



Department  
for Education

Department for Education  
St Paul's Place, Sheffield

Tel: 01142 742420

[www.gov.uk/dfes](http://www.gov.uk/dfes)

Cath McEvoy-Carr, Director of Children's Services, Newcastle City Council  
Mark Adams, Chief Officer, North East, and North Cumbria, ICB  
Deanne Taylor, Head of Service SEND, Newcastle City Council

27 October 2022

## **TWELVE MONTH PROGRESS REVIEW AGAINST YOUR ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN (APP)**

Dear Cath, Mark, and Deane,

Thank you to you and your colleagues for meeting with officials and advisers from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) on 5 October 2022, to review the progress you have made against your SEND APP since our meeting in February 2022.

During the meeting, the local area's collective determination to making sustainable improvements to SEND services and to the lives of children and young people was clear.

The key area of focus, highlighted within your Ofsted and Care Quality Commission revisit report was:

- Area leaders should establish effective arrangements to identify the impact of the area's work on improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Both in your paperwork, and during your progress review, you demonstrated:

- Successful piloting of the electronic SEND portal, with positive feedback and co-production of a new EHCP template.
- Your graduated response has been strengthened and relaunched, together with Autism Education Trust and bespoke Social, Emotional Mental Health training to target schools/settings.
- Positive feedback from pupils and parents' experiences of therapies with additional training. After a large investment to support the waiting list initiative all children have been contacted and needs assessed. There is better information and signposting to universal services available on the Local Offer together with bitesize videos featuring parents and families.
- An improvement made in the quality of EHC plans and addressing the delay in receiving health advice

However, we also found that:

- EHCP timeliness is still very poor although schools have recently started to make requests for assessments via the SEND portal which is anticipated to speed up the process
- Exclusion and suspension data is still too high for pupils with SEND, albeit a deep dive into exclusions and attendance data has been held, together with forming Local Inclusion Panels (LIPs) to support secondary schools.

Within the next six months, we ask that you:

- Demonstrate the impact your new processes and systems have on EHCP timeliness in line with national average.
- Demonstrate an improvement in exclusion and suspension data in line with national average.

As with all local areas that were required to produce a Written Statement of Action, you will continue to receive support and challenge from your DfE and NHSE Advisers, and DfE officials who will wish to assure themselves on an ongoing basis that you are managing to sustain the reassuring progress you have made. As a minimum, we will hold a further six-month review meeting in April 2023. Andrea will be in touch to arrange a date for this meeting and please contact her in the first instance should you have any questions.

I am copying this letter to Leader of the Council Nick Kemp, Chief Executive Pam Smith and local MPs Nick Brown, Catherine McKinnell and Chi Onwurah. In addition, a copy is also being sent to your DfE and NHS England advisers. You may also wish to share this letter with the Chair of the Parent Carer Forum, and any other key stakeholders.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Simon Clark', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Clark

Head of Vulnerable Children's Unit  
North East Regions Group  
Department for Education.