



4 March 2020

PROGRAMME UPDATE

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

1. Message from Helen Ellis, Assistant Director for SEND, Education and Family Solutions, Dudley Council

I am delighted that the SEND improvement programme continues to move at pace. We are dealing with challenges but work is ongoing to ensure we make informed decisions around provision across the borough in line with our future vision for *all SEND Children to have access to the right support, at the right time, in their own communities.*

I am also pleased to confirm the Department of Education visit on the 18th February 2020 went well. Pat Tate, who was a member of the Joint Inspection Team in 2019, is our new DFE Advisor replacing Charlie Palmer. Pat has a breadth of knowledge around SEND and Inclusion, and equally as passionate about children with SEND and supporting families and schools.

I would like to welcome Toni Dawodu to the team. Toni is interim Head of SEND and will support me with the responsibility of the strategic elements of day to day SEND operations as well as oversee the delivery of the operational improvements to the SEND Team with Sue Powell, SEND Manager. Toni brings with her many years' experience in transforming and delivering SEND Services for local authorities.

On Friday 28th February I attended the EHCP - A Good Plan joint workshop and I was overwhelmed by the support that we received from parents, carers and partners across the entire SEND system.

With over 60 people attending the workshop, it was wonderful to feel and see the passion in the room. We are all working together to make the SEND System and personalised EHC plans what they need to be to deliver the right outcomes for Dudley children.

Over the past few months we have been operating the SEND Implementation Group. The group has focused on working out the details of the work to be done, by who, where, when, etc. to deliver the improvements that we need across the SEND System. To be able to focus on two very different aspects Strategic/Delivery, we undertook a review of the governance to make sure it was right, efficient and suitably focused on driving the changes across the system.

To that end, the SEND implementation group has been closed. The delivery activity will now be divided across the 3 projects and each project will meet on a monthly basis. There will be a new group formed that will take the strategic role across the SEND System for Dudley known as the SEND Oversight Group (SOG) and will meet every 2 months. The aim for the SOG is to continue beyond the improvement programme as the system and partner wide oversight group to maintain focus and quality across the SEND System.

The 3 key projects being delivered are:

Operations, Training & Quality

This will focus on what we do, how we do it and how we make sure it's right.

Demand Management

We will explore what we need, where, when and how.

Communications & Culture

This will focus on co-productions, how we can work together, share information and communicate effectively.

These key areas will help ensure the improvement programme continues to move from strength to strength.

Finally, I would just like to thank everyone that has been working with us to drive change across Dudley for our children and young people with SEND. It is a very frustrating time still, as making changes on the scale that we want to takes time. Although we are not seeing the impact for the children just yet, we are working tirelessly with all of our partners, parents and carers to make sure what we do is a long term, sustainable change for the best for all our children and young people.

2. A Good Education, Health and Care Plan workshop

SEND Improvement Programme activities are re-designing and improving all elements of the service across the Dudley partnership. We have been working with our partners to improve the quality of the Education Health Care Plans for the young people and their families with Special Education Needs and Disabilities in Dudley.

You will recall from the Ofsted inspection last May this was one of the areas of weakness that was highlighted, and as part of the delivery of our Written Statement of Action (WSOA) response on Friday 28th February 2020 at the Joint Visioning Workshop at the Stourbridge Family Centre. The big question was *'If EHC Plans were the best they could be, what would this look would like?'*

We had representation at the workshop from across the partnership including Parents & Young People, Schools, Social Care, the Local Authority, the new SEND Team and CCG. Supported by representatives from the National Development Team for Inclusion, we were led through a number of interactive co-produced sessions so that we captured the aspirations and ambition of what we are trying to achieve for our Young People, Families and Carers, Practitioners and Organisations.

We ended the day by agreeing that each of our partner groups would be working together with the SEND and Improvement teams to co-produce the finer details for a Guidance Document scoping what a Good Education Health Care Plan and Process is, as well as expressing a determination to make the quality improvements happen as soon as possible.

The output from the day has been captured visually (below). The four big questions were:

- What needs to happen to make every EHC Plan excellent?
- How do we make sure all the young person's needs are captured in an EHC Plan?

- What needs to happen for an EHC Plan to be outcome focused?
- How can we make sure all EHC Plans are working well?



4. SEND Team update

The SEND Team has been through a massive period of growth and change since November 2019.

The new structure has been designed to reflect the pressures and challenges in the system and we are over half way through a recruitment process.

Role	Name	Recruited
Interim Head of Service (NEW)	Toni Dawodu	February 2020
SEN Manager	Sue Powell	November 2019
Quality Assurance Manager (NEW)	Karen Connerney	December 2019
Team Manager	Rob Bennett	1 more to start May 2020
Senior Case Officer	2 Recruited	
Case Officer	7 Recruited	6 (more being recruited)
Tribunal Officer*	1 interim agency	1 permanent (Start April)

*This role is due to be covered by agency staff. This has raised some concerns from parents due to the high nature of the daily rate that was seen advertised. The local authority took the decision to *cover this position in the short term to reduce the number of complaints and further delays to responding to parents, also making sure papers are timely for tribunals. Clearly this situation will be resolved in April when the new permanent Tribunal's Officer takes up post in April 2020.*

5. Interactive workshop to shape commissioning of services for the future

The interactive workshop to shape commissioning of services for the future was held in January to discuss the SEND agenda, national pressures, complexities and traditional make-up spend in education.

The workshop gave parents and carers a chance to give their views on what currently works and what changes need to be implemented. Topics discussed included what we spend and how it's spent, understanding the areas of spend, present ideas of service and shaping services for now and the future.

More information about the workshop and a full transcript of the Q&A can be found [here](#).

6. Young People's Inclusion Group – session feedback

The Young People's Inclusion Group is for young people aged 15 – 25 with disabilities, additional needs or long term health conditions. It's an opportunity to share views, find out more information, have fun and meet new friends.

On Monday 10th February, the Young People's Inclusion Group came together at DY1 Community Building to explore what [inclusion meant to them](#).

The next session will take place on Monday 9th March at DY1 Community Building, 5:00pm – 7:00pm. The session will focus on trying and testing different flavours and inclusive sports.



7. REMINDER – Stakeholders - tell us your views of the improvement programme and the SEND System?

Just to remind you the deadline for completion of the survey is 15 March 2020.

We want to encourage as many people as possible who work with children and young people in Dudley and support the SEND system to take part in this short survey.

We are conducting a survey for professionals so we can take a 'sense check' of where we are in terms of understanding stakeholders views of the current system and their understanding of the overall improvement programme.

Moving forward, we will use the feedback provided via this survey to inform our improvement programme and measure our progress against it as well as ensuring that we have the right communication mechanisms in place.

Please note - we will be surveying parents and carers separately in April to coincide with the 12 month anniversary of the previous parent carer survey.

[Take part in the stakeholder survey](#)

8. Parents and carers - tell us your views following the Ofsted and CQC post-inspection in preparation for review visit

Following the inspection from Ofsted and CQC (Care Quality Commission) in July 2019, Ofsted and the CQC will return in a few months to review the Written Statement of Action and see what progress has been made. Parents and carers have been invited by *Working Together for Change* to complete the post-inspection survey. The survey will be anonymised, collated and shared with partners including Ofsted and CQC when they return.

This survey is for parents and carers in Dudley of children and young people aged 0-25 years with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).

Take part in the parents/carers survey

9. Max Card – UK’s leading discount card for foster families and families of children with additional needs

Dudley Parent Carer Forum are pleased to announce that they will be offering Max Cards to all existing and new members of the forum. [Max Card](#) is a national initiative that gives its members discounted entry to a host of attractions, both locally and nationally, including the Merlin Group (Alton Towers, Sea Life Centre, etc.)

There will be a small charge of £2.50 (payable on collection) to enable us to purchase further cards in the future, so more parents can benefit from the scheme. You may know this as ‘pay it forward’. The cards will be valid for a period of 2 years, with an expiry date printed on the back of the card. Prospective members will have to complete a registration form prior to being issued with a card.

If you would like a Max Card, please email info@dudleyparentcarerforum.com. Alternatively, please visit the team directly at DY1, who will be happy to assist setting this up.

DY1 Community Building
Stafford Street
DUDLEY
West Midlands
DY1 1RT

The Max Card is the UK’s leading discount card for foster families and families of children with additional needs. Families can use their Max Card at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission.



UPCOMING EVENTS

10. The Dudley SEND Dialogue event for all schools – be part of the conversation

Tuesday 10 March 2020, 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Saltwells Education Development Centre
DY2 9LY

As we embark on a Dudley-wide SEND improvement programme, we would like to work with our schools in order to address the SEND challenges and explore options and solutions.

We would like to remind all head teachers to attend the Dudley SEND Dialogue event. Please book your place via Eventbrite here: <https://dudleydialogue.eventbrite.co.uk>

Free training places for family (unpaid) carers at Dudley Carers Hub

Carers can access free training at Dudley Carers Hub & Wellbeing Service.

The training sessions will take place at:

Dudley Carers Hub and Wellbeing Service,
Queens Cross Network,
Wellington Road,
Dudley
DY1 1RB

Upcoming sessions:

Level 2 Paediatric First Aid

Thursday 5th March 2020 (10:00am – 2:00pm)

Level 2 Mental Health Awareness

Monday 16th March 2020 (10:00am – 1:00pm)

For more information, please contact the hub on 01384 818723.

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www.dudleyhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/sendimprovement