



**EARLY SUPPORT AND INDEPENDENT SUPPORT BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2014, 1- 5 PM**

**Present:**

**Kevin Williams (KW)** - Chair  
**Amanda Harvey (AH)** - Council for Disabled Children  
**Dan Ellitts (DE)** - Council for Disabled Children  
**Martin Bull (MB)** - Independent Support, Council for Disabled Children  
**Merran Hilton (MH)** - Department for Education  
**Maureen Morris (MM)** - National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
**Nic Crosby (NC)** - In Control (via FaceTime)  
**Patrick Agius (PA)** - Department for Education  
**Toby Price (TP)** - London Borough of Sutton  
**Katy Weeks** - Council for Disabled Children  
**Rob Greig (RG)** – NDTI  
**Bethan Mathias (BM)** - Minutes Secretary, Council for Disabled Children

**Apologies:**

Caroline Allen, Chris Easton, Christine Lenehan, Daisy Russell, Jane Harrison, Jill Wellings, Liz Hobson, Peter Ellis.

**1.1 Welcome**

The Board noted that Mathew Hopkinson (DfE) has moved onto another policy role at DfE and welcomed Merran Hilton (DfE) who has taken over as part of a job share with Verity Prime (DfE).

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

**2.1 Update on Evaluation of Independent Support**

RG gave an update and overview on the evaluation project that is underway.

*2.2 Programme logic model / theory of change*

RG reported that the essential understanding is that people are comfortable with the Theory of Change (ToC). However, the group discussed point 1 ('increased skills, knowledge and responsiveness of those involved in providing support to disabled children and young people') and debated whether this was a true outcome.



It was agreed that RG/NDTi would adapt point 1 and the evaluation's interview framework.

RG asked for thoughts regarding an accompanying narrative to introduce and explain the ToC as part of the first public evaluation they plan to produce in January. It was agreed that some comments and minor edits could be useful.

**ACTION: MB & AH to work on the Initial Theory of Change document ready for public view, then to be passed on to DFE colleagues by 27<sup>th</sup> November. NDTi to produce final document one week following this.**

### *2.3 Evidence and data framework*

Referring to the draft 'measuring outcomes and indicators' document, RG explained that at present few KPIs clearly map onto the 6 outcome areas in the ToC. He suggested that KPIs might be shifted in Phase 2 to address this, but the Board was reluctant to make such changes at this stage of the programme. RG explained that the rationale of the research is that it feeds into action as it takes place and that this is a chance for reflection before NDTi go on to write a formal report. It was agreed that this would be kept under review.

### *2.4 Mapping activities*

RG gave some feedback on the survey to IS agencies and IASSs which is currently being piloted, telling the Board that so far the feedback seems positive. The survey is due to go out soon, with a December response deadline.

**ACTION: TP to review the pilot survey aimed at IS agencies and IASSs and give his perspective to the Board.**

The Board raised queries about whether this activity should be shared with LAs or with Parent Carer Forums. RG explained that a survey would be sent at a later date to local SEND Leads and that Parent Carer forums will be engaged during qualitative research.

NDTi had concluded, in their review of models and a synthesis of available existing evidence on Independent Support, that there is not currently a comprehensive published evidence base for Independent Support. Their proposed solution is to hold a series of 'key informant' interviews.

The Board responded with their suggestions of where to find the evidence base for IS, i.e. the green paper and key working documents but otherwise agreed to the interviews.



## 2.5 *Ethical approval for evaluation*

RG communicated that securing ethical research approval is necessary for this research and can be a difficult and risky process and as such it was important to stick to pre-agreed deadlines.

## 2.6 *Recruiting young people as peer evaluators*

RG requested advice from the Board in sourcing young people as peer evaluators. MB suggested RG speak to Zara Todd, who has led the EPIC group in a previous capacity to seek advice.

**ACTION: NDTi to request Zara's contact information if they plan to fund some consultancy input into this area.**

## 3.1 **Independent Support Quality Assurance Survey**

DE presented the draft Quality Assurance survey and feedback received so far. Most users had communicated that the survey was quick and easy to do both on and offline and that it was accessible but that they would like an assurance of confidentiality or to be informed how the collected information is used. The Board were asked for their comments in the meeting, they offered some minor edits and further discussion ensued.

There was discussion around whether the survey should be completed by or independently of the Independent Supporter and the question of bias. It was agreed that there should be a division early in the survey which explicitly notes when the Independent Supporter is helping to complete some of the formal details and when the rest of the survey is left to the child or young person. NC and RG commented that the materials should include graphics and should be in an easy read format to ensure that it is accessible..

**ACTION: MB/DE to revise the survey and feedback to NDTi.**

## 4.1 **Independent Support Quality Assurance Visits Proposal**

KW outlined his proposed Quality Assurance visits and described the logic behind them. He asked for comments from the Board and an idea of what they would like him to report back on.



There were no specific recommendations as to the content, but the board was concerned that the providers visited should understand that it was to give the Board feedback both on how things were developing 'on the ground' but also any recommendations as to how CDC's part in the overall programme could be improved from a providers perspective.

RG requested that NDTi interview KW after his visits so that this aspect of the IS programme is included in the evaluation.

**ACTION: MH to introduce KW to SEND Advisors.**

### **5.1 Young offenders and IS – briefing by Katy Weeks followed by discussion**

Katy Weeks presented to the Board on the subject of young offenders and Independent Support. The Board agreed that IS would have to apply in some way to detained children and young people who are in the EHC assessment and planning process. It was agreed that the approach in the community could not be mirrored exactly in the secure estate for a number of complex reasons discussed in detail. However IS has a strong training offer which should be extended to cover this group, both in providing access to the wider, current IS training to those working with children and young people with SEN in custody and a new element focusing on the specific framework for this group. The audience would include youth offending teams, SENCOs in the secure estate and may be helpful for advocates or case workers.

The Board discussed the need to ensure that any proposed training serves 2 purposes / audiences:

1. To a new audience: provide information and training for those working in a supporting role to children and young people going through the assessment and planning process in the secure estate
2. To the existing IS audience (Independent supporters and LAs): provide information / context and training for those working with children and young people in the community who may be at risk of offending or engaged in some way in the justice system (e.g. working with a youth offending team or on a community sentence).

The Board discussed and left open further consideration about how existing IS might work with young offenders in secure children's homes as these may be more suitable for the community IS structure and approach.

**ACTION: PA/KW to follow up proposals with the young offender policy leads in DfE and offer any support they might need in alerting MoJ.**

**ACTION: MB to feed back regarding relevant timescales and budget over the next few weeks.**

### 6.1 Change in method of involving young people and proposal for development of additional 4 training modules

MB explained that funding had been made available to develop 4 additional training modules to compliment the IS training.

MB reported that the IS team received close to 150 individual responses with suggestion of new module topics. MB shared the most popular potential modules with the Board and received their comments. It was agreed that modules to develop would be, in no particular order of importance -

<b>1.</b>	<b>Person centred planning</b>	On outcome settings in order to help parents and young people understand it themselves.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Personal Budgets</b>	On personal budgets in the context of complex funding arrangements in schools, LAs and post 16 providers.
<b>3.</b>	<b>Post 16 (including working with 19-25 age group)</b>	To help understand how best to work with young people (post 16) and meet expectations. For many people working with young people will be new territory.
<b>4.</b>	<b>Working with young offenders</b>	On how to work with young offenders if required to do so.

### 7.1 Overview of October KPI reports for ES and I

#### 7.2 MB gave an overview of Early Support's October KPIs

The demand for cluster groups continues to grow and now includes a broadening range of people across education, health and social care. More LAs are requesting access to IS training and access to tailored workshops on the reforms agenda. We are also seeing an increase in school SENCOs and health providers on key working training. The 27 workshops for Parent-Carer forums remain on track and the consultation with young people is making good progress.



The Board discussed why the risk rating had worsened for KPI 1 and 2. MB explained that this reflected the challenges that Regional Facilitators are facing and that they are currently experiencing a period of high-demand, and the risk of not being able to meet this demand has been noted.

**ACTION: MB to share an example note from a cluster groups with the Board.**

### 7.3 *MB gave an overview of Independent Support's October KPIs*

KPIs are on track to be delivered. However reports from IS agencies and IASS received to date have generally been of a mixed standard and the team are now checking through the details and evidence in this reporting period. However, it's clear that MoU and referrals are being firmed up and IS agencies have provided good examples of promotional materials and job descriptions. MB also reported on his visit to the East Midlands and demonstrated that there has been much activity, with referrals happening on the ground

**ACTION: MB to share some promotional materials with Board members.**

### 8.1 **Approval of previous meetings and matters arising**

The minutes of the last meeting and the introduction of the Action Log were approved (to be discussed in further detail at the next Board meeting).

Board members are now included on MB's email update list and it was agreed that this is useful.

The Board agreed that they would follow up on the proposal of inviting an NUS official to the Board via email so as to invite them to the next Board meeting.

### 9.1 **Change in method of involving young people**

AH reported back from meeting with the participation team to gather young people's views about how they would like to be involved in the ES/IS Board in the future. . Young people would like to have a direct impact on the programmes and are keen to support the development of the 4 further training modules.

### 10.1 **Other items the Board would like young people's views on**

It was agreed that should any items arise in future that the Board will flag these for the specific young people's consultation.



### 11.1 AOB

The Board agreed that there would not be a December meeting and instead to postpone until January; a better time for an update on the evaluation from NDTi.

The date of the next meeting will be agreed by email.

The date of the March meeting remains 18 March 2015 **at 10.30am**

The meeting closed at 5pm.