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Department of Children & Young People



Minutes

SEND Improvement & Assurance Board Meeting

27th November 2024

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| 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.  Correction to October minutes recirculated, page 12- a bespoke paper was suggested to cover AP and EOTAS AFI’.  The minutes from October SIAB were otherwise accepted as a correct record. The Chair added that the redacted minutes for the Local Offer will be agreed after the minutes have been agreed at SIAB. |  |
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| 2. | **ACTIONS & DECISION LOG** |  |
|  | The action log was reviewed and updated. PPL confirmed support of maintaining the action log and completion of actions.   * Action 21- SIAB members to make a portrait by the next Board meeting. Example template can be found in SIAB youth presentation. The Chair reminded all members to submit their portraits as this is a priority request from the young people and this shows commitment from Board members. * Action 28- Newsletter to be distributed for the first week of October. This has happened. * Action 48- Review of the process with communications role and update the Board in November. The communications role has now been progressed, and interviews commence from the week starting 02/12/2024. There is a new HR business partner who will be supporting the communications role. * Action 52- All Board members are invited to attend the Circle of Influence Board on February 28th, 2025. The Chair emphasised the importance of Board attendance for the Circle of Influence which is focusing on SEND on 28th February 2024.   The rest of the actions were updated outside of the Board meeting as the Chair requested.  Progress is being made in relation to a blog/video. The use of a video has been advocated by the young people. The videos are to provide summaries following SIAB meetings.  The Chair affirmed that the minutes of the Board are completed and distributed within a week and requested that the videos align with this, one video is for the blog and the other for the young people. The Chair suggested that Board members take turns on creating the videos.  **Action**- Co-ordination of producing the videos for the blog/young people. |  |
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| 3 | **Contributions from, and engagement with, Children and Young People** |  |
|  | It is really important that we hear what children and young people are saying and that the SIAB remain focused on children’s experiences. It is essential that we achieve sustainable positive outcomes for the children and young people of Bury. The young people shared their thoughts. Highlights from the presentation were:   * The young people have changed their group name from SIAB Young People’s Working Group to the ‘Changemakers’. * Most questions from young people are around how schools will be improved. * Feedback from the young people found that those in mainstream schools were less interested in hobbies such as sports and preferred comforting activities such as sleeping or listening to music. * The young people suggested more 1:1 consultations with existing professional adults and to be able to share their pupil passports with them. * Feedback on ambitions found that young people in mainstream schools were less ambitious than those in specialist provisions who had broader goals. A common trend was that they felt their additional needs were a barrier to achieving their goals as they do not have confidence in workplaces being able to accommodate their needs. The young people want to understand what help is available for them. * The young people raised concerns around safety particularly on public transport. * A lot of young people expressed interest in the numerical data as it is easier for them to understand and process. * The young people would like more information on post school options. * Another concern raised was around bullying. The young people want to know what is being done about bullying and how that can affect people long term. * Some young people felt that parents, carers, and education staff do not understand them. They would like more support for people in their lives and more training on SEN support for staff. One young person mentioned that they had infrequent CAMHS appointments which were just for medication reviews and not for check ins. They also raised that parents are present for the appointments and some children would prefer to speak to professionals privately but are not given the option.   **Action**- This matter will be raised with PCFT on CAMHS to ensure children have the option to be seen individually.   * A young person had a recent EHCP review, updating everything since their last review in Year 7 (now 19 years old). They found the outdated information triggering but felt better after discussing their support system with a trusted adult. The feedback shows effective outreach but highlights issues with delays causing distress. * The young people want to lead SEN training for all professional bodies. The Changemakers training program is being progressed in the Spring term which is aimed to be launched in September 2025. * The young people stressed the need for early identification to ensure effective support. They pointed out that assessment wait times delay diagnoses and receiving support, which negatively impacts school attendance. This lack of support often leads to bullying due to them being misunderstood, causing some young people to avoid school. * Challenges the young people found with the SAIB reports were with acronyms, jargons, and titles. It was suggested a glossary to be added to reports so any new items can be added on.   **Action**- Report writers to create a glossary and keep it updated on all reports.   * The Youth Voice Network aims to gather feedback from young people for the upcoming Circles of Influence event in Bury. They plan to distribute a Google survey, share the session plan with all schools, and post polls and questions on social media to ensure a wide range of input.   Discussion   * Transport and bullying have been a repeated theme as it was included in the Circles of Influence last year. The Chair enquired about the other practices not covered by the SIAB, such as bullying, road safety, and transport and suggested that these issues should be addressed by the Children's Partnership Board.   **Action**- The governance around safety for young people in the Children’s Partnership will be discussed an update provided at the January SIAB.   * The Community Safety Partnership strategy is being updated - the importance of including neurodiversity in all community safety issues, including interactions with the police and other safety officers was highlighted. The Equality Impact Assessment for the Community Safety   Plan will need reviewing.  **Action**- Collaboration with the young people for input on Community Safety Planning.   * The concern about young people having a bleak outlook on their future, especially regarding accommodation was noted. There is uncertainty whether this view will persist in future meetings or if it is unique to this group. While many young people understand workforce expectations, they had doubts about receiving the required support in the workplace.   **Youth Voice Network 2025 dates:**   * January 7th 9.30-11.30 * March 3rd 9.30-11.30   **Changemakers 2025 dates:**   * January 21st time TBC * February 25th 5-6.30 (provisional) * March 25th 5-6.30 (provisional)   **February 28th 12-3 (Circles of Influence – full Board attendance required)** |  |
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| 4 | **Governance**   1. **Risk Register** 2. **Performance data** |  |
|  | 1. Risk Register  * The current risk register is based on existing reports and papers. These reports will continue to be reviewed for actions. This is in the process of consolidation, identifying similar risks across the Priority Action Plan reports using a strategic program, and any additional concerns can be flagged and incorporated into the process. PPL have suggested scoring each risk based on its likelihood of occurring and the potential impact if it does. These changes will be implemented in the coming weeks. Here's the revised version with a specified action: * The Chair requested key report writers to compile risks and collaborate with PPL to update the risk register. The Board was reminded that the risk register needs to be quality assured by December 4th for the Stocktake and finalised before the January SIAB.   **Action**- Key report writers must ensure the risk register is updated with PPL by December 4th.   1. Update on Performance data.  * **KPI Updates from the PIP**: Strong Key Stage 2 performance in 2024, fewer requests for EHCP assessments, attendance rates matching national peers, a slight rise in Elective Home Education (EHE), fewer complaints, a significant drop in new EHCPs for children aged 11 and older, and continued timely issuance of EHCPs.   **Exclusions and Suspensions**   * **Primary Schools**: Suspensions are low compared to peers, with some volatility for children with EHCPs. * **Secondary Schools**: Post-lockdown, suspensions increased, with Bury showing higher rates in Autumn 2023. Permanent exclusions also rose, especially for children with SEND. * **Maintained Special Schools**: Lower suspension and exclusion rates than national averages, reflecting the age profile and needs supported.   **EHCPs (Education, Health, and Care Plans)**   * **Trends and Data**: Requests for EHCPs have been decreasing since early 2024, with new EHCPs issued declining since mid-2023. The number of assessments at month-end has been falling since spring 2023. There is a continued rise in post-16 EHCPs, while numbers for under-5s and 10-to-15 year olds are levelling off. Growth in total EHCPs is driven by the 16+ and 5 to 10-year-old age bands. Requests to assess have fallen mainly for secondary school age children, with a slight fall for primary school age children offset by an increase in under-5s. New plans for children with SEMH have decreased, while EHCPs for Autism have increased and SLCN have slightly decreased.   Discussion   * The Chair emphasised the need to investigate the correlation between exclusions and suspensions at secondary schools, particularly focusing on whether the lack of support for diagnosed students is a contributing factor. * There was a suggestion that the data needs triangulating with the ICB and other partnerships to identify the reasons behind the rise in primary needs for autism. This approach could help determine if the increase is due to delayed diagnosis or early diagnosis. * The restructuring of their inclusion and outreach team and the implementation of a 24-hour multiagency inclusion helpline was discussed. The importance of evaluating the usefulness of this helpline and how it supports schools in a timely manner, rather than waiting until a crisis occurs was emphasised. Schools may not have previously had access to such support, and this initiative could begin to change that. |  |
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| 5 | **Priority Impact Plan (PIP) 4** |  |
|  | Update on Priority Impact Plan 4   * The report highlighted the importance of the improvement plan for preparing for adulthood. A recent deep dive, supported by the DFE, provided an updated and detailed analysis of the PfA cohort, showing that children with EHCPs generally perform better than those at SEN support. The report emphasised the need to focus on areas where progress is lacking and to align priorities. It was noted that while individual services can articulate their PfA offers, there is a need for better coordination across education, health, and social care. Next steps include establishing clear pathways for children with and without EHCPs, ensuring these pathways are well-communicated and visually mapped out. * One of the challenging areas identified is ensuring that every child with an Education, Health, and Care Plan has a comprehensive Preparing for Adulthood plan. The focus is on beginning from Year 9 onwards. The annual review process should include up-to-date assessments and advice for those approaching Year 9, ensuring these details are incorporated into the plan and reflect the young person's aspirations. * During the phase of annual review recovery for EHCPs, specific phases of recovery are targeted, particularly for Year 11 and Year 14 students. The goal is for every child and young person from these year groups to have a PfA plan by March 31, 2025, as part of their statutory plan. A further mapping session is scheduled for early December to bring all partners together, collaborate on pathways, and identify gaps. * Following the deep dive session, some action areas need to be revisited and broken down further. This will help identify detailed impact measures and better assess how well things are going in those specific areas. * The Chair mentioned that the audit work needs to be completed before December to provide a clearer understanding and to stay on target.   Discussion   * The importance of the deep dive for the next steps, highlighting good practices at both individual and service levels was emphasized as was the the need to effectively communicate Bury's successes and identify gaps. Regular deep dives were suggested to help understand pressure points and short-term goals, providing a mechanism to unpick tasks and set realistic targets and metrics. The Chair discussed how some of the information could be used to communicate the strategy and actions. The upcoming Stock take in December will provide an opportunity to review and identify necessary changes and updates to the metrics. * A discussion took place about the communication support, highlighting the roles of Bury's practical communications and engagement officer and the children's communications manager, who provides overarching support for communications leadership in children's services. She emphasized the need to review the infrastructure and baseline communication framework to work collectively with SIAB members, aiming to effectively articulate the story to identify with young people. * The importance of maintaining focus on the ambition of young people for the future and need to translate this ambition into effective and timely actions for the young people through an action plan to measure the impact was again highlighted. The Board received assurance that the work is progressing well, focusing on setting measurable targets for leads and the delivery group. * The Board agreed with the Chair's suggestion to use percentages when presenting statistical data in reports, and vice versa, to improve clarity and understanding. * The Chair noted that while there are good provisions available, they aren't reaching enough young people, possibly because young people feel they lack pathways into employment, education, or training. Expanding these provisions is crucial. A Supported Internship event with providers and young people took place - the event emphasised the importance of access to provisions and the outcomes achieved. It also highlighted the evolving role of technology and the need for pathways that support young people's transition to adulthood, including travel and technology development. * The Chair added that the aspirations should be shaped by the young people to be delivered by the professionals. * The Chair requested thematic work for all school heads to collaborate on the effect of Priority Impact actions in Preparation for Adulthood.   **Action**- There will be a focus on Priority impact thematic work with all secondary school head teachers in the next BASH (Bury Association of Secondary Head teachers) meeting in March.   * An information sheet for parents/carers to think about what they need is being developed. |  |
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| 6 | **Priority Impact Plan (PIP) 5** |  |
|  | Update on Priority Impact Plan 5.   * The implementation and evolution of the'6into7' program, which helps transition students from primary to secondary school was discussed. The program is currently in place and is supported by the multi-disciplinary nursing team. Some schools have not adopted this and stuck to traditional methods. The education delivery group is working with schools to ensure the program is more than just a tech tool, aiming for longer and more appropriate transitions. The goal is to use the program more effectively in the upcoming transition period (May, June, and July) for students moving from year 6 to year 7. This approach aims to streamline information sharing while improving transition quality for students. * The co-production of best practice tools, mapping nursing services against the I-thrive model, health visiting services, and therapist roles is in progress. Co-production events, including an October transitional workshop and upcoming Circles of Influence in December, are focused on this area. Once internal co-production is clear, collaboration with Bury2gether and wider colleagues will add to the local offer as outlined in the plan. * The EOTAS policy has been a major focus, with work ongoing since the summer term. Six parental events have been held to review the draft policy, which still needs some reordering, rewording, and addressing specific issues. Although behind schedule, the aim is to finalise it by the end of the term. Training for local authority officers on EOTAS, EHC, and Section 19 has been conducted, with plans for further sessions once the policy is complete. Improvements have been made to the panel process, resulting in greater clarity internally. Efforts are also underway to include the voices of EOTAS young people by collaborating with providers who work with these communities. * Oversight of young people in Alternative Provision (AP) by Local Authorities was improved through enhanced training, new guidance, and centralised oversight. The AP strategy has increased providers, but further work is needed to focus on short-term, preventive packages, involving collaboration with schools and parents, to be completed in about a month. * The meeting on transition points with providers resulted with continuing the early years pilot and are planning a new pilot for transitions from Year 12 to Year 13. The education team is working on next year's offer, focusing on supporting children through various educational transitions, not just through digital solutions but also through effective processes. A meeting is scheduled within the next two weeks to finalise plans. * The transition pathways for children's support by health visitors are on track, with development and review processes nearing completion. * The multi-disciplinary team for children's support has been successfully embedded. * Health services have started engaging 14-year-olds in transition conversations. An audit will assess the quality of these conversations to ensure they positively impact outcomes for children and young people.   Discussion   * The Chair emphasised the need to include a time scale in reports to ensure accountability and prevent items from being overlooked. * The Chair established with the Board that from January the focus will be on the impact as it has been the actions so far. * A question was raised about the impact on young people-how do these health transition measures integrate into EHCPs and annual reviews? There's an opportunity to expand beyond a single agency response, especially for complex transitions. How can we ensure these measures are effectively incorporated and beneficial? * There hasn't been much difference with the ‘6into7’ program. There has been significant improvements as a result of the digital solution facilitating better information sharing between schools. Despite some schools not participating due to existing strong mechanisms, the program's rapid implementation and integration have been beneficial. There is a need for a system-wide approach. * The audit needs to ensure that all Health professionals are engaging with 14-year-olds. The Chair responded by emphasising the importance of measuring impact over the next several months and ensuring that actions are backed by concrete steps to achieve high-level outcomes which will show in the audit. |  |
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| 7 | **Priority Impact plan (PIP) 6** |  |
|  | Update on Priority Impact Plan 6   * The improvements in timely advice from professionals, particularly in social care, and the functionality of the SEND portal was highlighted. Despite challenges with the data system, efforts are being made to fully utilise its capabilities for statutory assessments and annual reviews. Historically, there has been a reliance on Excel spreadsheets, which is inefficient for managing many education health care plans. Work is in progress to transition to the new system, ensuring compliance and improving the quality of assessments and decision-making. However, progress has been slowed by a recent system update and the need to manage annual reviews accurately. The Board is assured that the challenges are recognised, and steps are being taken to address them within the set timelines. * The Quality Assurance protocol has been initiated in draft form to evaluate its effectiveness. The Invision 360 digital auditing tool has been insightful and useful, though challenges have arisen in training and partnership engagement, with no social care presence in training sessions. Assurance on partnership engagement is sought, and a review of audit membership at both multiagency and single agency levels is proposed. The draft protocol should continue, focusing on face-to-face multi-agency case reviews rather than face-to-face multiagency audits on just the EHCP. This approach aims to comprehensively understand the child's journey, from pre-statutory assessment to current placement, ensuring their needs are met effectively. It was proposed to the Board to continue with the draft protocol and implement multiagency case reviews in the audit.   Discussion   * The Board agreed on the proposal to continue with the draft protocol. The risk of overemphasising EHCPs and plans in the QA processes, which can neglect the broader realities of a child's lived experience was highlighted as was the importance of a balanced approach that includes the contributions of all agencies. It was proposed to involve the Changemakers, which the Chair agreed with. There is the need to involve the Parent Carer Forum and children to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences. The importance of ensuring EHCPs are compliant while also focusing on the child's overall journey and outcomes to improve services was also noted. * Work is ongoing to embed the voice of the child and a person-centered planning approach, not just at the EHCP stage but throughout the graduated approach. Training and development for the education healthcare team continue as part of a rolling program, with recruitment underway to increase team capacity. Senior officers and EHC case officers are being recruited, with the parent carer forum involved in the interview question process. Additional agency posts are being created to bring in specialist support, addressing recruitment challenges and ensuring continued progress. * The Chair expressed concern about the lack of Children’s Social Care involvement, noting the absence of Social Care representation at the meeting. This was highlighted as a significant gap, and the Chair proposed escalating the issue which was agreed by the Board. The Chair also requested data from on children with EHCP and SEN support who are open to social care, with a focus on this data in January SIAB. * It was recommended to break down data into smaller, more detailed segments would help the Board understand the extensive work being done. This was agreed - emphasising the need to improve the annual review cycle's effectiveness. The quality of older EHCPs is often lower due to outdated advice, highlighting the importance of focusing on the quality of new assessments. The challenges of using the current system effectively and the need to improve the annual review process were also mentioned. Measures are underway to address key stage transfers and build capacity within the team, with a strong emphasis on improving the quality of EHCPs and integrating various priority actions. PPL will provide support in breaking down data. |  |
| 8 | **Workforce strategy and Communications- Area for Improvement 3** |  |
|  | Update on the Workforcestrategy and Communications- Area for Improvement 3   * The target within the PIP is to have a development plan and training in place by March. Progress is on track, with a draft strategy discussion expected by January and a developmental plan and training to follow. The strategy focuses on a shared approach, planning, and learning opportunities to strengthen workforce development across the organisation. The draft strategy will be circulated in the December stock take, with a final version for consideration. This will be revisited in the January SIAB. |  |
| 9 | **Areas of Improvement 1- Communications** |  |
|  | Update on the Areas of Improvement 1- Communications   * There is a new interim Head of Communications and recruitment for a SEND Communications Manager is taking place. * The October SEND Local Offer Newsletter outlines improvement plans and key contacts for parents and carers. * A draft strategy will be circulated in December, with a final version expected in January. The strategy aims to ensure that families feel safe, respected, healthy, included, and heard, with a focus on improving EHCP processes and transitions. The next steps include refining metrics and co-producing an engagement plan with partners. * It was suggested that forming a small working group from existing SIAB members to focus on communications actions would be helpful. * The Chair emphasised the importance of having representatives to ensure all voices are heard and all input is considered as a partnership as well as the input form young people. The Chair suggested including non-SIAB members, such as team members, to provide support.   **Action**- An email to be sent to teams to involve other staff in the SIAB communications action group. |  |
| 10 | **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**  SIAB Evaluation  Plans for Stocktake |  |
|  | SIAB Evaluation   * The self-evaluation tool has been developed and will be shared with all members following this meeting. The Chair requested all members to contribute feedback by 4th December and will follow up individually ahead of the Stocktake.   Plans for Stocktake   * The Stocktake aims to evaluate how well the partnership has achieved its goals in the impact plan, providing an opportunity to celebrate successes and identify future actions. This is scheduled for December 10th from 9:30 to 12:30. * The agenda will be sent out next week. Evidence to be received by Tuesday, December 3rd. * The Chair discussed the importance of reflective sessions and suggested using a refined template from January, focusing more on impacts. A summary report of the first six months will be included in new reports to ensure information is not lost. Additional work in January will involve updating the priority impact plan with partner agreement, refining impact measures, and setting expectations for the next three to six months, leading up to the 18-month monitoring visit by CQC and DfE. * Reports will change to quarterly from January with two reports per Board meeting if agreed as a result of the Stocktake. |  |
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| 11 | **DATE OF NEXT MEETING** |  |
|  | 10th December 09.00 - 12.30pm Stocktake  22nd January 10.00- 13.00pm- venue: Unsworth Academy  26th February 10.00 – 13.00pm |  |