

The Role of the Designated Clinical Officer for SEND

Tara Harness –
DCO for SEND,
NHS Hull CCG
1st April 2022

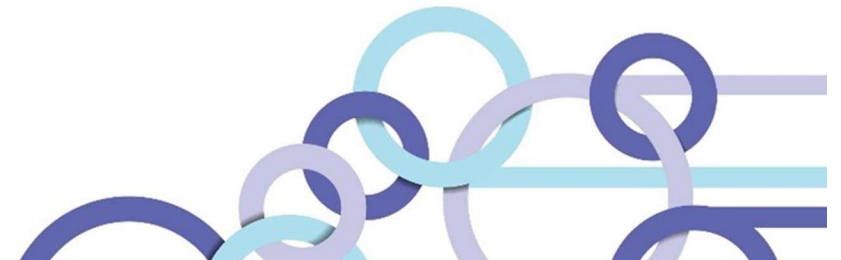
Creation of the DCO role

- The SEND Code of Practice (2015) introduces the Designated Medical Officer (DMO) role under the Section 3.45 “to support the CCG in meeting it’s statutory responsibilities for children and young people (CYP) with SEN and disabilities, primarily by providing a point of contact for local partners, when notifying parents and local authorities about CYP they believe have, or may have, SEN or a disability, and when seeking advice on SEN or disabilities”
- The Code goes on to outline under Section 3.48 “there is local flexibility for the role to be undertaken by a suitably competent qualified and experienced nurse or other professional, in which case the role would be Designated Clinical Officer
- It is a non-statutory role; however, local area SEND inspections have shown that the role(s) can be seen to be effective at supporting and assuring the health system is fully engaged with SEND against those areas who do not have the function in place



My background

- 1993 - qualified as a Registered General Nurse for Adults – worked in adult nursing for 3 years
- 1996 – moved into Children’s inpatient nursing
- 1998 – qualified as a Registered Nurse (Child)
- 1999 – qualified as a Special and Intensive Care of the Newborn Nurse – worked on Newborn Intensive Care unit and in the community as NICU Outreach Nurse
- 2003 – qualified as a Specialist Practitioner (BSc Hons) Community Children’s Nursing – worked as both a generic and specialist (Neonatal) community nurse
- 2010 – moved into Primary Care Trust to lead on Children’s Continuing Care – subsequently moved into CCG
- 2014 – New role of DCO for SEND added alongside to role as Children’s Continuing Care Nurse
- 2019 – Commenced new post as DCO for SEND with NHS Hull CCG



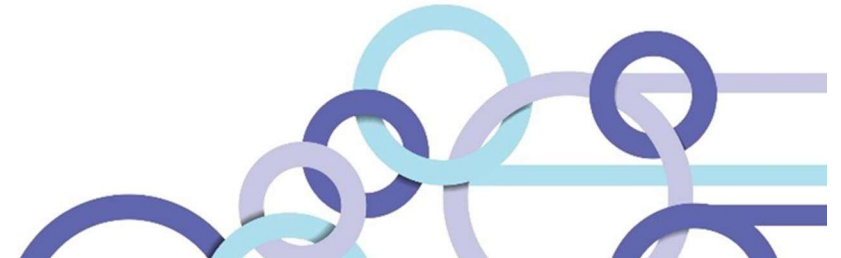
Functions of the DCO role

- There are 4 main functions;
- To provide oversight
- Coordination and assurance
- Strategic leadership
- Champion for those children and young people with SEND and their families



Oversight

- Do we recognise SEND and act early?
- Are we inclusive?
- Are we getting it right?
- Providing oversight from a health perspective into EHC panels and discussions of which children and young people go forward for assessment and if required have an EHCP
- Ensuring we can evidence and implement a good local offer from health and demonstrate clear health journeys for those age 0-25 years old with SEND



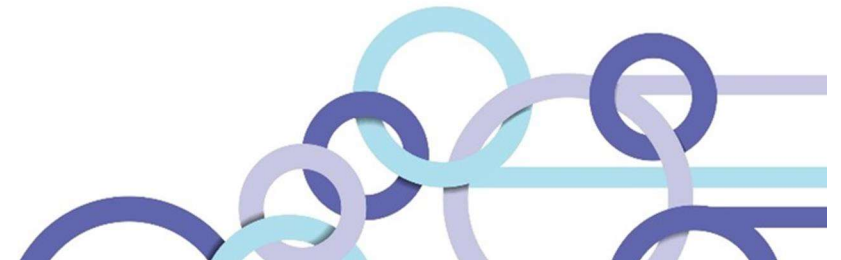
Assurance

- Providing scrutiny, accountability, EHCP audit and support of the local offer
- Supporting health professionals to contribute to the EHC assessment, planning and reviewing processes
- Working in partnership with others in the local area to improve the quality of EHC plans
- Supporting the commissioners and senior leadership team with regards to the CCG meeting and assuring the SEND health requirement – reporting health position and audits to quality committees



Strategic

- How are we doing in health?
- Do we meet the legislation for SEND?
- Are we commissioning for SEND in a joined up way with partners?
- Are we inclusive across all our commissioned services?
- Achieved by working alongside commissioners and stakeholders, especially children, young people and their families to identify and raise any commissioning gaps, some of which may require joint commissioning to resolve
- Develop, review and update with others across health, care and/or education policies and procedures to enhance the offer to children, young people and their families living with SEND, reflecting current statutory guidance. Disseminating as appropriate throughout the CCG and local health system
- Work jointly with partners across education, health and care to strategically plan and implement the SEND improvement plan
- Lead and influence system and culture change across multiple organisations



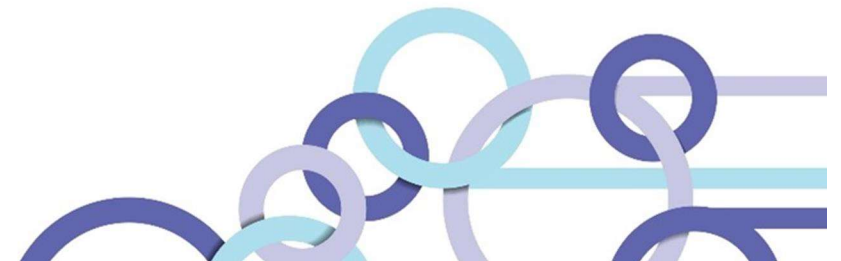
Championing

- Co-production
- Support
- Liaison and advice
- Co-working engagement
- Supporting the SEND team at the local authority with questions and queries
- Promoting links between the SEND team, educational professionals and social care and health services



Resources

- [DMO%20handbook%20newest.pdf](#)
[\(councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk\)](#)



Contact details

- Tara.harness@nhs.net
- Mob: 07934 298100
- Office: 01482 344700

