

SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy & Partnership Board

10 October, 13.00 – 15.00

Main Conference Room, County Hall North, Horsham

Attended

Brian Pope, Independent Chair

WSCC

Lucy Butler, Director of Children's Services

Steve Nyakatawa, AD Education & Skills

Helen Johns, Head of SEND & Inclusion

Jenny Boyd, AD Children's Social Care and Early Help

Claire Hayes, Head of Early Help

Vince Clarke, Children First Transformation Director

Louise Warren, Senior Improvement Lead

Kathryn Kellagher, SEND Development Officer

Education and schools

Mark Wignall, Head, Downlands Secondary

Doug Thomas, Head APC

Simon Brown, Head of SEND, Chichester College

Gillian Santi, Governors Association

Parent Carers

Rowan Westwood, West Sussex Parent Carers Forum

Health

Caroline Tozzi, Integrated Care System Health Lead

Jacqui Parfitt, Service Manager and Development Lead, Joint Commissioning Unit

Councillor Representative

Jacquie Russell, Cabinet member

Jay Mercer, CYPSCC rep

Apologies

WSCC

Yasmin Maskatiya, Head of Standards & Effectiveness

Grace Fairbourne, Early Years SEND Lead

Loretta Rogers, AD Adult Operations

Louise Fox, Head of Service Assessment and Family Safeguarding

Sarah Clark, Head of Virtual School

Education and schools

Louise-Isa Gada, Littlegreen Special school

Helen Ball, St Anthony's Special School

Representative of primary schools

Claire Kenyon, Busy Lizzies, Early Years

Health and Commissioning

Rachael Lee, Designated Clinical Officer

Kate Courtney, Designated Clinical Officer, maternity cover

1. Welcome and action log

Actions covered in the agenda.

2. Preparation for Local Area SEND Inspection – Review of the SEF

See attached the SEF and the draft Summary presentation (working document)

General comments

- It was agreed that the SEF is well-written, draws out the key issues, and that it was helpful to have a comprehensive document to build on.
- The introduction needs input from West Sussex Parent Carer Forum and health.
- The SEF needs to be an honest appraisal and, while we want to have a strengths-based approach, we need to be clear around the areas for improvement.
- The West Sussex Parent Carer Forum will review the SEF and provide feedback for the next quarterly review (to be presented at the December board meeting).
- The SEF should be read in conjunction with the Improvement Plan, which will be brought to the board at the November meeting – it addresses the “so what are you doing about it”.
- We will need to produce a summary presentation about the SEF for the Ofsted Inspectors and have started work on this (see attached).
- An Inclusion Leads and partners workshop on Friday 6 October identified gaps in the SEF and suggested the need for an Outcomes Framework to get a fuller picture. West Sussex Parent Carer Forum has a lot of data from families which can help with this.

Due to time constraints, we were only able to look at sections 1-3 in detail.

Section 1 – Children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way.

Discussion points:

- Some areas are both areas of strengths and areas for improvement – eg it’s a strength that we have employed Neuro-Developmental Pathway (NDP) Advisors, but the neuro-developmental pathway itself is an area for improvement.
- Need to include evidence of the impact of the SEND Under Five Partnership.
- JP to check evidence referenced in 1.12 about the positive impact of SPOA
- Need to include trajectory for improvement in timeliness of EHCNAs.
- Need to include evidence of schools using the OAIP and the Inclusion Framework, eg in school improvement plans, staff training etc.

Section 2 – Children, young people and families participate in decision-making about individual plans and support

Discussion points:

- Inclusive practice across West Sussex schools is inconsistent and we’re aware that some schools admit more children and young people with EHCPs than others.
- We need to influence schools by highlighting good practice. Board members were encouraged to view the presentation by students from Angmering School, which is stored on Tools for Schools - <https://schools.local-offer.org/inclusion/celebrating-inclusion/pupil-voice/why-is-it-important-that-we-listen-to-our-young-people/>
- There needs to be an honest discussion with schools, about what do we, as a school community, want for children and young people in West Sussex. We need to build a collective vision.
- This section needs more input from the Voice and Participation Team and from the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, to get a fuller picture of a child or young person’s lived experience.

Section 3 – Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time

Discussion points:

- SEMH needs to be higher profile.
- Add to strengths: Post-16 Special Needs Officers leading every annual review at FE colleges.
- Reducing the high needs block will necessitate having more children and young people with EHCPs in mainstream schools. It would be helpful to have a corresponding increase in support and resources for mainstream schools to meet the needs of these young people, that will ultimately be cheaper than placing them in special schools or INMSS.
- Many secondary schools would need additional physical space – when not in class, some children and young people with SEND need a safe space for them to use.
- All schools would need access to expertise, to increase staff skills and understanding.
- In smaller primary schools, a key challenge is that the SENCO could be part-time, has other roles in school or works across more than one school.

Actions

- 2.1 Consider if we can explore how to help schools meet the needs of children and young people with SEND through the Delivering Better Value programme.
- 2.2 CP to devise a template to capture changes to the SEF, see attached. Board members to use this to communicate amendments, which should be sent to KK.
- 2.3 SEF to be reviewed quarterly – next review date is the December Board meeting.
- 2.4 SEF introduction to have input from health and parent carer forum.
- 2.5 West Sussex Parent Carer Forum to review the SEF and send feedback to CP and HJ, cc KK.
- 2.6 JP to check evidence for positive impact of SPOA, point 1.12
- 2.7 Include Post 16 Advisors leading every Annual Review at FE colleges as a strength
- 2.8 Ask Toby Wilson, Voice and Participation Team, for input.

3. EHCP Timeline Response Plan

Key points:

- See attached Timeliness Recovery plan for projections, which are a conservative estimate and which plan for the backlog to be cleared by March 2025. Once the backlog is cleared, we should be closer to national average assessment times.
- SN meets the team weekly to discuss and challenge the timeliness data.
- The EPS is trialling a different way of carrying out assessments in order to get through the numbers. They will hold a meeting to include the key people whose input is needed to co-produce the EP assessment in person. Currently a lot of EP time is spent writing up reports and this is a more efficient way of carrying out the assessment. It won't be appropriate for every child or young person. The new way of carrying out assessments is being rolled out first with their Innovation Champions and will be used by the whole service by November. The Senior EPs trialled the idea and it took them 1.5 days to carry out an assessment; the current average is 2.3 days.
- We are asking EPs to carry out increasingly large numbers of assessments more quickly and consideration must be given to burnout. EPs can also earn more money if they work privately.
- We're reliant on external agencies to help us get through the backlog.
- In the longer term, we need investment to enable EPs to intervene at an earlier stage, to prevent escalation.

- The EPS has a small traded offer which has been pared back to allow them to focus on assessments.
- There is a national shortage of EPs and, in order to attract staff, it would be helpful to be able to offer a blended offer of statutory and traded preventative work.

Discussion points:

- It was seen as encouraging that the EPS is finding creative solutions and trying new approaches to cut through the backlog.
- It was felt that the projections were not ambitious enough.
- Some Local Authorities have set up dedicated teams to address the backlog.
- Targets within the 20 weeks should also be monitored, eg at 4, 12 and 16 weeks.
- Once waiting times have stabilised, are aiming for 18 week completion time.
- The prioritisation has meant that we now have 20% of plans completed within 20 weeks.
- prioritisation has a negative impact on other EHCNAs going through the system.
- The average waiting time for an EHCNA is 44 weeks. Families who are waiting for an EHCNA are generally on other waiting lists as well. The plan to support families during this time includes:
 - Regular comms with families to reassure them that they are not lost in the system.
 - Schools are receiving funding to help support children who have been waiting for an EHCNA for more than 20 weeks.
 - Advisory Teachers will monitor how schools are using the funding.
 - The funding went to schools in September and was backdated.

Actions:

- 3.1 BP and LB to meet to discuss stronger targets and resourcing

4. Update from West Sussex Parent Carer Forum

See attached presentation on the Partnership Agreement.

Discussion points:

- The forum is gathering useful data to evidence the impact of their involvement in meetings with WSCC and health.
- Take away words: co-production, collaboration and quality communication.
- We need to align the work of the forum with the Voice and Participation Team – this will be covered in the co-production policy.
- As a parent carer forum, they are really talking about younger children. Teenagers / post-16 young people have their own voice.

5. Forward Plan

November meeting to cover draft Improvement Plan that will sit alongside the SEF outcomes and attainment data.