

Feedback from the pinpoint March Network Meetings

Hot Topic: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Services

The meetings were held in 5 areas during the month of March and were attended by a total of 57 parents.

The meetings were split into 3 sessions. The first was information based and updated parents on the changes to local SEND services. Parents were able to have questions answered during this session.

The second part to the day involved a live demo of the Local Offer webpages on the County Council website. Parents were able to view, first hand how to navigate the site and see what services were available to them.

The third session was an opportunity to discuss personal circumstances with certain services on a 1:1 basis. Services included Preparing for Adulthood, Independent Support Service, Social Care and START.

These were an extremely useful set of meetings as they clarified changes in legislation, gave information on what should be happening locally in schools and showed parents where to find more information if they needed it.

Feedback from parents and service providers on the SEND reforms and current school practice

- START rarely available. This is very frustrating.
- Transfer process to EHCP is not consistent. Letters are not going to parents prior. Parents are not aware that they should have 2 weeks notice to attend a transfer. Some believe they are attending a review only to find out it is a transfer meeting. Some pupils have been transferred over with no input/knowledge from the parents. The L.A. timetable is not being adhered to in all schools. Parents are not aware that this can be flexible though. One parent had a transfer meeting but still received a statement back rather than an EHCP.
- Professionals attending transition/review meetings have not always met the child they are discussing and often do not turn up at all. More professionals need to be available.
- Reviews/transfers are not always minuted by anyone and in some cases wording from a statement has just been copied and pasted into the new EHCP document.
- Positive transfer meetings/experiences were shared from Spring Common and St Philips school. Both schools did what was best for the child and it was a good experience for all involved.
- Can good practice in schools be shared?

- Not all schools are sharing the fact that their information report and SEND policy are on their website despite having a duty to share.
- Not all schools are following the Assess, Plan, Do, Review guidelines. Parents are not being met with enough or listened to. Many are excluding rather than trying to meet the child's needs or getting training to do so. This leads to a working/career issue for parents. Schools should be working with parents to get the help and knowledge they need to work with these children. A good class teacher can make the difference between an education and exclusion. What is the L.A. doing to help schools through the changes?
- Social inclusion is not considered a high enough priority. A high proportion of SEND children need assistance with social skills and help to develop these. The new EHCP is triggered by an academic need only. If the child has a high level of academic excellence but no social skills they will not cope in school. This is a catch 22 situation particularly for those children who have statements but are being refused EHCPs due to the fact they have achieved academically, the high academic level has happened BECAUSE of the support they have received. Families will risk having their support taken away and then having to apply again for it when crisis hits.
- Reassurance and proof the new system can work are needed. The EHCP looks good on paper but is not being consistently implemented county wide. There is no security around the new SEND support in schools for the many children who have had a statement and will not meet the criteria for an EHCP. Ofsted need to make schools accountable before parents completely lose faith in a system that was designed to meet the needs of families.
- Parents are unsure if their child is protected under the new code of practice as schools have been giving incorrect information.
- Eligibility criteria for EHCPs is not well known enough and help with behaviour should be made available on the plan.
- Parents need to know if adequate resources exist to support their children both in schools and County wide. Parents want honesty about budget cuts.
- Children and young people have been let down by late diagnosis. Not until 18 years old is far too late.
- Many bad experiences with CAMH lack of help, being told their situation was not bad enough. Incompetent admin procedures in place. Child quotes - 'Do I have to hurt myself or someone else to get help?' 'I know there are people more important than me'
- Being seen by the educational psychologist is seen as a tick box exercise and does not lead to any further help in school.
- Parents don't all know about Independent Supporters
- Some parents have had problems with Penderels Trust.

Feedback on the Local Offer Webpage

- Clarity on who gets social care help would be useful – Families need to meet criteria of severe or complex needs to get disability social worker, information is not for all disabilities.
- Parents want childcare/childminders that can take children with SEN. Where is that info? More needs to be on local offer about this.
- Would be good to prioritise results in a search re: Local Offer Directory It needs information or a link to Contact a Family website for diagnosis information re: Local Offer
- What does 'offer' mean?
- The directory needs more links to activities
- Would be helpful to know if an activity is appropriate for children with autism. Age specific activities – physical age of child might be too old, but not mental age
- Service aren't equally spread across Cambridgeshire, often nothing in Fenland
- Short breaks info does not come up in the search on the directory. People would give up, there needs to be a link
- The directory is not intuitive. It's frustrating to not be able to find things. Key words don't always bring up the service you need
- The directory is not services its providers. This is causing confusion
- Do parents know that SENDIASS is parent partnership? That needs to be made clear on the support button
- Local offer and other information – make eligibility criteria clear from the start
- Local offer not accessible to all. No sign of different languages or video clips for those who are not particularly literate
- No housing information shown on relevant page of local offer. This is very important for young people.

Feedback from Parents on Whole Session

- 'Thanks very much – useful info and website demo'
- 'Discovered useful information I didn't know'
- 'Very pleased to find out about the Independent Supporters. Had a very helpful discussion. I found it very useful and informative – glad I came'
- 'Very helpful and informative. Really useful. Thank you'