

Minutes

SEN & Inclusion Board Meeting

Wednesday 7th May 2025, 2pm

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Present:

Naomi Carter (NC) – Service Director, Education, Inclusion and Access
Jade Kennett (JK) – Service Manager, Strategic Development
Beth Dyer (BD) – Service Manager, Education
Rachael Williams (RW) – Inclusion Manager
Nichola Smith (NS) – SEND Manager
Debbie Williams (DW) – Team Manager, Data and Performance
Kate Evans (KE) – Information Analyst
Irina Rowan (IR) – Senior Finance Business Partner
Jodi Smith (JS) – Senior Accounting Technician
Julie Lambert (JL) – Post 16 Manager
Rosie Lister (RL) – Virtual School Headteacher
Hannah Pye (HP) – Team Lead, Speech and Language Therapy
Hannah Byers (HB) – Team Lead, Specialist Advisory Teacher Team
Charlotte Heard (CH) – Business Services Officer

Apologies:

Theresa Wall (TW) – Service Manager, Education
Sarah Linington (SL) – Business Services Manager

Summary of Actions
Action: NC to send CH the agenda in a formal structure.
Action: HP to find out how many of the 60 Autism consultations go through to assessment.
Action: DW to send the data collection document to CH for circulation with the minutes. Colleagues to add their initials next to the data they can provide.
Action: NC to send CH the details on the Local Offer consultation, for circulation with the minutes.

1. Welcome

Welcome and apologies

NC welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. She asked for colleagues to type in the chat if they had to leave early, so that they could give updates first. JK and RL added their names. NC explained that there is a fixed agenda for these meetings and asked that colleagues bring KPI's relevant to their field, to present to the group. She confirmed that she would put the agenda into a formal structure and send to CH.

Action: NC to send CH the agenda in a formal structure.

Minutes from the previous meeting

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and agreed correct.

Action tracker

The following updates were shared: IR has updated the ILC's name to Lionheart, NC has shared the SEF with the group, NS and RW have a plan for the EHE pupils whom EHCN assessments are being requested for, JK is working on sharing the SEND Sufficiency strategy with colleagues and CH is looking at future dates for these meetings. HP noted that she has not yet found out how many of the 60 Autism consultations go through to assessment, but will do this.

Action: HP to find out how many of the 60 Autism consultations go through to assessment.

2. Strategic Leadership and Governance of System

DW advised that there has been a request from the DCS to produce certain data on a regular basis, and a lot of it relates to the Safety Valve. KE has put together grids, which DW shared with the group. She explained that the majority of the data will need to come from this group. NC suggested this is taken offline and DW agreed to send the document to CH, who will circulate it with the minutes. DW asked that colleagues add their initials next to the data they can provide.

Action: DW to send the data collection document to CH for circulation with the minutes. Colleagues to add their initials next to the data they can provide.

Virtual School update

RL reported the LAC figures below:

0-18 years old – 259

Preschool – 31

EYFS/Year R – 43

Primary – 89

Year 6 – 21

Secondary – 100

Year 11 – 25

Post 16 – 39

SEND – 103

EHCP – 63

SEN support – 40

Statutory school age in specialist school – 31

Post 16 in specialist school – 2

Statutory school age in resourced provision – 3

EOTAS in Year 11 – 1

RL confirmed that every child has a statutory PEP which is reviewed every term. She reported the following figures for the Spring term:

Preschool – 100% PEP's reviewed

Statutory school age – 95% PEP's reviewed (the other 5% are children that have moved or have just entered care)
Post 16 – 94%

RL confirmed that the (academic) year-to-date attendance figure for the statutory school age cohort is 90.5%. In March, the figure was 89% and RL explained that the team monitor attendance daily, meet weekly to discuss patterns, and follow up with the school, social worker and family. KE queried how the team get attendance data and RL confirmed that they use ASSET, who pull the data from school systems via Wonde.

RL noted that there are a number of young people seeking asylum in Year 10 and 11, and there is tutoring or alternative provision in place for them.

In terms of training, RL confirmed that there is an 'understanding sensory needs' course for foster carers, which was available for social workers and designated teachers previously. She added that the Attachment and Trauma Aware module will be rolled out in the next two weeks, alongside drop-in sessions. RL advised that she is working with the ILC on DDP (didactic developmental practice), who will train staff in September and invite a member of staff from other schools for free, with the aim of creating a centre of excellence. RL noted that Nettlestone and Newchurch have already completed the training and rolled out the practice.

Strategic Development update

JK confirmed that the consultation on the expansion of SEN provision launched on Friday and closes on 9th June. We are consulting to increase the number of places in resourced provisions, so that primaries have 12 places and secondaries have 20 places. She noted that we have no control over academies, but she is starting the conversation with them.

JK advised that the following are also being consulted on:

- St George's studio site – create 20 additional places
- Brighstone – create a new 12 place resourced provision for AS and/or SLC needs
- Lionheart – create additional 60 places, to be located at Cowes Primary site

JK advised that she is welcoming comments and running various drop-in sessions, and asked colleagues to encourage stakeholders to engage in the consultations.

JK confirmed that a new 12 place provision at The Bay primary has been approved and will open on 1st September.

JK noted that all the above have implementation group meetings and there is ongoing dialogue with stakeholders.

JK advised that there is a new SEMH satellite provision at Medina House School, and there have been questions from residents in the Chillerton area, so she is holding a drop-in session tomorrow.

NC noted that the scoping exercise is a big piece of work and JK confirmed that it is done internally, but in conversation with the schools.

Financial update on High Needs spend

IR shared the draft 2024/25 budget, which showed a £5.3m overspend. She noted that this is fairly consistent with the reporting over the year. There is a £11.96m cumulative deficit, and we received £970,000 safety valve funding for 2024/25. IR advised that the high needs block makes up over 22.8% of the budget, and the deficit is entirely high needs related. She ran through the different areas and NC noted that the high needs block is based on historic data, but the number of pupils with an EHCP rises year on year and we have to ensure that they are in the right provision. She added that we need to make sure we are holding ourselves to account and confirmed that JK is doing a session on finance at the EIA day.

JK advised that since Heather has been off, she has taken over the day to day management of SEND funding, and they are being more robust about challenging spend and ensuring it is for education, as there has been misuse, which is causing conflict with parents. She confirmed that prepaid cards are no longer used. NC shared that they have identified the need for an additional role in this area, and thanked NS for the work she has been doing.

NC noted that there is currently a statutory override, and explained that the budget doesn't sit on the council's budget sheet and if the override was to be removed, it would fall to the council.

IR advised that the DfE submission for 25/26 shows a shortfall of £5.8m and we are not likely to achieve the target of an in-year balance in 26/27, which is the last year of the agreement.

JK and RL left the meeting.

Local Offer

NC advised that TW was working on the Local Offer. The old site has been switched off, and there is a consultation on the current content, which NC would like more feedback on. She advised that she will share this with CH for circulation with the minutes.

Action: NC to send CH the details on the Local Offer consultation, for circulation with the minutes.

Outcome of Area SEN Partnership Board & Sub Group

NC advised that there is no current parent carer forum, but parents were invited to the Area SEN partnership board meeting. She explained that they are refining the Area SEN SEF and plan.

3. Oversight of statutory process

SEN performance (EHCNA and timeliness) and trends/patterns

NS reported that there are currently 1822 EHCP's, and in September there were 1780. They have had 287 ECHPA requests from September to date, 129 of which are parental requests, and this is an increasing trend.

NS advised that in Autumn, there were 9 requests for mediation, and in Summer there were 41. She explained that parents request mediation but do not attend, and then go to tribunal. NS confirmed that there are 46 live tribunals and thanked HP and her team for their support.

NS shared concerns that some SENCo's do not know what the Legal Test is, and she and BD will be providing training on this in June.

NS confirmed that she, NC and senior caseworkers are taking part in training in July, and there are four new members of staff starting soon (three in May and one in September).

Annual Review

In terms of timeliness, NS advised that the 20 week indicator is 11% and she doesn't have an indicator for 6 weeks. She shared that she currently doesn't have the capacity to pull off data, but is hopeful that the new staff can do this, and will ensure they have robust transitions, inductions and expectations.

NS confirmed that she submitted her dissertation this week, for which she analysed 10 EHCP's. She shared concerns around there being no pupil voice, a lack of understanding from professionals, inconsistencies and blank spaces. She stated that she is trying hard to change the rhetoric and mindset of some stakeholders.

NC noted that NS's job is huge at the moment, and she is hoping to create some capacity by recruiting a SEND Service Manager. NC explained that there are multiple complaints, and NS is the only one with the knowledge and expertise to respond. Some complainants use a scattergun approach by sending them to us, the DCS, DfE and Ofsted. NC said that she is aware she is asking a lot from NS.

NS reported that there are 88 EOTAS/EOTIC pupils, and the Legal Test was never applied. 7 pupils have now been placed back in education following their annual review. NS said that we can't continue with the old mentality and things are changing, it will just take time.

DW noted that on Capita, reports are available at the touch of a button, which she can show NS.

Quality Assurance

NC confirmed that the AP and INMSS visits are recorded on Microsoft Teams. RW shared that the AP guidance has been updated and she needs to collect data so may be calling upon colleagues for this.

4. Services for Schools

School Improvement offer/training/networks

BD confirmed that the school improvement team have now started and are visiting schools to build intelligence, trust and relationships. The school improvement offer has gone out to schools and will start in September.

PBS

BD confirmed that the PBS now sits under her and the outreach will continue in September. She advised that she is aligning processes and expectations, and highlighted the need to build a sustainable model.

Speech and Language Therapy

HP advised that there is just over 2 full-time members of staff in the team and the caseload in mainstream from Year 1 to College is 375. She added that they also provide support to St George's, IW College and HTP. There are 19 statutory assessments in progress and so far, they have been involved in 76 this year.

HP confirmed that between now and Summer, there are 2 virtual drop-in's and 3 training courses planned. They have ensured that they have termly reviews which has received positive feedback.

HP advised that the Autism Outreach post is 4 days a week, term-time only.

HP shared the following figures from last half-term:

20 students/8 schools discussed at drop-in's

5 follow-up visits

6 interventions

34 members of staff took part in training

Specialist Teacher Advisors

HB reported that at the last meeting, there were 119 pupils on the deaf caseload and now there are 124, and there were 65 on the VI caseload and now there are 71. She shared that the relationship with the eye department at the hospital has improved and there was only one VI child that they were not aware of.

HB confirmed that Cath has nearly finished her mandatory training, and she has attended the EY sign language course.

6. Ordinarily Available Provision

NC confirmed that she has spoken to BD and TW about how to move this forward.

7. Children and Young People

Inclusion - Suspensions/PEX/Medical

RW reported that the current attendance figure is 92.1% which is a slight increase since Easter. The primary figure is 94.2%, which is about 0.5% below national, and the secondary figure is 90.3% which is below national. RW advised that there are 3898 persistently absent pupils.

RW confirmed that there have been 1485 periods of suspension for less pupils. She provided the following breakdown:

52.8% - at point of suspension, no identified SEN

11.2% - EHCP

34.7% - SEN support

1.2% - under assessment

RW reported that this is not proportionate with the cohort of statutory school age pupils, and she is working with NS to address this.

RW advised that 90% of suspensions are occurring secondary schools and there are two schools that are consistently higher and there is focused work to support them.

RW shared that there have been five permanent exclusions from one school this week, which haven't been reviewed by governors yet.

RW advised that a big pressure is Section 19 provision, and they are currently supporting approximately 60 pupils. The last Section 19 panel was two weeks ago and there have been 15 new requests in the last two weeks. RW explained that there is a new multiagency process for the Section 19 panel, which includes legal representation, and this has been very positive.

NS shared that she has been at tribunal for a Section 19 case where they ruled in favour and the EOTAS provision will cost over £100,000. She added that there is a new rule that the working document cannot be more than 25 pages long, so advice needs to be succinct. RW advised that she has been asked to join a South-East working group on Section 19.

RW shared her concerns that there is no medical AP for primary and therefore there are 14 bespoke packages which the team need to be mindful of and monitor. NC noted that the ILC used to have primary provision, but it wasn't suitable, so closing it was the right decision, but we may wish to reconsider a different provision moving forward.

EHE

RW reported that there are currently 727 EHE pupils, which is 4.4% of the statutory school age population. She noted that this is considerably higher than other LA's, but they are seeing the same rate of increase as us.

RW confirmed that she and NC are meeting with the EHE community at the end of May, to engage with them and build relationships. They will link in closely with the school improvement team.

Post 16

JL reported that there is a diverse range of 16-18 cases on the island.

JL confirmed that there is a foundation learning and pathways programme at the IW College for SEND young people.

JL advised that there are gaps in the NEET programme, but she is working on supported apprenticeships with the apprenticeship team at the IW Council and Solent Hub. She is also working with schools around career pathways for 14-16 year olds as there is a lack of motivation.

JL shared that Smart Training might be coming back to the island to put on a 16-18 study programme, and the Kings Trust programme is an area she would like to explore.

JL confirmed that the DfE have announced a new 'risk of NEET' data collection, and she has produced a questionnaire for schools around what they are currently doing. The IW College have sent lists, which the team are currently analysing.

The team are reviewing the traded service as contracts are ending in August. JL advised that two other schools have expressed interest.

JL confirmed that Solent Hub are offering careers training and there are various events planned, including a young person event in October which she will keep the group posted about.

In terms of PFA, JL has started reaching out to establish where the groups are and put feelers out.

JL reported the following figures:

IW College – 270 on the list, 98 matched
HTP – 44 on the list, 25 matched

JL is meeting with Jess this week to look at aligning systems. KE asked if there is a process to update EMS when JL meets with Jess. JL confirmed that the team don't work on EMS but use One YSS.

JL advised that in March, there was vocational systematic training which 21 professionals attended.

JL reported that out of the cohort of 2925, 4% are NEET which is a slight increase on last year (3.4%). The figure has increased nationally too, and the South-East figure is 6.1% and the national figure is 5.1%.

8. Any other business

NC thanked colleagues for their updates and stated that we have come on leaps and bounds. She acknowledged that everyone works hard and makes hard decisions, and she is impressed by how much more joined up we all are.

NS asked that colleagues share any feedback around the external EP advice with her, as she will meet with them every half-term.

Meeting closed 3.30pm