

Minutes

SEND Improvement & Assurance Board Meeting 26th February 2025

1	INTRODUCTIONS & MINUTES The Chair welcomed everyone to the SEND Improvement and Assurance Board meeting. Introductions were made and apologies given. The Chair reiterated the expectations that everyone in attendance read all the agenda papers prior to the meeting. The minutes from January SIAB were accepted as a correct record.	
2.	ACTIONS & DECISION LOG The action log was reviewed and updated. Action 56: Creation of a Blog. Blog has been recorded and is currently undergoing the quality assurance process. Once completed, it will be ready to go live within the next week. Action 46: Communications to promote Parent/Carer Forum. It was agreed to discuss outside of the Board meeting whether this action is still applicable or can be marked as complete. The outcome will be confirmed at the next Board meeting in March. It was confirmed that the action in relation to young people feeling supported when they attend Board can be closed.	

	<p>Action 50: Sharing testimonies with the Board. Agreed this will be followed up with CAMHS and will be reported at the next board.</p> <p>Action 69: Young People's input on Community Safety Planning. The initial meeting has taken place, but further work is needed. This will be progressed within two weeks.</p> <p>Action 57: SEND Delivery Group. It was confirmed that this action is continuing to make progress and has moved into a stable delivery group. The date will be aligned with the Board dates and should be completed by April's Board meeting. Attendance will be in line with the focus and priority of the group.</p> <p>It was reflected that it would be helpful to have action being brought to the Board with a full update of activities to ensure better use of time and for there to be colour-coding used in the status column for ease.</p> <p>Action 40: Scout Stirling to conduct work with young people to understand their objectives and needs regarding the Good Health Offer. Further work needs to be undertaken to progress this.</p> <p>A glossary has been included and there is the intention to continue with this in future reports. The action will remain open to ensure its effectiveness.</p> <p>An update on the action related to ensuring good attendance and participation at the Circles of Influence event was provided. There is a need to find a new date for the event which will likely be in May.</p>	
3	<p>Contributions from, and engagement with, Children and Young People</p> <p><u>Presentation</u></p> <p>The update presentation was given which included feedback from the young people on the December Stocktake. This month, they focused on assessment wait times and the SEND Strategy. Additionally, there are questions for the Board that require answers.</p> <p>December Stocktake feedback: The feedback from the Stocktake was well received by our young people. They commented that it was pleasing to hear themselves being mentioned and they are happy that their contributions are being recognised. One of the concerns raised by the young people is that when Ofsted visits their school, they feel that the improvements made by the school are only maintained for the inspection and then subsequently abandoned. The young people are relating their own experiences to SEND Improvement work.</p>	

This was brought to the attention of the Board to ensure reassurance that the improvements will be maintained and not dropped.

Assessment wait times:

The proposed plan with the Change Makers to assign a caseworker for families waiting for assessments was discussed. This idea was well received; they appreciated the consistency a caseworker would bring. However, they expressed concerns about whether this plan would actually be implemented.

Feedback from the young people:

- They would like adults to follow through on their commitments.
- They want everything to be explained clearly.
- They prefer adults not to make promises they cannot keep.
- They seek reassurance that professionals are doing their best, even if it means sending clear email updates.
- They want the work done by adults to make a meaningful difference.
- They would like external professionals to conduct assessments, rather than their own teachers.
- They will know it is working when their day-to-day experiences become easier.

A session plan based on ideas from the young people has been created. This work has been delivered to Milwood School Council, both SEND Youth Clubs, and the Changer Makers group (approximately 35 young people, aged 4-25).

The session plan will be continuously delivered to other cohorts, including schools. There are plans to hold a co-production day with some Board members during the spring holidays.

Some findings so far:

- The young people were asked what qualities they would like to see from the Board. They mentioned that they want honest and truthful answers, consistent regardless of the audience. They also want the Board to give young people credit and thank them for their contributions.

Young people's questions to the Board, aimed at wait times for assessments:

- Why are the wait times for assessments so long? Our young people assume it is related to funding.
- Why is there not enough communication about the wait times?
- They would like someone from CAMHS to speak with them about the funding received for assessments.
- They feel that assessments are not a priority. Why have they been left to feel this way?

	<p>The Change Makers group would like someone from CAMHS to attend their meeting to hear about their experience with CAMHS. The young people would like to have a better understanding of the process after assessment has taken place and know what the next steps are.</p> <p>The young people have expressed interest in having an Instagram page to stay updated on SIAB and to hear from professionals. This is currently being explored Although no deadline has been set, it is part of an ongoing project. Once there is a clear understanding of how to implement this, a comprehensive update will be provided to both the young people and Board Members.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The feedback provided by young people into a "You Said, We Did" document. Due date: March 2. CAMHS attendance to a session to answer questions on waiting times and communication to be arranged. Due date: May 3. A session on what a SEND support plan is to be arranged. Due date: May 4. There will be work undertaken to ensure the written response to young people's questions are in a child-friendly format. Due date: April 5. Health representatives to respond to the young persons' questions in time for their next meeting which will take place in the next 2 weeks. Due date: March 	
4	<p>Governance - Risk Register</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>The Risk Register was reviewed, concentrating on the overdue items. There needs to be consideration for the Board to agree on reducing the risk ratings.</p> <p>Risk item 3: Communications capacity. It was recommended that this action can be closed, however would like to keep this open a little while longer to ensure that the new colleagues in this area are supported to deliver the work required. This risk remains RAG as red as the other Communication Workstream risks are interconnected.</p> <p>Risk item 8: EPS service specification co-production. The first engagement session has been undertaken – for parents to see psychologists, a survey has been completed; feedback will be obtained and assurance that regular meetings are scheduled.</p> <p>Risk item 22: 12-into-13 solution. There is a delay as preferred digital solution is not possible, so there is work being undertaken on an alternative solution. There will be a Transition charter developed and rolled out targeting</p>	

	<p>summer term. A full update will be shared with the Board appropriately.</p> <p>Other items covered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Gaps: Acknowledged as a high-priority risk due to ongoing challenges in effectively reaching stakeholders. • Workforce Sufficiency: Highlighted as a critical area requiring attention, particularly around recruitment, retention, and informal workforce support. • Local Offer Updates: Identified as a risk due to the lack of consistent updates and accessibility issues. • Governance and Co-ordination: ensuring all partners are aligned and contributing effectively to shared goals. <p>The Chair enquired if the Board thought anything was missing from the Risk Register following the updates and if any issues needed escalating today. No concerns were reported.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communication gaps to remain flagged as a high-priority risk until significant progress is made, this item will be reviewed monthly and update provided to Board members. Due date: April 2. Workforce sufficiency risk to be addressed through the updated workforce strategy in April's Board Meeting. Due date: April 3. Immediate focus on ensuring the Local Offer is accurate, accessible, and regularly updated. An update will be provided via the Priority Impact Plan (PIP) 2 & PIP4 reports. Due date: May 4. Draft strategy documents (communication and workforce) to be presented at March Board meeting for further review. Due date: March 5. Improvement of direct communication with young people and families by exploring options for a mailing system to improve newsletter distribution and tracking, ensuring that communication materials are accessible in multiple languages. An update will be provided with in the AFI1 Communications report for Theme 1. Due date: April 	
5	<p>Theme 1 strategy updates</p> <p><u>Presentation</u></p> <p>A recap of the feedback from the last meeting, where the Chair and CEO indicated that the developmental reports required further updates.</p> <p>SEND Strategy 1-pager:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An initial development session was held, including with BURY2GETHER 	

There was agreement on the shape of the strategy, along with other SEND strategies and agreed on a framework, the content, slides, doing a survey on the major issues parents want to reflect.

Communication Strategy Update

- Progress on the Communication strategy was discussed; with a meeting that took place on 1st February.
- There was acknowledgment of the need to have more people in the room, and gaps in direct communication with practitioners and families.
- There was agreement to improve Local Offer updates and explore better mailing systems.
- The importance of co-production was emphasised and giving regular updates to stakeholders: co-production will still be central, working up the co-production scale through the stages of development.

Discussion

Feedback from SIAB:

- The communication approach needs to enable two-way communication between Bury and families.
- Bury needs to ensure that it has all of the right people involved from across the partnership, and that clear roles are assigned.
- There was discussion that the communications group needs to meet regularly – initially monthly. This has been actioned.
- There was discussion on the need to ensure newsletters are created in a timely way but also that there are limitations to newsletters.
- Accessibility was discussed at length, including a need to consider different languages, and specific cultures such as Orthodox Jewish communities.
- Board members highlighted that there is work in progress to look at co-ordinating an information day for specific communities with Manchester and Stockport colleagues, recognising that certain communities are often well connected across a wider Greater Manchester geography.
- We need to understand collectively the highlights that we want to share as part of the communications
- Newsletter should be dynamic digital interactions across communities
- Next comms group meeting is 12th March

Presentation

Workforce Strategy Update

- The workforce strategy has been rewritten with a tighter focus.
- The remaining gaps were identified in the meeting, particularly around informal workforce support and retention strategies.

Action:

	<p>1. Finalise and present a draft workforce strategy. Due date: March</p> <p>Develop a plan to improve the accessibility of the Local Offer, ensuring that it is engaging, up to date, accessible to all communities (e.g. thinking about language requirements and cultural considerations); to be co-developed connecting in with key community representatives to do this. Due date: April</p>	
6	<p>Focus on Theme 2 (Combined PIP 2, PIP3, PIP6.1)</p>	
	<p><u>Presentation</u></p> <p>The report format has been updated following feedback at the last SIAB; taking the opportunity to reshape the report on actions and impacts metrics. SIAB approved the new format. The reports now combine a number of PIPs into a single report in-line with a key theme; in this case the theme is focused on early identification, support while waiting and initial assessment.</p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>Building an awareness of what support is available from across all partners and how and when it can be accessed should be a priority for this area.</p> <p>Need to consider further how SENCOs need to be supported; the feedback from schools is that there is still much more to do and suggested that Case Workers need to work closely with SENCOs.</p> <p>It was highlighted that this isn't within the role of Case Workers but that there is a programme of Support available to SENCOs including training and guidance, and specialist staff that they have access to (e.g. Trainee Psychologist post).</p> <p>Many parents do not know who to go to when there are challenges. There was an acknowledgement that addressing people's needs should be person-centred both in thinking about children's needs and their parents. There is a need to have more direct and real-time feedback with parents so that the partnership is able to 'keep on the pulse' of what parents are thinking, feeling and experiencing. This is important to ensure that parents understand the reason that activity is taking place e.g. understand that reviews are about ensuring support meets a child's needs, and where possible will be looking to support them to be as independent as possible.</p> <p>Priority Impact Plan 3</p> <p>It was stated that the biggest issue within pre-assessment support is waiting times. Previously, there was no commissioned service/ pathway for ASD, however this has now been secured for 25/26.</p>	

	<p>It was confirmed that the Community Paediatrics services work is continuing. The Neurodevelopmental Pathway and toolkit is being taken forward through the Greater Manchester program, which will deliver much more than the original scope. It has however caused a delay in the original timeframes as a bigger programme of work is being mobilised. Further links will be made so that there is more co-production.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A review of the current offer to SENCOs and identify opportunities to further develop this to ensure the offer is tailored to local needs; working with SENCOs and schools will be completed. Due date: May 	
7	<p>Neuropathway Survey</p> <p>Presentation</p> <p>A survey was undertaken by BURY2GETHER of the members and completed last Summer; covering education, social care, communications. A set of recommendations was developed following the completion of this survey.</p> <p>Recommendations provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A need for guidance or approved suppliers to enable a right-to-choose assessor for Bury under-18s. NHS colleagues updated that this was not within the remit to be able to signpost to suppliers. • Both Autism and ADHD are considered in discussions with parents/carers during the referral process, but not currently assessed for at the same time, which causes delays and inefficiencies. NHS colleagues agreed that there is an opportunity here, and that it could be picked up at the co-design workshop for this pathway. • Money was previously granted to CAHMS for the neuropathway in 2024 for the increase of staff. Parents wanted to understand what additional capacity had been added to the service using this money. NHS colleagues updated to correct this as the money provided was to expand the pathway to older children up to 18, and this has been done. • Parents are unclear on the neuropathway. It was agreed that alternative/additional communications would be looked at, for example, a diagrammatic pathway to be added to the Local Offer. • Parents are not receiving updates or regular communication when waiting for CAHMS/Paediatrics pathways – simple elements such as updating on progress through a waiting list have a big positive impact for parents. It was recognised by the SIAB that improvements in this area are important. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Due to time remaining, a number of recommendations were not discussed – it was agreed that these would be taken forward outside of the SIAB and key items for decision to be brought back for a fuller discussion at the next meeting. <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that the feedback from the BURY2GETHER report is fed into the Greater Manchester process. Due date: May 2. Work with operational teams to implement improvements to the process of keeping families updated. Due date: May 3. Work with the Communications workstream to provide further updates on the Local Offer on the Pathway Due date: May 	
10	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	<p>Plans for the 12 months Stocktake will be brought to the next Board.</p> <p>Deep Dive date is 11th March – focusing on Graduated Approach</p>	
11	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	<p>All meetings, unless stated otherwise, occur 10am-1pm in the Town Hall on the following dates:</p> <p>26th March 29th April 28th May 24th June 22nd July 23rd September 21st October 25th November 15th December</p>	