

## **Lancashire SEND Partnership Board Meeting**

### **24 January 2025 10-12am**

#### **Teams meeting**

#### **Board Members Present:**

**Sarah O'Brien**, Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (Chair).

**Paul Turner**, Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Lancashire County Council.

**Vanessa Wilson**, Director of Children, Young People and Maternity, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

**Cllr Jayne Rear**, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.

**Dave Carr**, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council.

**Louise Anderson**, Director of Children's Services, Lancashire County Council.

**Andrea Duerden**, Senior Manager, MASH, Lancashire County Council.

**Cerys Townend**, Head of SEND and Inclusion, Lancashire County Council.

**Ruksana Sardar-Akram**, Interim Public Health Consultant, Lancashire County Council.

**Peter Chapman**, Interim Associate Director for SEND & Complexities, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

**Laura Gibney**, Designated Clinical Officer, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

**Dr Maria Hall**, Associate Clinical Director for Community Neurodevelopmental Paediatrics, Lancashire Teaching Hospital.

**Marie Howarth**, Vice Principal, Preston's College, Further Education Representative.

**Ian Carden**, Headteacher at Ridgewood Special School, Lancashire Special Schools Head Teachers Association Representative.

**Oliver Handley**, Headteacher at Secondary Schools Representative.

**Jane Curl**, Headteacher at Carleton St Hilda's CE Primary School, Primary Headteachers in Lancashire representative.

**Natalie Sinclair**, Head at Highfield Nursery, Early Years Representative.

**Philippa Perks**, University of Cumbria Pre-School, Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector representative.

**Kathy Ashworth**, Head of Early Help Service, Lancashire County Council.

**Neil Willcocks**, Service Manager for Learning Disability & Autism, Lancashire County Council

**Sam Jones**, Chair, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.

**Clive Groves**, Steering Group Member, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.

**Gillian Rankin**, Steering Group Member, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.

**Clare Smith**, Youth Policy Strategic Lead, Lancashire County Council.

**Jennifer Ashton**, Manager of the SEND Partnership, Lancashire County Council.

#### **In attendance:**

**Laura Morris**, Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Team manager, Lancashire County Council.

**Oliver Moores**, POWAR representative.

**Lauren Jackson**, Head of SEND and Complexities, Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.

#### **Apologies / Absent:**

**Jacqui Old**, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council.

**Cllr Michael Green**, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing.

**Cllr Cosima Towneley**, County Councillor, Cabinet Member for Children and Families.

**Sakthi Karunanithi**, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Public Health.

**Charlotte Hammond**, Head of Service for Learning Disability and Autism, Lancashire County Council.

**Helen Keaveny**, SEND Lead, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust.

**Suliman Hussain**, Professional Range Youth Worker, Lancashire County Council.

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

Sarah O'Brien, Chair, welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted. Sarah suggested that future meetings should open with a good news story from one of our young people or parent carers. Sarah asked Board members to remember the children who lost their lives in the Southport incident, as the Board is all about trying to drive the best outcomes for our children and young people, particularly those with SEND.

### 1.2 SEND Area Inspection overview and next steps

Sarah O'Brien thanked all members for their support during the recent inspection. The SEND area inspection highlighted the importance of partnership efforts during the inspection period. Although the final report is pending, initial feedback indicates a need for continued focus on improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The inspection emphasised the importance of knowing ourselves, together with our priorities and actions. The report should be published around mid-February 2025. We will need to produce an amendment to our current plan addressing our priorities and associated actions. Peter Chapman shared that workstreams will continue, particularly the Four Cornerstones approach to co-production, and our work towards co-producing a new SEND Strategy, with consultation events being held over the next few months. ICB actions will align across the system, and the responsiveness of health providers and services was fabulous during the inspection.

**Action 1:** Jenny will send the finalised inspection report to Board members as soon as it is formally published.

## 2. Standing Items

### 2.1 Minutes from 10 October 2024 meeting

Minutes were received by all members to review prior to the meeting. Request made by Sam Jones for amendments to be made regarding key points of accuracy, particularly around the communications priority group and the clarity of decisions made during the meeting. Initially the minutes said all delivery groups were to be stood down but later the minutes said Improving Outcomes and Communications should continue. The inspection report will provide clarity as to how we work moving forwards specifically regarding communication.

**Decision:** the delivery groups are paused until the final inspection report is received.

Minutes of the last meeting have been amended as requested and published on the SEND Partnership website following the meeting.

## 2.2 Risk Register and Action Tracker

Risk register, and action tracker received by all members to review before the meeting. Several ongoing and outstanding actions were discussed including ongoing discussions and preparations for the final SEND Inspection report, updates on risk assessments and training within the team in response to the JTAI inspection in 2024. Ongoing discussions about the form of support for Lancashire parent care forum (LPCF) and room accessibility. The ongoing need for clarity and completion of summary templates for POWAR and LPCF members. A pre-meet is held to discuss agenda items, but a conversation is needed regarding the effectiveness of the forms and how to share information in an accessible format. LPCF also need to be included and fully briefed.

**Decision:** Agreed that the summary forms must be included with all papers presented at the SEND Partnership Board, to ensure an accessible format was included. This would form a front cover sheet, including recommendations for board members.

**Action 2:** SEND Partnership to commit to providing support to LPCF.

**Action 3:** All members to commit to completing the summary template to ensure accessibility for POWAR and LPCF.

All other actions noted as complete, being actioned or added as agenda items.

## 3. SEND Plan Progress

### 3.1 Agree Terms of Reference, governance arrangements and membership for 2025, including the plan for an independent chair.

Amended new Terms of Reference for 2025 were received by members prior to the meeting.

**Decision:** The terms of reference were discussed and approved, with minor amendments based on feedback. The importance of having a clear structure and understanding of roles and responsibilities was emphasized.

The possibility of an independent chair was mentioned but deferred for future consideration.

**Action 4:** Jenny to request finalised Terms of Reference be published on the Local Offer.

### 3.2 Review of SEND Plan 2021-2025 progress reports.

#### Priority Group 1: Improving Outcomes

Cerys Townend, Head of SEND and Inclusion introduced Improving Outcomes summary report for the first time since she joined Lancashire County Council in November 2024. Although the delivery group has been stood down, there continues to be plenty of action to share with members:

- **SEND Survey:** The 2024/25 survey is set to launch in February to inform the next strategy.
- **Recruitment and Complaints Process:** Additional recruitment and refinement of the complaints process to address delays, communication issues, and placement delays.
- **SEND Units and Capital Plan:** Development of 15 new SEND units is underway for September 2025 and we're also developing a wider capital plan for the next 10 years. We would like to understand where the gaps in sufficiency are and so would like to co-

produce with the parent carer forum and also gather feedback from schools and settings too.

- **Section 19 Protocol:** This has recently been drafted with the underpinning operational procedures and guidance being finalised, which will be available for all schools and settings.
- **SEND Strategy:** We've identified our local priorities through co-production in addition to the inspection report informing the priorities moving forward. Priorities include: improving timeliness around the whole EHC process, increasing compliance with phased transfers and annual reviews, timeliness and implementation of Alternative Provision and strategy, implementation of the ND Pathway, intelligence and data to inform strategic development, and improving the quality of data and input into the systems.
- **Graduated response:** a banding review has been co-developed with schools and what schools should be implemented prior to requesting statutory assessment, which overlaps with the ordinarily available provision framework. Regular networking with schools together with the roll out of PiNS, AET training, and mental health support teams help schools undertake a graduated response.
- **SEND Training programme:** The SEND Partnership workforce development webpage has been established and the SEND Academy induction programme for internal staff starts in February.
- **Attainment:** is slowly improving but data for 23/24 isn't available yet.
- **Suspensions / exclusions:** remain too high but support is in place for schools via the Team around Schools and Settings, virtual school and the educational psychology service to improve trauma informed, relational approaches for children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

**Decision:** The new template for reporting was approved as it evidences impact, in a simple, effective format.

Sam Jones asked if LPCF could be involved in the co-production of the SEND Academy induction programme. Clive Groves asked whether there was a report regarding performance of the SEND Helpline, which there isn't currently.

**Action 5:** Jenny to liaise with Janette and Sam to share the programme, and how parent carer forum can feed into it.

**Action 6:** Cerys to share an update regarding SEND Helpline performance at the next Board meeting.

## Priority Group 2: Communications

Sam Jones, Chair of LPCF shared the update for the communication priority group, which has recently been stood down.

- **All partners included in development work:** we have many exceptions around this in terms of wider communications. There is a lack of clarity around the short term progression of the communications priority delivery group and lack of opportunity on future workstreams to enable parent carer representation to shape service development. We need to review the protocol and the working together strategy in light of the inspection and how we work together, together with The Lundy model and new Four Cornerstones model to provide a cohesive suite of documents. We also need a communication delivery plan which is being reviewed on a wider scale. We have made progress through the co-produced working together events in October, continuing the work that was started in May 2024, together with the co-produced and co-delivered SEND Strategy development

day in September, where the Four Cornerstones model was introduced to over 70 partners. A third development day is planned for March. The co-production working group has been set up and have met twice to see if Lancashire would like to adopt or adapt the model, which we'll bring back to Board in March.

- **Lancashire Parent Carer Forum:** have set up a parent carer forum round table with local SEND group leads becoming part of the partnership, enhancing communication and representation, with some groups having as many as 2000 Facebook members, who also meet in the community. Group leads representing Down Syndrome, the deaf community, and other condition specific groups also contributed to the local area inspection. We've struggled with PCF being supported to allow all parents to contribute and participate, as the three supporting officers finished in 2020, with the jointly funded partnership manager and local offer development officer supporting as part of their designated roles, but it is no longer in Jenny's job description, so it isn't her role, although we've had some discussions with Paul and Dave as to what support might look like.
- **Partnership for the Neurodiversity in School (PiNS) project:** The ICB and parent carer forum are supporting 24 primary schools across Lancashire, with health colleagues providing a range of support services. Hopefully, the outcome of that will be more parent carers involved in the work of the partnership, together with schools being supported to meet the needs of neurodivergent children in mainstream settings.
- **Children and young people:** continue to work with the local offer officer and forum to improve the ways of working with parent carers using similar models and to ensure consistency of messages through social media channels. POWAR also need support to grow, and continue in the new plan as a priority. We have talked about gaining the voices of those seldom heard, including children who are electively home educated, children not in education, employment or training and making sure the SEND Survey reaches these groups too.
- **SEND Partnership improvement:** Meetings have been set up which will look at communication and the forum have fortnightly co-production meetings with the ICB, which could be opened more widely.
- **Local Offer:** Feedback has told us that there are some gaps in communication, as information is missed, so we need to explore ways of advertising the local offer, including in more accessible formats.

**Decision:** The partnership need to have a clear vision around the key challenges with communication and how we track the progress and exceptions, regarding the actions we're taking, and making sure they are pulled out into the future plan.

### Priority Group 3: Improving the SEND journey

Peter Chapman, Associate director for SEND and Complexities, ICB shared the exceptions regarding the priority.

- **Identifying opportunities to improve the child's journey:** links to the difficulties in developing a formal shared data dashboard. A range of datasets were shared as a baseline for future development. Multi-agency audits are progressing with data sign off agreements completed.
- **Early identification of need:** The early health notification process has been embedded but there remain elements of inconsistencies with the early identification of need.
- **ND Pathway:** We know that our system has unacceptable waiting times, which we are looking to improve through the Programme Board transformation programme which has been established. We are wanting to move towards a needs led support to ensure families receive support rather than focussing on the need for a diagnosis. The business case will be completed to ensure investment and commitment as a system, together with waiting list review.



- **Supporting pupils with medical conditions in schools:** framework was launched and is being utilised with positive impact. Guidance has come out from the regional and national team, which means the framework will be reviewed to ensure the current framework works and the commissioning arrangements effective. This framework is for children attending Special Schools.
- **Graduated response for speech and language:** launched in a number of Family Hubs with a working group exploring an evaluation of what's been successful and how we roll it out in the remaining districts with our providers.
- **Improvements to EHCP's and Annual Reviews:** work is ongoing, although our DCO's are in business continuity which is impacting on their capacity to share some finalised EHCP's with health providers.
- **Personal health budgets:** have identified Blackpool Council to run our health budget system, which will hopefully see an increase in the take up of them.
- **Local Offer for health services:** with the ND pathway being the biggest challenge, as it is so complicated in how you access it with each provider service. An audit process has been put in place to ensure information quality.

Sarah O'Brien commented about the data dashboard and how Nottinghamshire have shared a dashboard across the system, which was impressive, and would be helpful if we could get to that point. Cerys Townend asked if the framework for supporting pupils with medical conditions could be shared with mainstream schools, but it would need checking first to ensure it is relevant.

**Action 7:** Cerys asked Jenny to share a copy of the framework with her, to consider sharing more widely.

Sam Jones, chair of LPCF, offered support to the ND Pathway, which Peter accepted, and agreed to share the objectives in relation to delivering the pathway, and identify where parent carer expertise could best be utilised.

**Action 8:** Peter to share and discuss the objectives for delivery of the ND Pathway with Sam.

#### Priority Group 4: Preparing for Adulthood

Neil Willcocks, Senior Manager for adult Learning Disability and Autism shared his update focussing on exceptions:

- **PfA strategy:** is due for update and will reflect the priorities identified in the inspection. There is an opportunity to repeat the CDC PfA audit as part of a task and finish piece of work. In the previous audit there had been limited engagement from education and children's social care partners, so we hope to engage with these partners for the next audit. We have CQC Inspection of Adult Social Care occurring in the second half of February, which will also add to our learning and what our priorities might be for the PfA strategy.
- **Health transitions:** A three tier approach has been developed with work currently in progress.
- **Social Care transitions:** We've secured input from the project office to evaluate whether we've got the transition offer right. There is also a task and finish group with Children with Disabilities team.
- **SEND Employment:** The officer post is now permanent so we're looking to develop and broaden the range of employment offers for young people. Unfortunately, that last SEND Employment Forum was stood down due to so many members sending apologies. We also need to ensure we have the correct information on the local offer that people can access.
- **PfA data:** remains challenging around PfA outcomes and whether data should be integrated across the groups. Inspection feedback will likely support us in the areas we need to focus on.

Clive Groves shared that PfA is likely to be a key area in the inspection, and so is really important. There needs to be a collective ownership of transition and Cerys Townend asked whether the PfA

strategy should be part of the new co-produced SEND strategy, rather than a stand alone strategy, as there is no point duplicating work and PfA is fundamental to our SEND Partnership plan too.

Marie Haworth shared that destination and progression data are critical as to what our learners transition to. Vanessa Wilson reminded Board members that transitions occurred at all ages and stages, as children moved between education settings and each year group. Jenny Ashton shared that the newly published [Preparing for adulthood](#) Pathway Guide was for all ages and stages.

**Decision:** Board members agreed PfA and transition planning are key priorities from early years through to adulthood, not just from post 16 and will form part of what we do as a partnership moving forward.

Oliver Moores, POWAR representative and Young Advisor asked if POWAR could receive details of the transition workers supporting young people into employment. Sam Jones agreed and asked if parent carer forum could also be introduced so they can share the information with families.

**Action 9:** Jenny to introduce Olly and Sam to Hannah Monaghan SEND Employment Officer.

### Priority Group 5: Accessible Services

Dave Carr, Director for Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health presented his update for accessible services:

- **Increasing emotional wellbeing and mental support:** is beginning to make a positive impact and in relation to numbers and the national target which we are above target. Waiting times to the first and second appointment has also improved throughout the year. The issue is regarding inconsistency across the county and different providers, and how we shift the good practice.
- **Demand for specialist provision:** remains high and we are placing more children than we would like in independent non-maintained special schools, challenging the system financially, which is a national issue also. We would like more children in mainstream schools as we below target currently, which relates to the broader question of inclusion and how we use alternative provision.
- **Joint strategic needs assessment and joint commissioning strategy:** There are many projects and programme covering the themes in the SEND Plan and the challenges of how we measure impact, and the difference to children in terms of outcomes for children and young people. This also links into the previous discussion regarding the data dashboard.

Sam Jones shared that having a strong complaints and resolution process was really important, to ensure children attended the correct provision and to reduce the financial burden regarding independent school provision.

### 3.3 Draft SEND Strategy for 2025 and beyond

Members received papers detailing the proposed timeline for the new strategy.

The SEND strategy is being drafted based on engagement events and will be ready for further engagement events in February and March, before going to design in April. The final plan will be ready for sign off in July, with a full launch in September for the start of the school year.

The strategy will also incorporate feedback from the Ofsted report and focus on identified priorities.

Sam Jones shared that the timeline wasn't what she expected them to be, regarding engagement events as parent carers will need 8 weeks notice to enable them all to engage in the process.

**Decision:** Board members agreed that to truly co-produce the strategy we need to allow sufficient time for all partners, but particularly parent carers and young people.

**Action 10:** Board members are invited to share any comments they have about the SEND Strategy with Cerys and Peter.

Maria Hall asked whether all Board members are expected to attend all the meetings and development days, as there is a lot going on. Jenny Ashton clarified that meetings may change once we get the finalised report from Ofsted, but that the Board and Development Days were the main meetings, but with Board members being given the opportunity to be part of the process as a partnership and to co-produce the Improvement Plan as well as the strategy.

## 4. Key Topics related to the Improvement Plan

### 4.1 Annual Report 2024

The annual report was shared with board members for consultation. It includes updates from meetings, published articles, and progress on various projects.

**Action 11:** Members are encouraged to provide feedback and suggest amendments to be made to the Annual Report by the end of February. Members are welcome to request meetings with Jenny to review amendments.

Sam Jones requested a meeting with Jenny, Clare and Anna to review the communications section of the report.

**Action 12:** Jenny to arrange a meeting with Sam, Clare and Anna to review the annual report.

## 5. Meeting Governance

### 5.1 Forward Plan

The forward plan for the meeting due on 17 March 2025 was shared and discussed with some amendments made, particularly feedback from the inspection, priority action plan, and an update on the work on the Four Cornerstones model.

#### Standing items:

Minutes of the previous meeting  
Action tracker  
Impact and Effectiveness  
Forward Plan  
SEND Plan Reporting

#### Agenda items:

Feedback from inspection and next steps including Priority Action Plan  
Agree draft SEND Strategy 2025-2028 and Improvement (delivery) Plan  
Update on the Four Cornerstones model of co-production

**Decision:** It was agreed to defer annual reports from POWAR and Participation, to enable other young people to be invited too. It was also agreed to defer EHCP Audits.



Cerys Townend asked a question about SEND Plan reporting and whether we should stop reporting against the current plan and prioritise the new plan, while current priority groups are stood down.

**Decision:** Board agreed to review the existing plan and pull forward the actions that are being worked on, so we don't lose them, which will be reported on in addition to the actions in the Priority Action Plan.

The agenda will be discussed at the SEND Agenda Setting Group meeting.

Clive Groves mentioned that there were small venues for the next couple of meetings, which didn't allow for all members to attend in person. This is due to lack of suitable room availability at County Hall. Sam Jones suggested using the Jack McLoughlin centre as that had been used previously.

Decision: Sarah O'Brien suggested that we either met in person or via teams, as hybrid meetings can be tricky, and for other venues should be explored to facilitate all Board members being able to attend. Board members were asked to consider the options.

#### 4.2 Confidentiality and Board Brief

None shared.

#### 4.3 Impact and effectiveness: because of this meeting CYP will ...

It was felt that the meeting had pulled out a few items where we're starting to see impact. Olly agreed that there had definitely been some steps forward in terms of communication and the use of videos for young people. It was agreed that it is most important to continue the focus of communication, co-production and engagement with young people and parent carers. There is a move towards digital tools to help improve communication, including a multi-agency audit tool Invision 360, and a new EHCP portal, where all communications will go through. Board members may be asked to contribute to this work. The new reporting template was well-received, and the focus on impact and outcomes was emphasised.

The meeting was effective in discussing key issues, setting priorities, and ensuring a collaborative approach. It would be good to start the meeting with a young person or parent carer sharing their experiences or a professional sharing a case study to set the scene, and remind ourselves why we're actually here and what the partnership is about.

## 6. AOB

## 7. Date and times of future meeting and close

Sarah thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for all their input.

**17 March 2025 10-12am Hybrid meeting TBC**

## **Summary of actions:**

**Action 1:** Jenny will send the finalised inspection report to Board members as soon as it is formally published.

**Action 2:** SEND Partnership to commit to providing support to LPCF.

**Action 3:** All members to commit to completing the summary template to ensure accessibility for POWAR and LPCF.

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