

SEND Strategy Governance Board Notes

Thursday 14 March 2024

East Sussex College - Eastbourne Campus

Facilitator: David Smith / **Minutes:** Danielle Morley (ESCC)

Attendees: Elizabeth Funge (ESCC) Bethan Twigg (ESCC), Councillor Bob Standley (ESCC), Holly Riley-Saxby (ESPCF), Helen Diplock (ESPCF), Nathan Caine (ESCC), Chrys Poullikas (NHS), Caroline Tozzi (NHS), Louise Moor (Primary School Representative), Ann-marie Waite (Secondary School Representative), Sally Polanski (Amaze), Alice Tigwell (ESCC), Alex (Young Person Representative), Penny Mackay (ESCC), Antony Julyan (ESCC), Fenella Potterton

Apologies: Emma Buggy (Early Years Representative), Jo Nash (ESCC) Alison Jeffery (ESCC)

1. Facilitator's welcome and introductory remarks

David Smith introduced the group and gave updates to the Board:

- A new East Sussex Director of Children's services (DCS) has been appointed - Carolyn Fair.
- Carolyn will be starting in April alongside the outgoing DCS Alison Jeffery.
- There is lots happening in the SEND landscape at local (potential OfSTED/CCQ inspection), regional/area (Change Programme and area collaboration) and national (Green Paper on inclusion reform, upcoming General Election, and policy shifts)
- Because of the above and because of scheduled (for 2024) East Sussex SEND Strategy Board review of membership and terms of reference, there is requirement for Board to review and refresh and timing with new Chair arrangements is appropriate. The new DCS will be joining the Board. Kirsty Prawanna has resigned from the Board as special school representative, so we are looking for a replacement. We will be looking at health and care representation at Board level, and implementation group level.
- David Smith and Bethan Twigg are redrafting the SEND Governance Board Terms of Reference. It has been immensely valuable for the Chair/Facilitator to have individual 1:1 discussion with every Board member - and the agenda for today and the planned TOR/membership review should reflect those discussions
- Alongside considering membership, we also need to consider any key gaps in the work of the group, such as Post 16 and Early Years.
- Penny Mackay is hosting, on 21 March 2025 a specific 'educational stakeholders' engagement' event in the process of developing the Local Area Inclusion Plan.
- David reminded the group that being a Board member comes with a set of responsibilities and accountabilities and the revised TOR will seek to reflect that balance

2. Regular updates - Including actions from previous minutes and Updates from subgroups.

Bethan *summarised* actions from the previous Board meeting:

- *Penny/Nathan- to seek clarity on whether Change Programme Local areas will have to engage on all focus areas of the programme - Nathan confirmed that the Department of Education (DFE) have advised that there is a broad expectation that all Local areas will have to engage on all areas, but they recognise that not all local areas will be able to do this.*
- *Sarah to provide an update at future Board meetings - this was circulated with the agenda.*
- *New facilitator to lead conversations with Bethan and Board members on consideration to how reporting should work. Guidance around presentation of future power points will be provided. This was picked up in the presentation.*

Nathan gave an update on the SEND Strategy Implementation Group (SSIG):

- SSIG is the delivery group which sits under the SEND Governance Board.
- There have been two meetings since the last Board meeting.
- The January meeting had a strong discussion about coproduction.
- The February meeting had a focus on theme 5.
- They are looking at areas we are not so strong at and looking at how we can use the system to improve.

Antony updated the group on commissioning:

- The SEND Monitoring and Commissioning group Children's Integrated Therapy and Equipment Service (CITES) has been directly awarded to Kent community trust. This is nearly complete and secure.
- It was questioned whether a longer contract would be beneficial, now it is 5-7 years.
- It was noted that what's being written in EHCPs isn't always being delivered by CITES and co-production isn't always working across the Board for commissioning.
- It was suggested that we need NHS providers to be represented on SSIG.

3. Change Programme Update, (including SENDAP stakeholder event on 21 March)

Penny gave an update on the Change Programme:

- The Portsmouth and Sussex Area, engaged in the national Change Programme, is finishing the set-up phase, and entering the implementation phase.
- Children and Young People have different experiences depending on their geographical location. How do we move forward and improve on processes?
- We need a feedback loop, so we can keep feeding back challenges to the DFE and sharing information.
- We are currently looking at:
 - Advisory tailored lists
 - Multiagency panels
 - Strengthened mediation
 - Alternative provision
 - Data dashboard
 - Bands and tariffs
- The Change Programme is feeding into the national conversation but also helping at a local level.
- We are looking at EHCP templates, currently there are different templates across the three authorities in Sussex. There is currently a pilot with Early Years which will feed into the Change Programme.
- We need to look at what the Board's role in the Change Programme is. There will be a need for an accountable East Sussex Board for the emergent Local Area Inclusion Plan. Currently, the East Sussex SEND Strategy Board can and will fulfil that role for the SEND support elements of the LAIP - there are decisions to be made over the Alternative Provision elements of the LAIP.
- The Local Area Inclusion Plan (LAIP) is a huge document split into different sections. Feedback is that it doesn't feel like in inclusion plan, we may change the names.
- Penny noted that in East Sussex we have the SEND Strategy (2022-25) which will be continuing and won't be replaced by the LAIP. Both will coexist. We need to think about our narrative around this.
- When thinking about the membership of this Board we need to recognise that, as governance is currently configured, this Board will be signing off the LAIP.
- Penny will have a draft available for Board members in May and will then bring to the June Board meeting.
- How do we give people the opportunity to debate and consider the context ahead of the next scheduled Board (June) meeting? How do we get the right people in the room?

4. Benchmarking group exercise

- Due to timing constraints, we were unable to complete the exercise.
- Penny shared the 8 key principles and asked the group to look over the document outside of the meeting and consider our practices against them.
- It was agreed amongst the group that this would be a worthwhile exercise to do. Penny to suggest ways forward for Board engagement.

ACTION: Penny will circulate the information.

5. Transition- group discussion

David introduced this item. There is a lot of activity going on around SEND and how young people transition into adulthood. David asked the different representatives to give their perspective on issues around transition.

Alex - Young Person representative

- Alex described his experience of transitioning from a primary school to secondary school, he felt this was a difficult transition as he didn't come from a feeder primary school. His needs weren't communicated by the primary school to the secondary school and wasn't given a taster day.
- Alex went on to describe his current experience of transitioning from secondary to Post 16 as similarly difficult. His experiences vary significantly with different Post 16 establishments. Dialogue with and between the main post 16 providers could help significantly

Holly - Parent Carer Representative

- Holly echoed Alex's thoughts of non-feeder primaries. It was felt that they aren't transferring over the information in standard ways which means needs are not being met.
- There is often a lot of talking about making changes, but this isn't always reflected in what is happening.

Helen - Parent Carer Representative

- Helen cited the crucial role of APOs in the assessment and transition processes. She feels that the APO team has not been a settled one and that processes are variable, and the right schools are not being consulted and due process not always being completed.
- It appears, from parental viewpoints that transition from infant to junior school can be neglected and we have a lot of 'all through' primary schools in this county.

Louise - Primary School Representative

- Louise felt primary to secondary sees often good practice shared across local alliances but finds inconsistency with secondary schools to be a problem. An example given was not being consulted on dates for taster days.
- Primary schools, by nature, know the children very well which is something secondaries can't do. We need to consider how we handover information.
- Louise expressed that nursery to primary is more difficult as different nurseries vary in the information they hand over, and some children don't go to nursery.

Anne-Marie - Secondary School Representative

- Anne Marie advised that primary and secondary schools have put a lot of work in during recent years to manage transition.
- Transition is about the whole family and not just the child and schools are working hard to be the exception and not the norm.
- There are some challenges with GDPR, until the young person is on roll in September, they can't have any records of the young person. There is also a huge inconsistency on how information is shared, either through email, voltage, or files.
- East Sussex need to build connections with Brighton and Hove for Post 16.

Fenella - Post 16 representative

- Fenella felt that there is an issue of volume and capacity with secondary schools.
 - It used to be difficult to get information from secondaries, but this has improved in the last few years.
- There has been a lot of work on transition over the summer term, but we need to start looking from year 9.

David spoke to the group about the information we had just heard.

- There is a lot of work going on, but some experiences aren't improving in a way that we would expect.
- We want to be doing the right work and focusing on the right thing.
- Is there a feedback loop on the process of transitions?
- Elizabeth spoke about the link to the Change Programme. There is work going on looking at Post 16.
- The Board will use the post 16 innovation and communication 'case studies' to highlight potential for other phases (e.g. especially EYD)

6. Next steps and AOB

Agreed actions:

- Penny to highlight LAIP educational stakeholder event next week (21 March) with all Board members.
- Bethan to circulate suggested draft new Terms of Reference in the next month.
- Nathan, Elizabeth, and David to look at the transitions feedback and ensure a) the issue is kept 'centre stage; b) learnings from good and improving practice are captured via the Area Change Programme collaboration and from wider benchmarking across authorities; c) we work to identify the networks and groupings in East Sussex where best practice can be most effectively considered AND we work to create events/forums for such discussion where appropriate networks do not already exist .

David ended the meeting by thanking all current board members for engagement prior to and at the meeting.

The next scheduled meeting is 25th June, BUT note the likely need for an extraordinary meeting to consider the emerging LAIP