



October 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 Virtual Schools. The presentation will be added to the minutes on the link above.

We were able to raise the following:

- We are disappointed that we still have not met with Suzy Joyner but hope to do so soon.
- We have felt disappointed by the uptake of VSEND and lack of figures. We raised this matter and will be meeting with Ros soon to discuss this.
- We are aware of the difficulties with ADHD medications and are in regular contact with the ICB.
- We were concerned to hear that Waveney will not be getting an MHST in wave 10. There was no consultation or conversation prior to this coming up in an MHST meeting recently. It has caused concern and upset to some and we hope to discuss this further with Rebecca Mann.
- We have met with the attendance service and gave our feedback on their proposed code of conduct and attendance strategy. We raised concerns and continue to be very worried that fines are being issued to families of children who face barriers to attendance such as unmet needs, poor mental health and EBSA. Fining families will not solve these issues.
- It was recently in the media that Suffolk is the highest excluder for primary school aged children. This is very concerning and we cannot underestimate all that goes with an exclusion for families. We have requested data on these exclusions including how many of those children are autistic and children placed on unlawful part time time-tables.
- We raised many "high ticket" items in the previous accountability board meeting and remain keen to set dates to discuss these things. As always Academies and poor communication from staff to families continue to be a common theme in feedback we receive.
- We held a successful open forum event in Ipswich last month and thank those who attended. We had a good turnout of parent carers. Unfortunately, there was some criticism on the lack of senior staff from the local authority compared to previous events.



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.

Further sessions for the 'Time to Listen' events are to be held in the near future. The overall feedback has been positive. They are looking into whether these events will be held as individual or in groups moving forward. Any feedback with regards to this would be greatly appreciated.

There have been discussions around having information on the local offer page to assist those who live on the borders of Suffolk with Health and Education. Those on the border have difficulties and receive conflicting information on accessing services and would like this clarified on the local offer page. There is consideration to having maps that would highlight the areas and give information on services that they can access.

Assistance has been requested to help create information and guidance for school transport which will include some myth busting. This will be for providers, taxi companies and their staff. This will also contain information for parents. This is currently in its infancy, but SPCF have asked to be informed on the guidance being created.

SEND Priority 2 – The SEND Journey

The attendees watched the animation around the evaluation work that will be taking place on all elements of the SEND Strategy. If you would like to know more or feedback, you can watch the animation available: [Suffolk SEND Strategy Consultation Autumn 2023 – YouTube](#) and a survey: [SEND Strategy consultation \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](#)

An easy read survey is being produced to ensure accessibility. There is a possibility of having online drop ins to reach families. SPCF suggested a morning, an afternoon and an evening, we offered to help facilitate them.

SPCF shared that the animation didn't fully reflect the lived experience that families are sharing with us and we also said that it may actually be upsetting for some families to watch and it is important that they are acknowledged and validated.



SEND Priority 3 – Services & Provision

Discussions around the SEND Strategy, the animation and survey. Concerns were raised around how the message would get out to the Early Years cohort. It will be shared on the Early Years Broadcast and schools have been asked to send out to all SEN families.

With regards to special needs units, there have been conversations around the need of a Cognition & Interaction unit for secondary level in the South.

Concerns have been raised around border roles and responsibilities for Elveden especially for Health and Transport services. This will need to be clarified for families.

SEND Priority 4 – Transitions to Adulthood

The SEND strategy survey was shared with the group along with the importance of distribution.

SPCF raised that parents had been reporting a lack of preparing for adulthood paperwork especially in the Mid Suffolk area. Family services has confirmed this should not be the case and a reminder will be communicated.

The transitions guide is not reaching families as we would like so it will be shared again on the local offer, headlines and the SENDCo forum.

The Transitioning to Adulthood section on LiquidLogic was presented to attendees. It was raised that the form did not feel person centered but more process driven. Many young people had reported that they hadn't given any input – this will be investigated further.

Concerns around EHCP's that have bit been amended or updated and how this will impact on the preparing for adulthood process – it is hoped that the portal will help to identify that the percentages of those effected. It was felt by the group that there was a need for a drop down with information to explain the question and there needs to be a section for career goals.



VSEND

Apologies in the delay in sharing a VSEND update. we have received some of the VSEND data but not all. We have booked a meeting in November to discuss fully.

School Attendance

With an increase of feedback from families around attendance barriers and to follow on from our workshops. SPCF requested a meeting with the attendance team to discuss further.

SPCF raised the question around the suitability of school for certain children and the impact school in having on their mental health and anxiety levels.

A great concern for us as a forum is the fines that are being handed to families. With the cost-of-living crisis and the documented struggles of families in poverty, being given a fine which is the equivalent to a week's food shopping for a family is unacceptable. Fining families does not resolve the barrier the child is facing and will only add hardship. Statistically maintain schools have a higher attendance than Academies, why is this? SPCF feels that this links in to the accountability and the lack of authority over academies and ensuring that proper practice is in place.

There have been instances reported to us that children are being marked as absent when they are in school but unable to access a lesson. This raises safeguarding issues for instances when the school needed to be evacuated but also impacts on the overall attendance rate. The way that absence is calculated is not effective as 4 absences in October would have a greater impact on the figures than in July.

SEND Area Inspection for Suffolk

On Monday 30th October 23. Suffolk received the call to notify them that there would be a SEND Area Inspection conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission. This was to commence immediately and take place until Friday 17th November 23. SPCF emailed members, posted on social media and contacted local groups with the Inspection survey on Monday 30th as soon as we were advised and then further shared with schools and support groups (as listed on the Local Offer directory).



ADHD Medication Shortage

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT ADHD MEDICATION & TREATMENT

You may have heard about a national shortage of some of the medicines used to treat ADHD. These supply problems are expected to resolve at various dates between October and December 2023.

How does this affect me/my child?

Not all ADHD medicines are affected by this shortage. The ICB will contact you directly should their records indicate that you/your child is currently being prescribed one or more of the medicines that are likely to be in short supply, or possibly unavailable.

What do I need to do?

The NHS is working hard to manage this shortage, but there are a few things that you can do to help us minimise the effect on you/your child:

Patients currently taking Xaggitin XL® tablets, Concerta XL® tablets, or Xenidate XL® tablets –

Please only order your prescription when you have 10–14 days of your medicine left. It is important not to stockpile medicines. Your doctor will not be able to issue your prescription any earlier.

Be prepared for your medicine to look a little different to normal:

- You may be asked to take different strengths of your medicine to make up the full dose.
- If your usual medicine is not available, your GP should be able to give you a prescription for a different medicine that works in the same way and is still available – you should not experience any new side effects or changes in your ADHD symptoms.

Please do not ring your GP practice to request an alternative medicine, your pharmacist will arrange this for you.

- Any change to your medicine will be short-term, and only until the supply problems are resolved.

Once supplies are readily available, you will be given the option to switch back to your original medicine or stay on the brand that you have been switched to.

Patients currently taking Equasym XL® caps, Elvanse® caps, Elvanse Adult® caps, or Intuniv® tabs –

Please only order your prescription when you have 10–14 days of your medicine left. It is important not to stockpile medicines. Your doctor will not be able to issue your prescription any earlier.

Your GP cannot prescribe you an alternative medicine. If you have transport, you may wish to take your prescription to another pharmacy if your medicine is not available from your usual one. It is possible that another pharmacy will still have some of your medicine in stock, but this is unlikely. While waiting for supplies of your medicine to become available again, you may need to change to a different treatment or management plan. Your specialist will discuss the options available to you and agree on the best way to manage your ADHD until your usual medicine is available again.