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THE NATIONAL SEND FORUM Minutes 7th October 2020
Virtual Zoom Meeting
Chair David Bateson OBE

Present: David Bateson OBE (DB) *Chair*, Lorraine Petersen OBE (LP) *FLSE*, Rona Tutt OBE (RT) *NAHT*, Caroline Wright (CW) *RCSLT*, Stephen Deadman (SD) *NAHE*, Michelle Haywood (MH) *WMSEND*, Carol Kelsey (CK) *NNPCF*, , Rob Williams (RW) *NAHT*, Richard Boyle (RB) *engage*, Chris Rollings (CR) *FLSE*, Melanie Foster (MF) *NAS*, Julie Walker (JW) *sen.se*, Brendan Heneghan OBE (BH) *Engage*, Clare Dorer (CD) *NASS*, Catherine Ollington (CO) *NSN*, Kim Taylor (KT) *FLSE*, Adam Boddison (AB) *nasen*,

Guests: N/A

Minutes: Andy Petersen (AP)

1. Welcome and Introductions

DB welcomed and thanked everyone for joining this virtual meeting.

**For
Action**

2. Protocol for meeting

DB went through some protocols for this virtual meeting

3. Apologies

4. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

RT raised the issue about Mental Health Leads (Pg4/5) that AI had agreed to find out more information – RT asked if LP had heard anything - LP replied that she had not heard anything. The minutes were agreed

5. Covid 19: schools and services. SEND reference group update and additional Forum comments.

This item was deferred until Adam Boddison arrived.

6. Policy and DfE Update

DB thanked **LP** for circulating the updates – asked if **LP** had anything further to say. Links are all available and self-explanatory. **LP** raised concern about lack (or late) guidance for special schools – it always felt like an after-thought.

CK – mainstream guidance does not take account of SEND pupils either.

LP – Findings of the SEND Review has been postponed until 2021 including any changes to SEND Code of Practice.

KT – New guidance on remote learning has been published this morning including information about safeguarding - <https://tinyurl.com/y6pfn45q>. The SEND Reference Group has been raising the issues for special schools. A number of therapists are still working remotely and this is limiting the support that schools can give pupils plus the bubble system has changed how schools operate. DfE are trying to allow leaders to manage the situation within their setting and it is helpful to manage at a local level. Possibility of more updates before half-term.

7. Regional Centres of Excellence

Everyone had received the paper on Regional Centres of Excellence

DB -There had been a response from DfE about this research – representatives from DfE would like to come and talk to the Forum in December to discuss this work.

RT – After discussing this for 2+ years this paper has now actually come at exactly the right time because it can feed into the SEND Review.

KT – Not clear about the difference between a RCE and the Regional Teaching Schools Hubs that are currently being established.

DB – Whatever a school’s designation would not stop it from being a RCE – part of the survey work will indicate what expertise is already there.

RT – The more links we have the better and we don’t want to repeat what is already working well.

DB – Kate Williams will be undertaking 5 days’ work for writing up the survey information and then a review will take place for next steps.

CW – Consider talking to someone in the Health sector – key part of the system.

DB – Excellent idea and exactly what we want to happen – would either want health representative at the meeting with DfE or a separate meeting – can only get what is needed if we have everyone working together.

NB Since the meeting **DB** has been in touch with Prof Ben Laker who donated the research money who would be happy to provide his services for the project.

8. Thought Leadership Paper on Initial Teacher Training (MH)

Everyone had received Michele’s paper on Initial Teacher Training.

DB invited **MH** to talk about the paper.

MH – Have made alterations following previous meeting – picked out good practice and then added the final section – *This needs to change*.

Hope that everyone is okay with this or are there things missing. Do we want to push the specialist route or stay with the fact that all mainstream teachers have adequate training?

KT – Should go down the specialist route after some experience – what is lacking in training is the lack of knowledge of equalities and the equalities agenda and framing that within a social justice model.

CK – Echo what **KT** has just said – often see breaches in Equality Act – nothing in teacher training about how to work with/ talk to parents. Also often don't know what neurotypical development looks like so not able to see what is outside of this.

MF – Feel very strongly for specialist training – understanding pedagogy first of all but then understanding the individual needs of children and their families.

SD – Agree with the more specialist route – mainstream schools would value this as well – There are areas of good practice within England – Importance of SENCO really important as well as role of SLT – “Othering” children with SEND go somewhere else – break down of support in mainstream schools – push inclusion and inclusive practice

CR – Endorsed everything that has been said – Strike a balance to ensure our mainstream schools are able to teach ALL children – curriculum not always understood by mainstream schools – maybe there is a lack of expertise in the tutors/lecturers for these subjects in universities and maybe they need to seek support from those working with these students on a day to day basis. – What we need is a menu that signposts our mainstream colleagues to good practice in SEND curriculum and one that signposts those who want to go into the specialist sector into the specific routes they wish to take.

RT – Like the idea about the menu - people go into ITT at various stages of their career and life from very different backgrounds - idea of a menu for different routes would be good.

MH – Will do her best to add everything that has been said – word count permitting- definitely add something about specialist route – ITE courses need to be better in relation to SEND.

RB – Is there a link between this paper and Regional Centres of Excellence? Training to be an integral part of RCEs.

DB – Thanked **MH** for the paper – these first two papers are a real addition to the work of NSEND. Amended paper to be circulated.

9.

Thought Leadership – next papers: The Real Meaning of Inclusion; Identification of SEND; Ethos and Culture; 21st Century schools for 21st Century Children

DB – Real Meaning of Inclusion – awaiting **RT** to complete her book – this will be second half of October – Minutes from last meeting stated that - **RT, DB, KT** and **LP** volunteered for this paper.

Identification of SEND - **MR, MF, RB, DC** and possibly **CK** (time commitment)

MF – Had met with **MR** – number of emails have also been exchanged but no further forward at the moment.

DB – Still got Ethos and Culture and 21st Century Schools for 21st Century Children

CO – Offered to be on Ethos and Culture Group

DB – Idea would be to have two on the go at a time so we can pick these up once current two are finalised

10.54 – **CD & JC** arrived – **CW** left for another meeting

10 Update from members

pdnet – JC – Going from strength to strength – 120 to 5000 members in three years – COVID-19 has meant people have needed the service more than ever – especially our regional groups - sharing good practice and experiences on a number of COVID related issues. Commissioned to do a piece of work around accessibility planning – Toolkit to be published by WSS and nasen. Level 2 training available on line in the next couple of months.

NASS – CD - Trying to adapt – delivering online training – moved annual conference to March but this might be highly ambitious – having to re-think this. Incubator Project on-going – Working on a project with Whole Education using Spirals of Enquiry – Triads of 1 special and 2 mainstream schools working together on their own projects – mainstream to gain from expertise from special. Worried about the lack of transparency of the SEND Review.

NAHT – RT

1) Campaigns are up and running - Curriculum and assessment, structures, inspection and accountability, funding, recruitment and retention, pupils support and safeguarding

2) APPG for SEND have had second meeting – A new inquiry has been launched into the effects of COVID on children with special needs taken from the aspect of the four strands of the Code of Practice. Good news is that more people can attend a virtual meeting than face-to-face in a small room in Houses of Parliament.

3) At a recent SEC meeting, Alister Crawford, a special school head teacher in Derby who has been working with Oak National Academy - shared with us that there is now more SEND material available and they are working on more content to support children with SEND in both special schools and in mainstream

4) Annual conference was cancelled this summer - taking place online this Friday - combination of the annual conference and the AGM – condensing a three-day programme into one day

NAS – MF – NAS represented on the Disability Committee Commissioning Group - bringing together employment, education, transport, and access to goods and services – drive to reduce the disability employment gap. Key area of development for NAS education services is Cullum Provision. NAS's Cullum Centres help students on the autism spectrum get the support they need to thrive in a mainstream school setting - <https://www.autism.org.uk/directory/n/nas-cullum-centre>
Also seen an increase in on-line training provision to schools – Cullum Provisions seeking support for staff – very positive outcomes.

FLSE East - KT — Remote meetings – Mental Health & Wellbeing of school leaders high on the agenda – some Headteachers are isolated and not always getting support from LA. Also focusing on the Engagement Model – this had started but training not rolled out – trying to get this established again and delivered virtually – this is a transition year but need to get schools moving forward.

Conference was cancelled and looking to summer next year. Pre-COVID 19 we had an “open schools” project and we would like to resurrect this. Thanks to LP for the regular updates.

11.21 **RW** arrived

FLSE North East – CR – Thanked LP for updates – FLSE membership welcome these updates – working remotely and supporting each other. Equals update – Conferences not taken place but a great deal of curriculum development has happened - really useful for mainstream schools – multi-tiered approach – new set of documents that bridge “P” to Level 1 – Formal curriculum for those with Global Learning Difficulties – rewrite of English and Maths plus five other areas. New guidance document on Rebound Therapy being finalised – published by end of the year. Equals helping the Medicines in Special Group to look at nursing in schools.

KT (via chat) – Ofsted produced their first COVID-19 series: briefing on schools, September 2020. This document contains the evidence from pilot visits to schools between 14 and 18 September. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-series-briefing-on-schools-september-2020>

11.21 – **AB** arrived

WMSSEND - MH — Changed role – am now working full-time for University of Wolverhampton MAT – One of the secondary schools had an Ofsted visit last week - got the call on Monday at 10 am, arrived following day at 10 am. - interview schedule was around orientation at school, what were your procedures in terms of visitors coming to the school? What do your risk assessments look like for outside visitors? What is your sign in procedure? Have you changed that since lockdown? Went through certain targeted areas including the behaviour policy and asked if any amendments had been made to the behaviour policy to reflect changes due to COVID – 19. Also asked about exclusions, attendance and safeguarding (especially in context to local area) including children with EHCPs and their risk assessments. Final interview around on-line provision – digital poverty, what will happen if you have to close?

NAHE – SD – Annual Conference cancelled – regular webinars with good engagement of members – lots of smaller on-line meetings – Have got contact details for hospital education in each LA (from FOI request) - had regular meetings with DfE and hospital schools are now being included in guidance. Issue with some hospital trusts not letting teachers back on the wards – DfE and DoH sent joint letter to say this must change and teachers do need to be back on the wards – Should have been an 8% increase for hospital education but many LAs did not pass this on to settings. DfE looking into this. CPD training offer re-started and very popular.

NNPCF – CK – Work continues on-line – national reps under a great deal of pressure – Meeting with Minister Ford - <https://tinyurl.com/yxk4gzjr> - National Conference will take place on-line in November – bonus is that many more reps can take part and will be much wider reaching – Voluntary groups are reporting more parents accessing support and taking part in training sessions because they can more easily access online.

SEN.SE – JW – Supporting headteachers in Somerset and the relationship with LA – Meeting virtually both headteachers and LA – WSoA phase following LA inspection – working on support and

challenge, culture and lack of transparent practice – passionate about working with the LA to support C&YP. Commissioned to run the SEND Preparation for Adulthood strategy and SEND Networks for mainstream SENCOs. Engaged in bids funding Job Coaches, establishing a permanent shop with online presence, setting up supported employment forums across county - Current challenge is establishing a virtual careers fayre that meets the needs of our learners and their families. Finally, hoping to be the TS Hub for Somerset.

ENGAGE – BH – Thanked LP for updates – shared with national committee – Engage and Connect events with NASS this term – Conference next July in Manchester (hopefully) – Regional zoom chats happening – lot more work going on with mainstream schools – wanting advice and support -

NSN – CO – New 37 special free school had their launch event – NSN and DfE in partnership – very positive – NSN organising virtual events – more attendees than face-to-face – Setting up at end of October – Ofsted round tables – special schools have the opportunity to discuss with Ofsted and their visits – Networks difficult because of no school visits but launched NSN Connect – school tours on-line – very interesting to do and people not having to travel around country to do this.

NAHT – RW – Chairing Virtual SEND Conference in December - <https://www.naht.org.uk/cpd/conferences/leading-on-send-across-all-schools-conference-2020/> Organised a series of webinars on a number of topics including SEND – Clarifying with Ofsted the purposes of visits – HTs trying to concentrate on day to day – APPG SEND – encourage groups to get involved – looking for evidence on a number of issues. Additional surveys to members about how they are feeling about things – lateness of advice for special schools a very big issue.

Additional information from RW on APPG SEND.

As referenced in my brief update to NSEND Forum, the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) should be of particular interest to all organisations.

I know that the APPG would very much welcome submissions from as wide a variety of organisations as possible.

Details of the APPG for SEND are below:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Chair: | Olivia Blake MP (Labour) |
| Vice chair: | Sally-Ann Hart MP (Conservative) |
| Secretariat provided by: | NAHT - www.naht.org.uk/appgsend |
| Email: | appg.send@naht.org.uk |
| Twitter: | @appg_send |
| Inquiry Summer-Autumn 2020 | |

Terms of Reference:

The All-Party Group for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) has launched an inquiry into the impact that Covid-19 on children and young people with SEND during transition within educational establishments which will run from

Summer 2020 to Autumn 2020.

The inquiry will aim to build the evidence base on the issue, but also to inform progressive and practical solutions within the education sector and wider community.

The Group will be hearing evidence, views and experiences from a variety of expert stakeholders as well as young people themselves.

The objectives of the inquiry are:

- To further build the evidence base of the impact Covid-19 has had upon young people's mental health and wellbeing during transition
- To further build the evidence base of the impact that Covid-19 has had upon learning outcomes during transition
- To examine the impact that Covid-19 during transition has had upon children and young people with SEND specifically in relation to the social, emotional wellbeing within the community.
- To establish where the capacity and responsibility to address the impact of Covid-19 lies, whether this be with the Government, the sector, parents and young people themselves or a combination of all of these
- To make recommendations to Government on its role in mitigating and remedying the impact that Covid-19 has had upon children and young people with SEND during transition

The inquiry is open to receive evidence under four broad topics, which will form the basis of at least four oral evidence sessions in Parliament (or virtually), from July to November 2020:

1. Communication and interaction (oral evidence at 23 September meeting)
2. Cognition and learning (oral evidence at 14 October meeting)
3. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (oral evidence at 11 November meeting)
4. Sensory and/or physical needs (oral evidence at 2 December meeting)

The APPG invites all stakeholders with relevant knowledge and expertise to submit evidence. In particular, we welcome the input of:

- Children and young people themselves (whether on their own initiative or coordinated through young people's organisations)
- Parents and guardians
- Professionals and voluntary sector workers who work directly with young people, including teachers and youth workers
Professional associations and trade unions representing the education workforce
- Charities and NGOs that work with or on behalf of children and young people
- Academics and researchers involved in SEND
- Clinicians and public health professionals with expertise in SEND

- Government representatives from relevant departments, especially the Department of Health and Social Care and Department for Education.

The deadline for responses is 15 November 2020.

Please make written submissions by email to appg.send@naht.org.uk

Nasen – AB – From January nasen membership will be free for everyone – right thing to do at this moment in time – please can colleagues spread the word – Have been doing lots of webinars – now have a webinar pass – £200 per year access to all nasen webinars (30 per year).

5. SEND Reference Group

AB thanked everyone who has contributed to SEND Reference Group – set up as a short-term group to deal with the initial crisis – now got dates until Easter 21. Meeting fortnightly – had thought DfE might reduce the number they send to meetings but actually growing numbers of DfE representatives – SEND has been seen as an afterthought but direction of travel is making everyone more aware of issues around SEND. New teams developed within the DfE – Devices team – supporting getting devices into schools. May think that the guidance that's come out isn't necessarily in the form that we would want but the reference group sees it prior to it coming out and it is a great deal better than the original.

Current issues being raised – FIT Testing, medical needs and a AGPs, funding – one of group working with National Network of Special School Business Professionals looking at the additional costs of special schools.

KT – Have had some influence on a number of things – Greater understanding about not all special schools will be able to remain open (under the tier system) due to staff shortages.

AB – Often have to read between the lines of some of the guidance – political issues sitting underneath – ALL schools are open is the message but limited expectation around attendance gives specialist settings the opportunity to be open for those pupils who can attend (and their parents are happy for them to attend) but an acceptance that this may not be ALL children. Developing a greater understanding between the complexity of the big message versus the nuance.

DB – Two things came up earlier – masks on transport and AGPs.

CR – A number of anomalies still around – transport for SEND – drivers and escorts not compulsory to wear masks and yet anyone on public transport must wear one. The other issue is around AGPs – DfE guidance - staff need to wear FFP2 or 3 but DoH guidance states you only need fluid resistance mask - Highlighted the different ways that education and health have dealt with lockdown. Minister Ford made the statement that education colleagues would not be put at any greater risk than health colleagues – this is not the case.

KT (via chat) - Lack of reconnect of services to special schools for EHCP is low and due to NHS policy for remote access.

KT - Agree Chris - there is a tension building up between school and other staff from NHS and social care. There is a lack of understanding from DfE and general public – remote learning for instance is not accessible for many of our children – they need a person to interact with not a screen.

Reading about how they were dealing with things in America - pushing for assessments for children that we have in our schools - now understanding that those children can't really access remote

learning in the way that other people can so we do need to find ways in which we can support children within homes or in care homes.

RW (via chat) - Many of our school leader members are feeling the same as explained by Chris - that schools are being dealt with very differently in comparison to health, social care etc

CR – Medicines in Specialist Group – direction of traffic from Lorraine Mulronee acknowledged that the CCGs needed to step up support to specialist settings so there was not a postcode lottery but recently had information from our local CCG that is contrary to this. Too many schools paying for health provision out of education budget.

AB – Historic tensions between health, education and social care – different terminology and language – Every meeting the use of specific masks has been raised at every meeting. Message we are giving is that the PPE should not differ across all sectors – needs lead.

Additional guidance on APGs is coming out but not sure when this will be published.

KT (on chat) MARA still key with PPE advice

KT – What not understood is that people in schools working directly with these children – parents are really struggling and not getting the support they need and schools do not have capacity to help – schools cannot over-promise – no respite

11. Relevant updates from other affiliations

NIL

12. NSEND Forum Operation

Invoices will be going out to organisations this week – DB to contact AP about BATOD and NatSIP

13. Any focus for actioned statements of agreement including future invitees

NIL

14. AOB

AB – Thought Leadership Papers – have not circulated yet – being savvy about the timing – will be out nearer Christmas.

LP – School-to-school support directory published today by DfE – listing all Teaching Schools, national Leaders of Education and National Leaders of Governance.

<https://tinyurl.com/y6xu2st9>

15. Dates for 2020- 21

9th Dec, 3rd Feb, 31 Mar, 26th May, 7th July

DB thanked everyone for attending. **Next Meeting to be held on 9th December.**