

MINUTES – Local SEND Partnership Board

Date: Wednesday 3rd September 2025

Time: 13.00pm – 14.20pm

Venue: Microsoft Teams Meeting

	Discussion Items	Lead
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies Meeting Chaired by: Rebecca Wall Attendees: Rebecca Wall (RW), Martyn Owen (MO), Karl Bower (KB), Kim Holdridge (KH), Alison Tomes (AT), Clive Chambers (CC), John Moran (JM), Jane Cresswell (JC), Kate Jones (KJ), Natalie Firth (NF), Debbie Osborne (DO), Sarah Timmins (ST), Anne Donkin (AD), Andrea Ibbeson (AI), Emma Smith (ES), Claire Ziolkowski (CZ), Natalie Tyrrell (NT), Georgina Todd (GT) Apologies: Annika Leyland-Bolton, Angela Harrington, Paul Scotting, Emma Price, Emma Kirk, Roberta Radcliffe-Birds Non-Attendees: Simon Witham, Bushra Ismaeil, Sarah Hall, Paula Cousins	Chair
2.	Requests for any other business A request was made around if we have a representation from Public Health as part of the board. ACTION – To check the Accountability Agreement for the Board and invite a representative moving forward.	NT
3.	Minutes from previous SEND Board Minutes from the last meeting on 23rd July 2025, were accepted as a true record, and approved as final version. NT updated on the action log ➤ SB-73 action around Inclusion Charter and how often this is to be refreshed, feedback to Jane Reed that this is to be included in the next SEND Strategy ensuring we keep the same principles but be clear on how often this is reviewed. Action to be closed. ➤ SB-74 RW confirms we are working towards having a dedicated resource within the CWD team, action to be closed. ES adds that external training is taking place on 16th Oct around MCAs, as well as working with other local authorities to explore how further work can be done	

	➤ SB-75 has been completed and the document will be circulated to members following the meeting ➤ SB-76 NT confirms work has started on this, the SEF summary will be circulated following approval ➤ SB-86 has been completed ➤ SB-88 KB updates will not be completed any time soon so is left unscheduled currently ➤ SB-90 has been completed due to work taking place with DPV and CAMHS. DO updates DPV have sent their surveys out for feedback on CAMHS services ahead of a co-production session, to parents and young people and have begun to receive responses. Positive comments included friendly staff through the assessment process. Discussion follows surrounding feedback that an autism diagnosis is impacting referrals into CAMHS. KB suggests that future survey questions are clearer surrounding timescales as work has been done within CAMHS to improve the pathway for young people with ASD. MO updates that this work is also being picked up in Nov/Dec with CAMHS colleagues following a co-production session with Naomi Handley-Ward which went well. KJ shares that CAMHS are aware of this narrative and work has been done to ensure autistic young people are supported with their CAMHS referrals. KJ shares that work could also be done on how this further signposting and support is explained to families to change this perception. RW suggests adding a question to future survey whether those who were signposted elsewhere had their needs met through other services, AT suggests a question around whether the wider family have had their needs met with support for parents/carers too. ACTION – Debbie to include questions raised by board members into the survey for parents. ACTION – Engine Room to discuss what services are available for children and young people with ASD and mental health needs. Naomi Handley-Ward to be included in this work regarding the graduated approach and signposting work.	DO Engine Room Members
4.	SEND Implementation Plan – Update on progress NT updates that a further 3 deliverables have been completed since the last meeting. ➤ <i>P.1.23 > To train the workforce in the requirements of the local graduated approach in order to ensure earlier intervention is effective</i> - Delivered SEND awareness training to 40 delegates on 17th July – handed training over to Educational Psychologist Team. ➤ <i>P.2.5 > Improve recruitment and retention of teaching assistants (Focus groups with schools to develop strategy and devise high level strategy)</i> - Due to time constraints and availability of focus group members it was not possible for this to take place as planned. The CPD Framework and audit for this work has now transitioned to the Educational Psychology Team and SEND Inclusion Officers, for them to continue this work. ➤ <i>P.2.7 > Improve recruitment and retention of teaching assistants (CPD, Networks and support offer in place)</i> - CPD framework and audit has been created and shared with Educational Psychology Team and SEND Inclusion Officers, for them to continue this work.	

5.	Preparation for Adulthood Update and Highlight Report JM updates on the highlight report that was shared prior to the meeting. The PFA programme has moved into Phase 2 which is focusing on the multi-agency transitions hub partnership where young people's needs are being considered and how they can best be met. This is in the early stages and is being evaluated in terms of the impact on young people and how partnership work is progressing, what is/isn't working well. Learning from other local authorities is also being explored. JM shares that some workstreams are progressing further than others and how this can be applied to the other workstreams is being looked into. In October a meeting will be held to review the workstreams and plan priorities for the next 6 months. AI raises that the impact and outcomes is key for Board to hear in future. JM and MO are picking up work on how this is shown. ACTION – Work to be picked up in the Performance and Quality Assurance sub-group to look at dip sampled case studies focusing on transition points, collate data and demonstrate the impact work is having on young people	JM / MO
6.	SEND Engine Room Update MO updates on the discussions from the most recent Engine Room meeting. A report on the detail and impact of the element 3 funding process was discussed, the details were distributed to members in the highlight report ahead of the meeting. Supported internships were also a topic of discussion, with a draft letter being produced for the DfE that children without EHCPs should be able to access these internships after concern were raised. MO reports that Engine Room members have requested good news stories regarding the good practice in Doncaster, so that a newsletter can be produced to share with the Partnership and stakeholders. ACTION – SEND Board members to contact MO with any good news stories for Engine Room. Discussions were held around Case Audits to ensure these are timely, organised and further ensuring stakeholders are attending and engaged in this work. KH updates that the case audit process elements of the new system are being worked on and the next case audit is due on 15th September. RW shares that the process needed working on to ensure any gaps in information can be quickly closed with the right contact points for information. KB adds that in terms of quality assurance there are issues with attendance and quoracy in these meetings due to people being released from their day jobs to assist with this work. ACTION – JR to identify the service areas who are not attending/engaged to contact directly and discuss how we can help. ACTION – JR to undertake future work identifying recurring issues over the next 6 months to raise where improvements are not made in the case audit process – to be tasked to Engine Room or Performance and Quality Assurance sub-group. ACTION – Case Audits to be added as a standard item at the Engine Room and SEND Board to provide an update on Multi Agency Case Audit Days.	Board Members Jane Reed Jane Reed Jane Reed

	ACTION – KH to contact Jane Reed for her to send case audit panel dates to SEND Board members. ACTION – Jane Reed to raise with Rebecca Wall the areas that were not represented at case audits previously with RW/Al. RW shares thanks for Jane Reed and Kim Holdridge for their work on this.	Jane Reed Jane Reed
7.	Diana Choulerton Feedback MO shares feedback from Diana Choulerton to help us improve going forward. The aim of the session with Diana was to reflect on current self-evaluation and look at key areas to address. The main findings were that there was an indication of notable progress in several areas, including leadership; coproduction; joint working between services; governance and board structures; and strengthening the referral system with the introduction of the section 23 form. Further strengths included early help linking with SEND; work of the DCO and DSCO; alternative provision commissioning; support for transition between children and adult social services; and health visitors. Possible strengths that need further evaluation were identified and included improvements in the quality of identification and assessment relating to EHCP; oversight of quality of EHCP and annual reviews; the introduction of the digital hub; DBV – introduction of element 3 funding clusters; and the new co-produced pathway. Alternative provision and out of area placements commissioning and QA were also identified but need to know the impact over time. Risks found were preparation for adulthood relating to the progress since the last inspection; exclusions; speech and language graduated approach; joint commissioning; transition at 18 for those without diagnosis; transition from primary to secondary; and impact evaluation. Next steps pre inspection are for leaders to focus on the impact and difference the work has made to the experience and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. All leaders should be able to articulate this for their area. The impact of work being done to reduce exclusions and the extent to which the quality of EHCPs have improved were also identified as next steps to look at. Next steps beyond inspection are for the new strategy to have SMART objectives, and clear impact milestones; the implementation plan to have broken down impact milestones for each workstream; a strategy/pathway to joint commissioning; and a JSNA needs summary of implications for commissioning. There also needs to be ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review of the new strategy against interim impact milestones and performance data. Discussion should take place at SEND Board to focus on the difference the work is making to the experience and outcomes for children and young people. CZ raises that she was unaware this work was taking place. KB agrees therapies need to be involved in any future conversation. RW and Al confirm that it was covered in the previous meeting that in the future health colleagues are to be more included.	

8. Performance, Quality Assurance and Improvement Framework (PQAIF)

MO provides an update from the Performance and Quality Assurance sub-group that the scorecard being worked on is in final stages and being brought to the next SEND Board.

MO shares a slide deck with SEND 2 EHCP data detailed. Key points from the data displayed are

- Timeliness of EHCP's improved significantly in 2024 in comparison to previous years and is significantly above National Averages
- 37/51 EHCPs finalised within 20 weeks – current compliance rate of 72.55%
- 40 plans finalised of which 25 SLCN or ASD was given as primary need (62.5%)
- 25 plans finalised for children in Year 3 or below of which 20 had a primary SEN need of ASD or SLCN (80%)
- 3 decisions to assess did not lead to a draft EHCP being issued as needs could be met through HQT and with reasonable adjustments
- Children and young people are typically more likely to be in a **school** that is overall judged to be 'good' or better school in all categories (2019 67%/ 2025 92%) than previously.
- All of our specialist and AP providers are now 'good' in all categories or better.
- Key Stage 2 outcomes for SEND have improved are now in line with national Averages.
- Absence rates have improved for all children and for SEND categories between 2019 and 2023/ 2024, with primaries now being at least in line with national averages for all categories and special schools being above. Secondary schools have halved the gap to 0.5% for 'all', by 1.5% for SEND K and 1.2% for EHCP. National data for Autumn and Spring 2024/2025 showing that overall absence is better than national at 6.2% (NA 6.5%), with all SEND at 9.4% (NA 10.3%). From this, most recent data, all SEND categories are now lower than national averages for the three sectors.
- Permanent Exclusion rates have reduced in volume since 2019 and are now in line with national averages for primary and specialist sectors, but remain high at secondary. At secondary, the gap with national rates has reduced by 0.13 for all, 0.56 at SEND K and 0.81 for EHCPs.
- Work with the secondary sector has supported a diminishing of the difference with national suspension rates (from 0.36% to 0.30% during 2024), but there is still much to do, with rates being much higher than national. Three schools, from two trusts, make up 48% of suspensions issued in 2024/2025.
- Both CME and EHE referrals have increased over time, especially from 2020–2021 onwards
- In 2023–2024, EHE referrals nearly matched CME referrals, indicating a significant shift in how EHCP pupils are being educated.
- CME - referrals show a steady rise, with notable peaks in 2021–2022 and 2023–2024. This is likely a knock-on effect of post-pandemic disruptions, placement breakdowns, or delays in securing suitable school places for EHCP pupils
- EHE - referrals were relatively low until 2020–2021, after which they rose sharply. The rise may be linked to:
 - Increased parental concerns about the school environment post-COVID.
 - Dissatisfaction with SEND provision in schools.
 - A shift in attitudes toward home education post-covid
 - Increased concerns around school attendance

	AI requests for slides to be shared before the meeting with data in future. MO confirmed that this will happen in advance of the next board as we will have access to the Scorecard (a link) which will be issued with the papers. RW / AI confirmed that this needs to have a focus on every Board agenda moving forward. Need to allocate 30 minutes to this agenda item to understand the impact our work is having. This needs to be taking through the Performance Quality Assurance Subgroup to identify themes and trends to notify board. ACTION – Ensure that the Performance Scorecard is allocated on every agenda moving forward with a 30-minute timeslot. ACTION – Martyn to ensure that the next Performance Quality Assurance Subgroup focus on what key themes and trends need to be discussed at the next Board meeting.	GT MO
9.	Escalations to Education and Skills Portfolio Board No escalations to the E&S Board.	
10.	Any other business AI raises concern that the Board are not well enough sighted on what is happening in paediatric audiology services in DBTH – this is being discussed elsewhere but SEND Board should be aware. ACTION – Clive Chambers to arrange a meeting with Andrea Ibbeson to discuss paediatric audiology service concerns. To also include Martyn Owen from education perspective.	CC
11.	Date and time of next meeting ➤ Wednesday 15th October 13.00pm – 14.20pm	