



Stoke-on-Trent SEND Central Cluster Panel Autumn Term 2 Meeting Minutes

Meeting details

Date: Thursday 11th December 2025

Time: 09:30am – 13:00pm

Venue: MS Teams

Attendees

Name	Role	Organisation
(KP) K Peters	Chair	
(DM) D Marson	Head of SEND	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
L Bailey	Administrator	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
N Wilson	SENCO	Kingsland C.E Academy
(CR) C Robinson	Deputy Head Teacher	Co-op Academy Grove
L Meredith	Head of School	Saint Nathaniel's Academy
N Lowe	SENCO	Excel Academy
(MB) M Brookfield	SENCO	Abbey Hulton Primary
C Consterdine	MHST Manager (Combined Healthcare)	
(RM) R Morley	Learning and support Manager (SEND ILS)	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
J Sadler-Wright	Commissioning and Contracts Manager	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
(MC) M Condliffe	SENCO	Holden Lane
J Holmes	SENCO/Assistant Principle	Sneyd Academy
A Glover	Vice Principle	Kingsland C E Academy
D Drew	Senior Leader SENCO	Coop Academy Stoke
J Wood	SENCO	Jackfield Infant School
(VB) V Bradbury	Deputy Head Teacher	St Mark's CofE Primary School
(EH) E Holmes	SENCO	Etruscan Primary
(EP) E Pattinson	SENCO	Saint Nathaniel's Academy
K Lee	Senior Educational Psychologist	Stoke-On-Trent City Council

(TJ) T Johns	Assistant SENCO	Hanley St Luke's
(KA) K Amison	SENCO	Forest Park Primary School
C Gordon	Head of Inclusion	Stoke on Trent College
A Hodgson	Principle	St. Peters Catholic Academy
M Perry-Springer	Principal Educational Psychologist	Stoke-On-Trent City Council
D Carpenter	SENCO	Birches Head Academy
(DD) D Dyke	CYP Strategic Manager	SSOT ICB (NHS)
D Lindop	SENCO	The New Guild Trust
S Winrow	Co Headteacher	Merit PRU

Agenda Items

Item	Topic
1.	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>KP apologised that the meeting was not being held face to face. This was due to difficulties securing a venue big enough for all settings and the team around the cluster to attend. It remains the intention to hold a future meeting face to face,</p>
2.	<p>Values and purpose</p> <p>Recap of the key values picked out by members at the last meeting – Respect, honesty and hope. KP reiterated the intention and need to keep returning to the values we have identified to help to shape difficult conversations during this and future meetings.</p> <p>▶ Action – values to be added to the terms of reference and reflected in the online literature on local offer and SENDCo Hub - DM</p>
3.	<p>Cluster priorities</p> <p>DM provided short presentation on national priorities identified around local inclusion support offers and highlighted how the cluster approach mirrored those priorities.</p> <p>Discussion held around the difficulty in making decisions on allocating and prioritising funding without a clear set of priorities as a group of schools. KP gave the example of whether we want to prioritise individual requests or look at system wide programmes and projects.</p> <p>DM shared the initial purpose of the project was to upskill the workforce, add capacity and capability and to break the link between per-pupil funding. As such more locality wide projects would align with the LA intention around the pilot and potential wider rollout.</p> <p>DM updated on the delivery partner procurement that would deliver self or peer assessment. We're currently in the procurement process of that having secured transformation funding to do it (Additional to the cluster budget).</p> <p>The improvement partner will help to baseline where we're at as a locality and will facilitate some self-evaluation of areas of strength and weakness.</p> <p>And that longer term impact, what we're hoping is that that piece of work, which will hopefully start in February. After February half term this self evaluation and action planning will give us a real clear view of what our needs are as a local area as a locality and shape the team around the cluster make-up and training offer.</p> <p>DM shared that some of the training offer will come through that delivery partner as well. So hopefully we won't need to actually use all of our locality budget to deliver some of that upskilling of the workforce.</p>

	<p>KP summarised the discussion and chat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanting to upskill workforce, this will have a long-term impact as eventually this could lead to a ratio of 1 adult to 3 children. • As a collective we have said we want to start allocating resources as soon as possible and using the funding we have been given. <p>KP advised that future funding requests should be tested against these priorities.</p> <p>Settings discussed priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speech and language 2. Social emotional and mental health (EBSNA) 3. Sensory occupational therapy 4. Setting up resourced or internal provisions <p>DM reiterated the purpose of the cluster to determine its own priorities an outline what it needs from services rather than being recipients of services. Similarly, where good practice and expertise exists within settings can this be shared rather than looking for external help.</p> <p>▶ Action – DM to arrange for delivery partner to attend next meeting subject to contractual agreement being in place.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Review of actions and decisions from previous meeting</p> <p>See action log</p> <p>Review of the current service offer from the local authority and SaLT</p> <p>Dm explained the current traded offer from the local authority.</p> <p>KP reiterated the need to know what is on offer. Feels it still comes back to, we're not at any point of understanding clearly of what the needs are totally across all of our schools. We need that auditing work to take place to accurately inform that.</p> <p>Ahead of that taking place it was suggested to run a very brief survey amongst us all to identify the priorities.</p> <p>DD commented from ICB perspective to reiterate the need to understand what the requirement from the cluster is so that the appropriate support can be commissioned or if not commissioned from NHS then the cluster can be advised why and supported to look elsewhere for quality assured alternatives.</p> <p>A number of setting identified themselves in the chat was wanting to support the development of this and RM agreed to contact these for more information.</p> <p>▶ Action – summary of current offer and potential locality wide offers to be presented at the next meeting. This will include universal and targeted support available to settings and possibility for locality wide training and support around key areas of need. (RM/DM)</p> <p>Survey to be developed and circulated (RM/DD)</p> <p>DM/KP reiterated that the £210k funding belongs to the whole cluster and there isn't a specific allocation per school or a guarantee that each school will receive some of the funding. It will be up to the cluster to determine how to use the funding.</p> <p>DM explained that the capital funding is capped at £15k per school, but that doesn't mean each school will receive £15k. The cluster will need to determine the best use of the funding and recommend to the LA</p> <p>DD signposted everybody to the sensory toolkit</p> <p>▶ Action – details of sensory toolkit to be shared (DM/DD)</p> <p>EBSNA Horizons Project</p> <p>Agreed in principle at the previous meeting. DM has met with Horizons and costing is £15k for 30 schools or £9k for 20 schools. Dm requested confirmation from the cluster whether all wanted to</p>

	<p>take part or if we should just purchase 20 licenses given only 17 voted to approve. KP suggested seeking confirmation from each setting that they wanted to take part (now or in the future) and purchasing sufficient licenses</p> <p>▶ Action – DM to contact settings to confirm their desire to be part of the pilot and arrange for licenses accordingly.</p> <p>▶ Action – DM to arrange for EBSNA horizons to attend next meeting subject to contractual agreement being in place.</p>
5.	<p>Cluster funding requests – child level, project based and capital bids</p> <p>Abbey Hulton Primary School</p> <p>MB introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>Abbey Hulton have requested they would like a safe and sensory space. It was also stated by MB that they need small group support which would benefit those children who are easily distressed in class they then have a quiet place to calm down. There has been an increasing number of SCMH needs that need this utilised space. Abbey Hulton also made it clear they are aware of the sensory tool kit they have also had support from Kemball School and Watermill School giving them advice on how to create more of a comfortable sensory space and what they can do to improve these spaces for their children.</p> <p> Decision – funding approved by majority £9,994.36</p>
	<p>Co-op Academy Grove</p> <p>CR introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>Coop Grove outlined that furniture in the classroom is very uncomfortable for the children and they struggle to reach the floor given the wooden chairs and tables. We have had visit packages from SEND services where professionals have deemed our classroom furniture unsuitable for the children, which in turn has promoted restlessness and issues with handwriting.</p> <p>Dm asked if the trust had looked at this as part of their duty to maintain the school.</p> <p> Decision – funding declined by majority</p> <p>▶ Action – DM to look into alternative funding options if they exist and feedback to CR</p>
	<p>Etruscan Primary School</p> <p>EH introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>Etruscan have stated that they would like more outdoor resources/ space. Mrs E Holmes has shared she would like the outdoor area to be as good or even better than the Children’s indoor space.</p> <p>Request for helpful outdoor resources</p> <p>Access to indoor and outdoor provisions</p> <p>DM queried if this was different to the request last time and the discussion held with school subsequently around a commissioned resourced provision</p> <p> Decision – funding approved by majority</p> <p>▶ Action – DM/EH to clarify the costings</p>
	<p>Hanley St Luke’s C of E Academy</p> <p>TJ introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>DM explained that as Hanley St Lukes had funding agreed at the previous meeting that they were unable to access further capital funding through the inclusive Environments pot as the policy states only available to setting who have not previously accessed high needs funding</p>

	<p> Decision – funding not eligible</p> <p>▶ Action – DM to share inclusive environment protocol</p>
	<p>Saint Nathaniel's Academy</p> <p>EP introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>Some funding towards a sensory room Children are recommended to go to a quiet calm place. St Nathaniel’s School will be putting some of their own budget towards this sensory area. MP has questioned what the support will be once having the room fitted. TA/Support staff will be trained and this space will be only accessed to children when accompanied with an adult.</p> <p> Decision – funding approved by majority £9875.04</p> <p>▶ Action – Theme noted around sensory rooms etc. DM/MPS to look at wider support and offer around the development of sensory spaces and staffing to ensure effective implementation of sensory spaces. Potential discussion with special schools to look at putting on a learning session within one of the special school to look at how sensory spaces are developed, utilised and staffed.</p>
	<p>Sneyd Academy</p> <p>MC introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>The current resources are very supportive for all children with EHCPs. Wanting to add an outdoor area, adding fencing to make it a safe place for children. Developing this into a learning area. DM suggested using the money for something more ambitious and look at whether the Mat could match this to develop a more impressive space.</p> <p>KA queried whether there could be another way to get the money for the fencing and then using our cluster money to spend on more appropriate resources which includes different type of sensory equipment.</p> <p> Decision – deferred. View that the request was reasonable, but the funding wouldn’t deliver impact. Requested that the proposal be reviewed with the trust and return to future meeting</p> <p>▶ Action – DM to visit the setting</p>
	<p>St Mark's CofE Primary School</p> <p>VB introduced the proposal – capital funding – see agenda pack</p> <p>Asking for a sensory space, creating a space for children to reset. Mrs Bradbury explained she has been over to watermill and have experienced the small and big sensory room to hopefully give them the support and help they need to create their own.</p> <p> Decision – funding approved by majority £6,571.21</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Setting led solution circles</p> <p>No requests submitted</p> <p>Dm shared proposed shortened request form to enable settings to add future cases to the agenda.</p> <p>Cluster Discussion - Solution Circle Request – Fill in form</p> <p>Potential to do these in smaller facilitated breakout groups either in person or online in future meetings.</p> <p>▶ Action – All to review the request form and feedback to DM. Settings to use this form to request solution circle at next cluster meeting.</p>

	<p>▶ Action – MPS and DM agreed it would be helpful to send out some more information in regard to the solution circle approach so everyone has a more understanding of the benefit they will have.</p>
7.	<p>AOB – including agreement around future meeting dates and times</p> <p>▶ Action – DM requested all settings feedback on preferred dates and times for future meetings using the form here:</p> <p>Central cluster - future meetings – Fill in form</p>