

18 DEC 2019

PROGRAMME UPDATE

Keeping stakeholders, parents and carers informed about Dudley's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Programme

1. Welcome from Helen Ellis, Assistant Director for Education, SEND and Family Solutions

I am delighted that the SEND improvement programme continues to move at pace. Last week we held our fourth SEND Implementation Group. The membership of this group has increased and we welcomed new members from Black Country Partnership for Care, SENDIASS, Learning Support and schools.

Our plans to agree a whole system improvement programme are well underway and we have already drafted a 100 day plan both of these documents will be published in the New Year.

We are still awaiting feedback from Ofsted on our Written Statement of Action and as soon as we receive this we will share the plan.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your hard work, perseverance and support over recent months. We understand the scale of the task we have ahead of us but by working together and moving this agenda forward I am confident we can improve the outcomes for the Children and families of Dudley.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Helen Ellis, Interim Assistant
Director with lead responsibilities
for Education, SEN and Family
Solutions

2. Understanding the Needs of the Children

Over the past few weeks a lot of work has been done around the information that we have on children in the SEND System from the age of 0 to 25, not just children that have an EHCP. This has enabled us to start looking towards a more strategic approach to how and where services are provided across the borough. This includes support provided by partners based on the needs of the child not the location of the provision. Whilst it shows the continued increase in demand it has highlighted the needs around ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder), SLD (Severe Learning Difficulties) and SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health)

Helen and the team continue to engage with schools across the borough, mainstream and special schools, to strength the relationships and increase working together as a system to deliver changes based on information, knowledge and experience.

3. Health

The joint SEND area inspection of Dudley highlighted that the CCG's Designated Medical Officer (DMO) has insufficient capacity to promote the SEND agenda across health providers.

To address this specific action, it is proposed to change the role of the existing Commissioning Support Manager: Children and Young People's Continuing Care, to provide additional support to the DMO. This will enable additional strategic and operational guidance for education, health and social care professionals to be available. In effect, this post would support the DMO by acting as the "Designated Clinical Officer" (DCO).

To create this capacity it is proposed that the CCG employ a "Children's Continuing Care and Personal Health Budget Nurse Assessor". This post would carry out a number of activities which are currently the responsibility of the Commissioning Support Manager.

Funding for this post has been agreed within the CCG and the advert for recruitment will go out in January 2020.

Additionally there is now a regular cross system meeting working on the ASD assessment and diagnosis approach in young children. Jane Marsh, Head of Specialist Early Years' Service chairs a multi-agency meeting every few weeks that includes Early Support manager, Consultant Paediatrician, Education Psychology, Children's Assessment Service (CAS), Paediatric Therapy services and health visitors. The group focuses on agreeing Early Years support as well as sharing information between partners of the children that have been referred to CAS to ensure that any requiring Early Years support are identified and receive the services they need.

4. Dudley Council – SEND team update

Recently the Council agreed to increase the funding for the SEND Team from the Councils General Fund. This has enabled us to review the SEND Team structure and we have started formal consultation with staff in order to enhance, grow and develop the SEND team. This week, we have held multi-agency recruitment panel (including education and parental representation) interviews for the second Team Manager. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful and the position will be re-advertised in January 2020 on the [WM Jobs website](#). Please see the [attached job description](#) and feel free to share with anyone who may be interested in joining the team.

On 11th December, special school heads and members of the SEND team attended training around legal responsibilities and responses in regards to SEND consultations and Tribunals. This training has highlighted a number of areas which can support development of processes within Dudley and as a result of this, some additional guidance will be developed by SEN team and clearer paperwork for schools to follow for SEND consultations will be created.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome Karen Mckinnery to the team who joins us as Quality Assurance Lead. Karen will play a key role as we develop the detailed SEND Team Transformation project, a part of the wider SEND Improvement Programme. A couple of key priorities that Karen will be focusing on is ensuring the

quality of the EHCP and how we start to move towards a “Think Family” approach with the child at the centre of everything we do.

5. SEND Panel

The weekly panel process (where multi-agency decisions are made about support) continues to meet every Tuesday and we now also have representation from the Transport team. Since the last update, we have seen the first school representative attend panel and since the last communication, we have had a response from a school to suggest a rota for schools reps to be part of the panel process.

The panel team continue to strive towards bringing control to the process ensuring there is consistency and fairness in decisions being taken with the needs of the child at the centre of everything that we do.

6. Working Together for Change Parent Carer Forum

We continue to work with and promote Working Together for Change the Dudley Parent Carer Forum as the platform where parents and carers can share their knowledge of caring for a disabled child or young person.

The [Forum's latest newsletter \(Edition 13\)](#) is now out and contains news on the SEND Improvement Programme, what's happening locally for children with special educational needs and disabilities as well as an update on the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) and the role Dudley has had.

Their website also helps to signpost parents to advice and information and to support them through their journey as carers of a disabled child or young person.

The Forum's' experience of what works and what doesn't work so well offers support to other parents and carers and also helps service providers and commissioners to focus their efforts on effective, high quality support. For more information about the Forum or to join please go to www.careandshare.uk/welcome

7. Ofsted Written Statement of Action (WSOA)

On the 16 July 2019 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission published their Joint Area Inspection Report on the borough's SEND offer and services.

Following on from this inspection we were required to submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) or action plan outlining how we are going to improve our offer across the board over the next 18 months.

Our Written Statement of Action has been designed around the fourteen areas of concern raised by the inspectors and was co-produced with our partners including the council, Dudley Parent Carer Forum, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group and Youth Justice.

As we await feedback and sign off from Ofsted, we continue to press ahead with developing our improvement programme.

As previously mentioned, as soon as feedback is received from Ofsted we will share the document.

8. SEND Improvement Programme

The programme team continues to work on developing the overall improvement plan. This will be launched in the New Year. To help with this the SEND Implementation Group focused last week around the demand for services across the system and where we need to be focusing to develop a long term strategic approach to providing services across the borough based on the needs of the children.

A joint communications group, made up of reps from health, the council and the Parent Carer Forum, is meeting on a monthly basis to ensure communication about the programme is clear transparent and provides opportunities for feedback.

We have agreed how the views of the parent/carer forum will be represented at task and finish groups and how we will update them on our progress. We have also reviewed our governance arrangements to ensure there is parent/carer representation at all SEND partnership meetings.

We have co-produced a [communication strategy](#) that involves and informs all stakeholders to ensure they are updated with the on-going plan and progress of SEND improvements and provide a means of sharing knowledge, learning and provide feedback.

We have also begun looking at how we use external support to develop our workforce to ensure best practice is captured in the design and objectives of a revised workforce plan.

To this end in the New Year we will be issuing a short questionnaire to stakeholders and we would be grateful if you could let us have your views on the current SEND system.

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