# Pinpoint Network Meetings

# *Meet the Assistant Director for SEND and Pinpoint’s CEO Sarah Conboy* January 2021

## Background

Upon coming into Post, Toni Bailey committed to regularly meeting with parent carers at Pinpoint’s suggestion. This is the second round of these meetings. Due to the pandemic, this round was held virtually.

**Issues raised**

* **Covid related issues –** access to valued health visitor services during pandemic reducing support for parents who have babies with SEND. In person assessments suspended and parent carers concerned about delay to needs being identified and met**.** Medical needs not being met during lockdown as expected.
* **Support from SENCOs when parents request an Education Health and Care Assessment** - parent carers felt unsupported and that SENCOs may lack sufficient knowledge about specific conditions / needs
* **SENCOs and teachers not following what is in the ECHP –** despite intervention form SAT team school still not following ECHP – what other options are left?!
* **Statutory Assessment Team –** variability of experience – some have a positive and relatively smooth journey with few issues, whilst others report too many changes of caseworkers, difficult exchanges and dissatisfaction.
* **Expectation that all those working with children should have greater SEND knowledge –** parent carers feel that professionals should know as much as they do about SEND and specific conditions.
* **Variability in timescales for issuing final ECHPs –** some report no issues and no delay whilst other report delays of nearly 12 months
* **Training for Early Years Practioners –** view that EYFS practioners would benefit form more SEND training
* **Telling the Story many times –** concern that soe families are asked to tell their story / the child’s story many times. This can be emotional and unhelpful. Could we have a means of telling it once and all professionals being able to access it?
* **Parent Carers wish for children to remain in mainstream** – concern that some families are steered towards special schools earlier than they would like or when they would prefer their child to remain in mainstream (and needs can be met in mainstream).
* **Engagement Model replacing P Scales –** what help and support have schools had to understand this and prepare.
* **Request for more support for parent carers whose children have chromosome related needs** Parent carers would like a group specifically to address the needs of these families.
* **Lack of provision for those who are post 16 that meets their needs and aspirations –** many post 16 offers are people facing and do not meet the needs of young people who would prefer alternative offers and who are uncomfortable in social settings.
* **Post 16 ECHPs with no offer that matches need** – ECHPs are not being met as there is no suitable post 16 provision to meet those needs cam up more than once.
* **Post 16 offer doesn’t work for young people with spikey profile** can’t access single A’level without English and / or Maths for most A’level providers so can’t play to strengths and interests.
* **Parent carers paying for expensive private assessments as refused Education Health and Care Plan Assessment –** time, cost and frustration that the ECHA does not meet the needs of some families and their children
* **Speech and Language Needs are not well known and understood in schools** - lack of knowledge and an ability to diagnose needs
* **Teachers not trained to recognise or diagnose needs -** earlier identification of needs and a lack of specialist knowledge
* **Not all professionals express empathy and meet parental expectations**
* **Timeliness of personal budget payments –** regularly late payments mean parent carers either pay for services in advance or delay provision until paid and this is unacceptable.
* **SAT Caseworker turnover and communication of changes** parent carers often don’t know a caseworker has changed and some experience considerable number of changes in personnel. This does not help parent carers.
* **SAT Caseworker knowledge, understanding and empathy** some parent carers feel workers lack insight and this causes emotional distress and frustration as they seek help and support.
* **Mediation is working well** but much could be avoided by better communication of earlier activity.
* **Occupational Therapy access to services** reports that parent carers cannot access OT services as expected
* **Sensory Processing Identification / Diagnosis** parent carers have to seek private assessments as cannot access assessment or diagnosis in Cambridgeshire.
* **Schools don’t seem to know enough about Sensory Processing Needs** and cannot offer support
* **ECHP Reviews –** report that CAMH not invited when they were providing services and needed.
* **ECHP Reviews –** must be parent coordinated if young person is not in provision?
* **Desire to have a SEND triage approach –** one meeting with all the professionals or right professionals to provide diagnosis / assessment of need
* **Fight to access help** - asking because its needed – takes far too long / too many years
* **SEN Support** – needs to be so much better
* **Some school set up don’t support children’s needs but it’s not recognised** – school open plan layout doesn’t work for children’s needs
* **Parental choice of school not listened to by panel** parental choice really matters but the panel looks more at cost
* **Is funding scrutinised?** Concern that not all funding is spent as parent carer expect. Not all parent carers know what money is spent on and whether its as it should be. Should accountability be different – OfSted or others?

## Next Steps

## Toni addressed a number of the issues raised with those who raised them. He has committed to taking the issues back and we will ask for an update in the coming month.