

# Family Voice Conference

## June 2015

[www.familyvoice.org](http://www.familyvoice.org)



This conference hoped to achieve...

The answers to the questions asked at the conference, were answered by the following:

Sheelagh Sullivan	Head of SEN and Inclusion
Adrian Chapman	Service Director Adult Services and Communities
Dr Venkat Reddy	Consultant Community Paediatrician
Jonathan Lewis	Service Director for Education, People Resources and Corporate Property
Jo Rooney	Senior Commissioning Manager for Children and Young People with Complex Needs

Family Voice Peterborough

We need the Local Offer in Braille please	We will consider alternative mechanism to provide some of the Local Offer information, but it will not be possible or practical to replicate all of it in alternative formats. Some sections of the Local Offer also use BrowseAloud which allows the user to increase the font size, colour scheme and have the text read out to them to make our websites more accessible.
The biggest challenge for our family has been finding out of hours care for our aspergers boy – is there anything available?	Currently, the Family Information Service (FIS) website has more information about approved childcare providers and it also provides a brokerage service to locate childminders and out of hours care, although it may not extend to evening care. <a href="https://fis.peterborough.gov.uk">https://fis.peterborough.gov.uk</a>
The Local Offer is boring – it needs more photo's	We will consider this suggestion as we continue to review and improve the Local Offer. If you would like to share any further feedback or be involved in future developments please contact us via:

	<a href="mailto:participation@familyvoice.org">participation@familyvoice.org</a> or <a href="mailto:localoffer@Peterborough.gov.uk">localoffer@Peterborough.gov.uk</a>
What do I need to do to request a special needs school? What is the new process for accessing special school places?	There is no new way of requesting a special school place. Through the needs assessment process, reports and advice is requested from various professionals who are asked to look at the child's or young person's strengths, needs and suggest outcomes and provision to help achieve them. Part of this process will be to look at which education placement can best meet the needs and deliver the outcomes - this may be a mainstream or a special school placement. There will always be a discussion with parents / carers and the head teacher about the placement.
What happens when a child is in another county school – which local offer do we use?	The Local Offer for your home authority should have information about local provision, and also provision they use that is out of county
How will you improve schools attitude to working with parents?	A key principle of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms is engaging with parents and young people, and ensuring they are at the heart of the planning and consideration of their child's (or their own needs). Embedding this cultural change won't happen immediately, but our SEND Training programme will take into account this area of need and address it through a range of appropriate mechanisms.
Peterborough have a template for us to fill in for our school offer - do we use this or can we make our own?	A template SEN offer was co-produced with the SENCO's during the Summer of 2014, and all schools were asked to complete and submit them before the 1 September deadline when the reforms took effect. It is not essential to use the template form, but the purpose of it was to ensure that all the key requirements were covered. The template form is currently being updated, and the Local Authority will be re-issuing this with some guidance and an exemplar completed form. OFSTED have confirmed that part of their inspection regime in the future will be to look at the schools SEN Information Report / offer, and the information contained will also be taken into account by a tribunal as part of its considerations.
EHC plans are heading in the right direction, but social care and health assessments still feel separate. Is it being explored if this can be combined?	Health and Social Care colleagues are very much involved in looking at the process and how the advice and information is best developed and provided when it needs to be used for multiple purposes. This will continue to develop and improve as we become more experienced.
What if participation of child in their plan is not appropriate? (As children are not always aware of their diagnosis)	Participation and engagements are key fundamentals of the reforms, but each case should be considered on its own merits. There are many ways in which children and young people can be involved in the development of their plan, and it can be in more subtle ways if that is more appropriate. For example, a key worker could have a conversation in the playground to gather their views and opinions which can be used to inform their plan.

	However, it should be recognised that young people over the age of 16 do have additional rights which needs to be considered.
Who sets the SEN budget of the schools?	The schools budget is given to them by the Local Authority, and includes notional funding for all pupils, SEN and other funding factors. It is for the Governing Body to determine how exactly this money is spent within the school to ensure it meets all its statutory requirements.
Parents who have Direct Payments have to say what they have spent their money, do we expect the school to evidence it in the same way?	Schools have to evidence their effective use of public funding, including funding for supporting children and young people with special educational needs. This is done through a range of methods, but not in the same way that parents who receive direct payments.
Who assesses whether the child has made progress? Do schools doctor results?	A child's or young person's progress is measured in a variety of ways, including national assessments (such as GCSEs, SATs, etcetera), where children go to after year 11, and other sources of data. The statutory assessment results from cannot be doctored. There are changes coming to the national assessment framework, but there are always checks and balances to ensure children are being assessed fairly, consistently and this is reported accurately. If children are being prompted to amend answers, then that should be reported.
Whole SEN provision has changed how will this look in practice?	Our 'At a Glance' information, posted on the Local Offer sets out how different processes will work. We expect to learn from experience and will review our practice in the coming year with representative groups.
How do we appeal if send is refused	All of our statutory letters set out how parents can appeal to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). We also employ a mediation service to help us resolve any disputes.
Why is it that it takes so long to diagnose formally and access help for Autistic Children? For example I have been asking since my son was 2 and he is now nearly 16 . He has been failed completely	There have been difficulties with long waiting lists in Peterborough. This is being addressed in a proactive way to ensure that families have access to parenting support while waiting to be seen. Waiting lists are now open.
How are schools ensuring our children with SEND are supported adequately to maximise their potential in Education, ie the children without EHCs who makes the decision whether SEN support needs to be put in place?	There is considerable guidance in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years to help schools in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN. Schools are encouraged to use high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised to meet individual needs. We have been working with schools to encourage them to be clear about their SEN offer. A conference to support this work was held in the Autumn term with Brian Lamb as guest speaker
Is there any support for parents/carers etc of children with sen for annual reviews what to expect, questions to ask etc	Parents have access to a range of independent support services. A link to these services can be found on the Local Offer at <a href="#">Independent Support Services</a> .
Why is there no impartial service to help deliver or	As set out above there are impartial services to

<p>service those parents who feel pushed out or alienated from those groups or charities in our area whom have been tasked with the above role in the recent reform process</p>	<p>support parents who have children with special educational needs. Peterborough works in partnership with Family Voice but also embraces all other disability specific groups or charities.</p> <p>Family Voice Peterborough is the DfE designated parents forum for Peterborough whose function is to facilitate collective participation and engagement for whole groups of parent carers; engagement has to be pan disability, not focussed on just one disability or service and not specific to one child/ young person. Parent representatives are representative of groups of parents and do not represent individual parents.</p> <p>Parents can participate individually and are encouraged to do so which they can do via the Local Offer and in their own child/ young person's SEN processes via EHC plans and SEN support</p>
<p>Does the LA feel the length of time they took to recruit Sheelagh Sullivan has had an negative impact on parents and schools, and failed to give you a good start on the SEN reforms? –</p>	<p>The post of Head of SEN and Inclusion was difficult to recruit to but interim arrangements were made in the absence of a permanent post holder.</p>
<p>How does the LA check the progress of children with statements or those on Action plus. To monitor how effectively delegated resources are being used by schools and how do they challenge or make the school accountable when no progress is made?</p>	<p>The new outcomes based plans should make it easier to review the progress of children with SEN. Schools are responsible for monitoring the progress of all children in their care, including those with SEN. The Local Authority monitors the data available regarding pupil progress in schools.</p>
<p>It's crucial those at the top have a good understanding of disabilities. So if a headteacher questioned you why a good transition and sensory breaks are important for children with autism how would you respond?</p>	<p>Where a Head Teacher required information about a particular special educational need – whatever that might be, they would always be advised to talk to the specialist services involved in supporting the child concerned. They are best placed to respond in the context of the child. Where more generic support or advice was required they would be directed to the appropriate service. Where advice regarding ADHD/ ASD was required, the Educational Psychology Service or Autism/ ADHD advisory service are best placed to advise.</p>
<p>I feel I have been left to police my sons statement to ensure he is being supported correctly. Please can you confirm how you make sure schools follow the statement? -</p>	<p>Where parents have concerns about the day to day provision their child receives, they must first raise their concerns with the school including, if required, the governing body of the school. Independent support and advice is available to support this. The Local Authority cannot 'police' provision but Officers will challenge schools where appropriate. Parents can request the presence of an Officer, at the annual review of a statement or EHCP.</p>
<p>How do you feel the SEN reforms are going? The implementation of the SEND reforms is challenging in terms of timescales, scope and resources.</p>	<p>We have maintained a SEND reform project group and twice yearly 'board' to monitor progress.</p>
<p>Please can you confirm how you spent additional money given to you by the government to</p>	<p>It has been used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fund two additional staff</li> </ul>

<p>implement the SEN reforms? – The implementation grant for Peterborough is not large as this is a small Local Authority</p>	<p>(Educational Psychologist and SEN Officer);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to support training activities;</li> <li>• to provide a small amount of funding to schools to assist in the transfer review (conversion) process.</li> <li>• Employ a part time temporary multi-agency trainer to support the coordination and delivery of training linked to SEND reforms across Peterborough.</li> <li>• Provide additional capacity as required.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you feel you have enough staff to ensure the transfer of children with statements to EHC, if not what staff are you likely to recruit?</p>	<p>We have recruited additional staff (as above) but the burden of reform is heavy, particularly for the SEN service. Should further funding from government be made available, the current level of staffing will be reviewed.</p>
<p>When moving a child from a mainstream school to a special school, a pack about the school would be nice to look at</p>	<p>This can be passed onto the schools, many of whom do already produce their own packs for new starters.</p>
<p>Will there be any other way to access or book LA short breaks? Especially for those who don't feel confident with the current system i.e. Family Voice</p>	<p>This relates to the short breaks available through Family Voice. The LA will consider if there is an alternative mechanism that would make it easier to book. The entry on the Local Offer will also be updated and include more pictures.</p> <p>The eligibility for LA short breaks including short break types, access and booking details are available on the Local Offer.</p> <p>The caravan's available for short breaks at Skegness and Caister whilst being part of the LA short break offer are owned by Family Voice and not a service owned/ run or managed by the LA. The criteria for eligibility is matched to the LA criteria and bookings are open to all who qualify. All families with children/ young people who are eligible can book by phoning 01733 313184 or emailing <a href="mailto:holidays@familyvoice.org">holidays@familyvoice.org</a> and requesting a holiday contract, price and date schedule and further information</p>
<p>Brian Lamb talked about the focus on outcomes - does this include not only academic achievements, but also social behaviour and good mental health outcomes?</p>	<p>Individual outcomes are just that - very individual and will vary between each child or young person. They will also be linked to their overall aspirations, and the outcomes will show the steps that may help the individual child or young person towards reaching their aspirations. These may be academic outcomes, but may also include other areas such as social skills, communication, independence and such like. It should be recognised though that in order to</p>

	be eligible for an EHC plan, the child or young person must have a level of specific educational needs.
What do I need to do to request a special needs school? What is the new process for accessing special school places?	There is no new way of requesting a special school place. Through the needs assessment process, reports and advice is requested from various professionals who are asked to look at the individual needs and recommend the outcomes that are considered necessary to meet these. Part of the consideration of identifying these outcomes will be to look at which education placement can best meet the needs and deliver the outcomes - this may be a mainstream or a special school placement. There will always be a discussion with parents / carers and the headteacher about the placement.
How will you improve schools attitude to working with parents?	A key principle of the reforms is very much about engaging with parents and young people and ensuring they are at the heart of the planning and consideration of their child's (or their own needs). Embedding this cultural change won't happen immediately, but our SEND Training programme will take into account this area of need and address it through the appropriate mechanisms.
It's great that parents are helping to shape the Local Offer, but what about parents who initially have no idea what their children might need, because they don't yet have the experience? What will be done to support them?	The Local Offer has a wide remit, and it is expected that people can make enquiries to look for something specific as well as offering information to people who might not know what they need or want. That is why the Local Offer will always be developing and growing, and we appreciate and listen to any feedback people have which could make it better. We will be holding some more workshops and focus groups during June and July and we welcome e-mail feedback at any time - <a href="mailto:participation@familyvoice.org">participation@familyvoice.org</a> or <a href="mailto:localoffer@peterborough.gov.uk">localoffer@peterborough.gov.uk</a> .
Are more EHC plans and referrals likely to materialise as the process seems slow this year? Because everything is so new, will families get a better deal next year or year after.	As is always the way, we will get better and more efficient as the new systems embed and we become more experience.
EHC plans are heading in the right direction, but social care and health assessments still feel separate. Is it being explored if this can be combined?	Health and Social Care colleagues are very much involved in looking at the process and how the advice and information is best developed and provided when it needs to be used for multiple purposes. This will continue to develop and improve as we become more experienced.
How is the LA doing in meeting the statutory deadlines? The 15 day turnaround for colleges is difficult as postage delays are shortening this timeframe considerably. Views welcome.	Fair to say that we are not meeting our statutory deadlines at the moment. With regard to the difficulties with the statutory deadlines, arrangements have already been made to email these requests to the college so they have more time to address.
Who sets the SEN budget for the schools?	The schools budget is given to them by the LA, and includes notional funding for all pupils, SEN and other funding factors. It is for the Governing Body to determine how exactly this money is spent within the school to ensure it meets all its statutory

	requirements
Are we interested in when the schools are not behaving properly? Statemented child was pulled out to home educate, as my child was not making the progress expected and I was concerned about the money that was being spent on them. The SENCo then admitted they had been using the child as a cash cow. I reported to the Council but no-one was listening.	Yes, we must know about this, and it is not acceptable. We would challenge the school and explore. As a SENCo I used to add up the money and maximising the resource to try and give all the children more. The system is very much now about involving the parents in looking at the overall outcomes rather than the actual sums in the plan.
Why don't we give specialist training for teachers about autism - practical interventions which to head off problems.	It would be good practice to listen to the parents, and to learn what works and doesn't for the individual child. There is an autism outreach service, but we would be happy to listen to you about ways in which we could improve the wider service and offering, and listening to what you say. The Council has done some SEN training for our new teachers this year, so it will be good to see what benefit this has and if it can build some more momentum on the ground.