

Delivering Better Value in SEND



Why are we participating in this programme?

To improve outcomes for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) whilst gaining support to deliver sustainable services.

The UK government has long term aspirations to reform the system supporting children and young people with SEND, however these will take time to come into fruition. The DBV Programme acknowledges the current challenges we face and will provide valuable support in the short term to Local Authorities (LAs) like ourselves.

What makes this Programme unique?

As part of participating in the DBV programme, we will have dedicated capacity from Newton and The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). They will work with us to bring their experience and skills on identifying opportunities for change. This should help our local leaders and managers keep things on track through the inevitable periods of operational pressure.

After our work with Newton and CIPFA, we will have access to grant funding from the Department for Education (DfE) to support our implementation work – enacting positive change for children and young people, our staff and local partners.

We will be progressing on our SEND improvement journey alongside 54 other LAs in this Programme. This will provide us with a unique opportunity for collaboration with other areas. It will also mean we contribute to a wider evidence base that will be fed back to the DfE to inform future national reforms.

Who are Newton & CIPFA?

Newton specialise in operational improvements and have extensive experience in working with public sector systems like ours. They pride themselves in working side-by-side with those leading change – and those most affected by it – to form a single team. Their experience includes analysing complex processes and systems, as well as working with frontline teams to understand the biggest challenges they are facing so they can create a bespoke solution.

CIPFA are the only professional accountancy body in the world dedicated exclusively to public finance. They have 14,000 members who work to ensure public money is effectively managed and champion high performance in public services. They have extensive experience working in the police force and with Central & Local Government. Their team of chartered accountants includes experienced Local Government finance directors and officers with a deep knowledge of the education funding system.

What is the DBV Programme?

This programme is commissioned by the DfE and will support 55 LAs to identify the highest impact changes that each LA involved can make to better support their local children with SEND and make plans to implement those changes. The programme will place children and young people with SEND at the centre of the approach and decision making.

The implementation plans will build on existing initiatives and address the underlying challenges in each LA's high needs systems. We will be involving local partners & our front line staff when designing this plan, ensuring the programme is underpinned by a comprehensive data-driven and evidence-led diagnostic. There is also the opportunity for Local Authorities involved in the DBV Programme to apply for an implementation grant offered by DfE.

What have we done so far?

Newton & CIPFA have had a planning conversation with our Local Authority's senior leaders to understand our local context and position. We've shared the documentation with Newton and CIPFA that we felt was relevant and discussed areas where their diagnostic support would be helpful.

This was followed by a set up conversation, where we discussed what was required to prepare for next steps in the programme and how best to involve our local partners. The DfE have provided a grant to support data analysis in preparation for the next stages of the programme.

What are we doing now?

We are carrying out a diagnostic that will take just over 3 months to complete. This diagnostic will be made up of three modules with different partners involved in each to ensure we make the best use of your time and experience.

Delivering Better Value in SEND

What is a diagnostic?

To make impactful change that is sustainable, we need to identify the root cause of challenges - not just the visible symptoms. To do this, we need to be able to step back from our busy day to day lives and gather objective evidence. We will analyse data and combine it with rich insights from our local experience. Newton & CIPFA, who are our partners in this, will work collaboratively alongside us, supporting us with techniques to identify the biggest opportunities to do things better - things that will have the most positive impact for children & young people with SEND.

We will utilise forums to meet throughout the diagnostic, to share progress and ensure that the right people can be involved in shaping the diagnostic work.

To transform our services and make positive and lasting change, we will also consider our culture/how we work together - our strengths, similarities and differences and the impact of these on achieving a sustainable difference to the lives of children with SEND.

Ways to get involved



Surveys

Share your experiences through surveys to gather a wide range of views.



Virtual Drop-Ins

Opportunities for you to hear about what's going on, share views and ask questions.



Studies

Studies to inform the day-to-day reality of our processes and practice.



Workshops

Frontline-led discussions about real children – what happened and what we could do differently.

Why is it important to carry out a diagnostic?

1. To identify sustainable changes that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND
2. To enable us to build an evidence-based application to the DfE for a grant to assist with the implementation of those changes.
3. Build a strong, objective evidence base across a third of local authorities, which can be used to influence future national reforms

What happens after the diagnostic?

The diagnostic is just the first step. The evidence will show us where our biggest opportunities are so that we can plan, prioritise, and build on what we've learnt. There will then be a decision point regarding what to take forward from the diagnostic to incorporate in our improvement plan for implementation.

How do I get involved?

We know the whole system needs to work cohesively to support children and young people with SEND. Each local partner has valuable insights and experience we want to listen to and understand. These different perspectives will collectively inform our decisions.

Workshops, studies and surveys are just a few of the ways we will be looking to gain this insight. There will be lots of opportunities for you to stay updated and get involved. Some of you will be asked to take part in surveys, others will be invited to attend workshops where we'll discuss anonymised real cases in detail.

It's important we have the right balance of experience and areas of expertise, so we'll be inviting people directly. If you are asked to attend, please do your best to do so. Thank you in advance for taking time out to provide us with your valuable insights. For everyone else, there will be various forums and drop-in sessions where you will be able to share your thoughts, experiences and insights, and of course, to ask questions.

Who is leading this work & how can we get in touch?

This will be led by our local system leadership, facilitated by our partners from Newton & CIPFA. Our DBV lead will be Helen Ellis, so please reach out with further questions.