

Draft Minutes of Northumberland Parent Carer Professional Forum (PCPF)

Venue: Stannington Village Hall

Date: Thursday 9 May 10.30-12.30

PRESENT:	Alison Bravey (Minutes), Claire Brown, Helen Cowens, Alan Carrick, Mark Cusack, Kath Lennon, Julia Lyford, Amanda Richardson, Elizabeth Richardson (Chair), Doris Ross, Jacquie Simpson, Nicola Strachan
APOLOGIES:	Debbie Bakkali, Mark Bagott, Karen Carnaffin, Stephanie Cole, Helen Elliott, Sarah Hanlon, Andy Johnson, Dorothy Lewis, Eileen Robinson, Gill Turner

ITEM	DESCRIPTION OF DISCUSSION	ACTION BY
1.	<p>Welcome and introductions Mark Cusack, Passenger Transport Manager, and Claire Brown, Senior Manager, Partnerships and Resources, Education and Skills, were welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Claire's role includes coordinating work around the SEND Reforms, particularly with regard to preparation for the local area inspection, and ensuring that the Local Authority is better meeting the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice.</p>	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting: Agreed	
3.	<p>Matters Arising:</p> <p>Northumberland MAG (Multi-Agency Group) Autism: Meeting held on April 20 at Autism Northumberland, to discuss next steps for the group and review its purpose. Meetings to continue with Mark Bagott as Chair and Lesley Cole as Secretary: next meeting 22 June at Autism Northumberland. The group now has good parent representation.</p> <p>Lynn Bryden, Senior Manager for Commissioning, had been invited to join this group, but did not feel that this would be part of her role. It was suggested that a Health Commissioner be invited to discuss concerns around provision; e.g. for speech and language, and sensory needs. The Autism Working Group was mentioned as a link for the group. It was also noted that the Strategic Adult Autism Group was being reinstated and would be meeting on 17 May. Julia Lyford to check with Alan Curry, the Commissioner for Adult Disability, whether he will be part of this group. Elizabeth Richardson to find out who has been invited and share at the next Forum meeting.</p> <p>CYPS: In It Together have invited CYPS managers to the Forum meetings, but no one has got back to them. Some parents feel that the CYPS service is not meeting the needs of their children. The system is often a case of diagnose and discharge with no therapeutic support offered. It can be difficult to find the right person to speak to, especially at crisis points. Elizabeth to re-invite the CYPS manager to Forum meetings.</p> <p>Discussion: The Barnardos' Cygnet programme, aimed at the parents of children with ASD, was mentioned. The LISTs (Locality Inclusion Support Teams) are commissioned to provide this training and the age range has been extended to cover children from 5 to 18 years. There is an application form and flyer for parents. Parents need support where they have issues with their child at home and this training can make a big difference to them. Daslne (the database of children on the autistic spectrum in the north east) also has a new website with useful information.</p> <p>Early Years entitlement: the previous minutes were not clear about the fact that parents can use the Early Years entitlement over a longer period of time than 38 weeks (known as 'stretch entitlement'). Minutes to be amended to reflect this.</p>	<p>JL</p> <p>ER</p> <p>ER</p> <p>AB</p>

	<p>Carers Guidance Team: Elizabeth to circulate the electronic versions of Janice Gerard's presentations. It was noted that there is no obligation for schools to work with the Careers Guidance Team. Schools have autonomy, but can request support from the team. There was a recent careers event in Northumberland with stalls representing a range of providers/services. Young people from six of the Northumberland special schools were invited.</p> <p>Discussion: Julia commented that there was a mismatch between some of the schools attending and what was on offer at the event. Stalls were marked with a smiley face if they were supposed to be disability friendly, but some were still not accessible to young people with certain disabilities; e.g. the interactive resources used. Claire requested that Julia email her a bullet pointed list of her impressions of the day so she can feed this back to the Adult Learning and Careers Guidance Teams</p>	<p>ER</p> <p>JL/CB</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Feedback from In It Together locality meetings: The Northumberland SEND Survey for parents and future changes to home to school transport for children/young people with SEND were discussed at all of the meetings.</p> <p>West Northumberland: Carers Assessments: issue raised about parent/carers' right to have an assessment of their needs (linked with new legislation in the Care Act). Some parents who had requested an assessment through a mainstream social worker had been told that the social worker was not aware of this.</p> <p>Discussion: Doris clarified the criteria for entitlement of a carer's assessment. This would be when the child/young person's needs require over and above the support it would be expected of a parent to provide for their child. This would have to be substantial. If a child is allocated to the Disabled Children Team, the parent may be offered a separate carer's assessment or this may be done as part of a holistic family plan. Doris suggested that Michele O'Brien from Carers Northumberland be invited to the Forum meeting to provide further information and clarification. Legislation and policies need to be lined up. There is a Carers Assessment policy in draft form. It was noted that an assessment doesn't automatically entitle a carer to provision.</p> <p>SEND Processes – some parents experience significant difficulties with having their child's needs addressed. There are often no reported problems at school and the child was achieving academically. However, at home the child has major meltdowns. The role of the Hub and referrals to the Hub was queried.</p> <p>Discussion: Kath Lennon to provide a crib sheet about the Hubs for In It Together to disseminate to parents. It was noted that In It Together has commissioned the LISTs (Locality Inclusion Support Teams) to provide training for parents, focusing on how to deal with the after school 'melt-downs'. Previous co-produced training events with In It Together and the LISTs on Friendship Skills/Anxiety have been very well received by the parents who attended, indicating that there is a definite need for this type of training for families. The issue of ensuring 'School Readiness' was also discussed. It is important that parents are aware of what should be done to prepare their child for starting school and that the child, school and family are all need to ready for the transition. A working group is to be set up to explore all the different aspects of this.</p> <p>South East/Central: low turnout at the meeting and no specific issues raised.</p> <p>North Northumberland: SEND processes: issue around parents not being kept informed about what is happening for their child; e.g., whether an application has been submitted for top-up funding.</p>	<p>ER</p> <p>KL/ER</p>

Discussion: New SEND processes and paperwork should mean that parents' views are at the heart of arrangements for meeting their child's needs. Previously there was no defined section for parent/carers views. Now their views will be obtained in writing as part of the application. Signed parental consent is required on the form so parents will see the evidence provided by the school. This step will be completed prior to the EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) process. It was noted that the paperwork had to be produced much more quickly than the Local Authority would have liked and parents have not been central to this process. A future aim is to have good quality consultation and co-production with parents for paperwork/systems that are put in place.

The new system for schools requesting higher needs top up funding or an EHC needs assessment includes a multi-disciplinary meeting prior to the request being submitted. The parent/carer will be invited and theirs and the child/young person's views will be included as part of the evidence. Parents will be a central part of the discussion regarding the next steps for the child or young person. There will be a Lead Professional to provide an objective view. The notes from the meeting will form part of the application. When parents and carers are contacted by the Local Authority for their views if an Education, Health and Care needs assessment is going ahead, they can either agree to the Local Authority using the information already provided or they can add to the information they have already given. The aim is for a "tell us once" approach. The new paperwork has been shared with SENCOs, Head Teachers and private providers and will be used from now on.

Discussion: It was queried how this process links into the EHA (Early Help Assessment) process. Who is the Lead Professional? The concern raised was that the EHA form might involve services having a view about the 'dys-functionality' of a family; e.g. violence of a young person towards their parents, domestic abuse. What happens next when those types of issues are raised? It was explained that although EHAs may be part of the process for moving toward a child or young person with SEND receiving top up funding or an EHC needs assessment being agreed, but the EHA process has a much wider function, e.g. may be used by social work teams where there is a social care, but not an SEND need. The EHC process is a separate process.

It was also queried how the child's views would be obtained. There has been a lot of work around Person Centred Planning with the SEND Team. There is flexibility about how the child's views can be obtained; e.g. the One Page Profile. SENCOs to be briefed/trained in obtaining the views of parents and carers as well as children and young people. It was noted that the SEND survey showed that some parents and carers didn't know who their SENCO is.

Transferring LDAs (Learning Difficulties Assessments) into EHCPs – e.g. for out of area college placements, The Transition regulations state that LDAs will be transferred when requested by the young person (or their parents/carers if the young person lacks mental capacity).

The funding system for post-16 education is complicated. It is governed by the national funding regulations. For young people up to 18 years, higher needs top up can be provided by Local Authorities, where appropriate. For young people over 19 years the regulator is the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). It covers young people with low, middle and high level SEND; except where the young person has an EHCP, where the funding would be through the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

An added difficulty is that the young person may not know what choices they have for further education and what their support needs may be until they have got their exam results for Year 11. If they are undergoing an EHC needs assessment, the providers will get the funding through the EFA. The national threshold for Element 2 support is £6000, but providers can't draw down this money. The Element 1 (£5000) and

	<p>Element 2 funding (£6,000) amounts to around £11,000. The EFA states that their funding must not be spent on learners over 19 years unless they have an EHCP. The Local Authority will be meeting with further education providers to discuss this issue with funding and how to resolve it.</p> <p>The SFA is not providing funding at present so the only way to get additional funding is through an EHCP. The implication of this is that there would need to be a 20 week assessment process even if the top-up is for as little as £100. The national policy is that the SFA should fund up to £19,000 worth of SEND support. £19,000 plus £5000 place funding represents £24,000 of funding in total. However, providers are being told to seek funding from the EFA through the young person having an EHCP. This creates tensions in the system and puts added pressure on the Local Authority SEND budgets, which are already overstretched. It was noted that there are planned changes to the funding system and the SFA may not continue as an agency.</p>	
5.	<p>Transport Update – Mark Cusack, Passenger Transport Manager</p> <p>Background information: Procurement regulations require the Local Authority to periodically re-tender for transport contracts for children going to special schools in Northumberland, North Tyneside and Newcastle. There is a requirement to re-tender for services which involve the use of public money. Last done in 2011 and the contracts are due to expire this year. At that time it was all completed in one go, which proved to be too much, so this time the implementation is being staggered area by area.</p> <p>Key dates for contracts to be in place:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Beginning of the academic year 6 September 2016: The Grove School, Berwick; Barndale House, Alnwick; Priory School, Hexham 2. 3 January 2017: Cluster of special schools in south east Northumberland: Atkinson House School; Cleaswell Hill; Hillcrest; the Dales; Collingwood; The Centre, Northumberland Church of England Academy 3. 24 April 2017: special schools outside of Northumberland: Percy Hedley, Talbot House School; Northern Counties, etc. <p>Home to school transport arrangements do change over a period of time; e.g. as children move through school there are ad hoc changes to routes. “Clean sheet” starting point before re-tendering exercise to ensure best value for money. A general letter about the review is sent to parents and head teachers. The review does not include children/young people with Statements or EHCPs who attend mainstream schools or further education colleges. Mark acknowledged that it had been an oversight that the Local Authority had not let In It Together know about the review.</p> <p>The letter outlines the reasons for the need to re-tender and asks parents for feedback on current transport providers and to confirm their correct contact details. The Local Authority needs to manage the transition for the child and their family so information is requested about any variations to the original transport arrangements for the child, as well as a pen portrait of the child’s needs. Information about the dynamics between the children sharing transport is also useful. It was noted that transport for after school activities would not be funded as part of the usual home to school transport arrangements.</p> <p>Feedback so far has been very positive about transport providers. In awarding the contracts price is a key determinant, but other factors are also considered, which is why parents are being asked for feedback. The contracts will be awarded 5 to 6 weeks before the start date as a minimum. A mobilisation plan will be put in place where the transport operators are asked to make pre-journey visits to the home to introduce themselves to the parent and the child. The operators come into County Hall for briefings and to ensure that normal checks are in place, e.g. DBS checks.</p>	

	<p>Transport staff have visited special schools to talk to head teachers and key staff to get feedback from them about transport arrangements and providers and about pick up and drops offs. New contractors need to be briefed about the needs of individual children, and parents and teaching staff know the children best. In terms of costing, if prices are close (the cut-off point has not yet been determined) the Local Authority will look at the outcomes from the different providers for the children using the transport. Procurement regulations require transparency within the tendering process, but there is also the need to reward good operators. There are big budgetary pressures within the Local Authority. Hopefully the route review will help with this; e.g. with smaller sized vehicles used and the amalgamation of routes. Need to strike a balance between cost and outcomes.</p> <p>Discussion: The provision of Post-16 transport was queried. Two years funding is usually agreed in the first instance. The transport team work closely with the SEN team where young people have EHCPs. In terms of day to day issues, the assessment of eligibility for transport for children/young people with Statements or EHCPs is completed by SEN officers. Funding of a third year of Post-16 transport would be provided if the Local Authority have agreed the placement and the young person met the eligibility criteria for SEN transport.</p> <p>The provision of Independent Travel Training was also discussed. Some of the special schools build it into their learning programmes. Students undertake training to be able to use buses and other forms of public transport. Riverside Consulting is an organisation which runs a level 3 course to train volunteers to provide travel training for young people. The Children North East 'Bus Buddies' scheme provides travel training support for young people up to 18 years. It was noted that this are voluntary schemes and are not provided through the Local Authority commissioning route.</p> <p>The criteria for Disabled Bus passes for young people attending college have been changed. They are now for young people in receipt of higher rate mobility, but what about those on lower and middle rate? The threshold of entitlement is checked when the bus pass is renewed and some disabled people may no longer be eligible.</p> <p>It was also mentioned that an increasing number of young people 18 – 25 are losing their DLA or PIPs because they can't provide the evidence required. This can have implications for rent and housing benefits. Some young people with disabilities can't leave home until they are over 25 because they can't get housing benefit. There is a gap in support for these young people; e.g. support with how they can apply for certain benefits, such as ESA (Employment Support Allowance). The Citizens Advice Bureau may be able to help. It was noted that no one is tracking these young people and the outcomes for them.</p>	
6.	<p>SEND Update/Local Area Inspection/Local Offer- Alan Carrick/Claire Brown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New EHC Plans completed in time rose to 60%, then more than 90% in the last few months. However new requests have quadrupled in recent months too, which puts the system under pressure. • New SEND Guide to Services is available. • New SEND manager, Russell Pickering, starts on 1 June 2016. He will lead the statutory team responsible for EHC Plans, SEND funding and school places for children/young people with Statements of SEN or EHCPs. • As mentioned previously, the paperwork and process for new EHC Plans has just been updated, with one key change. Schools and colleges will be expected to hold a multi-agency meeting with families before the request is put in, so there is clearer evidence and consent before the formal process starts. Other LAs have done this and are getting nearly 100% of new EHCs on time as a result. • OFSTED and CQC released the long-awaited inspection handbook for SEND 	

	<p>Local Area Inspections. It confirms the very strong focus on how involved and satisfied children, young people and families are at every stage of SEND. The inspection will be a week long at any time from May 2016 (not in school holidays).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government has changed its proposed policy to turn every school into an academy. It looks like high performing maintained schools will have the choice to convert or not. • The government national review of all funding for education, including SEND, proposes that new capital money should be made available to build up local capacity for SEND places. No details from government yet. • The government has stated they are happy to fund new SEND schools, but only if they are Free Schools. Local authorities are not allowed to create new schools to fill the SEND lack of capacity. Some local School Partnerships in Northumberland are starting to look at this option. • LIST management changes from Sept 2016. Local authority multi-disciplinary working will continue, but the management structure is being adjusted so there is more whole-county focus on every SEND theme; with leads for priority areas including autism; social, emotional and mental health; and speech and language. <p>SEN Strategic group established; board of governance for SEN across the Local Authority. Includes senior managers from Education, Health and Social Care; Parent Carer representatives and schools.</p> <p>Work streams established in response to feedback from survey of parents/carers, schools and professionals in different services to monitor what is happening in Northumberland, get a strategic direction and look at resources. Briefing on areas of focus and 6 – 8 month work plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Early identification of SEND, school readiness 2. Services to support Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), particularly dyslexia. In response to feedback from parents and schools. Also includes dyspraxia and dyscalculia. 3. Children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. 4. Capturing the views of children and young people with SEND: at present there are pockets of good practice, but no overarching strategy. 5. Integration of services to support children and young people with the most complex needs, for example availability of therapies such as occupation therapy and provision re sensory processing. Need to look at whether we are bringing together services (e.g. education and health) in the right way. This work stream will not just look at children who are educated out of county. 6. Speech and language support. Mixed range of provision available at present; some exceptionally good and some not so good. Need to look at the quality of provision and how to improve it. <p>The Transitions Strategic Group will run in parallel to the SEN Strategic Group. Chaired by John Young, the Head of Adult Social Care services.</p>	
7.	<p>Information Sharing/AOB</p> <p>Julia Lyford: Splinter Group event on 29th June from 5 – 8pm: ‘Driving is it for you?’ with Newcastle Driving Assessment Centre. An opportunity for young people with SEND to ask questions about learning to drive. Also mentioned a Fourth Action event at Alnwick Sure Start called “Growing Yourself” aimed at young parents and their needs, including childcare needs.</p> <p>Doris Ross: pilot in west Northumberland: 0 – 25 social care team which will cover</p>	

	<p>children/young people with disabilities until they are 25. The Disabled Children Team currently recruiting to replace Margaret Makin, Transitions Social Worker, who is retiring.</p> <p>Amanda Richardson: Choppington Disability Group, opening out to all ages. Elizabeth Richardson will be attending next month to talk about In It Together. List of training including mental health, first aid and child safety.</p> <p>Elizabeth Richardson: did a presentation about In It Together at an event for Northumberland head teachers. Received positive feedback and four new referrals to the SEND Mentor project.</p> <p>Mentioned that the changes to the procurement arrangements for short breaks for children/young people in Northumberland has had a knock on effect for some parents; e.g. where a child with a disability has been referred to a group for young carers – agenda item for next Forum meeting.</p> <p>Discussion: Northumberland County Council have certain requirements for organisations which run clubs for disabled children; e.g. The Forget Me Not Club at Alwick Garden which can be restrictive. Some parents feel that funding for short breaks focuses on South East and Central Northumberland and there is not enough provision in other parts of the county; e.g. North Northumberland.</p> <p>Lynn Bryden to be invited to the next Forum meeting to give an update on the procurement process. It was noted that the Short Break Statement for Northumberland should be published on the Northumberland Local Offer.</p>	ER
8.	<p>Dates of future meetings: Thursday 7th July 2016 Thursday 6th October 2016</p> <p>Venue: Stannington Village Hall - all meetings 10.30 – 12.30</p>	

Agenda items for next meeting: Short Breaks

DISTRIBUTION LIST FOR MINUTES

Robert Arckless	County Councillor and Board Member for Children's Services
Mark Bagott	Consultant Paediatrician, Specialism in Autism, MAG Autism
Debbie Bakkali	Team Manager, Children's Services, Family Support Team
Alison Bravey	Parent Partnership Officer, SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
Ann Brown	Operational Manager, Involvement & Service Development Team, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Siobhan Brown	Clinical Commissioning Group
Lynne Bryden	Senior Manager, Commissioning
Rebecca Campbell,	Service Manager, North of Tyne,
Karen Carnaffin	Team Leader, Families Information Service
Alan Carrick	SEND Commissioner
Lesley Cole	Autism Northumberland
Mary Connor	Senior Manager, Early Intervention and Prevention
Helen Cowens	Parent Representative, North Northumberland
Mark Cusack	Passenger Transport Operations Manager
Helen Elliott	Healthwatch representative
Jean Hedley	Blyth Valley Children's Centre Locality Manager
Sarah Hanlon	Parent Representative, West Northumberland
Andrew Johnson	Director of Education and Skills
Mary Johnson	Co-ordinator of Dasl ¹⁹ e
Michael Kelcey	Northumberland Youth Service
Sarah Lee	Participation Adviser, Contact a Family
Daljit Lally	Executive Director, Wellbeing and Community Health
Kath Lennon	Specialist Teacher (ASD) Locality Inclusion Support Team (LIST) South East, MAG Autism
Dorothy Lewis	Children's Centre Coordinator - Seaton Valley Children's Centre, Team Manager - Community and Learning team, Volunteer Coordinator
Carol Macdonald	Portage Lead, Portage Service
Janet Millington	Clinical Lead, Speech and Language Therapy, MAG Autism
Marian Moon	Line Manager, Disabled Children Team, Northumberland Healthcare, NHS
Joanne Nelson	Consultant Clinical Psychologist, CYPS, MAG Autism
Michele O'Brien	Carer's Lead, Involvement & Service Development, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Russell Pickering	SEND Manager
Amanda Richardson	Parent Representative, Central/South East Northumberland
Elizabeth Richardson	Parent Representative, North Northumberland
Eileen Robinson	Parent Representative, West Northumberland
Doris Ross	Team Manager, Disabled Children Team
Ben Sanderson	Youth Participation Worker, Northumberland Youth Service
Jacque Simpson	Parent Representative, North Northumberland
Jill Stewart	Community Clinical Manager for Northumberland, CYPS (Children and Young People's Service)
Katharine Taylor	Clinical Manager, Children and Families, Northumbria Healthcare Trust
Gill Turner	Consultant Paediatrician, West Northumberland
Sue Welsh	Head of Therapies, Northumbria Healthcare, NHS