

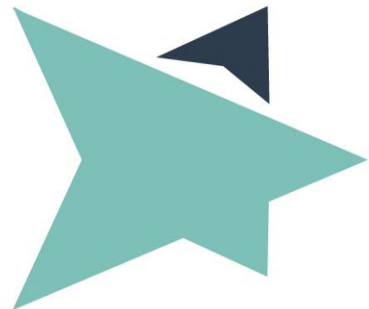
Improving the SEND system for Children, Young People and their Families

Dame Christine Lenehan – Director, Council for Disabled Children

Deborah Glassbrook – SEND Improvement Advisor, Local Government Association

Objectives

1. This session will facilitate delegates to discuss the likely impact of the Government's SEND and AP improvement plan proposals
2. It will explore whether it will be possible to come to a shared understanding of what a 'good' local SEND system looks like and how it can best meet the needs of children with SEND.



Children & Families Act (2014): SEND Code of Practice

1

Covers 0-25 years and includes guidance relating to disabled children and young people as well as those with special education needs.

2

A clearer focus on the participation of children, young people and parents in decision-making at individual and strategic levels.

3

A stronger focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for children and young people.

4

Includes guidance on the joint planning and commissioning of services to ensure close co-operation between education, health and social care.



Children & Families Act (2014): SEND Code of Practice

5

Expectation about publishing a Local Offer of support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities

6

New guidance for education and training settings on taking a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils and students with SEN.

7

Introduced the 0-25 Education, Health and Care plan for children and young people with more complex needs that need a more co-ordinated assessment process.

8

Greater focus on support that enables those with SEN to succeed in their education and make a successful transition to adulthood



Key tensions to reflect on

The Medical Model of Disability



VS

The Social Model of Disability



Headline Figures

- Over **1.5 million pupils** in England have SEN
- As of January 2023, there were **517,026 EHC Plans** (4.3% of all pupils in England have an EHC Plan)
- Almost 1/3 of pupils with an EHC plan are identified with a primary need of **autistic spectrum disorder**
- More than **80% of children in care** in England aged of 5-16 also received help for SEN
- Of the **24,577 pupils** in school-arranged AP, 20% had an EHCP plan and **42% had SEN Support**.
- **13%** of disabled people have **no qualifications** – almost three times the proportion of non-disabled people



Common challenges at a system level in SEND

- An exponential rise in demand: from 2018-2023, there has been an 81% increase in EHCPs
- There are many professionals and agencies involved and often they are not joined up around cohorts of need – these are defined in the Code of Practice as (1) Communication & interaction, (2) Cognition & learning, (3) Social, emotional & mental health, and (4) Sensory &/or physical needs.
- There are often conflicting demands on different parts of the system resulting in different prioritisation of delivering services for children with SEND. Examples include:
 - Current behaviors/practice direct demand to specialist support – impacting spend allocations.
 - Lack of focus on effective early intervention
 - Ineffective and weak joint commissioning
 - Parents and professionals not having confidence in the local offer
 - Not having a consistent and strategic ownership and oversight of area system
 - Workforce vacancies



SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Review

Identified 3 key challenges:

1. Navigating SEND & AP is not a positive experience for too many children and families
2. Outcomes for children with SEND or in AP consistently worse than their peers across every measure
3. Despite continuing and unprecedented investment, the system is not financially sustainable



SEND Review:

Right support
Right place
Right time



What does the new improvement plan tell us?

Vision of the Improvement Plan for Children and Young People (CYP) and their families:

- CYP will be able to access and regularly attend the most appropriate education setting, school or college for their needs – be this mainstream or specialist.
- A national system will provide clarity to parents and carers about what support their children should be receiving without a fight to secure what is appropriate, and without needing to navigate a complex system.
- The National Standards will improve early identification of needs and intervention. More CYP will receive the support they need, through ordinarily available provision, in their local setting.
- Standardised and digitised EHCPs will reduce excessively complicated processes to ensure CYP who need them get prompt access to the support they need.



A national system underpinned by National Standards

- The DfE will work with stakeholders to deliver a standard EHCP template, with supporting processes and guidance from 2025.
- The process should be easier to navigate, with parents being clear on what support they can expect for their child and where they can turn for help, including how to make use of support through the SEND Local Offer and [SEND Information, Advice and Support Services](#) (SENDIASS).
- The national system will provide clarity on the resources available to deliver the right provision, for example, by ensuring that the new SEND and Alternative Provision National Standards are clear on which budgets should be used to provide different types of support.
- National Standards will place a greater emphasis on the important role mainstream settings play in providing quality first teaching and evidence-based SEN Support to meet the needs of the majority of pupils with SEND, so that all settings provide the same high-quality provision.
- The delivery of National Standards will be supported by new SEND and Alternative Provision practice guides for frontline professionals and an amended SEND Code of Practice.



Education

- The Department will introduce a new leadership level SENCo NPQ (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator National Professional Qualification) for schools.
- The DfE has announced approval for a new wave of special free schools. This will mean that more children have timely access to sufficient local special school places.
- The DfE will create a three-tier alternative provision system, focusing on targeted early support within mainstream school, time-limited intensive placements in an alternative provision setting, and longer-term placements to support return to mainstream or a sustainable post-16 destination.
- By the end of 2025, the DfE will publish the first three practice guides focused on advice for mainstream settings, building on existing best practice. This will target the greatest areas of need in primary and secondary, as well as supporting the cross-government focus on improving mental health of children and young people.



Workforce and funding

- Increase core school funding by £3.5 billion in 2023-24, of which almost £1 billion will go towards high needs. This means high needs funding will be £10.1 billion in 2023-24.
- Invest £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to fund new places and improve existing provision for children and young people with SEND or who require alternative provision.
- Invest £18 million between 2022 and 2025 to double the capacity of the supported internships programme.
- Fund up to 5,000 early years staff to gain an accredited Level 3 early years SENCo qualification to support the early years sector, with training, running until August 2024.
- Invest a further £21 million to train two cohorts of educational psychologists in 2024 and 2025.
- In partnership with NHS England, as part of their £70 million Change Programme, pioneering innovative practice through running Early Language and Support for Every Child (ELSEC) pathfinders to improve access to speech and language therapy for those who need it.
- Develop a system of funding bands and tariffs so that consistent National Standards are backed by more consistent funding across the country.



Strengthened accountabilities and clear routes of redress

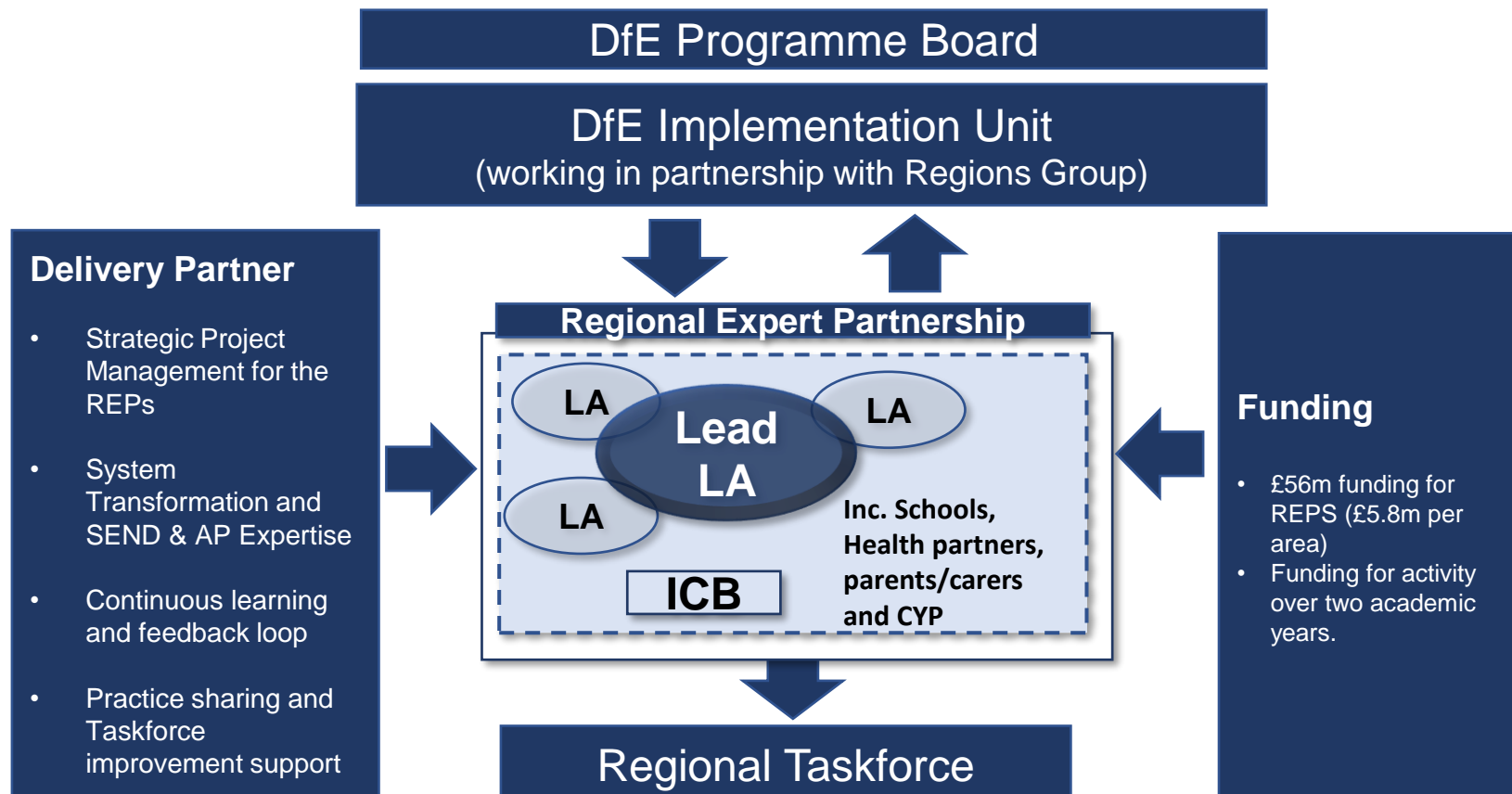
- Publish local and national inclusion dashboards.
- Deliver updated Ofsted and Care Quality Commission area SEND inspections.
- Give the Secretary of State for Health greater powers through the Health and Care Act 2022.
- Require every integrated care board to have a named executive board member lead accountable for SEND.
- Set up an expert group to support the development of a bespoke national alternative provision performance framework.
- Improve advice and guidance for families on mediation and update the professional standards for SEND mediators.



The £70m SEND and AP Change Programme

- The £70m Change Programme will provide immediate, visible, on-the-ground delivery of the new SEND & AP system. It will set up a network of 9 Regional Expert Partnerships (REPs) that will test, refine and guard against unintended consequences of new SEND and AP reforms, and will help to build a strong evidence base to inform our plans for legislation.
- DfE are in the process of establishing the REPs, which consist of one high-performing lead LA and 2-3 supporting LAs who are geographical neighbours.
- The set-up phase of the REPs will begin in Summer 2023, with testing and delivery commencing in all local areas within the REPs by September 2023. Testing will be staggered across the reforms.

Delivery Model



4 key system-level reform proposals

National Standards

- Expert Panels
- Develop Guidance
- Test Draft Standards
- Test Multi-Agency Panels
- Test mandatory mediation
- Improve Early Years and Post-16 Transitions

Partnerships & Plans

- Develop & publish Plans
- Expert Groups
- Test local Dashboards
- *NHSE ELSEC Pilot* (Establish Partnership in one REP LA per Region)

AP Service

- Test 3-tier AP Service
- Outreach to Schools
- Sustainable Funding

Commissioning Reform

- Bands and Tariffs
- Test Advisory Lists

Moving to excellence, what works in SEND



Enablers of improvement

Five enablers of improvement in SEND systems

1	Co-production and relationships at the heart of the system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-production with young people and parents / carers is at the heart of the system.• Strong focus on the lived experiences of young people and families.• Effective strategic co-production with young people's and parent / carer groups.• Strong relationships with partners, settings, schools, colleges and services.
2	Shared vision and evidence-informed priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Know yourself" – vision and priorities informed by lived experiences, effective data systems, robust self-assessment. Co-produced.• Shared ethos, agreed across all partners in the local system. Speak "same language".• Shared responsibility and accountability for delivering the vision and priorities.• Alignment of resource and strategy. Judicious, sustainable use of resources.
3	Stable and knowledgeable leadership and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collective buy-in from leaders across all partners who understand the SEND system.• Leadership is broad and distributed – buy-in from leaders across the system.• Robust quality-assurance, impact reporting and systemic feedback routines.• Effective partnership governance structures, aligned to wider boards (CYPP, ICB).• Effective communications routines to all parts of the local SEND system.
4	A focus on high-quality delivery of the essentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robust understanding of the statutory framework across all partners and roles.• Bedrock of consistently high-quality delivery against statutory duties.• Wider focus on enabling consistently high-quality practice (e.g., OAP, assessments) and a focus on practice that delivers outcomes, improves lived experiences.• Good practice and innovative initiatives built on this foundation.
5	A well-organised, skilled and supported workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stable workforce, organised in a sensible structure and with capacity to deliver.• Staff are well-trained, regularly upskilled, and appropriately supported and supervised (decision-making, quality of casework, handling difficult conversations).• Networks, communications channels and routines for engaging the wider SEND workforce across the local system (beyond any one organisation).



An Effective Practice Evidence Framework:

Seven proposed themes / dimensions

Theme / dimension of local SEND systems	What this dimension would include	
Strategic dimensions	1. Strategic partnership working, leadership and governance	<u>Leadership</u> and management Strategic partnership <u>governance</u> Arrangements for <u>joint planning and joint commissioning</u> across E, H and C (at strategic level – operational in #5-7).
	2. Co-productive working with young people and parents / carers	<u>Strategic co-production</u> arrangements to foster voice, agency and focus on lived experiences Involvement of young people and parents / carers in strategic decision-making <u>Systematic feedback</u> from young people and parents / carers.
	3. Achieving long-term outcomes and making a difference to lived experiences	Aspirational <u>long-term ambitions</u> for young people with SEND Routines for <u>capturing impact</u> on <u>lived experiences</u> and <u>long-term outcomes</u> <u>Gathering feedback</u> systematically, dealing with and learning from <u>complaints and disputes</u> pro-actively.
	4. Information and communications	Providing <u>information</u> to young people, families and practitioners about the SEND system and what is available Routines for <u>communicating</u> information about the SEND system.
Right help at the right time	5. Universal support	Support in <u>mainstream</u> education (early years settings, schools and colleges) around “ordinarily-available provision”, what good <u>inclusive practice</u> and <u>SEN support</u> look like Universal support from <u>health</u> services Universal support for <u>families</u> .
	6. Targeted support services	<u>Planning, commissioning and delivery</u> of <u>targeted SEN, care and health</u> support services that work with young people, families, and settings to build capacity, identify needs, and support inclusion.
	7. Specialist provision	Forward-looking, evidence-based, <u>collaborative planning of specialist provision</u> (specifically commissioned places in education settings; specialist interventions) Collaborative planning of <u>bespoke placements</u> for the <u>most complex needs</u> .

Underpinned by effective identification, assessment, support and preparation for adulthood



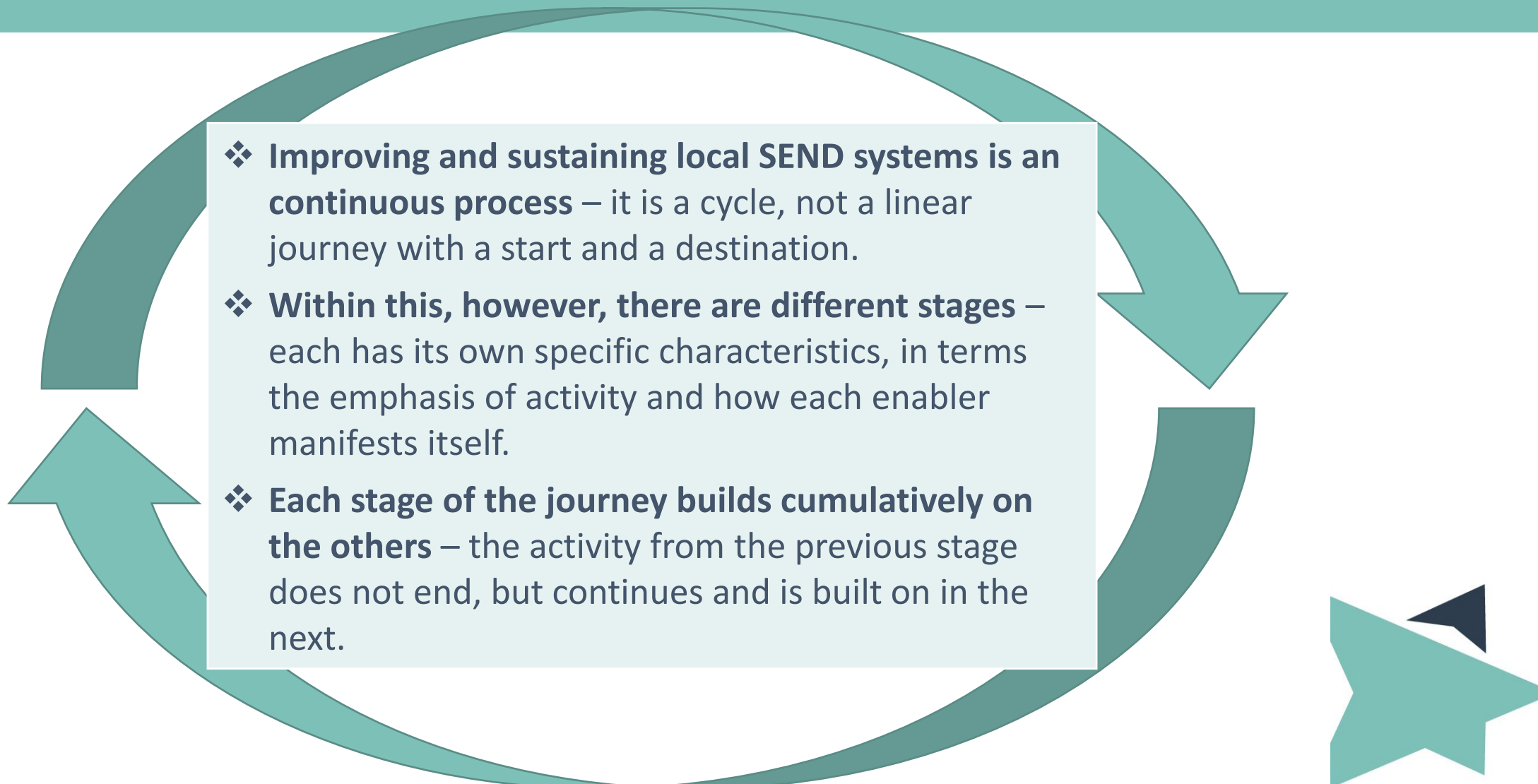
How the five enablers link to the three phases of an improvement journey/cycle

	Poor-to-fair	Fair-to-good	Good-to-great
1 Co-production and relationships at the heart of the system	Establishing relationships, routines, definitions and practices of co-production.	Embedding approaches to co-productive working in key areas of the SEND system.	Co-production is the <u>norm</u> and lived experiences is <u>at the heart of strategic and day-to-day decision-making</u> .
2 Shared vision and evidence-informed priorities	Shared <u>honesty</u> about challenges. <u>Developing</u> the vision. Focus on “ <u>fire-fighting</u> ” to improve specific areas of support and practice.	<u>Reinforcing</u> the vision in practice to make <u>links</u> across key parts of the SEND system.	<u>Living</u> the vision. System-wide priorities <u>linking SEND</u> to wider priorities for the local area.
3 Stable and knowledgeable leadership and governance	<u>Cadre</u> of key system leaders lead on work to co-produce vision, strategies and plans. <u>Developing</u> governance.	Increasing <u>recognition</u> of vision, strategies and plans across wider system leaders. Governance structures <u>embedding</u> .	Broad <u>buy-in</u> to the ethos and vision across all parts of the system. Leaders live the values. <u>Effective, impactful governance</u> .
4 A focus on high-quality delivery of the essentials	Focus on <u>compliance</u> – statutory responsibilities and other foundational practices.	Focus on <u>consistency and quality</u> of practice in statutory and non-statutory support.	Focus on the evidence of <u>impact</u> on lived experiences and <u>long-term outcomes</u> .
5 A well-organised, skilled and supported workforce	Focus on <u>stabilising</u> the workforce in key areas (structure, capacity, turnover), and building <u>wider networks</u> to ensure consistent practice.	Using <u>wider networks</u> of practitioners to communicate, inform, induct, build capacity, share skills and shape practice.	Building a <u>highly-effective, skilled, well-supported workforce</u> across the wider SEND system.



An improvement “cycle”

Overarching points about sustaining effective local SEND systems

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- ❖ **Improving and sustaining local SEND systems is an continuous process** – it is a cycle, not a linear journey with a start and a destination.
 - ❖ **Within this, however, there are different stages** – each has its own specific characteristics, in terms the emphasis of activity and how each enabler manifests itself.
 - ❖ **Each stage of the journey builds cumulatively on the others** – the activity from the previous stage does not end, but continues and is built on in the next.

An improvement “cycle”

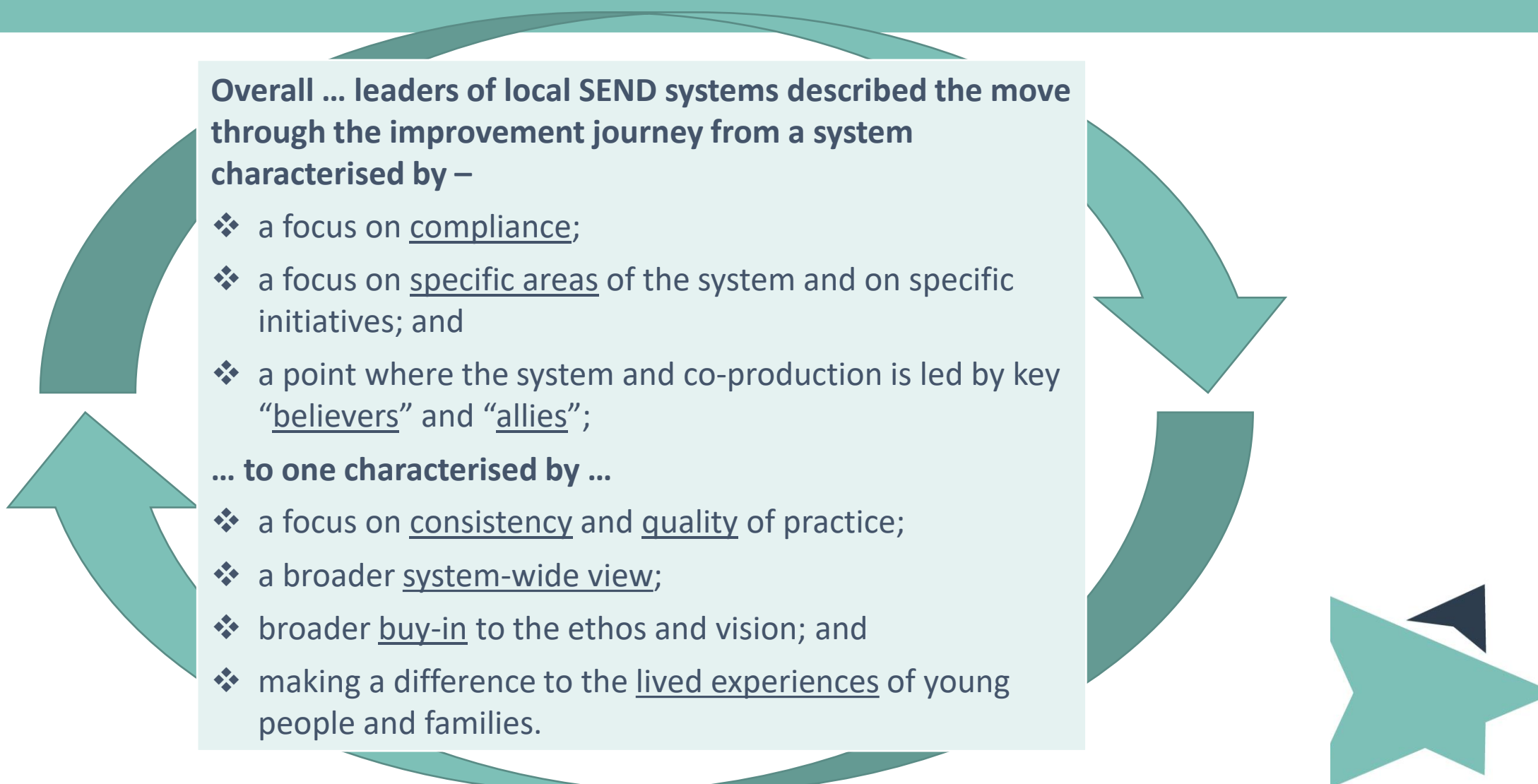
Overarching points about sustaining effective local SEND systems

Overall ... leaders of local SEND systems described the move through the improvement journey from a system characterised by –

- ❖ a focus on compliance;
- ❖ a focus on specific areas of the system and on specific initiatives; and
- ❖ a point where the system and co-production is led by key “believers” and “allies”;

... to one characterised by ...

- ❖ a focus on consistency and quality of practice;
- ❖ a broader system-wide view;
- ❖ broader buy-in to the ethos and vision; and
- ❖ making a difference to the lived experiences of young people and families.



Thank you

Questions or reflections?

