

CYP ND Programme Update March 2026

This month's newsletter provides an update on the continued progress of the Children and Young People's Neurodevelopmental (ND) Programme across Cheshire and Merseyside. Significant work is underway across all areas of the programme, with strong collaboration across health, education, local authorities and third-sector partners.

The programme continues to develop at pace as we test, trial and adapt our approaches and project work. We actively use the Plan-Do-Review cycle, with feedback and co-production at the heart of our approach so that we learn and make improvements as work progresses.

Below is a detailed update on key developments, ongoing projects and upcoming priorities.

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Knowing Me Profiling Tool Rollout Update



Tool Rollout Plans & Progress

Rollout continues to increase in all nine Places in Cheshire and Merseyside.

Work is ongoing at Place level to map existing services against the *Knowing Me* profiling tool framework, identify gaps, and work collaboratively across health and local authorities to commission services to address those gaps.

We are continuing to expand the resources available on the ICB website to support CYP, families and professionals. In March, we published resources aligned to each of the 10 profiling tool areas, with versions for both parents/carers and young people. Resources are organised by profiling tool area and now by diagnosis (autism or ADHD), making it even easier to find information on specific topics. Future updates will also include Place-based pages with local content.

You can find the resources here: [Cheshire and Merseyside Neurodevelopment Pathway - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](#)

Digital Developments

The MS Forms version of the tool is currently being trialled by a number of schools, professionals, and families to test usability and identify gaps. Early feedback has been helpful so far, and further refinements will be made before a planned wider rollout in mid-to-late April.

Work also continues to design a Power BI dashboard to help professionals interpret profiling tool data with greater clarity and provide visual summaries.

We would really appreciate more volunteers to use the form and provide feedback. Please contact louise.sinclair@alderhey.nhs.uk to get involved in shaping this crucial part of the tool.

Training

Professionals' training on the *Knowing Me* profiling tool continues, with training now delivered to 1032 professionals across 443 organisations. This includes 563 education staff across 355 schools. Digital resources for parents/carers are being produced by our training provider Koala NW.



Local authority funding has been secured for training to continue in 2026/27. Discussions are currently underway to refine the offer, with plans to develop more tailored, coproduction-led content that meets local and central needs and is flexible and responsive.

CANDDID Programme Evaluation Update



The Centre for Autism, Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Intellectual Disability (CANDDID) continues to lead the programme's evaluation work. An end-of-year evaluation report is being produced by the CANDDID team and is expected to be ready for review in April.

The team is seeking input from professionals who are using the profiling tool to help us understand your experiences. Young people and families are also welcome to be part of upcoming evaluation-led workstreams in 2026. Please contact the team at cwp.ndprofilestudy@nhs.net to get involved!

Over 275 delegates from lived experience, health, education and social care came together for the 7th Annual CANDDID Conference on Friday 13th March. A workshop took place for the *Knowing Me* profiling tool, with a joint presentation from Laura Marsh, Isobel Tollerfield and Ruksana Begum-Meades from the Evaluation Team and Lucy from Cheshire West PCF. The session was very well attended and there was lots of interest in the neuro-affirmative and child-centred tool, demonstrating the brilliant work that has taken place to develop it.

ND Programme Group Updates

Programme Board (formerly Pathway Oversight Group)

From March 2026 onwards, the Pathway Oversight Group will be known as the Programme Board and will meet every six weeks. Terms of reference and membership have been reviewed to ensure strong alignment and representation across all Places and sectors.

Funding proposals have now been submitted to expand assessment/diagnosis capacity for providers with the longest waiting lists; support delivery of the 52-week wait target; support a GP ADHD shared care pilot; expand early and ongoing support services in the community; and continue the CANDDID evaluation of the profiling tool. We are waiting for a decision on our proposals.

The Board continues to work closely with the 90-Day Sprint leads to standardise how waiting times are measured and improved across the system. Clock start/stop definitions and rules remain a key priority, with draft guidance (as updated by the CPRG) now reviewed and submitted to business intelligence colleagues for final validation.

Empowerment, Early Help & Ongoing Support (EEHOS) Group

March saw significant progress across the EEHOS programme. The MS Forms version of the profiling tool moved through final edits and into a two-week testing phase, with strong engagement and further improvements planned over Easter. Power BI development continued, with work underway to prepare data pipelines and enable child- and programme-level reporting.

Funding discussions with the ICB progressed, including proposals for reducing ASD/ADHD waits, expanding voluntary sector support, and ensuring equitable sensory provision across the region.

Evaluation work has advanced with a final report due in April and new explainer videos and templates released. Service mapping, Place readiness assessments, and communications planning continued.

Clinical & Professional Reference Group (CPRG)

After the successful ND & Mental Health Stakeholder Event in February, the CPRG has been working on a thematic analysis of the event outputs. This will inform the next phase of stakeholder engagement, focusing on improving mental health service involvement in assessment and diagnosis, widening access to support for neurodivergent children, and identifying workforce training needs. The CPRG has also updated the stratification tool to reflect feedback from an inter-rater reliability exercise held during the event.

As part of the 90-Day Sprint work to standardise waiting times, the group reviewed and updated the clock start/stop definitions and rules. Updated draft guidance was submitted to the Programme Board for review (see Programme Board update).

A new communications group has been established with CPRG and PCF representatives. The group will initially focus on developing accessible, family-friendly materials to better explain the ND pathway and the stratification tool.

ADHD Shared Care

The ADHD Shared Care subgroup continues to develop and refine the two-phase model to enable GP prescribing and physical health monitoring across Cheshire and Merseyside. They currently await funding confirmation, with a further funding request planned to support annual reviews and medication changes.

Key Dates for April 2026

- 16th April – ND & Mental Health Working Group
- 17th April – PCF & CPRG Communications Meeting
- 22nd April – PCF Cluster Meeting & ND Training Discussion
- 22nd April – ADHD Shared Care Subgroup Meeting
- 29th April – EEHOS Commissioners' Face-to-Face Meeting
- 30th April – Clinical & Professional Reference Group (CPRG)
- 30th April – PCF & CPRG Communications Meeting

Exciting New Resources to Share



Autism Central - England's Peer Education Programme | Autism Central

Autism Central is the National Peer Education Programme for families and support networks of autistic people of all ages in England. The programme is delivered by Anna Freud and commissioned by NHS England. They offer families education, coaching, and connection through resources, one-to-one peer support, and community events.

We met the brilliant Dr Georgia Pavlopoulou at the CANDDID conference and she asked us to share this amazing resource as widely as possible across Cheshire and Merseyside. Learn more here: [Autism Central - England's Peer Education Programme | Autism Central](#) **Autism Understood | Greater Manchester**

The Greater Manchester team have developed a young person's guide to autism. They have kindly given their permission for us to signpost our young people in Cheshire and Merseyside to this resource. Learn more here: [Autism Understood](#)