

# Southend SEND Area Partnership

## Update on Key Strategy Activity and Next Steps

---

October 2024



Southend on Sea  
City Council



Mid and South Essex  
Integrated Care  
System

# Update on Key Strategic Activity and next steps

In March 2023 the Southend-on-Sea Local Area Partnership was subject to a focussed Area SEND inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The inspection found that “The local area partnership’s arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements”.

In July 2023 the partnership produced and published a single strategic action plan in response to the inspection outcome which focussed on 6 recommendations. The action plan set out the local area’s plans to jointly deliver its priorities and improvements against these recommendations.

In May 2024 we produced a summary on the first year of delivery of the strategic area action plan, showing the key activity and impact. This leaflet provides a further update and confirms the refocussed priorities for 2024-25.

For more detailed updates and to view the strategic action plan visit [www.southend.gov.uk/SENDStrategy](http://www.southend.gov.uk/SENDStrategy) On this page you can also provide your feedback, ask questions or make suggestions on the areas progress.

## **Recommendation: 1**

Leaders in education, health and social care are empowered to drive forward improvements at pace so that the Southend SEND Partnership strategy impacts positively on the experiences and outcomes of all children and young and people with SEND.

**What we wanted:** An integrated system for Alternative Provision and SEND where partners work collaboratively to routinely review progress and challenges, agreeing new priorities and improvement work.

### **What we did:**

- More investment in SEND services which has led to an ambitious education transformation programme and service reshape.
- New governance arrangements have led to clearer functions for reporting and tracking progress against strategic action plan across meetings and the wider Area Partnership.
- The review of the Integrated Care Board has been completed with roles identified that support the SEND and Children's agenda.
- Leaders in Health, Education and Social Care are held to account on the delivery of services.
- SEND Strategic Board members have clearer oversight of the delivery of SEND Services and the impact of them.
- The new Self Evaluation Form (SEF) reflects the whole SEND and AP system and has been co-produced by all partners.
- There is greater stakeholder engagement through the creation of the SEND Headteachers Forum and Educational Strategy Group as schools are more engaged with the shaping of services and have a better understanding of the wider picture.

**The difference it made:** There is strengthened governance and arrangements in place for performance monitoring. All Area Partners understand the impact of service delivery and the key issues.

**Priority 2024-25:** Health commissioners and provider services understand their joint responsibility for SEND improvement.

## **Recommendation: 2**

The local area partnership should evaluate the quality and impact of services and joint working more effectively, to inform improvements that lead to better outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND.

**What we wanted:** To evaluate gaps in the system which would inform an education improvement programme.

### **What we did:**

- Created a central Early Years Service and a central Specialist Teaching Service to strengthen support and advice to settings and school.
- Aligned the Early Years SEND advisory team with the integrated Early Years service to strengthen joint working and support settings in identification of need and seamless transitions across the Early Years sector.
- Outlined a SEND Therapies project from September 2024 to include speech and language and occupational therapy consultancy for schools.
- 46 maintained and special schools have signed up for Relational Practice training.
- Strengthened targeted support to schools from the Access and Inclusion Team to reduce exclusions and raise attendance.
- Commenced Wave 2 Mental Health Support Teams in schools to widen the offer of early support.
- Implemented an all age Dynamic Support Pathway (DSP) with multi agency partnership working to prevent avoidable admission to a mental health inpatient setting.
- Provided improved outcomes for children and young people who have transitioned back to mainstream after accessing pilot and existing Alternative Provision pathways.
- Increased attendance at Year 9 Annual Reviews from the Preparing for Adulthood (PFA) team to provide advice, guidance and training for SENDCOs so that PFA outcomes are jointly agreed.

**The difference it made:** Improvements in the system have strengthened the quality of services.

**Priority 2024-25:** Quality assurance frameworks that will evaluate and demonstrate impact on children and young people's outcomes and experiences.

### **Recommendation: 3**

Local area partnership leaders should improve the effectiveness of joint working to support the co-production of Education Health Care (EHC) plans and annual reviews so that at each stage the provision that is planned takes full account of children's and young people's current and changing needs.

**What we wanted:** To ensure EHC plans reflected multi agency outcomes and the age and stage of the young person.

**What we did:**

- Carried out internal evaluation and an external audit of the SEND Team to identify improvement priorities.
- Increased capacity of the Educational Psychology (EP) Service to support timeliness of EP advice as part of the EHC needs assessment process.
- Increased staffing within the SEND Assessment and Review teams to match demand.
- Strengthened quality assurance processes within individual teams to ensure the quality, timeliness and content of EHC plans improves.
- Commenced work on a multi-agency Quality Assurance framework around EHC assessment and EHC plans that will establish a baseline quality for new and existing plans, identifying areas to target for development.
- Implemented reporting processes to track timeliness and quantity of advice obtained during assessment/review.
- Provided additional resource routes to schools to ensure there was support for children and young people during assessment delays.

**The difference it made:** Data shows that there is increased output of new EHC assessments within timescale as 2024 progressed.

**Priority 2024-25:** Managers across health education and social care to embed processes to quality assure statutory advice for EHC assessment and annual reviews and work together to strengthen data reporting mechanisms.

#### **Recommendation: 4**

Local area partnership leaders should ensure that they share accurate data across health, education and social care to support rigorous and effective self-evaluation and inform joint commissioning.

**What we wanted:** Joint data dashboards.

**What we did:**

- The Mid and South Essex (MSE) Business Intelligence team have developed an initial version of a SEND dashboard covering a variety of health metrics sourced from various partner organisations.
- Internal Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) SEND reporting now includes new functionality and interactivity for further insight on key education metrics and demographics of the EHC plans maintained by Southend-on-Sea.
- Individual teams and services routinely report data on caseload and activity through operational meetings for scrutiny and challenge.
- The publicly available SEND Profile Data Tool has been updated to include 2024 outcomes from the school census and SEN2 data collections.
- The co-production of a SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is almost complete.

**The difference it made:** There is greater understanding across the Partnership on the impact of service delivery and identified risks and challenges.

**Priority 2024-25:** To create an Area Partnership Outcomes Framework and key metrics to complete a joint data dashboard that will inform wider commissioning and delivery priorities.

## **Recommendation: 5**

The local area partnership should ensure that appropriate support is in place from health services for children and young people who are awaiting health needs assessments, so that early intervention reduces the risk of any escalation of concern.

**What we wanted:** Families know where to find support whilst waiting for assessment and that they are given the right information at the right time.

### **What we did:**

- Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) have been providing Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) support sessions for parents and carers of children and young people with or awaiting a diagnosis. These take place across a number of community venues as well as virtual sessions.
- Kids Autism Hub launched to provide online support for children and young people newly diagnosed or on the diagnostic pathway and their families.
- Sensory Awareness Toolkit launched by the Essex-wide Occupational Therapy group to support families and education settings in supporting young people with sensory differences/difficulties.
- EPUT has ensured their web pages have information about routes to referrals, assessment and treatment pathways. Resources are also available to provide support and advice for families whilst waiting for assessment.
- Southend Essex and Thurrock (SET) Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) website outlines resources available to support a range of difficulties as well as clear information on referral routes and what to expect next. This includes voluntary sector services such as online counselling, for example KOOTH.
- My Care Bridge, a new online portal for referrals for ASD and ADHD services in Mid and South Essex has launched. Families and settings can access supporting information and resources whilst viewing the status of their referral.

**The difference it made:** A number of initiatives have been launched across health providers to provide additional support to children and young people and their families waiting for assessments.

**Priority 2024-25:** Evaluate the user experience for all community health services so that support to families that are waiting for assessment is consistent across all pathways.

## **Recommendation: 6**

The local area partnership should make sure that parents and carers and professionals receive clear and reliable information about how to access the range of support and services that are available.

**What we wanted:** Families to understand where to go for accurate support, advice and information and understand improvements across the area partnership.

### **What we did:**

- The Local Offer Team and the Parent carer Forum launched the SEND Network.
- Feedback obtained via the SEND Network shaped a project plan scoping out the development of 11 roadmaps. 5 roadmaps that outline SEND processes have been created.
- There has been an increase in participants co-producing information through engagement activities.
- Supported the Parent Carer Forum to hold termly SSIF seminars on topics voted for by families.
- Increased subscribers to the SEND Partnership monthly e-newsletter (Peer into Southend SEND).
- Engaged widely with families across the city to help parents and carers to navigate the local offer and access the right support in a timely way. Through SEND Surgeries in local schools, coffee mornings and other community events.
- Launched the new accessible Livewell platform hosting the Local Offer.
- Continually reviewed the Local Offer website with families and young people.
- Identified a number of SEND Champions from local groups and organisations via the SEND Network.

**The difference it made:** There are significantly improved communications to stakeholders from across the SEND Partnership, and families are more aware of where to access advice and support or information.

**Priorities 2024-25:** Strengthen the strategic engagement of children and young people with SEND so they are more involved in the wider decision-making of the area.

SEND champions are operational.





Southend on Sea  
City Council



Mid and South Essex  
Integrated Care  
System