**S.E.19 SEND Joint Conversation**

**22nd September 2021**

**12:00 - 13:30**

**Notes of meeting**

| **Local Authority/ Organisation** | **Attendees** |
| --- | --- |
| Brighton and Hove | Rhianedd Hughes |
| Buckinghamshire | Lucy Perren (DSCO) |
| East Sussex | Rachel Atkinson (DMO) |
| East Sussex | Antony Julyan |
| Hampshire | Jayne Howarth |
| Hampshire & IoW | Matt Powell (DCO) |
| Isle of Wight | Kate Symes |
| Kent | Rosemary Henn-Macrae |
| Kent | Paul Crulley |
| Kent and Medway | Sue Gibbons (DCO) |
| Milton Keynes | Delphine Taylor |
| Milton Keynes | Nina Broderick |
| Oxfordshire | Catherine Clarke |
| Oxfordshire | Adeline Gibbs (DCO) |
| Oxfordshire | Kate Bradley |
| Portsmouth | Karen Spencer |
| RB Windsor & Maidenhead (Achieving for Children) | David Griffiths |
| Southampton | Tammy Marks |
| Surrey | Mary Burguieres |
| Surrey | Andrea Ferns (DCO) |
| Surrey | Nick King |
| Surrey | Paula Vyze (DCO) |
| West Sussex | Helen Johns - Chair |
| West Sussex | Jo Hill |
| West Sussex | Natalie McNeill (DSCO) |
| Wokingham | Sal Thirlway |
| Wokingham | Jenny Hooper |
| Wokingham | Elaine Munro (PEP) |
| NHSE/I LDA South East region, Senior Strategic Case Manager, Adults and Autism | David Keaveney-Sheath |
| NHSE & I, Assistant Director of Nursing | Natalie Warman |
| NHSE/I, Transformation and Quality Improvement Manager | Jacqui Stillwell |
| NNPCF SE Region Representative | Sarah Clarke |
| NNPCF SE Region Representative | Holly Davis |
| DfE S.E. Region SEND Adviser | Liz Flaherty |
| S.E.19 SEND Network Co-ordinator | Tracey Maytas |

It was noted that colleagues in Slough were unable to take part as they are having their Ofsted/CQC SEND inspection this week. Good wishes were offered from the meeting

1. **Welcome and background to meeting**

Helen Johns, West Sussex, welcomed everyone and reiterated the online meeting protocols.

1. **Actions and matters arising from last meeting**

The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed:

* The DfE have a list of first and second contacts for SEND for all areas, which Liz needs to keep up to date. **It was agreed for Tracey to circulate the existing list of contacts in the SESLIP website for members of this group to update.** *In progress. It will be updated to add a secondary contact and Tracey Maytas will send that out for updating this month.*
* **LAs were asked by Johnny Kyriacou if they would be interested in sharing experience in terms of IT systems for gathering data and analysing EHCPs. *- It was agreed that a meeting would be set up to share practice there. Action for Tracey.*** *Carry action forward.* *Tracey to set up a meeting around sharing practice in terms of IT systems.*
* **Element 3 Funding Reviews for Schools - Proposal to benchmark figures against across the Region.** Several LAs expressed interest in discussing this. **Wendy to take these conversations forward** **with Tracey to help facilitate.** *- Tracey and Wendy to set up a Task and Finish Group.* *Carry action forward.*
* SEND Training Assurance Framework: Sue Gibbons to inform this group when the training goes live. *On agenda.*
* **Tracey asked if it is possible to find out how many / what % of placements into INMS follow tribunal decisions and how many are agreed by LAs. Liz agreed to find out.** *She has not received a response yet. Liz to follow up.*
* EHC Needs Assessment Requests; numbers across the Region 20/21: A plea went out to all LAs to share their figures with Jo Hill, who will share a summary of the information at a future meeting. *On agenda.*
* Elaine Munroe, Principal EP to be a rep on the steering group. *The steering group is meeting in November. It will be done through that.*
* Flag up the lack of EP training places to DfE. *Liz stated that there has been an increase in the numbers of EP who were trained per year and additional funding was provided to increase that number, however this increase is not keeping pace with the demand.*
* **LAs to send feedback to Liz on AET, if they have used them recently.** *Only one response has been received so far.*
* Request for models of Additionally Resourced Provision to share with London LA. *No responses were received. It was agreed to close this action.*
* **Regional workshop to be run later in year on experiences of hitting the 20 week target for EHCP completion: Presentation on how to get from very low to 100% (Tammy Marks, Southampton) & how to stay at 95%+ over time (Karen Spencer, Portsmouth).***No feedback at the moment on that.*

1. **NHSE/I General Update**

Natalie Warman, Assistant Director of Nursing NHSE & I, provided a high level summary of the current priorities within the NHS:

* Not recovered from Covid, which translates in bed pressures, acute systems and A&E response. Ambulance services are struggling.
* Primary care services are still delivering the Covid vaccination campaign. Now launching the flu and surge vaccination and rolling the children's flu vaccination as well. This puts pressure on primary care services.
* Enormous amount of work to do to catch up for those who have been waiting a long time to access services.
* There is a focus on avoiding inequalities and making sure that equity in the provision is looked at in services.
* Impact and legacy of Covid seen in the increase of children attending A&E, due to isolation last year. Increase in CAMHS referrals related to mental health crisis, eating disorders, etc. trying to find appropriate support for those young people.
* Strategically, the Health and Social Care bill introduced in the summer has had its 2nd reading and it is now at committee stage.

There are 2 components of this: Integrated Care Partnerships, to be a dual partnership between the local authority and health, and the Integrated Care Boards. This is all subject to Parliament process but it is anticipated that it will go live from 1 April 2022. These important changes in how local authorities and health work together and think of what their statutory accountabilities are and the change in legislation.

There is again a focus on health inequalities, coming together on how to get good outcomes, focus on children and young people and prevention model and how we come together to manage our resources so we can meet the needs of the younger population.

1. **NHSE/I Learning Disability and Autism Programme: Autism Strategy Update**

David Keaveney-Sheath, Strategic Senior Case Manager - Adults and Autism, NHSEI, said that a lot of those pressures mentioned in the previous item are felt in the autistic population. The rate of admissions of young people and adults with an autism-only diagnosis, especially those with co-occurring eating disorder presentation and for the female population, has increased through the Covid pandemic.

The South East Autism strategy for 2021-2026 launched in April. The national strategy from the Department for Health and Social Care followed. Some of the intentions of both strategies align very closely.



David talked to his presentation, which will be shared:

* A lot of historically commissioned health services do not meet the needs of autistic people who access them.
* The aim is to provide guidance for the South East region.
* There are 10 key priorities:
  + Increase sharing of good practice and learning
  + focus on Co-production
  + improve data capture and analysis
  + refresh and redesign service models
  + workforce planning
  + increase volume and consistency of autism training and awareness
  + rebalance diagnostic and supporting provision
  + strengthen system governance and accountability
  + increase offer for children and young people
  + improve local community housing offers.
* The rates of employment for autistic people are some of the lowest within the UK. Poor employment leads to inequalities.
* He went through the intentions raised within the South East strategy; there are strategic and operational considerations:
  + Local strategy development and delivery: Across the region, there are 3 ICSs, some local based strategies are being delivered or in process of being written and then there is the DHSC strategy launch.
  + Resource models - appropriate team resource: Significant concerns regionally on appropriateness of workforce to deliver key priorities.
  + Operating model - Autism Partnership Boards operating in all local systems: Limited by Covid restrictions. Recently, information suggests that they have been reinstated/ restarted.
  + Additional focus on clear leadership and accountability: Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) is in place and regional team linking to SROs. Funded autism and disability champion roles within ICS - roles are being progressed and advertised across systems.
  + Training and development - locally procured training.
  + Regional team - 3 funded projects focused on adaption of in-patient settings: 2 related to CAMHS and 1 to adults.
  + Also wanted to have an increased focus on the inequalities presence in BAME, LGBTQ+ and Gypsy/Roma communities: A report will be written with this data.
  + Quality guidance and standards: reducing the postcode lottery of support which was often provided to autistic children, adults and their families, focusing on *pre-imposed diagnostic support offer.*
  + 3 year pilot in the Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire (BOB) area, focusing on eating disorders, ASD co-morbidity. Age ranges: 14 to 18 for the first 2 years and extending to 24 in year 3 to cover individuals at highest risk of hospitalisation due to eating disorder.
  + Community mapping was undertaken in January and June. A summary report will be published identifying those current projects. Local ICS are leading on delivery and timescales of this.
  + Ongoing service development work, around refreshing and redesigning models.
  + Admission avoidance and crisis: further work needs to be carried out to embed in all community mental health services.
  + Improving data capture and analysis.
  + Regional development of quality assurance tool.
  + *MHSDs redesign occurring nationally.*
  + *Regionally employed digital lead, regional adjustment flags can be embedded in health records to do that. Also to share best practice for reasonable adjustments with ICS colleagues.*

The following comments were made in response to questions from the meeting:

* It was clarified that the SE Region mentioned covers 6 ICS: Kent and Medway; Frimley; Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire; Hampshire and IOW - including Southampton and Portsmouth; Sussex; Surrey and Borders.
* Regarding eating disorders and autism, David said that eating disorders pathways are not always appropriate for autistic children and there are poor outcomes. There is a large piece of work around mapping occurring within mental health of what services are provided within our region. This will be presented at the autism steering group regionally to see how the gap in services can be filled.

*The Peace Pathway* is a programme developed for adaptation of eating disorder service for autistic people. This project is currently in the recruitment stage and it could start delivering early next year.

* In terms of the long wait list for autism diagnosis, David replied that there is a national piece of work led by the National Autism team around that. The use of tele health to progress assessment in a quicker way has been quite useful. There are a few studies in our area focused on screening tools designed for women and girls in the autism spectrum. Besides, money has been aligned to fast track those individuals in crisis on the wait list for an autism assessment.
* It was recognised that post-diagnosis offer of support is not clear. It will be a focus from health.
* Surrey shared their [Autism Strategy](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adults/disabilities/spb/apb/sapb) which has been produced with David and his team. David noted that he would be happy to see the strategies of other LAs and provide support and comment. He is currently working with the Reading team, West Berkshire and BOB teams and Kent have engaged with the national team for inclusion. IOW are also in the process of drawing together their strategy. There is a huge amount of work going on in the system.
* If anyone has any additional questions, please contact David at [d.keaveney-sheath@nhs.net](mailto:d.keaveney-sheath@nhs.net)

1. **DfE Update**

Liz Flaherty, DfE SE Region SEND Advisor, provided the DfE update:

* She noted that she is receiving mixed information on how smooth the return to school has gone this September. It is generally ok, but individual schools are reporting of a huge number of children staying at home and some struggling with staffing because they are still having to stay at home.
* There is no more news on the publication of the new Ofsted framework or the date for the SEND Review.

The independent social care review will be published in April 2022 and there is synergy between that and the SEND Review, but she does not have any more details.

She is not aware whether the cabinet reshuffle will have any impact on the timings of the SEND Review.

* Changes for SEN2 return in January 2022: It will include Annual Review timeliness. It will not be reported this time, but it will be from 2023.

Clarification was requested on what was meant by Annual Reviews timeliness, to which Liz sent the following information via the chat:

*From SEN2 2022 guidance: Item 4.9 EHC plan review decisions date  
Please enter the date when the LA wrote to the parent or young person with the notification about the LA’s decision following the review of the EHC plan. Note that this date is unlikely to be the same as the date of the review meeting.*

* Reminder of Y6 and Y11 transfer, so deadlines are made.
* The Decision Making and the Law training is on 11th October. The take-up in the South East is very low. She encouraged members of this group to book people from their teams if they were intending to do so.
* An up-to-date record of two SEND contacts per area needs to be kept for the DfE. Let Liz know if there are any contact changes in your area.

1. **EHC Needs Assessment Requests, numbers across the Region 20/21; Feedback from responses to survey**

Jo Hill, West Sussex, had made a request for information around the possible increase in request for EHC needs assessments, to which 10 authorities responded (including one statistical neighbour from outside S.E.19). Figures have been circulated in this document.



The maximum increase was 30%. All others also showed an increase.

It would be useful to have feedback from those authorities which have not seen an increase and the reasons why they think that is.

The following comments were made:

* Jo noted that requests are continuing to grow in West Sussex, although September is on par with last year. It is impacting timeliness and capacity.
* Paul Crulley, Kent, mentioned that their numbers have increased a lot. Their big issue is parental request. Parental nervousness around school's ability/willingness to be inclusive. They are trying to put something in place to address the issue.
* Sue Gibbons, Kent, added that this increase is having a big effect on health providers. They are consolidating a communication around the expectation of developmental milestones. Children have had a significant period of time at home and the benchmark of development may have slightly changed due to the pandemic. They have several task and finish groups to understand that in a more meaningful way. Jo remarked that they have seen a growth in the early years as well and she would be interested to see the outcome of Kent's piece of work.
* David Griffiths, RB Windsor & Maidenhead, noted that they had a large amount of requests in July and they now have a few tribunals.
* Mary Burguieres, Surrey, explained that they have run a campaign aimed at parents carers to help them support their early years children to develop their speech and language. Link [here](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/families/support-and-advice/helping-your-0-to-5-year-olds-speech-and-language).
* She added that they are consulting a transfer from the school block to have an inclusion fund to be allocated to schools to help with inclusion, probably through a cluster approach. They have consulted on transferring because the system is imploding and they want to do some targeted support around inclusion.
* In terms of parental requests, she remarked that they are more likely to be denied, because they do not meet the threshold, which is a waste of parents' and professionals' time. They are trying to provide support as an alternative for parents instead of seeking a needs assessment.

1. **Update on SEND Training Assurance Framework**

Sue Gibbons, DCO Kent & Medway, explained that the pilot took off a couple of weeks ago.

They have commissioned the Council for Disabled Children to support the pilot over the SE19 region.

They have cohorts of health professionals engaging with that and Learning Disability Nurses, School Health, NLDS services, etc.

They have also engaged with the members of the Medway parent carer forum to get their perspective in the new training package.

Feedback will come back in 3 months' time and the outcome of the pilot will be shared in 6 months' time.

Tracey congratulated Sue and the DCO/DMO group for getting this off the ground

1. **DfE pupil level census return Jan-22 (pilot) - EHC plan review decisions date data; Information from Data Benchmarking Group**

Tracey explained that there was an option for LAs to volunteer to submit this data in January 2022 before it becomes mandatory in 2023.

The SEND Data Benchmarking Group are looking at the SEN2 data. Some of the local areas are showing a year plus in the gap between the dates of the turnaround of the annual review to update the EHCP.

If anyone has any thoughts on how that should be managed or any help they think the Data Benchmarking Group could provide, please let Tracey know.

1. **New Joint Inspection framework. Update from latest meeting & any regional input required**

Tammy Marks, Southampton, commented that here is no further update. They sent out the request for expression of interest to try the new inspection framework to the DCSs in the summer. Allegedly the draft framework was going to be issued in the autumn term, but there are no more meetings in the diary.

1. **Co-ordinating future requests for information across the Region; proposal**

Julia Katherine, Portsmouth, had to send apologies - item to be carried forwards.

1. **AOB:**

* In terms of revision to DfE Covid guidance, Liz reported that they are encouraging children and young people who were classified as clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) to follow the same guidance as for the rest of the population and are no longer expected to stay off school. Neither she nor Jacqui Stillwell were aware of any new revision of the guidance.
* A question was posed around EOTAS and the approach of LAs for that group in terms of medical advice for these children and young people not being able to attend an education provision. There was interest in this topic from the group and it was agreed to put an agenda item in the November meeting.

Future meeting dates:

* + Tues 19th October 12:00-13:30 - LAs
* Tues 30th November - Joint Meeting
* Wed 19th January - LAs

Future topics:

* SEND Review and funding (!)
* Type 1 diabetes NICE guidance
* New Joint Inspection framework (standing item)
* Health advice for C&YP EOTAS (November)

Please send any items or questions and queries you would like to discuss with colleagues to Tracey.

**Summary of Actions**

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