# Pinpoint Network Meetings

# *Meet the Assistant Director for SEND*

# March 2022

## Background

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

**Issues raised**

* **Its feels like you’re the only one struggling, but then you realise you might be alone.**
* **Difficulties getting an Autism diagnosis in nursery and primary age children.** This can be difficult given the child’s stage of development, but schools can access help from the Educational Psychologist led District Team.
* **Challenge when school do not seem to consistently manage behaviour, especially when agreed management patterns are not carried through and child isn’t coping. School doesn’t seem to know how to manage the behaviour –** Toni outlined that schools could access District Support Teams who can offer advice and support. Parent carers might want to ask school if they have done so. Schools have a new offer of behaviour training and support through the STEPs programme.
* **SENCOs seem overwhelmed and under trained/ supported. Some are great but some are not.** Code of Practice is cleat about expectations that SENCOs are trained and have expertise in helping to navigate the system to reach the right professionals to gain access to services and support. They need to be on the management team so they can make decisions. The forthcoming SEND Review may address this as it’s been raised by lots of schools, Local Authorities, and parent carers.
* **Autism and issues around behaviour seems to be reflected back as parents not doing a good enough job.** Sad to hear this. The new Autism Strategy should support a change in perception, understanding and knowledge.
* **Schools threatening exclusion as a means of pushing a child towards a different school.** Tony was clear this was unacceptable, and that exclusion has legal framework that schools must abide by. He would want to be aware if schools were not following the guidelines.
* **School transport and potential new placements – what are the criteria?** Toni outlined current guideline and how to follow up with case officers.
* **Frustration of accessing what is wanted for child and the only option is to take legal action.** We would not want to advocate this route is there is a resolution. No excuse for poor communications and want to improve. Working to resource Statutory assessment team to have capacity to meet increased demand. New data management system should assist with improving response times.
* **Suggestion for a high level of intervention that the family are unsure they will be able to make use – residential diagnostic offer.** Please ask for more information as there are other options which may suit family life better whilst still providing the diagnostic support being suggested.
* **Example of another school exclusion – not following guidelines.** Tony was clear this was unacceptable, and that exclusion has legal framework that schools must abide by. He would want to be aware if schools were not following the guidelines. Parents have to be in agreement with an exclusions or part-time timetables and schools must demonstrate how it benefits the child whilst setting out how a full-time return is planned.
* **Dyslexia – teachers in schools do not appear to know enough**. The LA, with Pinpoint, co-produced Dyslexia Guide. SENCOs can call up Educational Psychologist’s team for specialist advice and support. This team can also assess for dyslexia / specific learning needs. Schools also need to check whether there are other needs as some needs occur together (co-morbidity).
* **SENCO’s roles are too big if working as a teacher or senior leader too** A SENCO being part of the senior leadership is actually helpful as it usually means a higher importance is placed on SEND and allocating resources when decision is made.
* **Speech and Language Therapy does not appear to be being delivered as expected in school.** Schools are experiencing practical issues with covid related staff absences and trying to keep schools open but please talk to school to understand why it’s not happening. Schools have an obligation to deliver what is agreed in the EHCP.
* **Pica (eating inedible things) is going undiagnosed as school don’t see the issue.** Please go back to school and raise it again but we will put ypu in touch with Early Help who may offer additional support.
* **Delays In receiving reports from the Statuary Assessment Team.** This has been a known (unacceptable) issue caused by lack of staff and surge in rapidly increasing numbers of EHCPs. There has been increased resources allocated and new staff recruited.
* **Parents would appreciate guidance on transitions between local areas (education, social care, and health transfers) – what to expect.** Toni will pick this up as it would be a helpful thing to produce.
* **One to one support specified in EHCPs is not being honoured.** Rarely do EHCPS specify one to one support. Instead, they will refer to the time that a child might need. There is merit in a child working with the teacher rather than only with a one-to-one teaching assistant. It’s also important to help a child gain their independence and sometimes this means moving away from one to one into small group work.
* **Speech and Language Therapy not being offered in schools in spite of diagnosis and school won’t accept private support.** Schools use a tiered approach where the Speech and Language Therapist will train support staff to deliver a specified programme of work and keep it under review. In this instance, it’s surprising that the school are not accepting the offer of an additional free resource, but they have indicated they are worried it will impact on the young persons ability to access the rest of the curriculum.
* **When will face to face services for pre-schools operate again as Zoom does work for our children (under 2 years)?** Agree its not idea and face to face is resuming. Please make contact with the service and request another opportunity to join a face-to-face session. The Children and Family Centres are also no open and can provide a range of play and supportive sessions: <https://bit.ly/3wpDyae>
* **Its frustrating, and pointless, if meeting notes are provided in good time.** They should be timely, and this is an expectation of all professionals.

**Positive Feedback**

* Thanks was noted for the work Dr Joanna Stanbridge is doing to set expectations and provide guidance for schools supporting children with Downs – parents appreciate this.

## Next Steps

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

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