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Department of Children & Young People

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Minutes

SEND Improvement & Assurance Board Meeting

24th June 2025

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| 1 | **INTRODUCTIONS & ATTENDANCE** |
|  | The Chair welcomed everyone to the SEND Improvement and Assurance Board meeting and acknowledged the presence of attendees joining online and apologies given. Everyone introduced themselves.  The Chair raised that one appendix submitted to the Board papers included a child’s full name and photographs. The Chair requested that Board members deleted this from their files and it to be deleted off the online copy and requested in future that no identifiable information of children should be included. |
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| 2 | **MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING** |
|  | **May’s minutes**  May’s minutes were reviewed page-by-page, with no corrections given. The minutes were approved along with the accompanying 31 actions. |
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| 3 | **ACTIONS AND RISKS LOG** |
|  | The actions due by this meeting or before were reviewed. The Action Log was updated accordingly with the following updates:   * **Action 88** (EOTAS – mapping children across the system including those without EHCPs): currently underway, and it was proposed bringing it back to the SIAB at a later date so the update can be provided once the new SEN2 data is released by the Department of Education. This was agreed – due date update on 22nd July. * **Action 95** (new Outreach team structure): The data is being gathered across services from both the Outreach team and the SEND support team, with the next task being to coordinate that to understand the full impact of how those services worked in the last 12 months – due date updated to 22nd July. * **Action 100** (‘You Said, We Are Doing’ log): It was requested that questions on the log were answered in a more timely way; the Chair recommended that matters are escalated to the Senior Responsible Officers if the log is not being updated in a timely manner. The action was kept open and will be addressed at the next Board on 22nd July. * **Action 125** (School Survival guide): The guide was taken to the SEND Handbook Task & Finish group, and they are keen to include it in their handbook and so she will provide updates as it progressed. The action was marked closed. * **Action 135**: was identified as a repeat of action 100, and so was closed.   The Risk Log has three new risks in relation to PIP5.   * Risk 45 and Risk 46: predominantly focused on the 6-into-7 digital solutions and the sustainability of the ongoing and expanding cost for it. * Risk 47: concerns the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings and the capacity to expand to a wider cohort. Further work is needed to look at whether alternative forums need to be used or whether the current forums can be expanded to accommodate these.   It was agreed that none of these three new risks were classed as immediate high risks (or would affect children transitioning into new schools in September), and so updates for the risk will come to the Board at the next Theme 3 meeting in October. These risks will be raised with the Secondary Sector Forum at the next meeting in two weeks’ time.  There was a question raised about the representation of Early Years and Colleges at SIAB. The Chair commented that it is good to have a variety of people attending the board at different times, and approved the suggestion.  **Actions**   1. Risk 47 (the capacity of MDT meetings to expand to a wider cohort) to be raised at the next Secondary Sector Forum – due report back 22nd July. 2. SIAB Board membership for Early Years and College colleagues – due 22nd July. |
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| 4 | **CONTRIBUTIONS FROM, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH, CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** |
|  | **Presentation**  Highlights covered CAMHS service design; staff training; wider engagement; upcoming work; upcoming meetings; and general feedback. *[The presentation has been provided alongside these minutes].*  **Discussion**  CAMHS service design  The Changemakers had spoken with representatives from CAMHS to ask questions about their Neuro assessment process, therapy service, and how they work with young people. There are plans to work throughout the Summer to get the offer established and share it in September.  Staff training  The Changemakers have been working on staff training, and were planning to attend an upcoming meeting of the Secondary Head Teachers.  Wider engagement  Two more young people are interested in joining the Changemakers group following a visit to the home-educated group in the theatre, along with two further young people from Connexions. There is also an opportunity to attend a drop-in at the Jewish Community Group in July which may identify other young people who would like to join.  The Chair reminded the Board that the Changemakers celebration event would be happening immediately after the next Board meeting on 22nd July. The Changemakers will also be running a training session that meeting around co-production and tokenism for the Board. |
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| 5 | **TERMS OF REFERENCE SIGN OFF AND PRINCIPLES OF BOARD MEMBERSHIP REVIEW** |
|  | Terms of Reference  The Chair commented that the Board membership within the Terms of Reference document had been updated. This was signed off by the Board, and is set to next be reviewed in six months (December’s SIAB Board).  Principles of Board Membership  The Chair raised that attendance for some members had been a particular challenge recently and requested that members send a deputy to SIAB meetings if they could not attend. The following updates were requested to be added to the Principles of Board Membership document:   * Members to send a named deputy in their place if they are unable to attend a Board meeting, to ensure that all areas are consistently represented in meetings. * Members are required to attend at least 9 out of 11 Board meetings every year (removing the August meeting). * Members are required to proactively share relevant information from the Board meetings to colleagues within their organisations.   There was a question as to whether Board members would need a minimum 12 months commitment, as is currently on the Principles of Board Membership document. This was kept in place, recognising that potential exceptions may be needed as they arise.  The Chair asked that Members do not share specific confidential conversations that have been discussed at the Board with others unless there has been a formal agreement to share.  The Chair requested that all Board members take the initiative to share (appropriate) information from the meetings out to wider colleagues, as it is important that cross-partner messages reach everyone, e.g. all schools.  The Chair raised that another Board evaluation was now due, having last been completed in November 2024. This will be done before schools finish for the summer holidays on 16th July.  **Actions**   1. PPL to update the Principles of Board Membership document – due 4th July. 2. The Chair to discuss the SIAB evaluation with Comms Leads in preparation for sending out before 16th July. |
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| 6 | **STOCKTAKE PLANNING AND MONITORING INSPECTION UPDATE** |
|  | The Chair mentioned the importance of having a schools’ representative at the upcoming Stocktake meeting on 1st July.  The previous Stocktake meeting had taken place in December 2024, and reviewed the progress in relation to the PIPs. The DfE and NHS England concluded that the SIAB were in line with expected progress at that time. rThe SIAB has continued at pace with its endeavours to move forward with any outstanding actions within that six-month period, and that it had tried to determine the impact that the actions are now having in relation to the identified outcomes within the PIPs. For this Stocktake, work has been undertaken across the partnership to gather evidence and there is a draft evidence submission that is near completion.  Following the Stocktake meeting, the partnership will be preparing for the Monitoring Inspection, which is anticipated to take place in October/November 2025.  **Actions**   1. DfE to circulate the Bury SEND Stocktake Agenda –completed. 2. PPL to circulate the previous Stocktake outcome letter to the wider board – due 1st July. |
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| 7 | **EHCP AUDIT DATA REPORT** |
|  | The template for the audit had been reviewed, in order to reflect the national change programme. This was reported as working very well. Significant amounts of training had also been given regarding preparing legally compliant EHCPs.  In addition, a large proportion of internal auditing had been completed and there is now a tiered approach of both single-agency audits, multi-agency audits and face-to-face audits. Invision 360, a digital audit tool, is now in use.  The output from the two cycles of auditing were in relation to newly issued EHCPs.  A slide deck pack has been put in the appendices for the Board papers around the impact of that work. This demonstrates an overall improvement in EHCPs with a reduction in those plans with quality issues from 58.3% to 42.9%. In addition, EHCPs receiving an overall grading from silver has increased from 16.7% to 28.6%, also with significant improvements in sections B&F, which is special educational needs outcomes and provision.  This was still a challenging area, with ongoing gaps in relation to Social Care input into EHCPs. There has been a meeting about this and subsequently progressed actions in terms of how to ensure that Social Care contributions continues to improve.  Meetings have also been held in relation to children who are not known to Social Care, to ensure that this data is tracked. As a consequence, compliance is improving within that area.  Another significant challenge raised was the number of audits completed, as only a small proportion of the 30-40 new EHCPs issued a month have been audited (current is an average of 10 a month). The Chair suggested that the conversation around who is not responding to carrying out the audit is discussed at the Operational Delivery Group meeting.  It was suggested that a focus on increasing the numbers of audits is more important at this stage than ensuring a fully partnership approach to all audits.  The Chair recommended that the specifics of how to resolve this would be discussed outside of the SIAB meeting.  **Actions**   1. A discussion about the issue of audit compliance to take place at the next Operational Delivery Group – due 22nd July. |
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| 8 | **ADHD CONSULTATION AND COMMISSIONING SERVICES** |
|  | An overview of the current commissioning position was provided. The gap highlighted in the inspection report was not having a commissioned managed pathway for this cohort of young people to obtain neurodevelopmental assessments. As a Locality, alongside neighbours in Oldham and Heywood, Middleton and Rochdale; there was a complete reliance of the right-to-choose pathway. Over the past months the team has therefore been working to progress the Commissioning process: obtaining approval for the finance and then also obtaining approval to go ahead.  An urgent award under the provider selection regime regulations was given to Optimise Healthcare. This means there is now expanded capacity around the shared care cohort, but also with the ability to commission a limited number of assessments. The contract is not yet in place, but it is in the final stages, with plans for this to be live before the end of summer. The finance contracts are very close to being signed, and respective teams have been given approval to start to transition young people on ADHD medication under shared care arrangements to the adult provider.  In addition, there is a new pathway for when young people approaching adulthood will be reviewed, and where appropriate transitions into the actual provider for that ongoing shared care will take place.  Further work needs to be done to determine how the limited number of assessments are prioritised, bearing in mind that the gap highlighted in the inspection needs to be addressed. Therefore, the challenge is the number of assessments that have been commissioned within the financial envelope is far outpaced by the level of demand; there will need to be careful consideration on how assessments are prioritised and take into account the needs of this particular cohort of young people.  The Chair asked whether any statistics could be given in terms of the size of the situation. The response was that the demand from adults for neurodevelopmental assessment is unknown, due the reliance on the right-to-choose pathway, which is depending on whether GPs refer individuals asking for an ADHD assessment to a provider who is eligible. However, for the number of assessments that have been commissioned: this year there were 240 autism assessments across the three localities, and 205 ADHD assessments.  It was raised that the themes being raised here are also recognised to be a national problem, as well as one at the Greater Manchester level. Also that there was an understanding that there is an underdiagnosis of women and girls, as well as marginalised communities.  It was confirmed that the assessments in the year so far were from the beginning of the financial year onwards. The team have drawn up pragmatic criteria around how young people are identified for having an ADHD assessments and the pathway from there.  25,000 people are currently on the waiting list for adult ADHD assessments across Greater Manchester. *[This presentation has been attached to the Board papers].*  The Chair commented that it was good for the Board to have assurance from what was happening both from the commissioning and consultation progress, and looked forward to seeing the final report once completed. It was confirmed that the plan is for the report to be completed by the end of June.  **Actions**   1. A update report of the ADHD commissioning and consultation progression – due 20th July. |
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| 9 | **THEME 3 UPDATE** |
|  | Theme 3 brings together several key points in a child's educational journey, where there are significant changes – for example the Preparing for Adulthood pathway, and the annual review cycles for children who are accessing Education Other Than At School (EOTAS).  **The Executive Summary**  The summary highlighted the progression of the following:   * A compiled list in relation to the 16 to 18 cohort. * Development of an Adult Social Care team to support with transitioning into adulthood. * Quarterly transition clinics in Health * Team meetings that are being held to support more timely transitions through community paediatrics. * Alternative Provision forums * Further developments in relation to communicating the Local Offer, particularly when products have significant improvements to update on. * Developing the Annual Review process to ensure that Preparation for Adulthood comes in for children who are at Year 9 onwards * New templates for Annual Reviews, so that conversations can be prompted at schools where the Local Authority cannot always be in attendance. * Data shows that 66% of children now have a completed annual review, which is slightly higher than expected (however not necessarily within the statutory time frames). 34% are therefore currently overdue or not yet due.   The next phase is to make sure the new offers are utilised and publicised widely.  And for other next steps, the partnership should focus on ensuring that the multiple transition points within a child’s educational journey interlink well with different services across Education, Health and Adult Social Care. It is important therefore for the partnership to work together to coordinate that planning and interdependencies in relation to transitional points.  **Discussion**  A question was asked about whether or not there had been any noticed impact for transitions as a result of the two senior social workers joining in the last 18 months.  There is a very good relationship with the senior Social Workers and the value they are adding.  It was asked what the protocol was for young people who would not reach the threshold for Adult Social Care. It is intended that those cohorts will be considered separately, as they are very likely to follow different transition pathways, and make sure outcomes are being tracked.  Bury is very good at having data for achievements at 19 years of age and that Bury does well in that relative to other areas.  The Chair reiterated that it was important that all reports include data so that impact and quality assurance can be evidenced and understood.  Annual Reviews have been a contentious issue in Bury, not just about the completion rate, but also the compliance and the quality of the Annual Review based on the information obtained. Some sufficiency issues have also been impacting. There is a small statutory Assessment team of reviewing officers who are responsible for issuing the responses to annual reviews, and the capacity is not meeting next year’s demand (over 3,000 EHCPs).  In terms of the Graduated Approach, the aim is to ensure that it does not stop at the point of issuing a statutory plan, so that the services are there at the earliest indication of needs changing leading to escalation of need and therefore having wraparound services available. Therefore, the plan is to act earlier and ensure there is sufficient information to manage the expectation if there is an escalation of need.  There is not currently any data in the system that is not already in the reports, so any further data identified will need to be collected. The Chair is chairing a Data and Performance meeting on 15th July, which will provide a focus on this.  The Communities of Practice model means that the need for data can be delivered through these networks.  A question was raised about how homeschooled children’s families would fit in to this, given they would not receive information from schools and the SENCOs are moving back to be managed within the Local Authority. It was answered that there is a Home Education Network, and that there is a newsletter that goes out as well as a dedicated offer. It would be good to provide reassurance by communicating out that for certain cohorts of children, there are things in place that should be having an impact.  The Leader, Lead Members and the Chief Executive had visited nearly every school in the Borough recently, speaking to the school leaders. The feedback from the staff was that they felt that there was lots of engagement when it came to safeguarding, however for SEND they wanted to talk more about the training available, and wanted to feel more part of the partnership.  **The Local Offer**  The Chair commented that regarding data to do with the Local Offer page, page two of the report showed the website visitor numbers had initially increased, but 12 months on still remain relatively small.  There was a challenge that the feedback from families was that the Local Offer is not the biggest problem, although there was still work to do on it. There is a plan to amplify the Local Offer message e.g. through other mediums such as Instagram, however agreements and boundaries for this must be drawn up first.  The data for the Local Offer website showed visitor numbers plateauing, however the minutes people spending on it are continuing to increase. Therefore, those who are accessing it are engaging with it more than previously. However, the partnership still needs to ensure that every opportunity with parents, family and young people should include mentioning the existence of the Local Offer page.  A full audit of the Local Offer has been completed, and it returned an over 80% compliance rate and there is ongoing work to obtain full compliance this week. Once compliance has been achieved there will be an ask for all organisations to put a link into the Local Offer page. At a Year 6 Transitional Evening, information was shared about the Local Offer page.  **Actions**  9.PPL to map out the interdependencies of the different services (Education, Health, and Adult Social Care) in terms of the transitional points by 22nd July  10.A report to the Board about the impact of the new senior social workers on transitions. Due 22nd July.  11.A review of the KPIs agreed and benchmark of the current progress against those to be completed by 22nd July   1. All Board members to take the opportunity when interacting with families to mention the Local Offer page – by 22nd July and ongoing. |
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| 10 | **SUMMARY OF KEY MESSAGES FROM TODAY’S MEETING** |
|  | * There will be further engaging with the young people at various events before the summer term is over * Communicate out the EHCP changes, recognising the progress made once timelines have been confirmed. * Communicate out the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) activities available this summer for SEND families * Updated Principles of Board and Membership (i.e. attendance commitment) to nine meetings a year, and to send a deputy if unable to attend |
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| 11 | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS** |
|  | **Initial parent survey update**  A survey was sent to parents and carers from 25th May to 11th June to obtain their views in relation to the SEND improvements. There were 80 responses, which is a small proportion of the 3,000 children with EHCPs. A piece of work will need to be undertaken around reviewing the comments and understanding what to take from them. From there it will be decided how it will be published. Early indications are that parents and carers are fairly happy with the early identification of their child’s special education needs, and there was growing confidence in the partnership through a much improved SEND newsletter and the Local Offer page.  The survey gives a baseline on how parents and carers feel about the service, and in six months may run the survey again co-produced with Bury2Gether in order to ask questions families are more keen to feed back on.  **Other**  The Chair thanked the interim Director of Education as this was his last Board meeting (leaving 18th July). He thanked the Chair and the Board and stated that he would be returning to the school system, and would be on hand to help with anything as needed. |
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| 10 | **UPCOMING MEETINGS** |
|  | * Stocktake meeting: 1st July 10-1pm * July SIAB meeting: 22nd July 10-1pm * No SIAB meeting in August. * September SIAB meeting: 23rd September 10-1pm * October SIAB meeting: 28th October 10-1pm please note the change of the date to enable the Changemakers to attend. |