

North Somerset SEND Partnership

SEND Improvement Board Minutes

Monday 17th April 2023, 15:00 to 17:00

Present

Catherine Gibbons (CG), Executive Lead Member for Children's Services & Life-Long Learning & Chair

Jo Walker (JW), Chief Executive, NSC

Pip Hesketh (PH), Assistant Director for Education Partnerships, NSC

Sheila Smith (SS), Director of Children's Services, NSC

Mr J Humphries (JH), Secondary Head Representative, St Katherine's School

Kenton Mee (KM), Chief Executive for North Somerset Parents Carer's Working Together & Parent Carer Forum for North Somerset

Mark Tucker (MT), SEND Advisor for the South West, NHS England

Jane Humphreys (JaH), Children's Improvement Advisor within the Local Government Association

Anthony Webster (AW), SEND Team Manager, North Somerset Council

Ed Bowen-Roberts (EBR), Headteacher, Baytree

Emma Bray (EBra), Headteacher Christ Church Primary, representing Primary Headteachers

Jacqui Scott (JS), Head of Learning & Achievement for Education Partnership

Keith Thompson, (KT), SEND Professional Advisor for the Southwest, DfE

Lisa Manson (LM), Director of Performance & Delivery, BNSSG, CCG

Grainne Rogers (GR) on behalf of Lorraine McMullen

Becky Hopkins (BH), Assistant Director, Children's, Family Support & Safeguarding

Mark Hemmings (MH), Transformation Manager with ICB

Lorraine McMullen (LMc), Interim Deputy Director of Operations for Children's Community

Shane Devlin (SD), Chief Executive for Integrated Care Board for BNSSG

Helen Caldwell (HC), Strategy Team

Mandy Plumbridge (MP),

Finley Kidd (FK), Graduate Trainee in the Strategy Team

Rebecca Pinder (RP), Minute Taker, Agilisys Limited

Apologies

Matt Greenhalgh, Interim Service Improvement Lead for Children's Social Work

Tony Page, Non-Acute Contract Manager for ICB

Emma Diakou (ED), Head of Business Insight, Policy & Partnerships, NSC

Emma Brown, (EBro), Vulnerable Children's Unit, DfE

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

2.0 Draft Notes of Improvement Board Meeting of Monday 6th March 2023

2.1 Additional actions to be added for JH to feedback from her Plymouth session and making enquiries about EHCP QA plans. The items have been added to the Action Plan. Minutes agreed and accepted.

2.2 Action Log

2.2.1 Area 5 (line 121) - The Incredible Years Report. A paper is attached to the agenda, that will move to completed.

2.2.2 Area 4 (line 126) – Regional and QA Forum. JG has contacts to help assess how North Somerset are progressing with the QA process. There's a Regional Network Group which AW has been in contact with and is also in the process of arranging a regional meet. A conversation is needed to identify whether we pick up on JG's offer or whether there's something in place. MP updated they are in contact with some neighbouring authorities to progress. **AW hoping to complete by the May Board and will update the 'Action By' date. ACTION.** Our SIP partner, Islington is looking through some of our SEMH EHCP's to help us identify themes of what might be going on for children behind the broad category of SEMH.

2.2.3 Area1 (line 128) – The adoption of SEND Strategy. The quiz is embedded in the agenda and is due to go out to schools and on the noticeboard. Item to be marked complete and put on the Forward Plan to bring back to discuss evidence. **PH suggested it would be useful for Board members to do the quiz to see if it's pitched appropriately. <https://forms.office.com/e/De9h2MjiFL> ACTION. AW to add to the Local Offer. ACTION.**

2.2.4 Permanent and Fixed term exclusions (line 131). The paper is coming to the May Board with an action plan. **AW to extend the date. ACTION.**

2.2.5 Area 5 (line 137) – Provide an escalation report to the February Board. Conversations have been had with Islington and there is a follow up meeting being booked. **Action complete and a written update to be brought to the May Board.**

ACTION.

- 2.2.6 Area 6 (line 138) – New SEND Inspection Framework. Item complete. A paper is attached to the agenda which includes feedback from JH's action, communications from different people and a power point.
- 2.2.7 New SEND Inspection Framework (line 140) – This is about at what point the SEND Improvement Plan will be stepped down now there's a national one. Emma Brown from the DfE has requested a meeting to address this point and there are plans to get a date in the diary.
- 2.2.8 Forward Plan (line 142) - Item complete; on today's agenda.
- 2.2.9 Independent School Report (line 144) – Visits needed to be moved because of the ILEX, **AW will report back in June. ACTION.**
- 2.2.10 Area 5 (line 147) – Duplicate item, **AW to amend. ACTION.**
- 2.2.11 NSPCWT funding (line 148) – The Parent/Carer Community Meeting is scheduled for 24th April. **AW to change the target date to May. ACTION.** SS, LM and KM met within the timescale; the follow up is to put the SLA together with a broader group to meet with KM.
- 2.2.12 Safety Valve (line 150) – Attached to the agenda.
- 2.2.13 Area 4, Quality of Plan (line 151) – Actions completed. An agreed date is needed, **AW to add a new action with the planned date for the May Board. ACTION.**
- 2.2.14 Feedback on Inspection session (line 153) – JH provided the bullet points for the Plymouth trial inspection which have been combined into one report.
- 2.3 Risk Log Review**
- 2.3.1 AW has taken over the SEND Engine Room Operational Group on a Friday morning. JW thanked everyone for their contributions towards a comprehensive risk register. Discussions took place around the quality of the EHCP. The backlog is the biggest risk, AW has a meeting with the Principal Educational Psychologist, (EP) tomorrow to map out how to reduce that and to look at the top ups. **AW proposed to come back to the next board with a timeline of how we are going to deal with the backlog; that ties in with our safety valve piece of work. ACTION.**
- 2.3.2 PH updated there is implementation funding from the Safety Valve, which will help those resources to bring down the list. There are concerns because of changes to Top of Funding (TUF), a message around what's ordinarily available around EHCPs is key and needs to be shared in lots of Fora. The QA will be helpful to check progress with social care and health input which in turn should bring this down further once we've had confirmation.

- 2.3.3 Area 3 (line 16/17) – Progress is being made with capital project work, various resource bases, and consultations are going out to schools.
- 2.3.4 Area 2 (line 9) – A conversation to be had around EHCP's going up and changes from TUF which puts pressure on professionals to attend reviews and to look at how that process is supported. KM advised that if all assessments are being moved from a critical point to a new pathway; it's likely there will be more demand at schools and SEMH which will impact on the local system and experiences. **LMc to pull together a risk register with associated mitigations. ACTION. PH agreed with KM that capacity of therapists needs to go onto the risk register. ACTION.** MHe noted they are committed on their Memorandum of Understanding that all annual reviews would get a written contribution from Health colleagues and there would be attendance in person for complex cases.
- 2.3.5 **PH suggested meeting with a group of clinicians, including KM, LMc and parent/carers to work out what contributions we can provide, have written assurance from Health about what's expected going forward and how to manage parent/carers expectations. ACTION.** EBR suggested the portal may have the ability to have reviews on an electronic platform to allow co-production remotely; **AW to see if that's possible. ACTION. KT advised that both South Gloucestershire and Wiltshire are addressing this issue and it may be worth sharing ideas regarding recruitment, priority setting etc. ACTION.**

3.0 Forward Plan

- 3.1 AW has mapped out a year on the forward plan and will come back with regular updates and deep dives.
- 3.2 PH spoke about a piece of work the head teachers are undertaking to gather their children with SEND to get details of a full day of their experiences. EBR is filming a 'day in the life' of their young people, how they are supported, how they are interacted and communicated with.
- 3.3 **AW to add Pathway to Adulthood to the July/August Board. ACTION.** PH is talking with Adult and Children's Social Care and trying to position this as a 'right of passage', rather than pathway to adulthood.
- 3.4 JW raised whether the frequency of items, are adequate, also the formal meeting with the DfE is in July and suggested the meeting after could be allocated to feedback. **AW to adjust. ACTION.**
- 3.5 Discussions have been had around inspection readiness and what is needed from the Board. PH thought this should be discussed at every Board as its likely there will be an inspection soon. **Work has started in the background and that needs to be brought together as a group to do a self-assessment. ACTION.**

Members agreed that a strategic joined up local area partnership as to how this Board responds will be critical, and meetings in early June and early July will be set. JH highlighted the time taken to get documents together and suggested doing as much preparation as possible in advance and then to focus whether people are clear on their areas for the interviews. PH reassured JH that a document library has been started and there's an entire workstream happening in the background. JW suggested adding timeline as an agenda item to the next Board to understand what's happening next, to progress with the self-assessment and to be as prepared as possible. **To add to forward plan. ACTION.**

- 3.6 AW will add the quality of EHCP plans, and going forward will put a regular slot into agenda for SEND inspection update and link with colleagues to set a formal date for June.

4.0 Improvement Plan

4.1 Area 2

MHe reminded the Board about the lack of capacity within the local area to implement the SEND reforms effectively.

- 4.2 The Graduated Response has been launched and already needs reviewing. The 5 nurture hubs are in place and provide 50 places. Mental Health Support Teams in schools are in place and delivering. Community care, additional substantive therapy staff are in post and operational. Paediatrics trajectory is going up with 23.5% seen within 18 weeks. Speech & Language and Physio are 100% for February. OT didn't reach their predicted trajectory. Health Visiting is over 90% and the Specialist CAMHS emergency service is 100%. Autism in Area 5, the average waiting period for children is 35 weeks but is dropping. In comparison with neighbouring authorities MHe thinks that North Somerset is at the right level. **AW and MHe to look at the system to organise data to automatically go out with Board papers and the correct report. ACTION. LMc clarified the paper will be circulated today. ACTION.** PH updated formal evaluations of the Nurture Groups is taking place tomorrow and the first ANT has been held.

- 4.3 PH asked about the changes of criteria of Autism which is causing significant anxiety amongst parents/carers and professionals. LMa updated these are BNSSG-wide changes, about bringing in clinical prioritisation as opposed to chronological booking. Clearly, there's a need to work and reflect on how this is taken forward with the ICB and Sirona. The Framework for Autism Spectrum Diagnosis was published on 6th April, so that context needs to be considered.

- 4.4 LMc has recently been successful around securing more money for the ASD waiting list initiatives, this is around working together to look at collective assets and statutory responsibility to create a sustainable change. LMc is ensuring her clinical resources are directed at the most need and vulnerability and the Board has a system responsibility to work out a sustainable change when it comes to neurodiversity.

LMc hopes to have the data around understanding impact.

- 4.5 KM recognised this is access to assessments across all services that families won't have unless they're at a critical point. There's a concern parents will start pushing failure of school breakdowns to access the pathway and a potential for spiralling mental health issues. PH advised this needs to be a main point in the Risk Register and the impact is significant. The Board need to take ownership and think about how to manage the fall out across the system and what services are available to meet their needs. JW noted this was raised at the ICB because of the concerns, Sirona was clear there is lesson's being learnt about the issue of co-production. JW appreciated the pathway is going to be designed through one of the Operational ICB Transformation Groups and asked for clarity on what the action is and what assurance the Board will get. **LMa to bring back a scoping document to the next Board in terms of where we are. ACTION.** KM thought that more urgency as a Board is needed to make sure a system is in place.
- 4.6 PH advised that if performance data can differentiate between unmet need, parental anxiety about unmet need and failure demand it will be clearer where to focus our activity.
- 4.7 **Area 3 and 5 Updated on what progress looks like for Children and Young People**
JS has received a report from Guy about the Nurture Groups which was positive with some good learning points. PPE's are completed and KS2 SATs results will soon be available; **JS will provide indicative results from Heads in the June Board to step the item down. ACTION.** JS gave a brief overview of the KPIs. There's been a 11% increase in mainstream of SEND children. JS to circulate the draft Education Strategy, JS has had consultations with Head Teachers and we're going to work as an Education Partnership Team to look at that strategy to re-energise those partnerships across schools. **JS will provide a full report in May for exclusions. ACTION.**
- 4.8 JW suggested there's an opportunity for lobbying around funding concerns and the unintended consequences on SEND improvement. **PH to assist with drafting correspondence on behalf of schools and the Board with JW and LMa. ACTION. Board Members to redirect conversations back into the system, so we can redirect and act upon. ACTION.**
- 4.9 **Area 4 EHC quality update paper**
MP updated that in the first quarter they quality assured 72 plans and 74% were rated as green, there's evidence that officers are responding to the feedback they are getting from the Quality Assurance Officer. Contingency measures have been put in place to create a more resilient QA system. Officers are being supported to develop understanding of what makes a good quality plan and providing training to what constitutes a legally compliant EHCP. JW reassured the Board that we'd had the conversation around the input into the EHCP's earlier in this meeting and agreed an action will be taken away around that.

JW thanked MP on behalf of the Board of the positive progress that has been made.

- 4.10 Area 5 – AS commented that information has been covered already in the updates across the Board. Joint Commissioning continues to progress across the board with Islington. AW reassured the Board that updates are discussed each week in the Engine Room. Area 5 is tied into the conversation with Islington, it's moving in the right direction. **Islington have provided a contact to meet with AW and AS and AW will bring back to the Board for sign off. ACTION.**

5.0 Data Dashboard – The Incredible Years Report / Early Years

- 5.1 PH noted the Incredible Years report is really positive, it came to this board because people were interested to know more worth having a read and reassuring yourselves of the quality of work that's out there and how appreciated it is by parents. A lot of thought has gone into the quiz, it has been simplified and is more accessible to stakeholders. The key with the data dashboard is, are targets being set around particular areas of weakness and are we then reflecting on how we're doing against those targets and is it enough. KM would like to see how SEND support and EHCP total numbers compare nationally and to neighbours. **PH will look at numbers and report back. ACTION. AW to add a deep dive on the data dashboard to the Forward Plan quarterly. ACTION. PH will get a print-out circulated to everyone once a month to have that conversation. ACTION.** AW is working with data staff on how to put in a version to balance against the other authorities which will make it easier to view.

6.0 New SEND Inspection Framework

- 6.1 A powerpoint is built into the report to give a quick overview of what happens each week. AW has been liaising with colleagues from Cornwall and they've given good practice tips. AW is meeting with HC and Tina on Friday to continue putting together Annex A and working with health and social care. AW proposed a case audit to support conversations with inspectors; they are looking for how well we're working together with Health, Social Care and Parents. AW has pulled together an audit tool, but there's more work to do, he suggested it's something the Board needs to have a handle on. AW is starting to do that ahead of time to get into a habit. PH would like to check the audit tool with Health and Children's Social Care and suggested a dry run of some audits at the Extraordinary Meeting in June. **A written programme plan to be put together to cover the next few months in terms of readiness for the next Board. ACTION. PH to look at who is going to be red flagged. ACTION.** JH offered to facilitate sessions and fed back on previous inspections.
- 6.2 **AW will be looking at doing some coaching around inspection questions. ACTION. AW has some data for the audit and will take offline with PH. ACTION.** Everyone needs to be prepared on the basis that everyone will be seen to manage the risk and support staff. **AW to complete the report based on the conversation today, and re-circulate to sign off. ACTION.**

7.0 Feedback from DfE

7.1 KT fed back it's been a positive, informative, and action-orientated meeting. The selection of the LAs to Lead Regional Expert SEND Partnerships is underway, with shortlisted authorities attending a meeting with the DfE today.

8.0 Any Other Business

8.1 On behalf of the Board JW thanked CG for chairing this meeting and working alongside North Somerset and Partners.

9.0 Date of Next Meeting

9.1 Friday 12th May 2023 from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

DRAFT