

**SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy & Partnership Board**  
**25 November 2025, 13.30 – 15.30, Committee Room 3, County Hall, Chichester**

<p><b>Chair</b>  Brian Pope, Independent Chair</p> <p><b>WSCC</b>  Anna Parsons, Early Years SEND Lead (maternity cover)  Claire Hayes, AD Education &amp; Skills  Graeme Potter, Public Health Consultant  Graham Olway, Head of Service – Schools Organisation and Planning  Karen Furse, Head of Standards &amp; Effectiveness  Kathryn Kellagher, SEND Development Officer  Laura Tomlin, Schools Planning Officer SEND  Rebecca Turner, Head of Commissioning  Sarah Clark, Head of Virtual School  Vicky Richardson, Head of Practice, Improvement &amp; Inspection</p> <p><b>Education and schools</b>  Phillip Potter, Head Oak Grove College  Simon Brown, Chichester College  Matthew Whatford, Head Imberhorne  Nicky Hiscock, Governor Parklands Primary</p> <p><b>NHS Sussex ICB</b>  Caroline Tozzi, Joint Director Children &amp; Young People, Strategic Lead for SEND  Isabelle Hodgson, Community Paediatrician and Interim Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Sussex  Emma Smith, Deputy Divisional Operational Director, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust  Nicky Stemp, Deputy Director of Community and Urgent Care Commissioning and Transformation</p> <p><b>Parent Carers</b>  Rowan Westwood, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum</p> <p><b>Department for Education</b>  Liz Flaherty  Luke Parker</p> <p><b>NHS England SE SEND Advisor</b>  Adeline Gibbs</p> <p><b>Councillor Representative</b>  Jacquie Russell, Cabinet member</p>	<p><b>Apologies</b>  <b>WSCC</b>  Andrew Parker, Interim Head SEND &amp; Inclusion  Adrian Dyka, Interim Assistant Director Corporate Parenting  Daniel Ruaux, Director of Children’s Services  Heidi Farr, Head of Assessment &amp; Family Safeguarding Central  Kieron Lyons, AD Children’s Social Care and Early Help  Loretta Rogers, AD Adult Operations  Nadia McGarry, SEND Improvement Lead</p> <p><b>Education and schools</b>  Doug Thomas, Head APC  Zoe Gordon, North Mundham and Lisa Harris, Rumboldswyke  Ruth Campbell, Chichester Nursery and Liz Mellor, Horsham Nurseries</p> <p><b>NHS Sussex ICB</b>  Toby Silverman, SEND Improvement Manager</p>
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## **1. Welcome**

## **2. Action Log**

See action log.

Brian visited three provisions with SEND Sufficiency colleagues: North Lancing, which had requested a small grant to develop a nurture provision on site, St Margaret's Primary School and Feltham Community College. The latter two have recently opened Special Support Centres (SSCs).

- Staff and pupils in mainstream provision benefit from accessing the skills and knowledge of teachers in the SSCs.
- Pupils move between the SSC and the mainstream provision, with some needs being met in both. The SSCs are used for emotional regulation and there was good evidence of reintegration back into the mainstream provision, where pupils spend the majority of their time.

## **3. Rag rating of strategic improvement plan**

Colleagues from WSCC, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, schools, health and the DfE met on 6 November to grade the impact of our activities, using the grading tool developed by partners. The strategic plan is to be submitted to the DfE by close of play today.

It was a worthwhile way to measure impact, providing opportunities for useful discussion and challenge. There are some areas where we can evidence progress and others where it is harder to show impact.

Discussion:

- We need to ensure that reports brought to the board are based on the improvement plan. To help colleagues focus on this, it would be useful to provide a template to capture updates, activity and actions.
- Update on point 3.1 of the improvement plan around timeliness of EHCPs: We are reviewing the efficiency of the SEND and Inclusion service in light of the increasing volume of work coming in. Cate Mullen is carrying out an end-to-end review of SENAT processes and operations, to identify where we can be more efficient. Alongside this we are looking at digital solutions. From January, we will have two Heads of SEND, Andy Parker and Jack Jones, which will provide greater oversight. Within SENAT, we are recruiting two Service Managers, 10 new SEND Officers, an additional Team Manager and an Operational Lead. It will take time to train and induct staff; at the same time, we are anticipating a further increase in EHCNAs in the lead up to the White Paper. EHCPs will be a focus item in the January Board.

## **Actions**

3.1 Liz to share an Improvement Plan updates template with Vicky

## **4. Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**

The attached presentation gives background to the LISO (Local Inclusion Support Offer).

Discussion on LISO:

- The support offer should enable mainstream settings to seek advice and access training, centrally held inclusion resources and, where appropriate, facilitate decision making for local service provision allocation.
- We need to link up with Integrated Community teams in health.
- The LISO will coordinate different referral systems used by teams and services.

- While very resource heavy, LINC's was welcomed for being highly contextualised and focused on individual schools. The learning from this is informing the development of the LISO.
- We are looking at how to evaluate the effectiveness of the LISO. It's still early days and we are yet to have the DfE definition of what inclusion looks like in a school.
- Post-16 and Early Years are not yet part of the LISO project.

The DfE asked partnerships in the Change Programme to complete a 'Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool', to be submitted to the DfE by 5 December. The tool is to measure how ready we are as a Partnership to develop, create and roll out our LISO. It is very similar to the 'Partnership Maturity Matrix Assessment' that we completed in April 2024 for the LAIP (Local Area Inclusion Plan). Colleagues and representatives from West Sussex Parent Carer Forum, Social Care, Health and Education met last week to complete the LISO assessment tool.

The LAIP Partnership Assessment was used as a benchmark against the LISO tool to see if we had progressed in any areas. There were 7 areas to assess with 44 sub-sections; in each area we had to say whether we were Emerging, Developing or Maturing.

As representatives of the partnership, we agreed that we had either stayed the same in some areas or progressed (we hadn't regressed).

Discussion:

- The tool combined too many areas which could hide both achievements and areas of concern. West Sussex Parent Carer Forum has fed this back to the DfE.
- Some of the definitions were ambiguous.

The board signed off the Assessment Tool and it will be submitted to the DfE.

## **ACTIONS**

4.1 Caroline to identify contacts within Integrated Community teams and share with Karen.

## **5. West Sussex Parent Carer Forum update**

The survey had 130 responses and there are 15 mini case studies which have fed into the report.

Discussion:

- Children and young people are generally accessing alternative provisions because it is either the best or only option available.
- Parent carers were not always able to accurately identify the type of setting their child attended. When the forum run the survey again, they will instead ask parent carers to name their child's setting.
- Children in mainstream settings are often EBSA or on part-time timetables. There is to be an analysis of children accessing independent alternative provision at the December board.
- The feedback is consistent with reports Phillip hears from families of children in years 5 and 6. Finding the right placement weighs heavily on families and there are practical considerations, such as travel time when attending specialist provision outside their local area. The same concerns are shared by families of children in Year 11 when looking at further education.
- Early Years is working with SENAT and it would be useful to hear parent carer feedback focused on pre-school.
- The Have Your Voice Heard events could be thematic, based on age groups

## ACTIONS

5.1 Rowan to share with Anna feedback received around Early Years and accessing childcare.

5.2 Have your Voice Heard events: Rowan to consider having an Early Years focused event.

5.3 Have your Voice Heard events: Rowan to link with Caroline around health involvement

## 6. Focus: SEND Sufficiency quarterly focus

### Public Consultation feedback

- There have been 5 recent public consultations around increasing provision for pupils with SEND, which had overwhelming public support so long as appropriate resources and access to health support and therapies are in place.
- Satellites are specialist schools with a second site reasonably close to the main provision, so they can utilise the expertise of special school staff. There were some concerns raised in the consultations about how pupils in the satellite site will feel part of the main school.
- The full analysis of the consultations is still pending.
- Health colleagues would define an SSC as a unit if under 50%; if over 50%, it would be defined as a resourced provision.
- Timescales: once we have gone through public consultation, the projects can start.
  - Palatine Primary School satellite site is estimated for September 28 at the earliest.
  - The Arun House satellite site connected to QEII is already open – this is an outlier as the consultation should have happened earlier.
  - St Anthony's expansion is estimated to open in September 27.
  - Buckingham Park Primary school SSC is September 27 or possibly January 28.
- Timescales are estimates and we are looking at ways we can bring them forward. An option is that schools should have more autonomy and manage projects themselves. St Anthony's is taking over a surplus school on the same site and will run the project as a test and learn pilot.

### Joint working with Commissioning, NHS Sussex and other teams

- The drive to work collaboratively with health and commissioning colleagues was welcomed and Laura was thanked for picking this up.
- There is now a better understanding of partner organisations, the timelines they operate in and the challenges they face.
- We need to consider strategic oversight and, for example, how we link in with housing developments which would change the local school population.
- The next step is understanding what data we should consider and how to use it effectively. Laura to link with:
  - Graeme Potter and Sam Taplin in Public Health: JSNA and School Health data, which includes lifestyle elements.
  - Anna Parsons, Early Years: good oversight of the needs of pre-school children which will help plan for the future school population (noting that this cohort's needs change as the children get older)
  - Growing West Sussex

### Key highlights from revised SEND Strategic Outline Case

- We are still waiting for confirmation of the DfE free schools, which would provide 210 placements.

- We are reviewing primary school surplus spaces and how these could be adapted to provide specialist spaces such as the nurture provision at North Lancing.

Graham and Laura were thanked for an excellent update.

## **Actions**

6.1 Effective use of data in planning: Laura to link with Graeme Potter and Sam Taplin for Public Health, Anna Parsons for Early Years and Claire Hayes for Growing West Sussex