

Birmingham

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Issue 5

December 2019

Welcome to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) newsletter

This newsletter is one of the ways we aim to keep you informed about the work taking place across our multi-agency partnership as we continue 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, June 2018.



Rachel O'Connor
Lead Officer, SEND;
Assistant Chief
Executive for
Birmingham and
Solihull STP

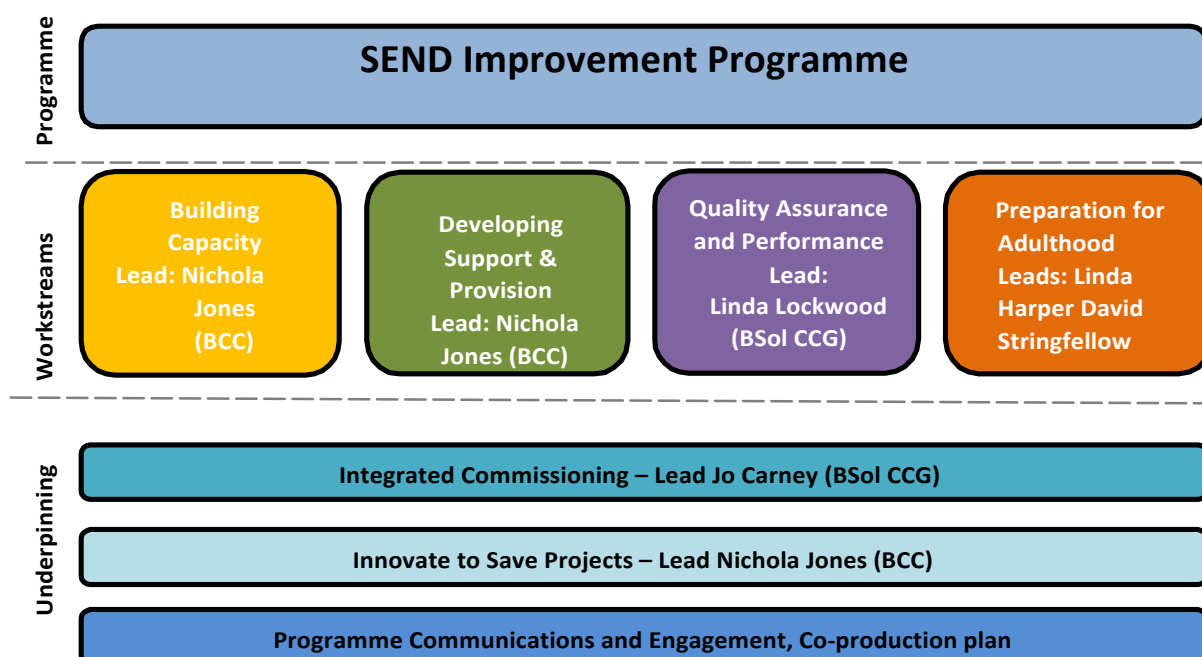


Dr. Tim O'Neill
Director, Education
and Skills
Birmingham
City Council

SEND improvement programme - how the work is structured

Our work is well underway and with so much positive activity and momentum it is easy to get lost in the maze of different projects, names and acronyms. So we thought it would be useful to provide an overview of how our work is structured and as you will see in this newsletter and going forward, all news stories will be tagged with a colour-coding to their relevant area of the programme. We hope this will help readers to keep abreast of the progress as they relate to the core improvement programme goals. Previous newsletter stories can be found [here](#).

Birmingham SEND Local Area Improvement Programme Programme Outline; updated September 2019



Further explanation about the Workstreams

Building Capacity

Building Capacity: focused on making sure any child with SEND in mainstream school gets the right support they need to thrive and for that support to be available to them locally in the school and/ or community setting.

Developing Support & Provision

Developing Support & Provision: to develop and improve the specialist support provided through specialist schools and residential and independent placements.

Quality Assurance & Performance

Quality Assurance & Performance: helping to monitor the progress of our work, to ensure that we are delivering better results and better services for children and young people.

Preparation for Adulthood

Preparation for Adulthood: developing our work across agencies to help children and young people maximise their potential, and to help them make supported moves to adulthood, employment, training, and what is best for them.

The three elements that underpin all four workstreams are:

Integrated Commissioning

Integrated Commissioning: looks at how we use the resources that all agencies have to make sure we are investing and planning jointly, and that we are creating services (pathways) that provide joined up provision and support.

Innovate to Save Projects

Innovate to Save Projects: this underpinning workstream is managing a sum of money to pilot and test new ways of working or service development, that is aligned with the Birmingham SEND strategy.

Communications & Engagement

Communications & Engagement: this underpinning workstream is fundamental to getting it right for children, young people and families, and we are working hard to ensure that improvement is co-produced with the real experts e.g. our children and families.

These workstreams report in to the Birmingham SEND Improvement Programme Board, which in turn reports to the Birmingham Children's Partnership, which is responsible for a portfolio of transformation and improvement priorities across children and young people's services.

Plans for locality support

A series of informative posters/flyers are now available, for use by schools, professionals parents and carers, to understand the plans for better local support and better early help for children and young people with SEND.

You can also [download](#) these documents.



SEND strategy: 2019-2023

A strategy refresh developed through consultation across the City - including views of children, young people and families - that seeks to deliver the most effective local offer achievable within existing funding levels. The strategy sets out the shared ambitions of providers and those they serve. The priority themes:

1. Building capacity through integrated teams working together across local areas
2. Developing sustainable support and provision for SEND children and young people
3. Knowing ourselves, self-improving and being ready for the changing demands

SEND Briefing October 2019 Issue 1

This first briefing, a new monthly information service direct from the SEND service team; available online to public and with embedded hyperlinks for those who want to find out more.

Topics in this issue include:

- Accessing specialist services via a locality panel
- More about what locality panels will do
- Details on locality panel forums with schools, scheduled in Jan 2020.

Parent link officers overview

A poster explaining the new role of Parent Link officers. Teams will be deployed geographically - North, South, East and West – and will provide the support for parents/carers to access and interact with services, to ensure voices are heard, needs identified and inclusive approaches to delivering solutions and support are enabled.

Inclusion service special school provision for children and young people with complex needs

1 sided document/flyer setting out Birmingham City Council’s commitment to ensuring that the overwhelming majority of school age SEND learners can and should be educated with others their own age in their local community school.

Sets out a 7-point plan for “What we will do” and a summary of the expected benefits.

Inclusion service programme 2019/20

Timetable for the delivery of the Inclusion service programme for 2019/20, detailing the workstreams, what they entail, their outputs and the expected impact of the work.

Using the Autism Education Trust programme in Birmingham – a framework for developing good autism practice

The Autism Education Trust (AET) programme underpins the Birmingham Communication and Autism team (CAT) model of service delivery to all maintained settings in Birmingham, some special schools and in those independent and alternative providers where we have a service level agreement.

The Autism Education Trust programme is a national programme, funded and supported by the DfE with over 220,000 delegates having been trained since its launch in 2011. The framework consists of a 3 Tier programme of face to face training for staff in early years, schools and Post 16 settings alongside a set of autism standards for evaluating whole school provision and a set of autism competencies for staff to reflect on their knowledge and skills, identifying further areas for professional development, both as individuals and as a setting.

AET in the SEND policy context

Government policy is gradually evolving with a view to improving the educational experience for autistic children and young people. An important recommendation of the APPG on Autism was to make autism better understood in the education system (All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism 2017). As the largest England wide national training programme for education based staff, AET has a key role in realising this recommendation.

CAT has been an AET hub since 2011, delivering all 3 programmes, early years, schools and Post 16. Birmingham EYIS jointly deliver the early years programme with CAT. Over 45,000 staff have been trained in the city since 2011. For more information on the Autism Education Trust visit: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>.

Rix-Wiki update

SEND News spoke to Hayley Aston, Transition Social Worker and Jackie Walters, Transitions Person Centred Planning (PCP) Facilitator about the [Rix-Wiki programme](#), where users can easily build a personal website telling their story through pictures, words and videos.

Rix-Wiki is being tested in response to one of the most significant concerns raised by amongst our young SEND people and their families /guardians that they feel frustrated and somewhat exhausted having to constantly repeat their stories to the multitude of professionals across the different support sectors that they engage with. Rix-Wiki offers the potential to reduce that pressure, making it easier for everyone to know and understand the young person's story, without the need for repetition.

Hayley and Jackie talked about their learnings so far from the Rix-Wiki pilot currently underway in Birmingham.

Thoughts on Rix-Wiki

Hayley and Jackie explained their role as champions and what they had learned so far about Rix-Wiki.

Hayley *“We know that, for young people and their families/guardians, the constant retelling of their story can be stressful, exhausting and if it includes trauma, can trigger episodes of low mood.”*

Jackie *“Joining up our service provision so the end user does not sense or experience any artificial walls or silos when they engage with the different specialties, is a big challenge.”*

Both felt that Rix Wiki, which is already successfully used in [other areas](#) across the country, offers a safe and secure potential tool to help reduce that stress and time on repeating your story.

Data security

Hayley and Jackie both said they are confident this story-telling portal is absolutely secure. In addition the portal enables young people and their families/guardians to be firmly in control.

Hayley *“They upload and control the content of their Rix-Wiki, can refine how the story is told until they are happy, and can pick who helps in telling the story, use pictures, videos and diagrams; it’s all their own choice how they tell their story and who they share it with.”*

Jackie *“We believe this approach is much more person centred it puts the well-being of the young person and their families/guardians first.”*

Person-centred

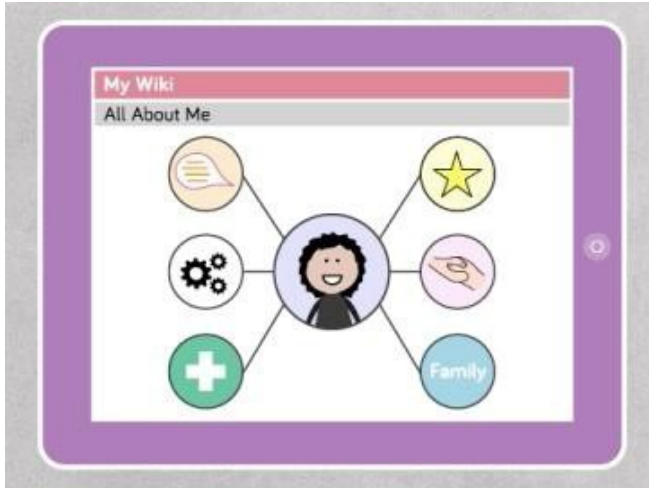
The benefits seem clear but are they being felt?

Jackie *“Rix Wiki is all about centring the discussion around the young person. So if a Rix-Wiki profile is up-to-date, this would mean the young person would be able to turn up to a meeting with a reduced stress level because the professional they are meeting would know all about them from their profile.”*

Hayley *“The professional is able to have a non-diluted, real time, detailed, first-hand knowledge directly from the young person. This brings a whole new understanding to the care and support the young person might need.”*

What next for Rix Wiki?

Simon Furze, Citizen Involvement Officer at Birmingham City Council commented to SEND news, “We have already been working with citizens who are Rix-Wiki Champions. These citizens are also carers for young adults with complex needs and have been part of the Rix-Wiki organising team.



The specially designed wiki template that each user can access is easy and quick to complete and simple to personalise.

The wiki can also be added to, when convenient, via a smartphone or tablet, not just from a computer.

Alongside social workers from the Transition Team and Rix-Wiki champions, working together with the young person, their families and guardians, we are looking at two key areas now. First we demonstrate the benefits of putting time in up-front, which frees up time when working with health and social care professionals. The second is to engage wider groups of citizens to sign up individual young people who are being supported via the Transition team.”

“We know that recruiting people to this pilot needs ongoing conversation with young people and their families/guardians we support, but it is one we feel we can win through showing the benefits of Rix-Wiki in action.”

Clare Yarnall
Commissioning Support Manager
(SEND & Personalisation)

Quality Assurance
& Performance

Third parent/carer survey issued

This latest survey is an important milestone to see if the improvements we have made in services for children with special educational needs and disabilities are reaching parents and carers in Birmingham.

These surveys are hugely important, and the results and findings will be reported to the SEND Improvement Board and the Birmingham Children’s Partnership.

Co-Chairs of the SEND Improvement Board, Dr.Tim O’Neill and Rachel O’Connor, are asking for as many parents and carers as possible to complete the survey.

Please share the survey link as widely as you can.

The survey is live at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/FJHYT5F> and will close on Monday 16th December 2019.

A message from the Chair of the Parent Carer Forum

“Birmingham parent carer forum has been very busy continuing our work around networking, building membership and bringing the family voice to the table. We have attended several events including the Autistica event around embracing complexity, hosted by Aston University and the national network of parent carer forums two-day conference in Chester. We have hosted two ‘meet and greet the management committee’ events and continue to look for parent reps to help us with our work. We are also continuing to build our links with the local authority and meet and work with them to help with the issues affecting our families and lend our input to the development in shaping of the new locality model. Our social media (Facebook and twitter pages) are a wealth of information and we regularly share our new learnings and discoveries with our membership via these mediums. We have lots of meetings scheduled to the end of the year and will continue to share our work. Our website will also be updated so please do visit us and keep in touch with your forum. We deeply value your supporting contribution. Thank you.”

Sabiha
Chair of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum

In brief...

A new Children’s Occupational Therapy advice line was launched recently. Posters detailing the service are available for promotion across schools and public spaces such as communication halls and children’s centres.

NHS
Birmingham
Community Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

NEW!

Children's Occupational Therapy advice line

Launches: 9th September 2019

An Occupational Therapist will be able to offer practical therapy advice, strategies and support to schools, parents/carers and other professionals in relation to a child's/young person's functional and independence skills.

The phone line will be open Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm

The child or young person must be:

- Aged 0-18 years (up to 19 only if in full-time special school education)
- Registered with a Birmingham GP

Phone number: 0121 683 2325

Best Care
Healthy Communities

Designed by CreativeHub, BChC, GraphicDesign@bhamcommunity.nhs.uk • Ref: 0-0111 • 28/08/2019

The term 'special educational needs' (SEN) has a legal definition. Children with special educational needs have learning difficulties or disabilities, that make it harder for them to learn than most children of the same age. Find out more [here](#).

Resources

[Birmingham Children's Partnership](#) (BCP): Information about the BCP and its work.

[SEND Gateway](#): an online portal offering education professionals free, easy access to high quality information, resources and training for meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

[Birmingham Parent and Carer Forum](#): To find out more about the forum or to get involved. Social media [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

[Council for Disabled Children](#) (CDC), an umbrella body for the disabled children's sector.

Autism Education Trust visit: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/>

Partner organisations:

