

**SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy & Partnership Board**  
**16 December 2025, 13.30 – 15.30, Committee Room 2, County Hall, Chichester**

<p><b>Chair</b>    Brian Pope, Independent Chair</p> <p><b>WSCC</b></p> <p>Andrew Parker, Head SEND &amp; Inclusion    Charlotte Smith, SEND Commissioning    Claire Hayes, AD Education &amp; Skills    Graeme Potter, Public Health Consultant    Kathryn Kellagher, SEND Development Officer    Nadia McGarry, SEND Improvement Lead    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></p> <p>Zoe Gordon, North Mundham    Phillip Potter, Head Oak Grove College    Simon Brown, Chichester College</p> <p><b>NHS Sussex ICB</b></p> <p>Toby Silverman, SEND Improvement Manager</p> <p><b>Parent Carers</b></p> <p>Clare Eels, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum</p>	<p><b>Apologies</b>  <b>WSCC</b>    Adrian Dyka, Interim Assistant Director Corporate Parenting    Anna Parsons, Early Years SEND Lead (maternity cover)    Daniel Ruaux, Director of Children's Services    Heidi Farr, Head of Assessment &amp; Family Safeguarding Central    Karen Furse, Head of Standards &amp; Effectiveness    Kieron Lyons, AD Children's Social Care and Early Help    Loretta Rogers, AD Adult Operations</p> <p><b>Education and schools</b>    Doug Thomas, Head APC    Mia Lowney, St Andrews    Nicky Hiscock, Governor Parklands Primary    Ruth Campbell, Chichester Nursery and Liz Mellor, Horsham Nurseries</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</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>    Jacque Russell, Cabinet member</p>
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## **1. Welcome**

There was a review of the attendance log.

### **Actions**

- 1.1 Claire to follow up with Adrian around who should attend from Social Care. Also to pick up with Doug Thomas regarding attendance from the APC.
- 1.2 Maria Hughes to be invited in place of John Clifton from the West Sussex Parent Carers Forum (WSPCF)

## **2. Action Log**

See action log.

## **3. Feedback from DfE 6-month review meeting**

This was a good opportunity to do a stock take with the DfE.

- We could demonstrate good governance through this SEND-AP Board which operates as a collegiate partnership.
- 5 Ofsted areas for improvement: we are progressing on all though Area 5, Preparation for Adulthood, is less developed. It was good to hear feedback from schools about the green shoots of improvement around EHCPs. DfE challenge of why we don't look at all 5 items every month: this has been raised more than once. It was suggested that Area leads provide a Report by Exception overview each month, and we keep to our schedule of quarterly focus meetings on key areas.
- SEND Comms: this is an area we need to focus on – Andy now leading.
- It was Dan's first experience of a DfE monitoring meeting and he is interested in modelling different ways of reporting our EHCP timeliness. Currently we only finalise once we have named a setting and it was agreed that we would model two different reports:

Model 1: finalise by naming a type of setting rather than naming a provision.

Model 2: at 40 weeks, all outstanding plans are finalised by naming a type of setting and have clear guidance on the interim provision while we identify a placement.

With both models, there needs to be clear procedures around the tracking of placement identification and the interim provision for children and young people. Sign-off of plans would have to include next steps and clear communication with families. Finalising plans using these models would open up greater parental rights to appeal earlier.

### **Actions**

- 3.1** We need to capture feedback from schools in our SEF. Karen Furse to provide regular analysis of Ofsted school reports.
- 3.2** New standing agenda item: Area leads to provide Report by Exception overview each month.
- 3.3** Andy to model reporting EHCP timeliness by naming type of setting in all cases **and** finalising plans at 40 weeks.

## **4. Risk Register**

The board were circulated an extract from the high-level corporate risk register and the beginnings of a SEND focused one that came out of a meeting with the WSPCF earlier this term. See attached.

At the meeting, we added Operational Communication, Sufficiency, Statutory Override, Capacity to deliver services, and SEND-AP Board membership.

### **Action**

**4.1** Claire to review the Risk Register and bring to a future meeting.

## **5. SEND Strategy**

This was signed off with the condition that Nadia liaise with the WSPCF and sense-check against the recent DfE letter.

- The Outcomes Framework will be launched either before the SEND Strategy (8 April) or alongside it.
- The Autism All Ages strategy was brought to the SEND-AP Board in December 24 and will be brought back in the New Year. This is an all-encompassing strategy; ours has a defined focus on children and young people.
- Nadia was thanked for all her hard work.

## **6. The role of the Virtual School; Children We Care For with an EHCP**

Discussion:

- While most of the Children We Care For are educated in county, around a third are not, which has implications for coordination and support.
- The Virtual School considers a school's Ofsted report while identifying a placement but doesn't currently look at Local Area SEND Ofsted Inspection reports.
- Simon reported that the Post-16 team were amazing, particularly around transition and the challenge of the statutory need for maths and English GCSEs. It's hoped that the Schools White Paper will bring change in this area.
- There is a Care Leavers Team monitoring destinations data, which can provide NEET figures.
- Virtual School data is shared regularly with social care.

## **7. A breakdown and analysis of those children and young people attending independent alternative provision**

Discussion:

- Service specification: It was suggested that the full DfE definition of alternative provision should be included in point 1.1, ie to also include  
  
Elective home education (EHE) and special educational provision otherwise than at school arranged under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (EOTAS) are not a form of alternative provision. EHE is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home (or elsewhere) instead of sending them to school full-time. For further information, see the guidance on Elective Home Education. EOTAS under

section 61 is arranged for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN), typically with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, when it would be inappropriate for the provision to be made in a school, college or other educational institution; often due to the child's multiple and / or complex SEN

- Commissioners need the support of Education and Skills colleagues to quality assure the educational element of the provision.
- There is a continued focus on safe recruitment and we offer safeguarding training to providers. The Safeguarding in Education team are also keen to attend the monitoring visits.
- There is a challenge around the tracking and monitoring of children in placements. Schools are expected to monitor pupils on their rolls. If a child is placed in IAP by EOTAS, it should be the responsibility of the Local Authority. Attendance is a specification KPI and providers are expected to raise concerns, but it needs a partnership approach to pull it all together.
- Providers are asked to submit case studies on a termly basis.
- We are looking at providing tutors in-house as a future possibility.
- The APC can provide outcomes data.

## **ACTIONS**

**7.1** Karen to pull together outcomes data from the APC.

**7.2** Charlotte/Rebecca to provide a couple of case studies for the next focus on Independent Alternative Provision.