure that services are responsive to the actual needs of young people.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the limited scale of pilot projects currently underway. Some Board members said that these pilots may not be representative of the wider population and suggested that future pilots should include less engaged schools to ensure broader applicability. There was also a call for clearer leadership and coordination.</p> <p>Priority Impact Area 3 The Board received a detailed update on Priority Impact Area 3, which focuses on improving the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process and the quality of plans issued. Significant work is underway to streamline the assessment and decision-making process, particularly within the first four weeks of an EHCP request. A key focus has been on embedding a robust quality assurance framework to ensure consistency and clarity in how needs are assessed and decisions are made.</p> <p>Initiatives have been introduced to support this improvement. A new communication contact form has been launched to enhance how families and professionals interact with the EHCP service.</p> <p>Surgery sessions are being set up for MPs and Elected Members to help address concerns and improve transparency. Training for schools is also being rolled out to support better understanding and implementation of the graduated response. Alongside these efforts, the team is working on digital enhancements to make the EHCP process more accessible and efficient.</p> <p>Despite these positive developments, the Board acknowledged the ongoing challenge of managing a high volume of EHCP requests—over 2,900 between January and April alone. This demand has placed considerable pressure on the service, even with additional investment and staffing. Board members raised concerns about the sustainability of the current model and the need for clearer impact measures. Board members questioned how outcomes such as “more children receiving the right support at the right time” could be quantified and tracked.</p>

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DSIAB2425/07 continued	<p>There was also a strong emphasis on the importance of co-production. Members stressed that families, schools, and Health partners must be actively involved in shaping the EHCP process to ensure it is inclusive and responsive to the needs of children and young people. The Board agreed that the Quality Assurance framework must be multi-agency in nature, allowing all partners to understand what is happening within the system and contribute to continuous improvement.</p> <p>While the Board recognised the significant progress made under Priority Impact Area 3, they also highlighted the need for ongoing data development, clearer metrics, and sustained collaboration to ensure the EHCP process is both effective and future-proof.</p> <p>Priority Impact Area 4</p> <p>During the discussion on Priority Impact Area 4, there was a focus on the sufficiency of provision between mainstream and specialist educational settings. It was acknowledged that the current system needs to be more fluid and adaptable to meet the needs of children who don't fit neatly into either category. This flexibility is seen as essential for improving outcomes and ensuring appropriate support.</p> <p>The Board was informed that there are currently 18 proposals under consideration. A key point raised was the importance of encouraging schools to complete training, particularly in areas that support inclusive practices and service delivery.</p> <p>The timeline for implementation was discussed, with a target window between June and September. However, it was noted that some services are not being fully accessed, which limits their effectiveness and raises questions about systemic barriers or awareness gaps.</p> <p>A significant portion of the discussion focused on data and the identification of vulnerable children. Board members emphasised the need to use the data dashboard to spotlight children of concern; those whose home circumstances or educational access are significantly compromised. For example, in families with multiple children, one child's complex needs can impact the entire household. The Board discussed how the system must respond more effectively to these vulnerabilities and ensure that the most at-risk children are not overlooked.</p> <p>There was also a discussion about the long-term sustainability and how data insights should inform strategic planning. A Board member referenced a previous initiative on children of concern and stressed the importance of integrating that work into the current SEND improvement framework.</p> <p>In terms of performance monitoring, the Chair (who also chairs the Data and Performance Group) provided reassurance that the Data and Performance Group is aligning datasets specifically with the Priority Impact Areas, rather than relying on generic data. There is ongoing work to improve data interactivity and it was noted that the team is learning from other regions that have already implemented similar improvements. However, challenges remain around data sharing protocols, which are not yet fully in place across all partners.</p>

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/07 continued	<p>The Board also explored issues related to attendance and school self-assessment. Concerns were raised about how attendance data, fines, and exclusions are being used and whether they align with the lived experiences of families. There was a call to triangulate school self-assessments with actual data on part-time timetables and exclusions to ensure consistency and accountability.</p> <p>Finally, the use of BRAG (Blue, Red, Amber, Green) ratings on the Local Offer was debated. A Board member cautioned against using Amber ratings, suggesting that they may not reflect how parents and carers perceive the quality or adequacy of services. The group agreed that more thoughtful communication and transparency are needed when presenting such evaluations.</p> <p>The Board had limited assurance on Priority Impact area 4.</p>
DSIAB2425/08	<p>Partnership Updates:</p> <p>a) Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice</p> <p>An update was provided and an important action point raised about the need to meet with each workstream to ensure that the Derbyshire Parent Carer Voice (DPCV) is involved. The mapping process has identified areas where the DPCV is expected to be included but currently is not.</p> <p>DPCV members have now completed Trauma-informed training, which will help shape the values and future direction within the DPCV.</p> <p>DPCV has also hosted successful events in collaboration with educational psychology, focusing on attendance. These events have seen significant engagement, with over 100 parents signing up for online sessions and more than seven events hosted. When developing new ways of working, the forum is available to help co-produce and deliver training from a PCF perspective.</p> <p>DPCV often identifies situations where their involvement could be beneficial. Additionally, it is important to note that the redacted notes should not include BRAG/RAG ratings, as the PCF finds them unhelpful.</p> <p>b) NHS Integrated Commissioning Board</p> <p>The Board received an update on behalf of the Integrated Care Board. The timescales for changes have been set, with all Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) required to submit a 50% reduction by the 30th of May. While some regional structures may change, others may remain the same. It is public knowledge that the Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board (DDICB) and Nottinghamshire ICB are planning to merge, although it is unclear if this collaboration will extend further afield. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and safeguarding have been identified as areas that will be potentially streamlined with the Local Authority and are being considered in the ICB structure however this will require legislative changes. It has been stated that the DDICB needs to achieve a £19 million saving.</p> <p>c) Local Authority Children's Services</p> <p>An update for Derbyshire County Council (DCC) was given. A new administration has been voted in, and the elected administration group will be affirmed at the council meeting tomorrow, the 21st. Reform UK has been elected, which will confirm who will be in attendance at this Board.</p>

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DSIAB2425/08 continued	<p>This is a significant change for the County Council moving forward.</p> <p>Areas in Children's Services are legislative and can be difficult to influence, so understanding the Elected Members' views on these matters will need to be considered.</p> <p>A Focused Visit inspection of Children in Need and Child Protection services was conducted recently and the feedback has been positive; the County Council are awaiting the full report of the inspection to be published.</p>

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/09	<p>Minutes from the meeting held in April</p> <p>The minutes from the meeting held on the 23rd of April were agreed as a true representation of the previous Board meeting.</p> <p>Slight amendments to job titles and a word change from "Health" to "Help" on page 1.</p> <p>The minutes will be redacted and anonymised and placed on the Local Offer website.</p>
DSIAB2425/10	<p>Action Log from the meeting held in April</p> <p>Reviewed in the meeting and updated.</p>
DSIAB2425/11	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>The Chair raised that the next meeting is scheduled to take place at Derby College. A key point raised was the issue of limited parking at the venue. It was noted that there are only 30 available spaces, yet more than 30 attendees are expected. To address this, attendees are encouraged to car share, and a SharePoint link was circulated to help coordinate travel. Members were asked to indicate who is offering to drive, how many seats they have available, who would like to be a passenger, and where people are travelling from. This was to ensure that everyone could get to and from the venue efficiently.</p> <p>The Chair recognised the significant time and effort members contribute but stressed that the Board's success depends on members role modelling responsiveness and actively engaging with planning and logistical tasks. The message was clear: to be a truly effective Board, members must not only attend meetings but also support the operational aspects that enable the Board's work to progress smoothly in between Board meetings.</p> <p>No further business was raised by members.</p>

DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Date and Time:	Venue:
11 June 2025, 14:00-17:00	
2nd July 2025 - Stocktake Meeting, Invited Board Members only	County Hall, Matlock
16 July 2025, 10:00-13:00	To be confirmed
9 th September 2025, 14:00-17:00	Committee Room 1, County Hall
14 th October, 14:00-17:00	Committee Room 1, County Hall
11 th November, 14:00-17:00	Committee Room 1, County Hall
10 th December, 10:00-13:00	To be confirmed