



EARLY SUPPORT AND INDEPENDENT SUPPORT BOARD MEETING THURSDAY 22ND JANUARY 2015

Present:

Kevin Williams (KW) - Chair
Christine Lenehan (CL) - Council for Disabled Children
Amanda Harvey (AH) - Council for Disabled Children
Martin Bull (MB) - Independent Support, Council for Disabled Children
Merran Hilton (MH) - Department for Education
Caroline Allen (CA) - Orchard Hill College
Chris Easton (CE) - NHS England
Jane Harrison (JH) - Early Support Lead
Jill Wellings (JW) - Wolverhampton Council
Liz Hobson (LH) - LGA
Maureen Morris (MM) - National Network of Parent Carer Forums
Nic Crosby (NC) - In Control
Sabine Mittag (SM) - Minutes Secretary, Council for Disabled Children

Apologies:

Toby Price, Daisy Russell, Peter Ellis

Agenda item 1. Welcome and introduction

Due to Board members' time commitments, the agenda was adjusted slightly and proceedings followed in a new order.

Agenda item 2. Approval of previous meeting minutes

The Board approved the minutes from the previous meeting for publication.

ACTION: SM to publish minutes from November meeting on Independent Support website.

Agenda item 3. Review of Action Log items

Martin Bull provided an update on action log item 7, which can now be closed. The Board discussed the actions required for items 2 and 9, and agreed that Martin Bull should take them forward.

ACTION: SM to close item 7. MB to take forward item 2. and item 9. on the action log and provide an update to the Board at the next meeting in April.

Agenda item 4. Matters Arising

The Board noted that Toby Price was retiring and will not be attending future Board meetings.

Agenda item 5. Update on Independent Support

Martin Bull provided the Board with an update on Independent Support. All IS agencies have now included information about the IS programme on their websites. CDC has published an updated list of all web links and contact details on the IS website. To meet the increasing demand for training sessions, all IS training materials have been revised and trainers are prepared for training delivery.

In discussion it was noted that gaining an overview of local authorities' activities relating to e.g. supporting adults post-18, health, or adult social care might be useful to inform future funding decisions. Consideration should further be given to the exit strategy for the IS programme, and IS agencies have already been encouraged to consider local transition arrangements as part of their Phase 2 proposals.

More work is needed to encourage access to online legal training among LAs - this could be a potential role for the SEND advisers. Strong, positive messages about this training could support the referral process in particular. Similarly, schools need fast access routes to this training and considerations should be given if it could be made available through the Local Offer and encouraged as part of DfE visits to local areas.

The Board discussed that it is important to ensure that parents most in need are given the choice of receiving IS support and to keep track of the number of referrals each IS agency/ supporter is receiving to meet local demand for this service.

ACTION: MB to forward the list of updated IS web links and contact details to the Board. (task completed)

ACTION: MB to work with DfE to consider communications, utilising all available channels, to raise the profile of IS and ensure that training on the SEN reforms is available to LA staff across sectors.

ACTION: KW, MB and CL to consider exit arrangements for the IS programme by June, following the election period.

ACTION: MB to liaise with the DfE SEND adviser team to establish a clear picture of referral mechanisms in local areas

Agenda items 6. and 9. Update on Early Support and exit strategy

Jane Harrison provided the Board with an update on the Early Support programme. As part of the wider ES exit strategy, the role of regional facilitators will end on 31 March but until then continue to have an important role in brokering support and networking arrangements between IS agencies and partners, for which there is increasing demand.

The key aim of this programme was to develop key principles and materials for early support, and these are now fully embedded in Section 19 of the Children and Families Act. The exit strategy will therefore primarily focus on creating the legacy of the Early Support programme, identifying the materials that are still fit for purpose and signposting parents and other service users to the relevant services and materials available to them.

ACTION: MB to explore with LH whether the LGA Knowledge Hub could be an alternative to the national archives for storing Early Support materials.

Agenda item 7. Outcome of Deep dive visits to two IS and IASS agencies

Kevin Williams shared the key findings from his deep dive visits with the Board. The emerging common themes included the importance of local knowledge and building constructive relationships between IASS agencies and local authorities, the range in backgrounds of Independent Supporters and the variety and complexities of local arrangements. The quality of IS training and support to agencies provided by CDC was praised by the areas visited.

ACTION: KW to share relevant, non-confidential sections of his deep-dive report with the agencies visited. MB to share the relevant parts of the report with SEND advisers.

Agenda item 8. Planning and procuring Phase 2 of the Independent Support programme

SM introduced the Board to the Payment by Result (PbR) process which will be implemented in Phase 2 of the Independent Support programme. In discussion, the Board noted that the PbR process should not disincentivise IS agencies or treat them unfairly. It was further important that IS support should go to the most vulnerable families.

As in Phase 1, the system will continue to allow sufficient flexibility to take account of individual local circumstances and nature of referral cases taken on by each agency, who will also continue to set their own referral targets. The PbR process will provide agencies with the opportunity to set more realistic rather than estimated targets for delivery, based on their experiences from the previous round. This will help to re-allocate funding in-year where there is most demand and need for this service.

To ensure that the focus remains on outcomes rather than targets, the IS team will work with agencies to develop KPIs that also capture the quality of the wider support provided to parents and young people.

ACTION: MB to write to DfE, outlining the proposed PbR process for Phase 2 of the IS programme and the levers and safeguards put in place to improve outcomes and ensure that the most vulnerable families are being supported.

Agenda item 10. Provisional dates for future meetings

The Board agreed to cancel the meeting on 18 March and have the next Board meeting on 30 April instead.

ACTION: SM to send an email to all Board members to confirm the proposed dates for future Board meetings.

Agenda item 11. Any other business

Jane Harrison will be leaving the Board at the end of March as part of the wider changes for the Early Support programme. All other Board members agreed to continue in their current roles. The Board will consider suggestions for new members, which could include IASS Network and local authority representation.

ACTION: SM to revise the Terms of Reference for this Board, taking account of new memberships and the changes for the ES and IS programmes from April.

ACTION: The IS team to compile a list with suggested suitable candidates for Board membership

The meeting closed at 5pm.