DERBYSHIRE SEND IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday 9th September 2026

Committee Room 1, County Hall, Matlock, 9:30-12:30

MINUTES:

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/156	**Welcome, introductions and apologies** Apologies were noted and listed above. The Chair amended the running order to allow additional time for inspection preparation and consideration of the partnership's Self-Evaluation Framework. Updates on the action tracker and health data were incorporated into later agenda items.
DSIAB2425/157	**Declarations of Interest** The Chair asked if there were any conflicts of interest or declarations of interest that needed to be noted. None declared.
DSIAB2425/158	**Children and Young People's Update** The Board heard that work had continued during the school holiday period, despite no Youth Inclusion Forum meeting taking place. Young people had contributed to recruitment interviews, the Corporate Parenting Board's My Voice and Participation subgroup, and a further podcast for social workers focused on ambitions, hopes and dreams. The co-produced glossary continued to be shared across SEND and wider children's services to support the use of consistent and caring language. Further young people would be involved in its ongoing review. Mind of My Own recorded 64 statements during July, including 18 through the Express app. The main themes were "All About Me" and education, supporting the inclusion of young people's views within Education, Health and Care Plan processes. A total of 136 statements from children and young people with SEND had been identified, although tracking remained incomplete. The available figures had been included in the Self-Evaluation Framework. The Board requested a stronger focus on apprenticeships, supported internships and work experience, as these subjects continued to be raised by young people. Each partner organisation was asked to identify existing or potential opportunities for young people with SEND. These opportunities will be mapped across the partnership and reported to the November Board.

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/158 Continued	**ACTION: DSIABA260 Due 20/10/2026 – Share Children and Young People's Glossary with Board Members** **ACTION: DSIABA261 Due 20/10/2026 – October Childrens and Young People's Update to include experience of a young person undertaking an apprenticeship** **ACTION: DSIABA262 Due 24/11/2026 – All to consider possible opportunities for young people in their organisations and what steps are needed to make this happen and report back at November Board.**
DSIAB2425/159	**Priority Impact Area Progress Reports** **A) Priority Impact Area 1** The SEND Inclusion Strategy had been published and linked to the SEND reform plan, providing a partnership framework through to 2031. Work arising from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment continued, including recommendations relevant to the wider partnership. Demand for Education, Health and Care Plans and assessment requests continued to rise. Annual performance for assessments completed within 20 weeks had increased to 18%, compared with 4.3% during the previous calendar year. Monthly performance had also improved, reaching 28.1% in July and 30.77% in August. The Board welcomed the improvement but noted that the partnership's aspiration remained for all assessments to be completed within 20 weeks. Quality must also be maintained alongside improved timeliness. The Board requested a clearer view of assessments exceeding 20 weeks, including the number of assessments overdue and how long they had been outstanding. This was needed to explain the effect of the backlog and ensure improved performance for newer cases did not obscure longer waits for other children. Future reporting should also include: • The number and proportion of parental requests. • Referral trends and sources. • The number of requests progressed or refused. • Outcomes by referral source. • Mean and maximum waiting times. • Parent carer experience. Parental requests were reported as accounting for approximately 34% of referrals. Local Authority representative and Parent Care Voice agreed to align messages with SENCO networks and use the available data to address misconceptions about how parental requests are considered. The Board agreed that reporting should balance compliance percentages with waiting-time information and families' experiences.

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/159 Continued	**ACTION: DSIABA263 Due 20/10/2026 – PIA3 Progress Report for November to include:** • **data on parental requests and refusal rates for EHCP assessments, including trends and actual numbers and** • **update of work DPCV to manage messaging on parental-request myths with SENCO networks.** **ACTION: DSIABA264 DUE 20/10/2026 – Concise monthly snapshot of key SEND data for Board assurance to be introduced at October Board.** **B) Priority Impact Area 2** The strategic partnership commissioning agreement had been developed and ratified through the Joint Commissioning Hub. The Board endorsed the content of the agreement and agreed that the substantive action could be marked complete. Final formatting and publication remained outstanding, and it was agreed that the final formatted version would be circulated when available. Parent Care Voice reported difficulties accessing some Board documents. Project Manager was asked to review the recent document list with Parent Care Voice representatives and ensure that they had straightforward access, including to the commissioning agreement. The Board recognised that making information available online did not necessarily make it accessible. A wider partnership discussion was required on providing: • Easy-read information. • Visually accessible documents. • Concise summary versions. • More detailed versions for those who required them. • Support for people with different levels of digital literacy. The issue should be considered through the appropriate partnership governance route, potentially the Operational Delivery Group. The Board also agreed that progress ratings should reflect completed substantive work. Where publication or final formatting was the only outstanding step, ratings could be updated to reflect the progress already achieved. **ACTION: DSIABA265 Due 20/10/2026 – ODG to consider issue of accessibility of documents and communications** **ACTION: DSIABA266 Due 20/10/2026 – Add Parent Carer Voice representatives to the Joint Commissioning Hub SharePoint** **ACTION: DISABA267 Due 24/11/2026 – Board to receive final 'designed' version of Joint Commissioning Agreement for info**
DSIAB2425/160	**Inspection preparation and readiness** The monitoring inspection was confirmed for 21 to 23 September 2026.

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DSIAB2425/160 Continued	The list of children with Education, Health and Care Plans and SEND support, the Priority Action Plan and the Self-Evaluation Framework were due for upload by 5pm on 9 September 2026. The remaining evidence supporting the Priority Impact Areas was due for submission by close of play on 11 September 2026. Initial conversations with services, Parent Carer Voice, national partners and children and young people were being arranged. The inspection timetabling meeting was scheduled for 11 September 2026. It was confirmed that this was a monitoring inspection rather than a full SEND inspection. Inspectors would assess whether the partnership had made reasonable progress against the Priority Impact Areas identified in the September 2024 inspection report. Priority Impact Area 4 was expected to receive closer scrutiny, including: • Children with additional vulnerabilities. • Children without school places. • Elective home education. • Alternative provision. • Permanent exclusions. • Reintegration into mainstream education. Priority Impact Area 6, concerning waiting times, was also expected to receive greater scrutiny. The Social Care HMI would review cases directly through the Mosaic social care system. The Board reviewed the 52-page partnership Self-Evaluation Framework and endorsed its focused approach. It covered the Derbyshire context, demand, partnership arrangements, co-production, leadership, quality assurance, performance and stakeholder feedback. Each Priority Impact Area followed a consistent structure: • What inspectors found in 2024. • What the partnership had done in response. • Alignment with strategic outcomes. • Known impact and lived experience. • Priorities for the next 12 months. Members stressed that participants must clearly explain local structures, decisions, actions and progress. Inspectors should not be expected to understand Derbyshire's local arrangements without explanation. The evidence should demonstrate both the distance travelled since 2024, and the work still required. The partnership should be honest that some positive outcomes were at an early stage, while clearly demonstrating the progress made. The evidence submission would be supported by approximately six storyboards and additional case studies. These would set out the historical position, action taken, emerging impact and lived experience of children, young people and families. The Self-Evaluation Framework could proceed for submission, but the additional evidence needed to include the supporting health data by the inspection deadline.

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/160 Continued	**ACTION: DSIABA268 Due 20/10/2026 – Exclusion case study to be adapted to demonstrate changes in permanent-exclusion practice, including review, quality assurance and reintegration where appropriate.** **ACTION: DSIABA269 Due 10/10/2026 – Ensure health data and supporting information for Priority Impact Area 6 is available for inspection evidence.**
DSIAB2425/161	**SEND reform – Experts at Hand update.** Outcome letters for local area SEND reform plans were expected during the week commencing 21 September 2026. Quarterly monitoring arrangements had not yet been confirmed. A reduced data request had been issued and could be submitted through a web portal or, if this were not available, by email. The October Board would require significant time to consider the reform plan feedback, monitoring inspection implications and future governance arrangements. The Experts at Hand programme included strengthened support across: • Inclusion and school attendance. • Educational Psychology. • Speech and language therapy. • Occupational therapy. • Physiotherapy. • Early years. • Preparation for adulthood and employment. • Elective home education. Recruitment for elements of the original offer was in progress. The proposed Inclusion Response Team would provide 12 specialist teachers and 12 teaching assistants across locality areas. The team would support children who were not attending school, identify appropriate education pathways, oversee permanently excluded pupils and support reintegration where appropriate. Educational Psychology had recruited six assistant educational psychologists and was advertising for qualified educational psychologists. Planned support included: • A named link educational psychologist for every mainstream school. • A SENCO helpline. • Mediated learning support training. • The LEANS whole-school neurodiversity project. • Early years support. • Parent drop-in sessions. • Sensory processing training. Therapy services were developing school-based speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy offer. Progress with recruitment depended on completion of the commissioning arrangements between the local authority, Integrated Care Board and NHS providers.

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DSIAB2425/161 Continued	Additional proposals included: • Four early years specialist teachers. • Twelve SEND employment officers. • Six elective home education officers and a team manager. If approved, the early years proposal aimed for staff to be in post from January 2027. The Board asked that the SEND employment offer provide additional capacity without duplicating existing youth employment and disability employment services. The Board also requested that the impact of the proposed elective home education capacity be monitored. More than 1,000 children were reported as being electively home educated, missing education or otherwise not attending school. Recruitment mitigation included using assistant educational psychologists as an interim capacity measure and as part of a longer-term workforce development and succession plan. **ACTION: DSIABA270 Due 20/10/2026 – SEND Reform October update to include:** • **Experts at Hand update** **Project support, governance and project infrastructure to a future Board meeting.**
DSIAB2425/162	**KPI dashboard, risk and action tracker, and qualitative data.** The Board reviewed the summary dashboard drawn from Derbyshire County Council's wider Power BI system. It currently included selected indicators relating to Priority Impact Areas 1, 3 and 4. External access to the underlying dashboard remained difficult and could involve additional costs. A regularly circulated summary pack was therefore expected to continue. Members agreed that future reporting should provide more than isolated monthly figures. It should include rolling trends, interpretation from Priority Impact Area leads and a clear narrative explaining whether performance was improving, declining or fluctuating. The future dataset should: • Bring together local authority and health information. • Align with SEND Strategy outcomes. • Include relevant comparisons with other areas. • Provide evidence of impact. • Support long-term, business-as-usual oversight. • Avoid focusing only on completion of inspection actions. The Board agreed that it should focus on a defined and manageable set of outcomes rather than attempting to review all available measures.

Item No:	Minutes:
DSIAB2425/162 Continued	The risk register was not reviewed in detail. The Board agreed that it required a comprehensive refresh following the monitoring inspection and reform plan outcomes. The review should take account of: • The monitoring inspection outcome. • SEND reform plan feedback. • Experts at Hand. • Changes within the Integrated Care Board. • The partnership's future operating and governance arrangements. The current SEND risk register and the reform plan risk register would remain separate for the time being. **ACTION DSIABA271 Due 20/10/2026 – Risk Register to be circulated to Board Members for review post-monitoring inspection outcome.**
DSIAB2425/163	**Local Partnership Updates -** **A) Parent Carer Forum update** Parent carer workshops were planned for the autumn, including a workshop on pathological demand avoidance. Educational Psychology drop-in sessions were continuing, with wider partner involvement being developed. Parent Carer Voice membership had increased from 802 to 1,412. However, it was recognised that this remained a relatively small proportion of the wider parent carer community. Plans were progressing to hold a roundtable with other groups, including those representing people with visual impairments, hearing impairments and Down syndrome, to broaden the feedback received. Partners, councillors and MPs were asked to route relevant parent carer concerns and recurring themes through Parent Care Voice so that these could inform partnership discussions and decisions. The Board thanked Parent Care Voice representatives for their contribution and recognised that much of the work was undertaken by volunteers. **B) Derbyshire County Council** The Executive Director for Children's Services confirmed that they had started in post on 27 July 2026 and was continuing to establish relationships with schools and partners. A pause to Local Government Reorganisation had been announced. The future timetable and implications were not yet known and references within Board documents might need to be reconsidered. Proposed investment supporting the reconfiguration of SEND and Education, Health and Care Plan services was expected to be considered by Cabinet on 10 September 2026. Teams were moving towards locality-based structures to strengthen relationships with schools and other local professionals. Temporary dedicated capacity was also being introduced for tribunals and complaints.

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DSIAB2425/163 Continued	The beginning of the new school term was recognised as an anxious period for families, particularly where children were changing schools or transport arrangements. The local authority would continue to review available transport data and respond to emerging concerns. The absence of school representation at the meeting was noted. Three new school leaders were expected to join the Board from October. **C) Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board** The Board were advised that the Deputy Chief Nurse had been appointed as deputy for the SEND portfolio. Further assistant director and Designated Clinical Officer arrangements were being developed. The Integrated Care Board was considering how corporate resources should be allocated according to partnership needs across its wider footprint. A formal letter setting out the future resource and meeting attendance arrangements was expected before the next Board. NHS providers were also invited to provide standing updates at future meetings where these would add value.
DSIAB2425/164	**Minutes of the meeting of 21 July 2026** The minutes were approved as a correct record, subject to recording that a young person had attended the meeting, without naming them, and adding missing apologies. The minutes will be anonymised and placed on the Local Offer website. **ACTION: DSIABA259 Due 11/09/2026 – Upload anonymised minutes from July Board to Local Offer.**
DSIAB2425/165	**Action Log** Reviewed in the meeting and updated.
DSIAB2425/166	**Any Other Business** The reference on the agenda to a monitoring visit in November was corrected. It referred to activity that the Board had intended to consider in November, rather than an expected monitoring inspection during that month. The Board may still undertake a follow-up self-evaluation. However, its timing and format will be considered as part of the wider governance review following the monitoring inspection and reform plan feedback. The formal monitoring inspection report was expected approximately 30 days after the inspection. This would be followed by a period of approximately 50 days to update the strategic plan. The Board could discuss verbal inspection feedback at its October meeting but could not formally respond until the report had been published. A separate meeting with key partners would then be required to agree the formal next steps.