

Report of the Head of Education and Learning

SEND IMPROVEMENT BOARD UPDATE REPORT

SEND Improvement Board

In April 2016, governance arrangements for implementing the SEND reforms were refreshed and the SEND Improvement Board (previously the Disabled Children's Improvement Board) emerged with new membership ensuring that local partners, including parent/carers were fully represented. The SEND Improvement Board reports directly to the Devon Children and Families Partnership Executive.

An LGA Peer Review was undertaken in November 2016 and offered validation of the strengths and areas for development held by the SEND Improvement Board. The key findings were included in the updated local area self-evaluation and have informed the strategic priorities outlined below.

The Chair of the SEND Improvement Board, (the Head of Education and Learning), continues to ensure that the work undertaken by the Board and the workstreams is raised at key boards and groups within the local authority and across partners. All the Board members take responsibility for sharing information on this area of work with the sector/organisation they represent. This is ensuring that SEND remains a key priority for all partners, particularly the Local Authority and the CCGs.

Devon Multi-Agency [SEND Strategy & Implementation Plan](#)

Devon's SEND strategy aims to set out six priorities across Education, Health and Care and is centred on the collaboration required across partners to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families; this directly aligns with the [Devon Children, Young People and Families Plan 2015–2020: My Life, My Journey](#).

The six strategic priorities, set out in the SEND Strategy, have been informed by Devon parents and carers, the local area self-evaluation, feedback from a range of groups and individuals and the findings from the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review, undertaken in November 2016.

Consultation on the SEND Strategy launched on 17 January 2017 and ended on 17 March 2017. All responses were considered and the findings were used to inform the final strategy document and associated implementation plan.

The SEND Implementation Plan aims to set out the various objectives the local area will achieve, under the six priorities set out in the SEND Strategy. It has been produced in connection with a range of other programmes and initiatives to ensure its objectives align with those of the wider partnerships and share a common ambition e.g. Transforming Care Partnership, Local CAMHS Transformation Plan

SEND Workstreams

In order to support the delivery of the Strategy the SEND Improvement Board put in place five workstreams to focus on the areas of improvement it identified and the development of key aspects of the SEND Reforms. Progress is monitored through highlight reports linked to the implementation plan. Updates from each of these 5 workstreams are provided below:

Engagement – Parent/carer engagement has been developing with support from [In-Control](#). Parent/carers developed Devon’s vision which is included in the SEND Strategy as well as family performance indicators to monitor impact from a parent/carer perspective. Work is ongoing to identify examples of best practice and learning in relation to engagement of children and young people. An engagement framework has been developed and further work is in progress to support understanding of this. The engagement workstream is also supporting the engagement element of the SEN Strategic Review Project. (This project is funded by the DfE and looks specifically at the capacity of provision across the county and in neighbouring Local Authorities.)

Operational Delivery – The new multi-agency Education, Health & Care assessment and planning process was launched on 20 February 2017. Supporting guidance and tools are available on the [practitioner support page](#) of the SEND Local Offer. Quality assurance guidance and a supporting toolkit has been developed and is awaiting implementation. The focus of this group remains on improving performance against statutory timescales and support for the transfer of Statements to EHCPs, as well as robust quality assurance.

A key challenge for this group currently is issuing EHCP plans on time, within the current staffing resource. This is because there has been a very significant increase in the number of assessments being undertaken (478 from Jan to July 2017 compared to 255 in the whole 2016 calendar year). A review of staffing has taken place and additional staff are shortly to be recruited to better manage the additional pressures.

Choice & Control – A single definition of [personal budgets](#) has been agreed and is on the SEND Local Offer, this has been reviewed by parent/carers to ensure understanding. Existing policies and processes across education, health and care have been mapped and work continues to look at moving to integrated personal budgets for children and young people with EHCPs. The local authority is currently completing a desktop exercise to look at how personal budgets could work in practice for a number of children who have been identified. A review of current panel processes is also in progress to look at decision making and how funding is agreed.

Workforce Development - 20 sessions of multi-agency EHCP training were delivered across the Spring and Summer terms. 394 professionals attended the training. Feedback from the training has been analysed and will inform plans for future sustainable training moving forward. The group have, with the support of parent/carers, developed a SEND Core Competency Framework outlining the minimum standards expected of professionals who work with children and young people with SEND and their families. The workforce has recently completed a survey to identify preferences for workforce development and key skills/knowledge required, this will feed into a sustainable training model.

In addition to support the recent changes to funding processes the following actions have been taken:

- Autumn term SENCO briefings for this term been attended by a senior manager from SEN to ensure the changes are covered in full. The changes have also been covered at Babcock SENCO networks.

- A SENCo key facts document has been completed and available on the [Local Offer website](#).
- Bursar/School business manager briefings have been run in all areas of Devon.

- The Strategic Lead for SEN has also attended the Headteacher liaison group and provided further information and answered questions from Headteachers.
- The SEND Operational delivery group, which is part of SEND improvement board, have also been updated and can provide reassurance and communication.
- THE SEND improvement board has been updated.

Preparing for Adulthood – A new partnership board has been established to drive forward improvements in this area. Management Information teams across children and adults have been working together to improve intelligence and complete financial modelling for those likely to transition into Adult Social Care. A communication strategy is being developed and will be linked with the overall SEND communication strategy. A business case for a ‘Young Adults Team’ has been drafted and will be presented to senior leaders imminently. Preparing for Adulthood has been identified as an area where the Corporate Purposeful Systems methodology will be used.

Every Workstream has sought representation from Parent/Carers forums to ensure that they are actively involved in the developments and are able to feedback information on the SEND Reforms to their forums. Work continues to maintain this as parent/carers leave and other join.

Devon SEND Local Offer

In addition Devon has developed SEND Local Offer Reference Group, which is made up of parent/carers of children and young people with SEND. The SEND LORG arranged a morning event at which parent carers could provide feedback on the user experience of the SEND Local Offer website. The ‘user journey’ approach was used, which is a goal oriented approach to information. Parents spent a short time looking at the way the information is organised on the site.

Following further consultation and feedback from parents, partners and providers and a peer review led by Mott MacDonald, the SEND Local Offer has been refreshed. The ‘We are listening’ page shows Devon is using the views of parent carers and families to inform its decision-making and communicate key messages. Search engines generate the SEND Local Offer page as the top result in google searches. The page gets updated regularly and you can sign up for email alerts when this happens. The number of people viewing the site increases every month (+46% in a year).

There will be on-going monitoring of the site, by the Local Offer & Participation Officer, in order to ensure it is working effectively and meeting the needs of children, young people, parent/carers, partners and providers.

SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

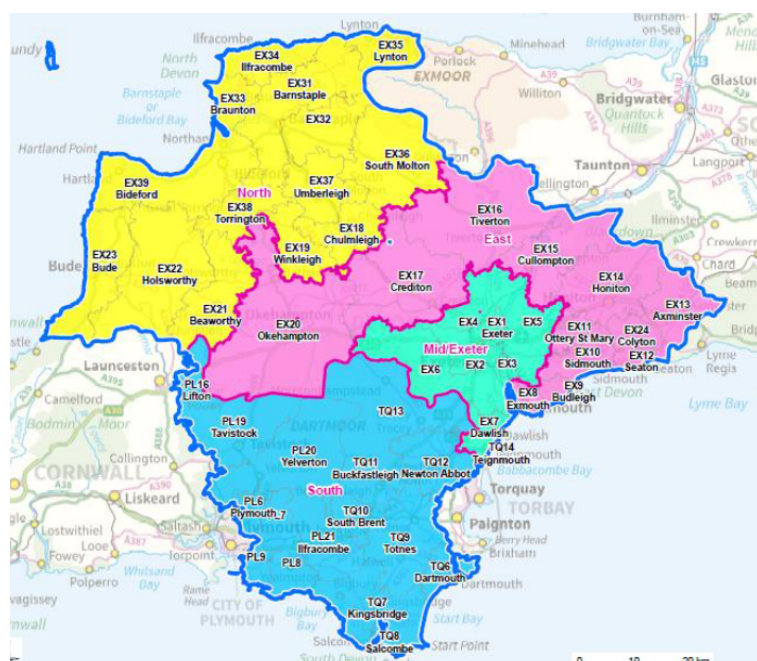
This [SEND JSNA](#) was commissioned by the SEND Improvement Board in spring 2017. The report aims to bring together information about children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Devon, and identify gaps in knowledge and areas for improvement.

Headlines include;

- Devon has a higher than average proportion of children with SEN; and especially of children identified as having SEN relating to social, emotional, behavioural and mental health needs.
- Overall, children & young people in Devon with SEN do better at school than the national average.
- The proportion of young people with SEN who are in education, employment or training in Devon is similar to the national average.
- There are some gaps in what we know about outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Much information is about activities. Providers and commissioners need to work together to continue to improve data on needs and outcomes to drive improvement.
- In terms of future need, based on population projections, there may be approximately 400-600 more children with disabilities in 2021 than there are at present in Devon.
- Local challenges are in line with the national position. Currently, there is no routine and complete national dataset available which includes information on the diagnoses and conditions of children known to community services, or on assessments and outcomes such as standardised assessments of functioning.

Reshape of 0-25 SEN Team

Following the appointment of a new SEN Senior Manager the SEN 0-25 Team has been reshaped and is now organised in line with the locality model used by wider children's services. There are now four area teams with SEN Officers allocated based on child/young person's home postcode.



The system used by the 0-25 SEN Team is undergoing some adaptations to focus on more robust performance monitoring. This new way of working aims to ensure the young person and family has one key worker from the SEN team allocated to their case from the beginning of the EHCP process right through to final placement regardless of what type of setting that is. This was previously not the case

Transfers from Statement of SEN to EHC plan

Following some focused work and an increase in resource, there has been a significant increase in the workload and completion rate of transfers of Statements transferred to EHCPs in Devon. The rate at which this is now happening, if sustained, would enable the transfer completion date of end of March 2018 to be met. Out of the original 3564 statements to be transferred there are now just 549 left to write.

Devon Information Advice & Support Service (DIAS) – Parent Information Events

DIAS is currently running information sessions for parent/carers in the autumn term, hosted at local schools. These events will provide parent/carers will clear information about Early Help, the changes to the new EHC assessment process locally and Devon's SEND Local Offer. They also offer a telephone support service to provide independent advice and guidance.

Re-commissioning of community health and care services

Children's health and care services are currently commissioned jointly by NEW Devon and South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Groups, Devon County Council, and NHS England. The services include specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Public Health Nursing Service, and specialist services for Children with Additional Needs or Complex Needs, such as physical and learning disabilities.

The contracts to provide services for children and young people in Devon are due to be renewed from 1 April 2019. Over the last few months local health and social care professionals, clinicians, partner organisations and patient representatives have been developing ideas and formed a proposal which has recently been consulted on.

A wide range of engagement work has been carried out across Devon which has already influenced these developments. A report has been produced to show [how feedback has helped to shape services for children and young people across Devon](#).

SEN Funding in schools

Whilst SEN funding is provided within every schools budget (44 million in 2017/18) this is not ring-fenced and is therefore coming under significant pressure as schools face ever challenging budgets. To support schools understanding of what funding is allocated to support children with SEN, additional financial information has been provided this year showing the breakdown across all areas of need. (Information on how SEN funding works in schools and the EHCP process and current challenges is being provided in the SEN Masterclass).

High Needs Funding

In September 2017 the Government provided its response to the Stage 2 consultation on High Needs Funding which took place between December 2016 and March 2017. Whilst in their response the Government state they are providing additional funding for high needs in 2018-19 and 2019-20 to date we have only had confirmation within Devon of an increase of £300k. This will hardly impact on the current overspend within the High Needs Budget. These increased costs have arisen as a result of the introduction of the new code of practice including the increased age range and population growth which have not seen comparable additional funding from government. Examples of these pressures are provided below.

- An increase in the number of learners with individually funded plans from 3572 in 2014 to 4103 in Sept 17.

- A 99% increase in the number of assessments which meet statutory thresholds and therefore need a joint assessment (255 from Jan to Dec 2016, 478 from Jan to end July 2017).
- A 33% increase in the past 3 years in the average charge made by independent special schools residential placements and a 54% increase in day placement average costs of the same time scale.

- The number of learners age 16 – 19 in Further Education with statutory funding has risen from 122 in 2015/16 to 262 in Sept 2017. As EHCPs unlike old statements can now continue to post 16 this number is likely to rise rapidly. In total there are now 713 young people aged 16 to 19 with funded Education Health and Care Plans compared to 452 in 2016.
- In addition requests for first assessment can also be made up to the age of 25 and the number of post 19 learners funded by the Local Authority has risen from 92 in 2015/16 to 147 as of 31.8.17.
- A increase the number of pupils medically unable to attend school (also funded by the High Needs Budget)

Whilst continuing to campaign for fairer funding for Devon schools we also need to put increased emphasis on securing adequate funding for the High Needs Block as the two budgets go hand in hand in providing inclusive provision for Devon Children.

The sheet below provides a brief summary of some of the work that has been complete by the SEND improvement board this year and the work currently in progress.

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Head of Education and Learning
November 2017

**Devon's progress towards full implementation of the SEND Reforms
 September 2017**

Progress to date	Work in progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well established multi-agency SEND Improvement Board reporting directly to Devon Children & Families Partnership Executive • 5 workstreams commissioned to deliver transformation • Multi-Agency SEND Strategy – consulted on and published • SEND Strategy Implementation Plan in place and monitored • SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment published • Updated SEND Local Offer developed with parents & professionals • Dedicated Local Offer & Participation Officer role • New multi-agency EHC assessment process • Reshape of 0-25 SEN Team in line with locality model • Designated Medical Officers in post and effective • Wide ranging engagement with parent/carers • LGA Peer Review completed • EHCP training for multi-agency professionals • EHC Quality Assurance guidance and toolkit developed • Preparing for Adulthood workers visiting all young people with EHCPs in Year 10 • Educational attainment for children/young people with SEN is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing capacity within 0-25 SEN Team to respond to rise in demand and performance against statutory timescales • DIAS running parent information events • Re-commissioning of community health and care services • Implementation of multi-agency quality assurance for EHC process • Re-development of annual review process • Ongoing transfer of Statements to EHCPs • Systems and process to support integrated personal budgets • Engagement of children and young people with SEND • More effective preparation for Adulthood – transition planning and monitoring outcomes • Development of a young adults team within Adult Social Care • Strengthening the tracking of outcomes for children & young people with SEND • Devon Inclusion Project • SEN Strategic Review • Increase take up of community based short breaks to promote inclusion therefore reducing the need for residential short breaks • Improving timely access to the right support and reducing waiting times for specialist services