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SEND inspection improvement plan

Last Modified September 12, 2024



Blackpool's SEND Partnership strategic improvement plan

September 2024



Introduction

Our partnership vision for Blackpool is for all children and young people with SEND to live happy, healthy lives in a community that is inclusive and supports them to achieve their ambitions.

Our partnership is committed to four outcomes that we believe will help us to achieve our vision:

- **Outcome 1** Children, young people and their families get the help they need at the time they need it
- **Outcome 2** Children and young people learn and achieve in settings that meet their needs
- **Outcome 3** Children, young people and their families have access to leisure and social activities that interest them
- **Outcome 4** Young people are prepared for adult life

Blackpool's partnership's SEND strategy was reviewed in January 2024 in consultation with parents, children and young people, and our partners. Following the feedback from of our inspection, our strategy has been updated to affirm our commitment to the achievement of our SEND outcomes.

We remain committed to working together through our model of co-production and the adoption of the Blackpool Families Rock principles that uses the model of head, heart and hands to develop our relationships with children, young people and their families.

Inspection findings

Between 20 May 2024 and 24 May 2024, Ofsted, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly inspected arrangements across education, health, and care services to evaluate how well members of Blackpool's Local Area Partnership work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

A copy of the full report in respect of the findings of our inspection can be found at the following link: [Blackpool Area SEND inspection](#).

The inspection identified the following areas that were effective:

- Early help workers complete thorough assessments with children, young people and their families, identifying individual needs alongside wider family issues. This includes prompt consideration of whether there may have been previously unidentified SEND and leads to prompt intervention when needed
- Although children can wait for extended periods of time to enter some therapeutic interventions, there is a wide range of additional support measures that are employed while they wait, according to the individual needs identified
- Social workers take time to get to know and understand the children with whom they work. This enables them to develop an insight into children's interests and aptitudes such as sports or music. Social workers use this insight to support children in the development of their skills and talents, for example, by helping to secure attendance at clubs and activities. This makes an important contribution to children's confidence and independence.
- There is regular, robust and appropriate oversight of children who are placed in care out of area. This ensures that children's experiences are monitored and understood, and that typically children's needs are met by the right services in their new locality

- Social workers, early help workers, and educational settings ensure that most children, young people and their families have access to impartial careers advice. Help is provided to support them with appropriate transitions into employment, training or education. This allows multi-agency partners across health, education and social care to better prepare children and their families for the significant changes that adulthood brings
- Assessments of children and young people's needs, completed by the children with complex needs team, are detailed and thorough. These assessments routinely consider the children and young people's holistic needs, as well as those in relation to their SEND
- Practitioners from across the partnership work effectively to identify the individual needs of most children and young people who have just moved into the country. Support for children and young people with SEND, who are new to the country, is put in place swiftly
- Children's needs are usually identified by health visiting services via an eight-stage model of care that includes anti-natal contacts. This enhanced model helps to ensure that children's needs are identified at the earliest stage so that appropriate care and support can be put in place
- Some health services have adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of the local population. For example, drop-in clinics are well utilised by parents where children's poor mental health is indicated and are seen as a resource for advice and guidance. Likewise, monthly Sunday clinics are being held by speech and language practitioners so that parents can better engage their children with the service. This prevents them from having to take time off from work or to remove their children from education. The clinics are also well used and appreciated by parents and carers
- Effective early planning takes place for children and young people transitioning between children's and adult's health services. The process of transition begins from the age 14
- There is a wealth of mental health support available across the local area, which children, young people and their families can be signposted to according to need. Children and young people can self-refer for mental ill-health assessment or can attend regular drop-in clinics across Blackpool. Their specific needs are then assessed, and a referral is made. Families can also receive advice on how to get the right help at the right time for their child
- The school-age neurodevelopmental pathway adopted by Blackpool successfully focuses on the immediate needs of most children and young people, sometimes before any type of formal diagnosis has taken place. Support groups and programmes are available for parents whose children and young people are waiting for support

Inspection outcome

The inspection team found that Blackpool's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and have asked the partnership to work together to address the following areas for improvement:

1. The local area partnership should ensure that strategic action plans are in place to identify the outcomes that they want children and young people to achieve. Data should be regularly reviewed and analysed to evaluate the area's progress towards these outcomes and to inform future decision-making
2. The local area should ensure that the voices of hard to reach parents, carers and their children are heard in any co-production work and that parents and children know how to access the right support and services at the right time
3. The local area partnership should improve the quality of EHC plans, ensuring that all relevant agencies contribute to planning and review, and that EHC plans link with children's other plans where appropriate
4. Leaders from the local authority should further strengthen the relationships that they have developed with mainstream schools and academies. They should continue to work with them, with support as appropriate from the wider partnership, to ensure that attendance and academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND improve, and rates of suspensions and exclusion decrease

Other areas for improvement

The inspection team also identified the following areas where the partnership needs to do better:

- Although some children and young people in Blackpool receive timely identification and assessment of their needs, this is not routinely the case. On occasion, this is due to a lack of joined up practice between practitioners across education, health and social care. Where children and young people's needs are not identified quickly, for example by using the dynamic support register, these needs can sometimes escalate, meaning that some children and young people require more intensive support later, having reached crisis point
- While the waiting times for some services are improving, waits for some services remain extensive, for example the pre-school neurodevelopmental pathway and the long waits for wheelchairs. Although leaders are aware of this and have put in plans to respond to this, it has an impact on those children and young people whose lives are being significantly restricted while they wait
- Some health services do not translate medical information, such as appointment letters, into a family's first language. While these translation services are available, not all health professionals access them. This means that children and young people sometimes miss health appointments
- Children and young people with SEND, who attend the maintained alternative provision benefit from a high level of support. However, this provision is too often put in place when a child or young person's needs have not been assessed in a timely way,

which sometimes means that they have reached a crisis point

- The local area partnership recognises that there is more to be done to signpost children, young people and their parents to the community activities on offer. Many parents, children and young people would like access to clubs and activities. This is not always possible due to club organisers' occasional lack of understanding and training around supporting children and young people with SEND
- Across all agencies, there is inconsistency in the speed with which practitioners recognise quickly enough that children may have SEND. This means that some children do not have their needs recognised and responded to quickly enough. There is more do to ensure that practitioners across the partnership routinely consider if children have may SEND needs that they need support with

Next steps

Blackpool's SEND partnership is required to update and publish its SEND strategic plan. This will be published on our local offer at the end of September following approval by our SEND partnership.

Accountability arrangements

Blackpool's SEND partnership board is responsible for holding partner organisations to account for the delivery of high quality services for children and young people with SEND and will oversee the delivery of our SEND improvement plan.

Area for improvement 1

Strategic sponsor: Greg Shaw – Divisional director of operations, Blackpool Teaching Hospital

Details of areas of improvement

The local area partnership should ensure that strategic action plans are in place to identify the outcomes that they want children and young people to achieve. Data should be regularly reviewed and analysed to evaluate the area's progress towards these outcomes and to inform future decision-making.

Narrative from the report:

Data is not always used and analysed effectively to monitor the impact of the work undertaken for children and young people with SEND. This is an area that the local area partnership is prioritising to ensure that it has a realistic picture of its effectiveness and to inform the necessary next steps.

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
	1.1.1	<p>Establish a SEND Performance Group that is representative of the SEND Partnership to include agreed Terms of Reference and reporting responsibilities.</p> <p>This group is responsible for quarterly performance reporting to the board against an agreed set of key metrics and to provide system wide reflection and analysis.</p>	Diane Booth – Chair of Performance Group	31 October 24	<p>1. The SEND Partnership is fully informed of progress against key measures that enables them to make informed decisions.</p> <p>2. As part of routine monitoring system wide data is analysed, checked and challenged so that any deviation from</p>
	1.1.2	<p>Identify top priority performance measures to be reported across the partnership that will act as a proxy to demonstrate progress against key strategic aims.</p>	Diane Booth – Chair of Performance Group	30 November 2024	

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
<p>1.1 Ensure that partnership wide data is routinely and effectively analysed to demonstrate the difference made to outcomes for children and young people by actions taken is recognised and that any fluctuations in performance or outcomes are recognised and mitigated or built upon.</p> <p>This will be demonstrated by a set of priority performance measures that enable leaders to plan, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of SEND services and support for children, young people and their families against the key strategic developments as well as the routine review of system wide intelligence that ensures outcomes are as expected for children and young people with additional needs.</p>	1.1.3	Review the data dashboard and develop a quarterly performance report aligned to key outcomes in the SEND strategy and areas for improvement in the inspection which provides analysis of data and recommendations. This will summarise the quarterly report developed by the group.	Diane Booth – Chair of Performance Group	30 November 2024	expected performance is recognised and reported to the partnership board for decision, direction, monitoring or mitigation. This will be demonstrated by the quarterly reports.
	1.1.4	Present the data findings to the SEND Board on a quarterly basis and record Board comments and decision making, direction, monitoring or mitigation.	Diane Booth – Chair of Performance Group	Quarterly Partnership meetings dates: March 2025 June 2025 September 2025 December 2025	3. A Partnership dashboard is available to view by all partners alongside the quarterly analysis of data provided by the performance group to support decision making. This is reflected in the quality of the reports generated and resulting actions that are routinely captured in case studies.
	1.1.5	Publish a family friendly data set of the local area’s performance against the agreed strategic outcomes as part of the annual review of the strategic improvement plan.	Diane Booth – Chair of Performance Group	September 2025	4. Publicly reporting data through a family-friendly on-line version on an annual basis 5. Data influences future planning, service development, delivery and support. This

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
					is evidenced in strategic planning, Joint Area Needs Assessments, service planning and work to ensure sufficiency.

Area for improvement 2

Strategic sponsor: Peter Chapman – Associate director for SEND, Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB

The local area should ensure that the voices of hard to reach parents, carers and their children are heard in any co-production work and that parents and children know how to access the right support and services at the right time.

Narrative from the report:

There are some hard to reach families, children and young people who do not know about the support that is available to them. This means that some children and their families do not have the knowledge of support and services to access the right services at the right time.

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
2.1 Understand the extent of our current co-production and engagement activities with families, children and young people across the three geographical areas – North, Central and South Blackpool	2.1.1	Undertake an annual mapping exercise to evidence the extent of the SEND Partnership’s current co-production and engagement activities with families, children and young people across Blackpool.	Charlotte Baron Head of SEND Stacey Baines Chair of Parent Carer Forum	31 October 2024	1. A report that provides evidence to the SEND partnership Board of the extent of our current co-production and engagement activities across the three geographical areas of Blackpool.
	2.1.2	Produce a report that evidences the details of our current co-production and engagement activities across the three geographical areas of North, Central and South Blackpool and identifies the gaps/opportunities to improve our reach to families, children and young people.	Charlotte Baron Head of SEND Stacey Baines Chair of Parent Carer Forum	30 November 2024 (to present report to SEND Partnership in December 2024)	2. A co-production and engagement plan that sets out proposed planned delivery to improve our reach to families, children and young people over the next 12 months. This plan will be monitored on a monthly basis by

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
<p>2.2 Broaden the reach of our co-production and engagement activities in areas where gaps have been identified from the outcomes of our mapping exercise as detailed in the mapping report.</p>	2.2.1	<p>Update the current co-production and engagement plan, based on the findings from the co-production and engagement report.</p> <p>The plan will set out the SEND partnership’s planned approach and co-production and engagement activities for the next 12 months in areas where the mapping has identified gaps in our reach to families, children and young people. These activities will be aimed at increasing awareness of how, when and where to access SEND and other support/services to meet their needs.</p>	<p>Charlotte Baron Head of SEND</p> <p>Stacey Baines Chair of Parent Carer Forum</p>	March 2025	<p>the Co-production and engagement workstream with progress reported to the SEND Board on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>3. A quarterly report will be produced that demonstrates the impact of activity undertaken and feedback received from families. This will be reported to the SEND Partnership on a quarterly basis to provide assurance that we are expanding our reach across Blackpool.</p>
<p>2.3 To demonstrate that the SEND Partnership has broadened its reach and is actively engaging with a greater number of families, children and young people across the three geographical areas of Blackpool.</p>	2.3.1	<p>Provide an evaluation report that includes case studies from families, children and young people who have not previously engaged in co-production/engagement activity to demonstrate the benefits of having a greater awareness of the support and services available to them.</p>	<p>Charlotte Baron Head of SEND</p> <p>Stacey Baines Chair of Parent Carer Forum</p>	March 2026	<p>4. Annual evaluation report detailing the impact of engagement and co-production activity for previously hard to reach families, children and young people.</p> <p>5. % increase in the membership of the Parent Carer Forum.</p> <p>6. % increase of hits on Blackpool SEND Local Offer.</p> <p>7. % increase of attendance at ‘meets and treats’.</p> <p>8. % increase of attendance at ‘meet the SEND team’.</p> <p>9. % increase feedback from Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust friends and families test.</p> <p>10. Empowerment forum represented across all Blackpool primary secondary and post 16 educational settings.</p>

Area for improvement 3

Strategic sponsor: Chris Coyle – Assistant director of operations, children’s social care, Blackpool Council

The local area partnership should improve the quality of EHC plans, ensuring that all relevant agencies contribute to planning and review, and that EHC plans link with children’s other plans where appropriate.

Narrative from the report

Child in need plans, child protection plans and care plans for children with SEND, do not always link with EHC plans. Social workers do not always contribute to EHC plans. This lack of co-ordination between EHC plans and children’s other plans means that agreed outcomes for children are not always fully informed and holistic which means that not all needs are considered by all relevant practitioners.

Key objective	Planned development activity	Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like	
3.1 To provide effective advices from education, health and social care professionals involved with the child or young person by those professionals who know the child or young person best.	3.1.1	Develop a multi-agency training plan that sets out clear aims, objectives and rational for professionals contributing to the EHC plan assessment and review processes through the advice that they offer.	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead Clair Martin – DCO	31 December 2024	1. EHC Plans accurately reflect the needs, provision and outcomes across education, health and social care. This will be measured through: a. The production of a quarterly quantitative data set that will measure the timeliness and effectiveness of contributions to the EHC assessment and review process against an agreed set of standards. A year zero approach will be adopted so that evidence of improvement can be measured.
	3.1.2	Develop robust notification, tracking and escalation processes to support timely advice for new EHC plan assessments and EHC plan reviews which is reported to the ADQA group. Where advice is not seen to be timely or impactful mitigation is put in place and improvement reported.	Charlotte Baron – Head of SEND	31 March 2025	
	3.1.3	Provide a report to the ADQA group on compliance and timeliness of advices from education, health and social care services with recommendations for resolution/mitigations to be approved by ADQA.	Charlotte Baron – Head of SEND	31 March 2025	
	3.2.1	Training plan identified at (3.1.1) to include professional awareness across the system of Early Help/ Child In Need/ Child Protection/ Our Children, Review Health Assessment (RHA) plans and how these should reflect/align to EHC plan needs, provision and	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead	31 December 2024	b. The data set will be reported to the ADQA meeting with decision and direction from the AD for

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
<p>3.2 To co-ordinate EHC plans with other plans (Early Help, Child Protection Plans, Child in Need Plans, Our Children Plans/Review Health Assessment Plans) starting with Our Children (looked after children) to ensure education, health and social care needs, provision and outcomes are fully informed and considered by all professionals across education, health and social care who are involved with the child/young person.</p>		outcomes.			Children’s Social Care.
	3.2.2	Develop a quality assurance measure within the QA audit tool that evidences links with other plans.	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead	31 March 2025	2. EHC Plans are reviewed and amended within statutory timescales as children’s and young people’s needs change. Performance data is analysed and reported to the SEND Partnership Board on a quarterly basis detailing:
	3.2.3	Develop robust processes to drive collaborative working between Social Care and SEND Services.	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead with Heads of Service – Social Care and SEND	31 March 2025	a. % of schools/settings holding annual review meetings within statutory timescales.
	3.2.4	Develop a mechanism for routinely gathering feedback from children, young people, parents and carers	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead	30 June 2025	b. % of schools/settings submitting annual review paperwork within statutory timescales.
	3.2.5	Develop a mechanism for routinely gathering data from annual reviews to evidence that outcomes are being achieved	Charlotte Baron – Head of SEND with BI/Systems team	30 June 2025	c. % of EHC advice received within statutory timescales.
	3.2.6	Evaluate the effectiveness of the training as part of the multi-agency EHC plan quality assurance process and include in QA report (see 3.2.1 above).	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead	31 March 2026	d. % of draft EHC plans issued within statutory timescales.
		3.3.1	Review and embed the QA framework across the SEND partnership to ensure that the definition of good is understood by parents, carers, children, young people and professionals.	Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead	31 March 2026
					f. The number and percentage of annual reviews that result in a maintained, amended, or

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
					<p>ceased plan.</p> <p>g. The number and percentage of amended plans issued within statutory timescales.</p> <p>h. The number and percentage of phased transfers completed by the statutory deadlines (15 February of each calendar year and 31 March Post 16).</p> <p>3. Quality audits demonstrate improved performance against EHC plan Quality Standard 2 “The plan evidences that parents and all professionals involved in supporting the child have contributed their views, assessments and advice to the plan and that this information is up to date.”</p> <p>Data to support improvement:</p> <p>a. Case studies detailing demonstrable difference for children and young people.</p>

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
<p>3.3 To ensure that EHC plans are consistently of good quality and support improved education, health and social care outcomes for children and young people.</p>	<p>3.3.2</p>	<p>Embed the moderation process and provide regular feedback to the audit team to ensure continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Bertie Goffe – Workforce Development Lead</p>	<p>31 March 2026</p>	<p>b. Timeliness of advice from social care, health and education.</p> <p>4. EHCPs are aligned to other plans that support children, young people and their families to ensure all plans are intrinsically linked and lead to improved outcomes. This will be measured through:</p> <p>a. Positive qualitative feedback from children, young people, parents/carers on the content detailed in the EHC plan.</p> <p>b. Increased % of EHC plan audits that meet overall quality standards.</p> <p>c. Number of combined meetings</p> <p>5. Outcomes for children and young people detailed in EHCPs are achieved. This will be measured by:-</p> <p>a. Increased numbers/% of audited new and amended EHC plans that meet the expected standards.</p>

Key objective	Planned development activity	Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
				<p>b. Improved attendance rates for children in mainstream education at SEN support/EHCP.</p> <p>c. Increased numbers/% of children achieving their outcomes based on analysis from annual reviews.</p>

Area for improvement 4

Strategic sponsor: Vicky Gent – Director of children’s services, Blackpool Council

Leaders from the local authority should further strengthen the relationships that they have developed with mainstream schools and academies. They should continue to work with them, with support as appropriate from the wider partnership, to ensure that attendance and academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND improve, and rates of suspensions and exclusions decrease.

Narrative from the report

Children and young people benefit from the support provided in special schools and other specialist settings. Mainstream schools, including some with specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND, work closely with the local authority to be fully inclusive. However, for many children and young people with SEND, academic outcomes and attendance are too low, while exclusions remain too high. In the early years, there are signs of a developing positive picture. This is because children are getting a positive start to education and are increasingly well prepared for starting school. Despite this work, there are some families who remain concerned about the ability of mainstream schools to meet their children’s needs.

Key objective	Planned development activity	Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
4.1 To develop a comprehensive and shared understanding across the SEND Partnership of the characteristics and reasons for non-attendance, suspensions and exclusions of children and young people with SEND at Blackpool schools.	<p>4.1.1 Undertake a multi-agency deep dive analysis to understand the characteristics, reasons and barriers to children and young people with SEND:</p> <p>a) Not attending school.</p> <p>b) Experiencing suspensions and exclusions.</p>	<p>Joanne Stewart – Head of Early Help</p> <p>Jeremy Mannino – Head of School Standards, Safeguarding and Effectiveness</p>	31 December 2025	
	Develop a strategic approach and implementation plan			

Key objective	Planned development activity	Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
<p>4.2 Address identified barriers to improve attendance of children and young people with SEND and reduce the numbers of suspensions and exclusions.</p> <p>Strengthen performance monitoring arrangements of attendance, suspensions and exclusions as part of the quarterly progress monitoring report described in AF1.</p>	<p>4.2.1</p> <p>aligned with the refreshed education vision to address identified barriers and improve attendance based on the outcomes of the analysis at 4.1.1.</p> <p>Delivery of the implementation plan will be the responsibility of key officers representing the BEIB and progress will be reported to the SEND Board.</p>	<p>Joanne Stewart</p> <p>Jeremy Mannino</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p>	<p>1. An evidence base that provides the SEND partnership with intelligence on the characteristics, reasons and barriers to Blackpool children and young people with SEND:</p> <p>a) Who are not attending school;</p> <p>b) Who are experiencing suspensions and exclusions;</p> <p>c) Who have a profile that causes concern regarding admissions;</p> <p>2. An implementation plan that sets out the activities that will be undertaken to improve attendance and reduce numbers of suspensions and exclusions for children and young people with SEND. A quarterly progress report will be presented by the strategic sponsor to the SEND Partnership. This will be supported by the Partnership dashboard that will be available to view by all partners alongside the quarterly analysis of data provided by the performance group to support decision making.</p>
	<p>4.2.2</p> <p>Review the role of the Pupil Welfare Service to align with LA and school objectives around improving attendance</p>	<p>Joanne Stewart</p> <p>Jeremy Mannino</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p>	
<p>4.3 Further strengthen relationships with:</p> <p>a) mainstream schools and academies</p> <p>b) between mainstream schools/academies and parents to improve attendance and the academic outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>4.3.1</p> <p>Recruit experienced school leaders to work alongside schools to support widening inclusion, raising standards and strengthening relationships with the LA/schools and parents.</p>	<p>Vicky Gent – DCS</p>	<p>31 October 2024</p>	<p>3. % increase in attendance of children and young people with SEND within mainstream schools.</p> <p>4. % reduction in suspensions from mainstream schools of children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>5. % reduction in exclusions from mainstream schools of children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>6. Increased parental confidence in mainstream schools and academies, which will be evidenced from parental feedback and case studies.</p> <p>7. % increase in academic outcomes for those at SEN support/EHCP.</p>
	<p>4.3.2</p> <p>Inclusion working group to be established, co-chaired by DCS and MAT CEx to review and respond to the approach to inclusion across Blackpool.</p>	<p>Vicky Gent – DCS</p>	<p>31 December 2024</p>	
	<p>4.3.3</p> <p>Work with VCS partners to maximise their contribution to inclusion</p>	<p>Vicky Gent – DCS</p>	<p>31 March 2025</p>	
	<p>Create a test and learn environment with one of our school's to investigate</p>			

Key objective	Planned development activity		Responsible	Timescale	What success looks like
	4.3.4	how we wrap local authority and partners support around a school for the benefit of children, young people and their parents.	Joanne Stewart – Head of Early Help	31 December 2024	

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