SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy & Partnership Board

16 July 2026, 10.00 – 12.00, Main Conference Hall, County Hall North, Horsham

Chair: Brian Pope, Independent Chair	**Parent Carers**
WSCC	Rowan Westwood, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum
Andrew Parker, Head SEND & Inclusion A	**Apologies**
Charlene Hornsey, Early Help	**WSCC**
Emma Parker, Service Manager Best Start Family Hubs	Anna Parsons, Early Years SEND Lead (maternity cover)
Jack Jones, Head SEND & Inclusion B	Adrian Dyka, Interim Assistant Director Corporate Parenting
Kathryn Kellagher, SEND Development Officer	Daniel Ruaux, Director of Children's Services
Lauren Boal, Voice and Participation Officer	Claire Hayes, AD Education & Skills
Natalie McNeill, Designated Social Care Officer	Karen Furse, Head of Standards & Effectiveness
Rachel Jevrons, Adult Services and Health	Heidi Farr, Head of Assessment & Family Safeguarding Central
Rebecca Turner, Head of Commissioning	Kelly Steel, Head of Service Assessment and Family Safeguarding Western
Sarah Bloor, Interim Head of Service, Children with Disabilities	Kieron Lyons, AD Children's Social Care and Early Help
Steve Trippier, CYPL Programme Director	Loretta Rogers, AD Adult Operations
Toby Wilson, Voice and Participation Team Manager	Mark Dodson, Adult Social Care
Vicky Richardson, Head of Practice, Improvement & Inspection	Nadia McGarry, SEND Improvement Lead
Education and schools	Sarah Clark, Head of Virtual School
Liz Mellor, Head Chichester Nursery	**Councillor Representative**
Simon Brown, Chichester College	Sam Raby, Cabinet Member
NHS Sussex ICB	**Education and schools**
Emma Davies, Designated Clinical Officer	Doug Thomas, Head APC
Louise Needham, Senior Designated Clinical Officer, NHS Surrey and Sussex	Matt Whatford, Head Imberhorne Secondary School
Viki Ashby, General Manager East Sussex CAMHS	Nicky Hiscock, Governor Parklands Primary
Department for Education	Phillip Potter, Head Oak Grove College
Elizabeth Roff	Zoe Gordon, Head North Mundhan Primary School
Liz Flaherty	Ruth Campbell, Head Chichester Nursery
NHS England SE SEND Advisor	**Department for Education**
Adeline Gibbs	Luke Parker

1. Welcome

2. Action Log

Action 154 WSPCF funding:

There are ongoing concerns about various funding streams including the LISO and Autism in Schools projects. These funding delays are impacting recruitment and workforce planning for the WSPCF.

It was agreed that Naomi would meet with Rowan to address.

Action 155 River Beach SSC

It was noted that while extensive support is being provided by the Sensory Support Service, there continues to be concerns from families regarding communication and transparency around future provision. Responsibility for consultation and decisions lie with the Academy Trust rather than the Local Authority.

Andy and Rowan to liaise over how to take this to the DfE.

3. Report by Exception

SEND Reform Mobilisation Plan

The Mobilisation Plan was submitted to the DfE alongside the SEND Reform Plan and recruitment has already begun. Implementation will be over a two to three year period.

Significant work is being undertaken to align the offers from various services and reduce duplication.

Cease to Maintain / Courageous Conversation Event

An update was provided on the recent Courageous Conversation event around cease to maintain. This was grounded in lived experience and there was positive attendance and engagement from partners. An action plan will be brought to a future Board meeting.

WSPCF Update: Changes to Roles

Rowan has a new role at Amaze Sussex and is now the Head of Partnerships, Policy and Advocacy for Amaze Sussex. She will remain involved during the transition period and continue to support WSPCF as part of her new role, but strategic representation at the SEND-AP Board will transfer to Dr Helen Fairman, the new Strategic Lead for WSPCF, and Nicky Hiscock, the new Chair of the WSPCF Steering Group. Nicky already sits on the SEND-AP Board as a school governor representative.

4. SEND Risk Register

Due to time restraints, this was not discussed in detail and will be returned to in the autumn. It's saved as a tab on the Action Log.

5. Terms of Reference

The following amendments were agreed:

- Reinstate explicit oversight of the SEND Strategy.
- Make it more explicit that the Board has oversight of delivery against Ofsted/CQC Action Plan requirements.

- Amend wording from "included in their community" to be about belonging in their community.

Subject to these amendments, the Terms of Reference were approved.

Given the pace of change across SEND and Health, it was agreed to review the Terms of Reference again in January 2027.

6. Whole Data Dashboard

There has been good progress in developing operational and performance dashboards, which are used to identify capacity pressures and areas that need intervention.

- We are continuing to trial AI and digital tools to support efficiency, for example in EHCP writing.
- Data cleansing work within Mosaic is ongoing and there was formal recognition of the role play by the Business Support Team and Data Team to improve data quality and to cleanse historical records. There is ongoing work to improve accuracy and cleanse Mosaic data.

Ofsted Annex A datasets:

These are currently scrutinised through the monthly SEND Performance Group.

It was agreed that it would be useful for the Board to have oversight of these, so that it can demonstrate understanding of both strengths and weaknesses across SEND.

Action

6.1 Jack to consider how best to share these and to bring to an autumn term SEND-AP Board meeting.

7. Support Whilst Waiting – health quarterly focus

The health quarterly reports centred on waiting times for Community Mental Health (CAMHS) and neurodevelopmental (ND) pathways.

CAMHS

We were joined on-line by Viki Ashby, General Manager for East Sussex CAMHS.

Historically in West Sussex, ND and CAMHS referrals were reported together; these are now separated.

- There has been an increase in levels of complexity, need and risk in young people presenting to CAMHS.
- Waiting lists in West Sussex had grown but following improvement work in 2025, the waiting list for an initial CAMHS assessment has reduced from over 600 in March 2024 to 74 by January 2026.
- It was noted that the latest data runs to January 2026 and that reporting is temporarily affected by the move to a new electronic patient record system. Once this is sorted out, we should be able to evidence if the improvements have been maintained.
- The NHS is in the process of reviewing benchmarking work across all areas but essentially West Sussex data is similar to other areas.

Discussion points:

While the reduction in CAMHS assessment waits was welcomed, concerns were raised about the proportion of children who go on to receive treatment following assessment,

the length of treatment waits, and the support available for children who do not meet CAMHS thresholds.

- Reducing waiting times for treatment after assessment is now a key focus for CAMHS. Work underway includes additional CBT capacity, consideration of contracting out of CBT provision, increased psychiatry capacity, and targeted work with 17+ young people approaching transition to adult services.
- At the point of initial assessment, CAMHS would agree what the next steps would be. If not within CAMHS, they would signpost to the appropriate support service. Those CYP at greatest risk would be moved to the appropriate framework for support.
- Clarification is required around what percentage of CYP go on to treatment and the wait times for the treatment.
- Age breakdown of data: peak referrals are from ages 13-15, and again in early 20's.
- There was concern from parent carers around the support available for those children who don't meet the high criteria for CAMHS assessment and are on long waiting lists for YES.

Neurodevelopment (ND)

- The neurodevelopmental waiting lists are of particular concern, with waiting times of approximately 227 weeks for autism assessments and 179 weeks for ADHD assessments.
- There is concern from WSPCF that the data may not fully reflect the actual wait experienced by families. Clarification is required around the ND waiting list data and what the wait is from referral to a family getting the screening pack.
- There are now waiting lists in the Right to Choose market, reflecting the situation in the NHS. One of the key issues is that there aren't sufficient qualified professionals to meet demand.
- Some children who have received assessments via Right to Choose providers are still on the SPFT waiting lists and data cleansing work is underway.
- Comments from families in the health update: while these were positive, it would be helpful to know numbers.

Actions

7.1. Clarify what percentage of CYP assessed go on to treatment and how long is the wait for treatment.

7.2 Clarify what is available for CYP who don't meet the high criteria for CAMHS (YES, MHST)

7.3 Clarification is required around how the ND waiting list data is measured; to include the wait from referral, to a family getting the screening pack, to assessment.

7.4 Data around timeliness of health advice for EHCNAs to be included in the next EHCP update (October 2027).

7.5 Clarify data/numbers behind the family feedback around Support Whilst Waiting.

8. Voice and Participation Strategy

This was welcomed by the Board and it was agreed that it provides a strong framework for improving participation across SEND. Discussion centred around the

importance of ensuring that participation is representative and reaches beyond small groups of young people who are already engaged.

There was particular discussion about how schools, which spend the greatest amount of time with children and young people, can play a stronger role in gathering and responding to pupil voice.

9. Proposal for working with school SEND councils

This led on from the previous item and was a proposal for strengthening SEND CYP engagement by developing a more structured network of SEND Councils through schools and other settings, based on the Essex SEND Multi-Schools Council model.

Action

9.1 Simon Brown offered a meeting with Lauren to improve links to the Chichester College Group councils.

9.2 Brian, Claire Hayes and Lauren to meet to discuss the proposal.