# Pinpoint Network Meetings

# *Meet the Assistant Director for SEND*

# November 2021

## Background

Upon coming into Post, Toni Bailey committed to regularly meeting with parent carers at Pinpoint’s suggestion. This is the fourth round of these meetings with three being held in November. Due to the pandemic, this round was held virtually.

**Issues raised**

* **Issues arising from delays in receiving EHCPs** – some families are reporting significant delays in receiving final copies of EHCPs. **Delays are a worry where transitions are due and it’s hard to find out how the transition process works for SEN youngsters.** The Local Offer has information available, and Pinpoint will provide some more information on its website**.**
* **There isn’t enough information about who completes what on an EHCP and there needs to be more explanation for parent carers.**
* **There have been delays in response from the Statutory Assessment Team with parent carers not receiving promised calls or awaiting follow up calls.** This was not the service level expected but there are known issues about the pressures the team face and more resource has been prioritised to support the service and improve timeliness.
* **Parents reported specific issues around schools and colleges: not responding to parent carer requests for information about children and young people or not delivering as specified in the EHCPs** Toni has heard this feedback and will work with LA colleagues to follow up with schools and support as needed.
* **Parent carers reported schools not doing Assess, Plan, Do, Review as expected as part of SEN Support and this then creating issues when an Education Health and Care Assessment is requested.** This is not what is expected of schools.
* **Schools are reportedly not following up the advice of specialists including dyslexia guidance.** The LA hasissued its own guidance and schools will be reminded of this.
* **Families are worried that speech and language therapy (SALT) and is not taking place as expected and that children who are seen appear to be discharged without a programme of sessions being delivered by the SALT team. There were also concerns that once discharged the wait following a new referral is too long.** Toni explained that the services now deliver ‘episodes of care’ but undertook to look at what has been commissioned and how it is working. He will specifically look at how the process for referral after as discharge are working. **Similar concerns were raised about physiotherapy and Occupational Health.** More information about how services work would be fed back as a request to health. Pinpoint have added a new health guide on their website.
* **Do schools need to accept the advice of privately commissioned professionals such as SALT and OT?**  Yes, they should, and the LA accepts advice from appropriately qualified specialists. However, schools may struggle to include every suggestion in the daily curriculum offer.
* **Some schools are not making referrals to other services where only they can make the referral leaving parent carers unable to make progress for their children.** Pinpoint’s website has new information about health and health referrals which may assist in knowing who referrals work and who can make which referrals to which services.
* **Significant delays were reported arising from a Community Paediatric referral to the Educational Psychology team and the child been seen.** Whilst the parent carer will ask for a window in which an assessment could be expected, Toni will be a follow up to understand how the current system is working given.
* **Post pandemic, should families still expect that therapies detailed in EHCPs are not being delivered?** No. It is expected that all services are operating normally (there are no pandemic related changes). If there are issues, then parent carers should alert Toni or Pinpoint.
* **SENCOs do not seem to know about the law in details. They do not seem have sufficient in-depth knowledge about specific needs and conditions.** Toni explained the role of SENCos and the professionals’ expectations. Pinpoint has information about SENCO qualifications on its website to help parent carers to understand what the training requirements are. The LA work with the SENCO network at least termly and this feedback will help shape how the network is supported.
* **Childcare for SEND children is hard to source, expensive and often doesn’t meet the need of working parent carers.** This is a recognised issue. The market of providers has shrunk due to the challenges of covid. Toni will feed this back to colleagues to consider whether there is anymore that could be done.
* **Delays in waiting to confirm correct school provision for a child’s needs - testing mainstream whilst considering special provision.**  If there are concerns that needs are not being met, then it should be raised quickly with the school and any specialist services who are involved to see if there is an agreed way forward. Caseworkers should also be able to assist.
* **The stress of not being successful when requesting an EHCP creates enormous stress for parent carers, exacerbated where the child has significant mental health needs and is at risk.** Specific advice was provided for this family.
* **Parent carers awaiting special school places are concerned about the long wait times for place availability.** The LA are creating new additional places, but these take time to build. If a child’s, or family’s, circumstances change then it is advisable to contact the case officer to discuss arrangements.
* **There were concerns as to whether schools were spending money specified in EHCPs are expected and what could be done of parent carers were concerned.** These issues should be raised with schools in the first instance and then with the child’s key worker in the Statutory Assessment Team at the Local Authority. SENDIASS can provide impartial advice. The LA work with schools but legislation can make the notion of enforcement challenging. The annual cycle of inspections form part of the checks and balances.
* **There are concerns that school staff do not appear well-trained in supporting SEND and some specific types of need (Downs).** This was heard and will be fed back into the support the LA offer to schools. There has been specific work undertaken to improve training for those who support children with Downs.
* **Post 16 issues**
	+ **Preparing for adulthood is not well known to or understood by parent carers. It’s hard to find information to help parent carers prepare for this stage of life with their young people.** The LA has been working to improve the information available as its one of their top three priorities in the SEND Action Plan, arising from co-production with parent carers and Pinpoint.
	+ **The wait for panel outcomes makes planning for post 18 education provision challenging for parent carers.** This was heard and understood.

**Positive Feedback**

* **Support for Downs children and young people** - Thanks was expressed for the very positive and supportive work Pinpoint and Dr Joanna Stanbridge (CCC Education Psychologist) are doing to address the needs of Downs children.
* **Several schools were recognised for their positive support of children and young people as were some teachers and support staff.**

## Next Steps

## Toni addressed the issues raised with those who raised them and will take feedback to the relevant services.

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