

SEND Strategy Governance Board Notes

Wednesday 29 January 2025

9:30am -12:30pm Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes

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), Councillor Bob Standley (ESCC), Chrys Poullikas (NHS), Caroline Tozzi (NHS), Honor Green (ESCC) Kathy Marriott (ESCC), Andrea Ferns (NHS), Jessica Stubbings (ESCC), Alice Tigwell (ESCC), Max (Young Person Representative), Peter Houlders (ESCC)

In attendance: Toby Silverman (NHS), Sam (Young Person), Meg Best (ESCC)

Apologies: Emma Buggy (Early Years Representative), Jane Flock (ESCC), Fenella Potterton (ESCC FE/Post 16 Representative), Kirsty Eydmann (Special School representative)

1. Facilitator's welcome and introduction

David (DS) welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies from Fenella Potterton, Kirsty Eydmann and Emma Buggy who couldn't attend due to current Ofsted inspections. Two new members of the board were welcomed, Max, the new Children and Young People's Ambassador and Andrea Ferns, the new ICB Designated Clinical Officer.

DS also welcomed as attendees, Toby Silverman, NHS SEND improvement officer and Sam, a young person doing work experience in Alice's team.

DS opened the meeting and emphasised that a main purpose of this meeting is about alignment and ensuring that the Board's working priorities and agreed Sussex Health priorities on SEND, are able to meet the required areas for improvement following the recent ASEND inspection.

Carolyn (CF) set this in the context of government reform. We have significant changes in local government, the Children's Wellbeing and Schools bill contains 39 policy changes across Children's Services and Education and will involve redesign and restructure with a focus on early intervention and prevention. We will have more detailed guidance on the implications of this Bill in the spring. It is also important to note that the Local Government Devolution agenda is happening parallel to this and will lead to other changes. Carolyn acknowledged all the hard work that went into the ASEND inspection in November and thanked everyone for their involvement. The report will be published on 5th February and will be a fair reflection of the progress made, highlight strengths and lay out areas for improvement.

2. Actions from the last meeting:

- Jessica (JS) and David (DS) to continue to monitor outcomes of Change Programme and LAIP: *Agenda item today on the Change Programme will cover this.*
- Potential for JS, Holly (HSR) and PCF to ensure children and Young People are represented in the development of AP directory. *Update will be given through the AP subgroup report.*
- Parent carer voice to be represented at school area alliance events: *Nathan (NC) will update in the sub-group report today.*

- Broad action about taking ideas forward transparency in the relationship between PCF and key partners: *This will be covered generally moving forward. A key test of trust and collaboration will be in the development of a joint approach to communications on the receipt of the ASEND report.*
- General point on ensuring concentration on EHCP process and inclusion in mainstream provision as a means of support for SEND: *This features prominently in the ASEND inspection feedback and is a focus moving forward.*

3. Updates from Sub-groups from the Board:

SEND Strategy Implementation Group - Nathan Caine (NC)



Sub-Group report
SSIG Jan 25*

NC talked through the sub-group report. The thematic focus for this meeting was Theme 4: “I belong and feel valued for who I am.”

Questions/Issues

- DS picked up on the work around SEND and post-16. Sam highlighted issues that he has had in his seeking of an apprenticeship route. DS committed to raising his plight with relevant East Sussex College and other post 16 East Sussex contacts.

Commissioning and Monitoring Subgroup - JS (in Jane Flock’s absence)



Sub-group report Jan
25 C&M*

- JS talked through the report which focussed on 2 main issues, SENDIAS contract and Special School Nursing.
- Helen (HD) highlighted a rising issue for parents is the fulfilment of wheelchair needs. JS stressed this is an issue we are aware of and is on the agenda for the next C&M meeting. Caroline Tozzi (CT) also confirmed that this is being monitored and is a priority moving forward.
- Sally (SP) enquired about the new Assistant Director for Commissioning and Transformation and how their role will fit in. CF shared that the new Assistant Director commences employment on Monday. The new role recognises the amount of resource that goes to commissioning functions and the complexity of managing the functions around this along with the significant transformation agenda.
- SP suggested it might be helpful to have links with Adult Social Care who are leading an Excellence in Commissioning Programme for the voluntary sector. CF stated it’s important to recognise there has been long standing under resourcing across commissioning. Jane Flock (JF) will be working with the new AD to make sure links relating to SEND will be made.

AP Provision Subgroup - JS

David highlighted that, at the moment, this (East Sussex SEND Strategy Governance) Board is set up as governance for the SEND Strategy and currently this board is doing a holding role relating to Alternative Provision. If the holding role becomes permanent, then the membership of this board may need to be reviewed to reflect the expertise needed.

Jessica highlighted key points from the Sub-group report below.



Sub-group report AP
- Jan 25*

Questions/Issues

- JS highlighted the youth voice work that had taken place of pupils accessing Alternative Provision (AP) and that this is informing the approach to AP.
- JS discussed the issue of SEND destinations onto post 16, the challenges of progression including the lack of suitable provision for people who want to do something specific. Sam reiterated his difficulties in getting an apprenticeship despite being very proactive in trying.
- Alice shared the difficulties young people experience moving from some AP which they enjoy and where they gain vocational qualifications they may not get in school, into college post 16 where there may be a lack of suitable progression routes. JS explained that LSEAT (London South East Academies Trust), the incoming Alternative Provision provider are in discussion with ESCG and other colleges to talk about this issue and to identify what post-16 provision is required. .
- Anne-Marie (AW), explained that from a school's perspective, AP can be expensive. She also questioned whether AP works long term for pupils in terms of reintegration, progression and outcomes achieved.
- Elizabeth stated that the curriculum review that the government is doing nationally is part of the solution around this, in ensuring that the curriculum in schools can better meet the needs of all pupils.
- EF emphasised there are so many interrelated factors that feed into making sure that young people have the right support.
- Alice (AT) pointed out the importance of a sense of belonging and the relationships schools have with children whilst they are in AP is vital and will be significant in terms of impact on the young person.

4. National policy updates and Change Programme developments - Education and Health

CT shared and talked through the ICB structure for roles focusing on children and young people and SEND.



NHS SEND structure
chart*

- She explained the NHS national operational guidance linked to the 10 year plan is not published yet and this may change things. Nationally the focus is on waiting times so this is a priority. The ICB is involved in the change programme and leading the PINS project. They are also involved in the regional care co-operative, which is a significant endeavour

spanning the South East to address the challenges in the market for children with complex needs being placed in residential care closer to home without the current extortionate cost. It's an area of priority that the Government is giving lots of focus.

- CT acknowledged the complexity of all the work and the importance of co-ordinating messages, decisions and actions in the most conducive way so we can be effective and efficient in our approach. When there are NHS agenda items, it would be helpful to have as much notice as possible.
- CF highlighted that we are also trying to make sure priorities are focussed on the most pressing things that are affecting families.

JS presented and talked through Education policy and changes that the new Government have made nationally.



National Policy
Updates - SEND
Gov*

NC presented an update on the change programme.



SEND and AP
Governance Board*

Questions/Issues

- Helen (HD) wanted to highlight that in her view and others in the PCF, inclusion in mainstream isn't the right option for everyone. EF stated it's about getting the right support at the right time for children. For the majority of children this will be mainstream but not for all children.

5. ASEND Inspection outcomes (timetabling; alignment of priorities/work programme; how to ensure collaborative engagement in the process)

EF shared and talked through a presentation on the ASEND inspection and focussed on the areas for improvement:



ASEND Inspection
report - Jan 2025*

- EF explained the inspection was a useful experience and showed our strength in partnership working, there is a section on what we do well, where we need to do better and specifics on what we need to monitor. The report will be published on 5 February and will be distributed to all relevant stakeholders.
- We will address outcomes of the ASEND report by updating the existing 2022-2025 strategy. This will be drafted by end of March and final draft will be shared at the next ES SEND Strategy Board meeting (3 April 2025). The Board were asked to agree to update our existing strategy and extend it to August 2026. This allows us time to make sure what is in the strategy is having an impact. The aim is to have a new East Sussex SEND strategy in place from Sept 2026, with the current Board continuing to serve in the governance arrangements.

Questions/feedback/early thoughts on this

- HP raised the issue of Alternative Provision as at the moment the Strategy is a SEND strategy. We need to look at how AP is included in the strategy if it is to be a SEND and AP Strategy. EF stressed that we do have well developed plans around AP but it is acknowledged that a broader inclusion strategy may require some adjustment to governance arrangements.
- CF also stated we do need a level of pragmatism around this, we know there will be a policy shift which means the strategy may need to change too. The maintenance of the broad structure of current strategy and governance until Summer 2026 allows for flexibility to respond to national and local area developments policy and practice.
- Discussion had around the complexity of the current strategy and the need to make the future strategy clearer and simpler. There are already conversations happening around this. There is also a need for prioritisation and focussing on what the key improvements need to be.

DS summarised the discussion:

ACTIONS:

- CF and EF to attend ESPCF Board steering group meeting (late Feb) to discuss joint communications and response work to ASEND Inspection report
- Timetable to next Board meeting as EF outlined - ensuring the 3 April meeting is able to approve and agree an alignment of priorities to meet East Sussex SEND Strategy commitments, ASEND Inspection requirements and Sussex ICB Health SEND priorities. Timetable includes: ESPCF Steering Group; SEND Board sub groups; School Boards; ESCC Cabinet.
- CT will ensure that 'transition' features in agreed Sussex ICB SEND priorities
- DS will ensure 1:1 visit/dialogue to Board members as is now customary before 3 April meeting.
- With regards to EHCPS, Chrys (CP) would like to work with Andrea (AF), to look into more detail about what is meant by the Health Contribution to EHCPs. **Action: CP and AF to discuss and agree an approach.**

DS thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

- ***If you would like to see any embedded documents, please email education.projects@eastsussex.gov.uk**

**NEXT MEETING 3 April 2025 9.30am -12.00pm
Venue: Eastbourne Town Hall**