



## November Summary 2022

### SEND Accountability Board and SEND Programme Board

All agendas, minutes and paperwork for these meetings are supplied by Suffolk County Council and can now be found on their Infolink page: [SEND Governance](#).

#### **During the November meeting, we raised the following issues:**

- Transport – Cancellation of contacts, lack of training, meet & greets not conducted, speeding, safeguarding etc. and that Travel Training is not a needs led service as an EHCP is required. No consideration to mental health issues and how this could affect travel.
- Communication – Parents are still reporting that they are not receiving responses to phone calls and emails. Complaints are being held at Stage 1 instead of moving to Stage 2.
- Children missing from education – We have concerns about this cohort and would like to know what is being done to support them. We have also asked for an update to the PEX figures with further details on the support packages for them.
- NDD Pathway – We raised concerns back in Sept with regards to the lack of pathways within the new NDD Pathway. It seemed targeted to ASD or ADHD diagnosis. We had a conversation with the pathway lead and were promised communications to share with parents. We are still awaiting these communications and have had to escalate this.
- A deep dive has identified a 68% difference in diagnosis between Suffolk & Essex, we have asked for this to be further investigated. We have also asked for an update on the figures for those families who did not move over to the new NDD pathway.

#### **We continue to challenge on:**

- Annual Reviews, including those who do not have an education/post 16 setting.
- EHCP provision not being provided in some of our schools.
- Some schools having a pre-SEND Support register/list
- Support for those who were placed at LifeSkills in Lowestoft.

#### **We are working on:**

- Resolving the misinformation/myths given to families such as: a diagnosis needed to access certain services or assessments. We are working with parent carers to produce a Myth Busting Document/Webpage where all common myths are clarified in order to empower parents to challenge the professionals giving the incorrect information. We currently have 30 myths to bust.



### SEND Priority 1 – The Local Offer

Local Offer Inclusion Support telephone number is now up and running. the greatest number of calls they have had in a single day is 7 which is positive. They are looking at advertising this number during Inclusion week and beyond. It was discussed whether there was a need to prioritise milestones. The families where English is not their first language/I.T Poverty milestone was not going to be removed but due to other demands they wanted to downgrade it. SPCF objected as Suffolk has a very diverse community where over 130 different languages are spoken and there are over 7.000 children within education settings where English is not their first language. We suggested reaching out to Engaged Communities who could assist those in the local community and may be able to arrange translation services/assistance.

### SEND Priority 2 – The SEND Journey

ECH Needs Assessments – There is an inconsistent process across the various areas so they are being brought together so that it is better process and clearer for families. EHCP AR Backlog – This includes those overdue or not yet recorded. There is an additional resource that has been brought in and has processed through 1000 applications since August. A business analyst has been looking at the process and recommending any changes. Both SPCF & Sendiass are reporting that there is still a communication issue with Family Services. Capacity has been highlighted as an issue however we need to move forward.

### SEND Priority 3 – Services & Provision

SPCF challenged on the lack of communication and transparency with regards to the shocking figures recently revealed on the NDD pathway. It was disappointing that the voluntary agencies are having to cover the gaps in care. these agencies are stretched to their limits and are facing the difficulties themselves. We shared that having a diagnosis is currently the only way to access particular services. such as travel training. therefore a needs led service is still far from reach. We challenged on the high amount of incomplete referral forms. it was stated that the triage panel were not content with the information contained. We clarified that the questions on the form were agreed by the triage panel at conception which was confirmed. The triage process is being reviewed and the disparity between North East Essex diagnosis figures (identified during the deep dive) will also be investigated.

### SEND Priority 4 – Transitions to Adulthood

This meeting looked at providing good employment/self employment support for YP with SEND. The 'I Can Be A' website (<https://www.icanbea.org.uk/>) has been a greatest source of information and support so the P4 Lead has made contact with the Mason Trust who run it with regard to making it more SEND friendly. The meeting was very successful with all parties and a visit was booked with West Suffolk College for the 25<sup>th</sup> November to see how the young people would like the website to look. SPCF shared that there is a Disability Confident Employer Scheme that organisations can sign up for and this will be shared with possible employers.



### NDD Pathway

Further to last month's update, we had the meeting with NDD Pathway heads on 30<sup>th</sup> November and we are in the process of finalising the communications to parent carers. This should be available in the very near future.

We have raised concerns around those young people that may be joining the pathway at 17 years old. At present it is only 0-18 (although there is plans for the future for this to be increased to 25) so we do not want 17 year olds to potentially sit on a waiting list for months only to find that they are now not able to be seen by the service. Barnardo's reassured that when they have seen applications for this age group they have been highlighted to professionals for this very reason. The Oversight Board agreed that it is something that will need a formal route and actions have been taken from the meeting for such.

We continue to receive feedback from parent carers that the support services have had a massive impact on either themselves, their child/young person or both. It reinforced the message that was shared throughout the formation of the pathway that support at the inception would improve outcomes for children and young people.

Please note: the support services are not part of the diagnostic pathway at all, they are purely there to support parents and will have no influence in the process.

### Focus Groups for Co-Production

We have tried an alternative method to involving parent carers by running focus groups for co-production. We are aware that there are still trust concerns for parent carers where the forum is concerned. Instead of having to enrol as a parent representative, we are asking parent carers to attend as individuals.

We have run two groups like this so far, the ARFID and LiquidLogic EHCP portal. Both were well attended by parent carers and were able to give quality feedback which has been taken forward by the departments. Both groups will be meeting again in the new year and the parent carers that were involved have expressed interest in continuing with the workstream. We hope to continue using this method of involving parent carers especially as we saw members of the group subsequently join the membership.

### Parent Reps/Experts by Experience

This month has seen us welcome a new parent representative join the team. They have been buddying since the beginning of the month and has proven to be an amazing asset to the forum already.

We are currently arranging a bespoke training package for our new role of Experts by Experience. These will primarily be what would have referred to as parent carer reps, however, we are looking to add grandparents, foster parent, siblings as well as young people themselves to our Experts by Experience role. We are working with a Contact associate to provide a training package that can be person centred and tailored around the needs of the learner. We are also improving all our policies to make sure they are as accessible as possible. We currently have 12 people interested in training with us using this model.



### Mental Health Support Teams (MHST)

Concerns have been raised by parent carers about the length of time for intervention from the MHST within their school setting. The Steering Group confirmed that the waiting lists are increasing and the demands on the MHST teams are high. This is not just in Suffolk but is being reported by MHSTs nationally. The teams are unable to see every child individually so are looking to focus on the whole school approach element. Actions have been taken from this meeting for leads of areas to meet and discuss the capacity concerns and look for possible solutions to present to the steering group.

### Waveney Parent Carers

We have been invited to a monthly meeting with the Norfolk & Waveney Health services and Family Voice Norfolk. During this meeting we will have the opportunity to feed back the experiences that parent carers have shared with us. If there is anything that you would like us to raise, please do let us know through the usual channels.

### Specialist Education Service (SES)

We have attended meetings this month with SES and they have provided this statement for us to share: We welcome the opportunity to share with you how the Specialist Education Services (SES) and Psychology and Therapeutic Services (P&TS) are continuing to work together to support early intervention and multi-agency approaches within our education settings. Our work focusses on enabling and empowering education settings to meet the needs of their communities of learners: promoting evidence-based strategies and interventions to enable children and young people to thrive in school and achieve their outcomes.

We constantly consider how our teams can best support inclusive practice and early intervention within schools. We are looking to move to a more locality-based approach whereby schools would have regular visits from our teams to discuss ways of working to support inclusion at a whole school level and at an individual child level. There would also be clusters of schools (like current SENCO Forums) which will aim to support schools around their local community and local context. We look forward to working with SPCF as we keep moving forward.

### Family Services Contact Information

We have received a copy of the updated Family Services contact details: they can be found on the local offer page: [Suffolk InfoLink](#) | [\\*SEND Family Services](#)

We hope that this will help parent carers as we do receive a number of enquiries around this.

### Holiday Closure

Please be advised that SPCF will close for a forum holiday from: Wednesday 21st December 22 to Wednesday 4th January 23.

Thank you