

SEND and Inclusion Executive Board, Friday 24th January, 09:30 to 11:30 Via Microsoft Teams

Present

- Cath McEvoy-Carr** (Chair), Director: Children and Families, NCC
Andrew Graham (AG) Principal Adviser, CES Commissioning and Strategy, NCC
Deanne Taylor (DT), Head of SEND, NCC
Jenny Ellis (JE), Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, ICB
Jenny Hicken (JH) Network Delivery Manager, ICB
Ian Dawson (ID) Head of Educational Development and Inclusion, NCC
Stella Wilson (SW), Director of Operations, Family Health Clinical Board, NHS
Steve Gittins (SG), Chair of SEND subgroup on behalf of the Promise Board
Gareth Smith (GS) Headteacher, Walker Riverside Academy
Christopher Richardson (CR), CEO, Prosper Learning Trust
Johnathon Jamison (JJ) Assistant Director Community Support, NCC
Claire Taylor (CT), Chief Executive Officer, Footsteps
Sarah Kerrigan (SK) Service Manager, NCC
Adele Moore (AM), Lead Assistant Director CSC & EH
Rachel Gibson (RG) Assistant Director at Newcastle College, Representative of the post 16 sector, Newcastle College)
Rachel Gallagher (RGa) Public Health Portfolio Lead, NCC
Kelly McGuinness (KM), Designated Social Care Officer, NCC
Anna Williams (AW), Transformation Manager, NHS
Karen Parker (KP), Acting Headteacher, Sir Charles Parsons School
Vicki Whincup (VW), SEND Voice Lead, NCC
Deb Tyler (DTy) School Organisation and Infrastructure Manager, NCC
Ian Redford (IR) School Organisation and Capital Specialist, NCC
Pete Trumper (PT) School Organisation and Capital Specialist, NCC
Linzi McMeekin (LM), Program Lead for Commissioning and Procurement, NCC
Emily Nesbitt (EN), Service Improvement Assistant, NCC (minutes)

Apologies:

- Mark Patton (Assistant Director Children and Families, NCC)
 Kirsty Sprudd (Deputy Director of Delivery Fraud ICB)
 Marie Leddy (Chair of Parent Carer Forum)
 Richard Scott (Director of Nursing North, ICB)
 Helga Charters (Associate Director of Nursing; Safeguarding, Learning Disability, MCA)
 Christopher Rollings (Headteacher, Hadrian School)
 Gail Ballance (Head of Children, Young People and Community, ICB)

1	Welcome and Apologies	Action
	Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted.	
2	Minutes of last meeting	

	Minutes agreed as correct and actions updated, as shown in action summary.	ALL
3	SEND Voice Update inc. Name the Penguin – Vicki Whincup	
	<p>PowerPoint Presentation shared in meeting:</p> <p>Vicki provided an update on the send voice initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They have recruited two new youth trainees, Lucy Berry and Dan Robson. The youth trainees will be involved in gathering feedback from children, young people, parents, and carers to improve services. • There has been significant work on the local offer website, which has received feedback about its difficult navigation and overwhelming content. Efforts are being made to make the website more accessible and user-friendly, including the possibility of creating a section specifically for children and young people. • Work is ongoing to improve the person-centred approach in the HCP process and annual reviews. A toolkit of resources is available for schools, and there are plans to develop this further with a task and finishing group. • The development of the Your Voice Matters network is underway, aiming to create a young person's panel to present views on behalf of their peers. The Post 16 network is well underway, and the primary network is in early stages. • The accessibility strategy is a key area of focus, with youth trainees keen to be involved. There is ongoing work on the accessibility of transport in line with the Lord Mayor's consultation, and feedback from young people is being incorporated into the transport offer. • The low stimulus room at Walker Riverside, implemented based on feedback from a happiness survey, has been well-received by young people and is being used frequently. • Communication with the parent carer forum is ongoing, and efforts are being made to raise its profile. A parent carer guide is being produced and will be shared with services and the parent carer forum once finalised. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CR offered VW to come and visit Thomas Bewick to discuss making communications SEND appropriate and relevant, and to explore opportunities for the SEND Voice team to engage with students at the school as well as the team as Thomas <p>Actions:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Voice update to be added to the forward plan as a standing item for each SEND Exec Board. 	ENE
4	Update on Community Short Break Offer – Kelly McGuinness/Linzi McMeekan	
	<p>Papers shared in meeting.</p> <p>KM & LM provided an update in the Short Break Offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LM shared details about the consultation document, which relates to the elements of the offer funded by the community short breaks budget. The consultation document includes feedback from children, young people, and families, highlighting the importance of activities like swimming and youth clubs. The offer includes advice and guidance for parents, inclusive youth groups, sporting activities, and the access fund. The budget for advice and guidance to parents remains the same at £85,000 per year. Inclusive youth projects will be designed to cater to neurodiverse children and young people. The access fund will help children with additional needs participate in community activities, CT pointed out that the maximum grant amount is £400 not £300. The budget for the access fund has been reallocated to prioritize swimming, a key priority for children and young people. The consultation document proposes changes to the eligibility criteria for the access fund. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair raised concerns about potential gaps in provision due to the procurement timeline. LM confirmed that the current provider will continue until the end of June, and options to bridge the gap for the access fund are being prepared. RG expressed interest in linking with the provider for inclusive gaming and sports activities. The consultation is open until the 31st of January, and feedback will be reviewed to make any necessary changes before going out to tender. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the consultation document has the correct access fund at £400. Any feedback on the document to be submitted by 31st January. 	LM ALL
5	Alternative Provision Update and Brochure – Linzi McMeekan	
	Papers shared in meeting:	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Framework in place since March 2024, initially had 33 providers, but has now expanded to 47. There are four tiers of placements: AP Primary, AP Secondary, Specialist face-to-face, and Virtual. • The Framework aims to arrange alternative provision and specialist tuition placements for children requiring education outside mainstream settings. • There are currently 109 placements with 19 ended and 170 total requests through the framework. The monitoring reports from providers shows positive outcomes. 52% of children meeting or exceeding progress, with consistent progress across terms. There has been some increase in children making no progress, attributed to new placements needing more time. • Data collection is crucial for monitoring and evaluating the success of placements. Regular updates and tracking of placements planned. There is a termly multiagency steering group which review outcomes, involving health and social care when needed. • There has been positive feedback from providers and children and there are plans to tighten reporting and intervention measures. There is a focus on daily attendance concerns and unregistered alternative provision. <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AP update and brochure to be shared with attendees. 	LM
6	New Special School Project Update and Overview of Investments Made In Mainstream Schools – Deb Tyler	
	<p>Powerpoint presentation shared in the meeting:</p> <p>DT presented updates on capital projects within education, focusing on the SEND capital programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The team has been working on multiple expansions and improvements in special schools like Thomas Bewick, Charles Parson, and Hadrian. • Since 2025, the SEND Capital programme has been allocated just under £13.5 million, with about £3.5 million yet to be allocated. The purpose is to increase places and improve facilities for children with SEND. Various projects have been delivered, including expansions of special schools and inclusion projects in mainstream schools. • There is a proposal to establish a new special school through the free school presumption route. A feasibility study has been completed, but there is a substantial funding gap. The team is working on securing additional funding and progressing with site preparations. • Several projects have been completed to improve inclusion and accessibility in schools. Examples include creating sensory spaces, small intervention spaces, and changing places washrooms. There has been lots of positive feedback from the schools and students. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In terms of future plans and funding the team are awaiting further SEND funding announcements. They are also exploring options to create more spaces for students with autism while waiting for the new school to be built and there are ongoing efforts to secure funding and progress with the new school project. <p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GS inquired about the chosen Academy chain for the new special school. DT clarified that there isn't one yet, as the free school presumption process requires all capital funding to be in place first. KP asked about the timescales for the new special school and the authority's plans to create capacity for students with autism in the meantime. DT and Chair clarified that efforts are ongoing to develop a new school, with technical work and lobbying for funding. Challenges include the free school presumption and funding issues, but contingencies are in place to manage children's needs. Many children currently travel out of the city for education, which is not ideal. <p>Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a further update to the forward plan for later in the year. 	ENE
7	RPIW Update – Deanne Taylor/Jenny Ellis	
	<p>Papers shared in pack ahead of meeting:</p> <p>DT provided an update on the Rapid Process Improvement Workshop (RPIW) held in July 2024. The actions from the workshop are progressing, with the item relating identifying appropriate health representation at early decision-making panels. This is a current challenge due to the structure of the ICB</p>	
8	Overview of support from DfE and Case Tracking Activity and Next Steps – Deanne Taylor/Jenny Ellis	
	<p>Presentations shared in the pack ahead of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first presentation is about the inspection process and expectations when cases are selected for local area inspection. The second presentation provides an overview of the support provided by Marian Cullen since her commission over a year ago. The document highlights the significant progress made during this period and outlines future actions, including a bid submitted to the regional SEND improvement programme to further commission Marian Cullen for the next steps. The focus will be on identifying transition points for 	

	<p>children's continuing care and health care, with plans to share the learning from these activities once completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, the document mentions an annual engagement meeting held recently with Ofsted and CQC, where they discussed the self-assessment and areas being monitored. The next annual engagement meeting is scheduled for December of this year, although the schedule is subject to change. 	
9	Managing Medicines at Compass Trust School – Jenny Ellis	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JE provided an update on the pilot model for managing medicines at Sir Charles Parsons and Hadrian schools. The pilot is expected to start within the next couple of months, pending funding approval. • The model involves providing an uplift to school staff to take on more health support responsibilities, with governance and support from health professionals 	
10	ICB Consultation Update – Jenny Ellis	
	<p>JE announced that the consultation on the new ICB structure has concluded, and the new structure will be implemented from the 1st of February. Jenny will be moving to a regional role as the Head of SEND for the North East and North Cumbria ICB, and Dawn Robson will take over as the DCO for Newcastle.</p> <p>The chair thanked jenny for all the work she has undertaken for Newcastle as the DCO and wished her well in her new role.</p>	
11	AOB	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted Podcast - RG mentioned that they participated in a podcast with Ofsted, discussing the importance of partnerships and senior-level buy-in. • Change Team - DT provided an update on the change team, which will be in place by March to review the high needs budget and take forward recommendations from Empower. • OTs in Special Schools - JE shared the good news that funding has been approved for an additional three occupational therapists (OTs) in special schools, which will have a significant impact on service delivery. 	

Action summary from this meeting

Agenda Item no. Date of mtg	Action	Owner	Due by date	Status
3. 24.01.2025	SEND Voice update to be added to the forward plan as a standing item for each SEND Exec Board.	EN	March	Open
4. 24.01.2025	Ensure the consultation document has the correct access fund at £400.	LM	March	Open
4. 24.01.2025	Any feedback on the Consultation document to be submitted by 31st January.	ALL	January	Open
5. 24.01.2025	AP update and brochure to be shared with attendees.	LM	March	Open
11. 11.11.2024	Proposal on the Question Time Panel to be shared at the next SEND Executive Board Meeting. Deferred to next Board Meeting.	AB	March	Open