

# ***Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) News***

***July 2019***

***Issue 2***

## **Welcome and Introduction**

Welcome to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) monthly newsletter. Working together we are committed to ensuring that our children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities have access to appropriate education, health and care services, as close to home as possible, so they can flourish.

As part of our Local offer, we will be working with children, their families and carers to design a system that works better and is sustainable.

This newsletter aims to keep you informed about the work taking place across our multi-agency partnership to make the very necessary and important improvements in the current service offer to our children and young people; as well as addressing the findings from the Ofsted and CQC inspection in June 2018.



***Rachel O'Connor***  
*Lead Officer, SEND / Assistant  
Chief Executive for Birmingham  
and Solihull Sustainability and  
Transformation Partnership  
(STP)*



***Tim O'Neill***  
*Director Education and Skills  
Birmingham City Council*

## **Our priorities**

Talking about the important work that is taking place, Tim O'Neill, Birmingham City Council's Director Education and Skills says: "We have to focus on ensuring that our children's education and well-being, whilst achieving best value for money are the drivers for all activity. We need to move away from being process driven and work towards a joined up response for children, young people and their families across Birmingham. Identifying the needs of these children as early as possible will ensure they receive the appropriate support and care, which in turn may reduce the reliance on specialist services at a later date. We want the agencies across Birmingham to work as one for the benefit of Birmingham's children."

## **Improving Quality in Education Health and Care Plans**

One of the key issues from the inspection last year was the need to improve the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). One of the ways we have taken this forward is

that the SEND Board has created a multi-agency SEND Quality Assurance Group. This group includes representatives from schools, health services, council services, the Children's Trust and adult social care services.

In April we reviewed 19 EHC plans that focused on plans finished between August and December 2018.

In May we reviewed 16 cases that had been completed since January 2019.

The learning from this work is that plans have started to improve, more plans are inclusive of health and social care assessment information and more plans are getting the basic information right. However much more is needed, including greater clarity about wishes, feelings and ambitions of the children and young people themselves, and clearer, smarter outcomes linked to needs and provision.

The SEND board has also approved a SEND quality assurance framework that sets out the agenda for the work of the group over the next year. In future monthly newsletters there will be more information about learning from this quality assurance work.

## **Introducing the Designated Medical / Clinical Officer team**

Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group have funded a clinical team of three 'Designated Clinical / Medical officers' whose role is to strengthen and quality assure the health input into SEND processes and pathways under the [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#).

The two Designated Medical Officers (DMOs) are Dr Orlaith Byrne and Dr Manjeet Raina who share the DMO role alongside their work as consultant community paediatricians at Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust. Ali Beard brings her clinical background in speech and language therapy and works full time in the role of Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) within the CCG.

The DMO/DCO team work closely with the Children's SEND Improvement Team in implementing the actions in the SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA). Ali is the Health representative at EHC Panel and is based at Lancaster Circus with SENAR Principal Officers (POs) every week. Orlaith is the health lead on the SEND Improvement Board and Manjeet is leading on the 'Working Together' workstream.

Current priorities for the DMO/DCO team are linked to the four SEND improvement workstreams and include:

- Improving the quality and timeliness of health advice for EHCPs at all stages,
- Devising and rolling out training in SEND across the health system,
- Identifying ways to quality assure the health elements of draft EHC Plans,
- Ensuring that final EHC Plans are received and available for the health records.

The DMO/DCO team act as a link into the range of health providers across the city including Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust, Forward Thinking Birmingham, Birmingham Women's and Children's Hospital as well as GPs and other hospitals.



Ali Beard  
Designated Clinical Officer  
(DCO)



Dr Orlaith Byrne  
Designated Medical  
Officer (DMO)



Dr Manjeet Raina  
Designated Medical  
Officer (DMO)

## SEND Training

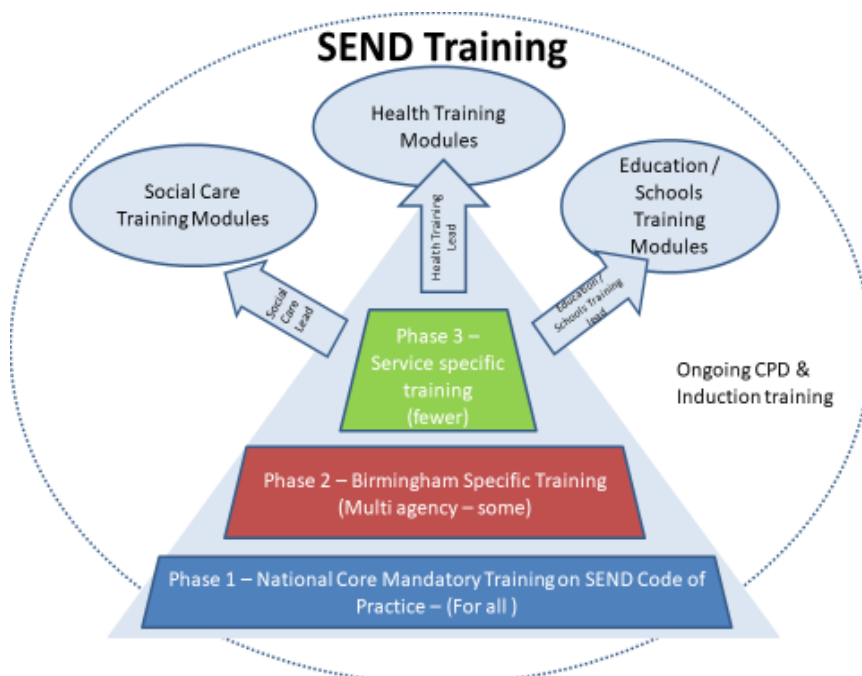
Plans are underway to build knowledge and equip partners across the wider Children and Young People's (CYP) workforce in supporting SEND. Training in SEND will be carried out in a phased way, with the aim of equipping everyone in the wider CYP's workforce to understand key points in the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and implications for their practice on the frontline of their work.

**Phase 1** will offer a short generic e-learning training module, (under 30 minutes), for everyone working with CYP in Education, Health and Social Care, using existing training platforms. This will be mandatory for all staff.

**Phase 2** will offer more detailed information about Birmingham processes for SEN Support and the Birmingham SEN strategy. This will take place at a launch event (date to be confirmed) and will be available as webinars / e-learning afterwards.

**Phase 3** will offer profession / service-specific guidance for frontline staff who regularly support CYP with SEND within the Local Offer and contribute advice for statutory processes. The content will be devised and delivered locally.

It is anticipated that Phase 1 will be rolled out from September 2019.



## **Birmingham Speech, Language and Communication Developments for Children and Young People.**

The Birmingham NHS Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) service is provided by Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BCHC) and commissioned by Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (BSOL CCG). Currently there are significant waiting times and high access thresholds. This has come about as a result of increasing demand, complex health and educational needs in the city and a lack of the systematic prevention and early intervention that is outlined within the national best practice balanced system model <https://www.bettercommunication.org.uk/the-balanced-system/>

The Trust and CCG have been working together concentrating on plans to reduce waiting times and transform the service as part of a balanced system supporting the wider workforce to help children with speech and language needs. This will be reliant on a partnership response across Early Years settings, schools, Birmingham City Council and the wider children's workforce.

We would like to hear from partners about how we can effectively progress this priority area to drive improvement in line with the SEND WSoA and recognised best practice.

If you can offer support to influence and shape this agenda, to deliver better outcomes for our children and young people, please email: Natalie Kelly, Head of Children's and Maternity Commissioning, at Birmingham and Solihull CCG [natalie.kelly6@nhs.net](mailto:natalie.kelly6@nhs.net) or Hazel Allaway, Professional Clinical Lead for Children's Speech and Language Therapy at Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS FT [Hazel.Allaway@bhamcommunity.nhs.uk](mailto:Hazel.Allaway@bhamcommunity.nhs.uk)

### **"Funding for SEND and those who need Alternative Provision: Call for evidence"**

Aware of concerns about the funding allocated for young people with SEND in England, the DfE has launched a consultation about the funding for SEND and Alternative Provision (AP), and is looking carefully at how much overall funding will be needed in future years. The call for evidence is an invitation to consider other aspects of the funding arrangements that:



- Could be changed to help local authorities, schools, colleges and other providers in their support for young people with SEND, those requiring alternative provision (AP) and those at risk of exclusion from school, and
- May not be helping the DfE get the most value from the resources available.

The online survey, which closes on 31 July 2019 can be found [here](#)

Before completing the survey please read ["Call for evidence on SEND and AP funding"](#).

A number of workshops have also been organised across the country. For more information about these events please email [senfinancialevts@ncb.org.uk](mailto:senfinancialevts@ncb.org.uk), giving your name, role, organisation and email address.

## **SEND Local Offer Innovate to Save Funding Grants**

The invitation to apply to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Offer Innovate to Save Fund (£1,400,000) closed on Monday 1 July 2019.

The SEND Local Offer Innovate to Save Fund supports shared commitment to work with schools, educational settings and partner organisations, encouraging and enabling co-production and collaboration across local organisations in Birmingham, to work together to improve the outcomes for local children and young people with SEND.

Applications were encouraged from both staff and communities to come forward with ideas to help build organisation capacity, promote collaborative working and in turn reduce demand for statutory services or enhance service delivery but at lower cost. For example, a group of schools or education setting providers could apply for cash to purchase equipment or provision and then take on the running of a function or service which is usually carried out by statutory services.

The SEND Local Offer Innovate to Save Fund places greater emphasis on the need to demonstrate what return on investment will be achieved, including how any savings or benefits will be realised as a result of the proposed initiative. Any initial Investment should in turn lead to a subsequent reduction in demand or cost for services provided by statutory agencies meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The Selection and Award Committee will meet to evaluate the grant applications and applicants will be notified of the outcomes by 8 July 2019. It is proposed that the programmes will go live during the 2019 Autumn school term.

## **Find the Written Statement of Action on the Web**

Please follow [this link](#) to Birmingham City Council's website where you can find out about the latest developments in the SEND Improvement work,

You will also find the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for SEND in Birmingham](#), our monthly newsletters, the [Written Statement of Action](#) and the WSoA [detailed action plan](#) that shows the work we are undertaking.

## **In the next issue ....**

- Update on Complaints
- New local offer development
- New operating model development work
- SEND strategy

***If you have any queries or would like to be kept up to date on the work of the BCP  
please email: [rob.willoughby@nhs.net](mailto:rob.willoughby@nhs.net)***

*Partner organisations:*



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