



Self Assessment of our SEND Implementation

Jan 2019 update

*A new approach to special educational
needs and disability*



Education, Health and Care Plan – Decision Making

How has work progressed since May 16

SEND Panel Membership (current)

The SEND Panel membership has developed since May 2016 and is now made up with representation from the following partners:-

- SEN senior officer
- Educational Psychologist
- Advisory Teacher
- SENCo
- Health
- Social Care (and previously Targeted Help)
- Parent Liaison Officer

The panel's role is to consider whether a statutory assessment should proceed based on a summary of the request for statutory assessment evidence and further information provided at panel by partners. The group may also advise on whether an EHCP is necessary following statutory assessment. The final decision in both cases rests with the senior SEN Officer.

SEND Panel Review – September 18

A review of the existing SEND Panel was carried out in September 18. The review included consultation with the SEN and Educational Psychology Teams and good practice discussions with Devon and Plymouth SEN Services.

The recommendations were:

- Membership should include Headteachers from Primary, Secondary and Special Schools to strengthen the level of challenge.
- Draft plans should be approved by the designated LA Officer as part of a two stage process. This may be with the advice of the panel, or if outside of the panel, the reasons should be documented and the panel advised.

Activity Led Funding (ALF) Calculation

Alongside the review of the panel process, the SEN Team is now reviewing the options for the allocation of the higher needs funding associated with EHC plans, known as ALF. Partners have given feedback that a more transparent process needs to be in place, which further clarifies the provision that funding will be agreed for.

Any changes to the process must be:



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- Fair
- Consistent
- Easy to understand, and, where appropriate, to challenge

The SEN Team is currently reviewing the options for implementing the proposed changes and an action plan will be put in place in spring 2019.

Specialist Provision Panels

To address the increasing demand for specialist provision places in Torbay, the SEN Team has worked with special schools to introduce a fair and consistent panel process.

The aim of the panels is to allocate the available spaces identified in each Specialist Provision/Enhanced Resource Provision to the children/young people with the highest level of need. The panels take place each January to decide the placements of young people put forward by their parents and professionals for a space in a specialist provision or an Enhanced Resource Base for the following September.

Professionals will consider the child/young person's needs, how well they are doing in mainstream provision and if there is any alternative provision they could access. Panel will then prioritise children/young people into a high/medium/low level of need for a place and then allocate the number of places available at each provision. Clear evidence must be provided of how the child/young person's needs could meet the criteria. This could consist of recent educational psychology assessments or consultation records, medical diagnoses or paediatric reports, social care assessments, clinical psychology reports.

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

- Torbay has a low level of mediation and tribunal which is an indication that parents and young people are satisfied with the EHC assessment process in Torbay.
- The specialist panel process is helping to ensure that specialist placements prioritise those children with the most complex of need
- These are a fair and transparent decision making process

Plans for development

- Young people, parents and providers will have access to the decision making process for determining when EHC assessment and the issuing of an EHCP is appropriate.
- There will be a further level of assurance into the consistency of decisions
- Funding and support for children with SEN in Torbay will be allocated appropriately to children and young people according to their individual level of need.

Priority

- Develop an action plan for changes to the current SEND Panel membership and processes – Spring 19



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- Investigate the options for allocation of funding and consult on new process to enable a decision – Spring 19

May 2016 Storyboard

What was the issue?

SEND Code of Practice - Collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support - section 1.23

When carrying out their statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities **must** do so with a view to making sure that services work together where this promotes children and young people's wellbeing or improves the quality of special educational provision (Section 25 of the Children and Families Act 2014). Local authorities **must** work with one another to assess local needs. Local authorities and health bodies **must** have arrangements in place to plan and commission education, health and social care services jointly for children and young people with SEN or disabilities (Section 26).

Our journey so far....

The SEND Panel was set up to:

- Consider requests for statutory assessment for children or young people with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND)
- To agree the services outlined in draft Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)
- To **sign off** the funding from education, health and social care budgets that may be required to fund the services in ii.

Our intention was for a multi-agency group to perform the decision making role around the need for Statutory Assessment and the "sign off" of an Education, Health and Care Plan:

Group Membership

The group is made up of 'core' members who are required to attend every meeting:

- Senior SEN representative
- Clinical Commissioning Group representative
- Children's Social Care representative
- SENCO
- Educational Psychologist
- Advisory Teacher
- SENDIASS representative



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The following may be called upon:

- Adults' Services representatives who are authorised to sign off funding requests
 - Zone Manager or Zone Deputy Manager
 - Learning Disability Service Manager
- Children's Social Care representatives who are authorised to sign off funding requests
- Health representatives who are authorised to sign off funding requests

What have we done?

SEND Panel

Delivery and management of the Group

- The meetings are organised and supported by SEN Business Support
- The agenda and summary sheets for the cases to be considered are sent out in advance of the meeting to group members
- The group is chaired by the Peggy Seddon, Senior SEN Officer, or Dorothy Hadleigh, Head of Service SEND
- The meetings take place every 2 weeks in Tor Hill House
- A case tracking sheet is completed by the SEN Business Support representative
- EHCP Coordinators / SEN Caseworkers are notified of the panel decisions via the SEND Panel tracking sheet and feedback to parent at a face to face meeting arranged at a time to suit the family in their home.

Expectation of panel participants

- To read the agenda and summary sheets in advance of the meeting and clarify the up to date situation with regards to their specific service involvement, where appropriate
- Participants will input at the meeting which will inform the discussion and outcome
- To treat all information presented at the SEND panel as confidential

What difference has this made?

- During the 6 month period that the temporary Designated Medical Officer was able to attend the panel, decisions requiring a health input were much more informed
- Torbay has maintained a strong track record of working with parents to reach agreement on supporting a child or young person with SEN. This is reflected in our low tribunal and mediation rate
- Families have an allocated SEN Officer to guide them through the process and ensure they are central to the plan strengthening relationships
- Clear information sharing with children/young people and parents
- The participation of agencies is tracked by the Quality Assurance Scorecard and issues are escalated to the SEND Operational Leads avoiding delays and enabling time scales to be adhered to



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Areas for further action

- Partners outside of Education have not regularly attended the panel. This is a key area for improvement. Service sign off needs to occur at the panel meetings due to statutory timescales
- Resolution of the role and allocation of a Designated Medical Officer to participate in the decision making process
- Work is needed to develop the quality of information provided by Health and Social Care partners to inform the decision making process

Immediate next steps

- The SEND Operational Leads need to ensure that each required agency is represented at panel on a regular basis, to contribute to informed decision making
- A workshop is being arranged with Health colleagues to be held at Torbay Hospital to create a shared understanding of each individual's responsibilities in the EHCP process and to remove any identified barriers to participation

Author

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