



Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

Updated Feb 19

*A new approach to special educational
needs and disability*



Supporting Children and Young People with Autism

How has the work progressed since May 2017?

- At total of 21 primary and secondary autism champions completed their training and are using their new knowledge and skills to support good autism practice within their schools. The autism champion project has now ended, however autism champions continue to support children and young people with a diagnosis of autism within their settings.
- The autism champions cover a wide age range from nursery to sixth form.
- Our educational psychologists have close links with health and education professionals who work in the area of autism. We support the implementation of the Autism Education Trust (AET) materials through individual casework, staff support, bespoke training and links with schools' autism champions.
- Our educational psychologists are in their third year of delivering the National Autistic Society Earlybird Plus programme which supports families whose children have recently received a diagnosis of autism.
- A multi professional group has been set up to include professionals from health, education and social care with the following aims:
 - To provide an overview of autism services and provision within Torbay.
 - An integrated approach to supporting children and young people with autism.
 - To share expertise, research and developments.
 - Signposting/support.
- In addition to the enhanced provisions at Brixham College and Preston Primary School, there is a new provision at Spires School for children and young people with a diagnosis of autism.

How has this improved outcomes for children who have SEND? How can this be evidenced?

Benefits:

- Collaborative working across services and multi-agency sharing of information promotes inclusion.
- Improved communication between professionals and services contributes towards better outcomes for children and families feel supported.
- A greater understanding of autism and individual differences.
- Promotes autism friendly classrooms/schools/settings and supports the inclusion of children with autism in mainstream settings
- The ongoing commitment of the autism champions means that more children, families and schools are reached, with a shared understanding of positive approaches to supporting children on the autistic spectrum.
- The autism champions who are valued and supported by their schools, remain committed to their roles and continue to work towards developing autism friendly schools.
- In October 2018 autism champions reported that they had a greater understanding of SEN generally. Three autism champions had taken on a SENCo role and another was managing an enhanced resource provision for SEND. Other activities undertaken include Lego Therapy, mentoring AS students, advising a safeguarding team on autism, nurture support, promoting continuity of practice across the whole school.

- Earlybird plus parents continue to give positive weekly feedback on how they have found each session. Parents have reported that family life has become calmer, they have a better understanding of their child and feel more confident about managing difficult situations. Parents have found the peer support invaluable and a recent group have set up a Facebook group and have offered to mentor parents of newly diagnosed children.

Challenges:

- A few autism champions reported that they were no longer given time to continue with the role, however one reported that she still offers support to anyone who needs it or asks for it, indicating that her knowledge is recognised within the school.

May 17 Storyboard update

How has the work progressed since May 16?

- 14 primary and secondary autism champions have completed their training and are using their new knowledge and skills to support good autism practice within their schools.
- A second cohort of 7 teachers have been selected and are currently undertaking AET training to become autism champions.
- The autism champions already trained cover a wide age range from nursery to sixth form.
- Two educational psychologists and portage workers are now licenced to deliver Earlybird and Earlybird Plus interventions.

How has this improved outcomes for children who have SEND? How can this be evidenced?

- An evaluation of the impact of the autism champion role has been carried out by Educational Psychology intern Lauren Coles. Lauren reports that the impact on schools, families and children has been extremely positive. Her report will be shared with stakeholders when it is completed.
- Increased number of autism champions means that more children, families and schools are reached, with a shared understanding of positive approaches to supporting children on the autistic spectrum.
- Regular network meetings are held twice termly and this has provided invaluable opportunities for networking, peer support and discussion of a range of topics such as transition, nutrition, SEND. The champions are using a competency framework for working towards autism friendly schools.
- Earlybird and Earlybird plus parents give weekly feedback on how they have found each session and the feedback is positive. They take away a lot of support and information and find that being with other parents has been really helpful. As it is a mixed group, with children from all over the spectrum, what starts off as 2 teams, quickly becomes 1 when they realise that all the issues affect them all, and that communication, even in the high functioning children is just as important as for those who are non-verbal.

Original Storyboard Sept 14 – May 16

What was the issue?

Ensuring that the needs of children and young people with a diagnosis of autism and their parents/carers are fully considered in the implementation of the reforms arising out of the new Children and Families Act.

Ensuring that children and young people with autism are involved and informed throughout the process.

Our journey so far....

The Local Authority SEND Department are mindful of the recent developments within the field of Autism, we are aligned with health colleagues, as we take due consideration of DSM 5 criteria, published.



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There is an ongoing focus within the service on gaining the voice of the child, young person and parents and ensuring that their views are heard and acted upon. The voice of the child and young person is represented in accordance to their chronological and developmental age, as well as their capacity to do so, in accordance with Mental Capacity Act.

Development of autism specific support systems and provision. There are currently two enhanced provisions in Torbay for children and young people with a diagnosis of autism. These provisions are based at Brixham College and Preston Primary school. Children with autism who also present with learning difficulties may attend one of the other specialist provisions such as Coombe Pafford School (7-18) or Mayfield School (3-18).

Torbay Local Authority are rolling out an autism initiative which delivers autism training opportunities to staff within the education sector locally, with a view to developing a selected group of autism champions. This will provide a network of trained professionals whose expertise will then be available across Torbay and provide schools with specialist support.

Development of the outreach service for autism. This is being offered by the enhanced provisions at Preston and Brixham, in addition to support already being provided by Combe Pafford and Mayfield schools.

Gifted and talented children and young people with autism are provided with due support, in order to support their journey towards reaching their identified potential.

What have we done?

We recently held a children's views network meeting to share good practice around different approaches to gaining the voice of the child. Contributions from the children's disability team, early years, social care, Mayfield School, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language, Adoption team.

Developed the role of the autism champion. 14 primary and secondary teachers across Torbay have been selected and are attending training delivered by The Autism Education Trust.

Development of the autism role within the Educational Psychology Service, which involves:

- supporting the enhanced provisions,
- contributing towards the autism implementation group and south west autism network,
- keeping up with other authorities in order to inform and develop practice in Torbay,
- sharing good practice and recent developments at Educational Psychology and Advisory Teacher meetings and SENCO meetings.
- Delivered autism awareness training for school escorts working within children's transport.
- Delivered autism specific training to school staff through the SEN inclusion network.

What difference has this made?

- Collaborative working with SEND and other professionals from health education and social care.
- All training has been fully attended and positively viewed.
- Collaborative working between health, education, social care, parents and children and young people.
- Increased knowledge and understanding of autism and shared approaches and strategies.
- Taking a person centred approach to planning and intervention for each child/young person.

Areas for further action

- To establish a multi professional autism team within Torbay.
- Launch a quality mark for schools based on our own outcomes as well as AET standards.
- Development of further enhanced autism provision within mainstream settings.
- Educational Psychologists and Portage workers to train to deliver the earlybird and earlybird plus training alongside speech and language therapists.
- Educational Psychologists to contribute towards diagnostic assessment of autism.

Immediate next steps

- To seek feedback from parents to inform gaps in provision, support what is going well and what they would like to see being developed in Torbay.
- To begin the process of evaluating the impact of autism champions.

Author

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