

SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy & Partnership Board

23 September 2025, 10.00 – 12.00

Cathedral Room, Chichester College, Chichester

Chair

Brian Pope, Independent Chair

WSCC

Andrew Parker, Interim Head SEND & Inclusion

Anna Parsons, Early Years SEND Lead (maternity cover)

Claire Hayes, AD Education & Skills

Jade Fellows, Practice Development and Improvement Lead

Karen Furse, Head of Standards & Effectiveness

Kathryn Kellagher, SEND Development Officer

Nadia McGarry, SEND Improvement Lead

Natalie McNeill, Designated Social Care Officer

Rebecca Turner, Head of Commissioning

Samantha Taplin, Public Health Consultant

Vicky Richardson, Head of Practice, Improvement & Inspection

Education and schools

Doug Thomas, Head APC

Nicky Smith, Governor Parklands Primary

Tom Anderson, Chichester College

NHS Sussex ICB

Rachael Prim, Designated Clinical Officer, for SEND

Parent Carers

Rowan Westwood, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum

Apologies

WSCC

Anna Parsons, Early Years SEND Lead (maternity cover)

Daniel Ruaux, AD Corporate Parenting

Heidi Farr, Head of Assessment & Family Safeguarding Central

Kieron Lyons, AD Children's Social Care and Early Help

Loretta Rogers, AD Adult Operations

Education and schools

Liz Mellor, Head, Horsham Nursery

Lisa Harris, Head Rumboldswyke Primary

Ruth Campbell, Executive Head Chichester, Bognor and Boundstone nursery schools

Phillip Potter, Head Oak Grove College

Parent Carers

John Clifton, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum

NHS Sussex ICB

Caroline Tozzi, Joint Director for Children & Young People, Strategic Lead for SEND

Toby Silverman, SEND Improvement Manager

NHS England SE SEND Advisor

Adeline Gibbs

Department for Education

Liz Flaherty

Councillor Representative

Jacque Russell, Cabinet member

1. Welcome

Brian thanked Rachael Prim for her valued contributions to the board over the past few years and wished her well in her job.

As agreed at the July meeting, we will now maintain an attendance log. This is saved in a tab on the SEND-AP Board Action Log.

It's important that we have full representation and that substitutes are sent when board members are unable to attend.

Actions

- 1.1 Karen will raise representation at the Special Heads Exec on Thursday.
- 1.2 Karen will source a secondary head representative plus substitute.

2. Action Log

- 2.1 Brian will write to Graham Olway, with a request for him and Rowan to visit a current SEND sufficiency project and to make a general point about improving communication, especially around consultations, with colleagues in commissioning, ICB, providers and the WSPCF. He will ask for an update on therapies support and a long term 5-year view of provision.
- 2.2 Preparation for adulthood: Andrew Parker to be invited to Nicola Rosenberg's public health transitions group to align work in this area
- 2.3 Supported internships: Claire to invite special school head and West Sussex student to talk about work in this area for the October board meeting.

3. Update on Integrated Care Board restructure

The merger with Surrey ICB is going ahead and Ian Smith has been appointed as the new ICB chair across Surrey and Sussex.

- The December deadline for ICB change will slide because of the merger.
- SEND will be kept within the ICB until further direction, ie to at least 2027.

Discussion around the 10-year health plan:

- The expansion of mental health support teams to every school is welcomed. Tanya Procter will be invited to a future board meeting to share the positive impact of these.
- The introduction of dedicated mental health emergency departments was also welcomed: there is currently very little support outside CAMHS and A&E. Ideally there would be a YES professional at GP surgeries, providing immediate help for young people and reducing the need for them to go to A&E.

Comments to feed back to Caroline:

- What are wearables?
- What are the national plans to support the recruitment of 8500 mental health staff?
- Point 2.2.1 around health visitors administering vaccines: this has not been agreed. Caroline and Sam Taplin to discuss.

Actions

- 3.1 Caroline and Sam Taplin to discuss Point 2.2.1 around health visitors administering vaccines.

4. Focus: Improving EHCP performance

See attached presentation.

Discussion points:

- SENAT is reliant on partners in the Educational Psychology Service, health and Social Care to deliver EHCPs. Its ability to improve performance will be limited by partners' capacity issues.
- It's possible there may be a further rise in EHCNA requests in response to the Schools White Paper, to be published this autumn. This could be because of concerns that schools will lose resources and reflects lack of trust in government proposals.
- By improving the efficiency of SENAT, staff will have the space to engage better with families.
- Regular communication with parent carers around SEND developments remains a concern and following a review by Sam Boulton, we are developing a communication plan.
- The DSCO and the DCO named and celebrated Aaron Swain, who has held the fort in SENAT these past few months and has shown a strong commitment to improve SENAT performance.

SEND Performance Report:

- Monthly EHCP performance varies due to volume of requests and external factors (e.g. holidays, illness). A shift to a three-month cycle for reporting and quality assurance would provide a more consistent and meaningful picture of performance trends.
- Slide 14 Cease to maintain: the reasons listed are different to those reported by families to the WSPCF. It would be helpful to understand the detail and narrative around the reasons, in particular points 2 (ongoing educational and training needs being met without an EHCP) and 6 (young person no longer wishes to engage in education or training). SEND IAS could help provide context. Research in this area would help provide data to inform Preparation for Adulthood work.
- It would be beneficial to have a problem-solving event about tribunals which take up a significant amount of SENAT, DCO and DSCO time. Commissioning would like to be involved as some contractors see tribunals as off contract and ask for more money.

Quality assurance – impact of EHCPs for children:

- The figures are encouraging but it would be interesting to see the impact of plans in schools. It is hoped that schools will be part of the planned quality assurance of annual reviews.
- The increase in leadership capacity was welcomed to drive and implement learning from the audits.
- The EHCNA Forum is currently testing out new funding formulas for EHCPs. The plan is to bring in other partners this term (schools and WSPCF).

Actions

4.1 Cease to maintain: Andy Parker to look at detail and narrative around reasons, in particular points 2 (ongoing educational and training needs being met without an EHCP) and 6 (young person no longer wishes to engage in education or training). Liaise with SEND IAS for context.

4.2 Cease to maintain: Jade to include this as part of the sample for the planned Annual Review audits.

4.3 Problem solving workshop about tribunals: Claire/Andy to pick this up.

5. Update from WSPCF

- The temperature check shows there has clearly been a positive shift in parental satisfaction, though this is still inconsistent. Reasons for the shift haven't yet been analysed but it is evident that the different approaches in schools involved in PINS and the Autism in Schools project have led to positive changes. Rowan has put in a funding bid to help the forum with data analysis.

6. Update on SEND Change Partners Programme and the Local Inclusion Support Offer

See attached presentation

- We are now in the second phase of the SEND & AP Change Programme (CPP) in which we have been asked to develop a prototype for a "Local Inclusion Support Offer", referred to as a LISO.
- This will be a multi-agency, integrated offer that will deliver training, advice and direct delivery of support
- A LISO workshop held in late July (to meet tight DfE deadlines) mapped services and identified gaps and overlaps.
- The LISO will be piloted in Crawley, Midhurst and Southbourne.
- There will be a lead navigator to coordinate the support offer, who will be proactive in reviewing school data and suggesting training/support requirements.

Discussion:

- It's likely that the LISO will be a key focus of the upcoming White Paper
- There are plans to have a lending library of equipment for schools
- This is a whole school approach and we are fortunate that we have the SEND & Inclusion advisers who feed closely into School Improvement.
- The LISO was discussed at Growing West Sussex last week.
- Testing will run to March but we can use the funding up until the end of August.
- There are no plans to change referral routes at the moment.
- The latest version of the LISO is attached to the minutes – please note this is not for wider sharing as it is still in development with partners.

Actions

6.1 Nadia to link with Doug over the LISO

7. SEND Governance and accountability arrangements review

Vicky asked for a small number of representatives to join a SEND Strategic Improvement Plan grading meeting. She'll email board members and volunteers from the meeting were Brian, Rowan, Natalie, Nicky and Toby.

Actions

7.1 Vicky to email board members around joining a SEND Strategy Improvement Plan grading meeting