

Pinpoint Parent Network Meetings Summary March 2016 Improving the SEND Reforms

Background

Five meetings were held across the five Cambridgeshire districts with parents, service providers and commissioners. The topic for these meetings was improving the SEND reforms with an aim to gather parents' views around what out of the new legislation around EHCPs, SEN Support and the local offer is working and what needs improvement. Representatives from START, SEND specialist services, and the Family Information Service at each meeting delivered short presentations to parents and ran group work. Representatives from SENDIASS, Core Assets, social care and preparing for adulthood also attended. The group work consisted of parents answering questions around their experience of the SEND reforms in practise and were based on the three areas of EHCPs, SEN support and the Local Offer. After the group work, each group fed back their key points which had been captured on flip chart paper and are recorded below.

38 parents commented in total with a good mix of professionals from Cambridgeshire County Council (Disability Team, SEND Services) and the voluntary sector.

Feedback from group work

A summary of the comments from the group work is listed below.

Education Health and Care Plans, plus processes around these

- Clarity is needed over what annual review meetings should be and the procedures and responsibilities of all parties plus timescales x14
- Parents and child's voice (and physical input) must be heard, supported and valued. x5
- School staff need to recognise parents' concerns and talk to them as equals and be honest
- Financial info on plan – parents don't always want. Some do for clarity around provision. Should be a choice x2
- Good examples of plans for parents / schools to see (early on) x3
- Further training needs for school staff at all levels. x2
- Multi-agency meetings and input – not always happening. Need contacts for each in the plan x11 (Some comments from SEN support as well)
- Assess, Plan, Do, Review should carry on even when young people have EHC Plans or statements
- 'As a parent I wanted it to reflect my child' – not enough information from the assessments. Others need to 'know' that child. Outcomes not co-ordinated in the plan x7
- Processes and decisions take a long time. Then the child can't always be supported in the interim. References schools, post 16, transport plan decisions, transition periods etc. x4
- Are parents/family/yp aware of Core Assets? Resend info to schools / SENCo's – Health and social care professionals.

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SEN Support

- Secondary schools not getting support right and communication is poor or only happens in crisis x7
- Parents need info on what schools should provide and do – Schools talk about funding not need. What is your first port of call for queries? x3
- Schools are ignoring child's needs, parents' views and ignoring reports and advice given. This leads to further issues. Early intervention is a must. x8
- Schools should recognise that SEN causes behaviour, children are not naughty and receive good parenting x6
- Some experience of A,P,D,R (Assess Plan Do Review) in practise but it is not fully realised though x4
- Parental involvement by invitation of the school is not consistent at most levels of child's education. This needs to be encouraged. Information is not being shared x14
- Learning passports accessible to all, including teacher to teacher x3
- Support and information not just to be school specific, discussion and thought to be given through CAF process to ensure home situation is also supported – who does this?
- Families not having to chase workers to do their jobs. i.e. completing plans x3
- Transparency in what schools are doing, how money is being used, interventions put in place for the child, progress etc. x4
- Upskilling parents and staff on SEND and all the services around this to help prevent crisis x6
- Parents would like a name for 'SEN Support' Plan so it is clear for parent what has been put in place – the Assess, Plan, Do, Review – what is it called, give it a name.

Local Offer

- Good it is there. Can go to one spot and find information fairly easily. Reads well. x3
- Heard about it but not used it. Parents are busy there is a lot of information and it needs to be summarised and made clearer x2
- The name 'Local Offer' is not clear. It's a meaningless term for parents who may be searching for information x4
- The Local Offer is hidden on the website – needs to be more obvious. Maybe a button saying SEND? x2
- Search tool is dreadful – unfiltered x3
- I am not aware of the local offer x4
- Parent don't know what they don't know. How can local offer address this? x2
- There should be posters about the Local Offer at the reception in all schools, health centres and that professionals know about it and promote during appointments and at diagnosis x4
- Structure the EHCP search. Use flow charts. More info on SEN support x4
- Add live help on-line web chat.
- More needed on social activities (Links to Cambs.net), SEND childcare, parent training pages and useful contacts not just websites. x6
- Information on transport to different schools.
- Information on process/rights, Advocacy and mediation. x4

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- Add contents page and a contact number directory x2
- Sometimes the information was too much to take in, hard to process jargon, keep it simple x3
- Add a postcode and know where the service is delivered from
- Refresh button not working well
- Local offer to be on council website and also an explanation of what it is – should have button saying SEND. x3
- Feedback button at the bottom of the page – more visible place
- Role play of support strategies on videos x2
- Read website – speak aloud button so those who can't read can't access x2
- Improve links between Local Offer and main website x2
- Feedback does not always recognise email address of parents
- Button on website around different conditions and what support your child should be getting x2
- Different education options – what is available? E.g. dual placement option, part time schooling + home schooling, different schools x2
- Information for parents – help and support available, parental well-being, Local support groups x2

Schools Information report

- Query if schools know about the Local Offer? x2
- Most schools have put them in place but not everyone has seen them or knows about them
- Few families or parents were asked to be involved with their creation.
- Governors need local offer training, info report needs a governor page/section
- Raising awareness of report with parents and promote further x2
- Essential that contact details are there
- Signposting parents support / advice on working with schools
- Schools are not yet always putting on how they ensure / are planning that their staff are informed and trained in SEND e.g. 80% of staff have had training in autism
- School need to know that they need to be transparent – and actually it helps relationships if they are. A partnership approach. x2
- A focus group of parents to work with the school would help.
- Schools should promote their schools information report and provide information on SEND including funding, roles, FAQs, EHCPs and SEN support x9
- Mainstream schools should look at how special schools do their local offer.
- Link the need for the schools information report with Ofsted
- Schools to give information about local offer at Parents Evenings and New Parents Evenings. Include information in the Schools Information pack, all staff to be aware of this. Schools need someone to explain to them first x4
- Use it as a way to feedback information anonymously so parents can find out information/complain without fearing repercussions.

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Next Steps

This feedback will be shared with the SEND Performance & Commissioning Board with an aim to share further with relevant services including schools. Pinpoint will update parents on how this work is taken forward.