

**Independent Support Board Meeting  
Thursday 10 March 2016, 12.30 – 3pm**

**Present:**

Kevin Williams (KW) – Chair  
Patrick Agius (PA) - Department for Education  
Barney Angliss (BA) - School SENCO, Surrey  
Martin Bull (MB) - Independent Support, Council for Disabled Children  
Dan Ellitts (DE) - Independent Support, Council for Disabled Children  
Christine Lenehan (CL) - Council for Disabled Children  
Clive Harris (CH) – LGA  
Jill Wellings (JW) - Wolverhampton Council

**Apologies:**

Maureen Morris (MM) - National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
Kathrine Everett (KE) - Orchard Hill College  
Nic Crosby (NC) – In Control  
Peter Ellis (PE) – Richard House Children’s Hospice

**Approval of previous minutes**

The IS Board approved the previous minutes 03/12/2015 and Patrick Agius informed members that DfE have now signed a contract with CDC to deliver the Independent Support programme until 31 March 2017. The IS Board thanked Patrick and the Department for Education.

**1. Update on Independent Support**

MB provided an update on Phase 2 contractual activities, key messages, issues and challenges of the Independent Support programme. Final data for the entirety of Phase 2 will be available at the next IS Board. MB discussed conduit spend and how funding will be utilised in the period ahead to best benefit and support the programme objectives.

MB reported that as of 9 March 2016, the latest figures from the customer Quality Assurance survey indicates that based on 1,322 responses to date from parents and young people who have used the independent Support service that:

- Over 60% felt the work with Independent Supporters was extremely useful, 30% felt it was very useful;
- Over 86% found the support they received had a positive impact;
- Over 96% confirmed that support was available when they needed it;
- Nearly 75% would recommend the Independent Support service;
- 85% felt they needed support with EHC planning in the future.

**2. Update on procurement actions**

MB provided an overview of the pre planning work and set up activities for Phase 3 of Independent Support (2016/17). This included feedback on legal advice on contracts, TUPE and tendering activities. MB discussed arrangements for a selection panel meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> April to review bids from tenderers where there is a clear competition to be the lead IS service provider.

MB informed the IS Board that in order meet the requirements of a compliant tendering process the IS team had offered a contract variation to existing IS suppliers for 3 months (April – June 2016) whilst a compliant procurement process is carried out. These actions will ensure that there is no service gap at

local level and parents and young people are not disadvantaged because of a procurement process. All IS suppliers have since agreed to the contract variation offer and the IS team remain on track to ensure contracts for both IS suppliers (variations) and IASS (12 months 2016/17) are in place by the end of March 2016.

### **3. Review of NDTi outline plan**

The IS Board reviewed the helpful NDTi proposal for extending the evaluation of the Independent Support Programme across 2016-17. Although the proposal was useful to see and consider at this early stage, the IS Board decided not to proceed immediately, but instead first review the key messages and learning from the forthcoming NDTi evaluation report before agreeing on next steps for evaluation.

**Action 1: MB to inform NDTi of the IS Board decision**

### **4. Future meeting dates**

The IS Board discussed the proposed schedule for future meetings. The next IS Board meeting will be held Monday 9<sup>th</sup> May and then on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July, all further meeting dates will be confirmed once the IS team have established the IS suppliers reporting timetable for 2016/17, so that meetings can take place once data has been received and scrutinised.

**Action 2: DE to review reporting dates and LT to canvas and confirm a meeting schedule for 2016/17**

### **5. A.O.B**

The IS Board discussed membership and if it needs to be reviewed. The IS Board agreed to invite a DfE SEND Advisor, Daisy Russell (IASSN), a rep from the Communications Trust and Sue North from NHS England. KW and MB will make contact to see if they would be interested in joining the Board.

**Action 2: KW and MB to follow up.**