



**Early Support and Independent Support Board Meeting
Monday 15th September 2014, 1 – 5 pm**

Present:

Kevin Williams (KW) – Chair
Amanda Harvey (AH) - Council for Disabled Children
Caroline Allen (CA)- Orchard Hill College
Chris Easton (CE) - NHS England
Christine Lenehan (CL) - Council for Disabled Children
Jane Harrison (JH) - Early Support, Council for Disabled Children
Jill Wellings (JW) - Wolverhampton Council
Liz Hobson (LH) - Local Government Association
Martin Bull (MB) - Independent Support, Council for Disabled Children
Maureen Morris (MM) - National Network of Parent Carer Forums
Patrick Agius (PA) - Department for Education
Peter Ellis (PE) - Richard House Children's Hospice
Toby Price (TP) - London Borough of Sutton
Bethan Mathias (BM) – Minutes Secretary, Council for Disabled Children

Apologies:

Nic Crosby (In Control)

1.1 Welcome and Actions from Previous Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

Updates from the group on actions noted in the previous minutes were as follows:

- NCB Finance team have now written to HMRC concerning VAT and await a response.
- A programme exit plan will be developed over the coming months. MB said he would share the plan with the Board in due course
- CL plans to put together materials to help Independent Supporters broker relationships with LAs by the end of October.

- IS agencies are currently producing their first reports, some of which may have MOUs attached which might be of use to others to see as examples. MB to review their suitability.
- The next CDC Council meeting is in October and it was proposed that the meeting includes an IS workshop. CL to follow this up.

Conflict of Interest

KW informed the Board of a potential new conflict of interest as he will be working with NDTI on another project, though he stressed that this is not in regards to Independent Support.

2.1 Overview of Independent Support July & August KPI reports

MB presented an overview of Independent Support.

Good progress is being made across the country. September update reports are expected to indicate that IS Agencies are making progress engaging partners across all 152 local areas.

MB outlined that there are now just over 40 contracts signed to deliver Independent Support and in addition 148 service agreements with Parent Partnership Services (now known as IASS). He stated that the predicted number for Independent Supporters in post for 1 September looks healthy but also said that local recruitment has been challenging for some IS agencies due to the summer months and this might impact on the final position for 1 Sept.

Independent Supporter training has been developed and is currently being delivered across the country. This was achieved by the 18th August deadline. The Board commented that this should especially be regarded as an achievement considering the challenging time constraints involved.

MB thanked JH and the ES/IS training team for their hard work to develop and deliver face to face training. JH reported that general feedback from participants on the training was really positive and that the legal training in particular had gone down well. This was confirmed by others in the group such as TP, JW. 'PA said he would welcome some

'real life' experience on IS activity, with a view to building up some case study material, when it was possible to get some.

Accreditation of the IS training will be considered in about a month's time, once the training is fine-tuned. There is no particular accrediting body currently under consideration.

ACTION: MB will forward case study material to PA when it becomes available MB and CA to consider an appropriate plan for accreditation of the IS training.

The group discussed how the IS programme's impact should be measured. Suggestions ranged from recording the number of recruited IS's, the number of referrals or the speed in which referrals are responded to.

ACTION: MB to retrieve statistics through his contract reporting mechanisms.

MB identified the biggest KPI risk as the necessity to bring overall costs down for Phase 2.

ACTION: MB to bring a plan to mitigate the risk of high overall cost for Phase 2 to the next meeting.

3.1 Training - update on progress and learning from the first cohort

The group discussed training topics which are currently not developed but could be offered as additional resource e.g. personal budgets, mediation/conflict resolution. MB added that there is a possibility of producing additional training modules and there was the finance in place to do so. AH and colleagues are developing some practical tools and would put together a plan for additional resources by the end of the year.

The concept of a closed web forum was raised, using the example of the IASS forum. MB explained that CDC had considered a web forum but the eventual decision was that, at this early stage, forum discussion might be too negative and best practice sharing may not be so evident.

ACTION: AH and colleagues to develop a plan for additional training resources

4.1 Feedback from disabled young people & review of this contribution

KW reported back on his meeting with three young disabled people. They spent time discussing their views on the role of the Independent Supporter and emphasised the notion of building confidence in the young person. The Board concluded that the Independent Supporters must be clear to young people about the scope of their role.

CE mentioned that there is currently a confused and negative message around the programme on social media and asked the group if they might proactively try to work on messaging. Whilst branding and logos are already with the contract providers, they do not currently have press notices or sample text. MB has though produced two articles and parent-friendly slides.

MB pointed out that the IASS's do have a communications responsibility and they should also be capturing some of its softer outcomes. It is also the IS agencies' responsibility to communicate with local networks such as schools.

CE made some recommendations based on his experience at the NHS which involves producing a comms pack to send to local providers, including tweets, press releases etc. The group agreed that this could be a positive step, whilst CA emphasised the need for the messaging to be very concise (five bullet points in simple language) to overcome confusion or negativity.

ACTION: PA and MB to pick up on the production of a communications pack for Independent Support.

JW asked about young offenders and IS. The Board confirmed that IS would be made available to young offenders but that this merited a separate discussion.

ACTION: All to prepare to discuss young offenders and IS in next meeting.

LH asked whether it is the role of the IS to challenge LAs and the group decided that whilst there is an element of challenge, IS is not an adversarial role and is more about support. MB and JH pointed out that they have made efforts to localise these decisions.

ACTION: JH to share her regional checklist regarding where/when to go for regional advice.

ACTION: KW to produce a Q&A for young people to clear up confusion regarding the scope of Independent Supporters.

5.1 Overview of Early Support July & August KPI reports

JH updated the group on the KPI's for Early Support using the document circulated before the meeting.

During a meeting earlier that day, the number of workshop events per region under KPI3 were reduced to three, as opposed to the six stated on the document.

The group discussed the fact that only 27 LAs will have ES workshops in their area, and thus the need to carefully roll-out messages to families/parents via joint comms, whilst ensuring neighbouring areas do not feel left out.

ACTION: JH & MB to consider the scheduling parent-carer workshops.

Key Working training is moving away from a two-day training structure to more of a bespoke service, which has been much better received.

The Board enquired into any overlap between the IS and Key Working training and were informed that, though there is similar content, each training has a distinct message and IS is more focused on processes. Early Support is a longer-term, more sustainable project and the Independent Support work is more of a one-off training job.

MB expressed the need for more work on Key Working training before accreditation is considered. Though the team in place is strong, some regions are less engaged than others and so delivery is inconsistent.

6.1 Options for the future of Early Support

JH presented an overview of Early Support. This included highlights and achievements to date, key challenges in the current climate, and the options for taking Early Support



forward. After some discussion the Board agreed that the best option for the future of Early Support would be to review of the materials that are available for families immediately after diagnose in the Early Years.

7.1 Responding to Media

This was considered to be covered by discussion of communications and messaging throughout the meeting.

8.1 AOB

No other business was raised. The meeting closed at 5pm.

Date of next meetings: Thursday 13th November 1pm- 5pm
 Monday 15th December 1pm -5pm