



# SEND Strategy Governance Board Notes

Tuesday 25 June 2024

The View Hotel, Eastbourne

**Chair/Facilitator:** David Smith **Notes:** Josh Kemp (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), Alex (Young Person Representative), Fenella Potterton (ESCG FE/Post 16 Representative) Emma Buggy (Early Years Representative), Deb Wilson (for Caroline Tozzi; Children's Service Commissioner, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove)

**Support:** Bethan Twigg (ESCC), Alice Tigwell (ESCC),

**Invitees:** Dr Jacqui Shepherd (Consultant) Peter Houlders, (ESCC), Penny Mackay (ESCC), Oliver Bowen (ESCC), Lisa Cloves (ESCC)

**Apologies:** Councillor Bob Standley (ESCC), Chrys Poullikas (NHS), Caroline Tozzi (NHS), Jo Nash (ESCC), Kirsty Eydmann (Special School Representative)

## 1. Facilitator's welcome and introductory remarks

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

- David welcomed Carolyn Fair, new East Sussex Director of Children's services (DCS) to the Board as a new member. David also welcomed other colleagues who were joining for this meeting.
- Carolyn Fair assured the Board of her commitment to the SEND and Inclusion agenda and to her role as a Board member

## 2. Actions from last meeting.

Bethan summarised actions from the previous Board meeting:

- Penny to highlight LAIP educational stakeholder event next week (21 March) with all Board members. (Completed)
- Bethan to circulate suggested draft new Terms of Reference in the next month. (Completed)
- 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. Elizabeth confirmed that transition remains a key focus including through the work of the school Boards and that work is progressing, including through the CPP on Secondary/Post 16 transition.

David thanked the Board for their participation in completing and attending the group discussion regarding the LAIP Benchmarking Tool Survey Process.

### 3. Agreeing Terms of Reference for both Governance Board and AP Sub-group

The Board agreed to sign-off the SEND Governance Board Terms of Reference and agreed some changed wording relating to young person representation and quorum.

Elizabeth introduced the Terms of Reference for the Alternative Provision (AP) Sub-group. The group will oversee the development of AP from tier 1 to tier 3 across East Sussex. The goal is to define the three tiers more clearly to better meet the needs of children, ensuring smoother transitions from mainstream education to appropriate onward destinations. At tier 3 there is a voluntary transfer from the current academy provider of Alternative Provision to a new academy provider, this will be completed in the autumn term.

Helen said this was a well thought out approach and thanked Elizabeth.

Both Holly and Helen proposed that a parent/carer and a young person or a young person's representative join the Alternative Provision Sub-group. Elizabeth will reflect on how the Sub-group can ensure parent/carer and young person voice is considered by the group. The Board otherwise agreed to approve the Terms of Reference. Alice noted that substantial work has taken place on gaining the voice of children and young people attending AP, which can feed into the group.

David then introduced a conversation about 'Ways of Working' and what it means to be a Board member. David focused attention on the roles and responsibilities of Board members and our expectations of each other, including how we ensure accountability and transparency.

Nathan - ESCC

- Emphasised the value of diverse experiences among members.
- Noted the need to clarify roles and responsibilities outside of the meetings.
- Suggested ways to facilitate this could include using networks and forums.

Emma Buggy - Early Years Representative

- Set out how she can currently only reach a certain number of early years providers and that there are challenges representing the whole sector.

David

- Emphasised the importance of forums 'of influence' and how to reach them, messaging, and identifying gaps.

Alex - Young Persons' Representative

- Highlighted the need for continuous messaging and feedback loops.
- Stressed empowering individuals.

Helen - Parent Carer Representative

- Noted that mainly updates are brought to the Board, rather than the Board being asked to make decisions.
- There is often a lot of information focused on Local Authority activity.
- Need for raised awareness around funding streams across all providers.
- Importance of understanding power dynamics.

Carolyn - ESCC

- Emphasised steering, collective responsibility and accountability.
- Encouraged making voices heard about the system.
- Noted the need to use the right levers at the right times and review our approach to effect change.
- Acknowledged the difficult financial contexts and how it is important to direct resources to make the biggest impact.
- Suggested that dialogue was needed on the forms and processes of engagement in budgetary prioritisation.
- Advocated for open conversations.

Ann Marie - Secondary School Representative

- Suggested the Board should agree the messages for Board members to take back to their networks.

Louise - Primary School Representative

- Requested a need for clarity of information and expectations.
- Acknowledged the importance of feeding back the information and recommendations from the Board to other colleagues, networks and forums.

## 4. Regular Updates

### Update from the SEND Strategy Implementation Group (SSIG)

Peter Houlders - Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) leads on Theme 3 and gave an update from the last meeting of SSIG which focused on Theme 3.

Peter's role involves:

- Supporting social workers and children and young people. This includes a focus on assessment and the local offer.
- Ensuring key workers are able to signpost correctly and social workers have an understanding the SEND system and EHCNA process to enable parents to feel more secure, and young people feel their needs are met.

Key highlights discussed at SSIG in relation to Theme 3 were:

#### **Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF)**

- Building stronger relationships with mainstream schools and specialist provisions.
- There is an increase in participation from 18% in 2022 to 24% in 2024, actual participation numbers have increased by 27%.
- SEN budget increased by 50%.

- SEN provision increased from 36% in 2023 to 48% in 2024

### **Bluebells Overnight Short Break**

- Jointly funded with health services.
- From April 2023-24, spaces used have increased.
- Available number in East Sussex is increasing.
- 15 young people access this service, specialised for those with complex SEN.
- Brighton & Hove overnight short breaks are not operating due to building work, expected back in service by end of the year
- Commissioning are reviewing the requirement for Bluebells, currently 10 children a year.

### **Direct Payments**

- Developing a strategy for locality.
- Support should be accessible to everyone.
- Collaboration with Children's Social Care to learn from current practice and to implement Direct Payments.

### **Transition Pathway for Children and Young Person with SEN**

- Service is now in place.
- At age 14, a child or young person will be allocated a social worker to prepare for adulthood.
- Three staff members involved in the Transition Pathway.

Ann-Marie asked who is providing the training for social workers and key workers. Peter confirmed his role includes providing training and offering one to one training.

Helen congratulated the work achieved through the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF).

Sally noted that for training on family health staff around 'How do I even talk to a parent?' that the PCF and SENDIASS could provide support with this.

### **SEND Commissioning and Monitoring Group**

Nathan provided an update from the last meeting.

- The group was set up to bring together Health, Social Care and Education.
- Alternative Provision Directory has been developed to provide a list of providers for schools to commission from.
- Current status: 73 providers expressed an interest in joining; 23 were approved, of which 6 are registered, and 12 unregistered.
- Survey of Young People in Alternative Provision: 92% gave positive feedback, the feedback showed that in many cases schools have limited contact with pupils once they are attending the alternative provision.

The Partnership of Inclusion Neurodiversity (PINS) is a Sussex wide initiative, Nathan reported a positive report from the manager - it was good to hear so much is going on to get the project underway.

Short Breaks Update:

Intake increased from 300 last year

- High number of small provider providing provision
- 95% satisfaction rate with a 93% positive impact reported.

## 5. Spotlight on Early Years

Emma Buggly gave a presentation on SEN in early years.

(Powerpoint presentation attached)

Louise - Primary School Representative

- Mentioned the goal to engage nurseries at an early stage.
- Nurseries have excellent links and good relationships with parents/families, facilitating further outreach.
- Challenges with reaching smaller providers and childminders.
- Emphasis on offering support and resources to these smaller entities.
- Availability of experienced SENCOs to assist nurseries.
- Role of the Primary Board in enhancing communication and messaging to early years settings.

Sally recommended a befriending service that AMAZE offer which is a support for families. Befrienders are matched to support parents.

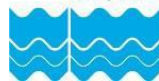
Helen thanks Emma for her insightful presentation.

Emma requested wording on Czone referring to 'all childcare settings' is updated.

## 6. Ensuring East Sussex Local Area Inclusion Plan (LAIP) and Governance Board focus on development priorities

Penny - ESCC gave an update and overview on the Change Partnership Programme.

Jacqui Shepherd - presented to the board the four themes to consider to support the Change Programme.



## 7. Next steps and AOB

### Agreed actions:

- Bethan will organise for the dashboard to be updated and for key information to be shared.
- Elizabeth will take the issues highlighted today away for further discussion with the three Heads of Service in Education East Sussex.
- Elizabeth suggested we prioritise how we work together over the following months and ensure there is an appropriate audit and gap analysis of the key networks, forums and partnerships through which to progress developments and improvements. This can include what structures we need to put in place.

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

**The next scheduled meeting will be 17<sup>th</sup> October.**