

SEN & Disability (SEND) reforms update

The Children and Families Act requires local authorities to make changes to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provision for children and young people.

This update is to let stakeholders and practitioners in the Bradford District know how the Council and its partners are developing changes to services for children and young people with SEND in response to the Act.

A review involving parents, children and key agencies was undertaken during summer 2013. A programme management office (PMO) and programme board have been established to steer through the work required by the Act.

The Council is working in partnership with colleagues from health, Barnardo's, Parent & Carer's Forum for Bradford & Airedale and family support groups to organise these changes.

Key requirements that are laid out by the Act

The main changes to SEND as a result of the Act will be:

All local authorities in the England and Wales to publish information about the services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Parents and carers will be able to access this information in one single place called the 'Local Offer'. This will include Information on education, health and social care for families with a child aged from birth to 25 years of age. Read more on our [Local Offer webpage](#).

Statements of Special Educational Needs will be replaced with a new Single Education, Health & Care Plan for children and young people aged birth to 25 for as long as the young person remains in education and learning.

Children and young people entitled to a Single Education, Health and Care Plan will be able to ask for their support to be provided through a Personal Budget.

Joint commissioning: local commissioners will be required to work together in the interests of children and young people with SEND. These arrangements must be robust enough to reach a decision in every case, and regularly reviewed.

Consultation with parents, carers and young people on the Local Offer

Consultation events have taken place in Bradford and Keighley to ask parents how they want the Local Offer to develop. The Council will now develop a local offer in response to the feedback from parents. The first version of this will be in place for September 2014 and will continue to develop with input from parents.

Consultation events have taken place with young people to establish what they would like to see within the Local Offer. A questionnaire is also being circulated to young people to gather their views.

Building on good practice with other local authorities

The Council is working closely with neighbouring local authorities as well as those authorities established as pathfinders. We will ensure that the Local Offer for Bradford has links to our neighbours and builds on the pathfinder's experience.

Working in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups

The three local clinical commissioning groups; NHS Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven, NHS Bradford City and NHS Bradford Districts, are key partners to help us deliver the changes across the district. The local CCGs are working with providers of health services to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to support them in delivering the implications of the Children's and Families Act. All providers are contributing to the 'Local Offer' and are involved in the development of a single Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.

Trials for new Education, Health and Care Plans

The Local Authority is funding the Educational Psychology Service to trial the production of the new Education, Health and Care Plans with a small number of volunteer families and a volunteer Special School. An important aspect of this project is to ensure our work is based on person-centred planning with children and young people and their parents involved in the co-production of the EHC plan. The learning from the trials will be used to inform the training of professionals at the end of June and beginning of July 2014. The Educational Psychology Service will then support families, schools and other key agencies in the review process that will convert the existing Statement of SEN into the new EHC Plan from September 2014. This will be phased in by the end of April 2018.

Single point of contact for SEN Assessment, Children with Complex Health or Disabilities Team and Children's Continuing Health Care

From the 1 September we will run one single point of contact for requesting assessments for Single Education, Health & Care Plans and/or social care and continuing care assessments for children and young people with the most complex disabilities and health needs. We will provide more detailed information over the coming months.

Update events for schools

The Council has run a number of update events for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) who are responsible for the day-to-day operation of schools SEN policy.

Colleagues from local Further Education (FE) colleges, Health and Social Care also attended these events and the Council will continue to work with FE and other partners in the post-16 sector as the SEND reforms move forward.

The sessions have focussed on what changes schools will be required to make as a result of the Children's and Families Act, including the need for each school to publish its own Local Offer.

To help schools, the Council has produced a draft [School Local Offer](#) which could be extended to reflect individual school circumstances.

Keeping parents informed

Open meetings with parents have been taken place in partnership with the Parent's Forum.

Further open events are planned for parents and carers in July. Information on the Children and Families Act and SEND is available on the [Families Information Service](#) website.

Information is being published regularly in the [Disabled Children's Information Service](#) newsletter and on the [DCIS facebook page](#) and has been published in [Community Pride](#).

A number of parents have volunteered to be part of a steering group to help develop the local offer.

More updates will be available in the early summer to ensure parents are familiar with the changes that come into effect in September.

Contact us!

The Senior Responsible Owner for the SEND programme is George McQueen, the Council's Assistant Director for Access and Inclusion. The Programme Manger for SEND is Gillian Simpson Morris.

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More information for practitioners on the [Local Offer](#) and SEND is available on

[Bradford Schools Online](#) and more information on the Children and Families Act is available on the [Bradford Council](#) and [Families Information Service](#) websites.