

Newcastle Local Area Getting It Right Together SEND Quality Assurance Framework

Annual Report 2021-22



Approved by SEND Executive Board 7 November 2022

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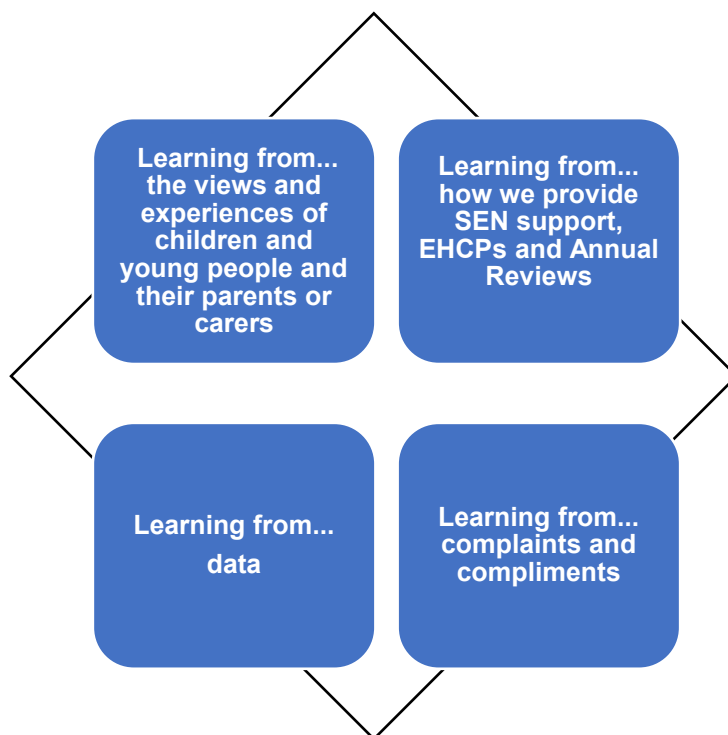
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1. Introduction

Our **Getting it right together framework** is published on the SEND Local offer: [SEND related policies and strategies \(newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk\)](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk).

This is our first annual report showing the work that has been carried out in 2021/2022 against the intentions set out in the framework. The agreed framework is set out below:

Figure 1: An overview of the Getting it Right Together Framework



2. Learning from the views and experiences of children and young people and their parents and carers

What we have done

The Parent/Carer Forum (PCF) have had an **opportunity to directly raise concerns** with Senior Leaders from the Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) each term. At the latest discussion the PCF asked 34 questions covering education, health and care. The responses are published on the PCF and Local Offer website. [PCF Questions to SEND Collaborative Forum - 18.05.22.pdf](#) .

We are continuing to invest in SEND voice and have provided opportunities for **Voice Trainees** to brief the SEND Board about their work. We are currently recruiting for a second round of voice trainees. Young people have been involved in all interviews for SEND Staff.

We have agreed a [SEND Outcomes Framework](#) which considers the experience of children and young people, key performance indicators (absence, exclusions, waiting times) and the biennial Health-Related Health Questionnaire. Taken together this intelligence will contribute to our city Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and will help us to target our resources to meet need.

From September 2022 we are starting to collect children and young people's views as part of their **annual reviews**, we have published a guidance video here: [SEND related policies and strategies](#), scroll down to the SEND outcomes Framework section. The next step is to include the

outcomes within relevant education, health and care commissioned service specifications with appropriate mechanisms for measuring progress.

The SEND Voice lead worked with children, young people, parents/carers to design a **'happiness survey'** which was circulated to schools in the Autumn Term 2021. 500 plus pupils and parent/carers responded to the survey which ran from until April 2022. There is huge commitment from educational settings to embrace a new approach and to respond to the voice of children and young people and parents and carers who have told us that communication in our settings is a big issue. The results can be viewed here: [Happiness Survey Feedback](#) and were reported to the SEND Executive Board in September 2022 and are to be discussed with the Promise Board. A task and finish group has been established, chaired by the Voice Lead, to respond to the findings.

Other work carried out to ensure we hear the voice of children and young people includes:

- **Transitions survey to influence the work of the Promise Board's school transition sub group:** Questionnaire devised by a group of year 6 pupils from Wingrove Primary school to find out what children think about the big changes that happen in their school life. What things can make BIG changes easier? Year 7 survey is to be rolled out autumn term to measure impact of work done with year 6's: <https://forms.office.com/r/qBetZ0csdL>.
- **Workshops created by primary pupils:** To be used in Early Years settings, special schools and Primary schools. <https://forms.office.com/r/kZLD0c9wyf> and accompanying video [Kenton Youth Champions Video - YouTube](#)
- **A survey of Young People developed by the Youth Voice Trainees:** Objective was to ask young people to tell us about their needs during the covid pandemic period <https://forms.office.com/r/VkDjm02py2>

Staff have been trained in **relational and restorative** practice training, a council wide approach to working with children and families and ensuring their views are at the centre of all we do. The SEND Casework team attended three days training in the summer term. The feedback from the team was very positive and it is hoped that this will lead to a further improvement in the quality of EHC plans.

Parents/carers have continued to be part of the SEND Workstreams and together we have **co-produced:**

- New EHC plan template and advice forms: [SEND Portal](#)
- [SEND Local Offer](#) website: parent/carers and children/young people were involved in the redesign and launch of the local offer website, including content design and creation of a promotional film to publicise the new site
- We have worked with parents/carers and children and young people and published **explainer videos to help raise awareness of support** available for families. They are available on the local offer:
 - <https://youtu.be/06PgJ5zP3IU>
 - <https://youtu.be/grzzfYPDfF0>
- [SEND Outcomes Framework](#)

Parents/carers are invited to take part in the EHC multi-agency audits and the interview panel for Senior SEND appointments. We have issued a number of licenses so parents/carers can

try out the '[Rix Wiki](#)' websites to improve how we get children's voice. A "Wiki" is a simple and secure online platform which our children and young people and their families can use to build up information about them to help children and young people and their families/carers to "tell their story" once.

Each term we publish a 'you said we did' biteable video to feedback our work to parent and carers. We also publish a calendar of meetings and events on the communications page of the Local Offer: [Calendar of Meetings](#)

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to improve outcomes and experiences of our children and young people with SEND. We are very grateful to the **parents/carers** who contribute their time and share their experiences with us. The contribution from families is critical to how we improve what we do and how we do it.

Next steps

- Being inclusive means that we will use a variety of ways to capture and embed voice from online tools and apps to capture children and young people's views and experiences to SEND Executive Board takeover days.
- We are planning some work with our parent/ carer forum to look at how we can improve how we work together strategically for the benefit of our children and young people with SEND

3a. Learning from looking at SEN support

What we have done

To strengthen the graduated approach and to support inclusion, we have invested in a core outreach offer for SEND, and we have also co-produced [SEND Descriptors of Need](#), alongside a resource pack and training programme to upskill staff working with children who have SEMH needs. The resources are available on the Local Offer: [Understanding and Developing SEMH Skills](#). The SEN Support Plan is now in use in Newcastle Schools.

We have invested in additional staff in our SEND Outreach Service: an additional two FTE specialist teachers, one Nursery Nurse and three FTE SEN Support workers. Their role is to provide advice and support to families, schools and settings for individual children and young people with SEND including communication and interaction needs.

SEND teams have delivered bespoke **training to targeted schools** where children have low attendance/are at risk of exclusion. For example, schools have received training on 'trauma informed practice', 'staff supervision', 'emotion coaching' and 'Zones of regulation' and this has been directly triggered in response to a child's identified significant SEMH needs as a result of being raised at the Inclusion Panel/ASAP panel, or as an identified need following review of the **SEND School Profile**. The outcome of this work has directly supported the child to continue their education within their school, improve their attendance and reduce the risk of exclusion.

We have continued to roll out **Autism Education Trust (AET) training** to all schools. There is a range of training from general autism awareness through to specialist training. Our intention is to explore to what extent the training has impacted on exclusions and suspensions in the short term and how we can measure this in the medium to longer term.

We have established **Locality Inclusion Panels (LIPs)** to support secondary schools. Schools are requesting support for students who are at risk of permanent exclusion, as well as

students without a school place through the Fair Access Panel process. 50% of the referrals received are on a SEN support plan.

To reflect the complexity of need, the LIPs include officers from SEND, Educational Psychology, 0-19 Service, Children's Social Care, Children and Families Newcastle, Youth Services, Careers and Guidance, Youth Justice Service and Virtual School, as well as officers from School Effectiveness and school leaders.

Although it is too early to ascertain long term impact on individuals, attendance of pupils referred to LIP panel has in most cases improved considerably. This is particularly marked for pupils attending alternative provision. Very early indications are that attendance reduces again upon return to mainstream but remains significantly higher than prior to referral.

In the Spring Term, 2022 all Head teachers were invited to attend some LA training delivered by Whole School SEND/Nasen. The initial session covered the statutory responsibilities for schools in relation to SEND and SEND Link Governors were also invited to attend. The follow up session looked at practical ways in which school leaders could implement statutory responsibilities within their setting. Schools unable to attend the training were able to view the recorded link, which was circulated to all schools.

The following were the areas that schools identified as their main priorities for identifying SEND:

- CPD
- Guidance
- Assessments
- Teacher support
- Early identification
- Good communication

When asked about priorities within their own schools, Head teachers identified the following:

- Use the SEND Guidance with the whole staff
- Amend the behaviour policy
- Whole staff training
- Shared responsibility/understanding of SEND needs within the school
- Re-evaluate provision
- Ensure that the graduated response is consistently applied
- Seeing increased engagement of SEND pupils
- Greater involvement of SEND governor

Next Steps

- Peer led improvement
- Review and update the Mainstream Guidance
Roll out of the Inclusion Quality Framework to schools

3b. Learning from looking at EHCPs and annual reviews

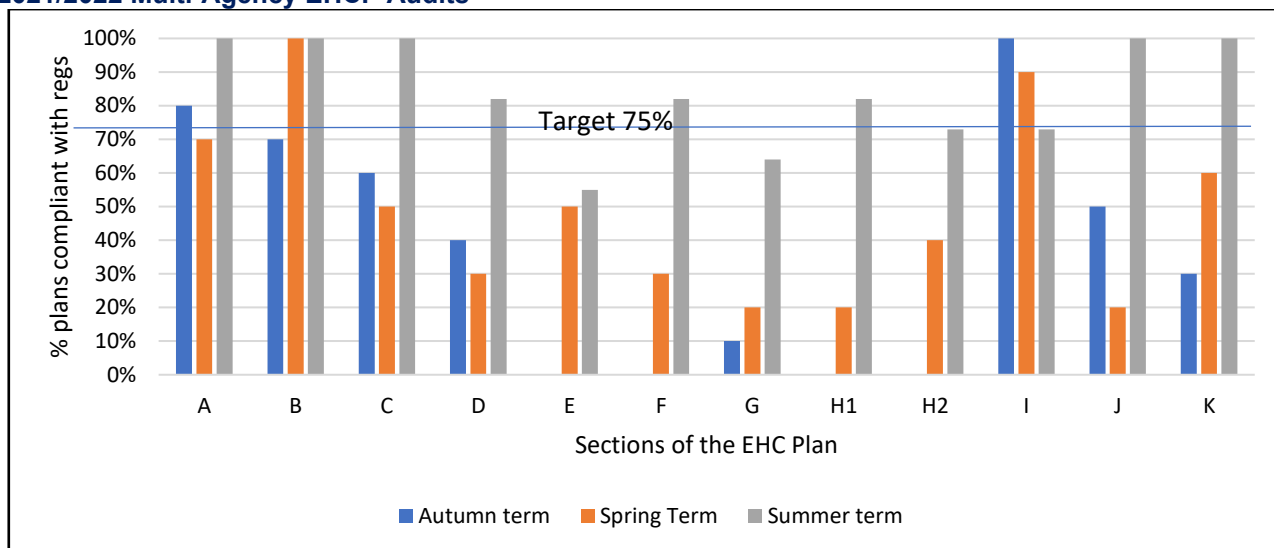
What we have done

We have invested significantly in the SEND Quality Assurance work over this last year and each term we undertake audits of the quality of EHC plans and the supporting advices.

For the EHC plan audits, auditors consider whether each section of the plan complies with the

regulations. As shown in the graph below, the summer term audit, which covered recently issued plans (the grey bar), confirms that for most sections of the plan, > 75% of plans audited are rated as compliant.

2021/2022 Multi-Agency EHCP Audits



Advice audits

The audit results for the advice providers are set out in Figure 5:

- **Health:** There have been significant improvements in the quality of health advice following training for health advice providers and a new health advice template. The latest audit found that 81% of the advices audited, were considered to be compliant with regulations and of these 69% were considered to be good practice.
- **Social Care:** Advice audits for the first two terms found that 62.5% of the advices were compliant. There has been a change of staff in social care and the new auditors have recently been trained and are currently completing the summer term advice audits.
- **Education advice:** The summer term audit showed huge improvement, 65% of advices were found to be compliant compared to 40% at the spring audit.

2021/2022 Summary of Single Agency Advice Audits

	Spring 2022: % Audits compliant with regulations	Summer 2022: % Audits compliant with regulations
Social Care	55%	O/S
Education	40%	65%
Health	44%	81%

Note: Whilst we carried out audits in the autumn term, we are unable to compare the results as different assessment criteria was used at this time.

Direct feedback from families

Each term SEND managers contact a family that has recently been through the EHC process to get their views. Timescales have not improved, and they are not where we want them to be. Despite plans not been finalised on time families have reported that they feel well supported and feel they can contribute to the process.

Examples of feedback from families that have recently been through the EHC process

Feedback from Families	
Did you feel involved in the EHC process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, X felt involved in the process, the SENCO at school was helpful and she was contacted by the caseworker to seek her views. Very happy with the service and the outcome. • As a family, we have been kept informed about the progress. • Y felt that she was kept informed. She was supported by school and the education psychologist was very supportive and explained the process well • Yes, mum felt included and informed of what was going on and why things were happening. • I worked with the school and was kept fully informed by the school staff and the professionals who helped in the assessment.
Did you feel your views were taken into account?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, mum felt that she was listened to and was happy with the service she received. She is hoping that with the added support X will make progress at school. • As a family, we have conformed to the professionals' views as we have less knowledge of our child's condition apart from the information that was provided to us and other information available. • L is non-verbal and only mimics others, but the people involved in the assessment spent time with him to understand his needs • D is non-verbal, but she was seen by the professionals, and they assessed her fully. • R is not able to give his views as he has limited verbal communication, but mum feels that the people around him work in a way that supports him and as • C has limited speech he was involved as much as he could be.
Were you happy with the outcome, plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mum was happy with both the plan and the outcome. She is happy with the placement at Z school. • Mum is happy with the plan and the support this brings in to the classroom for R but as it was only finalised during the summer holidays he only just got it she wants to wait to see how it's implemented before commenting further.
Any other comments about the process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mum feels it went well is happy • Mum feels that the support she has received is amazing. She is getting advice on interventions to use at home which she hopes will make it easier for C.

We have co-produced guidance document, video and a survey for SENCOs track progress in delivery of outcomes at SEND and EHCP reviews. These are published on the Local Offer. Please use this link [SEND related policies and strategies \(newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk\)](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk) and click on the Newcastle SEND Outcomes Framework section.

Next steps

- We are carrying out additional targeted training etc to improve Sections E, G and H2.
- There will be a focus on continuously improving the role of Social Care in the SEND process from September 2022.
- A report on the roles and responsibilities of social care will be discussed with the senior management team, and the training produced specifically for social care staff will be continuously rolled out which will include online learning modules.
- We have also recruited a Designated Social Care Officer, who will report directly to the Head of SEND, and they will lead on improving the quality of social care input into EHCPs.
- Themed audit to be carried out to look at the annual review process in terms of quality and compliance.
- Slight change to audit system – single agency audits to be carried out and results passed to multi agency audits.
- Consideration of investing in an electronic QA System and tracking of outcomes at annual reviews.

4. Learning from data and insights

SEND Managers Monthly Performance Clinic: We have established a SEND performance dashboard which informs our understanding of SEND service performance, enables identification of gaps in our understanding and provides in-depth analysis of key areas.

SEND Joint Intelligence and Commissioning workstream: Newcastle's local area SEND governance arrangements have been reviewed and it has been agreed that the Outcomes Framework is owned by the SEND Executive Board with operational responsibility held by the recently refreshed SEND intelligence and commissioning workstream, which is held bi-monthly. Going forwards this workstream will consider the framework and report 'exceptional' issues to the SEND Executive Board.

The main areas of concern and work carried out are set out below:

Waiting times for therapy services

Two steps have been taken to address the immediate therapy waiting lists:

- the first, an externally commissioned wait list initiative to contact, triage and assess the families on the wait lists for community Occupational Therapy and Adaptations.
- the second, an investment in increasing the capacity of the OT teams to better cope with the continued high numbers of referrals.

The Council and Integrated Care Board (ICB) have invested an additional £610,000 in OT as detailed below.

- We have commissioned an Independent Occupational Therapy (OT) provider to work with Newcastle Hospitals and Newcastle Council's OT Team, to review the waiting list to ensure all children on the waiting list receive an initial contact and are prioritised for assessment according to need. Where appropriate families are signposted to the universal services that can support them whilst they are awaiting assessment.
- At the end of August 2022, all of the 593 families on the waiting list have been contacted. The children on the waiting list, where OT is named in their EHC Plan, have been identified and are being prioritised for assessment to commence in September 2022. Since February our OT Teams have also addressed the growing waiting list that has occurred, an additional 110 children. Additional funding has been secured for this.
- In order to be able to meet the needs of children following referral, we have increased the capacity of the OT teams in line with NICE Guidelines and secured:
 - 2 FTE (Band 7) OT Advanced Practitioners and 2.0 FTE (Band 6) OT Clinical Specialists to work into the Community Team, and
 - 1 FTE OT (N9) to work into the Council's Paediatric OT & Adaptations team.

Permanent exclusions, suspensions and absences

We have been working with the Promise Board SEND sub-group, providing a deep dive into data and holding workshop discussions including sharing good practise, what needs to be improved and next steps. The following actions have been identified:

- Share further information on Teams Around Schools.
- Look to standardise reintegration packages following exclusion.
- Launch of the SEMH training programme for schools.

School SEND profiles have also been shared with schools and primary and secondary school profiles have been updated and shared with SEND sub-group.

The Locality Inclusion Panels (LIPs) was shared at the SEND Exec Board in May including the impact it has had and next steps.

Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET)

We have invested in an additional PFA lead to strengthen links between transition and ASC. A second PFA Lead post will allow time for strategic development of appropriate pathways for our young people and better links with adult social care.

A SEND Service Improvement Assistant is now overseeing the NEET list to ensure that capacity of caseworkers is not effecting the priority of supporting with young people who are NEET. They have attempted contact with all NEET pupils with an EHCP via telephone. Those that we are unable to contact via telephone are followed up with letter for all NEET young people are offered at the Skills Hub once contact has been made. This is with a caseworker with experience of Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG). This system allows administrative tasks to be separated from work that needs to be carried out by caseworkers, allowing more time for work with young people.

There will be half termly (more frequently if required) sweeps for young people who are NEET – the initial sweep has already taken place for the young people who were NEET and not known. This is involving home visits from caseworkers to try and reengage the young person, identify whether they are in employment or education and is carried out by a caseworker with experience of careers IAG.

We are strengthening our careers advice offer for those age 16 at risk of becoming NEET

Partnership Agreements will be developed for each provider to set out clearly what the expectations for careers information advice and guidance will be available from both the education provider and the SEND team. SEND Caseworkers will meet with SENCO's on termly basis (or more as required) to identify those young people with an EHCP that require more targeted support and are at risk of NEET.

We are currently exploring with post 16 provider Newcastle City Learning the possibility of engaging 16- and 17-year-old that are not in education with an outreach programme to help support them onto an appropriate pathway. As well as a possibility of extending the programme year 11 pupils with an EHCP who are at risk disengaged from education before the end of year 11.

The SEND team are working with the transition forum to put on a Careers and transition event in February 2023 where support for pupils with SEND will have a dedicated space to access support.

The PFA Workstream was relaunched in September 2022 and terms of reference are to be agreed at the November meeting.

EHCP timescales

The Board have been appraised previously of the work we are doing to improve our performance in this area, such as improving the quality and timeliness of advices received. A summary is provided below.

The graduated response has been strengthened to reduce the need for EHCP requests and to create more specialist places.

We have improved the quality of information on capita (data cleansing) and have rigorous management oversight of performance information including monthly performance clinic at SEND Managers meeting.

We have invested in additional resources to manage the increased demand for EHC assessments including:

- Additional SEND caseworkers.
- Three new Service Improvement Assistants and additional Business Support to reduce the administrative work that Caseworkers carry out.
- Two additional caseworkers to manage annual reviews thus leaving more time for caseworkers to focus on the EHC process.
- A business case for a Deputy Manager for the SAR Team is being considered.
- Additional Educational Psychologists to manage increased requests for statutory assessments and supported by four Assistant Educational Psychologists.
- We have recruited a DSCO to help improve timeliness and quality of social care advice.
- Additional resources in Health to improve the quality and timeliness of advices – DMO, DCO, and 2 SEND nurses (1.6 WTE) band 6.

We have examined the EHC process to ensure it is as lean as possible. We are working to improve the timeliness of advice, particularly with health. The DMO now receives a weekly report of outstanding advice and will call services directly. There is a clear escalation process when advice is at risk of being late. The DMO is considering whether we can screen for health issues at the referral stage and whether this would then reduce the need to seek health advice. The SEND portal will speed up exchange of information. We are currently reviewing the panel process.

Next steps

We will continue to monitor progress against the outcomes and commission pieces of work where the data shows identifies area that need improvement. The information from the feedback will be used to inform our [Joint SEND Commissioning Strategy](#), ensuring that we have the right services in place to meet need.

5. Learning from complaints and compliments

What we have done

For 2021/22 academic year we received 19 complaints and 16 were upheld or partially upheld. Of these, five complaints related to delays in EHCP timescales. The remaining were about poor communications and delays in securing appropriate provision. We also received 5five complaints, two about transport and three about the EHC process and communications. These complaints were withdrawn as they were resolved. To put this in context we received 565 requests for assessment in 2021/22 and the total number of complaints is relatively low at 2.8%.

In response to complaints:

- We have taken steps to improve the timeliness of EHCPs are set out previously in this annual report.
- Our training programme recognises the importance of effective communications and ensuring that parents/carers are at the centre the EHC planning process
- We continue to source additional specialist provision to reduce delays in finding appropriate places for children and young people.

In 2021/22 14 cases were referred to the SEND tribunal.

Next steps

We will continue to monitor complaints and tribunals and put improvements in place where issues are uncovered. We will also consider how to encourage and track compliments.