

West Northamptonshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Partnership Improvement Board Summary

27 January 2025

Item 1: Introductions and ground rules

The independent chair, Mrunal Sisodia, welcomed everyone and outlined the ground rules and expectations. These included maintaining high-quality, concise papers for efficient meetings, and focusing discussions on key points, deliverables, outputs, outcomes, risks, and issues. Roles and responsibilities within the board were clarified, categorising members into three groups: independent group (Department for Education (DfE), National Health Service England (NHSE), and West Northants Voices in Partnership (WNVP), accountable group (West Northants Council (WNC), Integrated Care Board (ICB), Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT), and delivering group (schools, health providers, some teams from NCT, and programme team).

Item 2: Minutes and action log

The minutes from the previous meeting on 19 December 2024 were approved without changes. The action log was updated.

Item 3: Review of key performance indicators (KPIs)

Progress in developing a data set for West Northants was noted but better data utilisation to drive priorities is also required. Measure refinement, clear trajectory, timescale and narrative were flagged with integration with other current ongoing works. KPIs continue to highlight the issues that the board is addressing such as access to community based services and poor completion of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within set timelines.

Item 4: Update from WNVP

WNVP raised parental concerns about key issues such as the primary pathway for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

and Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) waiting times. Also noted was more mixed feedback on the quality of EHCPs with some families starting to offer positive feedback (in contrast to 6 months ago) whilst stating that many were still dissatisfied.

Item 4: Review of workstreams

Partnership and Leadership

The second draft of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is being worked on with a subgroup reviewing data sets. The joint commissioning strategy is also in development. Interim update and time frame were asked to be presented in future meeting.

Right Support, Right Place, Right Time

A task and finish group was set up, and the early help strategy is progressing. Assistant Director of Integrated Children's Services is being seconded to support integration.

Transition and Preparation for Adulthood

Efforts include connecting young people with employers and educational opportunities. An event in December was successful, and more are planned. An animated video produced from young people's request praised for its accessibility.

Timeliness, Quality of Assessment, and EHCP

Plans include reviewing actions and membership and timescales, updating the annual review pack for schools, and capturing the tangible impact on children and families.

Item 5: Deliverables

Efforts to reduce EHCP assessment times were noted including new staff in the team and attempts to improve communication. Louisa Jones, new head of SEND, outlined a six-month plan to clear a backlog and enhance skills and efficiency of staff. ASD/ADHD assessment pathway was discussed highlighting challenges such as capacity issues and high demand on the waiting list. Early help and a systemic approach (single provider model) are keys for improvement.

Item 6: Risk log

The board agreed to review the risk log to be able to capture all risks and challenges discussed.

Item 7: Local Offer annual report

The board approved the local offer annual report 2023/2024 to be published in the website.

Item 8: Summary

The chair summarised the key messages, emphasising the importance of values, behaviours, and addressing risks and issues. Productive discussion and the clear ideas for enriching the board's work were acknowledged. The need to integrate all system aspects to see the holistic impact on families was raised by WNVP. The chair reiterated the importance of being child-centred and family-centred.