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Our Ref: AJ/KW

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Simon,

Thank you for joining us for the on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2024 along with Deborah Lamont (Healthwatch Director) and Sarah Wilkins (WCF Director for Education) for a discussion about the decision of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) to apply the Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS Project) to Herefordshire Schools and not to include Worcestershire Schools.

The project is funded, and time limited by the Department for Education (DfE), supported by the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and NHS England.

You had previously written to Paul Robinson (CEO Worcestershire County Council) in June 2024 following the ICB Quality Summit event where the question was raised to understand the decision making behind this as your expectation is that ICB would normally take an approach that would share this resource across both LA areas.

The Worcestershire Parent Carer Forum (PCF) had raised concerns with Healthwatch that this project opportunity had not been shared with the SEND Partnership at the time of application and there was concern that Worcestershire Schools and by association Worcestershire children had missed out on this opportunity.

This matter has been discussed at the SEND and Alternative Partnership Board on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 where both Worcestershire PCF and Healthwatch were present. The outcome and minutes from the meeting recognised the disappointment expressed by Worcestershire PCF that Worcestershire schools were not able to take part. The meeting also noted that learning

from this pilot can be shared across the Partnerships of both local areas as the project is restricted to 40 schools. The SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership Board has also proposed a deep dive item at a future meeting on support available to schools in relation to neurodiversity.

The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS Project) is anticipated to:

- Help shape whole school SEND provision
- Provide early interventions at a school level
- Upskill school staff
- Support strengthening of partnerships between schools and parent carers

The notification of this project came to the attention of the ICB in the Autumn of 2023. A meeting was convened in December 2023 by the ICB and included NHS England colleagues, along with Local Authority representatives from Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The expectation was that an expression of interest be made to NHS England for participation in this project. For an expression of interest to be successful evidence of where the input could make the most difference was required.

Feedback from officers concluded that there was no development support available to Herefordshire schools in the areas listed. Worcestershire schools had an offer of support, some free at the point of access and some traded and the PCF were also providing development of strengthening partnership between schools and parents via the Parent/Carer Engagement Toolkit and the PCF parent engagement officer.

However, it was agreed that Worcestershire schools could benefit from learning and development opportunities coming from this project.

On reflection with you we understand the limitations of consultation in this instance due to the expectations of response time from strategic funders for short term projects. However, we also recognise and agree that in another circumstance efforts would be made to include a wider group of consultees and decisions via the executive group of our SEND and AP Partnership as this would further develop our partnership approach.

We are committed to understanding the impact of this project and will forward plan the lead ICB officer Anna Swift to report findings to the SEND and AP Partnership Board at the most pertinent point to agree any opportunities or recommendations for Worcestershire. The

latest update from Anna, is that she and the Herefordshire LA lead are working on content for the Herefordshire Local Offer that we expect will provide regular updates for us all.

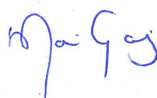
We think you will agree that this has been discussed and agreed at the SEND and Alternative Partnership Board meeting in July and future meetings will track progress and opportunities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam Johnston', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Adam Johnston**

Interim Director of Children's Services for  
Worcestershire County Council  
Chief Executive of Worcestershire Children  
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mari Gay', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Mari Gay**

**Managing Director**  
NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire