

# MINUTES

<b>Title of Meeting:</b>	SEND Local Area Partnership Improvement Board	
<b>Date:</b>	7 June 2024	
<b>Place:</b>	Hybrid Meeting Teams and Endeavour House, Lime Floor 2 – CLT Room	
<b>Times:</b>	10:00 – 12:00	
		Y/N
<b>Attendees:</b>	Kathryn Boulton (KB), Independent Chair	Y
	Cllr Andrew Reid (AR), Cabinet Member for SEND & Education	Y
	Cllr Bobby Bennett (BB), Cabinet Member for Children & Young People	Y
	Cllr Debbie Richards (DR), Deputy Cabinet Member SEND	Y
	Cllr Jessica Fleming (JF), Chair of Health Scrutiny Committee	Y
	Nicola Beach (NB), Chief Executive, Suffolk County Council	Y
	Dr Ed Garratt OBE (EG), Chief Executive, Suffolk, and North-East Essex ICB	Y
	Tracey Bleakley (TB), Chief Executive, NHS Norfolk, and Waveney Integrated Care Board	N
	Claire Smith (CS), Chair of Suffolk Parent Carer Forum	Y
	EI Mayhew (EM) Interim Director Children Services, Suffolk County Council	N
	Lisa Nobes (LN), Director NHS Suffolk and North-East Essex ICB	N
	Corrina Bielby, (CB) Department for Education Case Lead	N
	Helen Chester (HC) Department for Education SEND Advisor	N
	Louise Warren (LW) NHS England Advisor	N
	Douglas Leckie (DL) Head of the Vulnerable Children's Unit, Department for Education	N
	Emily Williams (EW) Deputy Director of East of England DfE Team	N
	Nicola Roper (NR) Assistant Director Adult Services, Suffolk County Council	N
	Nicki Howlett (NH), Service Lead, SENDIASSS	Y
	Susie Mclvor (SI), Engagement Hub Lead, Suffolk County Council	N
	Ros Somerville (RS), Assistant Director, Inclusion, Suffolk County Council	Y
	Garry Joyce (GJ) Assistant Director CYP Suffolk and North-East Essex Integrated Care Board	N
	Rebecca Hulme (RH) Director Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board	N

	Codrutza Oros Marsh (COM) Assistant Director Social Care, Suffolk County Council	N
	Seb Smith (SS) Assistant Director Nursing Community Health & Family Support Services, Suffolk County Council	N
	Adrian Orr (AO) Assistant Director Education, Skills and Learning, Suffolk County Council	Y
	Harriet Wakeling (HW) Head of Intelligence Hub, Suffolk County Council	Y
	Graham Beamish (GB) Head of Programmes CYP, Suffolk County Council	N
	Wendy Allen (WA) Programme Manager SEND, Suffolk County Council	N
	Trudie Rose-Porter (TRP) Director Transition, Foundation, and Inclusive Learning Suffolk New College (observer)	Y
	Anna Mears (AM) Headteacher Castle East School Special Education (observer)	Y
	Anneliese Hillyer-Thake (AHT), NHS Assistant Director Nursing Safeguarding and Quality	Y
	Sarah-Jane Smedmor (SJS), incoming Director Children Services, Suffolk County Council (observer)	Y
<b>Minute Taker</b>	Katie Farrow	
<b>Invited to attend</b>	Sue Willgoss (SW) SPCF, Lauren Day (LD) SPCF, Kate House (KH) support for chair in Wendy Allen's absence, Jamie Mills (JM) attending for Garry Joyce	

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Item Description</b>
1.	<p>Apologies &amp; Introductions</p> <p>Tracey Bleakley, Lisa Nobes, Corrina Bielby, Helen Chester, Louise Warren, Douglas Leckie, Emily Williams, Garry Joyce, Rebecca Hulme, Codrutza Oros March, Seb Smith, El Mayhew, Graham Beamish, Jonathan Fairclough</p> <p>KB Welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>KB shared that she was very pleased to be taking on the role of Chair and that this was her first meeting in the role.</p> <p>KB welcomed those colleagues attending from the Education Sector as observers.</p> <p>KB stated that it had been helpful to observe last meeting and thanked those colleagues she had had the opportunity to meet.</p> <p>KB confirmed that she was prepared for the demands of the work ahead and was confident that together we (Improvement Board Members) can work effectively to make the necessary improvements for children with SEND and families.</p>

	<p>KB outlined her role as one to challenge and seek accountability.</p> <p>KB confirmed that she would also support in the role as a critical friend and whilst she would challenge, this would be done with empathy, respect, and compassion and always with children with SEND, parents, and carers at the heart of any decisions.</p> <p>KB explained that attendance at the meeting had been impacted by the current Election. Colleagues from the DfE could not attend due to the pre-election period.</p> <p>Attendance from SCC officers had also been impacted by the current OFSTED inspection.</p> <p>KB confirmed that there were several people along with herself who were new to the meeting including Anna Mears and Trudy Rose-Porter.</p> <p>KB reiterated that it was good to have Education Representatives here to observe today's meeting.</p> <p><i>Introductions from all around the room.</i></p> <p><i>Housekeeping</i></p> <p>KB requested that for good practice in the meeting that all attendees use the raise hand icon.</p> <p>It was also confirmed that the chat function is on, and that all contributions that are for the minutes to be shared verbally within the meeting as chat contents would not be part of the minutes. However, the chat can be useful for links and additional information.</p> <p>KB confirmed that the meeting would finish at 11:50am to allow for the competing demands on many in attendance.</p> <p>KB asked the Board if there were any points of Any Other Business to be discussed.</p> <p>None raised.</p>
2.	<p>Review Minutes and Action</p> <p>KB confirmed that the minutes from the last meeting on Friday 3 May had been shared and asked if these could be accepted as an accurate record.</p> <p>CS stated that she had sent some amendments to WA on evening of 5 June and that these changes had not yet been included.</p> <p>CS stated SPCF could not approve the first half of the meeting minutes from Friday 5 June due to the sound issue making it unable to hear.</p> <p>Board agreed accurate minutes subject to amendments.</p> <p>May minutes will be subject to further review.</p> <p>KB then reviewed the actions handing over to RS.</p> <p>RS confirmed that all actions on the Log were Green (In progress) or Blue (completed) showing progress from the previous meeting.</p> <p>RS explained that all actions were currently in progress or completed.</p> <p>RS updated on SIB09 from 3 May regarding using correct data and confirmed that this was still in development, and progress had been made since last meeting.</p>

	<p>Cllr BB asked for an update regarding her question on Governance and Terms of Reference. Would this be reviewed every 6 months in the report?</p> <p>RS responded that the TOR do now state a review date in 6 months.</p> <p>Cllr AR asked if it would be appropriate to review further when schools had been included?</p> <p>KB confirmed that this could be reviewed again at that time.</p> <p>RS confirmed that Schools representatives would be at the July Board as members to review Governance at that time.</p> <p><b>SIB 011 ACTION – Terms of Reference to be reviewed in July and add to forward plan</b></p>
3.	<p>SPCF Update – Parent/carers feedback</p> <p>SPCF shared the following update on behalf of the parent carer forum.</p> <p>SPCF have been running the annual survey for the past 3 weeks which is due to close this evening (Friday 7 May 24).</p> <p>SPCF have been pleased with the response this year.</p> <p>SPCF have doubled last year's responses.</p> <p>CS stated to be both proud and grateful to the SPCF team for their efforts to gain more voices.</p> <p>SPCF know that parents and carers report survey fatigue, so are very grateful to those who took time out of their busy lives to participate.</p> <p>SPCF look forward to sharing the full results with the Board very soon.</p> <p>SPCF have also seen continued growth for the forum this month.</p> <p>SPCF are holding an open event in Stowmarket on 19 June and another in Lowestoft on 12 July.</p> <p>SPCF are grateful to those who have confirmed attendance but are disappointed in the response to the Lowestoft event.</p> <p>On Wednesday morning there was one person from the Norfolk and Waveney ICB attending. This has increased to three thanks to Mark Gowers efforts.</p> <p>SPCF reported that Suffolk North-East Essex ICB always attend SPCF events in their entirety for which the forum is grateful.</p> <p>No one from NSFT and no councillors are attending.</p> <p>Lowestoft is part of Suffolk and often forgotten.</p> <p>This is not supportive of SPCF.</p>

SPCF requested that all consider the message that is being given to these families of children and young people with SEND.

It was reported that more than two average working weeks for SPCF lost to cancelled meetings at short notice. This is disappointing.

Whilst SPCF recognise there can be genuine reasons, SPCF are finding meetings cancelled with poor excuses.

This is disrespectful and not an effective way to co-produce.

SPCF are full time carers who make the time to attend these meetings.

There is much work to be done about embedding coproduction.

Example

-Rise scoping with the Council for Disabled Children have demonstrated how to not co-produce and SPCF are concerned whether they are the right people to support a Suffolk co-production charter.

SPCF attended the Ofsted and DfE deep dive feedback session in May with parent and carer representatives.

Families fed back truly heartbreaking accounts of their experiences with the EHCP and annual review process since the inspection in November.

The effect of these poor experiences is having profound effects on people's lives.

Parents and carers are being diagnosed with PTSD and put on anti-depressants as a direct result of their dealings with Suffolk County Council when trying to secure the legal minimum education for their child.

Parents tell SPCF the LA are taking away childhoods. They are lost to stress, emails, calls and fighting for basic rights. Time that should be spent with their children.

Families are still being given incorrect information on EHCNAs.

And incorrect information remains on Suffolk's process and guidance for education settings.

The findings were that the stress levels of parents of Autistic children are comparable to a combat soldier.

SPCF have no reason to believe this has changed.

Families tell SPCF they are very concerned for their child or young person's mental health and do not feel they should have to wait until they are suicidal to receive any form of support.

So far 60% of respondents of the SPCF survey say education services have declined or not improved in the last year and that section F of the EHCP is not adhered to.

Last month SPCF raised the issue of complaints.

A meeting was arranged on Wednesday for July. Complaints continue to be a problem for families.

The SPCF survey results so far show us that families feel their complaints are not understood by the complaint handler, complaints are not escalated, staff are rude and unhelpful and there are no discussions with the person making the complaint.

Many months ago, SPCF asked for communications to families on the complaints process stages. This still has not happened.

On a separate recent poll 96% of people said their complaints were not resolved or handled with empathy and understanding.

It appears to be the current trend to blame issues on Family Services being short staffed.

It is not an excuse in law, and it is not an excuse to treat people poorly.

Staff treat families this way, violate legislation and there is no come back or learning.

Staff will continue in this way as the confidence feedback loop is strong.

SPCF see it, hear it, and experience it.

There is no excuse. There is no accountability.

Families continue to be affected by poor or no communication.

Too many do not know who their case worker is and receive no communication when case workers change.

SPCF would like to close by sharing the words of a parent carer from Suffolk.

Like many others the Friday evening bad news emails continue.

Addition: SPCF recommended the Board purchase and read the book 'Please Hear Me' by Lucy Jacobs a Parent/Carer in Suffolk

KB thanked CS for her updated stating it was impactful and powerful. These important messages are heard.

KB then addressed the points raised in the feedback from SPCF.

#### 1. Lowestoft event

KB stated it was important that attendance at this event be as good as possible.

KB confirmed she would be attending and asked for support comments from the Board.

Cllr AR confirmed that he would be attending the Stowmarket event but was unable to attend the Lowestoft event due to other commitments.

**SIB012 ACTION: AR to request that a fellow Councillor can attend in his place for the SPCF Lowestoft event.**

JM agreed that SPCF statement was incredibly powerful.

**SIB013 ACTION – JM will take away the point about attendance and ensure relevant and appropriate representatives attend from WSFT and NSFT to Lowestoft event.**

SJS confirmed that she had asked that her attendance to the Lowestoft event be added to part of her induction week activities.

SPCF urged commitment from the Board and to make appropriate efforts to attend stressing that if she was able to attend the event others should also be able to.

RS apologised as she is on A/L for the Lowestoft event and cover was being arranged in her place. She was attending the Stowmarket event.

**2. – Cancellation of Council meetings at short notice.**

KB stated that it was important to appreciate the impact these cancellations were having on SPCF, and that the takeaway should be that cancellation should be avoided at all costs.

KB stressed that cancellation should be the exception and not the rule.

NB confirmed that she had spoken to RS and others on this matter and that SCC would do their best not to cancel meetings.

NB said that whilst this was not an excuse, this is happening across the partnership.

NB further confirmed that SPCF had also raised this issue with her directly.

NB stated that she would ask SCC to be clear why they were rearranging or cancelling a meeting should this happen and to avoid doing so as much as possible at short notice. Whilst acknowledging that this was sometimes unavoidable on all sides including for SPCF.

NB added that it was also requested that a courtesy call be made in the event of a cancellation and not just an email.

NB asked if there was an expectation that NSFT be at the Improvement Board.

**SIB014 ACTION: NB to explore attendance by NSFT at SEND Improvement Board and update at July Board**

RS confirmed that she and SPCF had spoken, and they were collectively looking to drive this priority through the system to ensure that meetings are not cancelled except in extraordinary circumstances.

RS stated that SCC was looking at what is preventing attendance to SEND meetings.

RS stressed that attendance at SEND meetings is a priority and should be prioritised over other commitments.

KB set action.

**SIB015 ACTION: RS to take communications back to request someone attends in place of anyone unable to attend a meeting wherever possible and that cancellation become the exception and not rule.**

SPCF advocated for NSFT presence at SIB meetings.

SPCF confirmed that there was a meeting with Sophie Martin on this next week (W/C 10/06/24) concerning the work with RISE.

RS request that she and CS get together and reflect after this meeting.

**SIB016 ACTION: Further discussion is required with regards to the coproduction work with RISE, SPCF, Sophie Martin and RS to discuss.**

### 3. No Accountability

KB suggested that adding Education partners to the Board would help to add accountability.

KB referred to the complaints process not having been shared to families following CS request.

SPCF stated that families did not understand Stage1, and 'further' Stage 1 complaints.

CS explained that families are being refused escalation and do not understand why this is happening or do not understand the complaint process clearly.

**SIB017 ACTION: RS to follow up on the sharing of complaint information and process in a simple format.**

NH said SENDIASS could offer to support in this area as they sign post families to the complaint process.

NH also agreed that SENDIASS would support a simpler complaint process and sharing of information.

NH asked to be involved in the prime performance meetings going forward.

CS stated that she and RS spoke about prime performance in the week.

CS further stated that she would strongly support SENDIASS involvement in the process.

CS suggested a flow chart to visually show the complaint process, so this was clearer to parents and carers.

RS clarified for the Board that this was different from prime performance.

RS confirmed that there would be a review and reflection on the tone of staff communications with Parents and Carers working with SPCF.

RS stated that she would ask KH to invite NH to the next meeting about the complaint process.

**SIB018 ACTION: KH to invite SENDIASS to the complaints meeting.**

KB asked if SPCF had anything further to add.

CS reiterated that families needed to see actions and not hear words.

KB confirmed that this was a message that is clear and continues to be heard today. Thank you.



	KB requested that all actions be reported back on in July meeting.
4.	<p>High Level report Strategy and Priority Action Plan (for pre reading)</p> <p>RS confirmed that SCC and ICBs had now signed off the SEND Strategy.</p> <p>RS made mention to SPCF and NH who had been instrumental in achieving this.</p> <p>RS confirmed that there were two school representatives at the meeting today observing for Special Education as well as Alternative Provision. There will be reps from all sectors.</p> <p>RS added that the representative for Early Years was still key.</p> <p>AO explained that there had been an election process using the schools Forum process to successfully elect the representatives.</p> <p>AO added that the process for electing the Early Years representative was slightly different and used a consultancy forum.</p> <p>AO stated that the hope was to have this representative in place by July.</p> <p>RS added that the SROs will meet with educational representatives regarding the flow of communication. Areas to discuss would be how information can flow both ways and how to navigate the improvement of that flow.</p> <p>RS thanked all who had contributed to the feedback received.</p> <p>RS thanked HW on her continued support to provide the service with the tools to support improvement in the timeliness and quality of plans.</p> <p>RS confirmed that eighteen new staff had been recruited to date and there were two more interviews next week.</p> <p>RS explained that the recruitment is a rolling programme of work and confirmed that SPCF were involved in the process.</p> <p>RS confirmed that ten additional SEND Assessment Coordinators had been recruited out of the sixteen approved.</p> <p>RS confirmed that in response to this increase in staff, a training and induction plan was currently being mapped by Managers.</p> <p>RS was confident that having the new Assessment Team would aid continuity.</p> <p>RS explained the training was seeking to imbed continuity and quality of performance across the team.</p> <p>RS confirmed that her Time to Listen sessions were continuing and that parents had raised inconsistency of communication as an area of concern in these meetings.</p> <p>RS added that SPCF had also raised this point.</p>

RS shared that feedback from one parent was that their first EHCP had not been a good experience, and they were now on their second EHCP and this was already going better.

RS stated that this increase to staff would help the Liquid Logic process to feel more personal with an actual person dealing with families.

RS confirmed that the Annual Review Triage Team was now permanent.

The Assistant Designated Social Care Officer vacancy would be interviewing on 1 July.

RS also shared that Designated Clinical Officers who support Section G in the plan had now been added to Liquid Logic functions. Auto notifications were now in place so when an action is required from them, they receive a notice directly.

RS thanked HW and team for putting this in place for the DCO dashboard.

RS updated that there had been an increase to traffic on the Suffolk Local Offer website and that there had been the addition of a Thumbs Up feedback icon to ask if the page was helpful.

RS explained that the aim was to highlight any issues early on ensuring the right information is included.

**SIB019 ACTION: RS to report on the results of feedback reporting from traffic on site at the next Board in July.**

RS confirmed that Time to Listen events continue between Senior Leaders and parents and carers to listen to their experiences.

RS shared those areas of concern highlighted through this route had been the changing of coordinators, not knowing what is happening or who is dealing with their child's assessment or plan and the absence of dates for action.

RS said that parents are waiting and there was a sense they have been 'forgotten' in the system.

RS further shared that parent requested more regular contact. Even if it was just a weekly email to say they have not been forgotten.

HW was asked to see if there could be some way to send updates to parents via LL.

RS stressed that Coordinators needed to communicate to parents when they were no longer assigned to a child or when they would not be available to respond to enquiries e.g. annual leave, secondment.

RS shared that one parent said she had waited for 2 weeks for a reply from the coordinator before finding out they were no longer working for the team.

CS stated that parents were sharing long waits on EHCNAs. 40 weeks in some cases and that there was still no draft. This was far beyond average it seemed.

RS agreed that parents are waiting terribly long times and that the team are aware of this. The 35 weeks' timescale is average with some families waiting longer.

RS continued saying that there is a process to follow to overcome the current challenges. Recruitment is in progress and going well and the Performance Report shows the current trajectory for timescales.

RS agreed that the wait was high, and this is about how SCC can reduce this wait time whilst not compromising on the quality of plans.

RS reminded the Board that schools can access High Needs Funding whilst waiting for these assessments.

CS asked what happens in the meantime for children?

CS stated that there were children without places, with nothing in place for them to be supported.

CS stressed that unmet needs could spiral ending in interventions by Criminal Justice in worst cases.

SW agreed that there were children not in an education setting or with a section 19 or very poor response.

KB agreed that these were key actions for the Service.

**SIB020ACTION: HW to arrange for update to Performance Report.**

RS stressed that it was important to offer the right support at the right time.

RS stated that there were risks and barriers and that there was a request for recruitment to backfill as well as provide new staff.

RS referred to point 3.3 in the Shadow Improvement Board Report SCC would be ready to move on relatively soon.

RS explained that point 3.4 in the Improvement Board Report continues to be an issue. The GOSS system has been overwhelmed by the volume of data and the Intelligence Hub are currently waiting for an update from IT.

Cllr AR asked what sort of timescale are we looking at for this to be sorted?

**SIB021ACTION HW to look at timescales on when GOSS system will be available and escalate for Board.**

Cllr JF asked has there been any loss of data. Or any examples of new data overwriting previous cells?

RS confirmed that this was not the case. Data is all still there, there has been no loss. The issue is that the system cannot format the data being received.

KB confirmed that it had been said this matter has been escalated and requested SCC ensure that this is being worked on.

KB asked for any further questions for RS on this point.

None raised.

SW added that it had been great to be involved in the interview process and asked if SCC thought a parent should be on the panel for all interviews?

SW shared that she had found this a beneficial day.

RS confirmed she would take this back and see what can be done across whole partnership and particularly on assessment days.

RS agreed it had been helpful to have SPCF there. She thanked the members for their contribution.

**SIB022ACTION: RS to discuss with service on having SPCF included in interview panels.**

JM spoke on the Neurodevelopmental pathway.

JM confirmed there had been significant developments in this area.

JM explained that WSFT covers all referrals from under elevens with autism and NSFT covers all referrals from over elevens with Autism and/or ADHD.

JM stated that both areas had a substantial number of outstanding referrals, and the additional funding would help with this. This has been provided directly to both providers.

JM shared that they intended to screen all referrals in chronological order within respective providers going forward.

This had previously been an issue and had impacted on views of fairness and transparency.

WSFT now feel they can complete the screening process by end of June 2024 and complete the screening process by end of November 2024. If this situation changes JM will inform all partners.

JM confirmed that a process was now in place to address the outstanding referrals and commit to ensure reports were completed in the right way.

JM stressed that particular attention was to be paid to the language used. Each communication would be sensed checked before sent out.

WSFT now feel confident they have a clear plan and timelines.

JM explained that NSFT receive a higher number of referrals meaning their recovery will take longer.

NSFT project that all referrals will be transferred by the end of June.

JM explained that completion of assessments will depend on how many are screened as appropriate for assessment. The initial stage will be screening which will be followed by assessment of those screened as being appropriate. A clearer position and timescale will be possible once the screening is completed.

JM and his team are supporting NSFT with this to ensure assessments are of a high quality, not just focussing upon the speed this work can be completed by.

JM confirmed that he would be happy to offer an update via GJ for next meeting.

JM stressed that it was important to do things the right way but also be clear on what is happening and by when.

JM stated that a review of the voluntary sector provision was underway with a view to complete by November 2024.

JM added that the review would be looking from the perspectives of diagnosis process, parent/carer, young people, and providers to identify gaps in need and create a resource that is truly fit for purpose for all concerned.

JM stated that it makes this a larger piece of work, but a young person's voice is key, and it is right to review it now to ensure the workshops offered are what is needed both pre- and post-diagnosis.

Collaborating with colleagues on this.

JM confirmed that he was happy to share feedback.

JM requested that he work with CS on how SPCF can reach more frustrated families.

JM stated he would like to work together to see how the level of engagement in this area particularly could be improved.

NH thanked JM for work on this and requested SENDIASS be kept in the loop as well.

NH requested that JM and Team continue to connect with SENDIASS particularly around messages to families regarding delays to ensure that they land in the best way possible.

SENDIASS would be happy to support in this area.

NH stated SENDIASS would also request updated information on the voluntary services available.

SW raised the importance of Right to Choose and that many families were still not aware that this is a legal right.

This should be being made clear to families at doctors' stage but is often not the case.

The Right to Choose has been a legal right for several years now and would request that this information also be readily available to families via the SCC website.

SW cited the work of Waveney as a particularly positive example in this area.

JM – Agreed this was a reasonable request and that he is part of a working group regarding this area. JM stated that he would be pushing for SW to be involved in this.

**SIB023 ACTION: JM to update on working group around the right to choose website for July 2024**

CS thanked JM for his transparency and that all information good or bad is appreciated when shared as this ensures that SPCF know where they are.

EG also thanked JM for good and honest feedback. He was encouraged that WSFT had clear timelines for dealing with the backlog.

EG was a little concerned that this clarity was not in place in respect of NSFT and that assessments could be completed by Nov/Dec was not adequate.

EG offered to speak to the Chief Executive for NSFT if this would be helpful to clarify the timelines for NSFT backlog.

	<p>JM confirmed that he did not feel there was a cause for concern regarding responsiveness but rather that he would not know the full picture until screening was completed. Once this is completed there will be a clearer timeline regarding assessments.</p> <p>JM confirmed he would know for the July timeline.</p> <p>KB reiterated the offer of support from EG should it be required.</p> <p>JM stated that whilst the focus was on recovery it was also on how SNEE could work more closely with NSFT and WSFT going forward to develop a joint model.</p> <p>This is an area both NSFT and WSFT are keen to develop but important that this is done not only in the short term but looking long term as well.</p> <p>In relation to education, RS and team have been supportive in communicating the referral process and the right way and right time for each stage.</p> <p>KB confirmed that with the education sector present it would be their responsibility to take back to their areas from July.</p> <p>KB summed up by saying that there was clear progress in a number of areas and likewise still some areas which required further development.</p>
5.	<p>Quality Assurance</p> <p>RS stated that in the meeting documents the report from 2023 and not 2024 had been shared.</p> <p>For 2024 RS shared the following statistics:</p> <p>Forty-two plans had been issued.</p> <p>282 documents have been audited.</p> <p>At present the point of audit is retrospective and the intention is to also include a quality assurance process before documents are sent out.</p> <p>This is the responsibility of the Lead Coordinators and RS is aware that this has not always been happening at the rate it needs to be.</p> <p>Plans are in place to stabilise the team to ensure that training is delivered.</p> <p>Early indications following the deep dive are expected to show plateauing and some deterioration of QA.</p> <p>The new additional staff, fifteen in total, SEND Assessment Coordinators will be well trained and well supported to ensure this result is positively affected.</p> <p>SCC have SMART outcomes in place, but these are not currently detailed enough.</p> <p>This is an issue that SCC are aware of and are seeking to overcome.</p> <p>Overall picture of Quality Assurance at this time is that timeliness is and will continue to improve but quality still requires work.</p> <p>DR asked would it be viable to include SENDIASS in this? Look at training from SENDIASS in this area?</p>

NH responded to say that Fran Alexander, the Head of SEND Services had reached out to SENDIASS regarding working with families. Quality of writing is something that SENDIASS could explore but they are more focused on the legal process. Happy to take this forward though.

RS clarified that the area of development was more around ensuring embedding of what needs to be done rather than not knowing what to do.

Cllr AR stated that this was the first time he was reading the 2023 report and that it raises questions around how SCC marries information together.

Cllr AR would be interested to be kept updated on progress in this area and understands that resourcing is key.

Cllr AR added that he too recognises the concerns raised around communication and that this is a key area for development.

Cllr AR asked when the report for June 2024 could be expected.

RS confirmed that work was already underway on this report.

KB also confirmed that QA was now a standard agenda item to ensure regular updates could be provided in this area.

RS stated that SCC are aware of the barriers currently facing families and the impact on families who are needing to sit down with other family members to review plans.

RS confirmed that SW has been sharing positive plan experiences as well as negative and there is a shared agreement of the importance of having a human being to sit down with families and go through plans.

SW shared that she and another parent/carer provide a free service to parents and carers to review plans. They have several examples of plans they have successfully amended that have gone on to be accepted.

SW asked if sharing these examples could help SCC staff with the knowledge in this area.

RS responded by accepting this offer and also requesting that this idea be brought into the Induction Plan for new staff.

**SIB024 ACTION: RS requested sharing info from SW re: updated plan examples that have been successful so these might be used in the Induction Plan for new staff.**

KB confirmed that resources were indeed important but that this also highlighted the importance of trained people in order to generate consistency.

Cllr AR referred to RS point about using a Third-Party Provider for the completion of plans and suggested that this new approach could bring all plans in-house.

RS confirmed that it was not desirable to be using a Third-Party Provider and that this was currently being done out of necessity rather than choice.

SW suggested that once report writers are taught how to get it 'right first time' this would solve this issue.

	<p>KB confirmed that Quality Assurance will be a standing agenda item so that it can be monitored.</p> <p>KB confirmed that Timeliness was important but that the Quality of what is produced is equally so.</p> <p>KB stated that there was clearly a good commitment to additional resources and that whilst this did not negate the current problems it was clear that progress is being made in securing additional capacity.</p> <p>NB added her support of transparency and plain English. She added that she would welcome a process for SEND QA that stands on equal footing with that used in Social Care.</p> <p>RS agreed that she shared this desire and that the Quality Assurance Team were also part of Social Care. This would help to ensure consistency from the writers on the ground.</p> <p>CS raised the matter of quality of advice having been cited as a reason for low quality plans and that this is not an excuse.</p> <p>RS confirmed that yes it was important to have good quality advice, but it was also important to have good quality plan writers.</p> <p>KB suggested that investigation was needed around how that advice is being transferred and stressed the importance of rigorous and robust monitoring.</p>
6.	<p>Progress of Performance Data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current data</li> <li>• Future data measures</li> </ul> <p>Minutes to be read with Performance Data report.</p> <p>RS confirmed that the commentary review data was accurate.</p> <p>This links back to the Priority Action Plan in column 3.</p> <p>RS confirmed that there would be additional graphs being added to the report.</p> <p>RS reviewed Measure 4 – Timeliness stating that timeliness and quality is Priority Action Plan point two.</p> <p>RS confirmed that some progress had been made regarding timeliness although intentionally not at the expense of quality.</p> <p>RS referred to the graph on the bottom left of page 1 which showed the percentage of EHCPs issued in 20 weeks. The data referred to April 2023 – April 2024.</p> <p>March and April showed a dip in percentage, and this was directly related to staff sickness, turnover of staff and vacancies.</p> <p>In May this percentage picked up again to 23.5%.</p> <p>RS explained that the dotted line on the graph showed the trajectory and clarified that this was conditional based upon additional resources which have been requested.</p>



Trajectory differs depending on circumstances for example when temporary staff leave or staff absence is high, the line plateaus for a time.

Cllr AR confirmed the need for clear understanding of the modelling and trajectory.

Cllr AR continued that maintaining momentum was very important to ensure that the best service was delivered to families and that the additional organisational changes were needed to help with this.

RS confirmed that since there had been a dedicated team of people dealing with requests for EHCPs only. By the 6 weeks stage 100% had been actioned meeting the statutory requirements.

After that part of the process things slow and this is largely due to the lack of Educational Psychologists of which there is a national shortage.

The new Assessment Coordinators, of which ten have been hired to date of sixteen, will focus on the process from Week 6 – Week 20.

RS went on to add that there was now a permanent Triage Team for Annual Reviews with four dedicated inboxes.

When schools send the Annual Reviews, the Triage Team choose 1 of 3 pathways following that Review and direct each review to the correct pathway for action.

The current trajectory shows that the percentage of EHCNAs completed within the 20-week period would rise from 0% in 2023 to 60% in 2025 but reiterated that this would be dependent on the continuation of additional provision requested for the service to ensure it accurately reflects reality.

NB added that at this point she wanted to assure the Board that the changes to Cabinet meetings that had been recently made from early to late July will not slow the progress in SEND and that she would be authorising to proceed.

EG observed that RS had shared the change from 0% in 2023 to a trajectory of 60% completed within the 20 weeks for 2025.

EG asked was the ambition to keep climbing or to allow this percentage to plateau at 60%?

RS confirmed that the ambition was not to stop at 60% and that the model was based on current staffing.

RS suggested that a review annually was needed to ensure that progress is maintained.

KB stated that the documents need to clearly identify that the ambition is to continue to increase this percentage.

Cllr AR agreed that it was important to recognise that this trajectory continue to rise.

Cllr AR added that it was necessary to ensure that model remains dynamic and recognised that it will need further attention to ensure the correct support is in place.

RS stated that the dotted line shown on the graph was based on a few assumptions and variables. That it needed to adjust to reality to see what was needed at what point.

RS stressed that variables need constant checking.

KB confirmed that it would then be the Board's responsibility to ensure robust monitoring.

SW asked if the 'EHCP Issued' status referred to finalised plans or just issued plans.

RS confirmed these were finalised EHCPs.

**SIB025 ACTION: RS to clarify on data share that 'finalised data' means that plan has been issued so clear to readers.**

Cllr JF asked if all the relevant entities were present in the room. Do we have all the dependencies needed here? Are we assuming the clinical element?

KB highlighted that one key barrier to meeting these ambitions was the delay in receiving advice from Educational Psychologists.

KB suggested that the Board needed to keep a close eye on this key area and that the responsibility for unlocking this barrier rested with Board.

KB proposed that the effective monitoring of these areas was directly related to the frequency of these conversations. The Board would keep pace on this improvement through these meetings and that it was the responsibility of those around the table to unblock any barriers.

RS moved on to reflect on open and overdue plans.

RS confirmed that SCC were supporting families to get these plans produced.

RS continued that the Service was receiving a greater rate of applications than previous 2023 projections had suggested. The current trajectory work has been shared with Health.

RS clarified that whilst not all assessments would need to be known to Health and Social Care a percentage of these would be and this could affect that area of the service.

RS confirmed that despite this, the right people were present in meetings.

Cllr JF suggested that Health and Social Care and Social Services needed to work more closely.

RS requested that she be able to comment on some Additional Items.

RS referred to Measure 18 and that this was blank. Data has not reached the document.

RS cited Alternative Provision from Olive Academy which was undertaken with seventy-four pupils. Twelve from secondary and five from Lowestoft specifically last academic year.

RS explained that the children reviewed ranged from Years 5 – 11 with the majority being 9-10 years of age.

These programmes were very bespoke to children at risk of permanent exclusion. As such each plan was different for each child to reflect this.

100% of children engaged in their mini-PATHs (Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope)

They reported that they felt hope. That staff were seeing them in a different light and that they felt heard.

RS confirmed that the mini pathways had led to different actions and behaviours both by children and staff.

RS reported that seven of the children had their permanent exclusion rescinded.

RS shared the example of one child who saw an 84% reduction in challenging behaviours in a 3-month period and went on to sit their GCSEs.

RS was able to confirm that all the children had sat their GCSE exams following the provision.

CS challenged the use of 'behaviours that challenge' confirming that this was now referred to as behaviours of distress and would like this to be noted.

RS noted and confirmed that it was important to ask the question what has happened to you not what is wrong with you.

RS confirmed that Olive Academy uses very person-centred language, and this would be a helpful reference going forward.

**SIB026 ACTION: ALL to review and consider the use of language.**

Cllr AR raised that Items 9 and 14 had not been fulfilled and asked when these can be expected to be fulfilled?

JM stated that he will liaise with HW and ensure Health measures are included in the next report.

JM confirmed they would be speaking with Suffolk and Norfolk & Waveney to ensure the information shared was correct.

JM apologised that these items were not fulfilled but confirmed they would be progressed for next meeting.

**SIB027 ACTION: JM/GJ will update on meeting regarding health data with HW at next meeting.**

KB asked if there would be a complete data set available by the July meeting?

JM confirmed there would be.

RS confirmed that in Measures 23-25 percentages would also show the number of actual people effected.

RS shared the actual numbers of data for 23-25 for the current report.

Measure 23: 0.09% = 4 people, 0.34% = 14 people

Measure 24: 0.45% = 61 people, 0.39% = 53 people

Measure 25: 34.9% = 24.8% of all children and young people

RS confirmed that likewise these figures would be ready on the document for July.

KB then offered the opportunity to raise any questions about the data in the report.

SW raised a concern about children with persistent absence.

SW cited a recent case out of County where a child had taken her own life because she did not want to return to school.

SW stressed that it was time for 'us' as a County to take an enquiring approach to persistent absence cases.

SW shared an example of a parent whose child had received hardly any education for 2 years. That parent is now be taken to Court.

SW shared another example of a young person who was now being offered Alternative Provision but on the condition that they attend school the rest of the time.

SW stressed that a more empathetic approach was needed to effectively help these children.

AO agreed that Schools need to be welcoming places where a child feels that their needs will be met.

AO continued that discussions were being had with Academy and mainstream school Heads and teams were working on an emotional based school's avoidance strategy.

AO stated that he was working with two representatives from the Department for Education: Olive Academy Trust and Unity Schools Partnership on how this can be improved.

KB stated that this work should be commissioned from the system and have a real action plan around this.

SW reminded the Board that there were nine actions for Schools that SEND had agreed to take on board and that Schools were meant to offer a 'calm, nurturing environment.'

KB agreed with SW points.

JM shared that Mental Health was keen to get involved with this.

KB stated that the Board had now covered the substantive points of the agenda and confirmed the next scheduled meeting for the Improvement Board was Friday 5 July.

KB shared that it had been proposed that the meetings be quarterly from September but that this would be reviewed depending on what was agreed to be the right frequency to effectively cover the Forward Plan and standard agenda points.

Next meeting would cover the recent Department for Education Deep Dive.

Any items to add to the agenda should be shared with WA.

KB reconfirmed that there was not Any Other Business and thanked all contributions at today's meeting.

KB finished by saying she was looking forward to working on the improvements and would see everyone on 5 July if not before.

KB would be available for a post-Board catch up for anyone who would like this.

7.	Forward Plan DfE Deep Dive
8.	AOB None
	<p>Dates of Future meetings</p> <p><b>Friday 5 July 2024 10am – 12:00pm</b></p> <p><b>Friday 6 September 2024 10am – 12:00pm</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 16 January 2024 10am – 12:00pm</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 10 April 2024 10am – 12:00pm</b></p> <p><b>Thursday 10 July 2024 10am – 12:00pm</b></p>