

Havering Special Educational Needs and Disability Update

Introduction

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) section of the Children and Families Act 1 (the Act) has arisen out of the Green Paper Support and Aspiration which was published in March 2011. The intention of the legislation is to create a more family friendly SEND process which draws together the support a child requires across education, health and care (EHC). Statements of Special Educational Needs, which are mainly education documents, are replaced by a single plan called an Education, Health and Care plan. The regulations and Code of Practice (COP) have now been published and have been implemented on 1st September 2014. A number of Local Authorities across the country have received funding as pathfinders for the new approach. Havering is working with Bexley and Bromley who are London Pathfinder Champions.

Project Governance

A SEND Project team with representatives from across education, children's, adults, parents and health services has been set up. It reports to the senior management team of the CCG and local authority and the Health and Wellbeing Board. Working groups that are set up cover all of the major changes. There is a Parents Forum and an advocacy group are working at gathering the views of children and young people.

The Changes

There are 4 major areas of change and development.

- The Local Offer
- Education Health and Care Plans from 0-25
- Joint Commissioning
- Personal Budgets

The Local Offer

It is a requirement of the new legislation that the Local Authority will publish its local offer of services for children with SEND on its website. The Local Offer must show parents how services can be accessed and include health, education, social care, schools and the voluntary sector.

Our Local offer went live on 1st September. Over 50 parents with children across the age range have been consulted about how the offer should look and how they would wish to access it. Parents were unanimous in wanting the site to be divided in age ranges and to be very clear about thresholds and criteria. Three working groups looked at services at early years, school age and post 16. Templates were created on which to gather the information and many services have completed them so far. Mainstream schools and early years' providers have links from the website to the SEND section of their own sites.

Education Health and Care Plans

Clause 25 of the Children and Families Act requires Local Authorities to ensure the integration of education, health and social care for children and young people with SEND up to the age of 25. The

Code of Practice says that there must be a single assessment procedure (involving parents and children) on which health, social care and education agree so that families do not have to repeat their story a number of times.

We have produced a simpler system with a single point of access and we piloted this before going live in September.

Joint Commissioning

Clause 26 says there must be joint commissioning arrangements between education, health and social care in order to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to assess children and then provide for their needs. There must also be a formal mechanism for resolving complaints and difficulties between the agencies. We have been working closely with colleagues in the CCG to take this forward and a working group continues to meet.

Personal Budgets

As part of the changes parents of children with SEND must be offered a personal budget for the services their child requires. This can range from a managed budget in which the parents understand all that is spent on their child's plan so that they can redirect spending if necessary to direct payments for all or part of the services in the plan. We are currently finalising our short breaks policy working closely with Adult Social care colleagues to ensure consistency.

Implementation

From September 2014 all new assessments must come under the new system and that over 2 or 3 years all children and young people should have their statements changed to EHC plans after consultation with parents.