

Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee (CYPSSC) West Sussex

Joint Area SEND Inspection - Task and Finish Group

Health Update – February 2025

Governance Arrangements Update

A review of the Pan Sussex Children's Board function and membership has been undertaken in partnership with the three LA Directors of Children's Services and has been informed by a multi-agency workshop which took place in September 2024. The board will focus on four key priority areas for children and young people for the Sussex Integrated Care System:

- Neurodevelopmental Pathway (NDP)
- Children's Emotional and Mental Health
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children in Care and Care Leavers

These priorities have been chosen as areas of focus for the Sussex footprint based on population outcomes and common themes across the system through our improvement plans. Data and quality insights will drive improvements.

Place-based drivers and concerns will be fed into the Pan Sussex governance arrangements via the West Sussex Children First and SEND and Alternative Provision Boards.

Topic 1 – Health input into Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) (Timeliness and Quality)

TFG Meeting Date – 8 October 2024

TFG raised concern on the pace of improvement in the timeliness and quality of health input into needs assessments within the statutory timeframe. Members requested that NHS Sussex provide a plan of improvement with clear trajectories and milestones once available (by end of April 2025).

Responsible Officer/Member - NHS Sussex

Response/Progress/Deadline - February 2025

November 2024 Health Update

Designated Clinical Officer capacity for SEND in Sussex has increased from November 2024. Health input into the EHCP and EHCNA process is a key focus of these roles. They are working directly with Local Authority SEN assessment teams and NHS providers across Sussex to create more consistency in terms of quality and timeliness. Providers are expected to respond to Education health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) requests, and this is reflected in commissioning intentions, and this will be monitored through regular assurance mechanisms. Progress will continue to be monitored through the Pan Sussex Children's Metric Dashboard and reported through the West Sussex SEND and Alternative Provision Board.

February 2025 Health Update

- Designated Clinical Officers (DCO) for SEND are in post as of November across Sussex. EHCNA quality and timeliness is key focus for these roles.
- Discussions are underway to review NHS provider input into EHCNAs and Annual Reviews and there is ongoing oversight of this. (Steps are being taken to ensure that this aligns with local audit processes)
- The EHCNA response data dashboard has been developed to support increased scrutiny of timelines and monitoring of remedial plans developed by NHS providers. This information feeds into the Pan Sussex Children's Metric Dashboard.
- NHS providers are reviewing their EHCNA response process, with support from DCOs and commissioners
- EHCP/Tribunal queries are monitored via a secure inbox within the Integrated Care Board (ICB) SEND team

Topic 2 –Support Whilst Waiting Communications

TFG Meeting Date - 8 October 2024

Request that health providers put more robust and clear communication plans in place for children, young people and families who are waiting for services, including direct communication with children and families, recognising that waits can be too long. Members asked to be kept updated on the progress of this work.

Responsible Officer/Member - NHS Sussex

Response/Progress/Deadline - February 2025

November 2024 Health Update

We recognise the range of needs of our families and extensive work has been undertaken to develop the SEND local offer in West Sussex. Work will continue with communication teams across Sussex to develop health focused information and signposting to support available to families. We will monitor uptake and effectiveness of this information. NHS Sussex will work with providers to ensure consistency of information which is given to families who are on a health service waiting list.

February 2025 Health Update

- NHS Sussex held a SEND Health-Focused Workshop in December 2024 to bring together clinical and commissioning SEND leads to prioritise and consolidate plans and actions for SEND. Feedback regarding the support whilst waiting offer was raised by Parent Carer Forums and is being incorporated into new developments.
- [Online West Sussex Local Offer Health "Support whilst Waiting" page](#) developed, positive feedback received from professionals and parent/carers. Site activity is high with over 1,000 site clicks since August 2024. The [Integrated Care System \(ICS\) SEND](#) page further developed to include information around Right to Choose, ADHD medication and Support Whilst Waiting, views to the page from January 24 to December 24 were 2,578 showing increased activity. Support and information for families whilst waiting for a neurodevelopmental service in Sussex has been reported by Google Analytics team to be one of the top three visited webpages for the ICS website, we will continue to use this platform to share information with families.
- Sussex secured £200k as part of national Partnership for Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme to deliver co-produced neurodiversity support to primary schools across Sussex in 2024/25. Of the 38 primary schools involved, 13 are in West Sussex.

- Webinars offered through PINS include: Neurodivergence and Mental Health, Auditing and Adapting the Sensory Environment of Primary School, Unmasking Hypermobility and Neurodivergence, Understanding Children’s Strengths and Skills and Using a Relational Approach to Supporting Dysregulated Children
- Children and Young People Mental Health & NDP Communications Task and Finish Group has been established to understand how our basic online signposting looks and how we can offer clear advice and direction to those seeking help online. The Neurodevelopmental Communication Task and Finish (T&F) group reports into the Neurodevelopmental Pathway (NDP) and the Sussex Mental Health Learning Disabilities and Autism (MHLDA) Board.
- In relation to Speech and Language, the partnership is finalising the details around KPIs with Sussex Community Foundation Trust (SCFT) for the Special Schools part of the contract. Next steps are to jointly create KPI’s for mainstream schools.

Topic 3 and 4 – Right to Choose (RTC)

TFG Meeting Date - 8 October 2024

Request that NHS Sussex accelerates the work to finalise a consistent pathway including both NHS and Right to Choose Providers that enables the most appropriate response to both need and choice and continues to work towards improved access to assessment. Raised the importance of NHS Sussex engaging with children, parents and families on the work being progressed around Right to Choose and all service improvement for SEND services to ensure their voice and views were shaping those improvements.

Responsible Officer/Member - NHS Sussex

Response/Progress/Deadline - February 2025

November 2024 Health Update

We are working to develop a single pathway and recognise that for many children and young people with more complex needs, the assessment and diagnostic element of the pathway may be best supported through local partners to ensure a comprehensive person-centred response. Right to Choose information is now available to families on the West Sussex SEND Local Offer and NHS Sussex Q&As page has been developed for General Practice. NHS Sussex will work with people with lived experience to further shape this information alongside clinical leads.

February 2025 Health Update

- A high-level clinical assessment and diagnostic pathway for Adults ADHD assessment has been agreed, which brings together local and Right to Choose services following a proposed triage service. A high-level clinical assessment and diagnostic pathway for Children and Young People is under development.
- A Children and Young People's workstream has been established, alongside a pilot in East Sussex across East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT / Child Development Centre) and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT) who assess children (aged 6-11) for Autism and ADHD respectively. The purpose of the pilot is to strengthen cross-provider working and help families to tell their story once with a view to using the learning across Sussex.
- NHS Sussex has finalised its own contractual arrangements with three Right to Choose providers to enable greater alignment with local arrangements, alongside quality oversight; GP webinar and guidance developed for GPs and local people to support understanding of pathway.
- In-depth written briefings, regular newsletter updates, and webinars have been shared with General Practices to inform them when discussing NHS Right to Choose Framework assessment pathways with patients. A new clinical page dedicated to neurodevelopment pathways has been created on the NHS Sussex intranet for GPs and clinical staff to quickly access guidelines, pathways, patient resources and information about the various conditions to support conversations with patients.

Topic 5 – Commissioning arrangements

TFG Meeting Date - 8 October 2024

Request that there is the exploration of how scrutiny can understand and influence the broader commissioning arrangements of health, for example through a workshop, and ask that this is considered by the next HASC Business Planning Group.

Responsible Officer/Member - NHS Sussex

Response/Progress/Deadline - February 2025

November 2024 Update

The Health and Adults Services Scrutiny Committee discussed the outcome of the TFG at their meeting on 27 November 2024. Mental Health has been added to their work programme as an item to be timetabled for 2025. CYPSSC members will be kept updated and invited to participate in this item once it has been scheduled in.

February 2025 Update

No further input required.