



Wandsworth Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) inspection: Written Statement of Action (WSOA)

1 Introduction

1.1 Wandsworth received its local area SEND inspection in November 2019, and as a result two areas of significant weakness were identified for our local area. Senior officers across the local authority (LA) and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) accepted the findings of the inspection in full and immediately set out to address the areas for development. There were a number of strengths that were also identified during the inspection, notably that:

- leaders in the local area have an accurate view of their overall effectiveness in implementing the reforms;
- the identification of additional health needs in children aged 0–5 is a strength;
- co-production, (a way of working where children and young people, families and those that provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) is well established and effective;
- the Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service (WIASS) is highly regarded and complements the effective work of the local parent carer forum, Positive Parent Action (PPA).

1.2 Wandsworth Council and Wandsworth CCG are jointly responsible for submitting this WSOA. We will work with our parent carer forum (Positive Parent Action) and schools to collegiately own the plan and continue to use co-production principles to address weaknesses. The two significant weakness identified were:

- 1. Urgently improve the planning and assessment arrangements for Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans to better meet children's and young people's needs and aspirations and meet statutory timescales.**
- 2. Evaluate the impact of the local area's work in embedding the reforms more comprehensively by establishing a consistently agreed and applied framework for doing so. Use the findings from this to share strong practice and rectify weaknesses.**

1.3 The lead officers overseeing the development and delivery of this WSOA are:

Ana Popovici – Director of Children’s Services, Wandsworth Council

James Blythe – James Blythe – Locality Executive Director, Wandsworth & Merton, NHS South West London CCG

1.4 The co-authors of this WSOA are:

John O’Sullivan, Head of Performance and Improvement, Wandsworth Council

Julie Hesketh, Director of Quality, Merton, Wandsworth & Sutton, NHS South West London CCG

Betsy Clark, Lead Strategic Parent, Positive Parent Action

2 How we are addressing improvements

- 2.1 Improvements began during the inspection. We listened carefully to the feedback and began to take action in order to seek validation from inspectors that we were taking the expected approach to moving forward. For example, the quality assurance (QA) framework that was validated by the inspection team has since underpinned the QA activities that have taken place since November 2019.
- 2.2 Fundamental to our approach to securing improvements is to do so at a pace to benefit the most vulnerable children and their families. This is reflected by the Council’s commitment to investing in Children’s Services to ensure that it is in a position where resources are allocated to meet needs and changes in demand. This quick and flexible approach has enabled us to respond quickly to identified weaknesses.
- 2.3 The re-energised partnership with the CCG will enable us to work better together and move faster. Our joint oversight is now more robust following a refresh of the strategic governance of SEND and the establishment of a SEND Strategic Partnership Board that is jointly chaired by the LA and CCG.
- 2.4 Importantly, our commitment to co-production with parents, carers and children was recognised by the inspectors as a particular strength. We remain committed to our parents and partners being at the heart of all that we do to ensure that all children with SEND have the best chance in life. Parents, carers, and representatives from schools and Social Care are key members of the new SEND Strategic Partnership Board.
- 2.5 Our positive relationship with schools can be demonstrated through the funding identified from the High Needs Block to support improvements required in Special Needs Assessment Service (SNAS). This is a credit to their commitment to supporting the local area on the improvement journey.
- 2.6 We have realigned our strategic focus on children with SEND to ensure that it is a priority for all – as set out in our new Children and Young People’s Services Plan.
- 2.7 In relation to the two areas of significant weakness our Road Map below sets out our progress since our inspection.

Road Map of Progress

Key priority 1: Urgently improve the planning and assessment arrangements for EHC plans to better meet children’s and young people’s needs and aspirations and meet statutory timescales.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased leadership capacity • Improved governance, accountability and challenge through regular meetings with Director of Children’s Services (DCS) and Assistant Director of Education (AD) • Better availability for staff through implementation of SNAS duty manager system • Improve support and challenge through team meetings and regular supervision for staff • Final EHC plans signed off by AD/DCS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity at case worker level by 6 FTE • Better decision making and shared accountability for children through the establishment of SEND Transport panel • Combined short breaks and complex needs panels for more streamlined process • 20-week tracking tool to prevent delays in the assessment process • New standards for accountability and performance management introduced by new Head of SNAS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new defined resource and process to complete the backlog and reduce delays for children and young people • Administrative workload reduced by removing finance and transport functions from SNAS • Awareness session with Social Care teams on SEND code of practice • Initial review of EHC Needs Assessment (EHCNA) processes with partners and first revision of process model for EHCNAs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision to second a social worker into SNAS • Monthly dashboard reports for SNAS to ensure oversight of performance • Training plan developed to upskill staff and improve quality of EHC plans • Multi-agency audit of sample EHC plans completed to review progress from November (in line with QA Framework) • Standard and consistent format to capture professional advice |
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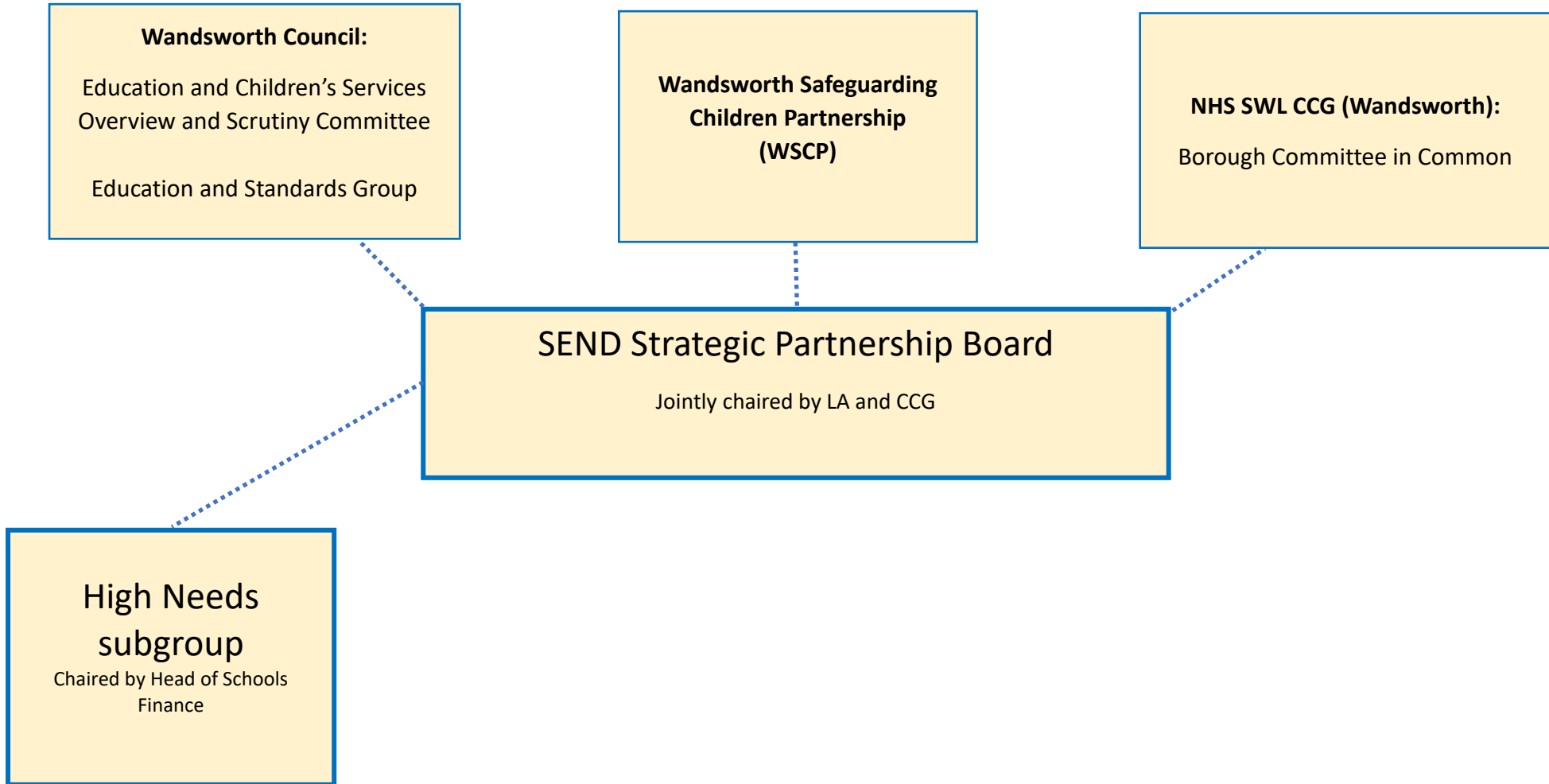


Key priority 2: Evaluate the impact of the local area’s work in embedding the reforms more comprehensively by establishing a consistently agreed and applied framework for doing so. Use the findings from this to share strong practice and rectify weaknesses.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wandsworth Local Health and Care plan published for 2019-21 including Start Well for Children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial draft of the Written Statement of Action • Improved strategic capacity for Head of SEND through revised organisational structure for SEND services within LA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the SEND Partnership Governance structure, with agreement new SEND Strategic Partnership Board to take place every 2 months • Improved monitoring through establishment of data dashboard for SNAS team | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £350k funding to support SEND improvement from DSG (school funding) agreed with schools • Paper on outcome of inspection went to Education and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee • Streamlined and consistent panel processes through review of purpose, membership and finance |
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3 Governance

Good governance will be key to how we drive forward our improvement, a high-level view of this is set out below.



4 Written statement of action

The tables below set out against each priority, the desired outcome, actions to be undertaken to achieve this and the intended impact.

NB: Whilst the local area will drive forward as much work as is practical, our timelines may be impacted by the changing COVID situation.

<p>Key priority 1: Urgently improve the planning and assessment arrangements for EHC plans to better meet children’s and young people’s needs and aspirations and meet statutory timescales</p>
<p>Overall intended impact of improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness: To issue all EHC plans within 20 weeks as per the SEND Code of Practice • Quality: EHC Plans are person-centred, holistic and outcome focused • Workforce: A skilled and resilient workforce to undertake the EHC needs assessment and planning process • IT: A system in place that supports SNAS to meet the statutory timescales and enables officers to accurately monitor and report on performance, track assessments and improve timeliness

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
<p>Backlog Complete all outstanding EHC needs assessments received prior to 30th November 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed specific processes to complete all outstanding/overdue assessments • Create robust tracking to monitor the progress of the overdue assessments • Through the established interim team (since November 2019) clear the backlog 	Head of SEND	Sept 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All outstanding assessment requests received prior to 30th November 2019 will be completed by end September 2020 • Monitoring of tracker • SEND Monitoring Meeting to hold the SNAS to account
<p>Timeliness All new EHC plans to be issued within statutory timescales (unless reportable exceptions apply)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create robust tracking process to monitor progress of EHC needs assessments (EHCNA) and completion of EHC plans (which includes ensuring that health and social care reports are produced within statutory timescales) 	Head of SEND CCG Children’s Commissioning lead	Mar 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular monitoring of tracker and scrutiny by SEND Monitoring meeting • Completion rates monitored bi-monthly by the SEND Strategic Partnership Board • Streamlined assessment pathway in place developed and shared with parents/carers

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and revise EHC needs assessment pathway in partnership with parents/carers and partners to streamline processes around assessment • Communicate with all stakeholders including parents/carers to ensure good understanding of the revised assessment pathway • Update the Local Offer website to reflect changes • Embed duty manager system in SNAS to ensure effective communication with parents and partners • Introduce new ways of working within SNAS to ensure all communications are within expected timescales e.g. responding to emails from parents/carers • Implement a revised and standardised process across all health providers to ensure that input into EHC needs assessments meets statutory timescales • LA to provide DMO with monthly reports on progress and timeliness of assessments • Complete an audit to review the format and content of health reports. DMO to support any training required • Analyse the reasons why the social care reports are not consistently produced within 6-week time limit and develop a remedial plan. Training to be provided to social care teams • Apply and record appropriate statutory exceptions to 20wk assessments in line with the SEND Code of Practice • Establish regular communication with PPA and WIASS to share progress with meeting statutory timescales 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 60% of new requests for EHC needs assessments received from January 2020 will be completed on time • This will increase to 65% for requests received from October 2020 and 70% for those received from January 2021 • Reasons for those not completed on time analysed and understood to inform future improvement • At least 80% of education, health and social care advice provided within 6 weeks by end March 2021. This will be phased over time (65% for assessments starting in July 2020, 70% from December 2020)

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
<p>Quality of Plans Assurance that all EHC plans are of a good quality and person centred, co-produced, have appropriate input from social care, health and education and are outcome focussed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of ongoing audit cycle to ensure good quality of plans which is regularly reported, implementing improvement plans as a result of audits • Embed quality assurance framework and review within 6 months • Develop and launch EHC plan checklist for senior case managers to ensure statutory compliance in line with quality assurance framework • Deliver ‘what good looks like’ training • Training for SNAS staff to improve understanding of health and social care reports and how these should be summarised within the EHC plans • Review and develop with the PPA information for parents/carers, children and young people to explain the EHC needs assessment process • Social care capacity brought into SNAS team to improve quality of social care input • DMO to participate in the QA of EHC plans • Review the role of DMO and how to make this more effective to support decision making in relation to health partners’ contributions • Review and establish sign off process for social care reports to ensure all objectives relating to care are measurable, understood and well communicated • Review all panels and their terms of reference to ensure added value and impact 	<p>Head of SEND</p> <p>CCG Children’s Commissioning lead</p>	<p>Mar 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit reports showing improvement in quality of EHC plans term on term and monitored by the SEND Strategic Partnership Board • All EHC plans have been endorsed by AD, DCS or Head of SEND (when in post) to ensure high quality of social care input and plans overall until confident of improvement • Review of DMO role completed with agreed solution implemented which will ensure greater strategic capability for the role • Parents show greater understanding of the EHC needs assessment process and face less confusion and frustration. This will be evidenced through the annual review of the SEND strategy, with a target of survey on survey improvements and feedback from PPA • All partners and professionals feel involved in the EHC needs assessment process. This is measured through feedback from partners and the improved timeliness of statutory advice from professionals
<p>Workforce Agile and skilled workforce across</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review SNAS staff structure and implement any changes necessary to meet the increased demand 	<p>Head of SEND</p>	<p>Mar 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff in SNAS receive induction training and access to induction handbook

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
<p>the partnership responsive to changes in demand</p>	<p>for EHC needs assessments and to meet statutory timescales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide dedicated additional HR support within the LA to assist with recruitment and performance management processes • Create an induction handbook for new starters in SNAS • Buddy put in place for new starters in SNAS • Improve arrangements for individual supervision within SNAS to include scrutiny of performance, compliance and ongoing training needs • SNAS to hold regular team meetings to support action learning • Appoint a permanent Head of SEND suitably qualified to drive forward improvements (LA) • Health and social care professionals seconded into SNAS with clear remit to improve timescales and quality • Reduce administrative workload by removing transport functions from SNAS • Mandatory training for social workers on SEND Code of Practice and statutory advice for EHC plans • Relunched training for SENCOs on EHC needs assessment process including SEN Support 	<p>CCG Children’s Commissioning lead</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff in SNAS receive at least monthly supervision • Ongoing period on period reduction in turnover of permanent staff in SNAS • 100% of social workers completed SEND Code of Practice training to improve quality of professional advice • Permanent Head of SEND in post • SENCOs provided training by end of Autumn term to ensure they understand EHCNA processes including SEN support and when to make an EHCNA request • New structure for SNAS agreed and recruited to
<p>IT An appropriate IT system in place in LA (and supported) for all EHC needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete migration of data onto one case management system ensuring data cleanse undertaken through this process • Review of system functionality to ensure it supports EHC needs assessment process as effectively as possible 	<p>Gary Hipple, Head of Schools ICT, Information and Libraries</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress to be monitored through the SEND Monitoring meetings • Single system in use for tracking of all assessments

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
<p>assessment data including case records which can produce regular and flexible reporting to monitor progress and support planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of initial and ongoing training package for the system to all those who need access • Development of 'super users' in SNAS to support new team members. Build effective reporting function from Capita to support monitoring, tracking and planning 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Case Managers in SNAS are trained and competent in use of system and 'super users' identified • Effective EHC needs assessment reporting available as part of monthly dashboard • Individual Case Managers able to interrogate system to support tracking • Managers able to interrogate system to inform individual supervision of staff members

Key priority 2:
Evaluate the impact of the local area’s work in embedding the reforms more comprehensively by establishing a consistently agreed and applied framework for doing so. Use the findings from this to share strong practice and rectify weaknesses

Overall intended impact of improvements:

- Co-produced vision for children and young people with SEND that is shared and understood by all
- A final co-produced SEND Strategy that is owned, shared and delivered through the SEND Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB). This will set out the local area vision for children and young people with SEND and will identify the joint priorities to improve their outcomes across education, health and social care
- A SEND Action Plan setting out how the Strategy will be delivered which is owned, shared, delivered and monitored by the SSPB
- Clear governance and evaluation mechanisms in place to oversee the embedding of the reforms and ensure ongoing learning to support future developments
- Improved levels of satisfaction with parents on their experiences of SEND in the local area and increased awareness for children and young people of the social, sporting and cultural activities available to them.

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
Vision, strategy, governance and evaluation Co-produced SEND Vision, Strategy and Action Plan in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared vision for children and young people with SEND • Co-produce, consult on and publish a joint SEND strategy for the local area • Develop a SEND Action Plan, with owners and timescales • Review and strengthen the governance arrangements for SEND improvement including the Terms of reference for the SEND Strategic Partnership Board (SSPB) and relevant sub-groups • Wandsworth SEND Strategic Partnership Board scrutinises improvements against the written statement of action 	Ana Popovici, DCS CCG Children’s Commissioning lead	Jan 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEND Strategy published by January 2021 providing a clear vision for children and young people with SEND • SEND Action Plan published and work plan in place to monitor improvements through revised governance arrangements • Appropriate sub-groups in place to drive forward improvements in themed areas e.g. Preparation for Adulthood, Early Years • Sub-groups will be multi-agency and will have a clear reporting cycle to the SEND Partnership Board as evidenced by minutes of meetings

Objective	Actions	Sponsor/Lead officer/s	By when	How do we know?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA SEND Monitoring Meetings chaired by DCS to oversee progress against key priority 1 • Regular review of the WSOA at Children’s Senior Management Team meetings • Develop a process for evaluating our strategy and progress against the reforms through a well-developed action plan, working groups, a robust work plan for the SEND Strategic Partnership Board and engagement with parents/carers and children and young people • Reports on SEND improvement work to be scrutinised every six months by Wandsworth Safeguarding Partnership Board • Regular reporting to the Education and Children’s Overview Scrutiny Committee of performance data and the improvement journey 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term Task and Finish groups demonstrate improvements in specific areas of activity e.g. IT system for SNAS • Annual reviews of the Action Plan demonstrate progress against all the outcomes • EHC needs assessment dashboard regularly reviewed by SEND Strategic Partnership Board to ensure oversight, with appropriate actions evidenced through minutes of meetings • WSOA delivery plan demonstrates improvements in the 2 key priorities as evidenced by minutes of meetings • Key SEND KPIs and WSOA progress scrutinized by Wandsworth Safeguarding Partnership Board evidenced through minutes of meetings • Key SEND KPIs (via topline) and progress against WSOA and SEND Action Plan (via key issues) reported to Education and Children’s Overview Scrutiny Committee

5 Our commitment

Wandsworth Local Authority and Wandsworth CCG commit to jointly delivering improvements, as set out in this statement of action. We will deliver improvements at pace, with the involvement of parents, carers and partners, and with children and young people being at the heart of all that we do.

6 Signatures on behalf of Wandsworth local authority, Wandsworth CCG and Positive Parent Action

This written statement of action is the result of collaboration between colleagues from Wandsworth Council, Wandsworth CCG and Positive Parent Action.

Ana Popovici

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