

Suffolk Local Area Partnership Improvement Board

Report Title:	SEND Governance Update
Meeting Date:	2024-07-05
Director:	El Mayhew, Interim Director Children and Families (DCS)
Assistant Director or Head of Service:	Ros Somerville, Assistant Director Inclusion,
Author:	Ros Somerville, Assistant Director, Inclusion ros.somerville@suffolk.gov.uk , 01473 264817 (Supported by Wendy Allen)
Purpose	For Information

1. Progress

Governance – Priority Action Plan 1.1

- 1.1 New board members for education have been appointed, including representatives for Primary, Secondary, Special School Alternative Provision and Post 16, further work is underway to appoint a board member for Early Years. (PAP 1.4)
- 1.2 Education Board members will join the Improvement Board from Friday 5 July 2024. (PAP 1.4)
- 1.3 A joint Senior Responsible Officer and Education Board member session has been planned for Friday 5 July following the board meeting, to further discuss the routes of communication between partners within the Local Area Partnership. (PAP 1.4)
- 1.4 The performance report has been further developed to accommodate the challenge and feedback from the SEND Local Area Improvement Board to ensure that the data presented is clear and enables the Improvement Board to track progress against targets and to hold officers to account. (PAP 1.5)

Timeliness and Quality

- 1.5 The £3.4m recruitment strategy for Suffolk County Council Inclusion Services is making timely progress as of 11 June there are 13 new starters, 21 with an agreed start date before 1 September, 12 in a recruitment process 13 requiring further action creating new job descriptions. (PAP1.9)
- 1.6 There has been successful recruitment to the new Assessment Team following an Assessment Day for applicants, 10 new Assessment Coordinators had been appointed (with 1 withdrawing post offer due to personal reasons, leaving 9 to start from August through to the beginning of September). This team will be integral in following on from the success of the

- Request Team, to create an Assessment Team that will focus on those requests that have been agreed for assessment. (PAP 1.9, 7.5)
- 1.7 A further date has been set in July to hold the next recruitment day for assessment coordinators. (PAP 1.9)
 - 1.8 Officers for the new Assessment Team are starting from August 2024, the induction and training programme is currently being developed. (PAP1.9)
 - 1.9 With the new Annual Review Lead is due to start in July-24, work is underway to start recruiting two new annual review officers to the permanent triage team to replace the current 2 temporary officers. (PAP 8.1 – 8.7)
 - 1.10 The new annual review form that was co-produced has been launched. Positive feedback has already been received from schools to advise that although the form is longer, the purpose to gather views and inform the annual review process to support the young person's review created a better review for the young person. The parent of one young person has reported that it is the best annual review they have experienced. (PAP 1.5, 1.6, 2.6, 2.7)
 - 1.11 Following the launch of the new annual review form in May, the triage team report that 20% of annual reviews are being submitted in the new format already as of 20 June 2024. (PAP 1.5, 1.6, 2.6, 2.7)
 - 1.12 One education setting in Suffolk has used the Liquidlogic Professional Portal (Annual Review portal) to return a completed review to the Local Authority this term. The project team will continue to work closely with the setting to gather feedback on the experience to inform their continued use of the portal for reviews next term and *the fuller launch (delayed because of supplier software issues) with other schools.* (PAP 2.6)
 - 1.13 Trajectory modelling has shown the predicted growth of requests for Education, Health and Care needs assessments and subsequent growth in EHC plans. The growth is expected to continue increasing the number of outstanding reassessments that will not meet the statutory timelines. (PAP 18.1 – 8.7)
 - 1.14 In response to this a draft paper has been reviewed by Senior Leaders within Suffolk County Council, with a view to securing the additional investment into the Inclusion Service for an increase in Assessment Coordinators/Plan writers, educational psychologist advice, and to create a further capacity within the transformation team with additional officers to support key areas including coproduction, customer services and enquiries and training & quality assurance.
 - 1.15 In May it was reported that the Designated Clinical Officers' (DCO) dashboard to access child level information with regards to children and young people with an Education, Health, and Care plan to support the statutory duty for health to sign off Section G had been launched. The dashboard is not yet accessible to the DCO team due to IT issues. *This has been escalated and attempts to resolve are underway.* (PAP 8.5-8.7)
 - 1.16 Initial Family Services' training days have been held in June, focusing on EHCNA, writing plans and legal requirements as set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and Childrens and Family Act 2014. (PAP 6.1)

- 1.17 Attendees report feeling more confident following the event, with ongoing feedback being received. (PAP 6.1)
- 1.18 Further training days are planned for July & September to focus on annual reviews, these will include personal budgets, early intervention and how to successfully challenge schools who may unlawfully refuse to take a placement of a child with an EHCP naming the setting. (PAP 6.1)
- 1.19 Health and Social Care have planned drop-in sessions to colleagues in Family Services to improve communication, knowledge and share learning, these will be tracked for attendance and impact. (PAP 1.6, 6.1)
- 1.20 A working group including SPCF, SENDIASS, colleagues from the ICB, Social Care and Inclusion has been initiated to look at the mandatory training offer for all workers across the partnership working with children and young people with SEND, initial scoping will take place asap with support from SCC Workforce Development. (QT 1.2) (*Risk for capacity of SENDIASS*).
- 1.21 The Quality Assurance (QA) Team is due to attend the SEND Programme Office in July to review the QA action plan, and progress actions. (PAP 2.1)

Communication

- 1.22 Following the launch of the new Suffolk Local Offer website, the page views and new users have significantly increased. In 2023 from Jan-May there had 2357, page views on the old Local Offer website, for the same period in 2024 there have been 135,447 page views. Significantly there were 547 page views on the EHCNA web pages in 2023 and 6787 in 2024. (PAP 10.2)
- 1.23 Following the feedback section being added to the Suffolk Local Offer website, the were 171,204 website pages viewed; 11 feedback forms have been submitted, (9 said the page was not helpful and 2 said it was, the 2 referred to the NDD referral and process pages. Of the 9 that were unhelpful 7 were NDD, 1 was regarding the Preparing for Adulthood page and 2 was about the education page. The feedback section will also be added to the Suffolk Learning Website to enable schools to provide feedback as well. (PAP 10.2)
- 1.24 There have been 5 Time to Listen sessions held with the Assistant Director, Inclusion since April 2024. Parents and carers can request a Time to Listen meeting with any Assistant Director across the SEND Partnership to share feedback. (PAP 10.4)

Right Support, Right Time

- 1.25 Suffolk Northeast Essex (SNEE) Integrated Care Board have introduced additional resource to reduce long waits for access to diagnostic assessments for neurodiversity. (PAP 11.1)
- 1.26 SNEE have development and agreement of business cases detailing approach to reducing waiting times for autism and ADHD assessments. (PAP 11.2)

- 1.27 SNEE have commissioned as a system to review the voluntary services offered and develop a commissioning process to ensure future services to support CYP and families appropriately. (PAP 11.3)
- 1.28 SNEE are collaborating closely with partners in the Norfolk and Waveney ICB, to ensure there is a consistent offer across the county for support as required for children and young people who have a neurodivergent need.
- 1.29 The Delivering Better Value programme is a small team of assistant educational psychologists who are delivering training to schools on evidence-based practice to improve maths and English outcomes for children and young people, at present 14 schools are taking part in the first cohort. Impact data will be available later. (PAP 1.8)
- 1.30 VSEND Toolkit consists of Valuing SEND (V SEND), Essential SENCO Toolkit and AANT (Analysis of Additional Need Toolkit). (PAP 1.8)
- 1.31 There are 603 licences as of April-24, with a 3% increase of active licences since February -24. This is accredited to the active work the Project Lead for VSEND is undertaking with schools. (PAP 1.8)
- 1.32 Of the 325 settings in Suffolk, there are 311 schools' users, with 66% having completed their setting readiness this is an increase of 4% from February-24 to April-24. (PAP 1.8)
- 1.33 There has also been a 13% increase in the number of children and young people profiles completed from February-24 to April-24. (PAP 1.8)

2. Impact & Milestones

- 2.1 Following the dip in statutory timescale for March & April, as indicated May data has improved with 23.5% of final plans issued in 20 weeks. (PAP 7.1)
- 2.2 The Quality Assurance team have finalised the Quality Assurance report for March -May 2024, this includes the QA team completing 42 audits (218 documents audited), for this quarter there has been a slight improvement in the quality of EHCPs audited from 16.6 to 17. (Please see supporting QA report for cycle 1 2024 for further detail. (PAP 2.1)
- 2.3 Senior Educational Psychologist (EPs) continue to quality assure advice from Educational Psychologists. (PAP 2.1)
- 2.4 The Educational Psychology team report that EPs are providing 96% of advice in 6 weeks of the request being received by the Educational Psychologist. The delay is when the service has been requested and the time it takes to allocate to an EP. (PAP 7.2)

3. Risk and Barriers

- 3.1 Whilst recruitment of new posts is well supported by the system especially Recruitment within HR. There is a significant impact on Service Managers and officers involved in interviewing and selection. (PAP 1.6)

- 3.2 The capacity of the teams continues to limit the ability of the service to systematically implement learning from the audits. This continues to impact on the quality of EHCPs which remains variable. (PAP 2.1)
- 3.3 Communication remains a main area for improvement, at individual child and family level and at the partnership level. (PAP 10.1)
- 3.4 Training access on Suffolk CPD will be restricted, work needs to commence between SCC and ICB to ensure eLearning training is available on CPD and ICB training hub platform. *Recorded on Risk Register.*
- 3.5 Pace to continue with RISE work has been impacted, and an agreement has been reached to repurpose this coproduction work, to widen coproduction with SPCF and parents and carers and children and young people with SEND across Suffolk. Solution proposed. (PAP 1.6) *(Recorded on Risk Register Impact 1)*
- 3.6 Due to the increased need across the SEND system this has also impacted the SENDIASS service, SENDIASS have shared that they are looking at a reduced model, whilst they recruit and look how to manage the increased need for support. *Recorded on Risk Register Strategy Impact 3.*