

SEND Improvement Programme – Response to Direction

DRAFT

1. Introduction

This document is the Local Area's collective response to the draft Direction issued by the Secretary of State with regards to the outcome of the 2021 SEND Local Area Revisit. The focus of this document is to present the proposed methodology and put forward a proposal for how the SEND Improvement Programme (SIP) could be structured, managed and monitored.

The Local Area accepts that insufficient progress has been made against 12 out of the 13 Areas of Significant Weakness identified in the 2018 Local Area SEND Inspection. This outcome was due to insufficient co-production, engagement and accountability since the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was approved in January 2019. As a result, the Local Area is committed to fully co-produce a new SEND Improvement Programme (SIP) based on identifying desired outcomes, which will be appropriately scrutinised by an Improvement Board chaired by the DfE appointed Commissioner.

The draft direction requested a response by 25th August but, it is difficult to build a co-produced programme during the month of August, as most education settings and families are on holiday. The proposed plan, discussed and agreed with DfE and NHS improvement advisors, is therefore to engage intensively during September 2021 in order to co-produce the desired outcomes, agree the measures of success and plan activity to improve on those outcomes. The plan presented at this stage is therefore a draft, subject to change following co-production and engagement.

2. Methodology

As part of developing a new SEND Strategy and in response to the Statutory Direction, the Local Area will identify 4-6 co-produced Objectives for children and young people (CYP) with SEND in Birmingham. Once the Objectives have been agreed, work plans will be aligned to those objectives, and to measure the progress against achieving the desired benefits.

Each Objective will have its own sponsor, project manager and project plan - including benefits to be realised. These benefits will have appropriate targets and intervals through which they will be monitored and reported widely and transparently. A clear and transparent dashboard will be published every 3 months on the Local Offer to show where the Local Area is in terms of its progress to achieve those outcomes.



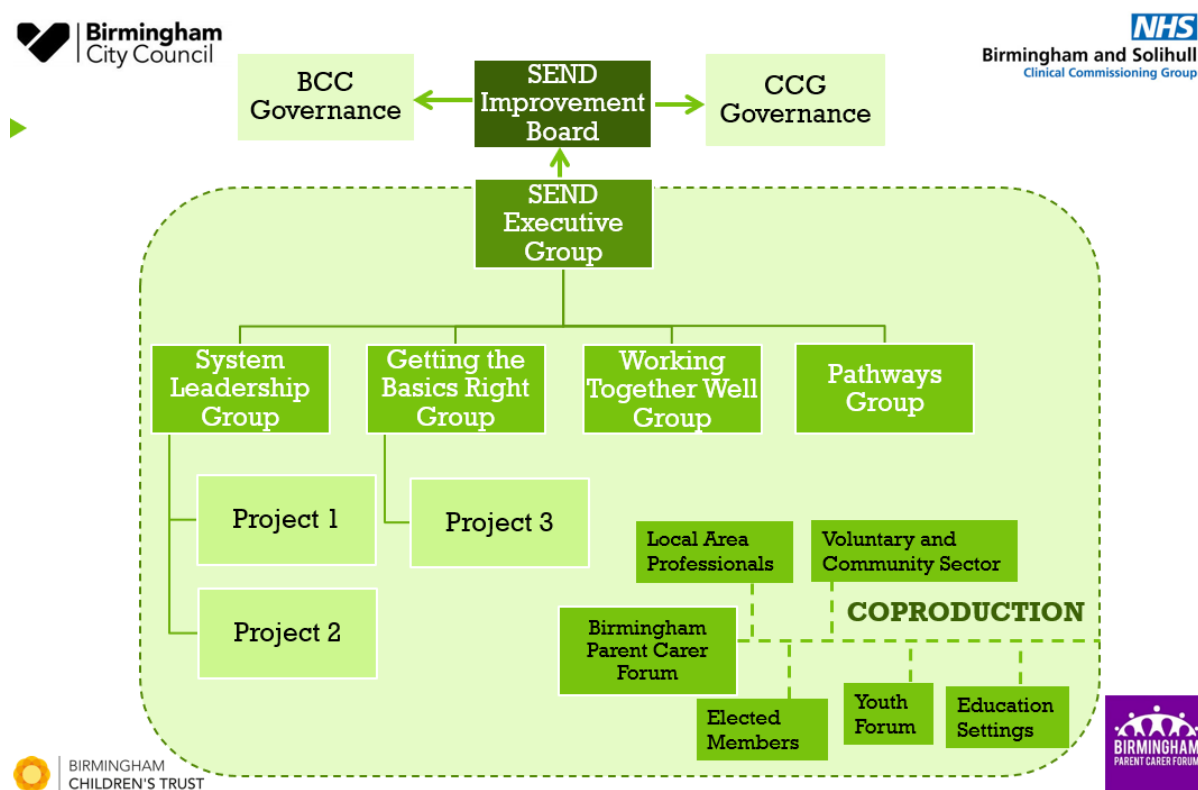
3. Governance and example

The SIP will be governed through the SEND Improvement Board chaired by the DfE appointed commissioner. The SEND Improvement Board will meet every 6 weeks and highlight reports will be produced for each of the outcomes agreed. The Board will have representation from the Local Authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Birmingham Children's Trust, Birmingham Parent Carer Forum and the Cabinet Member (Vulnerable Children and Families) and other elected members.

The sponsors for each of the Objectives will report into the SEND Improvement Board. Moreover, the sponsors will chair their respective Objective Groups to ensure that the programme of work is being delivered. The Groups will meet on a 3-weekly basis, with at least 2 weeks apart from the SEND Improvement Board, to ensure that the most up to date information is provided to the Board.

A SEND Executive Group will also meet every 6 weeks, with the sponsors of all the Objective Groups, in order to provide a space for challenge, support and decision making at a partnership officer level. Elected Members will continue to oversee progress through Overview and Scrutiny and regular briefings with the Lead Member. Furthermore, Member attendance at the Improvement Board is proposed and will be discussed with the Commissioner.

An example of the governance structure can be seen below:



The objectives described in the governance structure above require co-production across the partnership (this sits at the forefront of the programme, illustrated as the light green shading that encapsulates the working groups, based on coproduction with families, education settings, local area professionals, elected members and the voluntary and community sector). In the interim the Local Area has grouped the work required to make significant improvement in the 12 areas of areas of weakness into four themes (see below):

Theme	Area of Significant Weakness	Example of Key Measures of Success/ KPIs
System Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy • Inter-agency working • Local Offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of pupils with EHCP educated in mainstream environment • % of pupils with EHCP educated in NMI • % EHCNA advice received within 6 weeks • Satisfaction rates Local Offer Website through a dedicated survey • Local Offer Website Traffic monitoring
Getting the basics right – identifying and assessing need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of Assessments • Quality of EHCPs • Waiting Times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • %EHCPs issued within 20 weeks • % Annual Reviews actioned within 4 weeks of the meeting • % of EHCPs rated good and outstanding • % of EHCPs NEET • Statistics about waiting times (therapies and early identification)
Working Together Well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Production • Parental Engagement • Parental Satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of parental surveys returned • % of parental satisfaction measured through the parental surveys • Number of appeals lodged at SENDIST • Number of Complaints
Pathways – meeting need and improving outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Progress • Attendance and Exclusions • Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainment and Progress data EHCPs • Attainment and Progress data SEN Support • % of permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions for EHCPs • % of permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions for SEN Support • % young people with LD in paid employment

4. Example of Outcomes focused Transformation

As part of this methodology, it is important that the outcomes/objectives correlate with the activity. It is also important to baseline the current status of the Local Area, so that the targets agreed are achievable and appropriate.

Until the engagement and co-production stage is completed, the below is an example of how the SIP could be structured and the types of measures the Local Area would be looking at setting and monitoring:

Objective	Measure of Success	Target	Project/ Actions
Objective 2 – Getting the Basics Right – identifying and assessing need	EHCPs are issued within timescales and Annual Reviews are Actioned in a timely way	80% of New EHCPs are completed within 20 week	Transformation of SEN Administration
		80% of ARs are actioned within 4 weeks of the meeting	Transformation of Home to School Transport
		Therapies Waiting Times fall to national guidelines	Multi-agency Learning and Development Strategy
	EHCPs are good quality	70% of all new EHCPs are good or outstanding	Quality Assurance Strategy
	Appeals rate reduce	10% reduction in appeals registered	
	Number of complaints reduce	20% reduction in complaints received	
Objective 4 – Birmingham has Clear Pathways for CYP with SEND from an Early Age - meeting need and improving outcomes	CYPs benefit from early identification and are supported in the right provision.	% CYP with SEND educated in mainstream settings is at national average levels	Refresh of the SEND Strategy
		% of YP with SEND receiving a FTX or PEX reduces to below national average	Building SEND health and education local teams in mainstream
	Young People with SEND thrive in Birmingham	% of YP with EHCPs that are NEET is at national average levels	Developing SEND Local Provision in mainstream schools
		% of Health Checks for YP with SEND is at National levels	Developing responsive, flexible and effective specialist provision
		% of YP with SEND in supported accommodation increases	Early identification and intervention for SEND
		Attainment and progress levels for CYP with SEND improve to national levels	Effective preparation for adulthood
		% of YP with a Learning disability in employment rises to national average levels	Building wellbeing local teams in mainstream schools

5. Urgent work in progress

As well as longer-term strategic improvements, the Local Area needs to get the basics right so that children and families get the support they need and are entitled to now. As a result, we have urgently embarked on improving the SENAR service, initiating a project that looks at the organisation of the service, the processes and procedures, the IT system used by the service and the use of finance. As a result, we have identified that extra capacity is required in the service, thus Cabinet agreed in July 2021 to increase the general fund budget from £1.8m in 2021/22 to £8.9m. After stabilising the service, work will be undertaken to understand the ongoing cost of SENAR and a report made to Cabinet in due course.

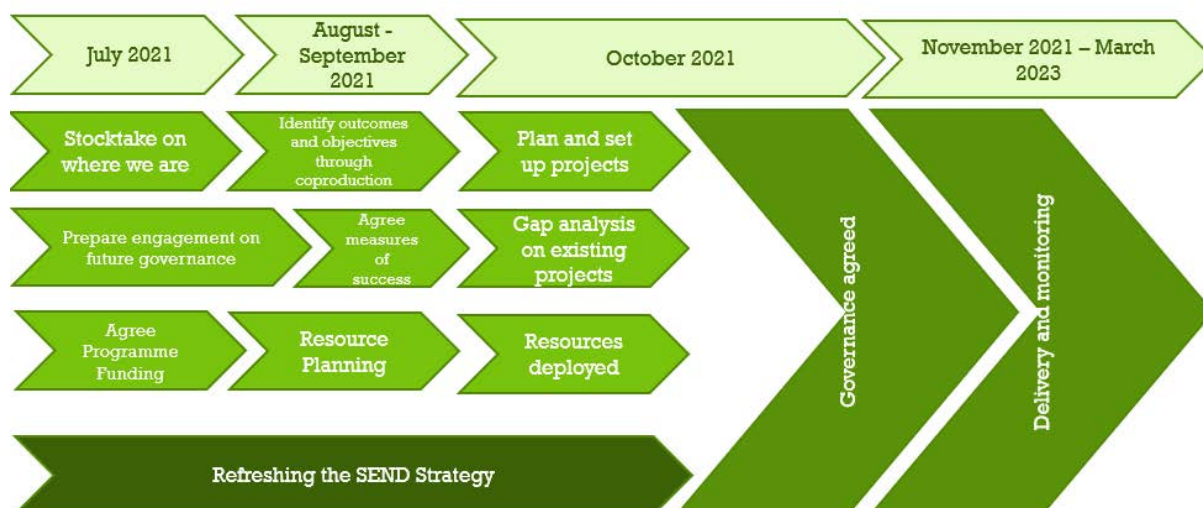
In the table below, there is a high-level presentation on how improving the SENAR service will contribute to addressing some of the issues identified in five of the significant areas of weakness.

Actions Taken	Benefit Sought Through Project	KPI for final state (24 months)	Area of Significant Weakness that the Benefit Correlates to
Increasing Capacity in the SENAR service and officers holding cases	Improved timeliness of EHCPs	80% of EHCPs are issued within 20 weeks	The Coordination of assessments is poor
	Improved timeliness of Annual Reviews being Actioned	80% of Annual Reviews are actioned within 4 weeks of the meeting	
	Improved quality of EHCPs	70% of all new EHCPs are rated Good or Outstanding	Quality of EHCPs is variable.
	Improved satisfaction	20% reduction in the number of complaints received	Parental dissatisfaction

Improving the processes and procedures and the case management system	Improved partnership working	80% of EHNCA advice received on time	Inter-agency working is ineffective
	Improved co-production and engagement with families in the EHCNA process through a parent portal	10% reduction of appeals registered	Weak Parental Engagement
Improving the way in which the HNB is used to meet needs	Improved provision allocation of CYPs with SEND	Parent/ Carer/ Young Person survey show increase in satisfaction with the process	Parental dissatisfaction

6. Timelines

The timeline below relates to initiating the programme. Further work will be done once the outcomes/objective are agreed alongside the action plans.



As part of the engagement process to set up the SEND Improvement Programme, the following events have taken place/ been scheduled:

- 28th of July 2021 – Meeting with Birmingham Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) to coproduce the methodology of running engagements (BPCF Committee)
- 5th of August – Meeting with leaders from the Local Authority, CCG, Birmingham Children's Trust and BPCF to agree methodology of setting up the programme and engagement.
- 19th of August – Summer Newsletter was sent to parents, which included information on future engagements.
- 24th and 26th of August - open meetings with parents and carers with the new interim AD for Inclusion and Wellbeing to offer an open space for discussion around the issues in SEND and Inclusion.

- 15th of September – SEND Birmingham Outcomes Workshop (BPCF, Parents/Carers, Professionals across Partnership, VCS) to establish the outcomes we want to achieve through the programme and how will we know when things have improved (measures of success)

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, all partners are aware that this is a complex improvement programme that needs to be adequately funded and resourced and that needs all partners to prioritise and engage in equal measure.

As well as looking at systems, processes and governance there is also a need to look at culture and behaviours within organisations and at the partnership level. During the Autumn Term we will consider a programme of activity in order to enable us to look at the lessons we have learned from the past three years and how we can ensure that this SEND Improvement Programme is successful.

Once this and co-production and engagement have taken place, we will be well-placed to submit a final Accelerated Programme Plan for consideration.