

Lancashire SEND Partnership Board Meeting
11 January 2024, 10.00am - 12.00noon
Hybrid meeting

Board Members Present:

Julie Bell, Chair, Interim Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Lancashire County Council
Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council
Sarah O'Brien, Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Dave Carr, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council
Sally Richardson, Head of Inclusion Service, Lancashire County Council
Cllr Jayne Rear, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Jennifer Ashton, Manager of the SEND Partnership, Lancashire County Council
Gillian Rankin, Steering Group Member, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum
Clare Smith, Youth Policy Strategic Lead, Lancashire County Council
Suliman Hussain, Youth Worker, Lancashire County Council
Vanessa Wilson, Director of Children, Young People and Maternity, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board
Lesley Anderson-Hadley, Associate Director for SEND & Complexities, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.
Elaine Croll, Designated Clinical Officer, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
Dr Maria Hall, Community Paediatrician, Lancashire Teaching Hospital
Marie Howarth, Vice Principal, Preston's College, Further Education Representative
Ian Carden, Head at Ridgewood Special School, Lancashire Special Schools Head Teachers Association Representative
Clive Groves, Designated Social Care Officer, Lancashire County Council
Kathy Ashworth, Head of Early Help Service, Lancashire County Council

In attendance:

Paul Smith, Strategic Lead for Inclusion, Lancashire County Council
Ruksana Sarkar-Aklam, Interim Public Health Consultant, Lancashire County Council
Andrew Brooke, SEND Enabler, Family Hubs, Lancashire County Council
Hayley Smith, SEND Auditor, Lancashire County Council
Clair Martin, Designated Clinical Officer, Blackpool Teaching Hospital

Apologies / Absent:

Neil Willcocks, Service Manager (Learning Disability & Autism), Lancashire County Council
Cllr Michael Goulthorp, County Councillor, Lead Member for Education and Skills/ Children and Families
Cllr Cosima Towneley, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families.
Sam Jones, Chair, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum
Andrea Duerden, MASH Senior Manager, Lancashire County Council
Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Public Health
Helen Keaveny, SEND Lead for Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
Andy Smith, Head at St Aidan's High School, Secondary Schools Representative
Sarah Barton, Head at Broad Oak Primary School, Primary Heads in Lancashire
Sue Conron, Head at Duke Street Nursery, Early Years Representative

1. Welcome and Apologies

Julie Bell welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

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

Be able to have access to information, advice and support they want and need. It is really important that we understand the needs of children and young people in Lancashire and have a joint plan for how we are going to continue to work together to meet them.

2. Standing Items

2.1 Minutes From 10 October 2023 Meeting

Lesley Anderson-Hadley 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 discussed the current benchmarking data for attainment which showed a slight narrowing of the gap between children with an EHCP, in relation to children with SEN support at Key Stage 2. However, the results remain lower than national data. For Key Stage 4 the gap has increased nationally and for Lancashire.

The number of children being suspended and permanently excluded remain concerning.

Priority Group 2: Communications

Jenny Ashton shared that Working Together events had been held in December 2023, with the feedback being analysed. Provisional analysis had identified themes including accessing support, workforce development, including a better understanding of specific conditions, and improved communications. A programme of events is currently being co-produced with Lancashire Parent Carer Forum. The Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and SEND Partnership Protocol will be presented later in the agenda.

Priority Group 3: Improving the SEND journey

Lesley Anderson- Hadley shared that the Neurodevelopmental Pathway had been reviewed, but required co-producton feedback with children, young people and parent carers. It had been shared that parent carer feedback had been obtained previously, and that this would be shared to prevent further duplication. Lesley requested that this be sent to her as soon as possible.

Priority Group 4: Preparing for Adulthood

The pathway guide is waiting for health information to be finalised before it is published on the Local Offer. Lesley Anderson-Hadley informed that the information was waiting for the governance process to be completed. The pathway would include transitions and a graduated approach to support, which would include reasonable adjustments being put in place and the implementation of inclusive practice. The new Employment Officer had started in post to lead the newly established Employment Forum which will drive forward post 16 options including Supported Internships.

Priority Group 5: Accessible Services

Dave Carr shared that investment in mental health services continues, including support from voluntary, community, and faith sector groups and via the digital offer. The paper regarding transition pathways from CAMHS had been deferred until March 2024, but that early help support would help to address the wait times.

A long discussion was held regarding the emotional support offered at early help, and that it wasn't always sufficient to prevent escalation of need. Kathy Ashworth shared that the child and family wellbeing service in Preston, had launched a pilot for group work for children and young people waiting for support from CAMHS. The programme was 6-8 weeks long, and provided group work for children, in addition to a separate group for parent carers, before both groups came together to share their learning. Positive feedback had been received, although some tweaks were being made to the programme before the next course ran in February 2024. The aim of the course is to broaden support skills, develop resilience and provide opportunities for learning. Kathy Ashworth shared that CFW had developed another group work programme for older children called Re-mind me which was tailored to children's individual need.

Vanessa Wilson shared that in East Lancashire, Spring North had been commissioned to provide first line support for children, before a referral was made to CAMHS for ASD / ADHD assessment to help identify and meet needs, as a diagnosis didn't meet need. The Autism in Schools project has completed the second year of it's programme and support was also being provided to children via the mental health support teams that are based in schools. It was asked whether these projects had been evaluated and if their findings were available.

Action 1: Jenny Ashton will share the Autism in School project evaluation with members, but the MHST evaluation was not yet available.

Concerns were raised regarding children where support isn't accessible, children who don't leave their bedrooms, or go to school, those who's needs are too complex for early help services but don't meet the threshold for specialist support. Discussed the dynamic support register for children and young people who need bespoke packages of support due to their vulnerabilities, and how there needs to be better understanding of how to access this support for children who are in the care of children's services. Briefing sessions have been organised for social workers by the keyworking team.

However, some of these children do not qualify for the dynamic support register or for keyworking support, as they haven't got any diagnosis, or are too complex, or don't have a named clinician or specialist in autism and so are referred to the Designated Clinical Officers, as there is no-one else. Enquiries have been made with the learning disabilities and autism team, for support where children are not accessing services or education, which is now at 1 in 5 nationally.

Action 2: Sarah O'Brien will liaise with the designated clinical officers (DCO's) regarding the children who couldn't access support via keyworking.

Short breaks take up has been low, despite registrations being high. A specialist short breaks service to provide overnight respite for children with complex needs is being commissioned and residential support services transitioning to adult services. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is being refreshed and joint commissioning explored further.

Action 3: Clive Groves offered to write a paper exploring short breaks provision, which Dave Carr welcomed.

3.2 SEND Board Terms of Reference, membership and Governance Structure

The updated terms of reference and governance structure had been shared with members prior to the meeting. Board members discussed how data was collated to ensure scrutiny and that the terms of reference are a working document. Membership was discussed including inconsistent attendance, the importance of the designated social care officer role, and buy in from social care, the importance that outcomes from escalations included feedback mechanisms, and for deputies to be nominated if members couldn't attend. POWAR requested that a summary template was implemented for agenda items and for meetings to be held in person, for their annual report and take over day, and for the other meetings to be offered as hybrid meetings.

Amendments to the tenure, membership and standing agenda items were agreed by the Board.

3.3 SEND Inspection, strategies and plans updates

Sally Richardson provided an update regarding inspection meetings, including Area Inspection meetings with partners and internal inspection meetings. The Self-Evaluation Form had been drafted, and was being updated in response to feedback received. This will be circulated to members of the SEND Partnership with the accompanying powerpoint presentation. Key lines of enquiry had been identified and were being developed. Regular bulletins were being shared and it was to clarify that only OFSTED inspections in schools had been suspended, whilst inspectors received mental health training. It is possible that Lancashire would receive their Area SEND inspection in January, February or March.

Key themes had been identified which include waiting times for health and education, health and care plans, the use of data to inform strategic planning, annual reviews and preparation for adulthood, in addition to communications. Out of 20 inspections completed in 2023, 7 were green (good), 8 were amber (inconsistent) and 5 were red (systemic failings). Lancashire has developed a recovery plan and received funding to recruit more staff, to prioritise transitions and annual reviews, initially in Year 6 and Year 11 pupils. Inspection takes place over 3 weeks where 6 children are chosen who may have an EHCP, SEN support or Alternative Provision. An evaluation of their support will be completed by practitioners, and practice audits have been completed. There is now no negotiation over the children selected and their placements will be visited.

Discussed the risks and resources and that concerns had been shared with council, with funding reviewed for additional resources including transport, demonstrating investment in SEND/Inclusion. Discussed the need to explore district level data to identify specific areas of concerns with waiting times. It was asked if key stage 5 data was also included on the dashboard, which it is, it is just the new benchmarking data was now available for key stages 2 and 4.

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

4.1 EHCP / Annual Review audits – annual report

Hayley Smith shared that audits of education, health and care plans (EHCP) were completed monthly and that multi-agency audits had been completed each half term, however due to data protection and information governance these were paused for the information sharing agreement to be finalised. The quality of new plans was currently at 66% for those assessed as good or outstanding, with amended plans and annual reviews being prioritised, to improve quality. However, all plans depended on the quality of advices completed by partner agencies. Moderation was also completed with a panel including the social care officer, and social care / child and family wellbeing managers on a rota basis.

Discussed the next steps regarding the outcomes of individual plans and explored how better working together could streamline the number of meetings, to improve attendance and participation. It would be helpful to have the outcomes broken down into districts to be able to resolve specific issues. Discussed how many plans should be audited and to link the impact and improving quality with the volume of plans. The aim was to audit 5% of plans, but due to capacity issues, there had been a decline in the number of audits completed and returned. It would be beneficial to include parent carers in future moderation meetings, although children and young people were consulted for the multi-agency audits. It would be beneficial for young people to actually audit the plans too and possibly involve young inspectors. A different tool is also being explored for the monthly audits, to reduce the time taken to complete them from 3 hours, to increase efficiency. Discussed whether it would be worth amalgamating the audits into one multi-agency audit for the whole SEND Partnership moving forward as it is important that all partners are involved. The ICB shared capacity issues and suggested it would be worth engaging wider health partners.

Training and workforce development was also important to improve the quality of plans. There was a training programme in place via the specialist teaching service, Lancashire Professional Development Service (LPDS) and SENDCO seminars. It is important to evidence learning and impact to improve quality.

Action 4: Jenny Ashton to add EHCP audits to the workforce development briefings/ network meetings

Action 5: Hayley Smith agreed to share the findings from the multi-agency audits with members.

4.2 Family Hubs 6 monthly update

Andy Brooke shared an overview of Family Hubs, including the national framework, Annex F requirements, connections and partnership working, the website and what's on guides, the community of practice and good news stories, the impact and how footfall had increased, the directory of support, and the plans to upskill the workforce. New hubs were being launched in March 2024 and then all

Family Hubs would be handed over to districts to manage as business as usual. Discussed a district Local Offer to promote localised services including the Family Hubs and how the directory app approach enabled families to access easily via their phones. Concerns were raised as to how the Family Hubs directory sits with the Local Offer directory, however the Family Hubs directory is not SEND specific, whereas the Local Offer directory is. The idea is to have a single source of underlying data which will be accessed in different ways according to the audience.

4.3 Workforce Development Strategy

The paper was circulated to members before the meeting for approval. Monthly briefings, quarterly network meetings and in person workshops are being developed for the SEND Partnership in 2024.

Action 6: Any comments or feedback on the workforce development strategy to be emailed to the sendpartnership@lancashire.gov.uk please.

4.4 Communication and co-production workshop

Clive Groves introduced the Four Cornerstone Approach for Co-production, and requested that this was implemented across the SEND Partnership and the action plan used to monitor performance. Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) have commissioned Kath Radcliffe to provide joint training and development on co-production. The presentation had been shared with members prior to the meeting, but a brief overview was presented.

Action 7: Lesley Anderson-Hadley and Clive Groves to work together and plan next steps for co-production with health partners.

Discussed the protocol that has been drafted for the SEND Partnership and Lancashire Parent Carer Forum. The Protocol sets out how the Council and ICB will work with Lancashire Parent Carer Forum who are a strategic partner of the partnership and how in being more accountable to parent carers we can improve things together. A request form is being piloted this quarter starting with a request for short breaks development. Clive Groves shared his thanks to the LPCF for their input as volunteers.

Action 8: It was requested for the LPCF, Clive Groves and Clare Smith, Youth Participation Lead to work together regarding the participation audit tool.

Members of the SEND Partnership Board approved the protocol.

5. Meeting Governance

5.1 Forward Plan

The forward plan for the meeting due on 17 April 2024 was shared and includes:

Minutes of the previous meeting

Action tracker

Impact and Effectiveness

Forward Plan

SEND Plan Reporting

DCO Annual Report

SENDIAS Annual Report

Continuous Improvement Plan and Inspection Framework update

Participation Strategy Annual Report
Annual Review of Local Offer Improvements
POWAR Annual Report

5.2 Confidentiality and Board Brief

None shared.

6. AOB

DSCO report and presentation was shared with members prior to the meeting, and the opportunity for any questions to be asked. The DSCO role is to support strategic development and alignment across SEND and Social Care to promote improved outcomes for children and young people. Clive Groves recommended that this post continues after his retirement.

An update was shared by Public Health that the 0-19 service had been out for procurement and Wirral NHS Trust would take over from HCRG in April 2024.

Thanks were given to Julie Bell and Clive Groves who both leave their positions in February 2024. Their hard work and support has helped the SEND Partnership to progress. Julie Bell will continue as a SEND Partnership Board Member in her role as Head of Service for culture and skills.

7. Dates and times of future meetings and close

17 April 2024 1 – 3pm Committee Room C, County Hall, Preston, in person meeting

Summary of actions:

Action 1: Jenny Ashton will share the Autism in School project evaluation with members, but the MHST evaluation was not yet available.

Action 2: Sarah O'Brien will liaise with the designated clinical officers (DCO's) regarding the children who couldn't access support via keyworking.

Action 3: Clive Groves offered to write a paper exploring short breaks provision, which Dave Carr welcomed.

Action 4: Jenny Ashton to add EHCP audits to the workforce development briefings/ network meetings

Action 5: Hayley Smith agreed to share the findings from the multi-agency audits with members.

Action 6: Any comments or feedback on the workforce development strategy to be emailed to the sendpartnership@lancashire.gov.uk please.

Action 7: Lesley Anderson-Hadley and Clive Groves to work together and plan next steps for co-production with health partners.

Action 8: It was requested for the LPCF, Clive Groves and Clare Smith, Youth Participation Lead to work together regarding the participation audit tool.