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THE NATIONAL SEND FORUM Minutes 07th July 2021

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Present: David Bateson OBE (DB) *Chair*, Lorraine Petersen OBE (LP) *FLSE*, Rona Tutt OBE (RT) *NAHT*, Caroline Wright (CW) *RCSLT*, Carol Kelsey (CK) *NNPCF*, Chris Rollings (CR) *FLSE*, Julie Walker (JW) *sen.se*, Mari Davis (MD) *NASS*, Alexandra Osborne (AO) *NSN*, Kiran Hingorani (KH) *SWALSS/NASS*, Jackie Mullan (JM) *FLSE*, Tina Wakefield (TW) *BATOD/NATSIP*, Rob Williams (RW) *NAHT*, Stephen Deadman (SD) *NAHE*, Michelle Haywood (MH) *WMSSEND*, Carolyn Morgan (CM) *FLSE*, Khursh Khan (KK) *NAS*, Malcolm Reeve (MR) *WSS*, Penny Barrett (PB) *SSV*, Steve Cullingford-Agnew (SC-A) *Equals*, Adam Boddison (AB) *nasen*,

Guests: Andre Imich (AI)

Minutes: Andy Petersen (AP)

1. Welcome and Introductions

For Action

DB welcomed and thanked everyone for joining this virtual meeting.

2. Protocol for meeting

DB went through some protocols for this virtual meeting

3. Apologies

Engage, NGA, PDNET

4. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising

The minutes were agreed with minor alteration.

5. Policy and DfE update

DB explained that the SEND national statistics 20.21 had been published on 24 June.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england-january-2021>

MR offered to undertake a presentation for the next meeting once he had updated his data set. LP commented that there had been a 10% increase in EHCPs, and an increase in pupils on SEN support. The primary need in primary schools was speech and language support, the primary need in secondary schools was SEMH. There had been a slight change in the number of pupils in mainstream schools with an EHCP so that they were now in the majority. DB commented that EHCPs were now running at 3.7% rather than 3.3% as they were previously. SEN support had risen marginally to 12.2%. There were now over a million pupils with support and the EHCP rates are 2.1% in primary, 2% in secondary and 24% in PRUs. As last year, ASD was 30%, MLD was just over 10% and SEMH nearly 15% and speech language

and communication needs both in terms of EHCPs and support were second only to ASD at 16%. There had been a big rise too, in free school meals. 20.4% are now receiving free school meals. This rose to 38% for those with EHCPs. SS placements had risen by nearly 50% in the last 13 years.

CR queried what was the current correct terminology for autism. KK responded that ASC was the current preferred term. RT said it might be easier to settle on 'Autism'.

MR agreed to prepare a presentation for the next meeting once he had updated his data set.

MR

CR commented that it was rumoured that the SEND review was now scheduled for the autumn. RW was unable to clarify the current position.

CR commented that he had contacted Lorraine Mulrooney about attending NSENDF but he had not had a response. DB commented that a list of questions needed to be prepared in order to encourage her attendance.

ALL

RT summarised her synopsis of the RCE meeting:

The area for a 'deep dive' will be Somerset/Swindon(which have a low proportion of SEND pupils), plus the neighbouring LAs of Dorset (which has a high proportion of SEND pupils), Bristol City and one other. MR will write a report by the end of August, setting out the landscape for SEND in these areas and the connections between them. MR will draw on information from the WSS team(s) in this area.

MR

DB reminded the group not to lose sight of multi-agency involvement in both maintained and non-maintained/independent schools.

MR had had another meeting with SWALSS and it had been suggested that the other area should be Swindon. MR stated that he had no problem with analysis and writing a report but he would need support in interpreting results. RT highlighted that Tina Emery might be a possible contact for the parent carer forums.

CK offered to find out the leads in the areas mentioned for NNPCF.

CK

DB suggested that MR combined the work he offered on the latest SEND data with his thought leadership paper that he mentioned he would be working on over the summer: the "Identification of SEN".

DB

LP reported that the inclusion of thought leadership papers on the nasen website was still in progress. DB agreed to follow-up. MH commented that she had been contacted by a PR agency about trying to get her piece into the TES or Schools Week.

AI joined the meeting

AI reported that the SEND Review had not as yet been published and no publication date had been set. The review team was still active and when the review is published, it will be a consultation, and everyone will be encouraged to participate.

The focus was on how to strengthen the mainstream offer and engage better with health and social care colleagues and their responsibilities.

DB queried whether oracy, communication, reading were being considered as a universal approach. AI responded that this was only being considered insofar as it affected EHC plans and the interventions used for them. There was a lot of thinking going on in terms of the universal or normally available provision.

AI commented that language development had been limited due to lockdown as a result of children only interacting with a limited range of people. This was also being considered as part of the recovery programme.

AI queried what had been the discussion about SEND data and DB summarised the discussion so far. AI commented that the data showed that the largest increases are happening at Key Stage two and Key Stage three. The SEN Support figure was also interesting, because over the last 12 months the rise was relatively small compared to the rise in a number of EHC plans. DB commented that he felt that this might be due to the transition between primary and secondary schools and the heightened anxiety of parents at that time. SD commented that hospital schools were seeing an increase in mental health anxiety due to transition issues and the disruption caused by the pandemic. CK commented that there were still not enough special school places so that the demand outstripped supply. CK also expressed concern about the large numbers of children who were not accessing a full-time education, not just from the pandemic but other causes. She also felt that it was difficult for schools to make a proper assessment of the support needed where children had been working remotely.

RW queried whether AI could give a “ball-park” date when the review might be published and whether the rise in EHCP numbers could be attributed to certain geographic areas where local provision had been cut. AI replied that no date had been set – work was also on-going to consider the impact of inability to access therapies in certain areas. The issue of differentiation and the so-called “post code lottery” was also being considered.

RT queried where alternative provision was coming under this review. AI replied that this was a very important consideration for the review team.

AI commented that the consultations were underway on behaviour and support in mainstream and encouraged members to respond. The closing date was the 11th of August.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/behaviour-management-strategies-in-school-units-and-managed-moves-call-for-evidence>

6. Update: Regional Centres of Expertise NSEND Research Update (RT/CD/MR/KH/DB/)

This item had been covered under item 5.

7. Thought Leadership – next papers and update on their circulation: Identification of SEND;

This item had been covered under item 5.

8. Updates from Members

BATOD is continuing to seek information from members about the consequences on deaf CYP of the pandemic. We are constantly updating our website information. In conjunction with NatSIP and NDCS BATOD have updated the letter for schools in England and Northern Ireland laying out advice, guidance and support for head teachers and staff – this is being altered as the rules change. BATOD are creating a new special interest group for QToDs working in resource bases. BATOD have held two of eight webinars. Six remain each one hosted by one of BATOD's regions and nations. Full details are on the website on the Events page. NatSIP held a very well attended virtual national working day July 6th, concerning the future SEND review. There will be a further working day in the autumn term.

FLSE NE/EQUALS – CR informed the meeting that he had written a book “Compendium to Rebound Therapy” LP commented that the link on the flyer CR had distributed did not appear to work.

<https://equals.co.uk/compendium-to-rebound-therapy/>

CR commented that a “Communications handbook” and a book on hydrotherapy were also in production. First FLSE NE post-lockdown meeting planned for October 14th. The focus will be for strategic planning. A conference is planned for next year in conjunction with EQUALS on preparation for adulthood. A conference is also scheduled for the 20th of May 2022 in Newcastle with Margot Sunderland covering the theory of mind and aces and gaps in our development.

FLSE (E) – Physical conference held last week with lots of social distance. RT had given a virtual update. A lot of new members were present and appreciation was expressed for LP updates. Concern was expressed about capacity (most special schools in the region were either at capacity or over. Also funding and the non-completion of the SEND review.

ENGAGE – has developed a resource to support a mental health audit for provision in schools, which should be released in the autumn term. National conferences to go ahead in Manchester on the third and fourth of November, along with the national awards programme. Places can be bought via the website. <https://engageintheirfuture.org/events/national-conference-2021/>

NAHE – 20% increase in members following a campaign to reach out to small units. A lot of virtual meetings had taken place. Use of virtual meetings had been helpful. NAHE conference planned for the autumn term and will probably be online. A physical conference for tier 4 CAMs units is planned in September. SD felt that there was a variation in the amount of funding that LAs had passed on ranging between 0% and 8%. LAs were not commissioning Hospital Mental health place and instead passing the problem back to mainstream schools. Some LAs were choosing not to commission Community Hospital Education places, thus forcing the problem back to mainstream schools.

NAHT – Members report an increase in mental health issues for staff, young people and HTs. Concern also about delays in assessments and resulting therapies. On the 14th of July NAHT are having an alternative provision briefing. The NAHT SEND conference is planned for 20th October. New perspectives on neuro-diversity is to be the focus. <https://www.naht.org.uk/SEND>

RT mentioned that the policy conference was to be on the eighth and ninth of October. RT had attended a Special Education Consortium additional meeting called “Ofsted Summer Catch Up” RT encouraged other members to attend. Nick Whitaker gave a Final Round up of work undertaken by OfSTED including “Supporting SEND How Children Young People's Needs Are Met in Mainstream Schools”, “SEND Old Issues, New Issues” and “Putting Children, Young People and SEND at The Heart of Recovery Plans”. DB suggested that the group needed to have a discussion about the issue of labels.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-send/supporting-send>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-old-issues-new-issues-next-steps>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-putting-children-and-young-people-with-send-at-the-heart-of-our-recovery-plans>

nasen – AB reported that nasen Live was planned for September and would be a physical conference at the Box Conference Centre in Birmingham. <https://nasen.org.uk/events/nasen-live-2021>

Nominations for nasen awards could still be submitted until 16th July. Nasen had conducted 2 SENco workforce surveys. Data had been compared between the 2020 survey and the 2018 survey to see what progress had been made in terms of issues like SENco workload. The surveys were available on the Bath Spa University website. <https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/projects/senco-workload/>

NASS – MD reported that the NASS annual conference was going to be a physical to face event on 12th/13th of October in York. <https://www.nassschools.org.uk/nass-annual-conference/>

MD had worked with LP on mental health and wellbeing training for NASS member

RCSLT – CW gave feedback on member issues. There had been a lot of problems with waiting lists which had been exacerbated by the pandemic. Some services were being successful in establishing new posts to deal with that as part of COVID recovery funding within the health system. Issues were also apparent in connection with staff mental health and wellbeing which was affecting retention and recruitment. Concern was also being expressed about the widening gap in Children’s communication skills, particularly as a result of home schooling. RCSLT were talking to NHS England about top-down solutions and issues around commissioning. RCSLT are also working as part of the health policy influencing group that’s led by the National Children's Bureau, to increase integration within the health system, particularly between health and social care, and the establishment of integrated care systems as the new structures for health. RCSLT had published a new fact sheet on the links between trauma and adversity, attachments and communication.

https://www.rcslt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/RCSLT_Adversity_Trauma_A4_4pp_FINAL.pdf

RCSLT’s report on “The People's Access to Speech and Language Therapy During the First Lockdown” had gathered 10000 signatures on its petition which meant the government will be now issuing the formal response to that petition.

SEN.se - in Somerset/Swindon, the special schools continue to work in partnership with the pupil referral units. SEN.se are looking to invite independent non maintained specialists’ provision into that collaboration. Also SEN.se are working on a pilot with NHS to look at increasing health involvement in the EHCP process. The pop-up shop initiative has now accessed a five-year lease on a shop in Taunton and SEN.se are going to be staffing and making products for the shop. Somerset/Swindon and Avon police have agreed to a supported employment programme which will be due to start in 12 months’ time. A virtual careers fair had been held which was highly successful. SEN.se networks have been developed where the special schools run networks for SENcos. SEN.se have been commissioned by the

local authority to deliver outreach. The relationship with the local authority continues to be very challenging.

SWALSS - planning underway for the principles conference, which will be in January and the deputies in March. <https://www.swalss.co.uk/conferences>

A new leadership and management course is launching in the autumn, and induction training for new head teachers is being considered.

9. Relevant updates from other affiliations, forums, trusts, alliances and partnerships

No Updates

10. NSEND Forum Operation

LP reported that invoices for NSEND information will be issued in late August.

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

None

12. AOB

DB canvassed members on their preference for meetings in the forthcoming year. BJ were happy to host physical meetings at present. RT supported physical meetings but suggested that a form of hybrid meeting be considered. KH endorsed RTs suggestion but supported physical meetings.

DB thanked members for their contributions over the last year and wished members a happy summer.

13. Dates

2021 **7thJuly**

2021-22 **29th September, 8th December, 2nd February, 30th March, 25th May, 6th July**
(Physical meetings at Browne Jacobson in London unless otherwise confirmed).

Next Meeting to be held on 29th September at Browne Jacobson 10.30am -14.45pm (lunch to be provided).

14. Venue 2021-22: Courtesy of Browne Jacobson, 15th Floor, 6 Bevis Marks, Bury Court, London EC3A 7BA

Meeting Closed at 11.55am

