

Name of meeting: Cabinet
Date: 19th March 2019
Title of report: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – The Parent’s Perspective

Purpose of report

To present the findings report from the Children’s Scrutiny Panel of the investigation carried out by the Panel into how Special Educational Needs & Disability Assessment & Commissioning Team (SENDACT) interacts and works with parents and carers and request that Cabinet approve the responses to the recommendations of the Panel.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council’s Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	No
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director (Finance)? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Not applicable Not applicable Julie Muscroft (sent 6.3.19)
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Masood Ahmed Cllr Viv Kendrick

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 All local authorities will receive an Ofsted inspection following the implementation of the Children & Families Act 2014, and Special Educational Needs & Disability Assessment & Commissioning Team (SENDACT) was preparing for their upcoming visit, although the date for the visit is, as yet, unknown. At the suggestion of Steve Walker, former Director of Children's Services, the decision was taken by the Children's Scrutiny Panel to consider Special Educational Needs and Disabilities of children on the work programme of the Children's Scrutiny Panel during the 2018/19 municipal year.
- 1.2 Members of the Panel met with parents involved with the SENDACT process to gain feedback on their views and involvement with the service. The Panel were made aware that the service felt this was an area in which they could improve, and the Panel sought to assist the service in this respect.
- 1.3 An Action plan is appended to the Findings Report at pages 12 to 21 and includes responses from the Cabinet Members. An addendum is attached to the Action Plan at pages 22 to 23, which includes additional comments from the Head of Service for Education Safeguarding and Inclusion.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

Not applicable.

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Working with People**

A core part of SENDACT's role is to work with parents and carers and their families, and with the agencies involved. Some of the recommendations relate to the need to improve communications so that parents and carers are fully informed about activity relating to their child.

3.2 **Working with Partners**

Some of the recommendations of the Panel fall outside of SENDACT's control. However the Panel will review each recommendation accepted by partners, and ask them periodically to attend Panel meetings to update them on progress made.

3.3 **Place Based Working**

Not applicable

3.4 **Improving outcomes for children**

The Panel is mindful that the service has already made huge strides in improving its relationship with parents, and have sought to support the service in its improvement journey. However, by implementing the recommendations of the Panel, the outcomes for children with SEND will be improved, and parents and carers will have confidence in a 'good' service.

3.5 **Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**

Not applicable

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

Parents and carers were consulted for their opinions on the SENDACT service and their opinions form the body of the attached report.

5. Next steps and timelines

Following the presentation of the report at Cabinet, the Children's Scrutiny Panel will consider regular progress updates to ensure that the agreed recommendations are implemented.

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That Cabinet note the findings of the Children's Scrutiny Panel on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – The Parent's Perspective and the response on the recommendations by the Cabinet Members.

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable.

8. Contact officer

Helen Kilroy, Principal Governance & Democratic Engagement Officer
helen.kilroy@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

None

10. Service Director responsible

Julie Muscroft, Service Director for Legal, Governance and Commissioning

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITIES
THE PARENT'S PERSPECTIVE

“Parenting a child with additional needs is like playing a sport where no-one knows the rules, the goalposts keep moving and there are more referees than players”

H2Au:the stuff of our life

Report by:-
Yolande Myers (Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer
(December 2018)

1. Background and Context

All local authorities will receive an Ofsted inspection following the implementation of the Children & Families Act 2014, and SENDACT is preparing for their upcoming visit which is anticipated to take place within the next 18 months. At the suggestion of Steve Walker, former Director of Children's Services, the decision was taken by the Children's Scrutiny Panel to consider Special Educational Needs and Disabilities on the work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.

A number of meetings were held between members of the Children's Scrutiny Panel and the SENDACT team to review the services' readiness for the Ofsted visit. Members of the Panel considered the Self Evaluation Form produced for the upcoming Ofsted visit on a number of occasions. Following these meetings, it was agreed that the Children's Scrutiny Panel could assist the SENDACT Team by focusing on one area of immediate concern, which was collecting the views of parents and report to the SENDACT Team on areas where improvements could be made.

The Panel sought to understand the developments taking place within the SENDACT Team and wanted to speak to families who regularly engage with the service to seek their views on the support available and their experience of the SEND process and the practices in place.

The Panel is mindful that the service is already making huge strides in improving its relationship with parents, and have sought to support the service in its improvement journey.

2. Membership

Members of the Children's Scrutiny Panel are:-

Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)
Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Lisa Holmes
Councillor Darren O'Donovan
Councillor Sheikh Ullah
Councillor Edgar Holroyd-Doveton
Dale O'Neill – Voluntary Co-optee
Fatima Khan-Shan – Statutory Co-optee

Councillor Rob Walker (Lead member for the Economy and Neighborhoods Scrutiny Panel) and Linda Summers (Voluntary Co-optee for the Corporate Scrutiny Panel)

also contributed to the appraisal.

The Panel was assisted by Yolande Myers and Alaina McGlade of The Democracy Service.

3. AREAS OF FOCUS

3.1 The area of focus for the Panel are set out below:

Parents

- To meet with parents involved with the SEND process to gain feedback on their views and involvement with the service.
- The Panel were made aware that the service felt this was an area in which they could improve. The Panel are also aware that feedback received by other local authorities during their SEND Ofsted visits often highlighted a gap in parents and families being able to influence the process. Therefore the Panel wanted to include parents and carers views in any recommendations they may issue.

3.2 How the work was carried out:

The Panel held a planning meeting on Friday 22nd June 2018 where Mandy Cameron, Head of Service for Education, Safeguarding and Inclusion was in attendance to outline the proposals for the SENDACT Team and their practices.

Following this meeting, the Panel planned their evidence gathering meetings and attended two PCAN (Parents of Children with Additional Needs) meetings, who are a 3rd sector organisation, to gather the views of the parents and carers in attendance regarding their experience of the SEND process in Kirklees and to gain their perspective on what “good” practice looks like.

Information was also taken from parents who could not attend the evidence gathering meetings by telephone and e-mail.

The evidence gathering events were held on Friday 7th September 2018 in Huddersfield and Tuesday 18th September 2018 in Dewsbury. These were pre-organised meet-ups for members of PCAN where parents and carers were informed that members of the Panel would be attending to speak to them about their experiences of SENDACT.

The Panel spoke with around 35 parents across communities to provide them with

the opportunity to share their first hand experiences of working with the SENDACT team with the Panel. The members of PCAN were candid in their comments and it became apparent that common themes were emerging.

The Panel recognised the immense contribution parents and carers make in supporting their children with SEND. Members of the Panel could also see the everyday strains on these parents and carers, and wished to capture within this report, the need for the SENDACT team to be mindful of this, both of when developing the service, and in their day to day dealings with parents and carers.

The Panel was also acutely aware of the resource pressures within SENDACT and welcomed the additional investment to implement improvements within the service.

Panel Findings

Parents and carers commented that they had begun to see improvements in communication, and initial contact with the service in particular was described as being a positive experience. Parents and carers were pleased to be involved in the recent recruitment process for new caseworkers for the SENDACT team. Parents and carers also remarked that senior managers within Learning and Aspiration were engaging with PCAN on a regular basis.

The Panel heard that, on the whole, the Early Year's Services appeared to be working well. Parents and carers felt well supported with the needs of not only the child, but also of the parent or carer being considered.

The Panel heard that self-referral to the Portage Team worked well and led to good support; not only for the child but also for the parents and carers. Regular visits to the child by play support workers, plus input from speech and language therapists and outreach workers were regular and of good value. The Portage Team assisted parents and carers with the referral process which had been reassuring to concerned parents and carers.

Some parents and carers felt well supported by the schools their child attended, with schools guiding and supporting them through the often difficult EHCP process. However, many parents and carers reported that they had encountered difficulties in accessing support through their child's school.

The Panel heard from parents and carers that the working relationship between them and the service was critical. Parents and carers wanted to see much more of a partnership approach to the relationship between themselves and SENDACT.

The Panel found that the service communication standards within SENDACT were often inconsistent. They did hear evidence of good practice, but it wasn't embedded throughout the service.

Parents and carers informed the Panel that e-mails were often not replied to,

telephone messages were not responded to and large portions of important information e-mailed to SENDACT for inclusion in their child's EHCP was often overlooked.

The Panel heard that parents and carers were frustrated when they arrived at SENDACT for a meeting, and could not contact the officer to let them know that they had arrived as the telephone numbers in the reception area were out of date.

Parents and carers reported difficulties in speaking with officers at SENDACT with some being told that they were only allowed to speak to their own caseworker. Parents and carers reported that they wanted to be able to speak to someone when they phoned SENDACT rather than waiting for their own caseworker to respond, which often led to a lengthy wait. The Panel found that it was important for parents and carers to know who their caseworker was and that SENDACT systems were robust enough to enable other members of the team to deal with enquiries in the absence of their colleagues.

The Panel was told that letters sent by SENDACT were complicated and difficult to understand with large amounts of legal information included. Parents and carers explained that after reading letters they were still unsure about how to complain about decisions that had been made, or what any next steps might involve.

Parents and carers informed that they often felt judged and marginalised by professionals, involved in their child's case. The Panel was concerned to hear from parents and carers that professionals, such as teachers, SENCO's and Family Support Workers often attributed a child's difficulties to problems or difficulties at home without that being substantiated by specialists in that area.

The Panel found that parents and carers were sometimes not invited to meetings and were told that the meetings were for 'professionals only'. This was of concern to the Panel as they felt that this might create a mistrust of the service, and they could understand the frustrations of parents and carers when being excluded. Exclusion from meetings had led parents and carers to believe that the service didn't always value their level of understanding and experience of the behaviours of their child. They were clear that inclusion is vitally important in the development of good working relationships and successful outcomes.

Concern was highlighted regarding the way in which interpreters were used in the service, as the use of school employees to translate left parents and carers feeling uneasy, and unable to honestly express their concerns. Parents and carers explained that those who interpreted for parents and carers were often members of their own local community, which brought about concerns over confidentiality. If parents and carers were frustrated with the level and content of the support the school was giving their child, it was difficult for them to feel comfortable in expressing their concerns with these interpreters translating for them.

Parents and carers advised that they found the process of getting an EHCP very difficult and didn't always understand the process. Evidence presented was that the

process of obtaining an EHCP was difficult, lengthy and could often be frustrating, despite the fact that the parents and carers they spoke with being articulate and engaged. Organisations in place to advocate for parents and carers had seen reductions in staff and resources and the Panel were concerned for parents and carers who found the process too challenging.

Parents and carers felt that those making decisions on school transport often didn't understand the complexities of getting children to and from school and were missing the crucial person centred approach principles, with reports that compulsory additional lessons after school were excluded from the school transport service.

Parents and carers explained that they sometimes felt their parenting skills were being criticised when being offered generalised parenting courses. The Panel heard that parents and carers found specific issue parenting courses valuable and often finished these courses with new found confidence in dealing with difficulties.

The Panel did however hear that parents and carers were sometimes criticised when they didn't adopt all of the suggestions from generalised parenting courses; they explained to the Panel that often, due to the individual nature of their child's difficulties, the strategies suggested didn't work.

Of greatest concern to parents and carers were the delays within the EHCP process. For some parents this caused huge delays in being able to consult with schools, particularly if they were independent or special schools with limited places available.

The Panel was disappointed to hear that delays had caused significant difficulties to some children where their EHCP was finalised at such a late stage, that the children had become settled in another, unsuitable, school setting. Parents and carers then had to make the difficult decision of whether to move their child to the school which could provide the specified provision, or whether to leave them where they were settled, but would likely not progress to achieve the success they were capable of.

The Panel heard that partner agencies, such as CAMHS and Social Care, delayed the process of obtaining or reviewing an EHCP, but parents and carers felt little seemed to be done by SENDACT to challenge the delays. Parents and carers informed the Panel that there was often no explanation given to them as to why a delay had occurred, and they were given no information about what the new timescale would be.

The Panel heard that SEND Panels were not held during the six week summer holidays despite there being a significant number of requests for EHCP's at the end of each summer term. The Panel found that this created a delay for children from the very start of the process and understood the frustrations caused when applications for EHCP's were made at the end of the summer term.

Parents and carers told the Panel that the outcomes in their child's EHCP were often too vague to be meaningful. Parents and carers wanted to see clear

achievable outcomes written into the EHCP which were specific to the needs of their child.

Parents and carers felt there was little support or alternative provision for children who were unable to attend school. Parents and carers were also concerned about transitions, particularly when their child would be moving into post-16 education. This left parents and children feeling anxious and concerned about the future.

The Panel heard that children with SEND were frequently being offered part-time courses for post-16 education, despite parents and carers suggesting that the legislation states that full-time courses should be found if that is what the child and their parent or carer wishes.

Parents and carers of children with long term, complex and rare conditions reported that they were writing large parts of the EHCP on behalf of the caseworker as the needs were so specific and unique. The Panel heard that it would be beneficial to these parents and carers for the different phases of a child's life to be planned well in advance, to allow appropriate consultation time, thus reducing the likelihood of delays in moving phases, or entering post-16 education or training.

Whilst acknowledging the difficulties outlined above, the Panel noted that staffing and resources had increased to ensure that there were adequate means to facilitate good quality practice, and the Panel was confident that standards and procedures would improve once these embed in the service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Service Standards

1. Develop a minimum level of service standards for communications (emails, telephone calls): regularly updated contact information. All parents know the name of their caseworker.
2. All notes relating to individual children, casework, and decisions made are detailed, accurate, and can be understood by all.
3. Review the format and length of letters to parents to ensure that language is accessible, with a clear rationale for decisions made. Develop a fact sheet or FAQ sheet to explain the more formal, complex legal information.

Effective Participation

4. Ensure that a Person Centred Approach is adopted and embedded by all professionals working with children with SEND and their families, so that their views are incorporated into the EHCP process, and an explanation is given where parental requests are not implemented. The Panel recommends that

the EHCP records any disparity between decision made and parental requests. Where a meeting is held for professionals only, a reason should be given for this and minutes shared.

5. SENDACT to review its use of interpreters to ensure that they are independent of the family.
6. Consideration to be given to the provision of advocate agencies for parents and carers as part of a package of support through the EHCP process. Additional training provided to caseworkers to better communicate with parents and carers with learning disabilities.
7. The School Transport Team will review its processes to ensure that children with SEND are not disadvantaged.

Parenting Courses

8. Revise the parenting support offer to take into account feedback from parents about the specific difficulties they face as parents of a child with SEND, e.g. adolescent to parent violence. Develop the Children's Service Workforce Development Plan to incorporate attitudes and behaviours – to remove judgement of parenting ability and to develop an understanding of the pressures families face.

Timescales and Content

9. Improve timescales for EHCPs by ensuring that the statutory process and responsibilities within this are understood by all agencies. If timescales are not met, a letter of apology to be issued stating the reasons for the delay.
10. Review the SEND Panel to ensure timely decision making regarding school allocations. Consideration to be given to a summer panel to prevent delay over the long school holiday.
11. Quality of EHCPs to be developed in partnership with agencies with specific attention to measurable, achievable and child-specific outcomes and interim steps, with consideration of impact and success of these built into the annual review process.
12. Develop and review the offer for those children who cannot attend school so that they remain engaged through the potential commissioning of other services. Consideration to be given to the use of flexi-schooling.
13. Revise the post 16 provision offer for young people with SEND to enable them to continue with full time education and achieve strong outcomes.
14. Allocate a senior specialist caseworker to those children with long term, complex conditions, to remain with the child and plan in advance for transitions.

SCRUTINY ACTION PLAN

Project: Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SENDACT) – the parent’s perspective
Lead Governance Officer: Helen Kilroy

No.	Recommendation	Response by Cabinet Members (Cllr Kendrick and Cllr Ahmed)	How will this be implemented?	Who will be responsible for implementation?	What is the estimated timescale for implementation?
Service Standards					
1	Develop a minimum level of service standards for communications (emails, telephone calls): regularly updated contact information. All parents should know the name of their caseworker.	Timelines and processes have been introduced so that parents know the timescales within which a call will be returned or an email answered. This has been a major focus of discussion with the Parent Monitoring Group who cite this as a major concern. A newly configured business support arm of the team has set up a process for amending contact details as these change. The new team has now been organised into areas and the	Through the SENDACT action plan	Kate Mawer and Vicky Bruce	December 2018, with a half termly review.

		number of cases held by each caseworker has been reduced to enable a better working relationship with parents. A more senior officer has oversight of each area. New guidelines for working state that the caseworker has a detailed conversation with the parents of any child new to the team to establish an early relationship with them.			
2	All notes relating to individual children, casework, and decisions made are detailed, accurate, and can be understood by all	There is now an extensive training programme in place and an expectation that all casework notes and notes relating to SEND Panels are detailed and accurate. This is currently a major focus for team leaders, quality is improving rapidly, and officers can now speak on behalf of other colleagues due to the quality of these. Where standards are not met, a robust discussion takes place with the caseworker where both support and challenge is offered.	Through the SENDACT action plan and the CPD programme	Kate Mawer and Vicky Bruce	January 2019, reviewed through supervision (case notes) and after each SEND Panel (Panel notes)

3	Review the format and length of letters to parents to ensure that language is accessible, with a clear rationale for decisions made. Develop a fact sheet or FAQ sheet to explain the more formal, complex legal information	All letters are currently under review to ensure that they are accurate and accessible, and this review has also been included in the workforce development programme for officers. All information relating to process (FAQ) is currently available on the Kirklees Local Offer (in order to avoid the use of over-complicated letters) and has been developed in co-production with PCAN. Parents will be signposted to this information at the start of the EHCP process.	Through the SENDACT action plan	Kate Mawer and Vicky Bruce	April 2019
Effective Participation					
4	Ensure that a Person Centred Approach is adopted and embedded by all professionals working with children with SEND and their families, so that their views are incorporated into the EHCP process, and an explanation is given where parental requests are not implemented. The Panel	Co-production and listening to parent views are at the core of the Children and Families Act principles. There can be differing views about the type of provision needed and any decision is made on the basis of assessments and evidence alongside parental preference – this is made clear at the start of any process. The SEND Panel that makes these decisions has	SENDACT – CPD programme. Schools – PCA Champions	Vicky Bruce and Kate Mawer	September 2019 (engagement with wider services through the Workforce Development Plan) but this will be an ongoing focus.

	<p>recommends that the EHCP records any disparity between decision made and parental requests. Where a meeting is held for professionals only, a reason should be given for this and minutes shared</p>	<p>undergone a review and there are now rigorous standards in place along with detailed notes that record decisions (and reasons for these). We will explore if there is a way of recording differing views within a plan. There should rarely be a meeting where parents are not invited to attend, and as a result of the Scrutiny Panel identifying this, it has been raised at the team meeting. All SENDACT officers have undertaken 'Child and Family Centred Approach' (CFCA) training and the principles of this are embedded into the action plan. There are now CFCA Advocates who will continue to train wider groups of colleagues across Council services, Health teams, and schools and settings. The CFCA training has been a useful way to bring better coordination across teams and services (Attendance, Virtual School) but there is a need to broaden the approach across wider services and</p>			
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		align the principles with the person-centred approach that already exists in these teams.			
5	SENDACT to review its use of interpreters to ensure that they are independent of the family (There are resource implications which will be discussed as part of budget planning.	Discussion at SLT	Mandy Cameron	April 2019
6	Consideration to be given to the provision of advocate agencies for parents and carers as part of a package of support through the EHCP process. Additional training provided to caseworkers to better communicate with parents and carers with learning disabilities	There are a number of advocate agencies within the Kirklees area and some parents pay to use these. Kirklees Independent Advice Service (KIAS – SENDIASS) also offers independent support to parents and is used widely. Any use of advocate agencies can be considered within the budget, but the training in place for caseworkers has a focus on communication and co-production.	Discussion at SLT	Mandy Cameron	April 2019
7	The School Transport Team will review its processes to ensure that	School Transport is currently reviewing its ways of working with parents to ensure that those children who need it have access	Transport work stream	Judith Anderson	September 2019

	children with SEND are not disadvantaged	to appropriate assistance with transport. This is a culture change that will challenge some current expectations of support.			
Parenting Courses					
8	Revise the parenting support offer to take into account feedback from parents about the specific difficulties they face as parents of a child with SEND, e.g. adolescent to parent violence. Develop the Children's Service Workforce Development Plan to incorporate attitudes and behaviours – to remove judgement of parenting ability and to develop an understanding of the pressures families face	Communications and relationships with parents form a central part of all training for schools, and messages shared at SENCOnet, etc. The Workforce Development Group, led by Ophelia Rix, with input from Christine Bennett, Paul Harris, Mandy Cameron and Marion Gray, is working towards an overall CPD programme with a strong emphasis on SEND. The workforce development plan will have at its core a value and behaviour-based element regarding the way in which we communicate with families. Alongside the issues that this raises about workforce development, early discussions have been held within the SEND Strategy Group, with input from parent members, about how we might support families better in relation to the specific difficulties they may face as opposed to a	Workforce Development Strategy Group Disabled Children's Review Board	Ophelia Rix and Christine Bennett Michelle Wheatcroft and Roger Clayphan	December 2019

		<p>more generic response. There is already a SEN Family Links Programme and the Step Up programme (which may not be suitable for this purpose) and these are delivered through the Stronger Families Programme. A Stronger Families Officer is meeting with a group of parents from PCAN to see how our existing programmes might be adapted to better meet need.</p>			
Timescales and Content					
9	<p>Improve timescales for EHCPs by ensuring that the statutory process and responsibilities within this are understood by all agencies. If timescales are not met, a letter of apology to be issued stating the reasons for the delay</p>	<p>Our statutory compliance in relation to timescales has fluctuated from 40% to 70% and there is an understanding that further work is needed to embed changes that will bring about consistent and better improvement. The action plan includes development of a timeline with interim deadlines for action in order to prompt agency input and to improve statutory timescales. A series of KPIs will be developed to monitor progress.</p>	<p>SENDACT action plan</p>	<p>Vicky Bruce and Kate Mawer</p>	<p>September 2019</p>

10	<p>Review the SEND Panel to ensure timely decision making regarding school allocations.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to a summer panel to prevent delay over the long school holiday</p>	<p>This review is underway and a significant improvement in process and timeliness can already be evidenced. Engagement from Heads of Service has led to much improved attendance at Panel and all members have received training about new process and expectations. Further consideration will be given in the action plan to the addition of a summer panel to prevent delay. The large number of cases coming to Panel has caused some difficulty and further work is needed with partners (particularly in schools and across health) to look at the reasons for this. Greater future engagement with Early Support will assist here.</p>	SENDACT action plan	Vicky Bruce and Kate Mawer	January 2019
11	<p>Quality of EHCPs to be developed in partnership with agencies with specific attention to measurable, achievable and child-specific outcomes and interim steps, with consideration of impact</p>	<p>Quality of EHCPs and of outcomes is a central task in the action plan alongside a more robust response to the processing of annual reviews so that we can monitor impact of EHCP activity. The quality of EHCPs is inconsistent, although we are now seeing improved</p>	EHCP QA group	Kate Mawer, Vicky Bruce, Christine Bennett, Tom Brailsford	March 2020

	and success of these built into the annual review process.	plans from those that have been started since March 2018 (the end of the transfer review period). The plans that were transferred from statements require attention and will be done through the annual review process. The proactive engagement from social care will be central to this.			
12	Develop and review the offer for those children who cannot attend school so that they remain engaged through the potential commissioning of other services. Consideration to be given to the use of flexi-schooling	An additional service to maintain engagement with individual children who are not attending school/assist with transition back into school has been commissioned and early reports from those children and their families are very positive. However the cohort is very small and there is a need to identify and commission additional activity here. The work of Early Support and the soon to be review Disabled Children's Team will support this. SENDACT now works closely with the Education Safeguarding Team who oversee Elective Home Education (and who are reviewing their processes for flexi-schooling –	Development of PRU offer Development of Early Support Offer Review of Disabled Children's Team	Mandy Cameron Michelle Wheatcroft Christine Bennett	July 2020

		awaiting outcome of DfE consultation).			
13	Revise the post 16 provision offer for young people with SEND to enable them to continue with full time education and achieve strong outcomes	Full time education at post 16 equates to 600 hours per year (3 days per week). Currently our special school post 16 provision is funded for 5 days per week, thereby providing an inequitable service (consistent with practice across the country). As part of the High Needs Review we are beginning to work with colleagues in social care to review the 3/5 offer for all students who attend post 16 college provision in order to establish what activity could be available on the other two days. We are also working with local colleges to better understand their offer in order to commission what we need for our increasing cohort of students. There is a need still for wider choice for students with SEND that takes account of their very specific needs. We are currently working with our special schools to develop further provision for an identified cohort of students.	Development of specialist post 16 places Partnership work with Kirklees College	Mandy Cameron Sarah Grant	September 2020

14	Allocate a senior specialist caseworker to those children with long term, complex conditions, to remain with the child and plan in advance for transitions	We would need to define 'long term and complex' as this equates to a large number of children. Currently senior caseworkers work with the most complex children/cases. A child with complex needs may not be a complex case if the provision in place meets their needs. Further dialogue to ascertain a common understanding will be undertaken with the parent monitoring group.	Consideration to be given through the SENDACT Review	Vicky Bruce, Kate Mawer	August 2019
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Appended are further comments from the Head of Education Safeguarding and Inclusions

Cabinet Members (Cllrs Ahmed and Kendrick): Response to the Recommendations set by Children's Scrutiny Panel regarding SEND Provision and Approaches

Introduction

Scrutiny Panel have focused on our approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) this year, with a particular emphasis on the work of the SEND Assessment and Commissioning Team (SENDACT). As part of this focus, they met with a number of parents from PCAN. They attended a coffee morning in order to be able to meet as broad a range of parents as possible. They met approximately 35 parents in all. Parents have reported that they appreciated the effort taken by the Panel in doing this.

The SENDACT review has now finished and additional staff have been appointed to the new structure as a result of the increased budget. As expectations of performance are raised we expect there may be further staffing changes in the coming months.

There has been extensive engagement with parents with the aim to co-produce our response to the improvements that are needed. As a result, a parent monitoring group has been set up, and held an initial meeting in October 2018. A further meeting took place in January. The action plan and all relating information has been shared with the group. Although the action plan currently focuses on the internal developments needed to begin the significant improvements that are required, the newly configured Learning and Early Support Leadership Team provides opportunities to widen the scope for improvement, particularly across Early Support and through the Kirklees Learning Partners. The positive engagement around SEND from the Heads of Service in children's social care is beginning to have an impact on work relating to statutory processes overseen by SENDACT.

Recommendations and Initial Responses

There is now an action plan in place for SENDACT which covers many of the points raised below alongside other areas for improvement, and it is recognised that these improvements will take time to embed. A large part of the action plan relates to ongoing professional development, both for the newly appointed officers and also for the existing team, in order to ensure compliance in the first instance, but more importantly to raise the quality of service provided to parents and their children. All actions within the plan lead to an overarching drive to change the culture and approach of the team in terms of communication and engagement with parents and carers which we recognise has been poor, and has exacerbated many of the issues raised through the Scrutiny Report.

Conclusion

The SENDACT action plan is updated and monitored every month by the SENDACT manager and Head of Service, and every quarter by the parent monitoring group. There is a lot to do. However we now have a more established, full team and early improvements are already in evidence.

There has always been a good working relationship between SENDACT and key education and health managers/commissioners, where strategies for improvement

have been discussed and shared. The relationship with key social care colleagues is building rapidly with a clear commitment to develop a joint approach to SEND provision and practice.

We are about to go out to commission our Parent Forum and it will be essential that this relationship is established quickly in order to maintain the level of engagement and co-production we have in place currently, as this is a core part of all of our SEND-related action.

Mandy Cameron
Head of Service (Education Safeguarding and Inclusion)
4.2.19