

## SEND IMPROVEMENT BOARD UPDATE:

Dear Colleagues,

This month's SEND Improvement Board opened by addressing the concern of the S114 Notice that was issued by the council's Chief Finance Officer, Fiona Greenway, on Tuesday, 5 September 2023. Sue Harrison was very keen to remind partners and stakeholders that the majority of services delivered by the Children & Families Directorate were statutory, and that we would continue to ensure our children, young people and families received great services. Councillor McCarthy was wholly in agreement and offered reassurance to the Board too. John Coughlan confirmed that focus would remain firmly on the delivery of the improvement programme, and this would not be affected.

It was a pleasure to welcome three new members to the Board – Temitope Ademosu, from Adult Services, Reva Stewart from Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust (BCHC) and Victoria Nussey, the new Primary School representative.

Sadly, we said a fond farewell to Doug Simkiss from BCHC who has been a member of the Board since its inception. Doug was thanked for his valuable contribution in helping to drive the changes in Birmingham.

We were privileged to hear from the Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust (BCHC) Transition team on the amazing work they're doing in supporting the transition for children and young people with complex needs in Birmingham from Year 9 into adulthood. Debra Stevens shared detail on their 'Wellbeing and Health at Transition (WHAT) model, and provided a case study to demonstrate its importance. This provided an opportunity for robust discussion around how our SEND and Inclusion and Adult Services can link into this work, and something we are very keen to progress.

Sharon Chappell from the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) provided an insightful presentation on their free investigative services around complaints concerning councils, adult care providers and other public service organisations. Most importantly it was recognised that the LGSCO investigate a larger proportion of SEND cases than any other subject area and the uphold rate on SEND complaints is consistently high (currently 90% whereby the average across all subject areas is 74%). Sue Harrison made clear the importance of having the right structure in place to ensure that all recommendations received from the LGSCO were promptly responded to and acted upon, with Helen Ellis confirming that a tight quality assurance framework was being introduced.

Helen Ellis and Kevin O'Brien provided details around the preparation being undertaken for the forthcoming Ofsted CQC inspection which will focus on the experiences and outcomes for children, young people and families, and the impact our



services are making. Arrangements are in place with key partners to ensure inspection readiness, recognising that the inspection could take place at any time.

A SENAR redesign update and proposed structure was provided by Helen Ellis. The redesign will ensure that statutory duties are met and service delivery meets the evolving needs of families and children with additional needs, by ensuring a fully resourced SENAR service. Parents and carers will be kept fully up to speed once the consultation period is formally closed and the proposed structure securely in place.

Finally, progress on APP was discussed and Helen Ellis provided a data dashboard, seeking feedback from the Board. It was agreed this would be discussed further at the next SEND Improvement Board meeting, with particular work being undertaken in the meantime around baseline and national benchmarks.

Overall it was a hugely positive meeting and we'll very much look forward to reporting back again in October.

In the meantime, we send our very best wishes and thank you all for your ongoing support and commitment to improving our SEND services.

**Sue Harrison, Strategic Director Children and Families**

**John Coughlan, SEND Commissioner**