

WESTMORLAND & FURNESS SEND PARTNERSHIP

Minutes of Meeting

SEND Partnership Board

Date: 7th October 2025 Time: 13:00 – 15:00

Present: Isobel Booler, Catherine Prince, Janet Wray (from 2pm), Dan Hinton, Lorna Jones, Cllr Janet Battye, Helen Keaveny, Sarah Page, Peter Chapman, Paul McCubbin, Julia Dean, Katrina Raine (until 2pm), Louise Haymer, Caroline Powney, Gemma Parkes, Sally Richardson, Steve Hatton, Andrea Henderson, Jason Habbershon, Matt Hardwick, Lisa Balderstone, Vicky Hepworth-Putt, Helen Howlett, Georgina Grant, Sarah Roscoe, Elaine Croll, Sarah Heywood, Lorraine Rudd-Williams

Apologies: Amy Holliman, Dean Graham, Jacquie Shenton, Julie Jones, Ali McCulloch, David Storm, Richard Scott, Ann Breeze, Mil Vasic

	Agenda Item	Notes
1.	Welcome and Apologies	Isobel welcomed colleagues to the meeting and the list of apologies received were noted.
2.	Updates and Actions Review of action tracker from July meeting	All approved minutes of July mtg. <u>Update on Outstanding Actions:</u> Independent Chair – RfQ currently out, with return date of 10-10-25. We should have new Independent Chair in place for the next mtg. PC to confirm dates with CP. These dates are benchmark, but these may move as the work progresses. PC currently happy with dates as they are. SEN2 data – no queries. We now have NW comparison data, W&F now becoming an outlier. To continue to monitor this.

		<p>Prac Week - Transitions booklet. This work is being incorporated into the SEND Improvement works. Action can be closed down.</p>
3.	Young Inspectors	<p>Sarah Heywood and Lorna Jones shared the work being done by the Young Inspectors to evaluate provision including at Short Breaks homes and within HAF programme across W&F.</p> <p>Sarah shared details of the training programme that is delivered to the Young Inspectors and the impact their work is having on driving further improvements. So far, 20 YI have been trained with a range of SEND needs.</p> <p>Young people are keen for Non-SEND and SEND inspecting together – this is a future area for development.</p> <p>Helen K – Can they come and inspect health services? Mostly HAF provision so far, but can inspect any service. Please email team if you would like us to inspect (contact details on slides).</p> <p>PC – What is impact? Written report and verbal feedback given. ACTION: SH to send sample YI report – CP to circulate.</p> <p>Sarah thanked for her presentation and ongoing work.</p> <p>ACTION: IB keen for further participation info on future agendas</p>
4.	<p>SEND Improvement Plan progress sections 1-4</p> <p>(b) Monitoring of performance/dashboards</p> <p>(c) Development of sections 5-9 (including</p>	<p>SH/JH gave an update and overview of the works and progress of the published Improvement Plan. This is a 3 monthly update, a snapshot of progress and shows we are roughly where we would expect to be at this time.</p> <p>Delays discussed – single data dashboard from ICB due to capacity delays within team and demands of other LAs as well as PCF capacity being paused (see item 6)</p> <p>SH shared headlines – panel process now implemented, stakeholder mapping completed, ICB/LA ND pathway groups mobilised, graduated response developed and reviewing of ordinarily available provision, mid-term DSG evaluation in progress, SEND forecasting established</p> <p>ACTION: DSG Management plan and HNB overspend to be added to next agenda, as in year and cumulative deficit increasing. This is a significant risk to the Partnership.</p>

	<p>deadline dates for all partners to respond with the plan revision)</p>	<p>SH shared focus areas for next period, including the DfE Strategic Review Meeting, and how we can develop opportunities/options for effective forecasting and planning</p> <p>Data showing continuing increase in requests for assessment, these are higher than NWADCS comparitors. (8.6% increase on requests from previous quarter). Link identified between deprivation and increase in no of requests. Significant increase identified within summer term on previous year. This shows we need to accelerate SEND Support. ACTION: future agenda item on SEND support and how we are intervening earlier</p> <p>Increase in parental assessments significantly risen – this again was identified by NWADCS data. IB/GP - When we receive parental request, do we need to explore reasons why with the school.</p> <p>ACTION: To explore and report back. JH to identify localities of these requests and look for patterns.</p> <p>Cllr Battye queried if this is linked in with Family Help – ACTION: JH to explore data within this. AH confirmed that some parental referrals are where CYP are not attending school – EBSA.</p> <p>ACTION: EBSA pathway and Section 19 panel on next agenda and the impact on non-attendance and increase in parental EHCP requests</p> <p>Our reasons for EBSA aren't the same as other LAs, as we still have infant/junior school model in some areas which can further increase anxiety as greater number of transition points.</p> <p>SENDAC report increase in parent contacts concerned with EHCP rather than SEND support – is this same as SENDIASS? ACTION: To include SENDIASS data on partnership dashboard.</p> <p>Our EHCP issue within timescales down to 77% compliance within 20 weeks. This is still above national, but part of reason for fall is due to increase in requests for assessment. PC – how we can factor this into future planning, to avoid similar drop in timeliness next year. IB – Budget demands make it very challenging to ask for more resource, caseloads of nearly 300. Exploring digital options to help manage demand on capacity. This was also impacted by significant staffing shortages in EP team over the summer.</p> <p>Looking at a SEND forecasting model to make it more scientific e.g. falling rolls. Currently working with sufficiency team to take these factors into account.</p>
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5.	<p>Research Paper: Partnership Approach to Rising SEND in Barrow</p> <p>(a) Current SEND Data</p> <p>(b) Research paper commissioned and wider partnership response</p>	<p>Research paper is just about to begin, exploring why the SEND need is more acute in Barrow than rest of W&F and nationally, we wanted to understand what is going on. Currently in the process of appointing academic organisation to undertake this – research team will then reach out to Partnership Board members for feedback within this.</p> <p>LSC ICB and Public Health keen to support this. PC to connect Caroline in with research lead in the ICB. Significant interest as at end of Barrow Rising project because of longer term workforce impact. Expect this research to be completed by the end of the 25/26 Academic year</p> <p>ACTION: Caroline to keep Partnership informed.</p> <p>Cllr B: What will happen at end? Report with recommendations – short/med/long term. Report back to work and health oversight board, but happy to bring back to partnership board – members were pleased that they will hear the outcome!</p> <p>ACTION: Follow up conversation with Caroline/ICBs/Public Health/Louise Haymer and Janet Wray to see how it fits into the national picture</p>
6.	<p>Feedback from SENDAC Parent/Carer Forum</p>	<p>Advised to pause current workstreams, technically not grant holders so not officially recognised PCF. This is causing a challenge as we are not having parent/carer input into workstreams and this is providing financial challenge to SENDAC, as they have existing financial commitments.</p> <p>As not had grant SENDAC have had to scale back activities and are not able to commit to future activities.</p> <p>Contact coming in to set clear expectations, SENDAC feel the DfE would prefer two separate forums. Date for SENDAC to meet Contact to discuss this, but not until November.</p>

		<p>This is a significant risk to our partnership. ACTION: IB to explore this further outside of this meeting.</p> <p>IB gave oversight on how this has emerged. Contact got in touch with the LA back in July and asked us to engage which we did. No follow ups since, today received an email asking for us to agree to Contact to be our grant holder. This is challenging for us, as we have no contact with Contact since the summer.</p> <p>Louise Haymer updated Partnership that she had spoken with Contact and would speak with Isobel/Georgina outside of this meeting. Louise understands that Contact will hold the W&F proportion of the grant and will use this to try and establish a new W&F PCF. IB raised concerns that coproduction is at the heart of all we have done, and we have worked in partnership with SENDAC. IB shocked at lack of coproduction from Contact that this is being 'done to' us. IB to escalate this as she is not comfortable at them holding the W&F grant when they haven't coproduced. PC agreed this from an ICB position also – happy to join meeting/put name to letter.</p> <p>ACTION: IB to draft formal letter to Contact from partnership.</p> <p>ACTION: Meetings with Contact and the DfE to take place this week or next to escalate.</p> <p>Cllr Battye expressed her support with this matter, and asked to be kept informed. IB expressed her thanks to SENDAC for all the work they have put into W&F since the partnership formed.</p>
7.	<p>Health Updates</p> <p><i>ND Pathway Updates</i></p>	<p>PC shared slides: ICB reforms, digital development, ND pathway, SaLT/OT update.</p> <p>Ongoing conversations about national reforms, but SEND functions will stay within ICBs until April 2027. If ICBs are struggling to deliver plan, this may be a phased out staffing plan over next few years, not redundancies.</p> <p>Digital development – grant funding been sourced to use these, working with other systems to streamline health advice. Stakeholder event planned for 20th October – this will then develop into a steering group.</p> <p>ND pathway work, with single diagnostic hub across LSC with hub with a range of practitioners into a single hub which manages all referrals. This is still built around having a digital profiling tool and continuing to move to needs led support service.</p>

Significant piece of work around training and education – linking in with work from PINS project. Clinical tools embedded across all services. Public facing ND update is currently being pulled together.

Three specific task groups are taking place, working in partnership with Cumberland, but this work will look slightly different in W&F to the offer in Cumberland.

SaLT and OT redesign, inconsistent spend across all LAs. How can we ensure there is an equitable response, based on ELGs CLL. W&F local steering group to pull together combined pot to commission single service – agreeing formal proposal and get local boards in place by November.

Asked two key Qs for board: ICBs will offer similar/diff tools – How do we want this to work for W&F pop as a whole? Do we support a move to single commissioning approach across W&F?

IB – When do we need decision about answer to questions. PC – need to be in formal position, but opp for initial reflections. **ACTION**: PC/CP to pull together specific meeting for board members to discuss these specific asks.

IB – need to be conscious about how ICB phrases things, Lancashire should not be a priority just because of this ofsted judgement.

Additional meeting to discuss this item – Wed 22nd October 2pm

IB expressed concerns that these have significant questions, and we may need more info from the ICB and then go away and develop a single agency view, before going back to the ICB.

We can't make a final decision today, as no NENC ICB colleagues on the call. Request for Peter to discuss presentation in detail and clarify asks, we will then have an agreed approach for W&F, we can then have a single agency discussion following this where we come to a collective view which we can share with LSC and NENC ICBs.

In other LA footprints, LSC just liaise with the LA. This is different here as there are two different ICBs covering W&F footprint. Following the inspection, we were keen to do things SMARTER and once, working together as two ICBs and this is an example of this.

	<p>LSC current position is that they have a mish-mash of arrangements, some legacy CCG, lots of inequalities and it's very unclear. The ICB funds each LA very differently, so to be equal to all LAs, we need to spread the funding equitably. There is no new money within the system, but we want to work differently, to use ELG CLL strand to weight the finance between both this and population. From W&F current position, there won't be a significant change in investment from the ICB, but other LAs will be more greatly affected.</p> <p>The ICB have developed models of what this could look like, across ICB, LA and individual schools. ICB proposal is that W&F have £XX budget, made up of ICB, LA and schools budget, and then a place based approach is developed as to what our population need/geography is.</p> <p>IB feels it is going to be difficult to have discussions without seeing what these models may look like. Our HNB is £400 per child lower than other LAs e.g. Blackpool. Whereas we have significant language concerns – particularly within Barrow, where this is one of the highest areas of deprivation in the country. We also need to consider Eden and what NENC could offer to ensure a consistent offer. By going for this, we risk reducing this offer across W&F.</p> <p>Peter shared proposed governance structures and how these would link in with current governance. Sharon queried if this would be joint commissioning just through SEND or through all, linking in with adults and public health. Peter confirmed this could be run as an all age commissioning forum, and what would work best for each LA.</p> <p>Benefits – this would give a single way of working, internal offer aligns with this, clear experience and consistency for schools and CYP.</p> <p>Challenges – Unclear on finances, how it will link in with existing commissions, how would it fit with NENC ICB?</p> <p>This work is about SaLT, but OT will need to be recommissioned also, so would want to do this using this model.</p> <p>Whatever the outcome will be of this discussion, we would then need an internal view and whether we need cabinet sign-off</p> <p>Next steps – draft the detail for decision making and information gathering to begin.</p>
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		<p>Other element to this, is to do with ND redesign, across LSC, single, digital front door, joint training programme, digital tools, more practitioners, needs led hub. There is joint work for health, education and social care.</p> <p>NENC are working with Cumberland, but it will have some different looks/tools. They may have a different education and training offer. Option to include all of W&F in LSC pathway, and digital front door and training offer will be extended to cover Eden.</p> <p>ACTION: W&F colleagues to have a single agency discussion and explore options and decisions.</p> <p>Peter was thanked for his presentation and input, and W&F colleagues would go away and discuss and agree our position, including involving Adult Social Care. All agreed they were happy with this approach.</p>
8.	Local Offer	<p>Ongoing piece of work. CP to circulate slides to provide current updates.</p> <p>ACTION: Local Offer to be on next agenda</p>
9.	Sufficiency Updates	To defer to next mtg.
10.	Forward Planning	<p><u>Items for next meeting</u> Local Offer Update Sufficiency Update EBSA & Section 19 DSG Management Plan and High Needs Block</p> <p><u>Items for future agendas</u> Further Participation Updates SEND Support and the Graduated Response</p>