

Spring 2025 Leadership Breakfast

SEND Manifesto Update

Nick Whittaker & Stephen Betts

SPRING LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST

This Breakfast will focus on SEND and the development of the SEND Manifesto.

Friday 10 January
8.30-10.30am
Learn Sheffield



Nick Whittaker
Learn Sheffield Improvement Partner



Albion House
Friday 10 January 2025



Better lives for children with additional needs: a manifesto
Leadership breakfast - SEND and inclusion
Friday 10 January 2025

The conversation began last summer...



A screenshot of a video player. The main content is a package of McVities Digestives biscuits, 360g. The package is red and blue with a large biscuit image. In the top right corner, there is a small video inset showing a man with glasses, identified as 'Nick'. Below the video player, the text reads: Nick Whittaker- Are Schools Healthy Human Systems?



Summer Leadership Seminar:
[Are Schools Healthy Human Systems?](#)
[Seminar Transcript](#)

[What Causes Wellness? Sir Harry Burns](#)

SEND Commission began in September...

- Learn Sheffield SEND Commission – Update (30 Sept 2024):
 - Strategy & delivery developing in parallel.
 - Shared accountability – education, health & LA.
 - Better lives for Sheffield children with additional needs: a manifesto.
 - ‘Fixing’ SEND but also fewer young people needing something additional or different.
 - Building blocks: locality processes, restructure sector SEND team, holistic description of healthy child development, case study work & resourced provision improvement offer.
 - Wider work – all partners involved (including ITF work on continuum of provision and joint working on neuro-disability pathways).
 - Significant developments at LS to make this possible – long-term sustained commitment.
 - Ask of the sector – acknowledge scepticism in advance of feeling the change.

Further details online: <https://www.learnsheffield.co.uk/Projects/Sheffield-SEND-Manifesto/>

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One term into this work – an update...

- How has our thinking developed in the autumn term?
- What are the key activities to develop the manifesto across the spring term and how are the building blocks being developed at the same time?
- When will the changes lead to a different experience in Sheffield?

Summer Leadership Conference (Friday 4 July)

Summer Governance Conference (Saturday 5 July)

- connected to a Festival Week in July (wb. Monday 7 July)

SEND Manifesto Update (January 2025)

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Core analysis and manifesto position:

- Children's experiences and outcomes are the product of our collective actions.
- Small problems become big problems.
- 'Growing up' has changed. We haven't kept up.
- We work within an almost totally reactive paradigm. This problem has intensified.
- We don't have good ways of developing and mobilising the forms of capital needed for whole-system transformation.
- Unreformed, the SEND system has [will] become totally unmanageable.



Manifesto proposals:

We are aiming to increase the number of children who have positive experiences and achieve good outcomes without requiring additional or different provision at the same time as transforming the arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of those who do.

- We see these goals as connected and inter-dependent. They are the core ambitions of our strategy.
- Whole-system change to a position that is far from current practice requires a long-term strategic approach that deliberately builds the capacity [or growth potential] needed for this transformation



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 - Learn Sheffield SEND Team
 - Locality SEND & Inclusion Taskforce
 - Resourced provision
 - Health pathways
 - SEND enquiry (including Sensemaker)
 - Healthy child development
 - Redesigning the graduated approach
 - Rebalancing accountability
 - SEND funding

Building blocks developing...

- Learn Sheffield SEND Team
- Locality SEND & Inclusion Taskforce
- Resourced provision
- Health pathways

Home

LS SEND Team

Speech, Language & Communication

Improving Resourced Provision

LS SEND Team

Learn Sheffield have developed a SEND team to support the delivery of the SCC SEND commission, including a restructure of the sector SEND team (which is now being led from Learn Sheffield) and the inclusion of the locality SEND leads.

Learn Sheffield Lead – Stephen Betts

Learn Sheffield Lead – Nick Whittaker

Learn Sheffield Lead – Steve Shaw

Sector Lead – Ian Read (Watercliffe Meadow Primary)

Sector Lead – Fiona Rigby (St Catherine's Primary)

Sector Lead – Katie Anderson (Chorus Trust)

Locality A Lead – Nicola Osborne (Monteney Priamry)

Locality B Lead - Fiona Rigby (St Catherine's Primary)

Locality C Lead – Hannah Thornley (Wybourn Primary)

Locality D Lead – Sarah Hearnshaw (Shortbrook Primary)

Locality E Lead – Will Smith (Mundella Primary)

Locality F Lead – Evelyn Abram (Sharrow Primary)

Locality G Lead – Jane Townsend (Stocksbridge NI)

SEND Strategic Lead – Lauren Ambler (Primary)

SEND Strategic Lead – Rebecca Molson (Secondary)

SEND Strategic Lead – Gary Simmons (Secondary)

SEND Strategic Lead – Emma Stevenson (Primary)

SEND Strategic Lead – Zoe Wilson (Primary)

SEND Enquiry (including Sensemaker)

SEND system features:

Strategic leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strong local area partnership and the conditions for highly effective multi-agency working.▪ Shared ambitious vision for children and young people with SEND.▪ Effective engagement and strategic co-production with children, young people and families.▪ Accurate understanding of the strengths and needs of children and young people with SEND and their families.▪ Effective strategic commissioning of universal, targeted and specialist services.▪ Strong systems for decision making and the allocation of resources.▪ Strong governance and oversight of the quality and performance of services, children and young people's experience, progress and outcomes, and value for money.▪ Effective workforce development focusing on children and young people who are vulnerable or have SEND.
Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ High-quality and inclusive universal education, health and care services.▪ Knowledgeable and highly skilled education, health and care workforce.▪ An effective graduated approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who need something additional or different.▪ Strong person-centred practice and effective systems to support engagement and co-production with children, young people and families.▪ Effective multi-agency working across education, health and care.▪ Practice that focuses on improving children and young people's experience, progress and outcomes, especially their preparation for adulthood outcomes.
Experience, progress and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Children and young people have a positive experience of education, health and care services.▪ Children, young people and families are meaningfully included in dialogue and decision making about their current and future lives and how best to support them.▪ Children and young people make consistently strong progress towards ambitious outcomes relating to their cognition and learning, communication and interaction, physical and sensory development and social, emotional and mental health. The outcomes they achieve prepare them well for their adult lives. They are valued, visible and included in the communities where they live and work.

Autumn 2024:

Use the SEND System features to develop an initial narrative and establish aspects for further enquiry.

Spring 2025:

Short (last week in Feb & first week in March) intense (large team – c.20 colleagues) enquiry process to follow up and deepen the evidence base.

Will include use of Sensemaker tool for the first time.

Output (by March 2025): shared analysis informing shared priorities to take forwards.

- **What are the key activities to develop the manifesto across the spring term and how are the building blocks being developed at the same time?**
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Child development focus:

To create a coherent and connected description of healthy child development.

- Reference point - connect ideas, theories, ways of thinking and working.
- Signalling effect - directing attention to the things that are most important and generative.
- Early warning system - using holistic measures of child development to identify children with increased likelihood of having SEN[D].

Health is more than merely the absence of disease—it is an evolving human resource that helps children and adults adapt to the challenges of everyday life, resist infections, cope with adversity, feel a sense of personal wellbeing, and interact with their surroundings in ways that promote successful development.

Initial task:

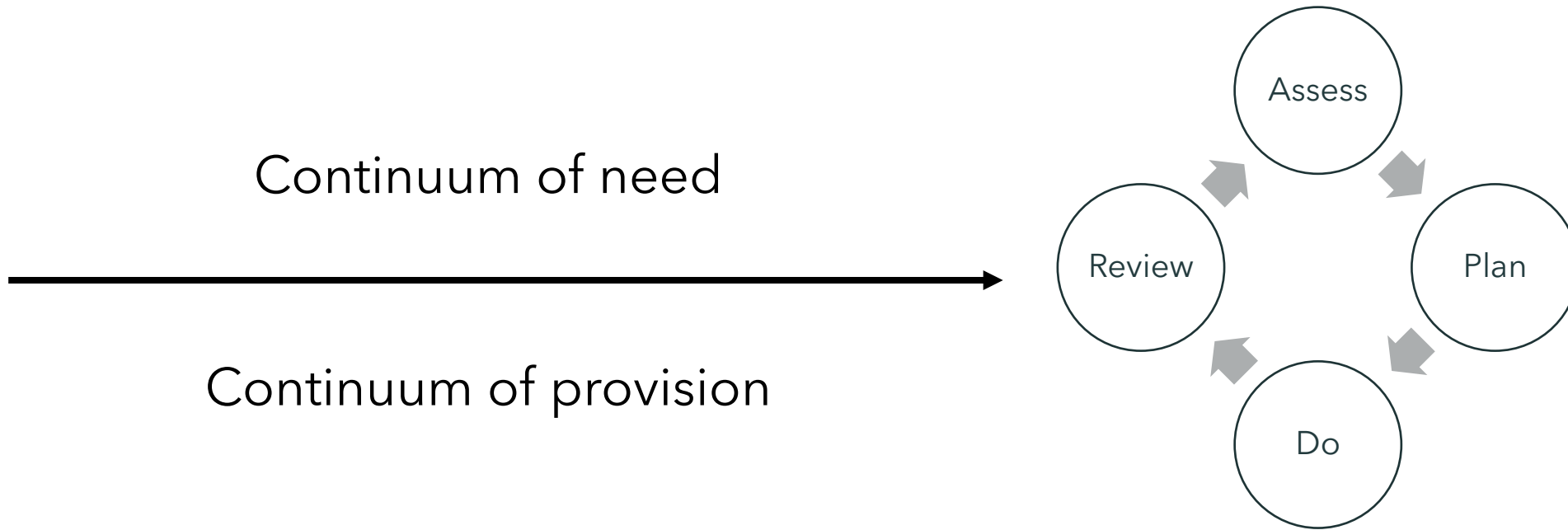
- Review existing models and descriptions within each subgroup [cognitive development, executive function and emotional regulation; speech, language and communication; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development].
- Describe the features of healthy development:

Although there are many varied models of child development, most conceptualise it to be sequential and cumulative, with later development building on skills and capacities acquired before. So, there may be bumps in the road diversions or it might happen in a stepwise fashion rather than smoothly but there is still this idea of building on skills acquired previously.

- Review and update [look for connections and create coherence].

The graduated approach:

- The number of school-age children requiring SEND support and EHC plans has increased year on year for almost a decade.
- Improvement activity has focused more on strengthening the arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting children's special educational needs than on understanding why the number of children needing something additional or different has increased significantly.
- Doing nothing or focusing only on incremental improvement will cause the SEND system to become [more] unmanageable in the coming years. The only option is ambitious whole-system reform and the time for that reform is now.
- In addition to the funding of existing SEND arrangements, funding a re-engineered graduated approach is an urgent short-run priority. A phased 'test and learn' approach would support the development of an effective and scalable solution as well as mitigating some of the problems of double funding.



'A dialogic process that brings the right expert knowledge and resources together at the right time. It is collaborative and child-centred'.



General and unique differences:

Common [to all]:	Different for some [groups]:	Different for some [individuals]:
The best of what we know about how children learn and make progress. How children typically acquire and develop their knowledge and skills.	The best of what we know about the way some groups of children learn and make progress.	The best of what we know about how an individual child's difficulties impact on their learning and development. A graduated approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the individual child's needs.



Re-balancing accountability:

- The problem of many hands.
- Prioritising networked and participative forms of accountability.
- Measuring the things we value.

The phenomenon that, due to the complexity of the situation and the number of actors involved, it is impossible or at least very difficult to identify who is reasonably responsible



IFS Report – Policy Options

The report sets out several policy options:

- Continue with the current system with minimal reform [the default position].
- Deliver provision in a more cost-effective way.
- Reform the system such that EHC plans no longer create statutory obligations.
- Enhance services to support children, including earlier interventions before problems escalate.
- Increase capacity in the state-funded specialist sector.
- Deliver more support within mainstream schools.

The options of delivering more support within mainstream schools and enhancing services to support children align with the SEND manifesto position and also look like the long-run position of the new government.

<https://ifs.org.uk/publications/spending-special-educational-needs-england-something-has-change>



Meaningful reform will be complex and costly:

- It is likely to require a significant expansion of the core SEND provision available in mainstream schools, an expansion of state-funded special school places, a geographic redistribution of funding, and possibly a reduction in the statutory obligations attached to EHC plans.
- Transition to a new system would also be costly as it would likely entail some double funding to cover current obligations. Although difficult, substantial reform is necessary to create a financially sustainable and equitable SEND system. The default is spending an extra £2-3 billion per year on an unreformed system by 2027-28.

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Complex system change...



Learn Sheffield Update

By Sheffield. For Sheffield. In collaboration

Our team is here to provide expertise and opportunities for our city, alongside our education settings, to improve the life chances of every child and young person in Sheffield.



SPRING LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

Friday 7 March
8.30-10.30
Niagra Conference and Leisure



Leader Briefing: Autumn 2 2024



STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP COURSES

2024/25



Sheffield SAFE Taskforce:
Annual Report: Year 2



Learn Sheffield Opportunities - January



Sheffield SEND Manifesto



Governance Training, Briefings & Conference



Good Practice in the improvement of pupils' attendance in Sheffield Settings



Learn Sheffield Update



Learn Sheffield AGM *Papers – next week*

Thursday 6 February
Online meeting