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Best wishes, Aidan Daly Communications and Evidence Programme Officer | | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | |  | | --- | | **Feature** | | | |  | | --- | |  | | | |  | | **Reflections from the East Midlands Change Programme Partnership on what they have learnt so far** | |  | | A group of kids playing with musical instruments  Description automatically generated | |  | | Hi, my name is Pat Bullen. I qualified to teach children and young people experiencing severe learning difficulties way back in 1984 and spent the first half of my career teaching in mainstream and special schools, becoming a special school Headteacher in 1995. From there, I moved into a regional SEND role with the East Midlands Local Authorities (LAs) and have worked directly for LAs in the region for over 20 years, always in SEND/Inclusion roles. I was fortunate enough to also hold a role as a regional adviser for Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) for several years, alongside tutoring on the national DfE-funded NDTi-led SEND leadership programme (2015-22). However, my best qualification in SEND is undoubtedly as a sibling to Tony, my older brother, affected by Down Syndrome but the best influence on my understanding of rights, choice and person- centred practice. He was also a great brother and we had so much fun together.  From working with Directors of Children’s Services in the East Midlands as their SEND/Inclusion lead (Regional Innovation and Improvement Alliance), I was approached about the Change Programme Partnership (CPP) role in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland - as the three LAs all have significant demand with recent changes in their own senior LA SEND/Inclusion leadership, and they also wanted to work as equal partners, rather than one LA leading - this makes us slightly different to most other CPPs. I was appointed as Strategic Lead from 1st September 2023, which I think has helped with our central capacity to respond. My knowledge of all three LAs also helped.  The three LAs share one Integrated Care Board (ICB) (there are so many acronyms in our world!) and from the outset, we agreed that all three LAs would be equal partners not only with the ICB, but with our health trust for all children’s services, Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT). This meant that we all had a share of additional burdens funding to set up, with very clear and dedicated health leadership within our CPP. Indeed, we used the existing health-led sub-regional structures to set up our governance.  **What have we learned so far?**   * That set up and then forming, norming, performing take time and we felt ready to commence testing the potential reforms only after several months * There is a huge appetite for change in our world, but we are also contending with project and short-termism fatigue * We would prefer to use each of the three areas to test to their strengths rather than overwhelm all three LAs with simultaneous testing * Once we developed the programme management approach, with great leadership from LPT, things have fallen more into place, as it’s that question of ‘how do you eat an elephant? In small pieces’ (apologies, I’m a vegetarian too). The programme managers have broken down daunting tasks into manageable scale- and the REACh consortium have been key in enabling this too.  Delivery successes  * Great attendance, engagement and readiness for change across the partnership, including with our parent/carer leaders and schools/setting/Further Education providers- at local workshops and online with DfE FAQ sessions * Our ELSEC pathfinder benefited from piggy backing onto a Language and Living SEND integration project which closes in March, including recruiting SALT support workers from there, enabling ELSEC to get out of the blocks speedily * Alongside our governance above, we have 12 workstreams with a two-page plan per workstream, and our switched-on finance lead from Rutland LA has developed a ‘scorecard’ or a template which we can score for the Steering Group to make recommendations about how we spend the resources in the programme wisely [NB alongside the 11 reforms, we are a Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) early adopter - NHSE project] * Change Programme funding has enabled us to award each of our PCFs money so they can attend more meetings and activities across the Change Programme * We have engaged the East Midlands Young Researchers with University of Derby to secure co-design with young people, with one researcher sitting as a Steering Group member and all researchers acting as consultants to the workstream co-chairs  Delivery challenges  * Colleagues are under pressure in the day job, and we are mindful of trying to support from the centre alongside harnessing the project leadership in individual areas * Communications- we now have a monthly highlight report (thanks Yorkshire &Humber for your example) and our PCFs issue a joint monthly newsletter which for example, explains how EHCP testing doesn’t affect statutory rights.  Comms are still not quite where we want it to be across the whole of our system * Whilst testing some reforms, we are pleased that the evaluation partner is now in place, as we are also seeing bigger ‘macro’ issues. One example is that our parent carer leaders like the standardisation of the EHCP template (though we might contend that ‘intended outcomes E’ come before provision) but we are losing the opportunity to guide practitioners in planning to work across the PfA pathways as it stands as a template * We’re trying to ensure that we look at the research- the Improvement Plan intends to base change on evidence- so we’re interested in not only sharing our views on bands and tariffs, but ensuring we are sighted on international research, such as Cor Meijers research on funding models.  Overall I had a great role across both the East and West Midlands, and did some other interesting work too, and I gave that up… because I really do believe in change. I don’t want to shout from the sidelines, I want to influence change. I think we need cultural change - we are each other’s partners in this, and our young people deserve nothing less. With my 40th anniversary in SEND/Inclusion coming up, I want to make the most of this late chapter in my career to strive to improve our system. Our young researchers speak of belonging and also told us that it should be an EHCPP - the last P is for people, as every young person they interviewed in the region last year described people who made a difference to improve their lives and outcomes- who wouldn’t want to be part of that? | |  | |  | | | | |
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