

Merton Local Area Written Statement of Action - Update

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For more details see here: [Merton Local Area Written Statement of Action and Easy Read Guide](#)

Objective	Action	RAG-Rating	Progress update
IMPROVEMENT OUTCOME 1			
Lack of cohesive strategic management and effective planning, particularly from health partners, in implementing some aspects of the reforms			
1.1 Strategic management of SEND reforms to be jointly reviewed by Children and Young People's Integrated Commissioning Group	ACTION 1.1.1 - Development of a scorecard to allow review of numbers of EHCPs, timeliness of advice and statutory timeliness of EHCP completions	Complete	A detailed piece of work was undertaken to devise a purposeful and operational dashboard that would provide a comprehensive overview of EHCP performance across Merton from key partners. The dashboard is an information management tool used to track performance against agreed indicators in line of local/national statutory guidance and timeframes. The dashboard has been discussed at the monthly Integrated Children & Young People Commissioning Group (ICYPCG) since June 2020 to provide partnership oversight of EHCP performance. Timeliness of EHCP completion improved in 2021 to 72.0%, well above our previous performance (40% in 2020) and the national average of 59.9% in 2021.
	ACTION 1.1.2 - Quarterly report on EHCP audits to be presented by the DMO and Head of SENDIS to Strategic management group	Complete	From June 2020 onwards, the Designated Medical Officer (DMO) and the Head of SEND Integrated Service jointly reported to the ICYPCG details of the audit process (single or multi-agency). The reports include findings and areas of improvement with recommendations. The ICYPCG continues to give regular scrutiny to SEND audit findings. During 2021 and 2022, a joint approach between Central London Community Health (CLCH) & SEND Integrated Service has also provided audit updates to the bi-monthly partnership SEND Operational Board, as well as reporting our progress to the DfE and NHS England via quarterly monitoring meetings.
	ACTION 1.1.3 - Review of implementation of improvement plans as a result of audits	Complete	As a result of the audits that have taken place, training has been provided to the SEN Team, partners services and professional advice templates have been developed, trialled and introduced. Implementation plans are written as part of the audit reports and this has been a partnership effort with close working between the LA, CCG and health providers. The focus has now moved onto improving the annual review process.
	ACTION 1.1.4 - Review of WSoA action plan	Complete	The WSoA is closely monitored and reviewed by the weekly WSoA Task & Finish group with senior leaders from local authority, SW London Clinical Commissioning Group & CLCH. WSoA updates are also a standing item on each ICYPCG (monthly) and SEND Reform Implementation Board (bi-monthly). Leads from the CCG and LA have reviewed the whole action plan and updated progress against each action point. This is then fed back to the above forums where actions are approved and signed off. The new SEND Strategic Governance Board established from June 2022 will be receiving regular updates on the WSOA action plan - this is chaired by LA Chief Executive and attended by senior partnership and parent/carer representatives.

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	ACTION 1.1.5 - Review the workplan of the DMO and define options for further support if required after the review which may include the use of a DCO	Complete	A part time Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) was appointed in Merton from Oct 2020, working jointly with Sutton, to provide oversight and support to health partners regarding their statutory responsibilities within SEND, alongside the Designated Medical Officer (DMO). A key priority was to devise and deliver a training programme for the workforce across health, education and social care on EHC needs assessment and planning for children and young people. Training was delivered from October 2020 onwards; this has included all health partners, including 50 health practitioners, 10 children with disabilities social workers and 60% of GP practices represented. Due to restrictions of COVID all training was offered via online webinars. A DCO progress report evidences the impact of the role in 2020-21, and a 2021-22 report is currently being developed. The DCO role is currently filled under temporary maternity cover by the previous SEND Health Team Lead. Previously, the SEND Health Team Lead was embedded within the SEND Integrated service, playing a key role in the EHCP process and providing a valuable interface/conduit with the SENDIS Team and health partners. This position was successful in 'bridging' the gap and communication between EHCP coordinators and health is now stronger. This position also worked closely with the SEND Nurse from Epsom and St Heliers hospital to review health professional advice.
1.2 - Finalise and publish a revised joint SEND Strategy for the local area	Finalise and publish a revised joint SEND Strategy for the local area which outlines how feedback from young people, parents and carers and professionals is being used to improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Complete	SEND Strategy 2020-2023 and action plan published. Progress on implementation plan has been monitored by Children's Trust and updates on implementation reported to CCG Governing Body and CYP Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The final year of the plan will also be overseen by the new SEND Strategic Board from June 2022 onwards.
1.3 Undertake a specific JSNA profile on children, young people and adults with special educational needs and disabilities, building on and strengthening existing JSNA data analysis and intelligence.	ACTION 1.3.1 - Define scope of profile and agree between partners	Complete	Comprehensive SEND Needs Analysis prepared in 2020 and reported to Integrated Children & Young People Commissioning Group (ICYPCG) to inform commissioning plans. Safety valve work involved comprehensive analysis of local SEND data throughout 2021 which is continuing in 2022.
	ACTION 1.3.2 - Desk based research, formulation of JSNA and stakeholder engagement	Complete	
	ACTION 1.3.3 - Sign off and publication of JSNA profile	Complete	
IMPROVEMENT OUTCOME 2	The inconsistent quality and contribution of health partners and poor utilisation of health information in EHC assessment and planning		
	ACTION 2.1.1 - Carry out a review of current processes in health	Complete	Reviewed with local commissioned community provider Central London Health Care (CLCH). Quality assurance has evidenced improvements in health contributions to EHC planning.
	ACTION 2.1.2 - Define common process moving forward	Complete	The EHCP Health Lead/Head of SENDIS and have clear processes in place for requesting and receiving Professional Advice. A Health Advice Template for CLCH and the Community Paediatric service has been developed, trialled and incorporated into practice.

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2.1 Health oversight of EHCP process is defined and implemented	ACTION 2.1.3 - Process map current health process of EHCP with a focus on sign off and oversight	Complete	SEND health roles and responsibilities were clearly outlined in 2020. The SEN Specialist Nurse reviews and contributes supports the SEN Team to ensure that the professional advice is fit for purpose. Through 2021, the EHCP Health Lead reviewed the professional advice received from CLCH and worked with the SEN Specialist Nurse to ensure that Sections C, F and G are clear and includes the relevant and appropriate outline of the pupil's health needs and the provision required. CLCH is continuing to quality assure professional advice, working closely with the Head of SEND Integrated Service from the LA. This has included live review of advice that means recommendations from audit can be incorporated into the final advice submitted to the SEND Integrated Service ensuring new EHC plans include high quality health advice.
	ACTION 2.1.4 - Implement a revised and standardised process across all health providers to ensure that input into EHCP works alongside education and care input.	Complete	The standardised templates and the oversight of the professional advice by the Specialist SEN Nurse and the EHCP Health Lead has ensured that the SEN Team are supported to ensure the relevant Health advice and provision is included in the EHCP.
	ACTION 2.1.5 - Development of a Training and education programme that includes education, health and care providers to enable a joint approach to training	Complete	Also see 1.1.5 and 3.2.6. Training has been delivered to CLCH and Children & Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) by the DMO, Specialist SEN Nurse and the Head of SEND Integrated Service. The additional support provided by the CCG (in the form of a DCO and SEND Health Lead) has supported the DMO in developing a comprehensive training programme which has been delivered on an ongoing basis from October 2020 onwards, to all partners who contribute to the EHCP process. Council for Disabled Children and National Development Team for Inclusion training has also been delivered across Merton.
2.2 CAMHS input into EHCP's is improved	ACTION 2.2.1 - Process map current health process of CAMHS input into EHCP (link to 2.1.2)	Complete	CAMHS/Head of SENDIS have jointly devised a template for professional advice into EHCP from the CAMHS service.
	ACTION 2.2.2 - Implement a revised and standardised process across the CAMHS providers to ensure that input into EHCP is completed within standard operating procedure (SOP).	Complete	Training described above has been provided to the CAMHS workforce by the DMO and Head of SENDIS, including most recently in November 2021. The training covers the expected time frames of assessments and health reports.
2.3 Implement a system (within the SOP) for Health contributors to review health input prior to the person centred planning meeting and for them to receive a copy of the final EHCP	ACTION 2.3.1 - Draft EHCP to be distributed to health leads until the new IT platform is implemented when they will have direct access	Complete	This was put in place straight away following inspection. Health professionals are invited to attend draft planning meetings. EHC Coordinators also meet with professionals prior to the draft going to parents, where possible. Final Plans are going to be sent from a central service from September 2022 to ensure that EHCP and appendices are sent to all professionals involved. The development of a new IT platform where health contributors can access plans directly is being considered.

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IMPROVEMENT OUTCOME 3			
Poor quality EHC plans compounded by a lack of effective quality assurance			
3.1 Development and implementation of a local SOP for the EHCP process	ACTION 3.1.1 - Review of best practice across other areas and process mapping in Merton to understand current state	Complete	We have worked with DfE to review EHCP quality with feedback from our link officer on the improvements seen. Head of SENDIS has reached out to other areas. Partnership groups continue to receive updates on best practice from other areas to help embed improvements.
	ACTION 3.1.2 - Agreement of a SOP across education, health and care	Complete	Standard Operating Protocols have been developed by health for CAMHs, CLCH Nursing & Therapy teams and community paediatrics across Merton to ensure consistency within the EHCP Process and support the training process. It was decided to keep separate but consistent SOPs for different agencies, to ensure professionals are only working to the information they need. However the SOPs and training together raise awareness about the contributions of all health partners to the EHC process. The previously implemented pathway and templates for social care are being reviewed and improved by the Designated Social Care Officer.
	ACTION 3.1.3 - Implementation of SOP and templates to assist with process and clarity of information to be provided in to EHCP by education, health and care	Complete	Professional advice templates for Health and Social Care were implemented in 2020. A new Designated Social Care Officer role took up post in May 2022 who will be reviewing the social care processes and implementing further improvements following the restructure in children's social care and early help.
	ACTION 3.2.1 - Agreement of a Quality assurance framework toolkit across education, health and care	Complete	A robust quality assurance framework has been embedded over the past 3 years with regular reports to partnership meetings on the findings from QA. These reports have highlighted improvements to EHC planning including clear target outcomes outlined for children and young people. Joint working between CLCH and SENDIS to regularly audit EHCP process and implement recommendations based on findings. This has included single- and multi-agency audits of professional advice and EHC plans. The Department for Education lead advisor has had oversight of this process through quarterly monitoring meetings, reviewing EHC plans & moderating audits, and has provided assurance that the QA framework is robust and quality of plans reviewed were improved.
	ACTION 3.2.2 - Development and agreement of an audit cycle and co-produced audit templates based on legal compliance and qualitative KPI's	Complete	As above
	ACTION 3.2.3 - Implement Audit cycle	Complete	As above

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3.2 Implementation of an EHCP quality assurance framework to ensure robust oversight of quality of EHCP's	ACTION 3.2.4 - Using the findings from regular audits to develop an improvement plan that is regularly reviewed and updated and shared with partners	Complete	Following audits, the SEN Team have received training on Section A, B, E and F and how to work with parents and young people to ensure that Section A accurately reflects the child/young person's voice and aspirations. Merton has also benefited from training pertaining to Year 9 Reviews being facilitated by the NDTi, which will follow on from the CCG commissioned training. Re-auditing has taken place to evidence improvements; including CLCH cross-checks with Head of SENDIS. All EHC Coordinators will have completed the Nasen Casework Award in July 2022 which will address some of the training needs identified through the audit action plan. It was identified that annual reviews and updating of plans following these meetings still remains an area for improvement. The annual review process and paperwork is being reviewed in August 2022 and training will be provided at the start of the academic year to all partners across education, health and care.
	ACTION 3.2.5 - Provide support and feedback to case officers through 1:1 supervision with team manager/appraisals and monthly team meetings in order to improve the quality of EHC Plans	Complete	This continues, alongside the training for the team which has been mentioned above. Team managers complete a set of monthly audits of EHC plans following which case officers receive feedback and any recommendations for improvements.
	ACTION 3.2.6 - Provide support and feedback to all contributors to EHCP's	Complete	Bespoke training continues to take place with partner agencies which incorporate audit findings and recommendations specific to the agency. DCO and Head of SENDIS undertake this. Now the DSCO has been appointed, they will be providing support and feedback to social care. SENDIS and the social care training team will be delivering training to children's social workers starting in July 2022. Social care training team have gone on Council for Disabled Children Train the Trainer training.
3.3 To understand the impact of changes implemented in 3.1 and 3.2	ACTION 3.3.1 - Review and feedback on 10 new complex cases to audit progress against actions	Complete	Audits have evidenced improvements in quality of EHC plans and professional advice from health. This includes audits on new EHC plans issued showing better quality of new plans and current auditing is focusing on amended EHC plans following review, to ensure this process is also robust and the quality of older EHC plans is also being improved.
	ACTION 3.3.2 - Reviews completed and feedback to ICYPCG	Complete	This continues to multi-agency groups - Integrated Children & Young People Commissioning Group and SEND Operational Board. Most recent update highlighted improvements across every section of the EHCP in September 2021 audits compared to 2019-20 audits.

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