

Lancashire SEND Partnership Board Meeting
17 March 2025 10-12am
Hybrid meeting

Board Members Present:

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Oliver Handley, Headteacher at Lancashire Secondary Schools Headteacher Representative.

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

Michelle Pye / Miranda Hyman, Interim Co-Chairs, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.

Clive Groves, Associate Member, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.

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

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

Oliver Moores, SEND Young Advisor.

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

In attendance:

Vanessa Nice, Headteacher at Virtual School, Lancashire County Council.

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

Ausra Pilitauskaite, Practice Manager, MASH, Lancashire County Council.

Apologies / Absent:

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Natalie Sinclair, Headteacher at Highfield Nursery, Early Years Representative.

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

1. Welcome and Apologies

Sarah O'Brien, Chair, welcomed attendees to the meeting. Apologies were noted.

2. Standing Items

2.1 Minutes from January 2024 meeting

Minutes were received by all members to review prior to the meeting. Request was made by Clive Groves for amendments to be made regarding support for Lancashire Parent Carer Forum. Updates were requested regarding the SEND Helpline effectiveness and support for SENDIAS. The SEND Helpline is being reviewed to move to form based with answer phone to enable a call back to be requested. Funding for SENDIAS has been secured with six new additional staff being recruited.

Minutes of the last meeting will be 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 but these have been cross referenced and incorporated into the Priority Action Plan.

Decision: Ownership of actions on the tracker needs reviewing to ensure equity across the partnership.

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

3. SEND Plan Progress

3.1 SEND Area Inspection overview and next steps

Paul Turner explained that following the SEND Inspection in December 2024, that the Local Area Partnership had 35 days from the report being published on 12 February 2025 to co-produce a Priority Action Plan. The plan would then be submitted to Ofsted for publication. However, the pre-election period prevent this until after the elections in May 2025. SEND advisors from Department for Education and NHS England have been assigned to the partnership to support and challenge the progress made against the Priority Action Plan. The Senior Officers Meeting will be held every six months over the next eighteen months to monitor the progress. The SEND Partnership must take ownership of these actions, as we are all responsible to improve the lives of children, young people with SEND and their families.

Concerns were raised regarding the wait for funding from central government and the effect dissolution of NHS England could have on the partnership, however the ICB are hopeful as SEND and safeguarding are statutory functions. Sarah re-assured Board members NHSE colleagues will

continue to oversee the progress of the SEND Partnership and that dissolution would take two years.

The Priority Action Plan has been drafted following consultation engagement events with partners to gather feedback as to what actions need to be taken, what difference this would make and how the partnership would measure this impact. This draft was shared with all members to review prior to the meeting. Further feedback will be gathered from advisors, ICB Board members, and Cabinet members and the plan amended to reflect this, prior to it being submitted on 25 March 2025. The Priority Action plan will be used to discharge the responsibilities for the priority actions and areas for improvement identified in the inspection report.

Action 1: Jenny will send the finalised Priority Action plan to Board members after it has been submitted to Ofsted and publish it on the SEND Partnership Local Offer website.

Concerns were raised regarding some of the timescales in the Priority Action Plan and that these could become a risk if unrealistic. Concerns were also raised regarding training plans and questionnaires as this could affect the entire workforce potentially. It was suggested that the partnership should maximise the co-produced parent carer SEND survey and CYP SEND Survey which will be co-produced and updated in 2025. Child voice should be celebrated regarding achievements, and must be central to everything we do. The partnership needs to gain the confidence of children, young people and their families. We must get the foundations in place before celebrating successes though, ensuring children and young people together with parent carers drive the delivery of our actions and effectiveness, using the improvement journey as evidence of progress. We need to ensure clarity of actions and that they are not hidden within the plan. It has taken other partnerships a year to get the foundations in place, so it is important we recognise this, and although it is good to be aspirational we must also be honest and realistic.

The plan is rather large and needs reviewing to remove duplication, streamlining the priority actions, and to ensure we don't spread ourselves too thin. All actions need to be broken down and made more specific and targeted, identifying the financial and time resources required, and responsible owners, together with a robust training offer and long term approach to inclusivity, including pre-post diagnostic support.

Clive Groves shared that the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum were in a state of transition, as Sam Jones had stepped down from being Chair. Clive requested that the Round Table members were engaged with and feedback mechanisms implemented, together with a forward plan for what should be co-produced. The Priority Action Plan will need sharing with the Round Table members but looked promising.

Action 2: Concerns raised regarding actions and timescales were noted, and will be reviewed by Cerys and Peter before the Priority Action Plan is finalised. A Gantt chart detailing timescales and costs will be completed, to ensure actions are realistic and achievable.

The SEND Partnership are required to appoint an Independent Chair of the soon to be established SEND Improvement Board. Members were asked if they agreed to standing down the SEND Partnership Board in its current format, whilst the SEND Improvement Board, SEND Operations Group and workstreams are established. Clive requested that there should be two parent carer forum representatives on each group.

Decision: Board members agreed to stand down the SEND Partnership Board in its current format, and stand up SEND Improvement Board to provide strategic oversight and challenge, SEND Operations Group to monitor progress against the Priority Action Plan and workstreams which will deliver the actions.

Action 3: The Terms of Reference and membership of Board, Operations and workstreams will need to be agreed by members. Workstream leads also need to be agreed. Please can Board members share comments by Friday 21 March regarding additional suggested amendments to the Priority Action Plan.

3.2 Agree draft SEND Strategy for 2025

Board members received a copy of the draft SEND Strategy to review before the Board meeting. The aim is to sense check our ambition, vision, and principles before going out for formal consultation after the election in May 2025. The SEND Strategy will overarch the Priority Action Plan, which provides the formal operational plan for the next eighteen months. An easy read accessible version of the Strategy and Plan was discussed, which would be short enough for children, young people and their families to be able to fully engage with. Podcasting and videos were also requested to enable communications with parent carers and children and young people, particularly those who find reading difficult. The partnership could consider whether the introduction to the strategy is written by young people rather than by the chair and cabinet member. Partnership working is vital with our children young people and their families, so they are able to recognise the actions are what they want and need. The outcomes framework for children and young people also needs including in the strategy,

Discussed how the SEND Strategy 2019-2021 was exactly that, short, straightforward and easy to understand, as it had been co-produced with the Youth Shadow Board. Clive requested that the Round Table parent carers were fully involved in the co-production journey.

Action 4: Cerys and Peter will attend the LPCF and Round Table meeting to discuss the strategy further. LPCF to send the invitation.

Action 5: Jenny and Clare to explore easy read versions of the SEND Strategy and Priority Action Plan with SEND Young Advisor and parent carer forum representatives, to include drafting a revised introduction.

Action 6: Jenny and Clare to explore podcasting and videos with corporate comms and local offer development officer.

4. Key Topics related to the Improvement Plan

4.1 Update on the Four Cornerstones Approach to co-production

Clare Smith provided an update on behalf of herself and Sam Jones, who had led the working group. The draft model for Lancashire and proposed next steps had been shared with Board members prior to the meeting for their consideration. The draft model needs to have the language, colours and design agreed, in addition to the definitions of co-production and training. Board members were asked to agree the next steps including how the model will sit in the Working Together Strategy, which needs refreshing this year, and the Participation Strategy which needs reviewing next year, together with the development of a self assessment tool and training. Dave agreed to consider the costs of design.

Members feedback was positive, about how we should co-produce in the future, although further consideration needs to be given by the ICB that they are wider than Lancashire. Board members identified that constraints need to be recognised, and intentions agreed with honest parameters, acknowledging why suggestions haven't been implemented to close the feedback loop. The partnership needs to build trust to prevent families feeling let down. Clive commended Clare on the work done and suggested a consultation with partners, particularly schools and Round Table members was required. Senior Leadership need revisiting as not all were able to attend the development day when co-production was discussed. Suggestions were made for clear distinction to

be made between the Four Cornerstones and the four areas of the Lundy Model, in addition to how they fit together. The Four Cornerstones Model is how we work together and the Lundy Model would fit within it.

Decision: Board members agreed for the Four Cornerstones model to be shared more widely by working group members for consultations within their own organisations.

Action 7: Clare will refine the draft Four Cornerstones document based on the feedback and ask for wider feedback.

4.2 Annual Report 2024

The draft annual report was shared with board members before the meeting for them to review. It includes updates from meetings, published articles, and progress on various projects. Concerns were raised that the report celebrates successes but inspection report has been published after this.

Decision: It was agreed that there should be an acknowledgement in the report regarding the inspection outcome. Clive advised he would send amendments on behalf of Sam as she had been unable to attend the meeting.

Action 8: Jenny will amend the paper as agreed and re-circulate to members to provide feedback and suggest amendments by the end of March 2025.

5. Meeting Governance

5.1 Confidentiality and Board Brief

None shared.

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

The SEND Strategy demonstrated commitment to co-production and the Priority Action Plan will drive improvements. Foundations need to be established engaging children and young people before consideration can be given to a Shadow Board or for SEND Youth Conference to be held.

6. AOB

It was agreed the SEND Partnership Board acknowledge the significant work undertaken by Sam Jones as Chair of the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum and for the immense support and dedication she has given over the last eight years. The Board will send a bouquet of flowers to Sam to thank her for her unwavering challenge and advocacy representing parent carers in Lancashire. Clive will also convey the positive messages to Sam.

7. Date and times of future meeting and close

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

SEND Improvement Board date TBC

Summary of actions:

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