



December 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 December meeting, we raised the following issues:

- Education Scrutiny Committee: We were disappointed with some of the language used within the meeting. In particular, the fact that some parents were deemed as 'multiple complainers' when no regard was given to the fact that there could be multiple failings or children and that a committee member stated that 'parent carers exaggerate their child's needs to get an EHCP'. This is not acceptable and parent carers should not be spoken about in this way when they are trying to get the best outcomes for their children. We also re-emphasised that they cannot leave the next SEND review until January 2024 as raised during the meeting on the 14th Dec 22.
- Feedback has been received that consultations are taking longer than they should and panels are contributing to these delays. This information was shared with the board for review.
- Attendance Register codes: We have received reports that schools are marking children/young people with an unauthorised absence whilst they are actually in school. The unauthorised attendance code is being used when a child isn't able to engage in the lesson. This is not acceptable and not a proper use of the attendance records.
- Language used in communications: Emails have been received by parent carers that state their children are now in the 'care of Family Services' which is causing anxiety & concerns, we have asked for it to be reworded.
- DfE have offered free Mental Health training for School leads and the uptake in Suffolk hasn't been very high. We feel that this is important that the training be taken up by as many schools as possible to improve mental health outcomes for children and young people. This will be shared with settings.
- VSEND: This is now being rolled out across all schools and SPCF have raised the importance of the child's views with regards to the ability of the setting to meet their needs are as important as the parent carers or schools.

We continue to challenge on:

- EHCP provision not being provided in some of our schools & drafts/final plans are not being completed on time.
- Some schools having a pre-SEND Support register/list.
- Exclusions: We raised concerns that the figures could be higher than last year with current figures. We also challenged about the what learning is being taken from the data.
- MHST: Concerns raised about the waiting lists and lack of whole school involvement.



SEND Priority 1 – The Local Offer

Suffolk Inclusion Week took place on the 7th November 22. more can be found about the event on the Local Offer page: [Inclusion Week](#) . As a forum we raised concerns about the event taking place. Lived experience has not improved for Suffolk families and having an event like this could cause further distress. However, because the idea came for the SEND Young People's Network, we agreed that it was important for our young people to be able to share the inclusive practice that they had experienced. There were some lovely videos created by the children and we're so pleased that they were able to share them with everyone. When reviewing the week, SPCF have been very clear about how difficult it was for parent carers to see the inclusive practices that most families are not experiencing. The feedback has been taken on board and acknowledgement of how Suffolk is **working towards** inclusion rather than being able to celebrate it.

SEND Priority 2 – The SEND Journey

The Graduated Response (GR) was the focus of the meeting this month. Work in being done by stakeholders to update the communications around the GR as it has been reported by SPCF that parent carers are still unclear about the response and how it is implemented in school. The Specialist Education Service (SES) have reported that the Inclusion Support Line, which is open to all education and setting-based staff, has seen 125 calls come in since September. More can be found out about the services offered here: [SES](#). Panels: It has been reported that there are a lot of misconceptions around the decision-making panels which is causing confusions within settings and for parent carers. An action raised in for work to be done around the panels to ensure that it is a clear decision-making process.

SEND Priority 3 – Services & Provision

This meeting was cancelled due to absences.

An update with regards to the communications around the NDD Pathway, has been released and shared with members. This can be found here: [Letter to Parents](#)

SEND Priority 4 – Transitions to Adulthood

The meeting booked for 'I Can Be A' to attend West Suffolk College went ahead as planned. They were very receptive to the feedback that the students gave and have taken away multiple recommendations. The Young People reported that they liked the process as a whole and would like to remain involved to improve access for users. A main action which was taken was for there to be a section around which vacancies are supported so that those with additional needs know which they can apply for. The website can be found here: <https://www.icanbea.org.uk/>. Carers Advice was discussed and the need for it to be done at a younger age. The group was supportive but SPCF raised concerns around the way it will be discussed. It is important it is done without any pressure or stress.



LiquidLogic EHCP Platform

SPCF and a parent carer focus group attended a session around the implementation of Liquid Logic as a platform for EHCPs. Parent carers fed back on the platform as well as asked questions around functionality. We have been provided with a video and a copy of the slides shown at the session to share more widely with members, this can be found here: [LiquidLogic](#). Should you have any further feedback that you would like to share with us, please do get in contact.

Myth Busting Update

SPCF asked members last month to send through a list of the myths that they had been told so that we can produce a myth busting document and empower parent carers with the information to challenge. These have now all been collated and we shall be working on busting all of the myths in the new year.

Keyworker Steering Group

The group was not quorate so no motions could be passed. However, updates were shared regarding the information and consent forms. These were sent to the group for approval. Recruitment for the Senior Care Navigators had produced 12 applications, 5 candidates have been offered an interview. It has been decided to change the name from Steering Group to Oversight Group now that the Keyworker Function is up and running so the terms of reference have been amended to reflect this. Presentations for GPs around the Keyworker Function have been booked in for January so that they are better informed about what the service can provide

Norfolk & Waveney Parent Carer and Young People Touchpoint

There have been an increase of calls to the 111 service with regards to Strep A. There was a lack of communications which resulted in parents unsure of what to look out for. Schools have now been given information to share. JustOne Norfolk have also updated their page with information: <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/childhood-illnesses/strep-a-scarlet-fever/>. Family Voices (the Norfolk parent carer forum) reported that they had received a great response to their survey for revisit. They have also booked their 2023 Conference for 11th May 23. Concerns have been raised about the cost of medication for children as paracetamol/ibuprofen are not free and it can be particularly difficult to get appointments with the GP to get a free prescription. An action has been taken to investigate how this could be supported.

We are now a standing member of this bi-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 so if there is anything that you would like us to raise, please do let us know through the usual channels.



Activities Unlimited (AU) – Short Breaks Application

AU have sent out emails with renewal applications for the 23/24 year. There has been a number of parent carers experiencing issues with the new portal. There was some confusion around if diagnosis documentation was needed so we raised this with AU and were received the following response:

“Could you also please advise parents that the only evidence they need to send us is –

- DLA/PIP for parent and or child (if in receipt)
- Employment support allowance (if in receipt)
- Universal credit if medically unfit to work (if in receipt)
- Attendance Allowance (if in receipt)

If we do need anything more, we will contact them directly.”

We hope that this will help to clarify some issues. There is a guide to help you navigate the new portal, it can be found here: [Guide](#)

Family Services Contact Information/Update

In case you missed it in last month's issue, 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 their contact details. We have been advised that the vacancies have now been filled within the team so parent carers should see an improvement in communication.

Holiday Closure

The SPCF team will be taking a much needed break over the school holidays. We will be closing at 3pm on Wednesday 21st December and reopening on Wednesday 4th January 2023 at 9:30am. On our return we will respond to all emails, phone calls/voicemails and social media messages so please bear with us if there is a delay in getting a response.

We hope that you all manage to have a nice break and please remember that whatever the festive season looks like for you, it's your perfect.

All that is left is for the team to say a very huge **Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year**. We will see you in 2023!

Thank you.