

**SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy & Partnership Board**  
**24 March 2026, 9.30 – 12.00, Rumboldswyke School, Chichester**

**Chair:** Brian Pope, Independent Chair

**WSCC**

- Andrew Parker, Head SEND & Inclusion
- Adrian Dyka, Interim Assistant Director Corporate Parenting
- Cate Mullen, SENAT consultant
- Daniel Ruaux, Director of Children’s Services
- Graeme Potter, Public Health
- Jade Fellows, Practice Development and Improvement Lead
- Jessica Bubb, SEND & Inclusion Adviser
- Karen Furse, Head of Standards & Effectiveness
- Kathryn Kellagher, SEND Development Officer
- Kelly Steel, Head of Service Assessment and Family Safeguarding Western
- Lisa Harris, Rumboldswyke
- Nadia McGarry, SEND Improvement Lead
- Rebecca Turner, Head of Commissioning
- Sarah Bloor, Interim Head of Service, Children with Disabilities
- Vicky Richardson, Head of Practice, Improvement & Inspection

**Education and schools**

- Lisa Harris, Head Rumboldswyke Primary School
- Matt Whatford, Head Imberhorne Secondary School
- Doug Thomas, Head APC
- Sam Channon, Business Manager APC

**NHS Sussex ICB**

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

**Parent Carers**

Rowan Westwood, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum

**Department for Education**

Liz Flaherty

**Apologies**

**WSCC**

- Anna Parsons, Early Years SEND Lead (maternity cover)
- Claire Hayes, AD Education & Skills
- Heidi Farr, Head of Assessment & Family Safeguarding Central
- Kieron Lyons, AD Children’s Social Care and Early Help
- Loretta Rogers, AD Adult Operations
- Sarah Clark, Head of Virtual School

**Education and schools**

- Phillip Potter, Head Oak Grove College
- Mia Lowney, St Andrews
- Ruth Campbell, Head Chichester Nursery
- Simon Brown, Chichester College

**NHS Sussex ICB**

- Isabelle Hodgson, Community Paediatrician and Interim Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, NHS Sussex
- Toby Silverman, SEND Improvement Manager

**Department for Education**

Luke Parker

**NHS England SE SEND Advisor**

Adeline Gibbs

**Councillor Representative**

Jacque Russell, Cabinet member

## **1. Welcome**

## **2. Action Log**

### **Action**

## **3. Report by Exception**

### **SEND Reform Plan**

The DfE has asked us to pull together a high-quality, ambitious SEND Reform Plan that, if approved by the Secretary of State for Education, will secure £182 million for our area through the High Needs Stability Grant.

Timescales are tight and it is vital that staff prioritise working on the plan for the next 6-8 weeks. Claire Hayes is the sponsor, Andy Parker is the Senior Reporting Officer, and Nadia McNeill is project-managing. We have set up 6 Task & Finish groups and these start meeting this week.

The ELT is clear that this takes priority over other work, including school visits, and Dan will communicate this to staff and schools.

Part of the work will be agreeing the Key Performance Indicators and this board will play a key role in the scrutiny and overview.

- We need representation from schools – Lisa offered in the meeting.
- Toby Silverman currently identified as health representative. Health representation is a challenge and Nadia will meet with Caroline to discuss.
- Rowan is keen to engage but the WSPCF is undergoing a merger and are under capacity.
- Brian offered to review plans
- If required, we can arrange an exceptional board meeting for partners to scrutinise the plan before submitting
- Partners to let Dan know if there is anything we can do to help get this off the ground.

### **Collated West Sussex Local Authority response to the White Paper**

Jack has been asked to collate the West Sussex Local Authority response to the White Paper and will need to bring this to the SEND-AP Board.

### **Actions**

- 3.1 Partners to let Dan know if there is anything we can do to help then prioritise the SEND Reform Plan.
- 3.2 Nadia to consider if we should call an extraordinary meeting of the SEND-AP Board to focus on the SEND Reform Plan.
- 3.3 Nadia to meet with Caroline to consider how best to engage with the SEND Reform Plan, and report back to Andy, Jack and Claire.
- 3.4 Dan to reach out to DCS colleagues in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, to consider a pan-Sussex approach with health providers
- 3.5 Jack to bring the West Sussex LA response to the White Paper in April.

## **4. West Sussex Parent Carer Forum – Health Update**

The feedback from parent carers around health is drawn together from multiple sources and aligns with the Ofsted report.

Summary:

- "Waiting well" is not being achieved, waits are getting longer, with little support during those waits.
- Pathways are unclear, inconsistent or nonexistent, leaving families without direction or timely help.
- Health inequalities continue to block access to essential healthcare for many CYP
- More families feel forced to pay privately, because statutory services cannot meet demand.
- Strong practice does exist, and shows what *is* possible when systems work well

#### Discussion:

- The temperature check (slide 9) shows there has been some increase in parental satisfaction, which has increased from 18% to 38%. Reasons for this:
  - Work done on Support Whilst Waiting.
  - Right to Choose
  - Feedback drawn from PINS or Autism in Schools tends to be more positive.
- It's recognised that some families will have a positive experience but the majority of the feedback given to the WSPCF is not positive and these families don't feel heard or acknowledged.
- Caroline will review the feedback and respond to it in the April health quarterly update.
  - To include data on waiting times in response to feedback on Slide 15 "Waiting times: the scale of the problem".
- The feedback will be included in the Strategic Plan Grading Event on 14 April.
- The partnership needs to build direct connections with providers and give them the opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the survey.
- Transitions from children to adult services within health is complex. It's discussed as part of the transitions work in Connected Council.

## Actions

4.1 Consider how to build direction connections with health providers, giving them the opportunity to respond to the issues raised in the WSPCF health survey – Dan/Brian

4.2 Respond to the feedback in the April health quarterly update, including waiting times – Caroline

4.3 Dan to circulate the HASS paper, a joint ICB/Local Authority report on a number of health resources including transitions.

## 5. Coproduction Update

The multi-disciplinary coproduction group aims to collect evidence of coproduction and works closely with the WSPCF, the youth cabinet and Young Voices.

They are developing a coproduction strategy to develop a culture and ethos around coproduction. This should be signed off in the next couple of months.

Next steps include the need to refine how to capture quantitative data to feed into impact monitoring.

## Actions

5.1 Coproduction and evidence pack for working with parents to be taken to Growing West Sussex – Karen to liaise with Jess/Anton to get it on the agenda.

## 6. Autism All Ages Strategy

This was last brought to the board in 2024 and was endorsed by the ELT in December 2025. It will be launched in May after the election period is over.

- It aligns with the SEND Strategy and will feed into the Preparation for Adulthood work (Autism All Ages Strategy: sub-group on Pathways to Employment)

## **7. EHCP Timeliness**

Area for Improvement 3: Leaders across the partnership should work at pace to further develop their strategy to improve the timeliness of EHC plans to ensure that processes are rigorous, sustainable and lead to plans of consistent quality.

- The new data pack was welcomed.
- Decisions taken in good faith two years ago need to be reviewed, in light of the increased demand on services. We need to provide the best conditions possible to deliver what is needed now and plan for the future.
- See attached presentation on the 20 week timeliness Interim Plan, which outlines the rationale behind the "Pink Process". This is putting a framework around prioritisation, with four dedicated SENDOs for P1 assessments. They will have daily oversight from the Operational lead who will report weekly to Andy and the Service Manager.
- Alongside this, it's imperative to have a plan to tackle the backlog. Resource will be put into this as well as the Pink Process.
- Commissioning needs to be part of the EP discussion if we need external providers from September onwards.
- The December health dashboard has not yet been published, so health data is out of date.
- The consequence of increased numbers of EHCPs is increased pressure on the Review and Monitoring side of SENAT. This needs to be added to the SEND Risk Register.
- While appeals have dropped overall, those around Section I have doubled. We are having Targeted Support from SESLIP around tribunals and it will be interesting to understand why this might be.

## **Actions**

7.1 Andy/Rebecca to liaise over the commissioning of external EP providers.

7.2 Add to SEND Risk Register the increased pressure and need for additional resource in SENAT Review and Monitoring.

## **8. Attainment data for children with SEND**

- West Sussex is slightly below national average in primary but above national average across the board by KS4. We need to improve primary school attainment data, to stop the gap from growing.
- The data doesn't include those at special schools but if a child is on roll in other schools, including APC, their data is included.
- KS4 APC data differs to what is publicly available via the DfE and the reasons for this are currently unknown.
- The APC has had a big drive towards reintegration to secondary and figures have doubled from last year. This points to buy-in from schools and it would be good to highlight this with Ofsted
- Post 16 destinations are a key indicator for APC and their figures are favourable compared to other APCs.

## **9. Close of meeting**

Brian thanked Lisa for hosting us at her school. The meeting closed with a school tour for those who were able to stay.