

SEND Executive Board, Monday 8 July 2024, 10am-12pm, Civic Centre

Minutes

Present

- Mark Patton (MP)** Assistant Director Children and Families, NCC
- Ian Dawson (ID)**, Head of Educational Development and Inclusion, NCC
- Sarah Kerrigan (SK)**, Service Manager, Children Education and Skills Directorate, NCC
- Sarah Ledger (SL)**, Performance Analyst, NCC
- Deanne Taylor (DT)**, Head of SEND, NCC
- Jenny Ellis (JE)**, Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, ICB
- Claire Taylor (CT)**, Chief Executive Officer, Footsteps
- Gareth Smith (GS)**, Head Teacher, Walker Riverside Academy
- Rachel Gibson (RGi)**, Assistant Director at Newcastle College, Representative of the post 16 sector, Newcastle College)
- Adele Moore (AM)**, Lead Assistant Director CSC & EH, NCC
- Louise Melling (LM)** Preparation for Adulthood Lead, NCC
- Kay Harrison (KH)** Preparation for Adulthood Lead, NCC
- Nichola Swan (NS)** Sacred Heart R C High School)
- Stella Wilson (SW)**, Director of Operations, Family Health Clinical Board, NHS
- Christopher Richardson (CR)**, CEO, Prosper Learning Trust
- Christopher Rollins, (CRo)**, Headteacher, Hadrian School
- Karen Hamilton (KHa)**, Headteacher, Sir Charles Parson School
- Linzi McMeekin (LMM)**, Programme Lead: Commissioning/Procurement, NCC
- Emily Nesbitt (EN)**, Service Improvement Assistant, NCC (minutes)
- Kim Barret (KB)**, ICB Consultant Paediatrician and Designated Clinical Officer.
- Angela Kumar (AK)**, ICB Head of Strategic Commissioning

Apologies:

- Cath McEvoy-Carr (Director: Children and Families)
- Kirsty Sprudd (Deputy Director of Delivery Fraud ICB)
- Miriam McGregor (Commissioning Lead Specialist, NCC),
- Ann Banks (SEND Service Improvement Lead, NCC)
- Marie Leddy (Chair of Parent Carer Forum)
- Steve Gittins (Chair SEND subgroup on behalf of the Promise Board)
- Rachel Gallagher (Consultant in Public Health, NCC)
- Richard Scott (Director of Nursing North, ICB)

1	Welcome and Apologies	Action
	Chair (MP in Cath McEvoy-Carr's absence) welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.	
2	Minutes of last meeting	
	Minutes agreed minor a couple of changes to attendee's title and initials.	
3	Permanent Exclusions and Suspensions – Ian Dawson	

Presentation shared with additional information highlighted:

- Permanent Exclusions are high with around 105 up until end of March, with the main being in secondary schools with 100.
- The higher number of suspensions tend to be in schools which have are serving areas of high disadvantage or are undergoing significant change.
- Officers challenge permanent exclusions where there are grounds and there is an independent review panel. However we are finding that the governing bodies are standing by their headteachers' decisions.
- When it comes to suspensions, we are finding that the majority have no SEND. However, there are a number of factors that could mask whether the child has an unmet need. We tend to find that when they have been permanently excluded, that there is a significant need and then the SEND route begins.
- We are also seeing more suspensions and exclusions from specialist providers which illustrates the level of need but also raises questions about our specialist provision and how we use this.
- What we find is we tend to put all the pupils in one place and this isn't necessarily the best approach and normalises behaviour whilst the range of SEMH needs around these pupils is vast.
- The plan this year is to invest in more inclusion key workers. There is strong evidence that they are doing a good job pre-exclusion, and we will have them mainly doing bespoke work with young people who are permanently excluded.
- Their role will be to work more intensely with these young people to encourage them to make the most of their education offer, point them in the right direction and crucially when they are ready to go back to mainstream, they will be in there with them advocating for them and liaising with them throughout the transition process.

4 Ofsted and CQC Letter following Local Area Review and Draft Improvement Plan – Jenny Ellis/ Deanne Taylor

Documents were shared in pack with additional information highlighted:

- The letter cannot be shared at the moment as we are in negotiation regarding factual accuracies.
- Overall, the three weeks and feedback were positive, and this will contribute to the national report in the autumn term.
- The draft improvement plan shows several focus areas. However there were three particular issues: the quality of our EHC plans, the waiting lists and commission of our therapies.

Comments/Questions:

MP asked whether we would be on track to land our commissioning therapies work in Sept? SK confirmed we were on track for a September start.

Actions:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Final letter to be shared once available. ○ Progress update on the commissioning of therapies to be on the agenda for the next boarding meeting. 	EN SK
5	Initial Feedback from SEND Celebration Events – Deanne Taylor	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were a series of events in school settings and specialist schools as well as a local offer marketing event which was attended by nearly 200 parents and carers. • The event raised awareness of our services and what can be accessed. • There was lots of positive feedback and appreciation from the schools, families and wider partners. • The events in specialist schools were a valuable learning experience and mainstream schools commented that there were things they took and would modify in their environments. • There will be a formal evaluation which will be shared and webinars. <p>Action: Formal evaluation to be shared and added to agenda for next meeting.</p>	DT/AB
6	Deep Dive into EHCP Timescales – Deanne Taylor/Sarah Ledger	
	<p>Document shared in pack with additional information highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHCP timescales have not improved, and we remain significantly behind the national average. • There have been some inconsistencies in recording as well as some staffing issues. However, the biggest barrier is the assessment stage. • The rapid improvement process week 8 July to 12 July) will help us to understand the barriers and ensure consistency in recording. • There has been investment in a performance management tool which has been well received and staff will be responsible and accountable for the data. • There are lots of things in the improvement plan to address our EHCP timeliness. We will be keeping a close eye on capacity as well as the data and will continue to keep the board updated. 	
7	SEN2 Analysis Key Messages – Sarah Ledger	
	<p>PowerPoint shared with additional information highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local authorities have to submit a statutory return to the DFE on an annual basis, which tell us about our children and young people who have got an EHCP or whether they are going through and assessment at any point in the calendar year. The data shared reflects back on the 2023 calendar year. • During that year Newcastle City Council (NCC) had the third highest increase over a five year period in terms of the number of plans. • NCC also had a large increase in the number of requests for assessment. • We also have the third lowest portion of requests refused and are 	

	<p>considerably lower than other North East regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high number of requests have led to significant pressure on all parts of the EHC system and a number of things have been put in place: additional finance to commission an independent Education Psychology to address EP advice backlog; a Family Support Worker appointed to work with a DSCO; two SEND Place Planning officers have been appointed; investment in the graduated response; multi-agency meeting as part of the EHC process; recent deep dive into EHCP timescales; and a rapid improvement event workshop to review processes in detail from start to finish. • This year currently we have 427 open assessments; monthly data shows this is levelling off. However, the total number of EHC Plans continue to grow. Data shows we currently have 2872 active EHC Plans. <p>Action:</p> <p>PowerPoint to be shared with the minutes</p>	EN
8	PINS Update – Jenny Hickens	
	<p>In Jenny’s absence, DT provided a verbal update from her: PINS is progressing largely to schedule, with some of the participating schools still outstanding in submitting the self-evaluations and sending out the parent carer surveys, but we have a good number of responses to go on to inform the next stage of the process, and to identify the most appropriate interventions and support for each school.</p>	
9	Getting it Right Together Draft Work Plan for Approval – Deanne Taylor	
	<p>Document shared in pack with additional information highlighted:</p> <p>This will come to the board for approval after the summer.</p> <p>Action: EN to work with DT to put this on the Board’s forward plan.</p>	EN/DT
10	Overview of Access Fund – Claire Taylor	
	<p>Documents shared in pack with additional information highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Access Fund is now back open for parents/carers and schools to apply for funding for extra-curricular activities. • There have already been lots of applications for the summer holidays so unlikely to have the capacity for any new requests for this time now. However for September onwards new applications welcome. • In response to questions, CT clarified that the funding applies to an individual child rather than a family, so siblings can get £400 each. Organisations can also apply; however, it is only one application per child either from school or the parent/carers. • The fund does not provide equipment or therapies and can no longer approve family passes. • There is and end of year (EOY) celebration event where pupils and families 	

	<p>are invited to join as well as an EOY annual report.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>End of year annual report to be added onto the forward plan for January Board.</p>	EN
11	Public Health Nursing Offer in Special Schools – Rachel Gallagher	
	<p>It was noted as unfortunate that a representative from Public Health was unable to join the Board meeting once again. The following points were reported by Board members working on this offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good health, wellbeing and resilience are vital for all our children now and for their future. There is good evidence about what is important to achieve this through improving children and young people’s public health. This is brought together in the national healthy child programme 0 to 19. • Conversations around the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) in specialist schools in Newcastle have been ongoing for some time: there is no national blueprint on how to deliver the HCP in these settings and there are mixed models of provision across the country. • Children attending these schools have specific medical and physical needs with the Community Children’s Nursing team providing nursing care and other duties. The Community Children’s Nursing team contribute to public health interventions under the principles of Making Every Contact Count (MECC) and the school plays a role as a trusted lead in the lives of their students and families. • We are currently undergoing a recommissioning process for our 0-19 service in Newcastle, with the new contract coming into effect on 1 April 2025. • As part of this process, we will be further developing the role of the 0-19 service in specialist schools and are looking to engage with all schools (including specialist schools) in Newcastle as part of this process to make sure we have the best possible offer in place for our children and young people. <p>Action:</p> <p>There needs to be a representative from Public Health at all future Board meetings.</p>	RG
12	AOB	
	<p>Rapid Process Improvement Week (DT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is currently happening this week (8 July to 12 July). Team will spend time looking at what the process is and re-mapping it to improve it. <p>Local Area Inspection Prep (DT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently working closely with a new colleague who is from the DFE. She will be running two sessions via Teams and invites will be going out soon. These will highlight hints and tips on what to look for in local area inspections as well as mock case reviews. 	

	<p>Early Years ARPs (DT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have two which we commission from schools. There has been a review of the outcomes as there is not always a destination for those young people. A draft report is currently being considered by the commissioned schools and will probably come to Board in the autumn term. 	EN/DT

Action summary from this meeting

Agenda Item no. Date of mtg	Action	Owner	Due by date	Status
20.05.2024	Ask about the ability of adding post-16 data to the dashboards	SF	June	Open
20.05.2024	Check whether the early years data reflects children attending other settings or only those at maintained nurseries.	ZF	June	Open
20.05.2024	A PDF version of the dashboard to be created to share with external colleagues for feedback.	ZF	June	Open
20.05.2024	Provide a list of hourly rates for providers as an appendix to the contract specification.	MM	Sept	Open
4 08.07.2024	CQC Letter to shared once available	DT	Sept	Open
4 08.07.2024	Commissioning Therapies to be on the next board meeting agenda	SK	Sept	Open
5 08.07.2024	Send Celebration Events evaluation to be shared at the next board meeting	DT/AB	Sept	Open
7. 08.07.2024	SEN2 Analysis to be shared with the July board minutes	EN	Sept	Open
9. 08.07.2024	Getting it Right Together Draft Work Plan for Approval to be put on the forward plan	DT/EN	Sept	Open
10. 08.07.2024	Access Fund EOY evaluation report to be added to the forward plan for January	EN	Sept	Open
11. 08.07.2024	Ensure there is a representative from Public Health at every board meeting	RGA	Sept	Open
12. 08.07.2024	Early Year ARPs Draft Report to come to board in Autumn term	DT	Sept/Nov	Open