

NOTES

Title of Meeting:	SEND Accountability Board
Date:	06 January 2022
Place:	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Times:	09:30 -11.00
Membership:	<p>Cllr Rachel Hood Cabinet Member for Education, SEND and Skills - Chair Cllr Chris Chambers (CC), Suffolk County Council Cllr Jessica Fleming, Chair of Health Scrutiny Toni Wasag – Chair of Suffolk Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) Nicola Beach, Chief Executive, Corporate Services Sue Cook, Executive Director, People Services Ros Somerville, AD Inclusion Allan Cadzow (AC), Corporate Director CYP</p>
In Attendance:	Cllr James Reeder

Item No.	Item Description
1.	<p>Apologies: James Reeder, Chris Chambers, Sue Cook, Nicola Beach</p> <p><i>Matters arising</i></p> <p>Clarification was sought regarding the sentence</p> <p><i>Timeliness- the percentage of new EHCNAs completed in 20 week has dropped</i></p> <p>It was clarified that this related to the change in the percentage of Education, Health and Care needs assessments (EHCNAs) that are completed within the required 20 weeks. SCC has improved this considerably and has been running around the high 80% and within the 95% at times. Every EHCNA requires a report from an Educational Psychologist (EP) who is usually employed by the Local Authority. The capacity of the EP's service means that they are unable to keep up with the current demand within the timescales required (6 week to write the report from the time it is requested) this means that the EP reports are taking longer than the 6 weeks and this is having a negative impact on the 20 week data. SCC has acknowledged the capacity issues and is seeking to recruit more locum EP capacity for the short term and 3 new posts have been agreed for the longer term. These 3 posts were advertised before Christmas and 1 qualified EP applied and has been appointed they will start in March 2022). We also had 3 trainee EPs apply who will qualify in September 2023. They too will be recruited subject to qualification. We will readvertise the remaining 2 posts to bring additional capacity this year. All EPs are also ensuring that they prioritise reports for EHCNAS which is helping address the delays. It was noted that there is a national shortage of EPs.</p>

	<p>Agreed will invite Beth Moseley and Claire Darwin and they will be contacted to assess their availability for the future meetings. Ros to action.</p>
2.	<p>Report on themes from LGCSO reports</p> <p>Jane Swift attended and presented a paper in relation to issues coming through from complaints to the LGCSO. Issues for discussion arising from the report.</p> <p><i>Agreed we need to ensure our systems and processes reduce the need for parents to submit a complaint to the LGCSO.</i></p> <p><i>Agreed we need to look at our offer of financial remedy as these are sometimes seen as too low by the LGCSO. We also need to review the timing of this offer to ensure it is at the earlier stage.</i></p> <p>What proactively is being done to identify those cases where there is not suitable education due to lack of suitable placement?</p> <p>Staff work very hard to find a suitable education placement and often the needs of these children are very complex. Sometimes these children have been turned down by several education providers.</p> <p>Where there is a shortage of OT and SALT provision what actions are being taken to secure this is, how is this being documented and shared with the parent?</p> <p><i>Agreed that parents need to be kept informed regularly regarding efforts and progress being made. Jessica emphasised the importance of good and clear communication with parents, carers and young people. Communication comes up as an issue in the vast majority of complaints.</i></p> <p>Further discussions needs to be had with CCGs re commissioning – both block and spot commissioning. Rachel particularly wants to look into lack of resource for sensory processing issues.</p> <p><i>Agreed -Ros will bring this back to a future Accountability Board</i></p> <p>Delays in issuing of EHCP – monitoring mechanisms are they robust enough?</p> <p>As indicated earlier in the meeting the current main issue regarding delays relate to the EP capacity. The capacity of Family Services is also a factor. The forthcoming investment in Family Services will support with this. Each week managers review the data to discuss the EHCNAs that are or close to running overtime. Actions are identified to move the situation on. Suffolk data remains ahead of the national data for percentage of EHCNA meeting the 20 week deadline.</p> <p>Where there are multiple complaints from one family what steps are taken to ensure that the same issues don't happen again.</p> <p>Learning is identified and reminders to staff shared and systems reviewed. Some issues are outside of our direct control although we need to ensure that we are communicating well and are transparent with parents/carers.</p>

	Nearly 50% of LGCSO complaints come from 4 families.
3.	<p>Update on Complaints, Enquiries and LGCSO actions</p> <p>There was not a new report for this meeting – Allan to find out why. However, complaints, enquiries and LGCSO actions are being very actively managed and Allan is confident they are being managed to a much higher standard.</p>
4.	<p>Update on staffing and recruitment</p> <p>Sickness is coming down significantly – in FS now just under 7%.</p> <p>Business Support resource has been secured to work on phased transfers. Ros is keeping a very close eye on this. With Special Schools looking at all the requests for specialist placements week beginning 10.01.22. There will probably not be enough places for all who have requested. Currently, it is not known what the number will be. Aiming to issue as many EHCPs and will be issued even if the placement is not the parents’ choice to allow parents to exercise their Tribunal rights where they wish to (not to do so may prevent parents from having these rights within the timescales that are needed before September 2022). This is not to be oppositional and the LA will continue to work with families where they have not obtained the placement they have requested and will support with transitions. Ros will update at the next meeting.</p> <p>A significant and high quality field have applied for the Family Services Manager posts. SPCF will be involved in interviews.</p>
6	<p>Update on Impower Work</p> <p>We are going to put extra resource into SENCO advice line as part of the early intervention offer.</p> <p>Work is progressing on piloting the VSEND tool successfully used in some other LAs which supports accurate identification of needs and provision mapping the schools offer.</p> <p>Capacity analysis has been done by Impower and we will be acting on that relating to matching the volume of work and the number of staff.</p>
7	<p>Overall SEND picture</p> <p>There is still a lot of challenge in the system and a lot of families who do not have what they want. Ros has instigated an audit to ensure we are tracking all pupils with different educational provision and offers to ensure we are addressing all.</p> <p>Toni said there is a feeling that things are beginning to change but still a lot of dissatisfaction. Feel that OT and SALT reports for EHCNAs are not always specific enough.</p>
8	<p>AOB</p> <p>SPCF are planning a survey and are currently working on the content.</p> <p>Dedicated Social Care Officer (DSCO) and a new Dedicated Clinical Officer (DCO) both start this month.</p>
9	Forward Agenda Planning and Dates of Future Meetings:

20 Jan 2022 at 9.30-11am - CANCELLED

Report on PEX – Maria Hough

Verbal update on SPCF – Toni Wasag

3 Feb 2022 at 9.30-11am

16 Feb 2022 at 11.00-12.30

1 March 2022 at 12.00-1.30

17 March 2022 at 1.00-2.30

Beth Moseley and Claire Darwin to discuss mental health work in schools.

1 April 2022 at 10.00-11.30