

Peter's Feedback Notes from WSOA Identify & Assess Need workstream-5th May 2022

I met this morning with Simon McKenzie, Jonathan Gilbert (project manager) and Marion (PCF).

We went through the end-of-April status report covering all the actions in this workstream.

I won't bore you with all the details, but I'll highlight two key issues that emerged.

1. Jonathan has had no update this month from Health, which means that all the action points that are led by Health have not been updated since last month. Most of these are down to Sam Best as the responsible person. I suggested that she should be invited to these meetings in future. I think we agreed that all the key people who are named as responsible for action areas should be invited to these monthly meetings to make them more accountable.
2. It emerged during discussion that the RAG rating system that BCP uses for these plans doesn't have any proper way of indicating that an action has not been / will not be achieved by the due date. I said that anything that is obviously late/overdue should be marked as RED, but apparently that is not allowed using current definitions for Red/Amber/Green!! Therefore I said we need to reconsider how we monitor this. I've seen plans in the past where the deadline has come and gone, and someone just assigns another deadline for 6 months in the future, and I said this is not acceptable. Marion agreed strongly on this point, and to be far both Simon and Jonathan also said that the current rating system is not good enough!! Simon says that it would be good for me and/or Marion to say this to a broader group! So I said, yes, I'd be happy to say all this to anybody and everybody. Let's see what happens next...

A few other snippets of news:

- SEND team have lost 4 case officers in the last month (1 maternity, 1 resigned, 2 agency staff left). Action to 'address immediate staffing issues' is due by May 2022, and will not be achieved.
- High Needs banding descriptors now being rolled out to schools - going 'remarkably well'. There will be a formal 30-day consultation end of May. Council has approved a likely extra £2million to provision this, the aim is to meet more needs in mainstream and reduce the pressure on special school places. Simon clearly regards this as a significant achievement. I said parents would welcome more mainstream inclusion, provided it really meant that children's needs were being met.
- Lindsay Sloan has a new job as manager of process improvement team (or some such title, sorry if I haven't got it quite right). Therefore the post of PFA coordinator is vacant at the moment, and progress on PFA actions is at risk. Simon said they can't

/won't recruit for this at the moment because the post is subject to restructuring and therefore they could only offer someone a job for 3 months right now! (Stupid process, I thought, but I kept my mouth shut this time!)

I have the full report for the workstream, covering all the actions. Let me know if you want to see it.

Peter Phillips