

Cheshire and Merseyside Children and Young People's ND Programme Newsletter – February 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

Professionals' training on the *Knowing Me* Profiling Tool continues at pace, with training now delivered to 866 professionals across 375 organisations. This includes 471 school staff across 298 schools.



The user guide that accompanies the tool has now been published online and can be found at [User guides - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](#). Summary videos have also been uploaded to support users of the tool, including children and young people. The universal resources aligned to all ten support areas are undergoing final checks and will be published on the website in March.

The MS Forms version of the digital tool is due to be tested in selected areas. Work also continues on a Power BI dashboard to help professionals interpret the profiling tool data with greater clarity and provide visual summaries to children, young people and families.

Evaluation – CANDDID

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

The evaluation team is now conducting thematic analysis, examining co-production feedback and exploring the emerging impact of the profiling tool using the Wirral and St Helens pilot data. The team is seeking professionals and people with lived experience to support upcoming evaluation-led workstreams. Please contact the team at cwp.ndprofilestudy@nhs.net to take part.

Group Updates

ND Pathway Oversight Group

Work continues at pace across the ND transformation programme, with progress reported across Early Help, digital development, evaluation, commissioning and pathway improvement. A communications working group has been established, and examples of good practice are being gathered to support stakeholder engagement.

A funding proposal to support delivery of the 52-week waiting time target has been submitted, underpinned by new clock start/stop definitions aligned to NHS England guidance. Members acknowledged that consistent implementation may lead to a material shift in reported waiting times but agreed this is essential to establish transparency, credible performance management and a single version of the truth. Alignment of dashboards, contracts and reporting processes will follow formal sign-off.

The 90-Day Sprint has generated positive momentum, and members emphasised the importance of ensuring that its outputs are fully aligned with agreed clock rules and embedded within wider governance arrangements. The focus must remain on sustainable pathway redesign and system-wide learning across all nine Places rather than short-term operational fixes.

Commissioning intentions for 2026/27 include a proposed £4 million investment to expand diagnostic capacity for children waiting over 52 weeks, strengthen waiting list support, continue rollout and evaluation of the profiling tool, pilot shared care,

enhance early support in partnership with local authorities and invest in digital infrastructure. SEND inspection focus on neurodevelopmental pathways will further strengthen the case for system investment.

Empowerment, Early Help and Ongoing Support (EEHOS) Group

The EEHOS group has reported strong multi-agency engagement and increasing alignment between education, health and local authority partners. The Knowing Me profiling tool is now central to the wider ND approach, supporting earlier identification of need, structured planning and improved shared understanding between families and professionals. Recent feedback from early adopter areas (including Wirral and St Helens) shows positive impact on children's daily experience and more coordinated support planning. Work is also underway to strengthen the digital infrastructure, expand the evaluation framework and develop consistent universal resources.

Clinical & Professional Reference Group (CPRG)

The ND Stakeholder Event at Alder Hey was very well attended with 84 providers, commissioners, parents, carers and VSCE representatives coming together to discuss mental health access for neurodiverse children and young people. Key themes included barriers to accessing mental health support; the importance of reasonable adjustments and flexibility in interventions; and the need for improved stratification and collaborative assessment models. Commissioners also gathered to discuss early help for neurodiverse children and young people.

The CPRG continues its work to strengthen alignment across the 90-Day Sprint, stratification and the wider neurodevelopmental pathway. The position statement on clock start/stop definitions is now with commissioners for feedback and will be circulated for virtual sign-off. The proposed approach confirms ICB oversight from referral to completion of assessment and sets 'clock stop' at the first meaningful contact with an ND clinician. Members noted the likely impact on reported waiting lists and agreed the need for careful implementation, data alignment and ongoing quality monitoring to avoid unintended consequences.

Funding proposals have been submitted to reduce waits to under 52 weeks, expand waiting well support, continue training and evaluation, and progress digital development. Provider survey analysis is underway to inform investment decisions, with appropriate caveats noted regarding data completeness.

A focused implementation session will be convened to support operational planning, ensuring that Sprint activity, clock definitions and pathway redesign remain fully aligned and deliver sustainable system improvement.

ADHD Shared Care Subgroup

A two-phase ADHD shared care model has been developed, enabling GP prescribing and physical health monitoring across Cheshire and Merseyside, subject to funding confirmation, with a further funding request planned to support annual reviews and medication changes.

Key Dates – March 2026

- 11th March – EEHOS Working Group (Early Help Support Functions)
- 18th March – ADHD Shared Care Subgroup Meeting
- 26th March – EEHOS Working Group (Profiling Tool Rollout)
- 26th March – Clinical & Professional Reference Group (CPRG)
- 30th March – ND Pathway Oversight Group