

We plan to provide a meeting note at the start of each half term, to provide a Learn Sheffield update for sector partnerships and locality meetings. This extra note has been produced to provide an update on some of the work that Learn Sheffield has been commissioned to do by SCC (SEND in particular), as well as provide an extra general update given the amount of information that comes out at the start of the year.

Learn Sheffield SEND Commission: an update from our CEO

Learn Sheffield has been commissioned by SCC to support improvement in SEND in the city. This commission includes both leading the development of the strategic approach and the delivery of some specific activities and reforms.

One of the challenges in this work is the need to develop the strategic approach and start to develop aspects of the delivery at the same time. Ordinarily you would develop the strategy and then use this to inform the thinking and decision-making underpinning the action. This would be unrealistic in our current position in relation to SEND in Sheffield.

It is crucial that the strategic planning is long-term and based on genuine shared accountability from all partners in the local area SEND system. For this reason, we are taking this term to work with the senior leaders from our local system, including those from health and the local authority. The buy in to this work from colleagues is already encouraging.

Our intention is to then consult widely (and quickly) on the detail of a new long-term SEND strategy on behalf of this group. The proposed title of this work is 'Better lives for Sheffield children with additional needs: a manifesto'. The title will clearly be less important than the content, and in turn the impact, but the choice of the word manifesto is deliberate. It is a public declaration of policy and aims, which everyone in the system needs to be able to hold each other to account for.

SEND is a space in which no-one can succeed unless we all do. Any individual setting, provision, service or organisation could be excellent but the impact of this will not be sufficient if other parts of the system are ineffective. In addition, 'fixing' the SEND systems and processes will not make a big enough difference unless we also seek to make changes which lead to fewer children and young people needing something additional or different in the first place.

This is a moral imperative to work together to increase the number of children who have positive experiences and achieve good outcomes, but also a practical necessity. SEND is in crisis for education, health and local authorities in equal measure. We need to recognise this but stop using crisis-style responses, and we need to do this together because none of us can do it effectively without the others.

We will continue to share information about the development of the thinking through this term (this began last term with Nick Whittaker's input – [Are Schools Healthy Human Systems?](#)). The quality of the manifesto will be crucial but, as I said earlier, change also needs to begin more quickly and in parallel to the development of the manifesto.

For this reason, a number of the building blocks that will be part of the manifesto are being developed in parallel this term by Learn Sheffield, supported by the new commission. A stronger analysis of quality in relation SEND will lead to clearer and better structured long-term priorities for the city, but we are confident that the activities below will form a useful part of the strategic approach moving forwards. Current developments include:

- a review of locality processes alongside locality leads - this will make recommendations to the Inclusion Taskforce in November with a view to changes from January 2025.
- a restructure of the sector SEND team (which will now be led from Learn Sheffield) – appointments to new roles were made last week and will all be in place by January 2025 (some sooner) alongside more resource in localities.
- the work to develop a detailed and holistic description of healthy child development begins this half term, supported by a wide multi-disciplinary group of colleagues.
- the development of a new speech and language strategy will also be informed by a detailed programme of case studies this term (led by Nick Whittaker alongside a similarly experienced colleague with a health inspection background).
- the launch of a new approach to supporting quality and improvement in resourced provision (including IRs and hub provisions across the city) this half term - including resources for everyone and the first commissioned enquiry visits by a team of colleagues who will support improvement in the city.

A great deal of other partnership work is also taking place, led by colleagues from SCC, Sheffield Children's Hospital, the Integrated Care Board and the Parent Carer Forum. This includes the transformation work being led by Meredith Teasdale within SCC, the development of the education funding model and the work being led by Inclusion Taskforce on the continuum of provision in the city. There is also a working group which is exploring how to tackle the long-standing challenges relating to neuro-disability pathways. All of this work is characterised by much greater openness to different approaches than has been the case before.

It is important that colleagues across the education system have an awareness of this work, including the significant influence of the sector through Inclusion Taskforce, Locality SEND Leads and sector partnerships. We also recognise the significant and (still) growing impact of these challenges on all our settings and the fact that many of you will not be feeling much practical difference in the way that you or the communities you serve experience SEND.

Learn Sheffield has made significant changes and additions to enable us to seek to make a difference in this space. This has been made possible by a much-improved relationship with SCC. We know that you will support these developments (as you have told us you would like us to get more involved in SEND often and in numbers in recent years!) but we also know that you are sceptical about change that you have yet to see.

We believe that we have the expertise and resources to make a difference to the local area SEND system in Sheffield. Our hope is that you will retain faith in the possibility that this can be profoundly better and commit to being part of that change.

Stephen Betts (27.9.24)

Extended School Improvement Commission

Learn Sheffield continues to deliver a small school improvement commission on behalf of SCC. This includes supporting maintained schools' Ofsted inspections (speaking to inspectors and attending feedback), headteacher recruitment in maintained schools, statutory moderation of KS2 writing and monitoring of primary phonics screening checks and SATs.

We have agreed an extension to this commission for 2024/25 with SCC to support a shared priority in improving outcomes, in particular for more vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. The main focus of this work will be primary writing outcomes.

This work being commissioned and funded (rather than just available through the subscription) is important, as it means that the activity is available to all Sheffield settings and staff.

The primary writing project will have a dual focus, to support both improvement in 2025 outcomes and the development of the curriculum for writing across the primary phase. It will be led by Diane Stokes, with support from Sarah Hubbard and the rest of the primary LSIP team.

More information about this project, which will include a significant moderation of writing offer (separate from the statutory work) for all Sheffield schools, will follow shortly.

Learn Sheffield AP Commission

Learn Sheffield has also been commissioned by SCC to work alongside colleagues from the sector and LA to develop a city-wide strategy and operational plan for alternative provision in the city.

We plan to revisit and update the review of AP which Learn Sheffield led in December 2019, which was also commissioned by SCC. This work will be led by Sai Patel and Steve Shaw and will provide an accurate understanding of the current context in the city.

We have adjusted the timeline for this work (essentially back half a term) so that the AP work is sighted properly on the SEND Manifesto work. This will reduce risks and increase opportunities for this work to connect or build on it, given that both relate to children and young people who require something additional or different.

Once this work is complete Learn Sheffield will hold an open event to share findings and support reflections and contributions from all stakeholders. We will then form an AP taskforce to take agreed recommendations forward and implement changes.

Educating for the Future Pilot: Report Cards

We have been involved in the [LocalEd2025 project](#) for the past two years. Our work on developing a report card has become [high profile](#) since the change of government in July and subsequent confirmation, at the start of this term, that the intention of implementing a report card model will go ahead.



The working group have agreed that we will pause the development of a Sheffield report card and turn our attention instead, for the next few weeks, to the national developments. We are one of the only groups nationally to have spent significant time thinking about the challenges and opportunities of report cards and the learning from this should be shared.

We believe that the government are working towards an initial January announcement of more detail in relation to report cards, so would like to share or publish something to support this work in early November. The working group have agreed three sessions during October to complete this.

Learn Sheffield Communications

Autumn Policy Briefing

We have introduced a termly Policy Briefing this year and the first one is now available to view for all settings who have purchased the core subscription package (who should have been emailed a link).

This briefing includes:

- A national policy update from Sam Freedman
- A summary of the updated EEF Implementation Guidance Report from Huntington Research School
- An Ofsted update from the Learn Sheffield Improvement Partners, covering some of the changes that have been announced
- An article from Nick Whittaker on two recent reports around the SEND system in England.

Ofsted Support

In addition to the input in the policy briefing, Learn Sheffield are also offering an in-person session for primary colleagues on Friday 25 October. This session will cover the recorded content in more detail and will give colleagues an opportunity to ask questions. The cost of the session is £50 per person. You can [book your place here](#).

The possibility of a similar session for secondary colleagues will be discussed at the Secondary Partnership meeting on Tuesday 1 October.

October Opportunities Bulletin:

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/d1X5KvYgMXhm1cpo?ref=email>

A quick reminder of other comms from the start of the year:

[Autumn 1 Leader Briefing](#) / [Autumn Training Sway](#)

Governance Chairs Forum

As mentioned in the September note, the next Governance Chairs Forum will take place on Wednesday 16 October (5:30-7pm in person at Albion House). If you or your Chair would like to attend this session, please contact andy.wynne@learnsheffield.co.uk.

Other Learn Sheffield Updates

Knife Crime Education Project

Learn Sheffield are leading a project commissioned by the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction unit called Effective Preventive Knife Crime Education (EPKCE). The outputs in the form of advice, lesson plans and small group interventions will be available to all Education settings in South Yorkshire (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield) and will be rooted in the evidence of the Youth Endowment Fund Toolkit.

We would be really grateful if colleagues would complete a survey: [Knife Crime Education Survey](#)

We are more than happy to receive more than one input from the same school from either Senior Leaders, Safeguarding Leaders, Behavioural Leaders and PD/RSHE curriculum leads. We anticipate that the survey should take between 15 and 20 mins.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the Project Leader – Sue Finnigan sue.finnigan@learnsheffield.co.uk

#DiverseEd Sheffield Hub at Learn Sheffield

Our colleagues at #DiverseEd are organising a conference here in Sheffield (at High Storrs School) next Saturday, 5 October. More information about the event, including the timetable and speakers can be found alongside the [booking link](#).

Following on from this event, we are pleased to be launching a #DiverseEd Sheffield Hub as a partnership between Learn Sheffield and DiverseEd. In 2024/25, this will take the form of five in person sessions (one each in the remaining half terms) and will cover a range of topics.

We would like colleagues to complete this short form [#DiverseEd Hub Session Survey](#) to rank the available topics in order of preference. We will choose the five most popular choices to schedule the sessions for this school year. We would be grateful if colleagues could complete this survey by Friday 4 October and share it with any colleagues who may be interested.

We will share further details about the #DiverseEd Sheffield Hub programme shortly, but the cost of these sessions will be subsidised and is likely to be £20 per setting (you can send multiple members of staff) for an individual session or £75 for unlimited access to all sessions for a setting.