

# SEND Strategy Governance Board Notes

Thursday 17 October 2024 2:00-4:30pm The View Hotel, Eastbourne

**Chair/Facilitator:** David Smith **Notes:** Lisa Cloves (ESCC)

**Attendees:** Carolyn Fair (ESCC), Elizabeth Funge (ESCC) Holly Riley-Saxby (ESPCF), Helen Diplock (ESPCF), Nathan Caine (ESCC), Louise Moor (Primary School Representative), Ann-marie Waite (Secondary School Representative), Sally Polanski (Voluntary Sector Representative), Fenella Potterton (ESCG FE/Post 16 Representative) Emma Buggy (Early Years Representative), Councillor Bob Standley (ESCC), Chrys Poullikas (NHS), Caroline Tozzi (NHS), Kirsty Eydmann (Special School Representative), Honor Green (ESCC) Kathy Marriott (ESCC) Jane Flock (ESCC).

**Support:** Alice Tigwell (ESCC), Jessica Stubbings (ESCC)

## 1. Facilitator's welcome and introductory remarks

David (DS) welcomed everybody to the first meeting of the 2024-25 academic year and thanked everyone for the recent 1:1 dialogues. This is the last year of the current strategy and a good opportunity to think about the stewardship of the strategy but also to focus on future plans, particularly looking at integrated inclusion planning. He reminded the Board about the addition of an Alternative Provision (AP) sub-group and the relevant report on this agenda.

### Membership updates

Alex Gunter, the young person ambassador has stepped down but will be involved in mentoring our new ambassadors. DS asked for special thanks to Alex for his contributions to be minuted. New members to the Board were welcomed: Honor Green, Kathy Marriot, Jane Flock, and the first meeting for Kirsty Eydmann.

### Actions from last meeting on 25 June

- The Data Dashboard has been updated and circulated.
- Elizabeth Funge (EF) has taken away the issues at the June meeting and discussed with the Heads of Education. Jessica Stubbings (JS) Head of Education: Participation and Planning, is now the primary ESCC point of contact for David and the Board.
- A work programme has been set up and will be discussed at this meeting. The programme represents a suggested 'focus set of issues' for the Board to address during the 24/25 meeting cycle.

### Introductory remarks - *Sussex Integrated Care Board*

- Carolyn Tozzi (CT) reported discussion on the importance of SEND on the NHS agenda. Andrea Bird has been recruited as the Designated Clinical Officer for SEND and will commence employment on 4 November 24. The role is Pan-Sussex but she will be working 3 days a week with ESCC.
- Carolyn Fair (CF) has spoken with Adam Doyle, CEO, NHS Sussex and he has confirmed SEND is a top priority for the Trust, as is Mental Health and Emotional wellbeing and Neurodiversity. CF stressed the importance of showing progress on this now.
- The local authority are recruiting an Assistant Director for Commissioning & Transformation who will hopefully be recruited by Christmas.

## Updates from sub-groups

### SSIG update: Nathan Caine (NC)



#### Appendix 6 Sub Group report SSIG Sep

- Discussion around difficulty of obtaining CAMHS data due to its complexity and the way it's captured Pan Sussex. SPFT and ESCC will continue to work on resolving this issue.
- Helen Diplock (HD) asked whether the timelines for EHCPs are being improved. NC confirmed East Sussex timelines are well above national average. The process is under constant review, improvements are made all the time and EHCPs are a focus for the work programme. HD has some suggestions on how EHCPs can be improved and will liaise with Nathan outside of the meeting. **ACTION:** Helen
- CT asked how the themes from the audits are fed back to the wider group, NC explained these are fed back via the action plan. The new Designated Clinical Officer for SEND will be part of the group involved in the audits.

### Commissioning and Monitoring update: Jane Flock (JF)



#### Appendix 5 Sub-group report CM

### Alternative Provision: Jessica Stubbings (JS)



#### Appendix 4 Sub-group report AP

- Sally Polanski (SP) asked if information and resources could be available to share to change the myths on Alternative Provision and the different tiers.
- There has been a lot of work undertaken on the Alternative Provision Directory, we are clear on where the gaps are and there a lot of new providers who are keen to be included. We are aware the Key Stage 1 phase needs more provision
- Discussion around ensuring young person's voice is included in Alternative Provision directory, JS is keen to work with Alice Tigwell (AT) and Holly Riley-Saxby (HR-S) to ensure this progresses.

## LAIP (*Local Area Inclusion Plan*) Update

- NC updated the group. Early draft of the LAIP was produced 31 May which included extensive consultation and feedback from all stakeholders and Board members. Board members were invited to make final comments and suggestions via email sent on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, all responses and suggestions have been reviewed and enacted where appropriate.
- The LAIP does not focus on the future so is not a replacement for a SEND strategy but does contain a huge amount of valuable information which will inform the new strategy.

- Following the start of the new government, there has been a pause on work to develop the national EHCP template. We are waiting for policy direction on this from the government.
- HD suggested a discussion on how we are going to shape the next strategy to sit alongside the LAIP to be an agenda item for our next meeting. **ACTION:** DS and JS to ensure that Change Programme impact and LAIP remain on the Board's Work Programme

## Work Programme



### Work Programme

- DS presented the Work Programme looking at the focus for the current year which focus on themes 1, 4 and 5.
- The programme covers the priority issues, as determined by the 2023-24 cycle of meetings, the 1:1 dialogues with Board members and the reports received.
- Discussion was held on independent school provision and how it might be factored into strategic planning on meeting needs. It was acknowledged there are complex issues around how we engage with such a diverse sector of charitable enterprises, commercial providers, national and locally based organisations. DS pledged to keep this matter on the table for Board consideration.
- With regard to Theme 5, work is ongoing, there have been mapping exercises around provision and the curriculum and transition into post 16, including for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- H R-S stressed the significance of getting the parent carer voice involved in mapping. It is important to note that when young people reach 16, it can't be assumed parents have the same view as the young person.
- EF gave assurances that the importance was recognised. The new EHCP transition team will ensure annual reviews take place and are of a high quality. Parents will feel more empowered.
- SP acknowledged that one thing we see is sideways moves where the young person needs support in transition between same age phase settings. This is something we need to put more focus on and is relevant to FE and post 16 as well as elsewhere.

## **Theme 1: 'My Voice is heard and acted upon' (Participation)** **Parent Carer Voice - relationship and collaborative work between ESPCF, ESCC and the NHS.**

### **EF opened the discussion:**

- Recognising there is a lot of activity in this area, we are making progress but there is more we can do to improve relationships.
- We have these relationships in a system that is challenged and challenging and some issues in this system are not in our control. We need to be clear on which areas we can make a difference in and concentrate on these.
- The importance of building on our work so we have a meaningful dialogue including the PCF voice. We should focus on reflection, reset and pushing forward.

EF summarised two focus areas which are priorities for further joint work

1. EHCPs. There has been good work to try and improve the quality of plans and the process, there are some things that can change locally and some that require national shift. Communication about the process is important but the purpose of the plan is to identify the needs of young people and to enable us to meet those needs.
  2. Mainstream provision for pupils with SEND, with and without an EHCP. Most children should have the opportunity to access good education with their peers in their community. EF suggests clear focus on enriching mainstream SEND support and driving greater consistency.
- EF reminded the Board of the many opportunities and settings to capture parent/carer voice input, including through the dialogues and feedback that all schools and settings have with and from their own parents and carers as well as via the formal PCF channels

#### ESPCF summarised their views:

- Stressed that we shouldn't be focussing on all children being in mainstream schools before we can be assured of a consistently effective mainstream offer. We need to look at what in mainstream doesn't work for what children. We need to focus less on the type of school and look more at what the school is offering.
- HD spoke about the experience of having a child with SEND. The parental survey highlighted that parents are often exhausted. It's important to remember this when interacting with parents and also important to remember that parents are interacting with lots of different services, not just ESCC. She emphasised how parents often feel powerless. They often think they know what's best for their child but don't know how to get it.

#### DS invited fuller whole Board discussion

- SP highlighted the huge progress in co-production at a project level which is working well. PCF are in 26 schools facilitating working between parents and school leadership. Co-production at a strategic level is less advanced.
- CF asked whether we are honest enough about the limitations about what we can achieve. We have an imperfect system with some things we cannot change. We need to focus on what we can change and not try to solve the unsolvable.
- Anne-Marie Waite (A-MW) pointed out many carers perceive mainstream provision as not being able to provide for their children without even looking at the school. They rely on hearsay that a particular school is better. We need proper dialogue with parents and young people so they know what the setting offers. Also need to start looking at EHCPs younger, maybe year 4. Amaze SENDIAS currently does this work with parents but only has limited capacity.
- Discussion on why parents often perceive mainstream as not appropriate, the need to build the trust with parents around mainstream schools and the importance of finding the right school for each child.
- Proposed that we could work through the school alliances to hold events for parents to share information. **ACTION:** EF to progress the development of direct parental and carer voice input at school area alliance events

## Next Steps:

### DS summarised key areas of agreement:

1. Work with parents/carers to build a deeper sense of trust and transparency. DS to discuss further with EF (for ESCC) and with HR-S, HD and SP.
2. Using 'EHCPs' and 'enriching mainstream provision of support' we will look to develop innovation and greater confidence by practical improvements on these areas.
3. Parent/carer events for each school area alliances to be progressed.

Action: DS will liaise with all relevant parties on the above before next full Board Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

### Other actions:

- Helen to liaise with Nathan about EHCPs
- LAIP outcomes and impact on next strategic cycle: to be put on the agenda for 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**Meeting closed:** 16:30pm.

**Next meeting:** 9 January 2025, 2-4.30pm at County Hall, Lewes