

## **Children & Young People with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)**

### **Our Vision**

Our ambition for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

To achieve our ambition we will create a 0-25 SEND system that:-

- Enables children and young people to have the best possible start in life and achieve their potential;
- Supports children, young people and their parents to have high aspirations for the future, raising aspirations by not only thinking about what is possible now but thinking creatively about what could be possible in their life;
- Ensures that children and young people and their parents are actively involved in planning and decision making, both at an individual and strategic level, and have more choice and control over the support they receive;
- Provides joined up education, health and social care services, working together to enable children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes;
- Ensures children and young people are effectively supported to prepare for adulthood, including employment, independent living, good health and participation in community life.

This vision is reflected in the Kirklees Joint Strategy for SEND.

### **Our approach**

In Kirklees a **child and family centred approach** will be integral to all planning for children and young people with SEND, to ensure best outcomes for our children and young people. The following definition and set of principles have been adopted across services and signed off by the Children's Trust and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

#### **A child and family centred approach**

In Kirklees, we recognise the contribution that a child and family centred approach has on improving outcomes in relation to:

##### **For the child/young person:**

- developmental gains
- enhanced skill development
- better psychological adjustment

##### **For the parent/carer:**

- increased knowledge of child development
- increased participation
- increased feelings of competency
- enhanced sense of control

Service providers using a child and family centred approach recognise that:

- A child/young person with special educational needs achieves best within a supportive family and community context and is affected (both positively and negatively) by the stress and coping abilities of family members.
- The purpose of any work that agencies do with families who have children/young people with SEND is to enhance the quality of life for the child/young person and the family. This includes support to ensure additional needs are met and that children and young people are kept safe.
- In order to best understand the support needs, professionals need to use a **person centred approach** to support children and young people and their parents/carers to:
  - work out what is important for the child/young person and their parents in order to prioritise the child/young person's needs
  - work out what their aspirations and goals are in order to achieve the best outcomes for the child/young person
  - make informed decisions regarding future actions and next steps.
- Professionals support parents and children and young people by:
  - listening carefully to what they say
  - working in partnership with them using a **person centred** and **strength based** approach to decide on priorities and which supports them to come up with their own solutions wherever possible and includes preparation for adulthood
  - providing the right information in the right way in a timely fashion, including that relating to future options

The focus on the family means that they are fully involved in whatever decisions are made and their knowledge and understanding of their child is respected and reflected in any such decisions. Equally the views of children and young people are respected and considered in relation to any decisions being made, and given due weight according to their age, maturity and capability.

**Key principles underpinning our work with children, young people and families:**

1. **Valued uniqueness:** the uniqueness of children, young people and families is valued and provided for
2. **Staying safe:** services proactively work together with families to ensure children and young people are kept safe and free from harm
3. **Planning partnerships:** a coordinated assessment, planning and review process in partnership with children, young people and families
4. **Key working:** service delivery is holistic, co-ordinated, seamless and supported by keyworking
5. **Birth to adulthood:** continuity of care is maintained through different stages of a child's life and through preparation for adulthood

6. **Learning and development:** children and young people's learning and development is monitored and promoted
7. **Informed choices:** children, young people and families are able to make informed choices
8. **Ordinary lives:** wherever possible, children, young people and families are able to live 'ordinary lives'
9. **Participation:** children, young people and their families are involved in shaping, developing and evaluating the services they use
10. **Working together:** multi agency working practices and systems are integrated
11. **Workforce development:** Children, young people and families can be confident that the people working with them have the appropriate training, skills, knowledge and experience

Our vision and approach as described above underpins the actions detailed in the Children & Families Act Implementation Plan.

## **Barriers and challenges to achieving our vision and embedding a child and family centred approach**

At this point in the implementation of the reforms there are significant challenges that need addressing at a strategic level to enable further progress to be made towards achieving our vision and embedding a child and family centred approach.

### **1. Workforce development**

#### **a) Developing and embedding a person centred approach**

##### **What is a person centred approach?**

A person centred approach is about discovering and acting on what is important **to** a person as well as what is important **for** them and finding the right balance between them. It is a process of continual listening and learning, focusing on what is important to someone now and in their future. Using a person centred approach can ensure that children, young people and parents are supported and enabled to express their views, wishes and feelings, and are central to planning and decision-making.

There are a variety of Person Centred Tools to support person centred thinking and skills. These person centred tools can be used in a variety of situations and can help to plan, organise, understand and connect with others.

##### **Why should we use a person centred approach?**

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 years provides statutory guidance relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and sets out clear principles for supporting and involving children and young people and their parents in all aspects of planning and decision making. The use of a person centred approach provides the opportunity to fulfil those principles, engaging directly with children and young people and parents to discuss their needs, and plan how they can achieve the best possible outcomes. It should be integral to all planning for children young people with SEND throughout their lives.

##### **Where are we now in Kirklees?**

In November 2015 Kirklees commissioned a consultant who provided a 'Snapshot' report for Kirklees in terms of some of the priority areas of the SEND reforms. Her research involved talking to practitioners across education, health and social care to 'benchmark' current practice/understanding of person centred planning.

The consultant's report made the following recommendations/ comments in relation to this area:-

- For families who are using many different services, practitioners should be given the tools to work in partnership with parents and carers as a team;
- A clear message is given about valuing the knowledge and understanding that a family has of a child's needs and strengths and this is used as a core part of coordinating, joint assessment, planning and review processes;
- There is an agreed process for identifying family strengths, needs and wishes that is sensitive and take account of family diversity and parents and practitioners are supported to understand this;
- The implications for workforce development are significant, as the SEND reforms represent a change not just in process but also in thinking about outcomes, co-production, and what it takes to support young people to move into adulthood with ordinary lives. On-going training is required to develop practice in child and family centred approaches and a shared understanding of outcomes.

### **What does this mean for us going forward?**

In view of the above, a key priority for implementation of the SEND reforms during 2016-17 needs to be to further develop and embed a person-centred approach across the workforce. Our proposal is for this to be through a focussed training plan this year and which will then need to be embedded into the Workforce Development Strategy.

Across education we are currently looking at a training plan for schools, settings and post 16 providers for this year which builds on the training and development already provided. We are also looking at training plan for our Specialist Learning Support Services within Learning & Skills and this has full sign up at AD level.

LA strategic leads will need to give consideration to workforce development across Social Care. One way to approach this could be to utilise the skills within adults social care where person centred approaches are already embedded and thought given to how adults social care can effectively support children's social care as part of All Age Disability Service development. This could link in to the training plan for schools, providers and specialist learning support in order to ensure consistency of message and approach.

Health leads will also need to give consideration to workforce development and could also link into the training plan being developed for schools, providers and specialist learning support services.

### **b) Key working**

#### **What is key working?**

Key working is an approach facilitating effective partnership working in order to achieve a co-ordinated, person centred, outcome focussed approach to assessment, planning and support where children, young people and their families require additional and sometimes complex support and interventions. It helps to build strong and resilient children, young people and families and enables a person centred approach to support.

#### **Why should we use key working as an approach?**

There is little doubt that key working makes a difference to families. It contributes to the empowerment of parents, who report better relationships with services, higher morale, less isolation and feelings of burden, improvements in receipt of information, access to services and fewer unmet needs, partnership and family involvement. Those performing key working functions regard the support they can offer positively, reporting greater job satisfaction.

#### **Where are we now in Kirklees?**

Jayne Whitton, Principal Educational Psychologist submitted a paper titled 'Key working in Kirklees' to Children's Trust in July 2014. The Children's Trust agreed to the content of the report and the next step was to secure 'inter agency sign up for the approach and agreement to set up and agree protocols and rollout the training for all relevant practitioners commencing September 2014 in order to meet the requirements of the SEND Code of Practice in relation to ensuring key working is part of our offer'. Unfortunately, this has not progressed due to lack of direction at a strategic level across all agencies.

In November 2015 Kirklees commissioned a consultant who provided a 'Snapshot' report for Kirklees in terms of some of the priority areas of the SEND reforms. Her research involved talking to practitioners across education, health and social care to 'benchmark' current practice/understanding of key working functions in practice. She comments that there is clearly a mixed understanding across practitioners about what key working facilitates in relation to joint assessment, planning and review along with what the terminology refers to ie. lead professional, key worker.

The consultant's report made the following recommendations/ comments in relation to this including:-

- If the future thinking is to develop an approach in Kirklees that sees key working functions being delivered by a wide workforce as part of their existing role this then widespread training would be required to ensure the support provided is consistent and effective across the workforce;
- Align strategies in Kirklees to incorporate and recognise the value of all children, young people and families being able to access key working;
- Service specifications, job descriptions, systems and processes and supervision and management etc will all need to reflect key working functions.

### **What does this mean for us going forward?**

In view of the above, a key priority for implementation of the SEND reforms during 2016-17 needs to be to:-

- Confirm Children's Trust agreement of Jayne Whitton's paper ' Key Working in Kirklees' (July 2014) at a strategic level (DAD/AD) and including Health as the agreed approach to delivering key working functions;
- Agree a training plan for all relevant practitioners, potentially building on the more universal person centred approach training (a) in order for specific roles to encompass key working functions.

## **2. Integrated working**

'The development of an integrated team around the child with SEND' is one of the 4 key objectives detailed within the SEND Strategy but it is there is no clear strategic action set out against it as to how this is to be taken forward. This needs to be considered by the SEND Strategy Group particularly with respect to the wide range of activities taking place currently across Early Intervention and Prevention and All Age Disability. For example, how is the early help consultation sitting with the early identification and intervention work which is progressing through the Children & Families Act – ie. 'Guidance to Schools: Graduated Approach?'

Mandy Cameron/Kate Mawer/Jayne Whitton – 21.7.16