

Lancashire SEND Partnership Board Meeting
10 October 2023, 10.00am - 12.00noon
Hybrid meeting

Board Members Present:

Julie Bell, Chair, Interim Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Lancashire County Council
Dave Carr, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council
Neil Willcocks, Service Manager (Learning Disability & Autism), Lancashire County Council
Jennifer Ashton, Manager of the SEND Partnership, Lancashire County Council
Suliman Hussain, Youth Worker, Lancashire County Council
Andy Smith, Head at St Aidan's High School, Secondary Schools Representative
Elaine Croll, Designated Clinical Officer, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
Dr Maria Hall, Community Paediatrician, Lancashire Teaching Hospital
Clive Groves, Designated Social Care Officer, Lancashire County Council
Helen Keaveny, SEND Lead for Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
Louise Jefferson, Integrated Service Manager, Early Help, Lancashire County Council
Marie Howarth, Vice Principal Preston's College, Further Education Representative
Sue Conron, Head Teacher at Duke Street Nursery,
Ruksana Sarkar-Aklam, Interim Public Health Consultant, Lancashire County Council
Vanessa Wilson, Director of Children, Young People and Maternity, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council

In attendance:

Paul Smith, Strategic Lead for Inclusion, Lancashire County Council
Kevin Burns, SEND Adviser, Attendance Adviser and Education Consultancy
Andrew Brooke, SEND Enabler, Family Hubs, Lancashire County Council
Oliver Moores, lead member of POWAR
Kieran Welsh, Head Teacher at Astley Park on behalf on Fran Clayton

Apologies / Absent:

Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion Service, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Michael Goulthorp, County Councillor, Lead Member for Education and Skills/ Children and Families
Cllr Jayne Rear, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Cllr Cosima Towneley, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families.
Sam Jones, Chair, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum
Gillian Rankin, Steering Group Member, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum
Clare Smith, Youth Policy Strategic Lead, Lancashire County Council
Andrea Duerden, MASH Senior Manager, Lancashire County Council
Matt Pilling, Senior Manager, Early Help, Lancashire County Council
Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Public Health
Lesley Anderson-Hadley, Associate Director for SEND & Complexities, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.
Fran Clayton, Head at Pendle View Primary School, Lancashire Special Schools Head Teachers Association Representative
Tina Wilkinson, Head at St Andrew's CE Primary School, Primary Heads in Lancashire

1. Welcome and Apologies

Julie welcomed everyone to the meeting. In response to requests from POWAR it was agreed for their item to be first on the agenda.

1.1 6 monthly report from POWAR

Suliman Hussain introduced the summary which had been shared with members prior to the meeting. Suliman explained how new groups had been set up for POWAR and that they had also held the Take Over Day in August 2023, for the first time. Suliman explained the numbers of sessions held and attendees but advised to exercise caution when interpreting these, due to the way the system collates the data. Suliman also explained how POWAR would benefit from a re-brand to represent current young people views and how it would engage more young people to participate, as children's needs change as they grow up. Board members who are presenting an item have been asked to provide a summary and this was celebrated as helping to clarify the contents for everyone.

Action 1: Dave Carr suggested he link POWAR with Lancaster University researchers (Vicki Webster and Rachel Ibster) who are wanting to explore participation reach with young people who have additional needs.

Oliver Moores summarised the outcomes of the Take Over Day where transport and greater leisure opportunities were cited as priorities for POWAR, the outcomes of the Take Over Day are included on the action tracker but it was felt these should be more of a priority for the SEND Partnership Board.

Action 2: Jenny Ashton to update the action tracker to prioritise the outcomes of the Take Over Day. A Task and Finish group can be formed and an action tracker developed to monitor the progress and outcomes.

1.2 Impact and effectiveness: because of this meeting CYP will...

Feel listened to, valued and have access to information, advice and support when they need it.

2. Standing Items

2.1 Minutes From 4 July 2023 Meeting

Dave Carr requested an amendment but otherwise the minutes were approved by the Board, and will be published on the SEND Partnership website following the meeting.

2.2 Action Tracker

The action tracker was received by all members for review before the meeting. Actions were updated where appropriate, were in progress or added as agenda items.

3. SEND Plan Progress

3.1 SEND Plan 2021-2025 Highlight Report

Members received the Highlight Report prior to the meeting.

Priority Group 1: Improving Outcomes

Sally Richardson was unavailable so Jenny Ashton shared the update. Last quarter, data was shared at both primary and secondary executive meetings and proposals made for shared decision making. The Alternative Provision (AP) Strategy was finalised and shared for consultation, and a three year Inclusion Strategy was finalised. SEND Teams were reviewed and a correspondence officer appointed.

Actions this quarter include the S19 report being completed and shared with leaders, an AP Lead is being appointed to facilitate placements, the new PEN 1 form has been launched for children who are permanently excluded, and the Inclusion helpline went live in October 2023. The SEND Survey results have been analysed and discussions held regarding the format for publication on the Local Offer. 678 parent carer and 160 children and young people's responses were received between July and August 2023. The SEND survey has now replaced the Annual Review survey. Co-production has included Children's Champions capturing the voice of children attending Pupil Referral Units with further plans to capture the voice of children and young people who are post 16 and not in education, employment or training.

Demand for education, health and care needs assessments continue to increase with over 2700 being requested in the last 12 months. Increased demand is affecting timeliness with less assessments being issued within statutory timescales. Permanent exclusions continue to place pressure on alternative provision and demand for special school places. Attendance continues to be a concern for children with additional needs, particularly those who have emotionally based school avoidance. Statutory processes are being reviewed to mitigate these risks. The ICB, DCO's and Primary Care are working together to ensure how we deep dive into the data to gain clearer clarification, particularly around attendance.

Action 3: SEND Survey results are to be published on the Local Offer.

Priority Group 2: Communications

Jenny Ashton shared the update, that the communications delivery plan has been completed for the quarter. 24 SEND Engagement Events have been completed over the last 12 months, with 7 held over the summer holidays. A total of 575 people attended with half being parent carers and their children. Lancashire Parent Carer Forum have agreed an engagement and participation protocol, which will be shared with SEND Executive and SEND Partnership Board in January 2024.

The Children and Young People's (CYP) Participation self assessment and action plan has been completed by inclusion and the SEND Partnership with priorities identified, including a Participation, Engagement and Co-production (PEC) Group being established, Mind of My Own app being explored to capture child voice and participation training to be developed and delivered.

Action 4: Evaluation of the SEND Engagement Events to be shared on the Local Offer.

Action 5: Volunteers from the SEND Partnership are invited to join the PEC Group by emailing the sendpartnership@lancashire.gov.uk

The SEN Support webpage is being developed to include greater clarity where parent carers and practitioners can access support and how educational support via the graduated response, emotional support and early help all fit together to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. This should go live on the Local Offer later this month (October).

Action 6: SEN Support webpage and guide to be published on the Local Offer.

LPCF are co-producing the Annual Review form for parent carers to ensure the form measures progress against targets identified in the EHCP and also in the last review. New Working Together online events are being co-designed and a new engagement event programme is being developed for 2023-4.

Priority Group 3: Improving the SEND journey

Vanessa Wilson shared priority group 3 update including how multi-agency audits have been completed, early help pathways have been developed, the Integrated Care Board (ICB) structure has been finalised, reviews have been completed on ASD Pathways, specification for 0-19 services, specialist community nursing, and recommendations made for additional resources. The speech and language balanced system pilot in Hyndburn has been successful and there is no longer a waiting list. The Self-evaluation form has been completed for Annex A and the Autism in Schools project has secured funding for a third year.

Actions next quarter include rolling out the balanced system for speech and language support, the Neuro-development (ND) Pathway steering group to be established, and the action plan implemented which includes pre and post diagnostic support and additional resources being outsourced. A new Head of SEND has been appointed and she will start in post from November. Joint Commissioning is a priority with a paper being written and actions are being taken to the Health Board on 18 October 2023.

Priority Group 4: Preparing for Adulthood

Jenny Ashton shared the update on behalf of Neil Willcocks who was experiencing technical difficulties. Monthly meetings have been held but school representatives are requested to help support the group. Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) data has been added to the SEND Data dashboard but needs adding to the new dashboard. A thematic review has been completed which audited EHCP's for PfA actions, a Transitions manager was appointed last quarter and an Employment Officer was appointed on 28 September 2023.

The new Employment Forum was launched this month to drive forward post 16 options including Supported Internships. Further actions this quarter are for the pathway guide to be published on the Local Offer, including health information which is currently being reviewed and remains outstanding.

Action 7: Jenny Ashton to contact PHiL and LASSH to request representation at the PfA Priority Group meetings.

Priority Group 5: Accessible Services

Dave Carr shared that there is a joining up of mental health support including additional mental health support teams, and support via We are With You around self harm. There are variable wait times across the county for CAMHS with 99% CYP seen within 4 weeks in East Lancs compared to 61% across the LSCFT footprint. There is continued engagement in the North West CAMHS re-design.

Speech and language support is also variable with the Balanced System being rolled out across the county and funding secured for Wellcomm training. 306 more special school places have been created this year, and further spaces identified. Schools have been invited to submit expressions of interest to manage the increasing demand. Post 16 and Alternative Provision procurement is live as part of the North West Regional Flexible Purchasing system to fill gaps in provision.

Short Breaks have 1500 members currently although it is known there are still gaps in provision. A tender has been launched for more providers. A survey has been completed and the results due to be analysed to inform future plans. Family Hubs were launched in the last week of September and development plans are in place.

3.2 SEND Board Terms of Reference, membership and Governance Structure

The Terms of Reference and updated governance structure had been shared with members prior to the meeting. Julie Bell shared that Sarah O'Brien will be taking over as chair. The SEND Plan's are being reviewed and so the Terms of Reference will be put on hold for now until the SEND Partnership Board has gathered feedback.

3.3 SEND Plan for 2024-2025

The Continuous Improvement Plan has been developed to ensure actions are monitored and kept on track in line with the SEND Plan 2021-2025. The draft plan for 2024-2025 includes the outcomes and associated actions from 2023-2024 with a RAG rating to show progress. New outcomes and associated actions need developing with the priority group leads for the following year.

Dave Carr shared that there are some actions, not currently included in the plan, particularly joint commissioning which requires the framework and strategy updating. There also needs a re-focus of the work in Accessible Services, particularly the ND Pathway and how we work together.

Discussed what are the impacts of the various projects and what are our goals. Paul Smith shared that there are several plans, many meetings and lots of activity, which he is reviewing. Paul is exploring what an inclusion eco-system would look like and mean post 2025. The key learning from inspection will advise on the future model and narrative moving forward.

If we are rated amber in the inspection, then future inspection would be in 2026, by which time the partnership will galvanise, leading to consistently good outcomes for CYP with SEND.

Action 8: Jenny Ashton to liaise with leads to update the new plan outcomes and associated actions.

4. Key Topics (Specific topics related to the improvement plan and the SEND Code of Practice)

4.1 DCO 6 monthly report

Elaine Croll shared the quarter 1 report for Designated Clinical Officers. Elaine shared their ways of working, including closer working with the ICB. DCO's deliver sessions to practitioners to quality assure health advices for EHC needs assessments. They are working to improve timeliness of advices which currently sit at 62.3%

DCO's respond to enquiries, mainly from the local authority, and have identified the key themes of their enquiries. There has been inequity of resources such as continence products, with DCO's raising concerns to the ICB, who have spot purchased resources to address the issue. DCO's also support with annual review process and have completed the new forms for the development review.

Next steps will include covering for Sue Mounsey who is leaving the service, providing a training offer and joint audit to evaluate health advices. DCO's lead the SEND champions meetings for health providers. Monthly reporting is being completed as a result of regular auditing and ways of improving timeliness are being explored, although long waiting lists contribute to delays. The report is broken down per department and identifies training and support need which is positive.

DCO's are keen to know what the impact of the graduated response is, how it is being monitored, to increase confidence for families and reduce the need for EHCP's. Joint commissioning will help reduce the gaps in provision. DCO's belong to the North West DCO network and share good practice regarding request information for tribunals, looking out, not just in to improve practice.

4.2 SENDIAS 6 monthly report

Clive Groves shared the report on behalf of Laura Morris. SENDIAS have completed the self assessment audit for participation and have identified three priorities to improve their working with children, young people and POWAR. These include improving the CYP section on the website, developing resources and exploring digital options. SENDIAS continue to experience increases in demand, which they are managing by the use of triage. A new system is being created by ICT to enable SENDIAS to record their conversations in a confidential way, as previously EHM records were not confidential. The helpline demand continues to increase, in line with the national increase in demand. Themes include EHC needs assessment and parental requests, SEN support and processes, setting issues, placement choice and liaising with the local authority. 249 CYP or families have been supported with the highest demand being in Lancaster and Preston. 22 CYP contacted the service directly. Case work reasons include tribunal, school choice, and supporting families with EHC draft plans. There are concerns that mainstream schools are not able to meet needs and progress isn't been made in relation to targets identified in annual reviews. SENDIAS has good feedback from families and have supported the SEND Partnership at engagement events and Family Hub launches. One page profiles of SENDIAS team members were published in the SEND Newsletter.

5. Meeting Governance

5.1 Forward Plan

The forward plan for the meeting due on 11 January 2024 was shared and includes:

SEND Plan Reporting

Updates re SEND Inspection, Continuous Improvement Plan and key data

ToR for SEND Partnership Board

EHCP / Annual Review Audits

Family Hubs update

Participation Strategy update

Communication and Coproduction workshop

5.2 Confidentiality and Board Brief

To note.

6. AOB

None raised but can be emailed for a response.

7. Dates and times of future meetings and close

11 January 2024, 10.00am - 12.00noon hybrid