



Lancashire SEND Partnership Improvement Board

9 May 2025 – 10.00-13.00

Hybrid Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Board Members Present
<p>Kathryn Boulton, Independent Chair</p> <p>Sarah O'Brien, Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board</p> <p>Paul Turner, Director of Education, Skills and Culture, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Vanessa Wilson, Director of Children, Young People and Maternity, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Dave Carr, Director of Policy, Commissioning and Children's Health, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Cerys Townend, Head of SEND and Inclusion, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Peter Chapman, Interim Associate Director for SEND & Complexities, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board.</p> <p>Clare Smith, Youth Policy Strategic Lead, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Michelle Pye / Miranda Hyman, Co-Chairs, Lancashire Parent Carer Forum.</p> <p>Oliver Moores, SEND Young Advisor.</p> <p>Philippa Perks, Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector representative.</p> <p>Natalie Sinclair, Early Years Federation group representative,</p> <p>Jenny Birkin, Primary Heads in Lancashire representative.</p> <p>Oliver Handley, Lancashire Secondary Schools Headteacher Representative.</p> <p>Ian Carden, Lancashire Special Schools Head Teachers Association Representative.</p> <p>Marie Haworth, Further Education representative.</p> <p>Victoria Hampson, East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust representative.</p> <p>Rachel Lomax, University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust representative.</p> <p>Paul Jebb, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust representative.</p> <p>Andrea Hardyman, Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust representative.</p> <p>Louise Haymer, Department for Education (DfE) SEND Case Lead.</p> <p>Cath Hitchen, Department for Education (DfE) Appointed SEND Advisor.</p> <p>Lindsey Marlton, National Health Service England (NHSE) Advisor.</p>
In attendance
<p>Jennifer Ashton, Manager of the SEND Partnership, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Stephen Morton, Public Health and Wellbeing deputy representative, Lancashire County Council</p> <p>Brendan Lee, Children's Services deputy representative, Lancashire County Council</p>
Apologies
<p>Jacqui Old, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Louise Anderson, Director of Children's Services, Lancashire County Council.</p>

Mairead Gill-Mullarkey, Director of Adults Community social Care, Lancashire County Council.
Rebecca O'Shea, Department for Education (DfE) Regional Lead.

Agenda Item	Minutes:
1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	The Independent Chair for the board Kathryn Boulton welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new SEND Improvement Board.
1.1 Introduction to the new SEND Improvement Board	<p>The SEND Improvement Board has been set up with an Independent Chair, in response to the SEND Inspection report. The SEND Inspection recognised the commitment and excellent work that has been done but there is much work to be done.</p> <p>SEND Improvement Board agendas include standing items which include Communication forward plan and forward plan for non-agenda items, minutes of the last meeting, and any other business to be raised at the start of the meeting to allow time at the end of the meeting to discuss.</p>
1.2 Terms of reference, membership and principles	<p>Draft Terms of Reference, membership and principles were received by members to review before the meeting.</p> <p>Kathryn explained that it is important for board members to understand the expectations as a partnership, as we transition into the different governance structure, and understand where decision making and escalations are. The role of the Independent Chair is to challenge and support the partnership to drive progress, holding the partnership to account and improving experiences and outcomes for children with SEND and their families.</p> <p>The principles were discussed, including the Nolan principles and points raised for additions, including reference to conflict of interest, and the importance of collaboration, co-production and partnership working, and collective responsibility.</p> <p>The Terms of Reference and governance structure were reviewed by members, with Kathryn emphasising that parent carer forum is a strategic partner and have an equal voice and together with children and young people will be the barometer for improvements made.</p> <p>Challenge: Kathryn asked for clarity regarding the five workstreams and who the leads of these are.</p> <p>Response: Cerys Townend explained that the county council Transformation Board has five workstreams and Peter Chapman shared the ICB were in the process of setting up workstreams for the Neurodivergent Pathway priority area.</p> <p>Action 1: The Priority Action Plan has identified milestone owners, but further work is to be done how these workstreams work together across the partnership.</p>

	<p>Challenge: It was noted that appendix B oversight and escalation points were missing from the Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Action 2: Jenny Ashton will work with leads to complete the oversight and escalation points.</p> <p>Board members discussed the membership and noted that Clare Smith supports Olly Moores and other young people to attend the board. Diane Booth was identified as representative for Blackpool Teaching Hospital.</p> <p>Action 3: Jenny will add Diane to the membership and invite her to future SEND Improvement Board meetings.</p> <p>Action 4: Jenny will update the principles and Terms of Reference before re-circulating with Board members.</p>
2. Standing Items	
2.1 Minutes and actions from the previous meeting	Minutes were received by all members to review prior to the meeting. Minutes were accepted as accurate and will be published on the SEND Partnership webpage after the meeting.
2.2 Action Tracker	Actions have been transferred over from the last SEND Partnership meeting in March 2025 onto the new action tracker. Updates and actions from this meeting will be added following the meeting.
2.3 Children and Young People's input and update	<p>Olly Moores shared that POWAR held weekly SEND participation group meetings at Preston and Burnley, and weekly online sessions, with increasing numbers. Olly requested that board members kept children and young people at the forefront of their minds in this meeting.</p> <p>Challenge: Olly raised concerns regarding gaps in support and to ensure this was consistent across the county. He stressed the importance that children and young people are given the opportunity to have their voice heard, particularly in schools.</p> <p>Dave Carr explained how the reach of participation across the county was challenging, due to the geographical size of the county. He stressed the importance of the partnership supporting POWAR to grow and that any support was appreciated. Many children and young people with SEND also attend other participation groups such as Youth Council.</p> <p>Cath Hitchin emphasised the cohort of children who are SEN support as they make up 20% of the pupil population in schools and breadth of voice could be gathered through school councils and the importance of exploring this. Children who have complex needs and are non-talking or pre-verbal also need to have their voice captured.</p>

	<p>Olly explained that children with SEND don't feel heard in school and therefore can struggle to raise their concerns. Michelle Pye explained that many neurodivergent children do not feel encouraged to sit on school councils. Brendan Lee raised concerns that unless we feedback action and impact (the so what) to children and young people in response to their views, the partnership risk losing their voices. This feedback needs to be fed back to children and young people in a You said ...We did format.</p> <p>Response: Board members discussed various ways that child voice could be captured, in all schools through their school councils and that all children with SEND need a wider voice. There was also acknowledgement that not all children and young people feel confident participating in school council's or don't always get the opportunity to do so, therefore it was important that their voices were also captured through different approaches. Miranda Hyman shared that many children of parent carers working with the forum were also keen to participate and have their voices heard. Education representatives offered to link with Clare, to further develop how all children and young people with SEND can have their voice heard.</p> <p>Action 5: Clare will work with the education provider representatives, including Blackburn and Blackpool Colleges, to establish ways that children with SEND can have their voice heard and their views inform ongoing improvements.</p> <p>Action 6: Jenny will link with Anna Burkinshaw, Local Offer Development Officer to create a You Said... We Did for children and young people, as part of the communication strategy and protocol.</p>
<p>2.4 Lancashire Parent Carer update</p>	<p>Michelle Pye and Mirand Hyman provided an update on Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) activity since they stepped up as co-chairs. They have had a busy few weeks engaging parent carers and asking them for feedback and to get involved.</p> <p>Challenge: The feedback received has been that better communication is a priority, particularly regarding more timely responses to calls and emails. Families have also emphasised the importance of ensuring that support is available at the right time, that education, health, care plan (EHCP) assessment and annual review timeliness improves, and that gaps in services reduce, particularly sensory support, speech and language therapy (SALT) and occupational therapy which is variable across the county.</p> <p>Michelle highlighted the community engagement and feedback they have had through the Round Table support Groups.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Deaf community shared that some deaf children are unable to access the curriculum in mainstream schools due to lack of BSL trained staff.

- The Down Syndrome support group reported that although some children are cognitively able, they were also unable to access mainstream school.
- Autism needs identifying earlier to ensure the children received the right support at the right time.
- Families reported they need support, as well as their child, and they need to build trust and not feel blamed. Families need to feel heard and not to have to battle or fight for what support their children need to build trust.
- There needs to be greater recognition of education other than at school (EOTAS) and alternative provision (AP) needs, particularly for children with pathological demand avoidance (PDA) profile.
- Children with lesser-known conditions such as avoidant and restrictive food intake disorder (ARFID) also need better support.

Response: Vanessa Wilson expressed how good it was to hear how LPCF is meeting with the support groups. Peter Chapman responded that the ICB will explore ARFID and SALT in the neurodivergent (ND) Pathway priority area, as expertise is required in the system and share information with LPCF so they can share this with the group. Cath shared how the deaf community use a mixture of oral and British Sign Language to communicate. Stephen Morton thanked Michelle and Miranda for their feedback and explained how the specification for the 0-19 service could support families with children who have SEND and requested for public health to work with LPCF.

Board members acknowledged that these issues, were not just local to Lancashire, and the partnership is on a journey to get the system better at meeting the needs of children and families. Funding mechanisms need to support early intervention to improve families experiences, and it was recognised that ordinarily available provision within all schools is crucial.

Good SENDCO support is key to supporting children to flourish within their local schools and must be offered in Lancashire to support them in meeting the needs of local children. Re-building the trust of parents and carers will take time, but with LPCF as the conduit to make this happen, the SEND Partnership can improve communication and provide feedback. The Independent Chair's Update will be developed with corporate communications and shared with parent carer forum before being published on the local offer.

Action 7: Peter to share information on ARFID with Michelle and Miranda, who will feedback to the groups how their voice has been heard.

	<p>Action 8: Jenny to add an update regarding action 7 as an agenda item to the forward plan for July 2025.</p> <p>Action 9: Jenny will connect Stephen from Public Health with Michelle and Miranda from LPCF to discuss how the specification for the 0-19 service could support families with children who have SEND.</p> <p>Action 10: Task and Finish groups will be set up to address the needs and establish mechanisms for co-production and working groups where there is a need for longer term actions.</p> <p>Action 11: Cerys, Jenny and parent carer forum will develop the co-production forward plan, together with a schedule of Let's Talk events at the next Development Day on 20 June, which will also be monitored against the priority action plan.</p>
3. Progress against the Priority Action Plan	
3.1 Highlight Report from SEND Operations Board	<p>The highlight report from SEND Operations Board was shared with members prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Paul Turner and Vanessa Wilson presented the highlight report from the SEND Operations Board which advances actions in the priority action plan with a broad range of partners. There has been positive progress against several actions, including increasing the capacity of the SEND team and staff induction, a draft educational capital plan and SEND strategy with engagement events being held in June and funding for the Neurodivergent Pathway has been secured for this year. However, it is too early to measure the impacts of these actions yet.</p> <p>Several risks have been identified including sustainable funding, which is a real issue nationally, workforce capacity, EHCP portal implementation and data integration challenges. These will be closely monitored and added to the risk register with updates reported to the board monthly.</p> <p>Action 12: Jenny will add the risks to the risk register to enable monthly monitoring and scrutiny.</p>
3.2 Update on performance and data (Priority Action 1)	<p>Presentations from the county council and ICB were shared with members before the meeting to enable scrutiny and preparation of questions.</p> <p>Dave Carr and Peter Chapman presented an overview of the performance data which needs to come together as a partnership. There is a data workstream as part of the LCC Transformation Programme and the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) was updated in January 2024 and is being refreshed for 2025. Dave discussed the development of a partnership dashboard to track Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and the importance of having a clear set of metrics to measure progress.</p>

	<p>Challenge: The board challenged that the target measures were not 100% for timeliness of EHC plans by 20 weeks and noted that although the milestone could provide a realistic position. National data is required and also baseline data as a comparison. It was also expressed that timeliness and quality of EHC plans needed to be two separate metrics. EHCP Audit data was requested to be presented at the next board as a standing item. Parents should not have to know SEND law or audit plans to know whether they are good.</p> <p>Response: Invision 360 software programme has recently been implemented as an audit tool with the first monthly report recently being completed. The tool has enabled more plans to be audited and will identify what a good plan looks like.</p> <p>Action 13: Cerys will share EHCP audit report to the board in June 2025.</p> <p>Health data included timeliness for Neurodivergent (ND) Pathway, therapies and health advices. The ICB will be setting up a data workstream.</p> <p>Challenge: The board needs to have assurance and therefore requires a partnership dashboard, with the narrative reporting by exception moving forward.</p> <p>Response: Concerns were raised regarding funding and capacity being beyond our control as a partnership and the subsequent risks and impact this could pose to children and their families.</p> <p>Action 14: Peter and Dave to integrate health provider data with the local authority dashboard by September 2025 and enable key themes to be analysed.</p>
<p>3.3 Quality Assurance update regarding EHCPs and experience (Priority Action 2)</p>	<p>Board members had key complaints data shared with them prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Cerys Townend presented an overview of correspondence and complaints data for consideration. Although complaints were reducing, they remained high, and response rates were over the statutory timescales. Themes include delays in the statutory assessment process, communication and amendments following annual reviews. The financial remedy costs are subsequently high due to these delays. The importance of good communication is recognised, and there is a commitment to making the improvements required, so that families receive a better experience.</p> <p>Challenge: Robust processes are required as many families are threatening judicial review and tribunals with information regarding these processes being shared with families.</p> <p>Action 15: Cerys to share the quality assurance framework with the board at a future meeting to provide the assurance that we are getting better at what we do.</p>

4. Meeting Governance	
4.1 Risk register and governance update	<p>The meeting identified that risks and issues need to be clearly identified and that a unified risk register needs developing for the Improvement Board. Clear processes for escalation from the board up to leaders, including a briefing with a position statement from the ICB for board.</p> <p>Action 16: links to Action 12: Jenny will add the risks to the risk register to enable monthly monitoring and scrutiny.</p> <p>Action 17: links to Action 2: Jenny Ashton will work with leads to complete the oversight and escalation points in appendix B of the Terms of Reference.</p>
4.2 Communication update	<p>The chairs update will be produced after each board meeting together with minutes of the meeting and published on the local offer, with the timing of these to be agreed. A full communications strategy will be developed, including updates from the Department for Education and the national direction of travel and a feedback mechanism for children and young people including a You Said... We Did format.</p> <p>Action 18: Jenny will work with Kathryn and corporate communications to draft the monthly chair's update to improve communication.</p> <p>Action 19: Jenny will lead a communication working group to develop the communication strategy and protocol which also links to Action 11: Cerys, Jenny and parent carer forum will develop the co-production forward plan, together with a schedule of Let's Talk events at the next Development Day on 20 June, which will also be monitored against the priority action plan.</p>
5. AOB	None
6. Date of Next Meeting	<p>3 June 2025 10-1pm in person - Floor 2, County Hall,</p> <p>Please send apologies to sendpartnership@lancashire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Summary of actions</p> <p>Action 1: The Priority Action Plan has identified milestone owners, but further work is to be done how these workstreams work together across the partnership.</p> <p>Action 2: Jenny Ashton will work with leads to complete the oversight and escalation points.</p> <p>Action 3: Jenny will add Diane to the membership and invite her to future SEND Improvement Board meetings.</p> <p>Action 4: Jenny will update the principles and Terms of Reference before re-circulating with Board members.</p>	

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