

Health and Wellbeing Board
28 July 2021

	Report for Resolution
Title:	Endorsement of a Speech, Language and Communication Strategy
Lead Board Member(s):	Councillor Cheryl Barnard
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Brief summary:	To agree the collective aims presented within the draft speech, language and communication strategy for the City to enable this work to progress through consultation and action plan development.

Recommendation to the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- 1) To agree the collective aims presented within the draft speech, language and communication strategy for the City to enable this work to progress through consultation and action plan development.**

In 2019, an LGA Peer Challenge identified that there was no clear offer for 0-5's in the City, including Speech, Language and Communication (SLC). Through further work as part of the Early Outcomes Fund bid, it has been identified that sufficient data sharing agreements aren't in place, commissioning arrangements are not understood by third parties and further work needs to be done around the co-production of resources needed to embed this agenda, particularly given its complexity and cross-cutting properties through a range of internal and external partners, such as Youth Justice.

This is a complex Early Years Systems agenda, affecting Public Health, Education, Social Care and Youth Justice. Whilst the focus is initially on 0-5 year olds to develop SLC skills to the best of their individual potential and prepare them for school, the success of this impacts on their attachment, attainment, leisure, mental health, wellbeing, later employment and ultimately their life chances.

Work has taken place over the last 2 years, both externally with Early Outcomes Fund LA Partners and Better Communication CIC, and internally through endorsement at a range of Boards, including Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, Children's Partnership Board, People's Leadership Team, Portfolio Holder Briefings and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team. This has resulted in the launch of the Balanced Systems Pathway, centralising all resources in the City, organised across 5 strands, to aid parents and professionals in identifying appropriate support, and also in the development of the accompanying draft Speech, Language and Communication Strategy. Both these pieces of work have been welcomed and well received, both at operational and strategic levels, recognising the clear contribution that this agenda makes to both the refreshed Council Plan and the Economic Recovery Plan.

As was agreed at the January meeting, and in line with other Early Outcomes Fund Local Authorities who have successfully embedded this agenda, the governance of this work will sit with the Health and Wellbeing Board who will have a strategic level oversight and decision making role. Relevant partners, including parents from across the Early Years System, will work together to monitor progress on improving support for SLC and unlocking barriers by having sight of all commissioned contracts that link to SLC. This can be achieved through the Children Partnership Board and through Best Start agendas, and the development of this work and the Action Plan will add clarity as to where the day to day management, operational decision-making and delivery of the completed strategy will sit to ensure the work is embedded across plans and areas of work.

Particular feedback from the Council's Corporate Leadership Team, noted how this piece of work was an excellent example of learning from reviews, partnership working, focusing on early identification and evidence, using the citizen's voice to improve access to services and influence decision making and policy. Building on this feedback and feedback from other various Boards and Partnerships, this item is brought to the Board for endorsement of the attached draft strategy and particularly the proposed collective aims;

- Joint commissioners must ensure that commissioning supports the delivery of a whole systems model including universal, targeted and specialist offer delivered seamlessly from a child and family perspective.
- Data sharing agreements across agencies in order to ensure that the outcome is achieved of no child or family missing out on support from any part of the system.
- Integrated 2 year checks are crucial to providing a robust system of universal identification. Although not mandatory, given Nottingham's level of identified and predicted need, this must be a necessary intervention across the early years system (health/childcare/education).
- A strategic approach to engagement of families in take up of the 2, 3 and 4 year old offer. This supports economic growth, school readiness and identification of need.
- Integration of the 0-5 workforce, with identified baseline training and assessment/understanding of the screening process.

Following endorsement, officers will ensure an effective consultation is planned and carried out to inform the action plan for the Strategy's implementation and delivery. This will be worked on over the summer, in co-production with partners, to ensure that the language and mediums used, are accessible and meaningful for both parents and carers and professionals.

The resulting action plan will have clear parameters to identify impact measures that can be evidenced, evaluated and monitored. This will be brought to a future Health and Wellbeing Board Meeting, with the final Strategy, following the consultation phase and will provide a reasonable timescale to ensure we have some positive progress to evidence to the LGA Peer Challenge Team who are due to revisit the local authority later this year.

Contribution to Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims and outcomes	Summary of contribution to the Strategy
<p>Aim: To increase healthy life expectancy in Nottingham and make us one of the healthiest big cities.</p>	<p>The impact of a person not developing sound speech, language and communication skills in early life are far reaching and significant, affecting school attainment, relationships, employment prospects and lifestyle choices.</p> <p>This work contributes to almost each element of the Board’s aims and outcomes, but specifically increasing healthy life expectancy, reducing inequalities in health by neighbourhood and in supporting children and adults in Nottingham to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>The Early Outcomes Fund work identifies need by ward and seeks to target resources to areas and communities who most need it through joint commissioning and shared oversight.</p>
<p>Aim: To reduce inequalities in health by targeting the neighbourhoods with the lowest levels of healthy life expectancy.</p>	
<p>Outcome 1: Children and adults in Nottingham adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles.</p>	
<p>Outcome 2: Children and adults in Nottingham will have positive mental wellbeing and those with long-term mental health problems will have good physical health.</p>	
<p>Outcome 3: There will be a healthy culture in Nottingham in which citizens are supported and empowered to live healthy lives and manage ill health well.</p>	
<p>Outcome 4: Nottingham’s environment will be sustainable – supporting and enabling its citizens to have good health and wellbeing.</p>	

How mental health and wellbeing is being championed in line with the Board’s aspiration to give equal value to mental and physical health

From an early age, children who cannot communicate as well as their friends struggle with attachment and attainment and by the time they are five years old, they are less engaged at school and one and a half times more likely to have mental health problems in later life.

Children with undiagnosed speech, language and communication needs are more likely to be excluded from school and struggle to form relationships with their peers. Supporting children to achieve good speech, language and communication before they turn 5 is fundamental to support their mental health. However, addressing poor speech, language and communication across all age brackets should be prioritised and will have significant mental health advantages.

Background papers:

None

