

North Somerset SEND Partnership

SEND Improvement Board Minutes

Friday 20th October 2023, 1:00pm to 3:00pm

Present

Cllr. Catherine Gibbons (CG) Executive Member & Chair
Shane Devlin (SD), Chief Executive for Integrated Care Board for BNSSG
Anthony Webster (AW), Head of SEND, NSC
Jane Humphreys (JaH), Children's Improvement Advisor within the Local Government Association
Anna Clark (AC), Senior Performance Improvement Manager, ICB
Kathy England (KE), Interim Head of Learning and Achievement, NSC
Alison Stone (AS), Head of Children's Commissioning, NSC
Helen Caldwell (HC), Strategic and Policy Development, NSC
Anthony Webster (AW), SEND Team Manager, North Somerset Council
Grainne Rogers (GR) on behalf of Lorraine McMullen
Wendy Packer (WP, Head of Inclusion, NSC
Ed Bowen-Roberts (EBR), Headteacher, Baytree and rept for special schools
Anna Clark (AC), Senior Performance Manager, ICB
Matt Greenhalgh, Interim Service Improvement Lead for Children's Social Work
Mandy Plumridge (MP), SEND Manager, NSC
Jacqui Scott (JS), Interim Head of Virtual Schools
Rosi Shepherd (RS), Chief Nurse, ICB
Rebecca Pinder (RP), Minute Taker, Agilisys Limited

Apologies

Jo Walker (JW), Chief Executive, NSC
Pip Hesketh (PH), Assistant Director for Education Partnerships, NSC
Carolyn Fair (CF), Interim Director of Children's Services, NSC
Kenton Mee (KM), Chief Executive for North Somerset Parents Carer's Working Together & Parent Carer Forum for North Somerset
Justin Humphries (JH), Secondary Head Representative, St Katherine's School

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

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

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

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

Bally Nagra (BN), Head of Service for Children with Disabilities in North Somerset

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

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

Mark Hemmings (MH), Performance Manager with ICB

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

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Acknowledged.

2.0 Minutes of Meeting of 18th September 2023

Minutes of 18th September were approved.

2.2 Action Log

AW talked through actions due to be completed in October 2023.

2.3 Transitions between Children's and Adults Social Care. Completed.

2.4 Mind of Your Own is being used within Social Care. CF proposed extending. **HC to do more work, pick up in the SEND Engine Room and forward to January's Board. ACTION.**

2.5 Data. Item complete.

2.6 Public health contribution to SEND. **AW to follow up with PH and send updates. ACTION.**

2.7 SEND Strategy quiz. Complete.

2.8 Exclusion Data. On today's agenda. Complete.

2.9 Independent schools. On today's agenda.

2.10 Meeting with head teachers and mental health support. **PH to follow up. ACTION.**

- 2.11 Board members meeting with parents/carers and children and young people. AW has developed a form to send to PAs to track who's met with who, to pull into a spreadsheet. **Tina to send email. ACTION.** Item complete.
- 2.12 Surveys to schools. AW is looking to put the Ofsted questionnaire into an online survey to share with schools, something is needed to capture data. AW is expecting to get results back to the January Board.
- 2.13 Pyramid of participation. Completed and added to documentation.
- 2.14 Speech and Language. **AW and AS to meet weekly with GR and the Team after half term. Item in progress and will feedback regularly. ACTION.**
- 2.15 Pathway to Adulthood. On today's agenda.
- 2.16 Data Analysis. **PH to follow up and bring back to the November Board. ACTION.**
- 2.17 Community Training. Due in December.
- 2.18 A date in diary for 17th November. Item ongoing. **AW to change date. ACTION.**
- 2.19 SEND Inspection. Item complete. AW has a contact.
- 2.20 Annual Review. **MP/AW to identify North Somerset colleague to write a report for the IDOX system (EHC portal) so we can see who is attending Annual Reviews and once complete bring to the Board. ACTION.**
- 2.3 Risk Log Review**
- 2.3.1 The log hasn't changed. There's work for AW behind the scenes, as it's still linked with old areas, the logs are still relevant, **but AW will change the reference numbers. ACTION. Complete**
- 2.3.2 Professional Contributions to EHCPs and Annual Reviews. As part of the SEND Engine Room AW will be looking at quality of advice from Social Care and Health and have some joint meetings to look at how to improve the system. Training sessions are being set up for social workers to help improve quality and will be picked up in next month's quality assurance paper.
- 2.3.3 In terms of timeliness, EHCP's are impacted by the amount of Educational Psychologist (EP) time available, the backlog was 115 before the summer and as of Monday, is now 86. Some EPs have been doing extra time and there should be enough capacity to improve the compliance of 20 weeks.
- 2.3.4 AW is filtering young people in receipt of top up funding, the team are juggling to ensure that part of the system isn't overwhelmed; there was over 100 in the system,

so some might be on the waiting list, but are moving through. Regular phone calls are being made to parents/carers. **JH suggested a bulletin go to schools, so people know of the challenges being faced. AW and MP to address via the next TUF consultation paper due out end of November once SSF has met.**

2.3.5 **AW advised the ADHD national issues need to be tied into the risk log and will review and bring to the November Board. ACTION. SD suggested using the Board to consider whether the risk register is correct and has the right set of risks. AW to add. ACTION. JH raised potential political changes over the next year which may change the landscape and implications of risks. AW to add to April/May Board. ACTION.**

2.4 Forward Plan

2.4.1 Additional items have been added. November's Board will have an update on the Education Strategy; The Dashboard is due its quarterly review and Business Intelligence are aware of that; **How the SEND Strategy is being implemented PH and JS to discuss with Anna. ACTION.** AW is planning to have the Young People's Council to join to the Board to discuss whether the SEND strategy is making an impact for them. **December's Board will discuss a deep dive into SEND support. ACTION.**

2.4.2 JH suggested discussions on Self Evaluation of SEND (SEF). An engagement conversation with Ofsted on Monday, the SEF is almost complete. AW has spoken to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel and agreed that an action plan will be put together for the next 12 months to link to who will be responsible for what. **To bring to November or December Board (HC). ACTION. AW to distribute papers with the minutes. ACTION.**

3.0 Feedback on SEND Day

3.1 SD was amazed by the amount of people, stands and information on the day. **AW to add item to November's Board for KM to update on statistics. ACTION.** AW found the day very positive, it was good to see people in person and to be able to network; he was able to introduce Cllr. Gibbons to different teams and parents were positive about being able to put names to faces after a feeling of disconnection; it was nice to connect on a human level. **A point for further discussion is for the SEND Improvement Board to support the use of the event as a professional development day. ACTION.**

3.2 HC found it positive to have face to face contact with parents/families, it was powerful to hear what they're up to and how support they received has impacted on them, both positively and negatively. HC and her team were able to consult and receive feedback on the SEND Local Offer. One of the stands were asking for suggestions on alternative language and young people provided new words to replace those they didn't like. **HC to provide wording suggestions to the Board. ACTION.**

- 3.3 JS congratulated KM and his team for the amazing work. JS did 3 workshops and a talk; it was good to have the opportunity to talk to people face to face and good to meet professionals. The 9.00am to 9.00pm open time gave the opportunity for all to attend.
- 3.4 GR reiterated that it was a fantastic day, teams found it useful to find out about other services available to Children and Young People and network. Feedback on workshops was very positive and gave a real opportunity for CPD.
- 3.5 EBR said that a byproduct of the event was upskilling professionals, they had workshops on Communication Aids and Social Story Writing. EBR suggested that when planning events in the future to cater for what each sector would benefit from. **Item to be discussed formally when KM attends. ACTION. AW to update KM on today's discussion. ACTION.**

4.0 ADHD Update on Medication

- 4.1 There's been a national alert regarding ADHD medication supply issues, guidance has been released for professionals working with Children and Young People around how to manage supply issues; to think about new initiations and whether the child/young person needs medication and whether they're in crisis. Consideration needs to be made for short treatment breaks and length of prescription, they're not able to currently prescribe for more than 30 days. Concerns have been raised in Parent Carer Forums across BNSSG. A group is looking at patient communication and how to make sure they're up to date on the latest information, it's serious and people need to understand why these options are being considered for their children and young people. If there any concerns, AC can put people in touch with the right contact in the ICB. SD spoke to Debbie, Chief Pharmacist to understand what the supply chain looks like, clarity isn't there unfortunately.
- 4.2 AW highlighted implications for schools and has asked EPs to look at getting resources out to help the system. The worst-case scenario is schools looking to permanently exclude and the SEND Improvement Board needs to work together to address that.
- 4.3 EBR advised that schools will put individual risk assessments together, look at other proactive strategies and consider therapeutic curriculum offers. Lower demands may need to be considered to support young people in these challenging times. CAMHS have written to parents to make them aware. EBR questioned whether there was risk around other medication. **AC wasn't aware but will check. ACTION. SD to see if Debbie and her team are aware of anything further down the line. ACTION.**

5.0 ICB / Sirona Data

- 5.1 AC shared data from August. Performance is 15.4% in terms of meeting the 18-week referral of treatment to target; demand has completely outstripped capacity. An improvement of data today shows an increase to 26%.

- 5.2 In terms of focus around Community Paediatrics, there's additional support from NHS England, in terms of waiting list validation, particularly the over 52 week waits needing review. A Task and Finish Group has been set up to look at the backlog and what the system is doing to support those Children and Young People; that will initially focus on demand and capacity, alongside the waiting list validation and to potentially look at what could be stopped, to address the immediate demand. Once outputs are in place from the action plan, what that means as a system can be explored.
- 5.3 Regarding Therapy Services, you'll see the OT waiting list is going up; there's not enough capacity in the services for the numbers of referrals going through. Project work and a review of clinical pathways is in place. **AC will share with the group to look at what can be done as a system to meet demand coming into our services. ACTION.**
- 5.4 SD raised the number of referrals rejected in August for SaLT was 56% and asked if they were the correct type of referrals coming through? GR noted that some referrals don't have enough information, so are rejected with the request for more information. They recognise there's a high level of rejection across the board and a piece of work is being done on whether the decisions meet the core referral criteria. GR has been working with school SaLT Services over the last 12 months, they now have a SENCo informing them how to make a good referral. For Early Years most referrals come through health visitors; there are referrals from families and those are rejected the most.
- 5.5 EBR asked whether fundamentally there's not enough workforce to meet demand? AC updated they are trying to address vacancies in the service, there's difficulty recruiting into certain specialties. In terms of overall capacity, there would still be a shortage of staff because of limited funding. System planning is being done in November to bring Local Authorities and ICB together to discuss where to prioritise efforts to yield the biggest impact.
- 5.6 JH advised that vulnerable children not getting investment at the earliest stage possible will impact costs further down the line. SD said from an overall perspective that's what they are trying to achieve, but there's an extreme budget, and they are making choices to get as much investment as possible, and processes. They need to invest and reform as much as they can, but don't have resources or workforce to meet all targets in a short timeframe. RS agreed there's a systemic problem around having the right workforce with the right skills. SD noted long waits are reducing. RS's Safeguarding Team is working closely with Sirona to get rid of wasted processes.
- 5.7 EBR would like a change in how performance is measured, not by how quickly children and young people are seen, but more qualitative data. **An ICB questionnaire is trying to collect feedback from families and AC will bring that, and some case studies back to the group. ACTION.**

6.0 Feedback on Pathways Preparing for Adulthood

- 6.1 Since MH's presentation on progress and challenges in June, they have continued to strengthen the Governance Board and arrangements and started an in-depth piece of work preparing adulthood strategies. They have started to look broadly in terms of travel training, ongoing employment, and housing etc. A piece of work reviewing all 125 children and young people who have moved from Children's to Adult's Social Care in the last 3 years was presented at The Children's Senior Leadership Team last week. For 90% of those who moved through the system it was straightforward; there's still work to do in terms of identifying needs and starting assessments early, but generally the cohort moves onto a successful adult package.
- 6.2 There is a small cohort of 13 young people who have more complex needs that had things been done sooner, their outcomes would be better. There will be 150 over the next 3 years that will move through Children's Social Care that includes those who have an EHCP and require Adults Services. We already identified 15 or 16 children and young people who again have high complex needs and will require a high level of support from Adults Social Care. The most significant difference is that cost of services will increase from £2.5 million to £5 million over the next 5 years if something different isn't done. **MH to present the 6 main items on the action plan to the Board, to ensure learning can be implemented. ACTION.** AW shared the document with the pathway to adulthood governance meeting last month as a good example.

7.0 Forward Plan Items

7.1.1 Attendance and Exclusions

- 7.1.2 WP has done a deep dive into secondary suspensions and exclusions, the reasoning behind them and what action is being taken to address this. There's quite a difference with 2 schools having suspended a disproportionate number of students.
- 7.1.3 A lot of work is now taking place with CEO's and Heads of those schools with higher number of suspensions and exclusions to drill down to what support is needed. WP wants to put as much early intervention in as possible to ensure young people aren't at risk of permanent exclusion and is making sure the graduated response can be evidenced. Attendance and suspensions are on the agenda for our meeting with schools, looking at what can be done to support them and to ensure there's consistency in data across schools. Both Special Schools and the PRU Learning Campus (PLC) are putting in outreach and early intervention for all youngsters, to address what some of the issues might be to avoid exclusions.
- 7.1.4 KE thought this needed to be a holistic approach and not a pastoral deep dive. WP agreed; often schools tell her there are still children and young people with unmet needs identified on school transfers; a delay in action is happening.
- 7.1.5 EBR suggested having evidence of where it's not working and pushing back to

schools. JH was concerned about the vulnerability of the children and where were they if not at school.

- 7.1.6 WP and PH have met with the Heads of the schools in question, discussing why one school is more successful and what needs to be done differently. There is lots of support for children not in full time education to ensure they're being safeguarded. For the most complex there's a meeting 3 times a week with PH and Heads of Service from Education Partnership and Social Care, looking at what's being done to get them in school. WP meets every Tuesday for the children a level below that, to look at what's being done to ensure those children are back in school full time. There's also monthly health professionals meeting and multi-agency meetings to address those young people to ensure it's understood why they're not in school and to get them back into school as soon as possible.
- 7.1.7 As of this year, Education Welfare must meet with all schools 3 times a year to have targeted support meetings to look at persistent absences for all students. There is a lot of work going on to bring everyone together to make attendance everyone's business and we need to be working with those who are finding themselves suspended or excluded. Schools are challenged if they try and permanently exclude a young person, and a few were rescinded last year when schools were worked with.
- 7.1.8 JS noted the data was up to May 2023 and since then there are more nurture groups, and schools are setting up their own nurture groups. **JS suggested bringing the data back in 6 months to compare progress. WP to bring back data. ACTION. AW to put on forward plan. ACTION.**

7.2 Progress on Attainment

- 7.2.1 JS thought that children and young people with EHCP's and EHC progress has been consistent throughout the pandemic. The paper points out the obvious that disadvantaged children and young people do less well than non-disadvantaged and in terms of the Education Strategy JS and PH will be driving on that piece of work to close the gap; KE will be leading on this over the next couple of weeks. JS suggested KE prepare SEND support data for the December Board. JS referred to the forgotten 41% of children from 2 to 11 and those leaving primary not having made progress, and the forgotten third of children going to post 16-education not having met the standard. Schools want to work with us and share their data.

KE is setting up a School Improvement Group to be in place by the end of this year and come Summer 2024 would hope to have made incremental progress in EHCP and SEND support.

- 7.2.2 JS has appointed staff to assist our Children in Care with English and Maths in the Virtual School, starting after Christmas. **A deeper dive to be put on the agenda of the Children and Young People Partnership meeting. ACTION.**

7.3 Independent Schools Update report

- 7.3.1 Independent placements in January were 143 and now 149. With Autism and SEMH being the highest area of need, this ties into work being done around extra resource bases being set up in Milton and Locking, opening in September and some additional bases at Secondary Schools in September 2024. AW is speaking with Weston College about transitioning back locally and what support and options are available. There are huge implications for home/school transport, with the spend being close to £1.5million. The SEND Commissioning placement is in place and will be working with the SEND team to monitor placements to tie in with the SEND Inspection Framework. AW is working with the Principal EP looking at how to pull together outreach support, getting the support in earlier and making it clear what's available. Baytree 2 is on track to be open February/March time, AW has been working with EBR around where students are best placed and is speaking with Bristol and South Gloucester to manage capacity in a fair way.
- 7.3.2 Part of the work around the pathway is to be clear around how to get travel training to improve independence, to help young people return for post 16-18; and working with the Adult Governance Team to tie in housing/supported living, so services are on the same page, can save money and reinvest in a different way.
- 7.3.3 The Safety Valve Project is going in the right direction, the next payment from the Department of Education has been received. The Lime Hills permanent site is a risk and AW and Emma Whitehead, Finance, are meeting regularly with JW, PH, CF, and Amy Webb to manage that. It's difficult trying to support children with a capped budget, creativity is needed to keep funding and work together. Somerset has funded schools to support ASD and SEMH children. AW is speaking with Somerset about their support for ASD and SEMH children and young people.
- 7.3.4 AW is having conversations with EP's around creating schools which are more autism friendly, those changes now would have an impact in 3 to 5 years-time which is why early intervention is key. JH wanted to know what the mechanisms are to ensure placements are meeting needs and whether those children are safe. **AW referred to the SEND Commissioning placement, part of that work is to ensure we're doing the annual reviews, they are also making sure outcomes are clear and MP will add to the action plan to give verbal update on those numbers. ACTION.**

7.4 Inspection Verbal Update

- 7.4.1 AW updated, the SEND engagement conversation with Ofsted is on Monday and everything in place, paperwork has been sent and there's a good handle on what we're doing well and what needs improvement. There's a review meeting for the SEND Engine Room early November and AW will ensure all data is available to report the key position back to the Board.
- 7.4.2 The SEF is covering things well and everyone is working hard to get that the information in. **AW to distribute to all to review. ACTION. complete**

8.0 Update from DFe Advisors

8.1 Apologies from Advisors.

9.0 Any Other Business

9.1 A reminder for people to have papers for the next meeting. **ACTION.**

10.0 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 13th November 2023 – 10.30pm to 12.30pm

DRAFT