

Cheshire and Merseyside Children and Young People's ND Programme Newsletter – January 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. Below is a detailed update on key developments, ongoing projects and upcoming priorities.

Knowing Me Profiling Tool Rollout

Training on the *Knowing Me* Profiling Tool has continued at pace throughout January. 684 professionals across 316 organisations, including 247 schools, have now been trained. Wirral is leading the way with Cheshire West following closely behind, and numbers are increasing across all other Places. This reflects ongoing commitment from frontline staff to develop a shared, consistent approach to understanding children and young people's needs.



A Specialist Support Practitioner from the TESSA Autism team in St Helens shared a young person's experience of using the *Knowing Me* profiling tool. They explained that tool has made a big difference for E over the past few months. After putting into place the agreed recommendations from the profiling tool, including scheduled sensory breaks, E now says he wants to come to school. Instead of seeing it as an

unhappy place, he now feels happy there, and he has even started attending the after-school club.

Parent and carer awareness work has also progressed, with seven dedicated sessions delivered to 22 parents and carers so far. Work is underway to create accessible, on-demand information to ensure families can access guidance at a time that suits them.

All nine local authorities have now formally agreed to continue funding the training offer into the 2026/27 financial year. This commitment enables the programme to move into the next stage of planning, including scoping a procurement exercise that will shape the future training model.

Development of the digital MS Forms version of the profiling tool is nearing completion, with final testing underway. The tool is expected to be ready by the end of February. Exploration is also underway to develop a Power BI dashboard, designed to help professionals interpret the profiling tool data with greater clarity and to provide visual summaries that can be shared with families. Early planning has also begun for the full digital solution expected to progress further during 2026/27.

Alongside these developments, universal resources aligned to all ten support areas have now been clinically reviewed and are due to be published online. These resources will provide a high-quality, consistent offer for children, young people and their families following completion of the profiling tool.

Evaluation – CANDDID

The Centre for Autism, Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Intellectual Disability (CANDDID) continues to lead the programme's evaluation work. The evaluation will extend into the next financial year, with discussions underway to finalise what data and outcomes will be captured moving forward.

Data collection from the Wirral and St Helens sites (participating in the Portsmouth–Cornwall pilot) has now concluded. The evaluation team has shifted its focus to thematic analysis, examining co-production feedback and exploring the emerging impact of the profiling tool. Work is also underway to develop interactive materials, including presentation slides and visual aids that support the wider resource offer.

The user guide for the profiling tool is in its final stages of refinement to ensure full alignment with the new MS Forms version. This updated guide will be published on the ICB CYP ND website in February. The evaluation team is also seeking

professionals and people with lived experience to support upcoming evaluation-led workstreams.

Group Updates

ND Pathway Oversight Group

Work continues at pace to strengthen the Early Help offer across Cheshire and Merseyside. Mapping of universal resources is nearing completion, and parallel mapping of commissioned services is helping to identify areas where further investment will be required. This will inform commissioning plans for 2026/27, which will focus on embedding the profiling tool, reducing waiting times, expanding shared care models and maintaining a strong evaluation function.

The programme is aligned closely to NHS England's 90-Day Sprint work, with a focus on improving reporting standards, validating waiting lists and piloting neighbourhood MDT approaches to support families while they wait.

From April 2026, the Oversight Group will become the Cheshire & Merseyside CYP Neurodevelopmental Programme Board and will move to a six-weekly meeting schedule.

Empowerment, Early Help and Ongoing Support (EEHOS) Group

The EEHOS programme continues to progress well, with draft digital forms ready for initial testing. The evaluation of EEHOS is progressing towards an April end-of-contract report, and work is underway to develop a coordinated communications approach, including a central FAQ set and examples of positive practice from across the region. Training oversight has improved significantly thanks to new tracking tools, and additional capacity will soon be provided by Koala NW.

Early support funding is expected to return to the £20k-per-Place model next year. Each Place is now preparing updated gap analyses and exploring opportunities to strengthen delivery through local partnerships, particularly within the third sector.

Clinical & Professional Reference Group (CPRG)

The CPRG continues to drive alignment across ADHD pathways, stratification approaches and wider ND pathway activity. Co-designed, family-friendly communications explaining stratification are in development, supported by Parent Carer Forums. Significant progress has been made in agreeing standardised definitions for waiting time reporting, with 'clock start' set at referral receipt and 'clock stop' at the first clinical appointment with a specialist ND clinician.

Collaborative work is also underway with Greater Manchester and the North West ODN to shape a consistent evaluation menu across the region. Meanwhile, the provider survey launched to support progress toward 52-week waits is open until 6 February and is already generating valuable insights.

ND & Mental Health Interface Subgroup

The subgroup is preparing for its stakeholder workshop on 25th February at Alder Hey's Institute in the Park. This event will bring together providers, commissioners, third-sector partners and lived-experience representatives to explore practical solutions for improving access to mental health support for ND children and young people. The workshop will also cover the embedding of the stratification tool and mapping of the Early Help offer.

ADHD Shared Care Subgroup

Insight from the current provider survey is supporting the development of future ADHD shared care models. An advanced model, led by appropriately trained specialist GPs, is planned for testing in Wirral from mid-2026. Work is also progressing to ensure a consistent baseline shared care model across all areas, addressing variation in prescribing practices, access criteria and GP engagement. Financial modelling, prescribing analysis and MDT pathway development are underway to inform the regional business case.

Key Dates – February 2026

- 23 February ND Pathway Oversight Group
- 25 February CYP ND Stakeholder Workshop
- 26 February EEHOS Group (Profiling Tool Rollout)
- 26 February Clinical & Professional Reference Group (CPRG)