

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) News

October 2019

Issue 4

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) monthly newsletter. Working together we are committed to ensuring that our children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities have access to appropriate education, health and care services, as close to home as possible, so they can flourish.

As part of our Local offer, we will be working with children, their families and carers to design a system that works better and is sustainable.

This newsletter will aim to keep you informed about the work taking place across our multi-agency partnership to make the very necessary and important improvements in the current service offer to our children and young people; as well as addressing the findings from the Ofsted and CQC inspection in June 2018.



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*Lead Officer, SEND / Assistant
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and Solihull Sustainability and
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Listening to our parents and carers – you said, we did

As part of the work to improve children's services here in Birmingham, a commitment was made to work more closely with parents and carers and listen to what they have to say. Part of this work has included two surveys to find out what if any improvements parents and carers have seen since this work started following the Ofsted/CQC inspection in June 2018. Using a 'you said, we did' format we aim to demonstrate that children, young people and their families and carers are benefiting from this important programme.

Birmingham City Council's Assistant Director for Inclusion and SEND, Nichola Jones said: "We were pleased to note that parents have highlighted improvements in some of the services. Whilst we know that there is still a lot of work to be done, it is good to note that some of our families are seeing improvements. However, we must strive to continue to improve our services so that our children and their families are all starting to benefit from the changes we are making."

Here are some of the findings from the survey carried out in May.

You said	We did
“don’t write rubbish EHC Plans”	Audit team has implemented and is now regularly auditing the quality of EHCPs. Quality has improved since January 2019 but we know there is still some way to go.
<p>“the whole system is wrong”</p> <p>“I am always fighting for the correct support”</p> <p>“departments should try communicating with each other”</p> <p>“A complete change in approach”</p>	We are developing plans to offer, where appropriate, earlier and better help and support for children and young people in their local mainstream school. We are developing these plans as a partnership to ensure joint working and communication within all SEND partners in Birmingham.
“answer phone calls”	Additional capacity has been created to ensure phone calls are answered and matters resolved in the first call. Staff in the Contact Centre have been trained to answer SENAR calls and are able to resolve those matters that do not need the involvement of a Principal Officer or Manager.
<p>“someone who understands the regulations”</p> <p>“lots of avoidable mistakes”</p>	A Multi-agency training programme is being implemented across the system to ensure all staff has in-depth knowledge of the legislation regarding SEND children and young people.
<p>Transition into Adult Services:</p> <p>“start earlier than 18!”</p> <p>“I am dreading it”</p>	A review of the EHCP ‘annual review’ process is in place, starting with Y9 reviews. The aim is to give young people aged 14 opportunities to think about their ambitions and what they want to plan for the future.
<p>“read the files”</p> <p>“Don’t want to tell our story to every professional”</p>	A Rix Wiki pilot scheme is being implemented this term. Rix Wiki is a secure website that will hold the story, pictures, videos of a young person. A wiki will allow children, young people and their families to tell their story how they wish to and then invite professionals of their choosing to view their wiki story. This will reduce the need to tell their story multiple times and support professionals to better understand the individual’s need for their service in a more holistic way.
“reduce waiting lists”	Business cases for new NHS investment have been agreed, and capacity has increased for Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy services to reduce waiting lists.

Vision becomes clearer for SEND services

A half day workshop at the end of June 2019, kicked off the development of the vision for the delivery of SEND services in the future. The workshop consisted of sharing good practice and understanding what level of joined up provision, or integration of health, education and care services we want in Birmingham.

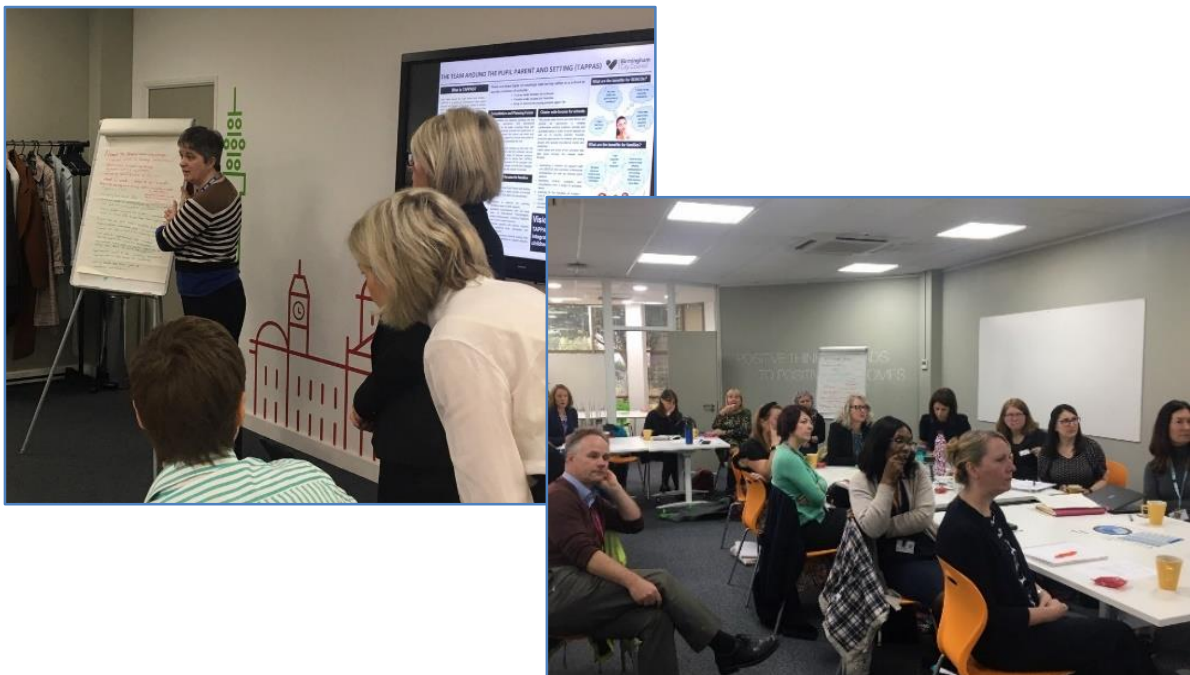
Key outcomes for the day included:

- Sharing of best practices and themed discussion of local vision for an integrated local area SEND service across education, health and care agencies and partners
- Developing our SEND ambassadors and change leaders programme
- Common agreement, that the future SEND model for Birmingham needs to focus on local support and integrated support and better early help to support children with SEND.

Paul Senior, Birmingham City Council's Interim Assistant Director, Education and Skills, said: "It was agreed there was a need for greater ambition for the future of SEND services, and a delivery model that focused on making support work locally, for the child, with as much early help as possible, in a joined up way from early years, through to early adulthood."

A further half day SEND design workshop...

Following on from the meeting in June, a group of 25 staff from all agencies came together at the beginning of October to develop plans for delivering support to children and families based in locality teams, and working with individual schools. Here are some photos of the event. In future editions of this monthly newsletter we will outline how this new approach to providing better and earlier support for children with SEND will work.



Refreshed Speech and Language approach to benefit Birmingham's Children

From September 2019, we will be offering a refreshed approach to therapy for all children in Birmingham:

- Due to the success of our parent workshops and positive feedback, we are now rolling these out across the city, the aim being that parents will be better informed, invested and involved in their child's journey and therapy.
- We are working closely with colleagues in education to explore and develop more integrated, partnership working to support children with communication needs across the city.
- We are working towards a significant reduction in waiting times for children with speech sound difficulties and stammers by March 2020, following investment into the service.



EDUCATIONAL HEALTH & CARE PLAN

Since July 2019, children who requires Speech and Language Therapy advice for their new Education, Health and Care Plan will now be seen for assessment and a report provided to support the EHC process.

Children's Speech and Language Therapy webpages get a makeover

The SLT webpages, which have been revamped, are now live, full of fantastic information about how to make a referral, journeys through the service, ages and stages, resources, ideas and key links.

Please signpost parents who are looking for support and strategies to help their child's speech and language development. Have a look and let us know what you think – www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/childrens-SLT

Local children set to benefit from new mental health support in schools and colleges

Children and young people at local schools and colleges are set to benefit from swifter and improved access to mental health support following NHS Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group's successful bid to secure funding to establish Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) within or near to schools and colleges.



The MHSTs will become part of the school community, developing models of early treatments for mild to moderate mental health and emotional

wellbeing issues, for those experiencing anxiety, low-mood, behavioural difficulties or friendship issues. Cognitive behaviour therapy will be offered where anxiety or self-harm is identified, as well as group support for parents to include issues around conduct disorders and communication difficulties.

NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG's Director of Joint Commissioning for Mental Health, Children and Maternity and Personalisation, Joanne Carney said: "We are delighted that we have been successful in our bid to establish new mental health support teams across our patch. This funding will ensure that children and young people have earlier and easier access to the help and support that they need, at the right time in the right way.

"The MHSTs will also provide help and support for education staff within school and college settings, as well as offering development opportunities to education staff for specialist learning, who will then be able to assist in the provision of mental health care at the earliest opportunity in accessible local places."

Dave Foster, Deputy Head Teacher of Forestdale Primary School, in Frankley, Birmingham, agreed saying: "The closer ties with trained mental health support teams and teaching staff will improve both the early identification and support of our most vulnerable children and their parents."

Tom Ashley, Birmingham Education Partnership's Inclusion Lead, added: "Emotional health and wellbeing has been a growing concern in society and schools are now being required to provide support in this area. To have a team, who are not only skilled mental health colleagues, working with schools, and to know that part of their training is specifically about working in education settings and with education staff, is a real opportunity for us to change practice. Schools that we are working with are keen to ensure this has a really positive impact on children and young people's wellbeing and are looking forward to working with the team."

One of 57 areas across England, that will be launched in 2020, each MHST will cover a school population of approximately 8,000 pupils. The Birmingham MHST will be based in the south of Birmingham, covering Northfield, Rubery, Kings Norton and Longbridge.

Case study - Our children are 'ACE'

As part of the SEND improvement programme to ensure children and young people have access to early and appropriate services that meet their needs, Colmore Infant and Nursery School committed to becoming an attachment aware school, promoting the emotional wellbeing of all their pupils through whole school approaches, helping children to achieve their potential.

This has included the introduction of a whole school curriculum entitled '**I'm ACE**' and stands for **A**mazing, **C**onfident, **E**xpert. It draws upon evidence which suggests that positive experiences, and a sense of belonging in school, support children to be resilient. These values are reflected in the school's two mottos which children begin learning in nursery:

"123 it's good to be me, everyone belongs in the Colmore family"
and

“I’m Amazing Confident Expert!”

Individual year groups plan and deliver a range of activities which incorporate these themes and involve parents and families also. At the start of this new school year, for example, children made and decorated their own ‘I’m ACE’ bag, to share with their new teachers. All children also have an ‘I’m ACE passport’ as they move from one year to the next.

Children who are deemed to be more vulnerable or who have additional needs receive enhanced provision to promote their sense of belonging to the school. This year, pupils received a post card from their new teacher in the summer holidays and their very own belonging bear to take home with them. The bears symbolise continuing relationships as the children move to a new class. They receive additional support from the school’s Learning Mentor and take part in self-esteem and confidence building sessions.

The school also uses attachment support plans (ASPs) to identify and communicate the needs of more vulnerable pupils, involving external professionals such as Educational Psychology when necessary. Staff work closely with families to implement and regularly review the ASPs which are a valuable aid during transition between year groups.

This year the school is participating in the city wide Trauma Informed Attachment Aware Schools programme. To find out more about Attachment Aware schools visit: <https://the-arc.org.uk/>

This is the first of a number of case studies that illustrate how the SEND improvements are developing across the city. If you have a case study or article you would like to publish in the newsletter, please email: rob.willoughby@nhs.net

Birmingham’s Strategy for Children and Young People SEND 2019 - 2023

A refreshed version of the Birmingham’s strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is now available on Birmingham City Council’s website:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/14179/send_strategy_2019-2023



Setting out the local area’s strategic priorities relating to SEND, the updated strategy builds on and complements the work of the previous strategy.

Be Empowered Workshops – Early Support Programme for SEND Parent Carers

[A series of workshops](#), written and led by trainers who are parent/carers of a child with additional needs themselves are being launched by Birmingham City Council.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/3m3zz0pwy35au2/BEW%20Booking%20form%202019.doc?dl=0>

In the next issue

- Plans for Locality Support
- Neurodevelopmental pathway
- Mental health update

***If you have any queries or would like to be kept up to date on the work of the BCP
please email: rob.willoughby@nhs.net***

Partner organisations:



WEST
MIDLANDS
POLICE

