

Confidential Report

Sector-led Improvement within Children's Services in the East Midlands

SEND PEER REVIEW REPORT NOTTINGHAM CITY 3&4 NOVEMBER 2016

Service/Areas Covered by Peer Review including details of any interviews/focus groups, numbers of cases looked at etc.

Review Team members:

Pat Bullen, Leicester City, acting as Lead Reviewer
Mark Emly, Derbyshire CC
Clare Griffiths, Parent Reviewer, Derbyshire Parent & Carer Forum
Sarah Tucker, Northants Health Foundation Trust
Michelle White, Lincolnshire CC

Selected lines of enquiry:

Area of Strength:

The Education, Health and Care (EHC) Pathway

Area of Development:

Preparing for Adulthood

Methodology

This review commenced with a meeting between the Lead Reviewer and a small number of local area officers, to agree the key lines of enquiry and a schedule of meetings/focus groups/visits to providers, which could corroborate/triangulate how well the local area had accurately identified the area of strength and area for development. The review team of five people spent two full days in Nottingham City, visiting fourteen providers.

Evidence notes were recorded confidentially by reviewers, and are retained confidentially by the lead reviewer. A short presentation was provided at the end of day 2 to the local area, and this document is the

Final record of the review findings.

Evidence:

This comprised:

- A full SEND local area self-evaluation format, (SEF) which addressed the three key areas within 'The handbook for the inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities' DfE & CQC¹- Identification/Meeting Needs/Improving Outcomes. The SEF included data and supporting information
- Fourteen provider visits
- Eight meetings with local area and/or health practitioners and professionals
- One meeting with representatives of the Parent and Carer Forum, Rainbow-
- Access to data and information commensurate with the areas of enquiry, as requested by the review team
- Evidence from parent and carer surveys

Conclusions:

Overall findings-

- The City has a clear vision and commitment to children & young people with SEND, articulated from elected members and the most senior leaders within the local area
- There are effective policy frameworks in place, such as a joint commissioning plan, co-designed by agencies, which places this vision within a strategy for implementation
- The SEF provides an analysis of the elements of SEND pathway implementation, which indicates that leaders know the City well, including areas of strength and areas which they intend to improve further

¹'The handbook for the inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities' Department for Education and the Care Quality Commission, April 2014

- The co-production and delivery of the SEF to the team of peer reviewers would be even further enhanced through parental representation
- There was cross service representation, with one department for children and adults, including a whole life disability strategy (WLD)
- There are some indications that the wider Nottingham City community- some parents/carers, and some providers, do not share the same perspective about
 - SEN Support/graduated response
 - parental engagement/participation at the individual level, within the Pathway
- **Communication** is a key issue for families- including the Local Offer

EHC Pathway

Partnerships

- Settings, schools and colleges have a positive relationship/partnership with the LA, particularly the SEND team, and are key to strategic agreement regarding SEND strategy- for example, the implementation of the High Needs Funding system, which enables access to resources without an EHC Plan. They have developed provision maps to support the shared understanding and implementation across the City of a Graduated Response to identifying and meeting SEN support needs. SENCOs and Head Teachers were clear that they shared decision making within the SEND Pathway. This has been continuously improved and built since the 1989 'Children First' initiative within the authority.
- Providers feel that the LA listens and works with them to resolve challenges and seeks to be flexible, having a problem-solving response to challenges.
- Consistent Person-Centred reviews (PCR) and methodology is highly regarded by parents and by providers, as indicated by the 100% satisfaction rates from parents/carers who had experienced a PCR since September 2014.
- An accessible monthly drop in clinic (led by the Disabled Children's Team Service Manager) was well regarded and seen as innovative and accessible; the short breaks Pathways 1 and 2 are developing and are beginning to be understood by a wider

range of partners, including families.

- IRIS newsletter – is well received and available on social media for families.
- Parental views vary; some parents within the Rainbow- Parent and Carer Forum expressed a range of dissatisfaction with elements of consultation, engagement, co-production, access to services and needs being met.
- Other parents seen within settings and schools had a more positive perception.
- Active engagement with the breadth of parental perception will be an area that the LA and health partners will wish to address.
- The Rainbow parent forum expressed concern at the general contribution of health providers to the EHC pathway and to the provision of health services to those with an EHC and without an EHC Plan.

Early identification

- The Early Years Pathway is very positive and links to the ability to identify and predict need, informing anticipatory commissioning decisions. This is supported by:
 - Health contribution to 2 year checks; piloting of 3/3.5 checks
 - Clinical practitioners follow up using the Forest programme-
 - Pre-school liaison meetings/HV, Portage etc in attendance.
- Early Help identifies key families within the City requiring support beyond universal services, with tailored support provided to build parental confidence. The service is open access. Signs of safety underpins all approaches.
- Systems such as MAR- Multi-agency referral form- and DART- Domestic Abuse Referral Team- sit within this process.
- PEEP sessions for 0-1 year olds are open access, support parental confidence, and refer on to other agencies if and as required.
- The LA sets out expectations within its well-regarded Provision Maps, which have been developed through close working with SENCOs across the City. Experienced SENCOs are commissioned by the LA to support the knowledge and understanding of new SENCOs of the High Needs Funding approach for additional resources.
- The City and its schools take a great pride in providing inclusive

educational provision to promote diversity and to enable children with SEND to live their lives locally.

- Schools expressed high confidence in the City's traded services and central SEND support, including the City Educational Psychology service (CEPs), Inclusive Education Services and Behaviour Support Services.

Commissioning

- There is a recently developed joint commissioning plan, shared by the CCG and LA.
- This is an outward looking local authority area which looks to anticipate need and improve outcomes- joint commissioning is developing further and appears to be effective within the LA, embedding and developing with health partners. The five-year plan is developing participation.
- Personal Budgets are developing well, with opportunities to pool/merge budgets. The City is using the expertise of the LA in working with Direct Payments, to support health in rolling out Personal Health Budgets (PHBs). The area has over 360 Personal Budgets in place at the time of reporting for children with SEND.
- The EHC Panel is multi-agency – all three agencies are present-and presently has drop-in school access. From January 2017, this process will always include school participation. An open, questioning approach with evidence sought within the Panel, leads to robust decision-making.
- Some providers and the parents discussion group with Rainbow PCF, were less sure that plan writers had a person-centred approach, as they did not meet the child or young person, and their family, directly. There was some indication that what had been discussed and agreed at the person centred reviews did not appear in the ultimate plan.
- An emergency Panel sits to meet needs that have changed suddenly or dramatically.
- Providers also believed that the local area needed to be more 'joined up'- for example, a specialist provider lacked confidence in FE colleges to meet needs locally, and had significant difficulty in obtaining a response from FE providers to queries- a local partnership across Preparing for Adulthood/transition could

develop this area.

Outcomes

- Identification has become more accurate and consistent so that in January 2016 15% of pupils in Nottingham City were identified with SEND compared to 14.4% nationally
- The SEN/non-SEN attainment gap at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key stage 2 and Key stage 4 is lower than national measures. (2015)
- From Key Stage 1- 2 the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities making expected progress is largely in line with national measures. (2015)
- Nottingham attainment data for pupils with SEN support is higher than that recorded nationally. (2015)
- 95% of Ofsted inspections of early years settings and mainstream schools 2015-16 reported that provision for children and young people with SEND is good or better and that pupils are making good progress
- Percentage of 16/17 year olds participating in education or training December 2015 is in line with national expectations (87.6%)
- 92% of the cohort with a statement of SEND were in sustained education, employment or training after KS4 – an improvement of 9% and higher than statistical neighbours
- After KS5, 64% of cohort with SEN were in sustained Education, Employment or training - an increase of 20% from previous year
- Family Leadership training programme (aimed at supporting parent / carers with the transition process) received excellent feedback and now ready for wider roll-out.
- There are currently 8 City learners with EHC Plans on supported internship programmes and at least 2 learners at SEN Support. These supported internship programmes are newly commissioned this year across a variety of education providers in partnership with other agencies.
- Young people at SEN Support and with EHC Plans are accessing a

variety of employment-focused training, including 4-week pre-traineeships delivered by Futures, and longer traineeship programmes and Apprenticeships.

- Very few young people (18) are educated outside of the local area in non-maintained/independent specialist provisions.
- Transition social workers based with careers guidance advisers provide co-ordinated support to young people and families in relation to education and social care needs.
- The increase in the use of Direct Payments and the decline in residential care, appears to be demonstrating greater personalisation and community based support.
- The use of support planning for all 'Pathway 2' cases and those accessing a Direct Payment is beginning to show greater personalisation of services.
- Early access to short breaks via new Pathway 1 and 2 processes. Families do not yet fully understand these pathways.
- 82% of reviews are undertaken by Independent Reviewing Officer within timescales for overnight short breaks and children in need.
- A jointly funded contract called Integrated Community Equipment Loan service (ICELS) is in place to ensure the consistent and cost effective provision of equipment. The contract is a jointly funded service by the City and county councils and all CCGs.
- All young people undergoing a Continuing Care assessment are notified of eligibility within 28 days
- 2015/16 financial year the rapid response service prevented 241 admissions to hospital enabling the young person to remain at home and saving an estimated £556,000 in the cost of acute services.
- It is evident from the review, that as with other local areas, 'outcomes thinking' is in development as an iterative process across families/providers/local authority and health practitioners.

Preparing for Adulthood

- There is inconsistent preparation for adulthood within education providers
- Perceptions vary of preparedness for FE college access; from colleges in relation to how well schools prepare students, and

school's perception that colleges repeat learning and do not tailor the offer to meet individual need.

- Where young people are supported by Disabled Children's Services, they are well supported across the transition- this is not replicated for those with SEN Support who move into adulthood- some parents noted many Social Worker changes
- Staff across different elements of the workforce have received Mental Capacity Act training, but this was not always evident in voice of Young People- though we are aware that we did not meet groups directly, due to timetabling challenges within the review
- Aspirations- there is some evidence of an emerging 'aiming for employment' approach- but this is not yet the view of young people and their families; schools and academies; FE colleges. There is some evidence of the LA leading employment opportunities through apprenticeships and job carving, for example, within LA departments.
- Supported Internships are emerging, though employment opportunities are developing, this is a slow process
- Opportunities are apparent in employment, which could be better accessed with the intended refreshed PfA strategy, and need for a champion with the post-16 strategic lead
- The cross over transition Social Worker supports transition positively/ Transition nurse positively regarded
- 'Futures' services is very positively regarded, by families and providers- we heard universally positive feedback about this dedicated disability advisers and the provision of advice and guidance
- Developments are emerging across 0-18/18-25 structures with the Whole Life Disability strategy
- We didn't hear from Young People directly in the process

Recommendations:

General

Reviewers saw the co-produced presentation of the SEF, as a key strength, which could be enhanced even further through the presentation including parents and carers, and young people with SEND.

EHC Pathway

- PCRs- some schools use this as an alternative to mediation/informal DR- which is a burden on the resource of the LA- the LA may wish to explore this further, as they use the resource for 40% of cases which are not taken forward to statutory assessment
- Health are seen to be less present across the Pathway, not fully co-producing plans, nor always seen to be contributing by parents/carers or by providers- the CCG should consider this finding and consult with their providers regarding clear expectations. Technologies such as the wiki or Skype contributions to assessment and planning could be accessed, which could improve the contribution
- EHC case worker and Plan writer- feedback after decision not to assess would be even better if the service made contact by phone or more personally to families, rather than a letter which leaves the family to make contact for feedback
- The EHC Panel- scrutiny by SENCOs and other practitioners has been piloted and we see it as very constructive that the LA intends to formalise this from January 2017, to ensure further transparency and scrutiny
- The Pathway continues to be seen as more education driven- the local area could consider how to address this perception, for example through health and social care presence/use of technology for attendance/through health information on the Local Offer website
- Parental perceptions of the EHC planning process and their understanding are not as positive as perhaps the outcomes and our positive view of the strategic and operational capability of the local area. Work with the emerging National Partnerships model, sponsored by Contact-a-Family, could develop this element within the City.
- Schools/academies highly value the traded and core services from LA- CEPs/BST/ IES/ASD- they notably had less confidence in therapy services e.g. SLT/physiotherapy- delays due to, for example, the length and complexity of the speech and language referral process, and the closure of a case due to parental failure to attend, should all be further explored by the CCG commissioners

Preparing for Adulthood

- The local area could develop the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)

partnership further, through bringing together more systematically, special schools/secondary schools with enhanced resources and FE colleges, to improve the study programme and broader curriculum offer, to better understand one another's roles and support more effectively the transition process for young people. the well-regarded 'Futures' could perhaps have a key role within this

- Accelerating the employment opportunities across the wider council strategy and including health partners, is important to 'lead from the front', though the limited resource provided – the post-holder within the LA has three very large areas of responsibility- hampers this aspiration
- The East Midlands regional Preparing for Adulthood facilitator would support the local area in developing the overall strategy, for example, in linking more effectively with local businesses to develop employment strategy
- The Mental Capacity Act training may require work with schools and providers to better secure the voice of the young person within decision making
- The EHC Pathway could develop more PfA focused outcomes, especially from Year 9 upwards
- The Family Leadership roll out will be essential to develop parental aspirations of employment for their young people

Pat Bullen, Lead Reviewer, 11.11.2016