



September Summary 2023

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 September meeting:

There was a presentation on Alternative Provision Schools. The presentation will be added to the minutes on the link above. There were some concerns around the data with a high demand but the occupancy rates being very low (49% across all providers), we were advised that 2 providers had a temporary hold placed upon them when concerns were raised and that targeted termly interventions effect the figures. SPCF fed back that some of the 2 term intervention deadlines are not as effective as families would like and asked for the consideration to extend these to 3 or 4 terms to have the best impact.

We were able to raise the following:

- EHCP's have been ceased with the correct process has not been followed. We were assured this would not happen. This has resulted in new EHCNA requests in order to regain provisions.
- What the LA are doing to ensure annual reviews are not being missed? We continue to hear this is happening and it is the local authority's responsibility. Most of us are well aware that the lack of annual review was recorded as a missed opportunity by the coroner at the inquest of a YP who took their own life.
- Lack of SEN support and EHCP provision remains a big issue for many families. SPCF has reached out to other PCFs to find out how their LAs work with Academies.
- Many parents are having to go to tribunals and the LGSCO whilst the trauma builds for the children and young people affected. This also affects the wellbeing of the entire family. Many parents are exhausted and can suffer poor mental health as a direct result of fighting for legal minimums and caring for their child or young person. The effects frequently become financial too with my parent carers having to leave work altogether.
- Bullying remains an issue for many children. We know there is a connection between bullying, SEND and suicide. These issues need to be tackled.
- Concerns that children and young people have been turned away from ATS because they do not have medical evidence. This is not needed. The local authority is responsible for education after 15 days but we have been made aware that some key staff are not aware of this.
- Many families watched the SEN special on Anglia news this week. It was noted that Suffolk is the only county in East Anglia that do not hold figures on how many children are out of education.



SEND Priority 1 – The Local Offer

The new Local Offer website is still being created. It is hoped that the official launch is to be in November 23. The draft has been shared with key people with SPCF providing feedback. The Local Authority as well as Health representatives have come together to ensure essential content is under each tile and that the information is relevant and up-to-date.

The SEND Awareness module has now been rewritten and is mandatory for all SCC Staff. We have pushed to have other module made mandatory to ensure that those working with families have a clear understanding. The Inclusion Support Line is being well used and initial feedback is positive. The lived experience is not improving for most so there is a concern that only certain schools are accessing.

SPCF raised that the lack of communications from Family Services and Transport has been fed back to us multiple times since the start of the academic year. Case workers have left with no new one allocated or even an out of office.

Evaluation work will be taking place on all elements of the SEND Strategy. If you would like to know more or feedback, there is an animation available: [Suffolk SEND Strategy Consultation Autumn 2023 – YouTube](#) and a survey: [SEND Strategy consultation \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](#)

SEND Priority 2 – The SEND Journey

Discussed concerns around the EHCNA process and decision making. Both SPCF and Sendiass gave multiple instances where ECHNAs had been refused but have won the appeal process. This is causing unnecessary stress to the families not to mention delays in support. Communication during the process is not to a good standard nor always timely. The Essential SENCO toolkit should be supporting with applications but SPCF had to remind parties that not all children attend a school setting. Reviews are ongoing to learn from feedback provided by surveys, mediation, tribunals and LGSCO decisions to make improvements.

Complaints are still not being dealt with within the specified timescales, there are no communications around the delays and it seems that the majority are being marked as 'complex'.

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SEND Priority 3 – Services & Provision

Discussions were centred around the SEND Sufficiency Plan. It was noted that it led to securing more funding as it identified the need to build more SEND schools within the area. Overall, it was felt that the Send Sufficiency Plan has worked well and progress was made. However, it was also noted that this was not being felt by all parents and that there was still more to be achieved.

The addition of new SEND provisions with Suffolk has led to more specialist placements. From previous complaints fed back by parent carers – that SEND schools/units/provision are not being spread across Suffolk equally, there has been more consideration on the placement of the new provisions with the additions in the North and West of Suffolk where there was demand.

NDD Pathway has now launched the new forms however the old forms were still accepted until 25th Sept 23. There have been some inaccuracies shared on social media around the NDD Pathway not accepting applications. SPCF have been assured that this is not the case. We also raised concerns over delays, the increase waiting times and the backlog in service since the introduction of the NDD pathway last year.

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SEND Priority 4 – Transitions to Adulthood

This meeting went through the milestone document for attendees to provide updates on their areas:

- The SEND Employers Forum is booked for 4th October 23 and will be running as a Hybrid session to allow as many attendees as possible. This group is about looking at how we create employment opportunities for young people, through work experience, talks, mock interviews, supported internships as well as actual paid opportunities.
- The Skills Team have now recruited a Supported Internship Coordinator and will be in post soon.
- The Transitions Guide is now live and can be found here: [Transitions Guide](#). Initial feedback is positive and that it is clearer.
- Evaluation work will be taking place on all elements of the SEND Strategy. If you would like to know more or feedback, there is an animation available: [Suffolk SEND Strategy Consultation Autumn 2023 – YouTube](#) and a survey: [SEND Strategy consultation \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](#)



VSEND

Apologies in the delay in sharing a VSEND update, we are **still** awaiting figures from the IMPOWER Team. SPCF would like to know how many schools attended the VSEND training, how many schools then went on to complete a 'setting readiness' and subsequently how many children's profiles have been undertaken – especially those with the 'home confidence' element which is completed by parents. As mentioned in previous communications, SPCF are concerned that VSEND will not be used in settings, much like other offers, so these figures would ease our concerns.

Suffolk Inclusion Toolkit

SPCF attended a meeting around Inclusion which referenced the Essential SENCO Toolkit.. Which also included interventions such as the Specialist Support Service, VSEND and Analysis of Additional Needs Tool (AANT). All methods rely heavily on the provision accessing and implementing. There are many schools that are doing it well but there are more that are not. It is important to show case the good examples and the impact it has had in their school in the hope that others will follow.

Annual Review (AR) Training

There has been work undergone to improve the guidance and training provided to professionals around Annual Reviews. This has been an area where SPCF has highlighted issues on multiple occasions. With some annual reviews not having been completed in 5 years. We have received assurances that work is in place to insure that historic AR are completed as soon as possible whilst still completing those due. The Young People's Network have been speaking to children and young people about what an 'ideal annual review' would look like – following on from the success of the 'ideal worker' creation. SPCF suggested that perhaps parent carers could also feedback what their ideal annual review would look like. The meeting chair will be looking at ways to receive this feedback. It is felt that the majority of parents would just like to ensure that the AR is completed on time and as per the legislation within the SEND Code of Practice, however there were suggestions around location, times etc. that would also benefit.

If you would like to share what you feel would make an ideal Annual Review, please email us at: info@suffolkpcf.co.uk or by using the feedback form online: <https://suffolkpcf.co.uk/feedback/>