

Update on the work of the Post 16 SEN Casework Team

Introduction

The Post 16 SEN Casework Team currently consists of Laureen Wardle (0.8fte) and Faye Cooper (0.6fte). Laureen is the Lead Officer and has worked with the range of Post 16 providers we use to ensure the provision available meets the needs of the students with Education, Health and Care Plans.

Some students who were previously placed out of area are returning to Torbay for Post 16 provision, and these developments are an exciting opportunity. The positivity the SEN Team are encountering from providers has been very much appreciated and welcomed.

The bespoke provision which was set up at South Devon College from September 2019 has been a success with students who would previously become NEET re-engaging and making significant progress. We are now discussing how this can be built upon and developed further. This approach provides Torbay with value for money, and better outcomes for the students concerned.

The Post 16 Panel has become a strong and effective mechanism, where close scrutiny and challenge is forthcoming. There are a number of Post 16 providers represented on this Panel, and their input is very effective and much appreciated. The solution focussed discussions have allowed creative approaches to be developed, and new approaches have emerged to meet the needs of some of the more complex students. This innovative response is creating a broader range of provision for our students, with value for money, and better outcomes as the focus.

Providers are also more aware of the expectations the SEN Post 16 Team and the Head of Service has of the provision they offer to Torbay students. The rigorous scrutiny and challenge is resulting in better PfA (Preparing for Adulthood) outcomes for the students.

This year has been a particularly challenging one, with COVID-19 circumstances, however the Post 16 providers have been superb in finding creative solutions to support the students. The collaborative approach is a strength which I am sure we will continue in the future, and some of the virtual learning opportunities have suited some of our students more than the traditional face to face learning.

Transition arrangements for students due to transfer to Post 16 provisions in September 2020 are occurring, and once again creative solutions are being implemented. Close liaison with students, parents, providers and the SEN Team is in place and working effectively.

One of the challenges we need to continue to address is the better sharing of student information in order to ensure receiving provisions are aware of learning styles which

suit the student involved, and to avoid duplication and best build on the learning the student has already achieved.

There has been rigorous tracking of students to ensure the number of NEET students is reduced, with appropriate support, guidance and engagement put in place. This has required a great deal of SEN Casework Officer time, and further staffing will ensure this can be strengthened.

A more focussed effort to cease EHCP's where they are no longer required has been adopted, and is proving worthwhile.

Recommendations

In order to build on the work of the Post 16 Team there is a capacity issue, and until additional staffing is appointed we are unable to expand on the work currently undertaken.

On-going discussion and developments with the Post 16 providers to support the range of needs we have in Torbay.

Strengthening the links between mainstream schools and Post 16 providers in order to ensure collaborative approaches occur in the best interests of Torbay students.

Dorothy Hadleigh
Head of Service (SEND)