Bury Council
Department of Children & Young People

Redacted Minutes

SEND Improvement & Assurance Board Meeting
14th July 2026

1	**WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**
	The former Chairperson and now acting Vice-Chair introduced the meeting and handed Chairing responsibilities to the new Chairperson.
2	**MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
	The minutes for the May and June Board meetings were reviewed and agreed as an accurate representation of both meetings.
3	**ACTIONS AND RISKS LOG**
	The Chair briefly outlined the plan for Board meetings going forward, with a feeling it was important to review the log and try to finalise some actions to start fresh in a new format and handed over to a senior officer to review the action log. **Action 110** – Comms in different format – Beebot is progressing with a SEND Comms and Engagement Officer due to start over coming weeks. **Action 259** – Ongoing comms for workforce Strategy Board – to be picked up at the workforce strategy board. Due date of February was discussed with most recent update in April. A senior officer confirmed that the latest SEND newsletter had been issued recently and added that communication remains a significant area for improvement and is expected to be a priority for the future Board. A Board member noted that despite the training portal not being up and running, there has been a continuation of training with multi-agency partners outside of this.

	Action 276 – QA update – Further works ongoing over summer, will be carried forward into reports and meetings after the summer break. **Action 299** – "Support Whilst Waiting" Early Years Workstream – Initial pathway meeting held with 18 representatives from across the sector attending; mapping exercise completed, in depth exercise underway on age groups, threshold and offers. Next steps for steering group to meet in august and pathway meeting in September. **Action 309** – Update on SEND work experience opportunities – A partner organisation has focused on this and will update in the new academic year. **Action 314** - Review of SEND cod of practice –Members confirmed that they had reviewed the SEND Code of Practice. **Action 317** - Full review of risks – Will continue to be part of the routine governance and oversight of the new Board. **Action 318** – Update on voice mapping provided later within CYP agenda item. **Action 319** – SEND Sufficiency update – Mapping of current provision and gaps completed, and the SEND Sufficiency Strategy has been drafted and will be going to BASCL on 15th July for a review. Roadmap 2026-2030 developed, with sufficiency projects underway. A senior officer requested that an update be brought to the next Board following BASCL. **Acton 322** – Preparation for adulthood – Agreed this remains important in the new governance. **Action 323** – Changemakers attendance at faith school leaders' meetings – A Board member confirmed that arrangements to attend a faith school leaders meeting next week. **Action 324** – Participation group with CAMHS team – Meeting between Changemakers and CAMHS Operational Manager scheduled for 8th September.
4	**CONTRIBUTIONS FROM, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**
	Changemakers members discussed their experiences with each attending member invited to speak to the Board. A young person described how working in a café has helped to prepare him for adulthood and described how staff have helped him to research how to develop a career within transport. This involved interview preparation and his confidence was enhanced as a result. A young person described his experience at college and the freedoms he has enjoyed since transitioning from School. He volunteers for a children's charity and attends social clubs. He spoke of one-to-one support in his internship and described the social clubs he attends and how they help him to develop friendships.

A young person described his experience at college and how staff have been supportive – he has been supported to develop friendships and master interview techniques through a supported internship.

A Board member thanked the Changemakers for attending the meeting and sharing their experiences. She updated on Changemakers' activity since the last meeting which included an easy read version of Short Breaks Duty Statement with a short video being developed alongside this; NHS SEND Handbook; meetings about SEND reforms with senior officers and Communities of practice with a Board member; ongoing work on the School Survival guide; engagement with SEND Commissioner; and a full cabinet meeting with Youth Cabinet. She also gave an update on the planned Changemakers celebration event.

She reported that Changemakers membership remains heavily college-based and a new drop-in recruitment event will be trialed to attract young people. Invitations have been distributed to schools, colleges, AP settings and EHE teams for interested young people to attend.

She also updated voice mapping with 16 out of 17 secondary schools responded. Further work is needed with primary schools, AP settings, and Electively Home Educated children.

She also provided an update on the upcoming work of Changemakers. In addition to the meeting with CAMHS Operational Manager, there will be a CYP-designed staff training pilot with local schools.

Changemakers' members finally thanked the Board for their input and for attendance at sessions during the previous year.

5 **PARENT CARER FORUM UPDATE**

A Parent Carer Forum representative updated on the number of meetings attended and the time spent by volunteers in attendance (approximately 2,500 volunteer hours) over the year, explaining the enthusiasm of members to attend.

She reported that Parent Carer Forum membership had increased by 133 since September 25, currently sitting at approximately 1,600 members.

She discussed funding and noted an increase of £3000 per year in recognition of the amount of work being undertaken.

She updated on plans from September to reach out to parents and to visit schools more often, in the hope of improved information gathering and distribution.

Regarding the Monitoring Inspection, she noted that the tone of communication was well received by families and highlighted the positive nature of the response.

She continued to discuss the Parent Carer Forum encountering communication issues, including difficulties accessing social media platforms, continued concerns regarding communication between services and parents, and requests for earlier notification of events to enable promotion It is hoped that the new engagement officer role would help to improve communications reach.

The Co-production Charter was discussed, and it was noted that progress had been quiet.

A Board member updated that a draft coproduction charter had been created and trialed on transport & personal budgets and local inclusion work. She discussed support on two pilot schemes from an external partner. She discussed how the charter has been applied to the two pilots and that this will be reviewed to refine the charter. She hopes that she will be ready to update further at the next Board meeting.

A Board member spoke of communication through schools and suggested the Parent Carer Forum approach schools to link in with and take advantage of existing mechanisms such as school coffee mornings.

A senior officer emphasised the need to improve the facilitation of discussion between schools and the Parent Carer Forum.

The Parent Carer Forum representative continued to discuss social opportunities, including free school meals and a lack of provision which has generated complaints about an inability to get onto HAFF**.** She referred to a mapping exercise on what is available for all. Adding that another local authority excels in this area.

She continued to speak on the neurodevelopmental pathway, highlighting questions around triage and that communications had been unclear. She noted that far fewer children had been triaged away from referral than expected which was a relief. Feedback on the Neuro Hub has been requested with only a few responses so far, noting concern that the Neuro Hub is only open two days per week, suggesting it would be helpful to open more often.

A health representative updated on triage, noting that communications that have gone out to stakeholders have had mixed messages. He discussed ongoing work on the communication of outcomes to parents, with a meeting planned for September which aims to restart. Hub accessibility was then discussed; general availability feedback is to be taken back with an answer to come back for an update in September following discussion.

A senior officer discussed meeting with parents and a commitment to using the voice of parents to develop forward plans around Experts at Hand. He noted that this will continue to develop over the long term.

A Board member added that a recent regional discussion had been largely around avoiding a consistent approach across the regional space. Noting the local offer will be built on the Communities of Practice model and local needs. She noted that discussion with a Board member had highlighted the importance of communications, and that this will be built upon what is already in place locally.

A senior officer noted inconsistent funding arrangements across local authorities which makes consistency across the region difficult. Noting that limited

	resources will continue to be an issue. She referred to comments from the Parent Carer Forum representative about a lack of provision, which is also due to the lack of funding when compared to other areas of the region. A Board member added that a fair and equitable model is the goal and that work continues to make this possible. A Board member noted that many Local Authorities are coming from a place of no existing work, which gives the local area a good starting point given the work already underway. A Board member added that Communities of Practice will act as a foundation and that the partnership will continue to look at how minimum requirements can be maintained throughout the journey. She noted that the offer needs to be co-produced and that this is already a consideration. She noted that the local area has already developed a robust Offer and support mechanisms for schools. A Board member came back to the short breaks review and noted that she would be happy to bring a paper back to the Board to ensure there is an understanding of the work done to ensure the review is undertaken appropriately, ensuring availability of services to young people and families. A Board member noted the lack of response to the inspection should be taken as a positive. **Action 325** – Charter to be reviewed and an update provided at the next Board meeting. **Action 326** – Update on Neuro Hub from health representative at the September Board. **Action 327** – A Board member to bring a paper back to the next Board to help the Board to understand the work done to ensure the review is undertaken appropriately. Ensuring availability of services to young people and families.
6	**MONITORING INSPECTION UPDATE**
	A senior officer updated on the Monitoring Inspection. Highlighting a health partner's absence, noting that this update would normally be from a joint perspective, representing the close working partnership. She highlighted that the outcome was a significant milestone but not the end of the improvement journey. Looking back to March when the inspection took place, she gave an overview of the inspection itself, and thanked all involved in the inspection and the work surrounding it and leading to it. She advised inspectors had commented on the positive impact for children, young people and their families, particularly in earlier identification, reduced waiting times in some services and community-based support amongst others. She highlighted the six priority areas for improvement.

	Firstly, SEND Strategy and Governance, noting improvements such as stronger shared strategic governance with independent oversight, better use of data to inform decision-making. Areas need to improve include communications with parents/carers and co-production with Parent Carer Forum. Second, Early Identification, improvements include the expansion of the Educational Psychology service, stronger graduated response, stronger locality working, SEND health visiting model, and improved screening processes. Areas still in need of improvement are some referrals being closed without notification to families/individuals. Third, Support While Waiting, improvements include ND Hub development, stronger triage, better information sharing, workforce upskilling, and wider community support offer. improvements are needed in areas such as long waits for ADHD/Autism diagnosis. Fourth, Preparation for Adulthood, improvements include clearer post-16 transition pathways, better transition planning, improved data tracking, and stronger careers support. Improvements are needed in areas such as capacity challenges. Fifth, Transitions (0-25), improvements are noted in improved strategic approaches to transitions across the system such as improved strategic planning, better information sharing, and parent guidance developed. Further work is required to address inconsistency around the experiences of families around transitions. Sixth, Educational Health Care Plans, inspectors described improvement as notable with better quality assurance and increased capacity and oversight. Further work is required to address a backlog of annual reviews. She then described next steps, highlighting the delay in publishing the inspection findings due to limiting factors such as local elections. She also noted that ongoing strategic plans and supporting work have continued in the background since the inspection. A full inspection is expected to take place in approximately 15 months.
7	**SEND PARTNERSHIP BOARD**
	The Chair spoke briefly about the reforms and highlighted that this is not the only area to map going forward. He spoke of the need to review all aspects of our work as the Board moves forward, rather than focusing solely on the reforms. A senior officer provided an overview of the reforms plan, the PIP and Inspection readiness. He noted a need to establish what inclusion and belonging mean locally. He spoke about permanent exclusions, noting that the local area's number of exclusions is particularly high for a small Borough, stating this indicates a need to form an agreed baseline across all partners which will then help to identify areas of concern. He added that a new plan is not required, but there is rather a need to weave together existing plans and mechanisms. He

continued to discuss the timeline, adding that as this is a cultural change it will take time to implement in full.

An external adviser discussed how the reforms will impact over time, noting that 3-4 years will be spent on preparation and development of the new system up until 2030 and the implementation phase likely to take place in the following 5 years. He predicted that EHCP's will continue to rise until the new system is implemented, before peaking and eventually reducing in the long term.

He then updated on the Ofsted local inspection framework, with an inspection expected within 18 months. He highlighted areas of focus that are central to delivery of the reforms and other areas less obviously central to delivery, as well as multiple areas which the 2024 local area inspection indicated leaders should address. He suggested a single plan should work to inform the partnership about existing priorities and established local strengths and weaknesses.

The Chair agreed with the external adviser and asked where the Board believed it currently sat. The external adviser suggested the service sits at a '2' which was seconded by the Independent Vice-Chair. She noted that widespread systemic failures had been addressed, but that the local area was currently inconsistent with a need to build on that.

A Board member noted that in some areas there is very good practice whilst other areas are still behind, indicating a need to improve consistency. He positively noted how far the local area has come but agreed with the feeling of inconsistency.

The Vice-Chair agreed that clarity on inconsistencies would be important to continued development.

A senior officer then updated on SEND Reforms & additional improvement priorities, noting the council facilitation of sub-groups, such as the data sub-group which have a school lead approach. He continued to note that capturing areas of focus from these groups would ensure we continue to improve areas of focus based on feedback.

A senior officer updated on six priority areas under the additional improvement priorities within the proposed new governance- Neurodevelopmental Pathways, Community Paediatrics, Preparation for Adulthood, Communications, Local Offer and Joint Commissioning, noting that these priorities have been developed following multi-agency discussions.

A senior officer added that a scorecard rating mechanism might be useful to track progress in these areas.

The Vice-Chair challenged that there may be a need to clarify the data required by the Board to ensure progress.

A Board member added that Communications may not be a standalone area and should instead be woven throughout all areas.

	The Chair asked if a timescale could be established, a senior officer clarified that this is the overarching SEND reforms plan and would be used to strengthen and should be seen as one, with groups then taking ownership of individual areas. The Vice-Chair asked if the Priority improvement plan should be more clearly referenced. The external adviser agreed that the work could be retitled, suggesting naming it the SEND Reform & Improvement Board would ensure it is explicitly clear that this has been considered. The Chair noted a need to be clear on the KPI's measured and reviewed by the Data & Assurance Sub-group, ensuring a clear start point to which progress will be measured. A senior officer agreed and added that many of the groups are closely connected and work to support the Experts at Hand model. The Chair added that even with the best experts in place, the cultural change required is integral to progression. The Parent Carer Forum representative questioned where the Parent Carer Forum would be involved with this, whether in attendance or by receiving minutes, suggesting the need for continued involvement going forward. She asked if it would be helpful for them to be included in the Experts at Hand Sub-group where parents and carers would feed in. A Board member suggested that the partnership should work to ensure co-production comes as a standard decision, suggesting the Parent Carer Forum should be involved at every step where capacity allows. The Chair suggested communications and data should run through all levels of priorities. A Board member stressed that the quality of data is very important. He also recognised risks around finance, which he stated routine monitoring would help to address. A senior officer suggested the terms of reference should reflect all areas discussed. The Chair asked if the title of the Board going forward would also benefit from the inclusion of an improvement element, suggesting SEND Reform & Improvement Board or SRIB, which is being used in other areas. A senior officer requested Board members to send any thoughts or suggestions on any of the areas discussed to her. The Chair called for a smaller group of Board members to meet to discuss next steps and consider functions already established, and how to move forward.
8	**AOB**

	A senior officer asked a government representative about the process of lifting the improvement notice and he explained the timeline and flight path of this decision, noting the process has been started but governmental factors will extend the time needed for this. The Board thanked a Board member for her work during the improvement journey.
9	**UPCOMING MEETING DATES**
	Upcoming meeting dates: - 22nd September 10 am – 1 pm local venue - 18th November 2-5 pm local venue - 12th January 10 am – 1 pm local venue - 9th March 10 am – 1 pm local venue - 13th May 2-5 pm local venue - 13th July 10am – 1 pm local venue