

## SEND Improvement Board Update - January 2024

At the start of January's SEND Improvement Board, Katie Moore shared the good news that NHS England (NHSE) and the Department for Education (DfE) are satisfied that the Local Area Partnership have made sufficient progress in one area of weakness from Birmingham's Accelerated progress Plan (APP): *'The initial inspection found that there was a lack of an overarching approach or joined-up strategy for improving provision and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)'. Therefore, NHSE and DfE have agreed to cease formal monitoring of this area.* The DfE will now formally write to the council and Integrated Care Board (ICB) with feedback and next steps.



John Coughlan indicated that positive feedback had been received from the stocktake that took place in December, and although progress had been made in every area of significant weakness, there remained no room for complacency and every effort must continue.

The Best Value Commission work continued at pace, and although difficult financial decisions were being made, it was recognised that every effort was being made to ensure that vulnerable children would remain protected. It was agreed that once the cabinet report had been published, detailed communications would be shared with the Parent Carer Forum, to bring everyone up to speed.

The remainder of the afternoon provided an opportunity for colleagues from the SEND Co-production Training Team to deliver a training session for the Board.

Focussing solely on co-production, the learning environment ensured the Board spent the time fully immersed in all aspects of co-production, and allowed for important discussion around:

- Overcoming barriers to co-production and sharing learning and good practice.
- Working to embed the [SEND-Co-production Framework & Charter](#) across the Local Area Partnership.
- The aims, objectives and implementation of the new [Birmingham SEND Co-production Award Scheme](#).
- How co-production is embedded to include the voices and lived experiences of young people and parents and carers from the outset.

It was a thoroughly interesting and informative afternoon, and the Board were most appreciative of everyone's time and effort.

Special mention goes to Anthony Clayton, whose journey is quite remarkable, and demonstrates what can be achieved if you put your mind to it. Several years ago Anthony joined the council's Youth Empowerment Squad (YES), a youth group established by the Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Service. After much encouragement from colleagues, he joined the Fast Track Apprentice Scheme and now works full-time as a Business Support Apprentice within the team. Anthony also played a key role in helping to co-produce the SEND Co-production Award Scheme and the Co-production Training. In his own words ***"It just shows if you keep going you can be what you want to be. What you do, really does make a difference."***

Huge congratulations on your achievements Anthony, you are truly an inspiration to us all.

Special thanks also go to the Co-production Training Team who have all done such an exceptional job in developing the training:

- Laky Sahota – Participation and Co-production Officer
- Pam Armstrong – Chair of the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum
- Anthony Clayton – Business Support Apprentice, Youth Empowerment Squad
- Gwilym Evans – Participation Coordinator, Birmingham Parent Carer Forum
- David Hill – Theme Lead for Pupil & School Support
- Louise Connop – Senior Engagement Officer, Thomas Pocklington Trust

Thank you to David and Louise who supported the training session and who will be assisting with the role out of SEND Co-production training in the future.

Louise joined the session on behalf of the Thomas Pocklington Trust; a leading advocate for access, equality and inclusion to the daily lives of blind and partially sighted people. Her contribution to the session and her assistance in the role out of the SEND Co-production training in the future will be invaluable to the team.

The training session was incredibly well received with one member reflecting:

*"The session was really good, with the ability to reflect and discuss current practice, understand that we need to be much more accessible and invest time in hearing lived experiences of CYP and their families. It was also good to hear the experiences of Pam, Anthony, and Louise which highlighted that much more work is needed around communication and reasonable adjustments."*

The plan was for further SEND Co-production training to take place across the city bringing together multi-agency professionals, young people and parents and carers.

The session reiterated the absolute necessity of co-production as only by seeking the views, thoughts and ideas of those with 'lived experiences' will we make a positive difference to the lives of our children, young people and families.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who participated, and our very best wishes to you all.

**Sue Harrison – Strategic Director for Children and Families**

**John Coughlan – SEND Commissioner**