

Welcome!

Collaborative learning across local authorities:
Enhancing EHCP Quality





Agenda for this afternoon

- Intro from Phil Stock Invision360 CEO and Founder
 - Rachael Kennedy & Amy Brittain, Hertfordshire County Council
 - Tina Emery OBE
 - Tia Sohi Education Consultant and SLIP for DFE
 - Survey & closing from Phil
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*'Knowledge grows exponentially
when it is shared'*



Welcome

Rachael Kennedy & Amy Brittain

Hertfordshire County Council

Making SEND Everyone's Business in Hertfordshire

Focusing on the Quality Assurance and Audit Function and Practice Development

Rachael Kennedy (SEND Quality Assurance Team Manager) and Amy Brittain (Practice Development Lead)



SEND is everybody's business.



Making SEND Everyone's Business

A Programme of Workforce Transformation to Increase Capacity and Enhance Capability

The initial **proposal for investment** was put forward in **spring 2023 before inspection**, culminating in agreement by Cabinet in July 2023, for an **annual investment of £5m**, largely to increase staffing for Statutory SEND duties. An **additional £2m investment** was agreed by Cabinet in December 2023, to further increase capacity.

The Context:

Increased Demand

Rapidly rising requests for EHC Needs Assessment.

Parental Dissatisfaction

Timeliness and effectiveness of delivery of statutory SEND duties received the highest levels of parental dissatisfaction in 2022 parent / carer survey results..

Workforce Challenges

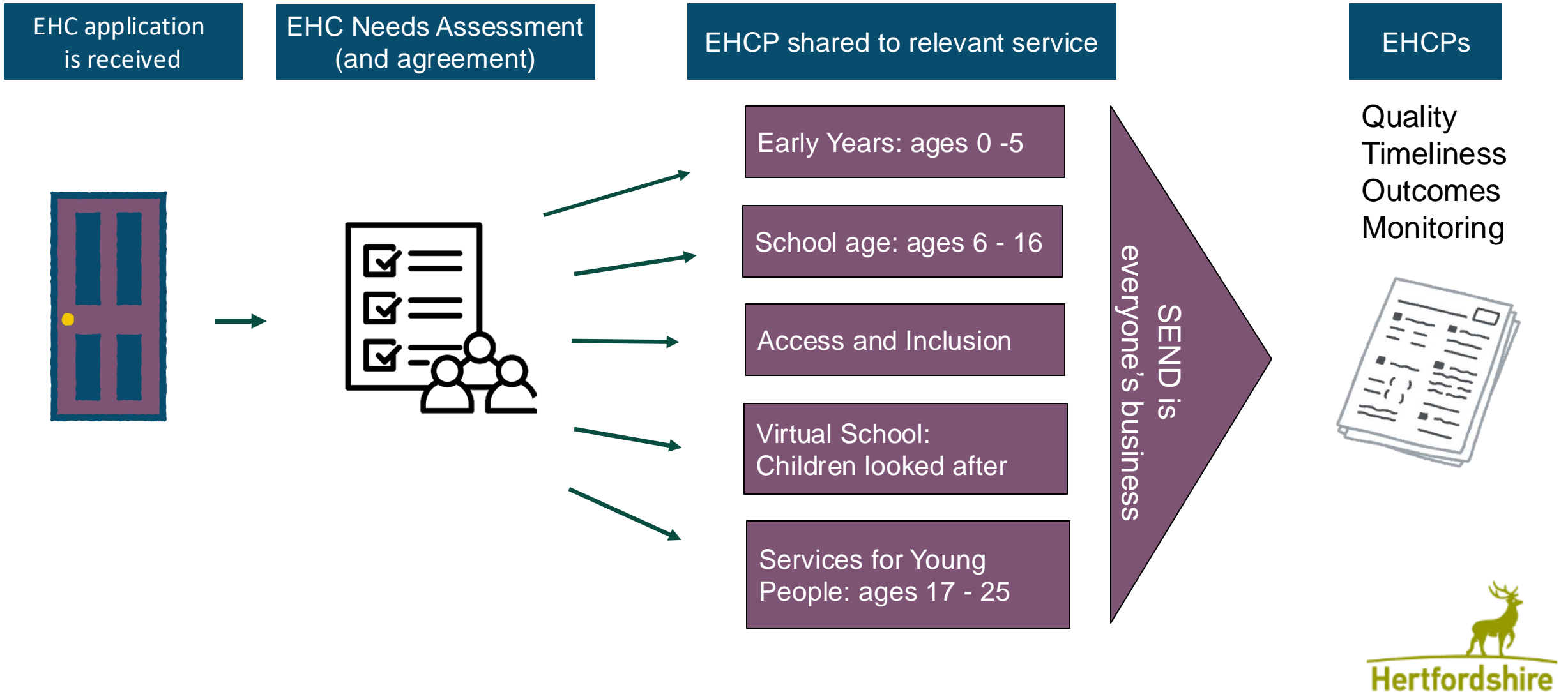
Challenges with staff retention, recruitment and job satisfaction.

The Response:

- **New delivery model** - Increased specialist input and a more joined up approach across services
- **Recruitment campaign** - to secure up to 140 'motivated' new staff
- **Workforce development** - and a focus on transferrable skills and lived Experience
- Improve **timeliness and quality**
- Improve **communication**
- Improve **job satisfaction and retention** of the workforce

Making SEND Everyone's Business

A new service delivery model



Making SEND Everyone's Business

An expanded SEND Quality Assurance function

- There are pre-existing mature and outstanding quality assurance functions existing within sectors and organisations within the Local Area Partnership.
- Learning from what works well in NHS organisations and within Children's Social Care, we have expanded and enhanced the SEND QA Function.
- New multiagency governance has been established including a partnership QA Board and QA Framework. Good feedback on both from DfE advisors and NHS England advisors.
- This has significantly increased capacity to support the quality improvement of the work, including increased auditing work across SEND, SEND Quality visits with NHS Service providers, as well as multi-agency auditing involving SENCOs and parent/carers reps.
- Alongside existing QA practitioners, 2x new Practice Development Lead roles have also been created to play a pivotal role in 'closing the loop' and ensuring that learning is taken forward from auditing activity. This includes delivering bespoke training on identified areas for improvement, supporting teams with celebrating good practice and implementing any changes to improve practice.

Accurate, Compassionate and Timely
(ACT) communication

Skilled workforce

Early support and transition planning

Co-production

Clear criteria, standards and
processes

Accessible and equitable provision

CYP and parent/carers voice

Joined up services

Clear, smart, trackable outcomes

CYP-centred planning

Hertfordshire's 10 principles of quality

Making SEND Everyone's Business

SEND Quality Assurance Team

Example Audit Work- focusing on EHCP quality

- Monthly audits of new and existing EHCP's are carried out by Team Managers and Leads across our MSEB teams using Invision 360. Direct feedback is provided to plan writers following audit.
- Further randomised audits are undertaken by the SEND QA Team, Panel Managers and Senior Leaders independent of SEND Teams.
- 4x multi-agency audits of EHCP's are undertaken every half-term. These are in-person events and include social care, health, parent carer involvement etc.
- Schools/Settings can volunteer to audit EHCP's on Invision 360 of children/young people in their settings.
- Quarterly audits of advice contributing to EHCP's are undertaken by Service Leads in each area., Multi-agency in-person moderation panels then take place at the end of every quarter which involve parent carer and other services; checking all agree with gradings.
- Survey's are undertaken with parents/carers, SENCO's children and young people to gather their views on the process.
- Lived Experience Reviews and Thematic audits are undertaken across the quarters to further explore key areas of practice.

Practice Development Work

- EHCP Good Standards Guidance Document
- New EHCNA advice templates
- SMART in Herts and other Guidance has been produced to help practitioners
- Multi-agency training responsive to audit findings- e.g. specificity training.
- 'This is Me' process and training
- New Practice Guidance notes
- SEND Academy Training
- Audit workshops with teams
- New SCAPE team for social care advice

Impact

- **Increase in EHCP's being audited as 'good or better'**
- **Greater understanding of what 'good' means across MSEB teams and SEND partners.**
- **Consistency in standards of practice.**
- **Reduced complaints and increased compliments.**

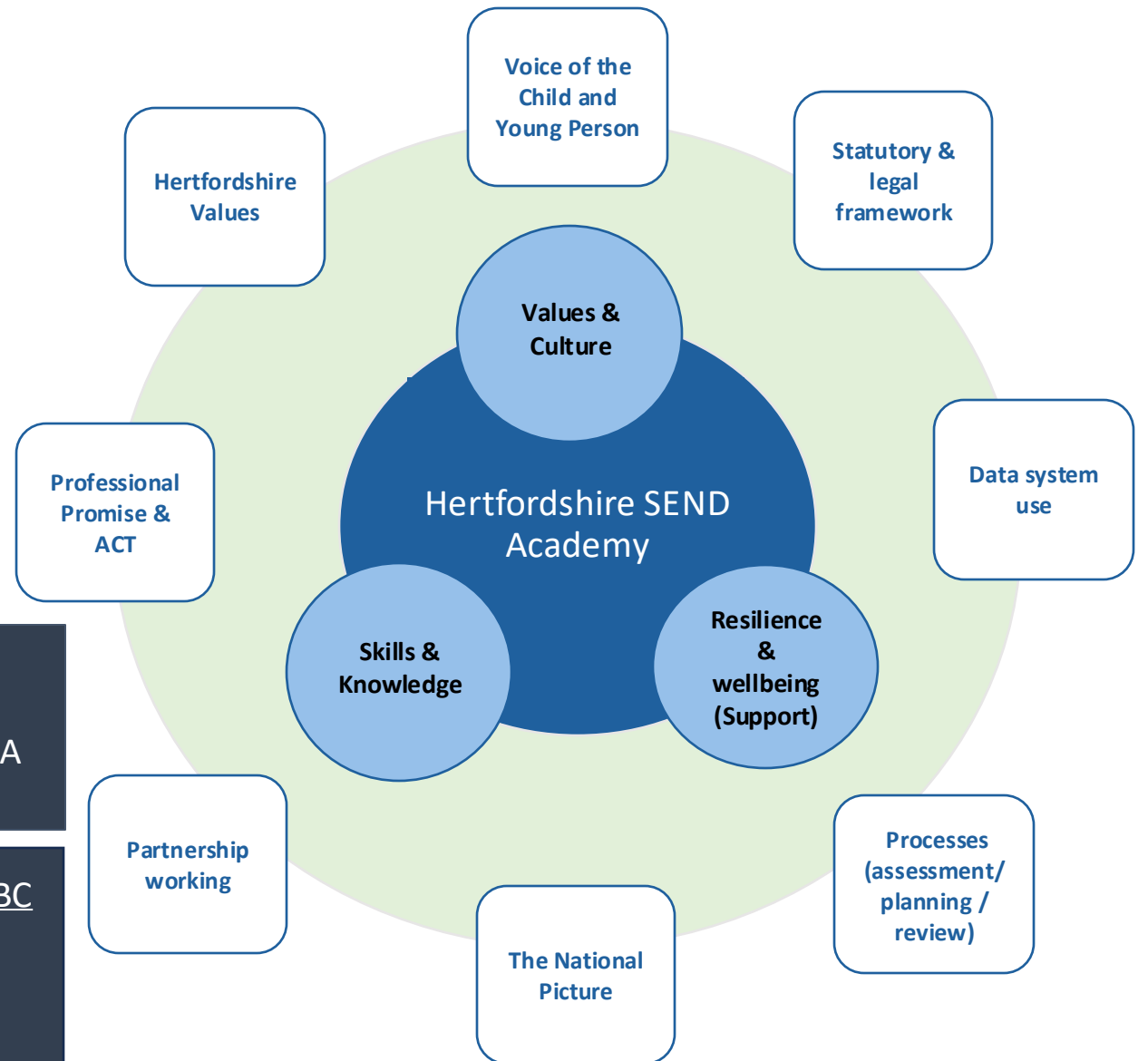
Hertfordshire SEND Academy – Professionalising Our Workforce

- Create a comprehensive training offer supporting the professional development of colleagues and partners working within statutory SEND.
- Increase the skills, knowledge, and confidence for Statutory SEND colleagues
- Opportunity to complete the BTEC qualification in SEND Casework or SEND Casework Management

‘Dame Christine Lenehan described the SEND Academy as “groundbreaking”, and I agree’ – Barrister Leon Glenister who conducted the recent Independent Review on Hertfordshire’s EHCNA process.

[Hertfordshire mum critical of Send provision hired to improve it - BBC News](#)

[Recent Press Interest: How Hertfordshire Council Has Revolutionised Recruitment](#)



Hertfordshire SEND Academy Induction Programme

- A comprehensive six-week training programme.
- Supports the development of in-depth knowledge and understanding the Statutory Process as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice and key legislation, and how this supports children and young people with SEND.
- Embeds good practice approaches. Ensures the Golden Thread through the programme including; Voice of the Child, our Hertfordshire commitment to Accurate, Compassionate, and Timely (ACT) Communication with our children and young people and their carers which has been developed with Hertfordshire Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI).
- Grounded key learning theories providing a blended approach to learning to support all learning styles and needs.
- Practical application tasks and assessments at key points to gauge staff competence in statutory SEND practice in relevant roles.
- Launched January 2024. 138 new staff have graduated across 8 separate cohorts to October.
- Bespoke version delivered for existing staff to support upskilling existing knowledge and confidence across the service and create 'buddies' to support new starters transitioning into roles and continuing their learning journey.

Expanding the SEND Academy Offer

So far we have delivered:

- Comprehensive training on the Statutory SEND duties and good practice for all new staff involved in this work, and the majority of existing / pre-MSEB staff.
- Training across the partnership on the 'This is Me' Tool, promoting best practice on capturing the authentic voice of children and young people in their EHCP.
- Training on Annual Reviews & Educational Advice focusing on developing good practice and person-centred approaches for education settings.
- Coordination of a cross-partnership SEND Workforce Development Group, to consider how expertise and resources can be shared.
- Undertaken staff engagement via Pulse Survey - with positive results
- Bespoke Well-Being and Resilience for Leaders of SEND programme to support our leadership team with creating a culture of well-being and belonging.

Next steps:

- Expand on open access to SEND Academy training sessions to multi-agency partners from January 2025.
- Open a partnership-wide Learning Hub, with training information, booking system and resources.
- Continue to explore opportunities for joined-up training across our local SEND partnership, to promote collaboration and consistent approaches.
- Following significant interest regionally and nationally, we are exploring the possibility of enabling other local authorities to benefit from SEND Academy resources and support to improve local practice through the development of a commercial arm.
- Roll out the Level 3 and Level BTEC Qualifications to all staff.



Q&A

Welcome Tina Emery OBE

Contextual Information



- **576,000 EHCp's (↑ 11.4% on last year)^{*1}**
- **98% of SEND tribunals are in favour of the parent carer ^{*2}**
- **13,700 SEND tribunals ^{*3}**
- **69.1% of all EHCp's are for school aged children (5-15 years) ^{*4}**

^{*1} DfE SEN 2 Data

^{*2} Contact

^{*3} Children's Commissioner

^{*4} DfE



Communication

- Guidance is at 6 weeks, 16 weeks and 20 weeks.
- What are the communications that you have with children and young people and their families in between?
- What communication do you have in place if you think it is going to take longer than 20 weeks

Negative viewpoint



Plans focus on the needs of the child and young person, which can appear negative and hard to read.



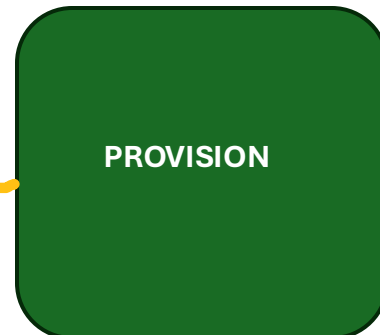
Warning of this to families can be useful

Outcomes

- Need to be smart and achievable
- Need to be smart and deliverable



Golden thread



Qualitative and quantitative

Are the interventions measured?

Do they know how often they need to be delivered in order to meet the outcomes?

Do we know who is to carry out the interventions?

Conclusion

- Get to know the family
- Keep the family informed regularly
- Make sure that you can see the child or young person throughout the plan
- Make sure interventions are clear, concise, and deliverable
- Make sure outcomes are SMART
- If you are exceeding timeframes, tell the family sooner rather than later, as they maybe able to help!





Q&A



Welcome Tia Sohi



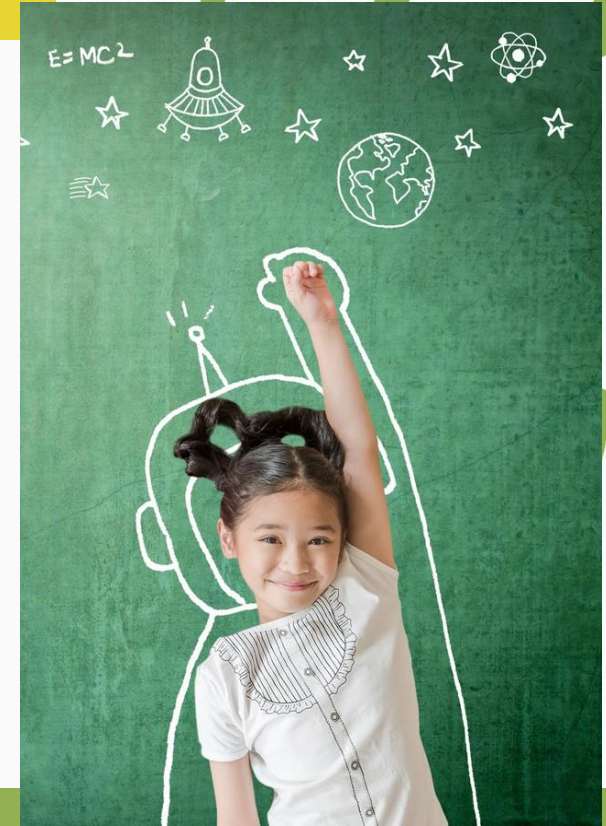
Sector Led Improvement & The Change Programme

PRESENTED BY TIA SOHI



Welcome!

Understanding Sector Led Improvement (SLIP)
Benefits of effective coproduction and collaboration
Proactive Improvement
Engaging stakeholders
Change Programme Update



SLIP Support



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITH SLIP

SLIP Partners are both operational and strategic leaders appointed to support local authorities who may require the following support:

- Bespoke packages (strategies, diagnostics)
- Operational support (working with your teams to shape and embed change such as backlog management, EHC processes, redesigned stakeholder engagement, capacity management)
- Strategic Support (restructure design and lead, mentoring and coaching, Inspection preparation, ILACs support and Thematic reviews)





Statistics



Local Authority 1 - Nov23 - Oct24



0% 20 week compliance > 94%



Backlog of 287 with an average of 80 new EHCNA requests monthly > no backlog, average completion time 17.1 weeks and 60 new requests



Annual Review backlog 2036 > 204 with a focus on quality and MDT approach rather than speed

Local Authority 2 - Jan24 - Oct24



11% 20 week compliance > 96%



Free school bid coproduced and agreed, with a complimentary Sufficiency review and strategy drafted



SEND improvement plan agreed by the DfE following a statutory notice, monitoring visit Jul24 highlights 'positive improvement'

Coproduction & Collaboration

Both themes are heavily influenced throughout the new thematic review and Ofsted framework. Many LAs are in receipt of a category 3 due to the lack of evidence and meaningful coproduction, collaboration and integrated working across the local area partnership



Thematic Reviews

In 2023, Alternative provision was the theme which resulted in the findings revealing the inconsistent experiences for CYP, poor outcomes and unregulated attendance within home schools. Some CYP have been in AP awaiting specialist placements due to sufficiency struggles, rather than purposeful transitional placements



Ofsted Inspections

85% of local authorities that have been inspected under the new framework have not received a category 1, with the majority receiving a category 3. The main themes for this is a lack of lived experience, impact and a strong SEF demonstrating collaboration and coproduction that is meaningful across stakeholders.

Proactive Improvement

Short term projects or capacity does not lead to systemic change in culture and ethos - therefore does not result in sustainable transformation

- 1 | EHC timeliness has taken its drop due to EPS and SEND officer recruitment and retention challenges nationally - and where timeliness has improved, quality needs to continue to be a key focus.
- 2 | Educational settings are increasingly concerned about the rising financial pressures they are being faced with, pre statutory support and a strong inclusion focus is an area that needs to be integrated within the SEND service
- 3 | Utilization of data - how does your LA use local partnership data such as ND pathway, under 5 developmental checks, how does your data inform your sufficiency planning and improvement journey.



Stakeholder Engagement

- Developing an understanding of stakeholders' opinions, concerns and best practice can help shape improvement. Coproducing and sharing initial ideas early makes it more likely that they will support you as they will feel they have inputted and been involved.

Ofsted outcomes and Thematic reviews have highlighted that whilst Local authorities claim they engage with their stakeholders, joined up working leading to positive outcomes for families are not evidential. Many key ideas are presented to stakeholders rather than produced with them, leading to non engagement or confidence in delivery



How would you rate your local partnership stakeholder engagement?



Change Programme

The SEND Change Programme is a national programme to test some of the changes the Government wants to make to the system for supporting children and young people with SEND



Standards

National standards for SEND provision - however will not replace existing Law



Local Area Partnership

Integrated working to support families and CYP access the Right support, at the Right time



Tailored Lists

Parents/carers still have the right to request that a particular school, college or other setting is named in an EHC plan (Section 38, Children and Families Act



EHCP Template

Testing a new template to replace the current situation where each local authority uses its own template.

Who are the Change Partners?

- East Midlands: Leicester, Leicestershire, Rutland (joint leads)
- East of England: Bedford (lead), Central Bedfordshire, Luton
- London: Barnet (lead), Camden, Enfield, Islington
- North East: Hartlepool (lead), Durham, Gateshead, Stockton-on-Tees
- North West: Manchester (lead), Oldham, Rochdale, Trafford
- South East: Portsmouth (lead), Brighton, East Sussex, West Sussex
- South West: Gloucestershire, Swindon (joint leads)
- West Midlands: Telford & Wrekin (lead), Herefordshire, Shropshire
- Yorkshire & Humber: Wakefield (lead), Bradford, Calderdale, Leeds



What are the key updates?



- 1** £4.5m has been allocated to NHS bodies (via LAs) to implement the Early Language Support for Every Child (**ELSEC**) speech and language intervention project. ELSEC is a two-year programme aimed at improving early identification and support for speech, language and communication needs in EYFS and primary school settings.
- 2** The Majority of funding spent thus far within Local authorities has prioritized the big changes within **Alternative provision** - moving into a three tier system which requires input from commissioning, SEND service and stakeholders
- 3** 4 Local Authorities have adopted the draft nationalized template as their **permanent template** - however this requires significant capacity to work with their operating systems to rebuild the template, which is a cost and concern for most LAs - all of which use different data systems.



Tia Sohi - SLIP Partner & Consultant
tiasohi@hotmail.com

Preparation is key

Ensure your Annex A, SEF, SEND improvement plans, Local offers, PFA pathways, Strategies and Local area partnerships can be evidenced as effective, coproduced and most importantly - improving the lived experience for CYP. **SLIP is more than happy to support your LA, working alongside the DfE to improve your practice and outcomes prior to inspection or following an inspection**



Thank You

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” – **Henry Ford**





Q&A

Feedback survey





Thanks for coming!

