

SEND Reforms Torbay

March 2014 (No.2)

The aim of this quarterly briefing is to give an overview of the preparations that are in progress for the SEND reforms which come into effect in September 14. For further information on any aspect of the reforms please contact 01803 208953 or email SENDreforms@torbay.gov.uk

Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities and their parents or carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve. Expectation is that there is a cultural shift in assessment and planning, with growing emphasis on personalisation, multi-agency working and outcomes-based approaches. Co-production (especially with families and young people) is key to successful delivery of the reforms. These changes are significant and wide ranging. The multi agency sign up within Torbay has enabled significant progress to be made and hopefully this will continue.

Dorothy Hadleigh, SEN Services Manager

Education, Health and Care plan (EHC plan)

“If all agencies involved with the young person and their family can work more closely together it will be of benefit to everyone involved because it will improve communication and trust so that the services and provision needed can be organised in a more co-ordinated manner.”

Gill Hague, Advisory Teacher (Special Educational Needs)

What does the guidance say?

EHC plans must be focused on the outcomes the child or young person seeks to achieve across education, health and care. EHC plans must set out how services will work together to meet the child or young person's needs and in support of those outcomes. EHC plans will be based on a co-ordinated assessment and planning process which puts the child and young person and their parents at the centre of decision making.

(ref. draft SEN code of practice – p92)

Draft Plan

The first draft of the Torbay Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) has been drawn together and is currently being consulted on by children, young people, parents and carers.

To create the draft plan, the multi-agency group evaluated plans recommended by the Department for Education from Hartlepool and Southampton, to determine which elements could be used to meet local requirements in Torbay. The group also reviewed the existing Torbay statement of Special Educational Needs which feedback showed to be considered as child focused. Once consultation is complete the plan will be updated and made available on the SEND reforms web page from April 9th.

EHCP Pathway

Children, young people and their parents are key partners in the process, and their views on how, when and to what extent they would like to engage must be taken into account. They should feel confident that they will be listened to and their opinions will be valued.

(ref. draft SEN code of practice – p93)

Professionals from Education, Social Care and Health have created the first draft of the EHCP pathway to begin to map how the new process could work. The pathway focuses on co-ordinated working and person centred planning within the challenging new 20 weeks timeframe. The Torbay EHCP pathway will be viewable on the SEND reforms webpage from April 9th.

Training

Person centred training for key staff is planned to start in May. Workforce development is working with the SEND reforms team to establish what skills training will be required and this will be put in place over the summer term.

Personal Budgets

“South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group is working with partners and families to prepare for the introduction of Personal Health Budgets (PHBs). PHBs will offer the opportunity for some innovative thinking around meeting individual outcomes, working closely with education and social care. We hope to trial some PHBs over the spring and summer so they are readily available in September 2014”

Jo Hooper, Joint Commissioning Manager (Children's), South Devon and Torbay Clinical Commissioning Group

A personal budget is an amount of money identified by the local authority to deliver all or some of the provision set out in an EHC plan. By having a say in the way this budget is used, a parent or young person can control elements of their support.

(draft SEN code of practice - p114)

Personal budgets should be based on the clear, agreed outcomes that are to be set out in the EHC plan. The decision making process to establish and agree a budget should be clear and must be open to challenge with parents able to request a review of decisions in relation to direct payments

(draft SEN code of practice -p114)

In Control have been commissioned to provide guidance and training regarding how Personal Budgets could fit within the Torbay EHCP pathway. Managers within Education, Health and Social Care are working on the specifics of how personal budgets will work in Torbay and supporting information will be created and distributed in the summer term.

The Local Offer

“Enjoyed meeting other parents and professionals to discuss the needs of our children. Thank you Parents Participation Forum for putting this type of event on and allowing parents to have the opportunity to speak directly to service providers.”

Feedback from a parent at Parents Participation Forum 'Co-Production event, March 10th.

Local authorities must publish a local offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available for children and young people in their area who have SEN, including those who do not have EHC plans.

Preparing for Adulthood

“Through the multi agency forum the SEND reforms will bring about a simple common format, language and understanding of the child’s needs which will support their transition along a number of routes through care and education, including leaving care and wider adolescent service. This will help young people, families and practitioners understand their needs and therefore what services they need to ensure young people make a successful transition to adulthood.”

Steve Bellworthy, CTC Practice Manager
& Registered Social worker

The local offer has two key purposes:

- To provide clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the provision available; and
- To make provision more responsive to local needs and aspirations by directly involving children and young people with SEN, parents and carers, and service providers in its development and review

(draft SEN code of practice p42)

The Family Information Service will be the home of the Torbay Local Offer and will take responsibility for updating information as it is supplied by providers. The Local Offer task group has created templates to gather the statutory information that must be made available as part of the Local Offer. Consultation is taking place with children, young people and parents about what other information would be useful to include and in what format. The process of contacting all of the organisations providing services to children and young people with SEN will take place between April and July. The Family Information Service team will then update the Local Offer section of the website. The templates for gathering information will be viewable on the SEND reforms webpage from April 9th. A summary of feedback on useful information will also be shared with service providers to guide their own website content.

The information gathered will be evaluated to highlight where there are any gaps in meeting local needs and this will start to be addressed jointly by the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group.

If you would like to make us aware of an organisation, club, group or person that provides a service for children with SEN or a disability, then please email the contact details to SENDreforms@torbay.gov.uk. This will enable us to contact the provider and gather information about the service provided for inclusion in the Local Offer (if appropriate).

Local authorities should ensure that early transition planning is in place for all young people with an EHC plan focusing on outcomes and their transition to adulthood and how to achieve them. Planning should be ‘person-centred’ and consider the appropriate education and training provision for the young person to help them meet outcomes, such as employment, independent living, good health and community participation.

(draft SEN code of practice – p134)

A group of young people with a range of needs have been identified to take part in a pilot of the EHC plan and pathway starting in April. The task group has begun identifying strengths and weaknesses in the existing transitions process, highlighting how agencies involvement could improve the process.

Actions over the next 3 months

- Create a criteria for post 16s to have an EHC plan
- Create a transitions process map up to 25 and define the roles of organisations (who does, what and when)
- Monitor the pilot and amend the process accordingly

Further support

The SEND reforms project team will ensure that relevant information continues to be made available on the SEND Reforms web page. In addition, events to communicate changes will be arranged, within organisations or externally, and these will be publicised by email and via task group members.

If you require any further information, please email SENDreforms@torbay.gov.uk or contact Matthew Gifford (SEND Reforms project manager) on 01803 208953.

Useful links

Torbay Family Information Service
www.torbaydirectory.com/family

Torbay SEND
www.torbay.gov.uk/sendreforms

Council for Disabled Children
<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/cdcs-resources>

SEND Pathfinder information
www.sendpathfinder.co.uk

Devon SEND Pathfinder
www.devonsendpathfinder.info

Torbay Parent Participation Forum
www.torbayppf.co.uk