



# Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

February 2019

*A new approach to special educational  
needs and disability*



## Early Support in Torbay

### What was the issue?

**Co-ordinating the identification of Early Years children with SEND and the Early Support offered to families prior to entering school Reception.**

*SEND Code of Practice 2015 states:*

*5.12 All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEN or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care*

*5.15 Where a health body is of the opinion that a young child under compulsory school age has, or probably has, SEN, they must inform the child's parents and bring the child to the attention of the appropriate local authority. The health body must also give the parents the opportunity to discuss their opinion and let them know about any voluntary organisations that are likely to be able to provide advice or assistance. This includes the educational advice, guidance and any intervention to be put in place at an early point and before the child starts school.*

*5.16 This support can take a number of forms, including:*

- Specialist support from health visitors, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists or specialist teachers, such as a teacher of the deaf or vision impaired. These specialists may visit families at home to provide practical support, answering questions and clarifying needs*
- training for parents in using early learning programmes to promote play, communication and language development*
- home-based programmes, such as Portage, which offer a carefully structured system to help parents support their child's early learning and develop*

### Our journey so far....

- Children with SEND are currently identified to the Portage Service, SEN department, Educational Psychology Service and Early Years settings by parents, Health professionals, Social Care professionals and School/Nursery setting staff.
- The Portage/SEN department are represented weekly at the Level 3 Social Care Targeted Help panel and in addition to sharing information to the wider panel members as part of a whole family support discussion, attendance at Team Around the Family meetings can provide direct advice and support to parents of Early Years children with SEND.



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- Paediatricians and Health Visiting Teams signpost families to the weekly Family Information and Play for Children with Additional Needs (FIPCAN) which is facilitated jointly by the Portage Service and Torbay Children Centres. Flyers are distributed regularly to all Health teams and nursery/school settings. Posters are provided to be displayed at the Child Development Centre at Torbay Hospital and in all nursery/school settings.

## What have we done?

- The Early Years Group membership, which includes the Portage Team Lead, Educational Psychology representative and Early Years Advisory Teacher, meet monthly to prioritise Educational Psychology referrals in order that all children identified with SEND, likely to require SEN support or EHC assessments are assessed in the year prior to them starting school Reception or earlier if required. The Early Years Advisory Teacher for Inclusion supports Early Years settings to refer to Portage and Educational Psychology and these referrals are discussed at the Early Years Group meetings.
- The Portage Team Lead attended an annual Health Visiting team day to talk about the Portage Service Offer including the FIPCAN group, Home Visiting team and Parent training
- Children with SEND who have attended the FIPCAN group may not have been identified prior to this by any other service and parents will receive advice about Portage and Parent training available. Referrals can be completed with parents.
- Regular Portage Parent training is offered to all parents known to Portage and for those who attend FIPCAN
- All children receiving Disability Living Allowance or have had a Portage referral are able to access the two year old funded nursery places

## What difference has this made?

- During the years 2015/16 and 2016/17 100% of children identified received Educational Psychology assessments prior to them starting in school reception. This is well on track to be completed this current year. Assessment can lead to an EHC assessment request if necessary.
- Early Identification of SEND and future planning of support can be identified through a child's attendance at FIPCAN
- Health colleagues regularly signpost parents to the FIPCAN group and Health Visitors continue to be the highest referrer to Portage in terms of numbers of referrals
- Early Years settings can be confident that children will receive an Educational Psychology assessment in a timely manner
- The Educational Psychology Service is able to manage the steady flow of assessments which in turn helps manage the flow of Early Years Requests for Statutory assessments to the SEN department



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## Areas for further action

- To continue to promote awareness of the Portage Service offer to all Health and Social Care colleagues using a variety of methods including mail drop, email, team discussions and developing social media.
- To continue to monitor whether the management of Early Years referrals to Educational Psychology supports children in good time before starting school Reception.
- To continue to support parent's awareness of the process around Educational Psychology assessments in Early Years, including how this is managed and how this impacts on the management of Early Years Settings requesting EHC assessments.

## Immediate next steps

- Include a session around EP assessment and the process for Early Years settings requesting EHC assessments in the Portage Parent training

## Author

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