

North Somerset SEND Partnership

SEND Improvement Board Minutes

Friday 12th May 2023, 14:00 to 16:00

Present

Jo Walker (JW), Chief Executive & Chair, NSC
Pip Hesketh (PH), Assistant Director for Education Partnerships, NSC
Mark Tucker (MT), SEND Advisor for the South West, NHS England
Shane Devlin (SD), Chief Executive for Integrated Care Board for BNSSG
Sheila Smith (SS), Director of Children's Services, NSC
Anthony Webster (AW), SEND Manager, NSC
Lisa Manson (LM), Director of Performance & Delivery, BNSSG, ICB
Grainne Rogers (GR) on behalf of Lorraine McMullen
Jane Humphreys (JaH), Children's Improvement Advisor within the Local Government Association
Anthony Webster (AW), SEND Team Manager, North Somerset Council
Becky Hopkins (BH), Assistant Director, Children's, Family Support & Safeguarding
Mark Hemmings (MH), Transformation Manager with ICB
Ed Bowen-Roberts (EBR), Headteacher, Baytree
Emma Bray (EBra), Headteacher Christ Church Primary, representing Primary Headteachers
Mandy Plumridge (MP), SEND Manager, NSC
Matt Greenhalgh, Interim Service Improvement Lead for Children's Social Work
Jacqui Scott (JS), Head of Learning & Achievement for Education Partnership
Keith Thompson, (KT), SEND Professional Advisor for the Southwest, DfE
Emma Diakou (ED), Head of Business Insight, Policy & Partnerships, NSC
Helen Caldwell (HC), NSC
Rebecca Pinder (RP), Minute Taker, Agilisys Limited

Apologies

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

Mr J Humphries (JH), Secondary Head Representative, St Katherine's School
Emma Brown, (EBro), Vulnerable Children's Unit, DfE
Alison Stone, Head of Strategic Commissioning, Children's Services
Kenton Mee (KM), Chief Executive for North Somerset Parents Carer's Working Together & Parent Carer Forum for North Somerset

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 The Board is without an Executive Member following last week's elections, new members will be announced this afternoon.

2.0 Minutes of Meeting of 17th April 2023

- 2.1 It was agreed the minutes were an accurate representation of the meeting.

2.2 Action Log

- 2.3 *AW to work with the wider regional teams to create a peer Q/A forum.* Gail from North Somerset joined with BCP in Dorset on 5th May and there's a wider group set up on 26th May and 8th June with North Somerset. Gail has a few more meetings with BCP in Dorset, feedback on evidence will be provided verbally prior to the next QA Report in July. Item on track. **AW to mark complete and add revised date.**

ACTION.

- 2.4 New SEND Inspection Framework – The DfE have clarified that an Ofsted/CQC joint area inspection under the new framework would nullify the existing Improvement Plan and Improvement Notice. They will take stock after our next formal review as there's acknowledgement of distance travelled over the last 18 months, and they will then come back to us with recommendations. Item complete.

- 2.5 *The Independent Schools Report* – PH and AW have visited 6 providers and are writing a report for the Board looking at how they're quality assured and monitored and how we report the outcomes of the children in those provisions. The report will be provided shortly.

- 2.6 *NSPCWT Funding Issues* – North Somerset and the ICB have drawn up requirements of the core offer. Some areas of vulnerability have been identified in the way the Parent Carer Forum is committed financially and a difference between its core funding. CG, SS and PH have met to discuss what the support will be. The ICB has match funded the DfE element of the grant and clarification around the core funding is a piece of work to do over the next year with KM to close off the risks. **A position statement to be brought back to the next Board, to give the outcome of the meeting on 16th May. AW close off the item as the dialogue is ongoing.**

ACTION.

- 2.7 *Update on the therapies commissioning following meetings with Islington* - LM is meeting Islington on 23rd May to close or escalate. **LM to update JW and SD prior to the meeting with DfE and NHS England on 7th June. ACTION.**
- 2.8 *The SEND strategy quiz to be added to the Local offer* - AW is meeting with HC's team next week to redesign a parental friendly version for the local offer.
- 2.9 *Update on capacity to support Annual Reviews* - The Memorandum of Understanding is in place and the item is complete. **To test the Memorandum of Understanding and build on the learning of the Baytree pilot. ACTION. A parent's guide on what to expect from the annual review to be put on the local offer. ACTION.**
- 2.10 *The Autism pathway* - To be brought back to the June Board. **Date to be updated. ACTION.**
- 2.11 *Education Strategy and Indicative Results data* - In progress. The strategy is attached to Board papers.
- 2.12 *Funding* - Item to be completed by today.
- 2.13 *SEND inspection readiness* – On today's agenda.
- 2.14 Risk Log**
- 2.15 *Improving quality of EHC plans (Item 4.1)* – This is around not being able to keep up with EHCP requests. Steps have been taken to increase capacity within the local authority by bringing in locum Educational Psychologists because of increase in demand and requests for statutory assessments. This this will remain a high risk for a while until that number comes down.

Independent schools lowering thresholds to be added as an emerging risk. ACTION. PH to clarify whether the risk is just North Somerset or wider and escalation with the DfE is required. ACTION. To feed through to the Regional SEND co-ordinator. ACTION.

3.0 Forward Plan

- 3.1 The formal review is in June which will be discussed at the Board. **AW to add JH's suggestion of evaluating the parent/carer's survey. ACTION. Members to share additional topics with AW. ACTION.**

4.0 Improvement Plan

- 4.1 **Area 2** - JS has consulted widely with professionals about the 6 pillars and how they

are expanded. Network meetings have started, and trauma informed funding has been successful. JS is talking to different stakeholders so each pillar can have 3 aims to help schools be more effective, which will be reviewed after a year.

EB has implemented correspondence with primary heads, they are keen to meet to discuss the varying levels of skills and streams of training. JS confirmed that in 2 months it will be finalised to a working document for September. **AW to add periodically progress with the Education Strategy to the forward plan. ACTION.** It will go through the DLT and then to various Boards. The item is on the Children's Partnership Board agenda and JS can potentially circulate to the Board in July.

- 4.2 PH has had real success with the nurture groups, the head teachers are coming to the June formal review. EB shared that considering the current pressures on school leaders, an element of supervision for head teachers has been offered which has had positive feedback.
- 4.3 *Exclusions and Suspensions.* JS has identified that secondary schools have too many SEND supported children receiving suspensions, that will be raised with EPB and SHINs to form a subgroup to look at data in more detail. Current data shows that SEMH needs aren't being catered for and is leading to the suspensions. JS is ensuring both primary and secondary are involved in conversations. **PH to add suspension and permanent exclusion data for Special Schools to the report. ACTION.**
- 4.4 **JS will provide comparison data for terms 5 and 6 for years 7 to 10 and actions from the subgroup to look at those schools who don't suspend as many. ACTION. JS to look at potential data for year 11's and bring back to the October Board. ACTION.**
- 4.5 *Autism Pathway.* Following the publication of the National Autism Framework on 5th April and having heard from parents/carers and partners, stakeholders have been written to around reverting to previous triage arrangements for children on the autism pathway. **LM has co-produced a project plan with chairs of The Parent Carer Forum and will circulate to partners which can be discussed at next Board. ACTION.**
- 4.6 MH shared good news from the Lead for Mental Health Support in schools; they now have two teams in place and are on track to support 58% coverage of the school population.
- 4.7 GR updated electronic records went live last week and there is now shared records across Children's Services, they now have means of capturing when EHC reports are done.
- 4.8 **MH to share a link to AW to forward with the minutes, of feedback given to children and young people from their key worker on the crisis project. ACTION.**

- 4.9 **Area 3** - PH updated the Nurture Group report is going through its final drafts and will be circulated virtually by the end of 26th May.
PH has invited Ofsted and Keith to visit the groups. The pilot is being introduced to Early Years.
- 4.10 JS noted the item hasn't been stepped down because there's no data from exams and has asked Emma and SHINs to provide indicative data. JW advised they need to be reassured the data wouldn't be released publicly and would only go the DfE. JS added a word of caution with data because last year's was still post Covid, this year's data is based on assumption; it would be useful for schools to give their indicative data to enable us to consider that. **JW would like that point made at the DfE meeting. ACTION.** PH thought that Area 3 may never be stepped down and may be superceded by the new Inspection Framework.
- 4.11 **Area 4** – Quality Assurance Paper. MP updated they continue to look at 100% of plans through quality assurance. Two plans a week go to the assessment panel. MP will provide an update about the Dorset and BCP work at the next Board. The number of plans rated as good raised from 50% to 73% and the parent/carer contribution raised from 53% to 82% and there's more evidence of the child's voice through the plan; there's a training need to establish views of the child. AW is due to catch up with Will, Head of Service in South Gloucester in June to discuss aligning the same software and audit tool. PH and AW have talked to independent schools about the quality of their annual reviews; that will be captured in our reporting. MP added their next step is to look at the proposed amended plans to determine whether the issues lie. **MP has some good success stories with SEND children progressing well through their education and is getting some case studies together to capture their voice. ACTION.**
- 4.12 JH queried the recurring theme of social care contribution. MG updated it's a combination of factors, some about people's understanding of the priority and work continues with social care colleagues. The quality has significantly improved, the new guidance for social workers is almost complete. MG continues to do a piece of work with AW and wider colleagues around auditing of ECP's as well.
- 4.13 AW has started rolling out EHCP portal and Annual Review training to schools with a view to have that running by September. There's another session next week and videos are on the local offer as well. Stage 2 is rolling out training to Health and Social Care. **AW to produce a notice in terms of managing expectations for the next 6 to 12 months. ACTION.** PH added that Education is shadowing senior officers between Education and Children's Social Care to build an understanding of each other's services and perspectives.
- 4.14 **Area 5** – AS has sent apologies. Tony Page has returned to Sirona and Anna is returning from her maternity leave. JW noted this is an area where concerns have been raised around Joint Commissioning and the rate of progress, there's a further meeting with Islington the week after next. JW would like to see more progress the

next time the Board meets. SS and LM have the item on the action log to bring some feedback. **LM is hoping to give an update to JW and SD prior to the DfE meeting on the 7th June. ACTION.**

- 4.15 **Area 6** - ED updated the dashboard is planned for a deep dive every 2 months, the next in July. It's been agreed to send schools parts of the dashboard regularly, so they can see what's happening in context and nationally. PH spoke to Hannah Batts around measuring progress month on month to enable target setting. JH asked for transition data to be considered; **AW add Transition Data to the action log. ACTION. JW asked Board members to take note of a language change from 'transitions' to 'pathways to adulthood'. ACTION.** PH is also looking at Rights of Passage for children with SEND to ensure we're providing what they should be getting at certain stages in their life.

5.0 SEND Inspection Readiness

- 5.1 Cornwall's and Warrington's Inspections are now on the website. In terms of SEND readiness a second meeting was held on Tuesday and further data was fed into the areas SEF; there's more work to do, including pulling in further social care, health information in. AW meets with several people on Fridays, the agenda focuses on moving things forward. 12 different meetings have been arranged with the SIP partner, Islington, they are happy to share policies and processes.
- 5.2 There's a follow up meeting in June for the SEND Board to look at this in more detail. **AW to look at what the surveys are asking the children and young people. ACTION.**
- 5.3 EBR suggested questions could be incorporated to a survey that schools are already putting together; and could also feed into parent/carers surveys. The Board was assured there's a lot of work underway, progress being made, and data is being brought together.
- 5.4 KT said there's a lot of activity behind the scenes with the DfE and advisors looking at inspection findings, the issue of consistency and key basis of judgements. KT is hoping to report back at the next Board meeting. Regarding data and survey's Ofsted are keen on the lived experience of families; KT thought there may be value in tracking a few families with complex needs over time to see what their experiences of services are and how that learning has been taken forward in terms of service improvements. Given timeliness of exams and covid, KT has suggested to another authority to gain samples of evidence across areas of cohorts rather than individuals.
- 5.5 KT advised that in terms of data gathering, schools often have information that's not published and that can be used to judge whether progression is made; KT also suggested working on a small sample of schools and children to show progression over time. PH is looking at getting a proforma together to capture outcomes from EHCP's across the board. Conventional measures of progress and attainment are less relevant to children with SEND so other means of capturing progress needs to

be found. *KT left the meeting.*

- 5.6 From the feedback the Board has heard that the voice of parents/carers is leading us down a path that's not necessarily the correct one and there's learning about whether we have a strong enough relationship with parents/carers and young people. JW suggested having parents/carers to join the Board. **AW to take away reflection under this item on our relationship with parents/carers and whether we want to hear from them directly as a Board or broader group, ensuring a broader group to get varied representation. ACTION.**
- 5.7 PH has asked all schools to talk to their children with SEND and then to talk with parents/carers, they will learn a lot about the experience of those children and families, that information can be gathered as part of our evidence. PH, SS and BH will be taking questions to The Parish and Town Councils to get a wider view of what it's like to be a child with SEND.
- 5.8 MH referred to Area 4 and AW's top tips. There's now a clear policy around dynamic support registers and community care education and treatment reviews. MH has met with the developers of the inspection format that's being delivered; there will be dives into children with complex needs at risk of admission so the dynamic support register needs to be working effectively. MH advised for work to be done to follow through some pathways, with children with more complex mental health needs and complex learning difficulties to see how it works and how the register works will be important.
- 5.9 **The point of business continuity was raised, participation is needed from all three agencies. HC to take on board. ACTION.** BH noted some of the recent learning from the ILAX was having a conversation early on with Ofsted around capacity and resources available.

6.0 Feedback from DfE

- 6.1 MT thanked the Board for a proactive discussion. A lot of the discussions are very much there, it's about co-production, communicating and working alongside parent/carers and emphasising the mix of the children and young people and being able to evidence pathways and partnership working. KT advised the Board to continue working as they are, some good work is being done. **One of the key areas is around EHCPs and KT advised to demonstrate from a health perspective the review process is working, and data is now coming in. Co-production needs to be addressed and evidence provided. LM, PH and AW to incorporate those two areas. ACTION.**

7.0 Any Other Business

- 7.1 **AW has sent a draft monitoring report for this Board and will capture updates and share with Board members, ready to send to the DfE by 24th May. ACTION.**

JW agreed with the process.

7.2 **A pre-meet was agreed for 5th June. Members to send AW all information and data by 24th May. ACTION.**

7.3 It was agreed for the time being Board meeting of 15th August Board would go ahead.

7.4 JW our executive has been finalised following elections last Thursday and we have a partnership executive. The Deputy Leader is Catherine Gibbons, and she is retaining her portfolio for children and would like to continue working with us. Our Leader is Cllr Mike Bell. The Executive member for Adult Services and Community Services is Cllr Roger Whitfield and Homes and Health is Cllr Jenna Ho Marris.

7.5 Sheila Smith is leaving North Somerset will be retiring at the end of July. Sheila thanked people for their warm words.

7.0 Date of Next Meeting

7.1 Monday 19th June 2023, 13:45hrs to 15:45hrs