

SEND REFORMS

TORBAY

A new approach to SEN & Disabilities

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Including: Introduction – Sharon Matson, Devon CCG; Cordelia Law, Member for Children’s Services; Torbay SEN; Capital Funding; Parents Feedback – EHCPs; Elective Home Education; Designated SEND Officers, NHS; SEND Strategy – Your Views; Portage Award; Autism; Useful Links



Torbay Local Area SEND

Find out more by visiting the SEND Strategy and the SEND Updates pages.



Introduction

I'm very pleased to introduce this edition of the Torbay SEND Newsletter on behalf of NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group.

It's been a busy time across SEND services with many positive developments.

We are pleased to say that an extra Designated Clinical Officer has been appointed to work across the whole of Devon to support improvement in Education, Health and Care Plans. Meanwhile, close working between local partners is resulting in additional resources for autism assessments and support for

those waiting to be assessed for autism over the age of 14. More work is planned to make improvements to autism services in the second half of this financial year across Torbay, Devon and Plymouth.

It was great to see the Speech and Language Therapy Team at Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust being recognised at the trust's Staff Heroes Awards for their outstanding contribution, winning the Right Care, Right Place Team award.

Local commitment to continued working in partnership with children and young people

was kickstarted last month with Torbay Council's SEN team hosting a regional event bringing together children and young people from local schools with professionals and external groups to discuss how to engage well and plan for co-production opportunities over the coming 12 months.

[There is more good news inside and please do take the opportunity to influence the SEND Priorities for 2020 onwards, using the details at the end of the newsletter. \(pg 9\)](#)

Sharon Matson
Head of Commissioning for Women and Children, NHS Devon CCG.

Cordelia Law

Member for Children's Services

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Cordelia Law and I am the Liberal Democrat Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

Since taking up position, I have been getting to know the many teams that make up Children's Services, but I have to admit to a particular interest in SEND. I spent several years fundraising for Chernobyl Children's Project and have seen first-hand the potential of children and young people with disabilities to flourish if given the opportunity and environment.

Two of my own children have moderate dyslexia and dyspraxia, but with the support they received through school in Torbay, they were able to achieve great results and good degrees, but most of all they are happy and confident young people, despite the difficulties they have encountered through their extra needs.

These are the experiences and opportunities that I believe all of our SEND children and young people should have and are entitled to. One of the first things I did as Cabinet Member for Children's Services was write to the Secretary of State asking for significant and immediate further investment into SEND, urging the government to adequately invest in the future of our SEND children and young people.

Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act in 2014, which extended eligibility for SEND support up to the age of 25, Torbay has seen a 51% rise in the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans and no increase in funding from government. I therefore wholeheartedly welcome the recently announced cross-government review of SEND support and the extra £700 million for Higher Needs budgets that was recently announced for 2021-22. I hope this will go some way to easing the long-standing pressures facing SEND provision by local areas and that the review will offer our SEND community improved quality and funding of their needs for the longer term

I wish you all a happy and fulfilling return or start to school, college and university and thank you for the work you conduct daily to support the SEND community.

Best wishes



Cordelia Law



“““
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Torbay SEN

Requests for Statutory Assessment (RSA)

Torbay has always performed well against the 20 week timescale, however over the last academic year our ability to meet timelines has significantly reduced due to the increased number of children requiring a needs assessment from education, health and social care partners. We have worked quickly to address this by recruiting two new EHC coordinators and a Case Worker within the last 6 months. Temporary specialist resource was commissioned over the summer break and the backlog of EHCPs has been successfully reduced. The Local Authority has also recently announced further investment in SEN and we feel confident that we will be able to quickly return to our expected level of performance. During this period the SEN Team worked to ensure the issuing of EHCPs for children transitioning from Reception and Year 6 were prioritised.

	Sept 14 – Aug 15	Sept 15 – Aug 16	Sept 16 – Aug 17	Sept 17 – Aug 18	Sept 18 – Aug 19
Requests for Statutory Assessment	161	176	216	236	293
Refused Assess.	21	42	40	35	87
Stopped Assess.	2	3	4	2	2
No EHCP following assessment	2	1	2	6	10
Issued	136 (84%)	130 (74%)	170 (78%)	193 (82%)	138
In Progress	0	0	0	0	56
Final EHCPs issued on time	89%	81%	88%	84%	26%

**[click here](#) for published data which takes into account exceptions and children whose EHCP is administered by another authority.*

Working with partners

To ensure that children and young people have the best assessment of their education, health and care needs in their EHCP, the SEN Team has put together training for partners who contribute to the EHC Assessment. The training clarifies what information is required from professionals to produce an effective EHCP. The session provides an opportunity for ‘myth busting’ and for professionals to ask questions directly of SEN representatives. If you are a professional who would benefit from this training please ask your manager to email hannah.spencer@torbay.gov.uk to arrange a group session.



Capital Funding Update

Local authorities must ensure there are sufficient good school places for all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities. The Government has committed £215 million of capital funding nationally (2018-2020) to help local authorities create new school places and improve existing facilities for children and young people with SEN and disabilities, in consultation with parents and providers.

The allocation for Torbay was a total of £500,000 which is split into 3 equal payments for each of the years 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. In May 2018, the DfE announced a £50 million increase to this fund and in December 2018 a further £100million to local authorities, taking the total investment in this fund to £365 million. The additional allocations for Torbay announced May 2018 (£116,279) and December 2018 (£232,558) bring Torbay's revised total allocation to £848,837.

This funding is:

- intended for the children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans for whom the local authority is responsible.
- to support local authorities to invest in provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities aged 0-25 to improve the quality and range of provision available to the local authority.

Torre Academy

Creation of Sensory Area within the Reception Unit

"The money we received to go towards setting up the sensory room had provided the children of Torre Academy C of E with a fully equipped indoor sensory room with strobes, sensory mats, soft areas and plenty of resources to meet the needs of several children.

In our outdoor area, we were able to develop it with a range of outdoor equipment to enhance their learning.

The impact this has on our SEN children is evident for all that visit to see. Our children with sensory needs often self-regulate using this room and it has become a fantastic safe space to allow them to meet sensory seeking needs".



Muddy Wellies

YMCA Creation of Sensory Room

"The children absolutely love the new sensory room, we have found that all of them are benefitting from the holistic, calming atmosphere it is providing, it is particularly helpful for our 1:1 children too.

Thank you so much for the funding, we couldn't have achieved this without it!"



Churston Ferrers Grammar School

Creation of Calm, Sensory Room

"The old storage/nurses room now has a much lower ceiling, making it feel a much cosier room. The colour on the wall and the dimmable lighting has helped create a soothing space and removing the large sink and shelves give much more sitting space.

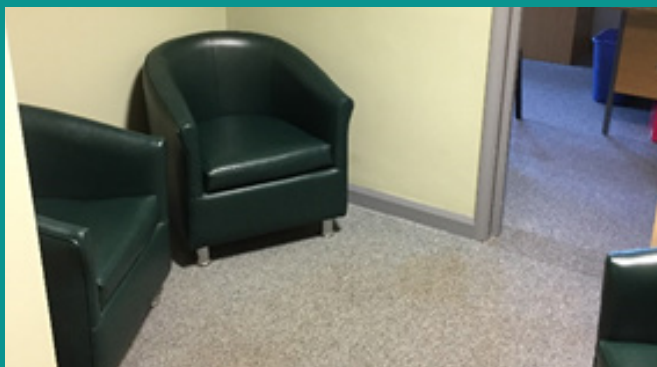
In the mornings before school and during breaks and lunches up to 3 students at any one time use the room. Most of these are EHCP students but other highly anxious autistic students also use the room on a daily basis. The room is also used frequently during the day for students to spend time regulating themselves, or during their dropped lessons to complete work. They have named it the 'chill out room' and created a sign for the door.

It has been a much needed addition to enable us to cater for our higher needs students who require 1:1 TAs at all times, particularly for 2 of our new yr 7 EHCP students and a highly anxious yr 9 student who has recently been diagnosed with autism."



Churston Ferrers Grammar School

Sixth Form Calm Room



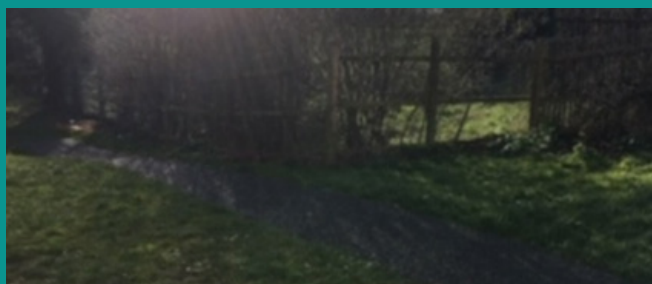
"It has become increasingly apparent that the various health issues experienced by young people often present themselves in school. Our EHCP students are amongst our

most vulnerable students and these students need ongoing support which is targeted and discrete. Students diagnosed with ADHD, who are on medication require a quiet place to take this, often need rest breaks and a place to settle, away from the noise of the common room. Having a quiet and private space to talk to such students, who sometimes need to sit with a member of staff who can explain boundaries and provide instructions in a manner tailored to the needs of the student without interruption, offer them counselling and mentoring is invaluable for their wellbeing."

Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Primary School

Wheelchair Accessible Pathway to Sports Field

"The camber on this entrance meant that our child who uses a wheelchair felt very unsafe accessing the playing field. The child now gets down there in safety and, weather permitting, plays on the field and joins in with sporting events with the other children".



Education, Health and Care Assessment Feedback.

Parents and young people are asked to provide feedback on the assessment process from all partners across Education, Health and Social Care, that is used to form an EHC Plan. For the academic year 2018/19, 48 people took the opportunity to respond. 46% felt that the overall experience was positive, 30% satisfactory, 11% negative and 13% not scored. The feedback is gathered by the SEN Team and shared with partners to target improvement work. **The clearest message from families is that they value regular communication and they would like the whole process to be quicker.**

“

All the relevant staff working together to help, good support system. Having the meetings at school to keep track of overall progress. Information being passed on. Draft EHCP very informative explained well.

”

“

It takes too long, the whole process before children get the actual help they need. I know this is due to lack of funding but this impacts on the mental health of children.

”

“

Communication between home and school has been very successful.

”

“

I feel nothing has worked well. There has been no communication. This has been one of the most stressful processes I have been through. Waiting for relevant reports from professionals. Reports were all outdated and available prior to the process starting.

“

The positivity and friendliness of the staff as I felt I was on my own.

”

“

Working with the LA SEN Team has been very effective. I felt we were thoroughly supported by them. SENDIASS are also very helpful.

”

“

The whole situation/process of getting ... to where she is now has taken far too long. This should have happened a long time ago.

”

“

Better communication and clear guidelines regarding who does what.

”

“

Contact with the SEN Team has been an amazing support and they really helped.

”

“

Ensure that the reports are completed on time.

”

“

I felt listened to. I also felt that everyone is trying to do their best for ... His needs have come first. So, so pleased as the support came when it was most needed.

”

“

Everyone I've seen or talked to has been really caring and understanding, having my portage worker at the time was a big help as well.

”

Working Together

Elective Home Education & Special Educational Needs

Across the Torbay area approximately two hundred children between the ages of five to sixteen are electively home educated. Parents choose to home educate their children for a variety of reasons and at different times in their education; with some doing so for a short period of time and some as a much longer plan for their child's education. Currently around twenty percent of Home Educated children have some additional educational needs, with a much smaller percentage having an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Whilst Home Educating can be an effective option for some pupils, some parents wish for their child to return to being educated in a school setting. The Elective Home Education Team strive to support and advise parents to ensure they can make informed choices about their child's future and then receive support to manage this change. Over the past year the EHE and SEND teams have been working together to support children with Special Educational Needs return into a school setting.

This has been most effective when a collaborative approach with parents, EHE Lead Professionals and SEND Caseworkers have been formed. This process can be very complex as so many agencies share a portion of responsibility for the child's needs. In a recent case no less than six different agencies all worked collaboratively to make the transition happen for a young lady with complex needs who was desperate to attend school again. The collaboration between the EHE and SEND

team was crucial in this process; ensuring the child's needs were relevant and up to date. As well as then discussing possible school settings with the child and parent and putting together a support and transition package with all agencies involved. Destination schools have also been very accommodating in offering a bespoke transition so that those wishing to return to school have done so successfully. On a recent visit to finalise her transition the young lady in question reported to me:

“

I never thought I would be able to go back to school, I wish the summer holidays were over now!

”

For further information on support visit:
[Elective Home Education – Local Offer](#)



Local Offer

[fis.torbay.gov.uk](https://www.fis.torbay.gov.uk)



Visit **Local Offer in Torbay**

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities



The Local Offer has continues to be developed to meet the needs of the local area. Building upon the success of the [Early Years resource](#) pages, consistently the most visited pages in the Local Offer, the Joint SENCo and SEN work group has created the [Torbay SENCo Handbook](#). The handbook gives SENCos (and all local offer users) access to a comprehensive range of information to support them in their role.

Designated Officers SEND

The Designated Medical Officer (DMO) and the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) have key roles to support joined up working between health services and local authorities and to implement the Children and Families Act reforms.

Across Devon Torbay and Plymouth there are 3 DMO's and 2 DCO's these are:

Plymouth: Dr Sharon Glass (DMO) and Sue Syers (DCO)

Torbay: Dr Lorraine Dibble (DMO) and Paul Leach (DCO)

Devon: Dr Jane Dunlop (DMO) and Paul Leach (DCO)

In Brief DMO's have more of a strategic oversight for SEND and DCO's have a day to day hands on approach, but roles can interchange, and overall responsibility is shared.

We endeavour to work as a virtual team, with all officers being able to offer support and advise can be contacted at the single mailbox: d-ccg.send@nhs.net

The Clinical officers should help facilitate the Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) process as well as the integrated health care plan process and link with the local health systems to help enable the best outcome for children and young people through the SEND process.

Paul Leach, Designated Clinical Officer, Torbay

The purpose of the DMO/DCO role is to have:

Oversight

Across all health professionals delivering healthcare to disabled children, young people and those with special educational needs.

Coordination

To ensure:

- All health services are reflected in the Local Offer and that health providers are cooperating with the local authority in the review of the Local Offer.
- Oversee and assure quality of Health contributions towards plans, and offer support and advice on early help and development of IHCP's
- Link between education, health and social care to ensure a joined-up journey through the SEND process for children and young people.
- Offer specialist health advice within the mediation and tribunal process, helping to coordinate health response

Strategic contribution to the development of:

- A joint commissioning strategy that works towards the integration of services to improve outcomes
- A participation and engagement strategy with children and young people with SEN and disability and their families
- Engage various Health organizations in relevant SEND improvement work streams that have an interface with health services.
- Advising on and developing local process, policy and coordination across all agencies.

This is only a very brief oversight of both roles, and we would be happy to discuss with individuals involved in the SEND process further, should they wish. Contact is through email address above.

Please contact the team at d-ccg.send@nhs.net.

SEND Strategy 2020 – 2024

YOUR VIEWS REQUIRED

With the existing SEND Strategy set to expire in the 2020, the Education Service has started work with local area partners to consult on what the priorities for SEND should be over the next 4 years. Our ambition for the local area is to build on the new ways of working that have been put in place since 2014 and move forward with an ambitious strategy to truly raise aspirations for young people with SEND living in Torbay.

We would welcome your views on what the aspirations for this strategy should be as well as any specific areas for development. Please send your comments to SENDreforms@torbay.gov.uk.

The local authority hosted a number of briefing sessions in October 2019 where parents and professionals were invited to give their views. Below are some of the views gathered at those sessions:-

Employment

- Work needs to be done to develop opportunities with local employers
- Employment is 6% for those with EHCPs nationally, we need to make this a priority for improvement
- Getting a job is a gateway to successful living

Provision

- The support of children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs is an issue that needs to be addressed in schools
- Parenting skills / more support for parents – raising aspirations and thereby their children's
- More mental health support for children and adults
- More knowledge of what provision is available pre EHCP
- There are issues with transition planning – services are available at SEN Support level which stop being available once a young person reaches adult services

Co-Production

- Child's Voice work could be done in partnership with other agencies
- Need to set realistic expectations with parents of what getting an EHCP will do
- Priorities must be set with young people and their families
- Must link with vulnerable pupils work

Attainment

- Focus on closing the attainment gap

The Nest Neighbourhood Nursery awarded the first Portage Stamp of Approval in Torbay.



Congratulations to Patricia Hunter, manager of The Nest Neighbourhood Nursery and her staff members for achieving the Portage Stamp of Approval.

This is awarded to Early Years' settings who have demonstrated they deliver inclusive Early Years Education based upon the Portage Principles. Patricia and her staff members attended training to increase their knowledge of the Portage Model and demonstrated how they use the Principles in their daily practice when supporting children with additional needs.

They completed all the required elements of the national assessment process facilitated locally by the Torbay Portage Service and the Early Years Advisory Teacher for Inclusion. The Nest Neighbourhood Nursery will now be listed with the National Portage Association and promoted to parents and practitioners through the Portage Regional Support Hub with a direct link to the nursery website.

This award demonstrates The Nest's commitment to inclusion and to developing better outcomes for Early Years children with Special Educational Needs.



Mandy Astin Portage Team Lead presenting to Patricia Hunter manager of The Nest with Judith Thomas Early Years Advisory Teacher for Inclusion and The Nest nursery staff members and children.

For further information please follow the link:

www.portage.org.uk/support/training/npa-stamp-approval-scheme

Autism Waiting Times

New investment in autism services will reduce waiting times in Devon

- An extra £750,000 will be spent on increasing capacity so that there are skilled practitioners able to undertake autism spectrum disorder (ASD) assessments of those families and children currently waiting for an assessment over the next two years.
- Waiting times for an autism assessment are currently too long and the demand for children's assessments increased by 79% from 2016/17 to 2018/19. [More details here.](#)

Useful Links

Torbay Local Offer

All SEND related local services and information
<http://fis.torbay.gov.uk>

Torbay Council Website SEND landing page

The portal for all local information including guidance and forms
www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/send/

SEND Code of Practice

Statutory Guidance in relation to SEND
www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Torbay Local Area SEND

Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND by:

- Better joint working
- Developing the local offer of services and support
- Joint commissioning
- Enabling co-production
- Preparing young people for adulthood

Find out more by visiting the SEND Strategy and the SEND Updates pages.

