Minutes of a Meeting of the
North Somerset Local Area SEND Programme Board

19th December 2019

1. Present and apologies

1.1 Members Present:

Eifion Price - Assistant Director – Children’s Support & Safeguarding, P&C NSC
Cllr Ann Harley – Chair of Children & Young People Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Wendy Packer (WP) – Education Inclusion Service Lead, P&C NSC
Jenie Eastman (JE) – Early Years & Childcare Service Lead, P&C NSC
Kenton Mee (KM) – NS Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT)
Nick Flaherty (NF) - NS Parent Carers Working Together (NSPCWT)
Alyson Harris (AH) – Children’s Specialist Community Services, NSCP
Ed Bowen-Roberts (EBR) – Special School Representative
Sarah Trevitt (ST) – Supportive Parents SENDIAS Service
Martin Hawketts (MH) – Service Lead, Adult LD & Mental Health
Mark Hemmings (MH) – Transformation Project Manager, BNSSG CCG
Anthony Webster (AW) – SEN Team Manager, P&C NSC
Su Schofield (SS) – Disabled Children’s Team Manager, P&C NSC
Mike Newman (MN) – Strategy & Policy Development Manager, P&C NSC
Gill Hinton (GH) – Information & Advice Officer, P&C NSC
Gail Smith (GS) – Strategy & Policy Development Officer, P&C NSC
Sally Varley (SV) – Planning & Access Service Leader, P&C NSC
Carl Nicholson (CN) – Manager, Integrated Transport Unit
Katie Park (KP) – Project Manager, Integrated Transport Unit
Teresa Canfield (TC) – Divisional Lead, NSCP
Ben McConkey (BM) – Strategic Lead – Inclusive Practice, Weston College

1.2 Additional Attendees:

Anne Porter – SEND Professional Advisor, Department for Education
Mark Tucker – NHS England
Paul Spencer – Programme Manager, NHS England
1.3 Apologies:

Cllr Jan Barber – Executive Member for Children and Young People
Dee Elliot – Secondary Schools Headteacher Representative
Matt Lenny – Public Health Service Leader, P&C NSC
Mike Rees (MR) – Youth Offending Team & High Impact Families Lead, NSC
Lisa Manson – Director of Commissioning, BNSSG CCG

2. Minutes of previous meetings

2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting on 7th November 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Annual Self-assessment 2019/20

GS reminded the board of the annual self-evaluation process which will begin in the new year. The process will follow the same basic format as our previous year’s self-evaluations to allow us to compare and draw conclusions on progress. However, this year, following the findings of the LJAR process, there will be a more rigorous focus on outcomes and impact.

EP raised the issue of schools’ involvement in the process. It was suggested that this could be introduced via discussion at EEPB and HANS. Cllr Harley wished to understand how Governors could play a part. It was suggested that they could assist in completing the template. EP & EBR suggested this might be raised at the Heads & Governors Meeting.

MN agreed to find resources in his team to update lists of SEN Governors and SENCOs for schools. NF indicated that NSPCWT would appreciate this list being shared.

Action: GS to circulated template and reminder of key dates in the process

4. Top-up Funding Review

WP informed the board of the current consultation changes to top-up funding (TUF) and the process for the decision by the Strategic Schools Forum and Education Excellence Partnership Board.

KM noted that the Department for Education had announced additional SEND funding. It had been suggested that these amounts may be used to mitigate impacts on the High Needs block, with a strong suggestion that LAs should not subsidise High Needs by drawing funds from Mainstream.

EBR noted the risks to Special Schools finances, with all North Somerset Special Schools likely to show a deficit at the end of a three-year period, based on the
proposals. Schools share our vision of keeping children in local provision, but changes to TUF could impact this. Building new schools is positive, but funding places is critical to their future.

WP will be meeting with Special Schools regarding the review, but noted that we have no additional funding, and that the majority of TUF goes

**Action:** WP to copy promotional text to KM to ensure NSPCWT raise awareness of consultation

### 5. Written Statement of Action – Progress & Future Reporting

#### 5.1 MN introduced the papers updating key areas of work on the Written Statement of Action. Detailed reports from the majority of workstream leads had been requested for this meeting as it was the first opportunity to review progress since the WSA was approved by OFSTED. At future meetings, it was proposed that a simplified reporting chart was used to track key actions and for the board to identify areas for future focus by exception. The Board agreed this process and the format of the reporting tool.

#### 5.2 ASW1 Update

MN noted that several key actions had been completed, including extending the membership of the board to include elected members, with Cllr Harley attending today for the first time and Cllr Barber unfortunately unable to attend but invited to future meetings.

Cllr Harley asked how the board obtained the views of long-term foster carers. EP suggested that the Foster Carers Association meetings would generally capture these. ST also mentioned the information, advice and guidance available to foster carers.

The SEND Strategy is in preparation but has been delayed following team members leaving the LA and recruitment processes proceeding slowly. The intention is still to have a comprehensive engagement and consultation process once a draft is published, building on the very positive sessions on aims and vision, and on co-production which have been held.

#### 5.3 ASW2 Update

WP noted that the service was now known as the Education Inclusion Service, which was felt to be a more positive and representative title for the activity which her teams undertook. NF agreed that the name was positive and felt that this might be an excellent time to produce an accessible overview of the services provided.
ST asked if new organisation structures were available for the service. WP agreed that these would be circulated as soon as they were available.

**ACTION: WP to circulate organisational structures when available**

### 5.4 ASW4 Update

MH reported that Deborah El Sayed has been appointed as overall lead for SEND with BNSSG CCG. Lisa Manson will lead SEND work in North Somerset.

Liz Jarvis is now in post as our DCO and panel meetings have been rearranged to enable her to attend within her work pattern. Designated Nurse for CLA is now also in place. AW reported that the initial experience of the new arrangements had been positive, and that new processes to support them would be in place from January. AH asked when there would be an opportunity for her staff to meet Liz – this will likely be in January 2019.

Specialist CAMHS has been supported with £500K per year to support a robust IT solution, crisis capacity and it is hoped this will have positive impacts on the waiting list position in due course also.

KM requested a view on progress in reducing waiting lists. As noted there is positive news for CAMHS and work is underway to find additional funds to support reduction of the SCAMP waiting list.

**ACTION: MH to bring update to next meeting on waiting list position and actions**

### 5.5 ASW5 Update

AW reported that there are now approximately 900 EHC plans active in North Somerset. There are no further SEN statements. Work is ongoing with schools to secure and promote the Graduated Response and this will underpin further improvements to the EHC process.

ST requested clarification on accountability for delivering the graduated response and use of TUF by academies. She suggested that MATs could be challenged by raising issues with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC). EP agreed that groups might wish to write to the RSC directly.

WP explained that she was supportive of a Quality Assurance role to ensure that TUF was being used effectively to meet needs and achieve outcomes in schools.

### 5.6 ASW6 Update

MH reported that the Joint Commissioning Plan (JCP) would follow the
development of the SEND Strategy and the Joint Outcomes Framework and should build on learning from South Gloucestershire’s experience of drafting a similar document.

EBR noted an issue with deep suction preventing school attendance, along with issues where healthcare assistants were absent due to sickness and limitations in the capacity of the Lifetime Service. MH stated that this had been raised as an urgent issue.

**ACTION: MH to request than Inge Shepherd brings report to next meeting on action plans for Lifetime Service**

5.7 **ASW8 Update**

WP reported on the work of the Inclusion Panels, including their work to improve tracking of children who are out of school. Work was also underway to support retention in schools via strategies, training for teachers etc.

ST asked if there was a mechanism for parents to bring issues to Inclusion Panels? WP explained that at present this would be via school, but this was challenging if school was key to parents’ issues (e.g. dealing with anxiety, behaviour policies etc.)

EBR noted that the Special Headteachers Meeting would look at what support could be offered to support retention in mainstream schools.

**ACTION: WP to bring a report to a future board on issues around ‘off-rolling’ children**

6. **Specialist/Alternative Provision Review**

SV presented an update on the current range of capital projects which had been initiated since the delivery of the findings of the review and the publication of the Education Commissioning Strategy. It was noted that the outcome of North Somerset’s bid to host a Free School in Wave 13 of the Department for Education’s programme was awaited with a decision due in January.

SV requested that the Board identified a member to attend the Education Excellence Partnership Board’s SPLD & ASD subgroup during week commencing 4 February 2019 which would be reviewing submissions by schools to host SPLD and High Functioning Autism hubs.

**ACTION: Board to identify a member to attend the subgroup**

7. **Supportive Parents – Independent Service Review**
This item was considered confidentially as it included commercially sensitive information

8. **Home to School Transport – Policy Consultation**

CN and KP reported on the planned process for consulting on the revised SEN and Mainstream transport policies. This would include open meetings for parents, at which Roger Butterfield, a specialist in the field, would be available to answer questions about transport policy and entitlement generally.

CN also updated on actions taken to improve the Home to School Transport service, including a plan to introduce a single point of incident reporting, linked to the council’s new corporate complaint handling system.

KM noted that maximum journey times were currently not included in the draft policies and felt that reducing these was a priority for parents.

**ACTION: CN to ensure that single point of access/incident reporting is promoted via NSPCWT and SP**

9. **Date of next meeting**

Thursday 14th February 2019, 11:00-13:00, Rickford Room, Town Hall Weston-super-Mare