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THE NATIONAL SEND FORUM Minutes 4th December 2019
Browne Jacobson, 15th Floor, 6 Bevis Marks, EC3A 7BA

Present: David Bateson OBE (DB) *Chair*, Lorraine Petersen OBE (LP) *FLSE*, Carolyn Morgan (CM) *FLSE*, Rona Tutt OBE (RT) *NAHT*, Steve Cullingford-Agnew (SC-A) *Equals*, Caroline Wright (CW) *RCSLT*, Kiran Hingorani (KH) *SWALSS/NASS*, Stephen Deadman (SD) *NAHE*, Michelle Haywood (MH) *WMSSEND*, Penny Barratt (PB) *SSV*, Lucy Atherton (LA) *IPSEA*, Carol Kelsey (CK) *NNPCF*, Sue Hewitt (SH) *FLSE*, Barry Payne (BP) *FLSE*, Rob Williams (RW) *NAHT*, Richard Boyle (RB) *engage*, Michael Surr (MS) *nasen*, Tim Johnson (TJ) *NSN*, Tina Wakefield (TW) *BATOD/Natsip*, Di Caesar (DC) *pdnet*

Guests: André Imich (AI) *DfE*,

Minutes: Andy Petersen (AP)

Welcome and Introductions

**For
Action**

DB welcomed everyone and asked each attendee to introduce themselves.

Changes in Representation, Guests and Links

Tim Johnson (*NSN*), Di Caesar (*pdnet*), Tina Wakefield (*BATOD/Natsip*)

Apologies

Chris Rollings *FLSE*, ASCL, BILD, NASS, NAS, SEN.se, WSSend, NGA, Browne. Jacobson.

4. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

One minor error was reported by RT

AP

5. Policy and DfE Update (AI) (Note AI was unable to provide detail on new initiatives due to election "Purdah" requirements)

1. The incidence of students with SEND, EHCPs and placements in specialist provision was increasing
2. Local Area Inspections had resulted in 50% of Local Areas being required to prepare "Written Statements of Action". There were examples of reforms being realised and

implemented as agreed. There was, however, evidence that areas needed to engage schools in improvement plans. The department was pleased to note that more parent carers were being engaged in the inspection process

3. The demand for EHCPs was continuing unabated. As a result there was particular pressure on special schools' capacity. AI noted that the rise was not only due to reforms but could be tracked back as far as 2008.
4. OFSTED were paying particular attention to "Off-Rolling" practices in their inspections which was resulting in schools who employed this policy being placed in a "category" for poor "Leadership and Management".
5. The Department had noted on-going problems with workforce capacity causing pressure on staffing. There were particular problems with Post-19 education.
6. The Education Select Committee Report on SEND had now been published. Its conclusion was that SEND reforms were correct and that there was a need for a systemic cultural shift in this area. 24 recommendations had been made but government response had been delayed due to the election.
7. The NAO Enquiry "Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities" had also been published. Its findings again suggested that reforms were correct but funding was a particular issue. The NAO had found that there were many local variations in the way EHCPs were funded and wanted an explanation for this problem
8. Government led SEND Review – this was underway at the time the election was called – a report was now anticipated at Easter 2020.

BP commented that resources were often not getting to the right pupil. **PB** echoed this sentiment and commented that High Needs blocks were often overspent and resources were not getting to schools. **PB** felt that there was an inclusion problem with mainstream schools having to fund the first £6k of expenditure – schools with poor finances were often penalised.

SD commented that Local Authorities should be allowed to open special schools without them being designated as Free Schools.

CM commented that there was a problem with initial teacher training with new staff not being trained to deal with SEN issues. **MH** commented that SEND enhancement option was available for trainees. **BP** commented that not enough leaders were willing to take on SEND responsibilities.

RB commented that the Select Committee Report should have demanded more accountability from individuals.

CK commented that there were transparency issues with funding and budgets.

KH was concerned about strategic planning.

BP felt that the pressure from OFSTED on off-rolling was starting to work.

SCA commented that he felt that there was a lack of action on previous reports.

IA suggested that NSEND should prepare a report to influence ministers thinking.

CK highlighted zero tolerance behaviour policies which were inherently discriminatory.

LA commented that 90% of complaints to the ombudsman were being won by complainants – however local authorities still did not seem to be modifying their behaviour.

DB commented on the SCR highlighting health support and the financial difficulties of coming to terms with the 34% increase in special school places in 11 years allied to the complexity.

Although generally welcoming the SCR findings, **DB** was disappointed that all of SEND was reported as a homogenous group without distinguishing between those without cognitive issues and those who have. He asked **AI** if there was something the Forum could do as a body. **AI**

suggested it would be helpful if the NSEND took a view regarding zero tolerance policies in schools that adversely affected those with SEND.

6. **The new guidance document jointly developed by RCSLT and BATOD** - Best practice guidance for collaborative working between Qualified Teachers of the Deaf and Speech and Language Therapists - has now been published and is available online <https://www.rcslt.org/-/media/docs/clinical-guidance/rcslt-batod-guidance.pdf> (CW/DC). **RT** commented very positively in the light of her own experience and interest in this area.

7. **Thought Leadership paper**

DB gave the background to the idea behind the Thought Leadership paper and handed over to **MS** who attended the meeting and outlined discussions that he had had with **AB**.

The purpose of this initiative should be for NSEND to generate ideas, thoughts and opinions which could be presented to stake-holders in order to influence future developments. **AB** had suggested that this could take place perhaps twice a year with the first paper being targeted for Spring 2020. Suggestions for suitable topics were now sought from members.

CK suggested that "Zero-Tolerance would be a suitable topic. **RT** suggested a title "Should Zero Tolerance Policies be Tolerated".

MH suggested a focus on initial teacher training.

DB queried what would be the mechanism for generating these pieces of work? **MS** commented that **nasen** were willing to make a grant of £2.5k to fund this as a contribution to reasonable expenditure. **MS** agreed to confirm whether this grant would be per paper or per year.

KS posed the question whether the research grant from **BL** should be used in this context.

CK, PB, MH, LA all agreed to be involved in the preparation of the first paper.

Further suggestions for topics were made: **ITT**, The Real Meaning of Inclusion, Ethos and Culture, 21st century schools for 21st century children.

DB commented that papers were not about everyone agreeing but ideas emanating from the Forum and would be best worked up by a small group after a half hour agenda item where everyone could contribute.

MS
CK,PB,
MH,LA

8. **Update on research proposal (RT)**

DB and **RT** confirmed that there were no restrictions as to what the grant could be used for other than the need to undertake research. **RT** commented that Regional Centres of Excellence would address many of the issues that had already been discussed. **M. Reeve** had suggested that a meeting be held in January to consider further progress.

9. **Update from members: successes, issues and events**

ENGAGE – **RB** explained that **ENGAGE** had now undergone a change in structure with joint chairs being appointed. A new website had been commissioned which was still being completed. There were a number of up-coming conferences and events – these would be uploaded to the website <https://engageintheirfuture.org/events-initiatives/>

NAHE –The Annual Conference had been held in October. A Leadership Conference had taken place in Oxford in November. A further one was planned in Manchester in June 2020. **NAHE** had responded to a **DfE** consultation on on-line provision.

WMSSEND – were planning another "Everyman Festival" in Shropshire in June 2020. Speakers were being sought if any member was interested. The University was also holding a leadership conference

in February 2020 <https://tinyurl.com/wnmfo2x>

Equals - new section added to website from September 2017 called the “Whiteboard Room” containing lots of free educational resources. <https://equals.co.uk/whiteboard-room/>

A conference was being planned for July 2020 on Sex and Relationship Education.

SWALLS – a successful conference for School Business Managers had recently been held.

Conferences on School Leadership and a Deputies conference were upcoming see

<https://www.swalss.co.uk/events>

NASS - has launched the first ever “SEND Incubator”: a package of support designed to turn schools’ ideas into fully-fledged ‘services’, that can be shared commercially or charitably to benefit more children and young people with SEND. <https://www.nassschools.org.uk/2019/05/07/launch-of-the-nass-send-incubator/> The annual NASS conference is scheduled for October 2020 with a focus on HR and Health.

SSV – PB reported that the organisation was in the process of re-inventing itself. Particular problems were being experienced with GDPR

pdnet – DS reported that there had been an increase in members recently and online activity had grown. PDnet were experiencing a good take up on training and were about to launch level 2 training for TAs. Level 3 training for teachers was in the planning stage. Guidance for the writing of plans was also in progress.

IPSEA – the chair was currently sitting on a steering group for national trials. IPSEA had launched an election manifesto see <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/news/ipsea-launches-2019-election-manifesto>

An SEN Law Conference was planned for 2020: <http://www.senlawconference.co.uk/>

NNPCF - the annual conference in November had been disrupted by the election announcement resulting in several speakers being unavailable. A session on SEND review had formed part of the conference.

NSN – no special points to highlight.

NAHT – had published a leaflet in advance of the General election 2019: “Our schools. Their future. Your choice”. <https://tinyurl.com/suumowg> A survey of schools with less than 150 pupils had been undertaken “A picture of small schools in England” <https://tinyurl.com/v2ojmyj>

A press release was due on the PISA results and is available on their website

<https://tinyurl.com/r7pt9nu> . A SEND conference “Leading on SEND across all Schools” was planned for March 2020 <https://tinyurl.com/u9ep9kb>

nasen – a leadership programme was in progress. nasen continued to undertake MHFA training. Case Worker courses for LA SEND case workers were being rolled out. Nasen had developed CPD courses for Early Years SENcos. <https://nasen.org.uk/event-listing.html> WSEND were developing a suite of videos for NQTs. A new project was being planned with Erasmus+. Nasen in conjunction with the UCL centre for Inclusive Education will be hosting ISEC 2020 on the 3rd-5th August 2020.

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/inclusive-supportive-education-conference/>

FLSE – Eastern region continued to provide CPD for school leaders on SEND issues. Feedback from members suggested that recruitment was becoming a big issue. In addition members were concerned about the lack of school nurses and the increasingly complex medical tasks TAs were being asked to undertake. A working group on curriculum had been established and a series of “Open Schools” events were in progress. The North-Eastern region were organising a conference in respect of issues with the NHS.

10. Update from other affiliations, forums, trusts, alliances and partnerships

None

11 NSENDF

LP apologised for the hiatus in catering for this meeting.

12. Any focus for action and statements of agreement including future invitees

DB stated that in addition to the actions already agreed that there would be representation at the February meeting from the Anna Freud Centre.

13. AOB

None presented

14. Dates for 2019-2020

05 February, 25 March, 20 May, 08 July

15. Venue 2019-2020

Browne Jacobson will continue to provide a venue for NSENDF meetings, with grateful thanks.

Meeting Closed at 2.30pm