

Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board: February 2026 partner update.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Partnership Improvement Board has been established to oversee SEND improvement activity across the whole system in Nottinghamshire, with a focus on the priorities and areas for improvements identified in the [Ofsted and CQC inspection report](#). The Board meets every six weeks and is chaired independently by Dame Christine Lenehan.

The aim of the Nottinghamshire Improvement Board is to robustly track, monitor and oversee the Nottinghamshire SEND Improvement Programme so that the aims are achieved at pace and provide challenge and support to increase the likelihood of the aims being achieved.

The purpose of these partner briefings is to update you on progress of the SEND Improvement Programme so you can share the work that is taking place via your networks. You can see previous [briefings](#) from Improvement Board meetings from June 2023 onwards.

The most recent Board meeting took place on 9 February and focused on the new statutory SEND service structure, SEND reform and governance structure.

Governance update

The Board discussed the future governance of the SEND Partnership as it was originally set up as a time-limited Board following the SEND inspection in 2023.

From April 2026, quarterly meetings of the SEND Executive Leadership Group will be supported by the Partnership Assurance and Improvement Group (PAIG). These groups will continue to hear the voices and experiences of families with a continued focus on the priority actions and the wider areas of improvement across the system including addressing gaps, waiting times and quality; workforce and systems development; transitions; and inclusive practice.

With the focus on moving to the new approach to governance and oversight from April, partners are working together to agree clear governance structures with independent review that will still be present but will be different in the future. The commitment is to collective partnership efforts to keep performance at the centre.

There was a discussion about the sector's approach to scrutiny in several areas, including for SEND. Ongoing discussions are taking place with various local areas

about an independent approach to scrutiny, like the current safeguarding partnerships approach.

Discussion took place about the next steps for considering the governance requirements and what it will look like in the future.

The Department for Education is required to carry out a stocktake and this will take place in the summer term.

Update on the new statutory SEND service

The Board was given an overview of the council's new statutory SEND service which has been put in place as a response to address some of the issues raised in the 2023 inspection. The service has now been formally launched and is operational.

- The team held a system-wide briefing recently with more than 100 professionals.
- The new team is fully-staffed apart from two advanced practitioner posts which are being re-advertised because of the importance of getting the right people in post.
- Completed the transfer of records for 7,500 children in the MOSAIC system.
- A series of meet the team sessions for parents have also taken place online.
- One significant change being trialled in the plan and review teams is that some children, if their current plan is working well, will not have an allocated worker. This approach will be regularly reviewed and any young person who does need an allocated worker, will have one assigned.
- Parents are expressing some anxieties about this change, but initial feedback is that they are willing to try it.
- This will be kept under review. Engagement including sessions, surveys and feedback, will aim to ensure that parents don't feel 'done to' but can get their voices heard.
- This new approach is aligned more closely with the non-statutory services and so teams should feel more connected, including with health services.
- Requests for assessment continue to grow.

The Board discussed this new approach, and heard some feedback that parents felt the sessions were offered at too short-notice. Parents are concerned about not always having an allocated worker and aren't quite clear about how this works. The service will take on board all feedback for future plans. There was a discussion about the need for further communication with parents about this and how it will work with schools and the local authority.

It was also raised that schools are important in this new approach and that they need to be part of it. Service will consider how to best join up engagement with schools.

Performance

- Assessment times have dropped recently but the new focused assessment team and further funding for educational psychology capacity will provide increased attention on this.
- Annual reviews levels has also dropped. The new plan and approve team will focus on this area. The Invision 360 system and the Rise programme will allow for renewed focus on improving this area of work.

Feedback from assurance meeting with Chief Executives

Meetings with Chief Executives of the local authority and the ICB have taken place regularly.

There has been a keen interest from them in holding shared accountability for SEND reform. They have reflected on performance and provided some challenge – where are we at, what is being done, what still needs to be done. The role of the independent scrutineer has also been discussed.

Dame Christine recognised solid leadership from both Chief Executives which has made a real difference.

Update on SEND reforms

The government's local government financial settlement is expected soon.

It is expected that the schools White Paper will also be issued soon although a date has not been confirmed.

There have been some national meetings with parents and carers about the upcoming reforms and a full consultation on SEND reforms will be widely shared so that people can help to shape future plans.

There is an aim to feedback learning from SEND improvement boards from different areas will provide a basis for the detailed data and quality assurance work already underway to be built on. There is a general recognition that local area partnership capacity is short so if any new requirements can take account of learning to date that will be positive.

All involved, including parents and carers are keen to see the White Paper as there has been a lot of coverage to date, leading to some speculation.

Communications update

The Board received an update on recent communications activity and coverage, along with a case study about the Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions (SPACE) programme that has been running since 2024.

Families of children and young people experiencing anxiety, OCD and related difficulties have praised the pilot programme being trialled by Nottinghamshire Healthcare's North Nottinghamshire CAMHS team. Support is offered in group sessions, which parents have identified as a strength. Parents are given advice and ideas to empower them to support their children and young people who are experiencing anxiety. To ensure all needs are met, some sessions have been delivered one-to-one with families.

The final Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 18 March 2026.

Dame Christine Lenehan

Independent Chair of the Nottinghamshire SEND Partnership Improvement Board