

SEND

Newsletter

SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS AND
DISABILITY
0-25 IN
KNOWSLEY

ISSUE 3 JULY 2018

SEND 0-25 Flourishing and achieving; becoming fulfilled and purposeful adults

Earlier this month, a multi-agency event was hosted at The Venue in Huyton, to update people who are working with children and young people on SEND.

Staff from the council, education, health and social care attended, along with representatives from the Parent Carer Forum and young people receiving SEND support in Knowsley.

The event proved to be very popular with over 100 attendees.

Given the importance of the messages delivered at this event, the focus of this newsletter is to summarise the event and reiterate some of the key messages and feedback from the event.



DRIVERS FOR SEND SUPPORT AND PROVISION

The main drivers around SEND support and provision are:

- Changes in national policy - the Children and Families Act 2014 which extends SEND provision up to the age of 25.
- Co-production (no decisions about me, without me).
- Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Greater collaborative working.
- A self assessment of our SEND provision and support which has identified that we are behind where we need to be and improvements needs to be accelerated. In response to the areas for development identified, we have developed an action plan, which will help us to make the improvements needed - and quickly.

THE LOCAL PICTURE

- In Knowsley, almost 20% of our children and young people have an EHCP or are in receipt of SEND support - 3.8% with a plan compared to 2.8% nationally and 15.8% receiving SEND support compared to 11.6% nationally.
- Over 3,000 of pupils receive SEND support in schools.
- There is a high prevalence of moderate learning difficulties in primary schools and a high prevalence of children with autism in special schools.
- There are high school absence rates amongst SEND pupils - 37.2% absenteeism rate in Knowsley compared to 28.5% nationally.



PROGRESS MADE SINCE MAY 2017

A peer review (independent professionals reviewing what services and support we provide) was conducted in May 2017 which identified a number of areas that needed improvements. Since that time, we have made progress in a number of areas including:

- A joint SEND strategy and implementation plan has been developed - visit www.knowsley.gov.uk/knowsleycouncil/media/Documents/send.pdf to view the strategy. The strategy outlines the five key priorities to be addressed over the next three years - joint working, co-production, focus on outcomes, transition into adulthood and improve the quality of Education Health Care Plans.
- A joint governance structure has been established.
- Two-way communication flow is being developed and encouraged with children / young people, parents, carers and schools.
- Investment secured for a new client management system for SEND - improving data and analysis.
- A joint SEND Commissioning Strategy has been developed between the Council and CCG.

WHAT WE NEED TO DO

There are a number of key actions we are now taking forward. These are:

- Inclusion is our top priority (maintain children in mainstream schools).
- A person centred team approach around a child rather than working in silo.
- Addressing the issues identified by parents and carers.
- Improve our EHCPs.
- Improve our Local Offer website - in terms of design, functionality, interaction and content. We are working with children, young people, parents and carers on the new website with work due to start in September.
- Ensure everyone has an understanding of what good outcomes look like with an emphasis on outcomes being aspirational for our children and young people with SEND.
- Introduction of a workforce development programme across the multi-agencies to provide consistency.
- Developing the THRIVE approach - ensuring timely support is provided when it is needed.
- Neuro developmental pathway and short breaks - address parts of the system that aren't working well.
- Review SEND provision in schools - Can we expand our SEND provision in certain locations (limit the number of children travelling outside of the borough).



THE VOICE OF OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Attendees then had the pleasure of hearing from Louis Campbell, who had been a pupil at Alt Bridge school. Louis talked about his experiences throughout his education and his plans for the future.

- Louis talked about the challenges around the time that he needed help and support and the subsequent delays in getting support which made his anxiety worse.
- At the start of the process, Louis was in a mainstream school. His school hours were reduced and he felt misunderstood, didn't feel listened to and felt isolated from other students and staff. He was home schooled for 12 months, but this made Louis feel worse - he suffered with depression, panic attacks and being at home resulted in him not wanting to leave the house.
- He was later diagnosed with autism, but the process of being diagnosed was slow, requests for counselling were met with delays and experienced inconsistency in terms of support due to varying professionals being involved.
- Moving into his adult life, Louis is aware of the Knowsley Supported Internship programme offering work experience for young adults with a learning disability or difficulty for 12 months with a view to helping them secure employment. A former pupil at Alt Bridge has subsequently secured a contract following completion of the programme.
- Louis is looking to study ICT at St Helens College, but his lifelong career plan is to be a politician.
- In terms of what he needs now, Louis stated it was guidance and career advice.
- From his own perspective, he feels that the process of assessment and diagnosis needs to be quicker. He also reiterated the importance of asking for children and young people's views on the services being provided.

To stand up in front of a room of more than 100 people is a great achievement and his experiences were really thought-provoking - well done and thank you Louis.

OFSTED AND CQC INSPECTION

Knowsley's SEND support and provision will be inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) at some point. Inspectors will review the area's (not a single organisation's) leadership and accountability, implementation of legislation and code of practice, delivery of statutory duties and quality of service. They will evaluate these through the experience of the young person and their family. In essence, they will be assessing how well do we know our children (in terms of identifying their needs, assessing their requirements and ensuring the best outcomes are delivered).

The inspection will look at a number of areas including:

- Is the voice of the child / parent / carers both encouraged and captured?
- Assess our procedures and systems regarding assessment in schools / nursery settings.
- Joint commissioning between the council and health.
- Children looked after - are any special educational and healthcare needs met?
- Quality of education provision (both mainstream and special).
- Our Local Offer - provision, support and accessibility (promotion of our website will be a priority once the website has been redeveloped).
- Transition and preparing for adulthood.
- How we deal with appeals and tribunals.

Ahead of the inspection, Inspectors will review a range of information and intelligence including our Local Offer website. Whilst onsite, Inspectors will speak with children and young people with SEND, their parents / carers, council and health officers, visit providers (schools, childcare providers, children's centres) to speak to leaders, staff and governors about how they are implementing SEN reforms, conduct case audits of ECHPs which will also include children looked after.

KNOWSLEY PARENT CARER VOICE

We also heard from two parents representing our Knowsley Parent Carer Voice - Tricia and Cheryl. Again, a daunting prospect to stand up in front of a packed room, but to hear their personal experiences was very moving. They shared the main concerns from parents which are:

- Short breaks - one provider was never going to be enough and one size doesn't fit all. The provider doesn't cater for children with complex needs. However, council officers are addressing this issue by working with parents and carers to communicate the criteria. Those who do attend short breaks, enjoy them.
- Transport - escorts sometimes sit at the front of the bus, but some children are non-verbal so how can the escort know what is going on behind them? There is a feeling that you have to 'jump through hoops' to receive the transport service. Some also commented that transport workers were not empathetic. Fewer complaints are being received and we are improving the information available for parents and simplifying the process. There is some confidence that we are listening and make the changes needed.
- Transition - a general feeling that nothing has happened in 10 years and there is no formal planning, just talk but no follow ups. There was one transitional social worker who is no longer in post - need a whole team. Parents would like to see a seamless transition with the same social work team from 0-25 years for consistency. Parents/carers are working with us to review and improve the transition process, and the information and options available. This is a key priority and a lot of work is being done to address this issue.
- Education - examples of children with SEND who have been excluded from trips and sports day. A good plan seems to be linked with a good SENCO, although there were issues raised over SENCOs being appropriately trained. Specialist schools have fewer complaints and seem to be 'getting it right' so this model should be adopted across other schools. Parents sometimes feel they are not listened to in schools.

As well as working with parent/carers on the Local Offer website, a Parenting Support Programme is also being co-produced to address behaviour. The Knowsley Parent Carer Voice do feel that partnership (co-production) between them, the council and CCG has improved. They are feeling listened to and feel part of our improvement journey.

NEXT STEPS

At the event, we asked participants to feed back any issues that surprised them, any gaps they have identified and what three priorities they will take away for action following the event. These are now being collated and analysed and a further update, including any actions completed, will be available in the next newsletter.

Feedback is really important, so if you have any feedback following the event - even if you couldn't get to it but would like to feedback any ideas, suggestions or tell us about your own experiences - please email send@knowsley.gov.uk

Thank you to everyone who took part and organised the event.



CONTACT US

If you have any feedback on the services you are receiving or would like us to include information about a certain topic in a future newsletter, please tell us. You can email send@knowsley.gov.uk

SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL
NEEDS AND
DISABILITY
0-25 IN
KNOWSLEY