

# SEND Reforms Torbay

1 year on

October 2015 (No.7)

**Including:**

SEN Team Statistics, SENCOs view, Local Offer, Parents Forum News.

Updated personal  
budget information – page 6

## Personal Budgets for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Torbay

Booklet available now please contact the SEND team on 01803 208274  
or email [EHCP@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:EHCP@torbay.gov.uk).

You can download a copy from [www.torbay.gov.uk/sendreforms/educationhealthcareplan](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/sendreforms/educationhealthcareplan)

### Introduction

Just over a year ago the Children and Families Act 2014 came into force. This law introduced the biggest change in 30 years to education support for children and young people with special educational needs (SEN).

The main changes saw Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) replacing Statements and the extension of the system to cover those in further education and training up to age 25.

The transfer process is a major undertaking and intensive. This will be on-going and we are dependent on all the professionals involved in their continuing support. This latest newsletter provides you an insight in how we are doing. It is a mountain we are having to climb, and my sincere thanks to everyone who has a role to play in this.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have launched a consultation on their proposals for inspecting how local areas are meeting their responsibilities for children and young people with SEND. We have included an article around this within the newsletter and I would like to encourage you to take time to consider this.

There is still lots to do, but the feedback we are getting from parents and young people is positive, and therefore makes it all worthwhile.

**Dorothy Hadleigh, Head of Service (SEND)**



## Torbay SEN

Since September 2014, the SEN team has been working on the task of converting 900 statements of SEN to Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs). The team has until April 2018 to complete all of the conversions.

### EHCP Stats (up to 1/9/15)

#### New requests for statutory assessment

- **20** weeks – the statutory period to complete an assessment and issue an EHCP
- **161** requests for statutory assessment have been received since September 2014
- **45%** increase in requests for statutory assessment compared to the previous school year
  - **109** requests for statutory assessment have been agreed and finalised since September 14
    - **90%** of these were completed within statutory timescales
  - **27** requests for assessments agreed and assessment is in progress
  - **3** requests for assessments agreed but the family left the area
  - **22** requests for assessment turned down

#### Conversions from Statements to EHCPs

- **20** weeks - the amount of time to convert an EHCP following an annual review (this was recently changed from 14 weeks by the Department for Education)
- **298** Our target number of conversions for this school year
- **224** (75% of target) (76 of these have been drafted but not finalised)
- **25%** completed within the statutory timescale

We anticipate a significant increase in the percentage of conversions being completed on time now that the permitted number of weeks has changed to 20.

## EHCP feedback questionnaire

To help us make sure that our SEN Team and Education, Health and Care Plans are meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability, we have created a feedback questionnaire for parents, carers or young people to complete at the end of either an Education, Health and Care Assessment, an Annual Review or a Conversion of Statement to an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The short questionnaire is available in paper copy with a freepost backing or online at [www.torbay.gov.uk/sendfeedback](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/sendfeedback). The information received will be put together by the Torbay Council Consultation team and the results reviewed by the SEND Operation Leads group on a quarterly basis. If there is an issue that needs to be addressed more urgently the Consultation Team will forward this to the SEN Team directly when received.



## SENCOs View

### Neil Leonard - *The Spires (formerly Westlands) Secondary*

- My feelings are the EHCP process now ensures there is an opportunity for parents, carers and key professionals to have valued input into the plan and pupils are now the central feature thus incorporating a pupil centred approach.
- The documentation is much improved but could still be altered slightly as there is still some repetition and I would like a SENCO forum to look at best practice with some opportunities to generate a comment bank.
- The form lends itself to the process we already take in terms of the meetings, target setting and planning for intervention which is good as we have not needed to change our existing methodology.
- Students obviously benefit from a well thought out EHCP and the opportunity to review the initial statements which have in some cases very old specific aims and objectives/ outcomes has been a valuable process.
- Concerns that not all professionals are able to make the meetings and may not leave feedback for us to act upon.

### Andrea Rogers - *Queensway Primary*

- I mostly have positive things to say about the change from statements to EHCPs. Certainly having recently received a statement from Wales, it bore no resemblance to our statements, so presume the EHCPs would be similar. It makes the Torbay system look amazing.
- I think the EHCPs coming through are clear and have the child at the heart. It has also made me more likely to invite pupils to reviews, which has been positive. I'm not sure this happened in many Primary Schools before. I may be wrong, perhaps it was just me?
- Our school worked towards gaining the IQM (Inclusion Quality Mark), for the second time (March 15) and the assessor was impressed at how far we had come, in the short time since the new code of practice came into being.
- One downside for me at Queensway is the time it takes to scan documents/reports to the service following reviews, as these will only be accepted by email. For a child with very complex needs and very many professionals involved, this takes a very long time. I have, however now managed, to get this completed by our admin team.
- Also feel that being part of the working party for the local offer gave me an insight that others may have struggled with as the new code came into force.

### Paul Bates – *Watcombe Primary School*

- Families have been very grateful that an EHC plan ensures support for their children, particularly with the transition to secondary school or opening the possibility of specialist education. One plus is the speed of turnaround. A decision is made pretty quickly after receipt of RSA as to whether or not to go ahead.

- I think involving the parents at school level (Appendix A) speeds the process up. The school's Appendix D is also less time consuming than previous paperwork required for statements (which often involved a lot of repetition of information already submitted with the original RSA).
- The 12 month plan on the EHC plan and subsequent annual review forms provides a realistic and useable document to work with in school. It will make the teacher's understanding of what a child with a plan requires and what their responsibility is in providing it.
- The document itself is also much more personable: any person picking it up and reading it would get a well balanced view of the whole child, not just their 'special need'. The matching of the Annual Review document and the EHC plan has also made that process easier to manage. The principle of education, health and social care having some joined up thinking is a positive.
- It would be useful to have the training promised for putting a successful RSA together. This was billed for last October, but turned into a presentation regarding the Annual review process. In my school this delayed the RSAs planned and has created a bit of a backlog, especially as SEN seemed reluctant to process any the previous summer when the system was about to change. Several children missed out on the possibility of moving to Combe Pafford as a result.
- It would also be useful to have access to the criteria for making a successful RSA. I have had several refused, which in the past would have had a sound case for statutory assessment.

### **SEND Team response**

Many thanks for the feedback, it is very reassuring to hear that schools are finding the documentation and process generally more person-centred and reflective of all views. We recognise the difficulties of ensuring that the right professionals contribute to the forming of an EHCP and the SEND Operational Leads (Service Managers from Education, Health and Social Care) will continue to make this a priority for development. We are collecting data on the timeliness of the reports provided by the different professionals to support the different aspects of the EHC process and feeding back any issues. We also hope that the Education, Health & Care Plan feedback freepost/online questionnaire will capture the views of parents and young people on the quality of this information.

Schools are advised to contact the SEN Team should they have a query over how to complete the required paperwork. The criteria for statutory assessment has not changed since the Statement system so any new requests would have been judged against this. The criteria will be updated shortly and when this is complete it will be distributed to all schools.

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## **Available SEND Literature**

- Education, Health and Care Plans – Guidance for Parents and Carers - Booklet
- Education, Health and Care Plans – Easy Read Guide - (Leaflet coming December)  
- Big thank you to TC Now for producing this ([www.totalcommunicationnow.org](http://www.totalcommunicationnow.org))
- Personal Budgets for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Torbay - Leaflet
- What is the Torbay Local Offer - Flyer
- SENDIASS - Parent Information - Leaflet

Literature is available in printed copy from [ehcp@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:ehcp@torbay.gov.uk)

### **Forthcoming literature**

We are currently working on a guide for young people who are 14 - 18 which will provide advice and guidance on the how to prepare for the different stages of education and also the move into adult services. We are aiming to have this available in the autumn term.

## Local Offer

- Schools Local Offers
  - downloadable template title changed to School SEN Information
- Further Education section added to Preparing for Adulthood. This section lists post 16 options for young people considering Further Education, including detailed SEN support information where available
- Local Offer information section added
  - brings together all records where a downloadable 'local offer template' is available
- SEN Team Local Offer template updated and added to team record
- How to make a request for statutory assessment – pathway clarified on Local Offer front page

## Parents Forum

The feedback from our members so far has been positive regarding the Education, Health and Care Plan processes. There have been a few issues raised in relation to Home to School transport, SEN Support in schools and disability discrimination in and out of school.

We therefore have secured a national guest speaker from IPSEA to talk about the law in relation to these two areas at our forthcoming conference on the 20th November 2015. This will take place at the Little Theatre, Torquay. If you would like to attend please register by visiting <http://www.torbayppf.org.uk/>



## Personal SEN Budgets

The team continue to pilot the SEN approach to personal SEN budgets within Torbay. Based on the information received, the team will consider:

- 1) **If the service for which the Personal Budget has been requested meets the young person's SEN needs**
- 2) **If there are any barriers to stop us offering a personal budget**
- 3) **If the needs could be met by a universal service**

The team will provide an explanation if a request is turned down and the same rationale will be applied to future enquires (bearing in mind that each enquiry must be considered on its' own merits). To help with consistent decisions, we have developed a new template to ensure that all relevant information can be considered when a request is made.

Personal Budgets requested this year:

- 3 personal SEN budget enquiries that have been agreed
- 7 personal SEN budget enquiries that have been turned down
- 4 personal SEN budget enquiries that are awaiting further information

## Personal SEN Case Study

### Introduction

A Torbay family, Secondary School, Primary School and SEN Team have collaborated to agree an individual package of care which will allow a pupil with severe visual impairment to attend secondary school within Torbay rather than move to a residential school in Worcester.

Although cognitively very able, the young lady has difficulty accessing learning as she has very little sight. She has a big personality, a good sense of humour and took an active role in the discussions about her future support.

### Background

The pupil wants to attend her local Secondary school and continue to live at home. The nearest specialist provision that is suitable to meet her needs is Worcester and it would cost around £60000 for her social care and educational placement.

The Personal Budget will be used so that the Secondary school can recruit and train a member of staff, in advance, to the level of Braille that will be needed to support the pupil and to provide ongoing training. They will need someone available for her all day, including for pick up and drop off and would like to train some additional staff so that they are not reliant on only one person. The member of staff will also need to prepare documents and work for the week ahead.

### What's been agreed?

The Personal Budget will be used to train the member of staff and pay for their hours, spending extra time with the pupil at her primary school and bringing her to the secondary, shadowing the primary teaching assistant and going for Braille teaching. The Top up funding will then be reviewed in September 2016 to determine the level of support going into the school to support the pupil's identified needs.

WESC Foundation Outreach provide specialist VI Advisory services to schools in Torbay and were able to support the transition process for successfully including the VI pupil and providing relevant CPD to staff and pupils.

For further information about WESC please visit [www.wescfoundation.ac.uk/](http://www.wescfoundation.ac.uk/)

## Parents Views

Our daughter has all the needs of ten year old little girl, plus the practical complexities that loss of sight brings. Our strength is as a family unit where we can help and learn together. The funding means that we do not have to send our daughter to a residential specialist school out of the area breaking up the family, for which we are eternally grateful.

Being members of the visually impaired community we are well connected with parents in similar positions across the UK and consequently well informed regarding levels of educational support. We know that the support offered by Torbay SEN is truly outstanding and worthy of national acclaim.

## Young Person's Views

I feel it is vital that I have the support of a fully Braille trained assistant to enable me to have access to all of the curriculum and be able to continue with my Braille, I think that it would affect my confidence if I didn't have that support. If I didn't have my work in Braille I wouldn't be able to join in with the class or work with my friends. I'm worried my Braille wouldn't improve. Continuing life skills and mobility would be essential for my every day future needs. Mobility around school is a concern for me particularly at break times and lunch because the whole school will be moving around. I feel a one to one at lunch times isn't completely necessary as long as someone is aware if an emergency but would need someone to get from class to class in case I was late. I will need someone to help with my new technology as I'm not really confident with the Braille note.

I will definitely need someone to Braille practice test papers because if not, I won't be prepared and might not do well.

## General support for Carers

You may already know about the specialist support available to parent Carers, but do you know about the general support provided to all Carers by the new Integrated Care

Organisation? (ICO = Hospital Trust and Community Health and Social Care Trust joined together on 1st October).

There are Carer Support Workers based in each GP practice in Torbay one day a week. They provide a listening ear, or can do a Carers Health and Wellbeing Check with you to see if you are accessing all the support you need. Where the support should be provided by Children's Services (such as Safely Home bracelets), they will send their assessment through to the right department to check whether you are eligible for additional support.

However, much of the support in Torbay is 'Universal support' – available to all Carers to prevent needs arising.

- The Carers Register can provide a back-up plan in case you have an emergency – anything from just ringing your partner or a neighbour to say you can't get home, to getting a package of care set up.
- The Register card can also be used as a discount card in a variety of shops, or for free parking at local Hospitals when you are taking / visiting the child you care for.
- Joining the register gives you a quarterly newsletter which includes a whole host of information
- Courses for Carers – from manual handling to stress management, IT training
- Finance and benefits advice
- Carers Groups and activities
- Carers Lifestyle Workers – helping you quit smoking or be more healthy
- Independent Carers organisations such as Crossroads Care

**To find out more about any of these services, please contact Signposts for Carers on (01803) 666620, [signposts@nhs.net](mailto:signposts@nhs.net)**

## Upcoming Work

The SEN Team is starting a piece of work with pupils of a local school to look at what professionals could do to make the annual review process a more comfortable environment for young people to participate. After the initial pilot, all schools will be contacted with the aim of gathering and sharing good practice in this area. The initial work will take place in the Autumn term and will be completed in the New Year.

## Consultation on the SEND Inspection Framework

On 12 October, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission launched a public consultation on proposals for inspecting local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who are disabled and have special educational needs. The consultation is available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-area-send-consultation>. It closes on 4 January 2016 at 11:30pm.

A young people's consultation is also available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/467242/QUESTIONS\\_Local\\_Areas\\_young\\_people\\_FINAL\\_2015\\_10\\_12.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/467242/QUESTIONS_Local_Areas_young_people_FINAL_2015_10_12.pdf).

Independent inspection, combined with local and national accountability measures, will show how the SEN and disability system is performing; which parts are working well and less well; and whether outcomes are improving for children and young people. You can find out more about SEN and disability accountability by following this link:

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/416347/Accountability\\_Publication.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416347/Accountability_Publication.pdf).

## Useful links

SEND Code of Practice

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

Developing Outcomes in Education, Health and Care Plans

[www.torbay.gov.uk/educationhealthcareplan](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/educationhealthcareplan)

Torbay Local Offer

[www.torbaydirectory.com/family](http://www.torbaydirectory.com/family)

Mental Capacity

[www.torbay.gov.uk/mentalcapacity.htm](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/mentalcapacity.htm)

Council for Disabled Children

[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/cdcs-resources/information-for-children-and-young-people-on-send-reforms](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/cdcs-resources/information-for-children-and-young-people-on-send-reforms)

### Easy Read Guides:

SEND Reforms

[www.mencap.org.uk/EasyReadGuides](http://www.mencap.org.uk/EasyReadGuides)

## Contributors

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Plus contributions from a Parent and Young Person (Personal Budgets)

