

## Local Offer Governance Group

Date: 8 April 2022

**Present:** Rachel Akers, (Designated Clinical Officer NHS) Chair: Kathy Forsdyke, (Local Offer), Liz Sagi, (Adult Social Care) Nikki Taylor, (IASS Service Manager) Becky Whiting, (NAYC rep) Joanna Williams (SSS North)

**Representatives,** Victoria Farrington for Jo Bradley, (DCT) Anne Wakeling for Samantha Lavender (SSS West)

**Guests:** Julia Smith, (Local Offer Development Workers) Nichola Jones (Interim SEND lead - North)

**Apologies:** NPF, Lorraine Flute, Jo Bradley, Samantha Lavender, Gemma Marks

### 1. Introductions for new members/ visitors

Rachel welcomed new members and visitors to the group and opportunities were given for people to introduce themselves

### 2. Matters Arising from the Last Meeting

#### a. Storyboard

Rachel reported that we are still waiting to hear what the SEN Advisory Board (SAB) want to use:

A new template was used by Social Care for their recent inspection of the NCT but the position for SEN teams use is not clear. Rachel will contact SAB for clarification.

#### b. Short Breaks statement -

Kathy reported that the holding statement on the Local Offer for the short break statement has now been removed as a new short break statement has been provided. The Local Offer is now compliant with Code of Practice

#### c. Child Trust Fund

Julia is working on a Local Offer Guide to the Child Trust Fund following a recent government consultation. Information was shared in the most recent SNIX magazine about how parents can claim the Child Trust Fund when their child does not have mental capacity to do so on their own behalf.

#### d. Terms of Reference of LO Governance Group (attached)

It was agreed to update the TOR to reflect arrangements for the current situation of the Local Offer.

### 3. Feedback to the Local Offer (attached)

The feedback given to the Local Offer since the last meeting was shared with the agenda papers. The group asked Kathy if feedback was ever received about what people couldn't find on the Local Offer, but this is not often asked of the team. Nichola questioned how the Local Offer team research information to questions raised by people contacting them. The team were able to confirm that they verify the information from their colleagues as needed. Negative feedback to the Local Offer is rarely given directly to the Local Offer but there is some evidence that there may be second or third hand evidence that can be used in future.

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#### 4. **Annual Report for the Local Offer**

The annual report for the Local Offer was issued with the agenda papers to all representatives. No discussion at the group took place as everyone had had the opportunity to read it. This will be published on the Local Offer website. Kathy took the opportunity to thank Julia for her time while Kathy was on secondment for the COVID project.

#### 5. **Disaggregation of Local Offer website and team**

Kathy presented a paper with the agenda about the pending disaggregation of the website, search directory and staffing. Kathy explained that the Transformation Team will discuss the situation later in April with the North Senior Leadership Team. A tender for a new contract for the IT technology is needed and sits with the IT infrastructure team. This will drive the Local Offer searchable directory – which is statutory. The Transformation Team confirmed that some SEND webpages are in scope for 22/23 to be moved and will recommend that the Local Offer is included, by moving over the webpage content and keeping the directory as it is until a contract is procured. The Family Information Services directory will be affected by the same process. SNIX is managed by the Local Offer for the local area and has been split as the database (Capita One) has been divided. Both Julia and Kathy have access to both areas. The magazine is created once and distributed across the county. NCFG have been asked for comment about the future of this. Vicky agreed to discuss the disabled children's register with Jo as Nichola said that the disabled children's register is a social care regulation.

The Local Offer data will not divide equally between the two authorities and there will be a large area of duplication, including the 500 document and articles. Kathy expressed her concerns that as the two members of staff have different jobs, grades, responsibilities, and skills, to divide the staffing into North and West would be a threat to the quality of the current Local Offer. Vicky asked if parents will need to access two Local Offers to find services in Northamptonshire, and this was confirmed as the case under current plans to divide the data into North and West.

The group offered thoughts and advice to Kathy and Julia for the future.

Kathy will prepare an options paper for the Governance Group. (to follow).

#### 6. **Members' updates**

- a) Beccy Whiting explain that she had been appointed by the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs following Zoe Robinson's resignation. Beccy started her role in January 2022. She has started a project looking at youth groups for children with special educational needs and disabilities within the voluntary sector. Beccy was asked if Kathy could pass on the details to the Commissioner for short breaks within the Childrens Trust.
- b) Jo Williams introduced herself as one of the SSS workers for North Northants. Jo explained that the North team have around 400 children on the caseload at the moment. They are now offering face to face work at home and in school. They are running a consultation call service responding to parents within eight weeks. Parents report this as being very helpful. They have recruited two new members of staff to the team.

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- c) Anne Wakeling reported for SSS West that they also have around 400+ students on their caseload at the moment - a broadly similar position to the North team. The West team allocate cases via a panel. The North and West teams are working in conjunction to provide parent workshops. Some of them will be face to face. They will ensure that the Local Offer are made aware of these new courses and dates so that the Local Offer can continue to support the SSS team by sharing the information with families. The West team are also looking at how they can use the family hubs as places for parents to drop in and have face to face consultations.
- d) Liz Sagi explained that her current role in adult social care is being divided between the North and the West and her role for the North is currently being advertised and will hopefully be quickly recruited. Liz is planning to increase her cohort of Education Health and Care Link Workers and widen the scope of their role. The North currently have one Link Worker. The link workers cover 12 establishments but Liz is planning to expand this for students who are electively home educated and students attending mainstream schools that may need to access adult social services as they mature.
- e) Nikki Taylor reported that IASS continue to be busy. IASS, NPGF and the Local Offer are planning sessions for parents to consider the implications of the recent Green Paper issued by the government for consultation. Dates have been booked for the 29th of April for the West and the 9th of May for the North.
- f) Nichola Jones reported three key priorities in her interim role for North Northants.
  - 1) improving the early help offer
  - 2) compliance and duties around Education Health and Care Plans and annual reviews
  - 3) a sufficiency review, particularly for the specialist provision in the North.
 She reported that the North EHC team have had a turnover of staff but the new staff on the EHC team have been starting and she is reviewing operational processes.
- g) Rachel reported that the Health services are coming out of COVID Recovery and doing more face-to-face work. ICS SEND Maturity Matrix final return is due by 13th May. It will be signed off at the SEND Accountability Board on 4th May. Therapists continue to have a backlog and are struggling with increasing referrals.

**7. Any Other Business**

The West SEN Services had recently had a peer review with East Midlands reviewers looking at SEN Support in West Northamptonshire. (30 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022). Formal feedback will be made available and will be shared through the Local Offer

The meeting concluded at 11:05 am

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be arranged for the summer term.

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