

# SEND Assurance Group Terms of Reference

**Version 1**

**Better health  
and wellbeing for all...**

## Version Control

Version	Approval Date	Author	Update comments
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## **1. Establishment**

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) assurance group is a subgroup established by the Quality and Safety Committee.

## **2. Terms of reference**

The terms of reference are defined by the ICB.

The terms of reference will be maintained by the ICB Governance Team/Lead Officer.

## **3. Authority**

The group is authorised to:

- Investigate any activity within its terms of reference
- Seek any information it requires within its remit, from any employee or member of the ICB
- Commission any reports it deems necessary to help fulfil its obligations
- Obtain legal or other independent professional advice and secure the attendance of advisors with relevant expertise if it considers this is necessary to fulfil its functions. In doing so the subgroup must follow any procedures put in place by the ICB for obtaining legal or professional advice
- The group is not decision making and provides an assurance function only.

## **4. Purpose**

The purpose of the assurance group is to support the Quality and Safety Committee to discharge its duties relating to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities across the North East and North Cumbria.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

This section describes the duties, authority, accountability and reporting.

The subgroup's duties are as follows:

- Provide a single oversight of compliance of the health responsibilities relating to the statutory duties for SEND across the ICB
- Ensure there are robust quality assurance measures in place to assure the ICB that organisations from which they commission have effective SEND

arrangements in place

- To share learning and good practice and oversee implementation of improvement plans to ensure removal of unwarranted and unnecessary variation in the discharge of ICB statutory duties for SEND across the ICB
- Review risks in relation to SEND across the health system and agree mitigation plans
- To influence and then consider NICE guidance and influence relevant strategic forums in the ICB to address/manage variation and agree the ICB position
- To inform and influence wider strategic commissioning decisions which impact on delivery of an effective SEND offer in each area/place of the ICB
- Ensure there is an effective SEND dataset for the ICB to inform commissioning/integrated commissioning
- Be an active voice and partner in shaping the proposal and implementation of an overall strategic programme of work to deliver the ambitions, priorities and plans for SEND and escalate any issues/concerns to the Quality and Safety Committee where appropriate
- To provide Health Executive leadership for SEND, facilitating and promoting joint working and best practice within and across the whole North East North Cumbria system
- To enable the subcommittee members to provide a strategic link back to the ICB and area/place partnerships ensuring that the programme has the correct balance between strategic leadership and local system delivery.
- To gain assurance from the area/place-based arrangements to the ICB on the discharging of statutory health duties in-line with the legislative requirements.
- To offer an ICB view to the SEND Boards, ICB and local organisations (including place based partnership arrangements where they exist) on future provision and delivery of SEND services Review themes, outcomes and learning from inspections to inform agenda and commissioning
- Review SEND workforce issues and offer an ICB view to ensure compliance across NENC ICB e.g. DCO, DMO roles
- Ensure activity aligns with SEND Partnerships informs and influences Children and Young Peoples Strategy, transformation, and commissioning activity
- Ensure effective co-production arrangements are in place across the ICB to ensure the voice of children/young people and parents/carers is heard

## **6. Accountability and reporting**

The assurance group is accountable to the Quality and Safety Committee and reports (via minutes) on how it discharges its responsibilities.

The secretary formally records the minutes of each meeting and keeps a record of all confirmed minutes. The group will provide assurances on the business considered and escalating any concerns, where necessary to the Quality and Safety Committee.

## **7. Membership and attendance**

### **Chair and Vice Chair**

- Director of Nursing (Safeguarding) (Chair)
- Senior Head of SEND (Vice Chair)

In the absence of the Chair, or Vice Chair, the remaining members present elects one of their number to Chair the meeting.

### **Membership (subject to ICB Chair's approval as above)**

- Director of Nursing (Safeguarding) (Chair)
- Senior Head of SEND (Vice Chair)
- Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) representatives
- Director of Nursing (AACC)
- Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) representatives

### **Attendees**

Only members of the subgroup have the right to attend meetings, however all meetings of the subgroup may also be attended by the appropriately nominated individuals who are not members.

The Chair may ask any or all of those who normally attend, but who are not members, to withdraw to facilitate open and frank discussion of particular matters. Other individuals may be invited to attend all or part of any meeting as and when appropriate to assist it with its discussions on any particular matter.

### **Attendance**

Where a member of the subgroup is unable to attend a meeting, a nominated deputy may be agreed with the Chair. Conflicts of interest will need to be considered for any nominated deputies.

Where an attendee of the subgroup (who is not a member) is unable to attend a meeting, a nominated alternative may be agreed with the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence).

## **8. Meeting Quoracy and Decisions**

The subgroup will meet in private.

The subgroup will meet at least 4 times a year. Additional meetings may take place as agreed by the Chair (or Vice Chair in his/her absence).

The Quality and Safety Committee may ask the group to convene further meetings to discuss particular issues on which they want the subgroup's advice.

In accordance with the Standing Orders, the subgroup may meet virtually when necessary and members attending using electronic means will be counted towards the quorum.

### **Quoracy**

As this is an assurance group quoracy is not required (as they are not a decision-making forum). The chair will decide whether there are enough members of the required disciplines at the meeting to ensure the meeting is meaningful.

### **Decision making**

The subgroup is not decision making and does not have any financial delegated authority.

## **9. Behaviours and Conduct**

### **ICB values**

Members will be expected to conduct business in line with the ICB values and objectives. Members of, and those attending shall behave in accordance with the ICB's Constitution, Standing Orders, and Standards of Business Conduct Policy.

### **Conflicts of interest**

In discharging duties transparently, conflicts of interest must be considered, recorded and managed. Members should have regard to the NHS guidance on managing conflicts of interest and the ICB Standards of Business Conduct and Declarations of Interest Policy.

Conflicts of interest must be declared and recorded at the start of each meeting. A register of interests is maintained by the ICB with an extract considered before and during each meeting. If a conflict of interest arises, the Chair may require the affected member to withdraw at the relevant point.

## **Equality and diversity**

Members must demonstrably consider the equality and diversity implications of decisions they make.

## **10. Secretariat and Administration**

The Chair is responsible for agreeing the agenda and ensuring matters discussed meet the objectives as set out in these terms of reference.

The group shall be supported with a secretariat function which will ensure that:

- The agenda and papers are prepared and distributed following agreement with the Chair.
- Any additional conflicts of interest are recorded and handled appropriately.
- Good quality minutes are taken in accordance with the standing orders and agreed with the chair and that a record of matters arising, action points and issues to be carried forward are kept and taken forward between meetings.
- If requested, the Chair is supported to prepare and deliver reports to the Parent Committee.

## **11. Review**

These terms of reference will be reviewed at least annually and more frequently if required. Any proposed amendments to the terms of reference will be submitted to the Parent Committee for approval.