

Local Area - SEND newsletter for parents & carers

Newsletter Highlights



Dear Parent or Carer

Welcome to our partnership newsletter from the teams working together to deliver SEND services in Birmingham City Council, the NHS and Birmingham Children's Trust. I hope that you will find it useful and informative.

We have welcomed new staff into the service this term and are pleased to report that the SENAR service is now 70 person strong - welcome to them, we are delighted to have a stronger, bigger team to help families.

We are also very pleased to say that a considerable amount of work has been done to ensure that we met the Statutory Deadline of 15th February to issue school phase transfer EHCP amendments. 99.9% of Reception placements were confirmed, 100% of Year 2 placements were confirmed and 99.7% of Secondary placements were confirmed; this is compared to 0% in 2021.

Green shoots of improvement are appearing in the SEND service in Birmingham and you can read more on that in this newsletter and on our [news page](#) of the SEND Local Offer website.

The Government issued its [Green Paper on the SEND](#) review this week. It is currently out for [consultation](#), which you can be part of. I will be reflecting on its findings and the implications for Birmingham in our next newsletter.

Sue Harrison

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**What is improving?
Progress so far**

**Reducing waiting times
in Autism Assessment
and Support**

**New Keyworker system
for complex needs**

**New Complex and
Enduring Team**

**Autism Courses for
Families**

**Developing Local
Provision - Early Years**

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Autism Assessment and Support – reducing waiting times through extra support teams

A separate organisation called 'Healios' (an online provider of Autism assessments) has been commissioned to assess children and young people over 7 years who are on the NHS waiting lists.

This has been in place for several months and they had completed 1555 ASD assessments before Christmas and continue to support to date.



Another organisation 'Clinical Partners' are now working with the children under 6 who are waiting and as part of a pilot and will see 100 children for face-to-face assessments.

An all-age Autism support service is currently in development following consultation with experts by experience, services and commissioners. Next steps for the service include recruitment to roles and development of a dedicated website and phonenumber, with a go live date of 1st April 2022.

The Balanced System - Improving support to children with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Organisations across Birmingham are focused on improving outcomes for children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication needs. Everyone who communicates with children has a part to play!

The support for children with speech, language and communication needs across Birmingham is moving to the Balanced System® approach. This is a way of working that strengthens joint working of the children's workforce in order to effectively support children with speech, language and communication difficulties from low level universal support to specialist support.

Progress to date:

To support the move to the Balanced system a Speech Language Communication Needs (SLCN) Strategy Group has been established to lead and develop the strategic vision for this service.

An SLCN Design Group has been established under the SLCN Strategic Group and is the working arm undertaking specific operational tasks and actions. Both the Strategic and Design Groups have system wide membership including Birmingham and Solihull CCG, Birmingham City Council, Birmingham Community Healthcare Provider Trust, Education, Birmingham Forward Steps and the Parent-Carer Forum.



Data gathering and mapping activity gave a starting point to understand the current picture in Birmingham for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs. This was supported by engagement work that took place with Speech and Language Therapists, educational colleagues, parents / carers and wider stakeholders.

This helped identify current needs and the current offer of support available across Birmingham, whilst also raising awareness of the Balanced System and the need for change in Birmingham.

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The Balanced System Next Steps:

·The development of four SLCN Workstreams that will feed into the SLCN Design Group. The four SLCN Workstreams will be underpinned by the Balanced System principles and will focus on; Information, Access, Place and the Targeted Offer.

·To establish a Parent Participation Group to design and embed co-production as an approach to support the move to the SLCN Balanced system.

·Test new ways of working and review current pathways and service offers.

More information about The Balanced System® can be found here: www.thebalancedsystem.org/

Therapy advice phone lines and resources:

Don't forget that each therapy has an advice line to call plus useful resources and videos on their webpages to support you whilst you are waiting;

Occupational Therapy - 0121 683 2325 www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/children-and-young-people/services-parent-portal/paediatric-occupational-therapy-service/

Speech and Language Therapy - 0121 466 6231 www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/children-and-young-people/services-parent-portal/birmingham-slt/slt-videos/

Physiotherapy - 0121 466 5193 www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/children-and-young-people/services-parent-portal/paediatric-physiotherapy-service/



The New NHS Keyworker System for Children and Young People with complex needs.

The NHS Long Term Plan includes commitment that by 2023/23 children and young people with a learning disability, autism or both with the most complex needs will have a designated Keyworker, initially with individuals being at risk of admission or inpatients.

Barnardo's Birmingham and Solihull Keyworker Service works in partnership with Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning group to support children and adults within the age range of 0-25 years with the most complex needs, are inpatients, or at risk of being admitted into hospital. These young people are vulnerable with a learning disability and/or autism.

Keyworkers will offer guidance and advice with navigating the relevant services and ensuring the young person gains the support they are entitled to. Keyworker support officers carry out direct interventions with the young person and capture their voice by adopting the use of person centred approach strategies. The service then ensures this voice is heard throughout all critical meetings and discussions with professionals.





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Social Care – the new Complex and Enduring Team

The Complex and Enduring Team delivers specialist social work support for children, young people and their families who are affected by mental health challenges. Our growing team of experienced Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Newly Appointed Team Manager Deborah O'Neil and Clinical Psychologist, Dr Fiona Tait provide a holistic approach to promoting young people's recovery.

We support children and young people with the highest level of need across their journey of admission: from those at risk admission or who are currently admitted to specialist mental health hospital and their discharge planning, as well as post-discharge S117 Aftercare.

We pride ourselves in outside-the-box thinking to personalise our support to meet the individual needs of those we are working with. We are based within the Disabled Children's Social Care service and offer support to teams throughout the trust who are working with children and young people with the most complex and enduring mental health needs.



We attend the Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group Panel as well as the Forward Thinking Birmingham Dynamic Support Register meeting to share information and the promote the safety of all young people in Birmingham who are at risk of admission.

We look forward to seeing the effect that this new team will have on improving access to mental health services for our children and young people with the highest levels of need.

For more information on the Statutory services that Birmingham Children's Trust provide and the referral process please visit www.birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Autism Acceptance Week

Autism Acceptance Week aims to draw attention to the 700,000 people living with autism in the UK both to educate those unaware of the condition, and to help make the world friendlier to those who are affected by it.

The Communication and Autism Team (CAT) celebrated Autism Acceptance Week by encouraging schools to hold events during the week. Many Birmingham schools took part in a range of activities including assemblies, cake sales, quizzes, treasure hunts and awareness raising lessons.

During the week, we heard the voices of our children and young people as their comments were tweeted out by CAT via the Access To Education twitter account.

<https://twitter.com/A2Education> - you can also read the CAT team blog [here](#)



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Communication and Autism Team Parent Awareness Course (CAT PAC)

The Communication and Autism Team have worked with parents, autistic young people and autistic adults to update our CAT PAC offer to families. We have produced three CAT PACs for parents/carers to attend. CAT PACs are courses which support parents/carers to develop their understanding of autism and how it impacts on their child or young person's daily life and experiences.

Early Years' CAT PAC:

The Early Years' CAT PAC is designed to give parents a chance to reflect and gather information at the early stages of their journey. There is a focus on communication and early play to support engagement with family members.

What parents have said:

"I really enjoyed the CAT PAC sessions. They were really informative and allowed myself and other parents to share our experiences. I feel like I am able to understand my child better."

"After each session I felt better because I am not alone on this journey."

Primary age CAT PAC:

The Primary Age CAT PAC is designed for children attending school settings. It gives parents/carers opportunities to think about how their child can develop friendships, communicate their needs effectively and how parents can support their child with emotional regulation.

What parents have said:

"I really appreciated this session, it gave me a safe space to talk about some of my worries and it really helped me to feel as though I wasn't alone on this journey. So thank you very much! I look forward to next week."

"This was so helpful, the videos were brilliant at illustrating what we were discussing. I was able to spot things my son does (like buffering) and how i should respond to help, which I think is really going to help him."

Secondary CAT PAC:

The Secondary CAT PAC is designed for young people who may have received a diagnosis at a later stage. It not only develops an understanding autism, but provides a focus relevant to the young person's stage in life. Topics include discussions around puberty, relationships, developing independence and getting ready for exams.

What parents have said:

"It was comforting to hear the experiences from other parents , including the presenters. It is very isolating at times."

"Very useful session. Informal , friendly but excellent and informative."



CAT PACs are delivered each term. Information will be sent via school SENCOs.

Early Years Developing Local Provision

Launched week commencing 21st March, the Developing Local Provision (DLP) initiative aims to enhance the work already being done by early years settings and mainstream schools in providing support to SEND children in their local area.

Based on Birmingham's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) strategy, the DLP initiative is already in place in primary and secondary schools across the city.

Schools and settings are stronger working together, when they can better understand their context, and therefore, their priorities. The DLP initiative will further empower schools and settings to achieve solutions with support and resources, with a focus on:

- Enhancing the capacity of Early Years settings and mainstream schools to work together to provide for SEND children in their local area and to plan the provision that they need
- Enabling more children to access high-quality provision as close as possible to where they live
- Reducing reliance on high-cost specialist placements in out of city schools

DLP and Early Years

The Early Years DLP initiative will be delivered through the 10 District Early Years Networks. The long-term aim is to establish good quality local provision that successfully meets the needs of individual children, supporting them in their Early Years journey through to their chosen mainstream school where their needs will continue to be met well.

Our Early Years DLP plan focuses on three specific objectives:

1. To improve early identification and support for children with additional needs by increasing the number of children that have access to a practitioner with a level 3 SENCO award.
2. To build knowledge, skills and practice across the sector through coordinated professional development and networking opportunities
3. To improve early identification and support for children with additional needs by the creation of a virtual district inclusion partnership hub in each of the 10 districts

Effective communication and partnership with parents/carers is a thread running through all of these objectives.

You can find out more here: <https://www.birminghamearlyyearsnetworks.org/developing-local-provision>



DLP

DEVELOPING LOCAL
PROVISION

The SEND Local Offer website - support, information & advice for SEND all in one place

www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk







SEND news and updates

You can find all our newsletters and SENAR updates on the SEND Local Offer website

www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/latest-news/

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Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Update



The Birmingham Parent Carer Forum has been working hard to ensure the parent voice is being heard. We have continued to help facilitate the Parent Engagement Events which had been co-produced with the council. The events sought to give parents and carers the opportunity to say how they would like to be involved in co-production within the council as well as give feedback on the Local Offer website. These Parent Engagement Events have given us and the council valuable feedback that will be worked into a shared definition of co-production in Birmingham. Furthermore, suggestions on improvements to the Local Offer Websites have already been made with your feedback continuing to shape the site going forward.

Alongside these events we have been busy hosting events with our families. On 21st March we held a Parent Rep Engagement event where we invited our Parent Representatives and other parents and carers to find out more about the work that the Forum is doing to represent the families of Birmingham and how they can get involved in shaping the services our children and young people access. We joined forces with the Pathological demand avoidance (PDA) Society to offer an online training course, the first of these sessions covered developing our understanding of the PDA profile of autism and considering what demands are their effects.



Finally on the 29th of March we held a Well-being Day for all our parents and carers. As parents and carers, ourselves we know the importance of looking after our own well-being, because of this we really wanted to put together a day where parents and carers could come relax, take part in activities, and catch up with each other. We want to thank everyone that attended the day and made it so special.

We have an exciting update with regards to our new venue! We are very close to being able to move into our new office space based in Great Barr. This venue will become our base of operations and we plan to hold events and drop-in sessions for our families on a regular basis. Keep your eyes on our social media pages for more information about our grand opening event!

Finally, we were extremely grateful to receive a special mention during Minister Quince Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Education Keynote talk at the NNPCF (National Network of Parent Carer Forums) Annual Conference. Minister Quince thanked the Forum for its hard work in helping support improvements within Birmingham. Follow the link to see the whole Keynote (512) An update on the SEND Review and Green Paper - YouTube

We also continue to make sure we flag concerns raised to us to the relevant parties in Health, Education and Social Carer.

As always, we thank you for your continued support

