

# SEND BRIEFING

*"Children and young people will be happy and reach their full potential"*

JANUARY 2020 / ISSUE 2



## Dear colleagues

Many thanks to all those schools that attended the consultation events that we held in November and December 2019 to share some of the different ways the inclusion team are going to be working. We had over 450 people attend across the four school events and just over 50 families attend the parent and carer consultation events.

[Click here for some of the frequently asked questions that were asked during these events.](#)

I am really looking forward to meeting with each of the school consortia over the coming months, and, to hear about the great work taking place in Birmingham to support children, young people and their families with special educational needs.

I am also really pleased to be able to share the funding that has become available through the high needs block allocation of funding. The government announced that Birmingham would receive an additional £26.6m to address previous and predicted overspends, as well as providing capacity for investment in the future. In effect there will be funding available for mainstream schools to work together to support children with SEND in the mainstream school. Further information about the additional funding will be shared in the next couple of weeks.

From the conversations I have had with individuals I have been really struck by how many passionate professionals there are in Birmingham who want to make a difference for all our children and young people.

We know we have a way to go to ensuring both our services and in particular our referrals pathways improve to ensure better timeliness and wrap around support.

The link below to Huzaifah's story is a great example of how working in innovative and different ways combined with strong leadership, really is making such a difference to the lives of the families and children and young people. Thank you to St John's Primary School and to Huzaifah and his family for sharing their story.

[Link to Huzaifah's story](#)

Very best wishes for 2020.

*Nichola Jones*

Assistant Director for SEND and Inclusion.

## SEND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL MEETINGS

This term, all schools in Birmingham will receive an invitation to attend a multi-agency planning meeting.

The meetings will discuss Special Educational Needs at a strategic level as well as discussing special educational needs on the ground, including where the schools are 'stuck' with individual pupils. They are also an opportunity for schools to share ideas and to shape future locality working, building on the good practice already in place across many schools. The meetings will not come out of school's core hours.



## LOCALITY PANELS

In November 2019, instead of holding one city wide panel we started to run four panels which cover four areas across the city. All panels meet on a Tuesday morning and have local representatives from education psychology, the advisory services for communication, cognition and learning, looked after children, Early Years, Post 16, health, social care, as well as members of the SEN administration and home to school transport team. Each referral has an assigned lead professional who links with the school and who present the case. The panels consider requests for additional funding or resources; changes of placement; specialist placements; EHP statutory assessments. Each referral into the panel is appointed a lead professional who presents the case.

## PARENT LINK OFFICERS

This term, we are introducing our new Parent Link Officers. These are members of the local authority who are there to help build better communication links between parents, schools, settings, specialists and other support agencies.

They will support parents through a central contact line, family forums and drops events.

We recognise we really need to build trust and establish much easier ways for families to get advice and to be able to access some of our specialist professionals for [advice or more information about parent link officers and the events coming up click here.](#)

[Please click here for more information on the Parent Link Service Contact Line.](#)

## LOCALITY SCHOOL FORUMS

Building on the current good practice in many local areas, we are keen to continue working with groups of schools to facilitate local area SENCo forum meetings.

Led by the schools, the forum enables schools to work together to share good practice, raise common themes and issues and take a solution focused approach to addressing these.

In addition, we are continuing to deliver city wide SENCO Networks, which aim to address common themes coming out of the local groups as part of the ongoing agenda as well as sharing key messages from the local authority.

## LOCALITY FAMILY FORUM

Parents have often told us that they want to speak to professionals when they are raising their first concerns about their child's needs but find it difficult to do this without a long referral process.

To help address this we will be starting to host family forum events each term, which will include an opportunity to attend drop-in appointments with a range of different professionals.

Keep your eye on your school noticeboard for information on dates and venues for these events which we will be sharing with you very soon. We also ask if you can please share this information, once received with parents in your school, so as many as possible can attend them.



## YOUNG PEOPLE'S FORUM

The application process for the SEND Youth Forum has now been completed. The team received many applications from secondary aged young people with special educational needs from across Birmingham schools. The common theme amongst the applications was a desire to participate and ensure that the support provided in Birmingham schools works for all children and young people with SEND or disabilities.

On the 13 January 2020 interviews for the forum took place at the Council House. For many of the young people this was their first experience of an interview process. They rose to the occasion and the interview panel were blown away by their enthusiasm and determination to be part of Birmingham's SEND Youth Forum.

The newly established SEND Youth Forum will now meet regularly throughout the year to support and advise Birmingham City Council on a range of themes and issues related to special educational needs and disabilities. For further information email [youthforum@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:youthforum@birmingham.gov.uk) or [Sarah.j.scarr@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:Sarah.j.scarr@birmingham.gov.uk)



## SEND SUPPORT PROVISION PLANS

SEND Support Provision plans, are designed to be used by mainstream schools to collate information about the support being provided for a pupil with complex needs as part of a graduated approach.

Where the resources required are beyond that which the setting can provide from their allocated SEND notational budget and through the support of outside agencies, the plan can then be used to apply for enhanced funding through the locality panels.

SEND Support Provision Plan templates and guidance can be accessed through the A2E website: <https://accessstoeducation.birmingham.gov.uk/senco-zone-birmingham/>

Further information on how to submit plans will be shared through the individual school meetings taking place this term.