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**Newcastle Parent/Carers of Children and Young People with SEND**

**Q&A session with Deanne Taylor,**

**Head of SEND, Newcastle Council**

**22nd July 2020**

*‘*[*Individually we are a drop but together we are an ocean’ Ryunsuke Satoro*](https://www.google.com/search?rls=com.microsoft:en-GB&source=univ&tbm=isch&q=%E2%80%98individually+we+are+a+drop+but+together+we+are+an+ocean,+but+We+can+make+waves+together%E2%80%99.&safe=active&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiDg8aj-eXqAhWDZMAKHbabB0gQsAR6BAgKEAE)

*Let’s make some waves*

**Introduction**

Parents and carers (P/Cs) of children and young people with SEND in Newcastle met with Deanne Taylor the Head of SEND at Newcastle Council, to ask questions about SEND services and raise any concerns. The meeting was held by ‘teams’, not ideal and great for everyone, but better than not managing to meet at all. 17 parents and carers joined the call.

We thank you all for your contributions. This note includes Deanne’s response to the questions asked on the day and other questions that have been received. We have tried to group them by topic. I hope we have captured all your questions but if you cannot spot your question or are not satisfied with the responses please let me know.

*Catherine Ratcliffe, Contact*

**Q&As**

1. **Can you give a brief description of your job role and what you are responsible for? Is it mainly education? If social care and health does not fall within your specific responsibilities who are the SEND equivalents for social care and health in Newcastle? How do you work together, is this clearly visible in the decision-making structure?**

*I am currently responsible for the high needs budget and several teams;*

* *Educational Psychology Service (EPS)*
* *SEND Assessment, Provision and Review (SEND APR)*
* *Special Educational Needs Teaching and Support Service (SENTASS)*
* *Early Education Additional Support Team (EEAST)*
* *Children's Visual Impairment Team (VI)*
* *Hearing Impairment Service (HI)*
* *SEND Placement Planning and Transport*

*My direct area of responsibility is education however as you know SEND is a wide scope and covers social care and education. So, whilst I am not directly responsible for the operational delivery, I am responsible for overseeing the social care and health arrangements for our CYP with SEND. I have weekly meetings with Newcastle Gateshead Clinical commissioning Group (CCG) and the Children with Disabilities service and each of these services sit on the SEND Executive Board.*

1. **There has been a lot of change in leadership roles at Newcastle. The descriptions of what executives do below CEO have disappeared from Newcastle LA website or I can’t easily find them. What is the leadership structure for SEND in Newcastle? Is it possible to publish job titles with names who are fulfilling the roles? Is there an easy to read/understand diagram of strategic working groups for SEND that shows how Information is shared and used to inform decision making? How this links to oversight from local councillors? Is it possible to highlight where representation of parents happens including gaps?**

*There have been lots of changes in leadership and I personally intend to be around for a while which will hopefully bring some stability. I am currently looking at my structure and how the teams are aligned. I am also looking at capacity as the teams have not been reviewed since the SEND reforms. The feedback from parents/carers/settings about what works and what needs to change will directly feed into how local authority SEND services will look. As soon as my structure is finalised it will be published. The terms of reference for our SEND Executive Board and workstreams have been reviewed and are about to be published on our Local Offer, this includes the membership of the Board and workstreams.*

1. **Do you have meetings with all people who have statutory duty? Is that a place where there will be coordinated strategic planning? Is there some way that everyone can pull in the same direction to get needs met? When things are disjointed this is when things go wrong, people pass the buck and you then end up in a battle. This can be soul destroying. The key is open and honest conversations. Accountability isn’t about having a battle it’s about getting the best for our kids. Education, Health and Social Care working together matters in SEND yet there can still be missing decision makers at the right level in strategy meetings. What can be done to ensure there is joint working and capacity issues are addressed so all three are represented?**

*Our SEND Executive Board is jointly chaired by the Director of Children, Education and Skills from the Council and the Executive Director of Nursing and Patient Safety and Quality from the CCG. There is a place for a P/C forum representative and we want it filled. During this period of Covid-19, we are all working better together, and it has created a positive approach. I want a culture change so that when people who if they don’t have the right answer for families, they will find the person who does.*

1. **Are minutes of the SEND Executive Board able to be published on the Local Offer?**

*Yes, we write a Board briefing which is published on the Local Offer and on Services to Schools* [*http://www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Article/77502*](http://www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Article/77502)*. Admittedly, it is not easy to find, improving the Local Offer is a priority.*

1. **Why has it been made so difficult for parents to access SEND transport for their children? The rules for applying for school transport are not clear at all. The on-line form is not where it was on the council website. New parents whose children are to start school in September are unaware that they even need to request it.  We have been giving out the phone number, but parents can’t get through. Plus, parents don’t know how much detail to put on the form.**

*This is the first time that I have been made aware that it is difficult for parents to access SEND travel support for their children. I have had to look into this one with the team as the changes were made prior to me coming into post.*

*I understand that we changed the application process at the beginning of the year to make sure we have accurate up to date information about a young person’s needs, and we did include P/Cs in developing the process. The eligibility criteria for SEND Travel assistance has not changed and can be found* on our web page:

<https://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/special-educational-needs-andor-disabilities-send/special> .

*SEN professionals should point families to the website so that people are aware of where to look. The links on the website, are not great, and the Local Offer is not great. We are going to be changing this and making it better.*

*I absolutely understand your frustration about not being able to get through on the telephone, I appreciate that this has been really difficult. As staff have been working from home we have set up an answer phone message on the main number* ***0191 277 4646,*** *asking that a message be left with contact details, and that a member of the team will be in touch as soon as they can. I tested this myself, incognito, and got a call back within 4 hours. I hope parents will see an improvement here. The e-mail inbox is monitored during usual business hours and any queries should be answered.*

*I am always looking at ways to improve. I have ensured that we have legal oversight on everything we produce, where appropriate. I am more than happy to look into ‘easy read’ versions of our document if people feel that this would help. I will take back the issues that you have raised, particularly the need to improve communications**with parents/carers****.***

1. **Information from Send Transport is often confusing for parents. Feb 2020 there was information posted out to parents that caused a lot of confusion, many parents feared cuts to services, many called LA with questions. Question & answer sessions were offered quickly via Pass it on Parents, schools and others. The following week at a providers-16 plus network in presentation style feedback I was astonished to hear this was parents’ fault. There was no recognition of poorly worded information being part of the problem. On Friday 17th July while out I bumped into some other Newcastle parents who shared their annoyance and confusion over Sen transport letters that had been sent out last week. It causes mistrust in wider Send provisions not just transport. Sadly, Newcastle is not alone Contact has a report how SEN transport information is often misleading can contain illegal advice. This has been an issue for many years. This is lengthy enough without the detail, but I and other parents have tried to address this.**

*I have looked into this and I want to apologise for any anxiety, distress and confusion that this has caused. The attachments to this letter were sent in mistake. I want to assure you that these are not current documents, which are not used by the SEND Transport team. In fact, the attachments have not been used for many years. Since you highlighted this to me, I have made sure the attachments have been completely removed from our electronic drive, as I wanted to make sure this mistake will not be repeated.*

*Please be assured that the Information on the Newcastle City Council website is current and reflective of the service’s processes and practice.*

*I want to assure you that we will be looking to undertake a full consultation on of SEND transport policy and the team will be in touch with parents to ensure that they are given them the opportunity to be involved in that process.*

*Once again, the members of the SEND Transport Team and myself would like to apologise for any distress or confusion the attachments to the letter caused*.

1. **Did parents who receive personal travel budgets (PTBs) have any cuts to payments?  Where any new personal travel budgets agreed with parents during the period? Was there any savings or increased costs? Were there any consultations held with Individual parents or representative groups to changes in these payments?**

*It is fantastic that we have so many PTBs and great that it’s a choice we have. With the introduction of lockdown and the uncertainty of how long this was going to last, parents received their April payments. We didn’t make any further payments where children were not attending school as parents were not incurring any costs. We continued to make payments for the children who attended school during the lockdown.*

*I have recently agreed with legal services that the bonus payment this year will be paid based on the attendance of the children prior to lockdown. I felt that this was only fair as this is the money that is due to the parents for the actual costs incurred and they should not be penalised for the non-attendance over the lockdown.*

1. **What are the expectations of the numbers using SEND transport and costs of delivering transport for the coming academic year? What plans do you have for parent representation?**

*I have no specific plans other than to ensure we continue to deliver our statutory duties in the best way we can.*

1. **I'm aware that special school places are a priority for children with Autism and a new school has been identified in addition to Thomas Bewick. When do you expect to be able to secure places at this provision?**

*It is a priority for us to make sure that we have enough places. There has been a huge growth in needs in Newcastle, with significantly higher cases of Autism than the national average, particularly for those that require a specialist place. We will be increasing capacity to ensure we can cope with the demand. We are consulting on a solution for September, which is to build on Thomas Bewick’s expertise and use fantastic space available at Broadwood school. It has great outdoor space and the whole wing of a building is available. DfE have approved this development, as long as there is no negative feedback from the consultation. So far, we are getting really good feedback from the consultation which ends on 1st August.*

1. **I have found there is a real gap between mainstream and specialist places like Thomas Bewick School. How can we bridge the gap for children with autism?**

*We have to look at the barriers to learning for these children and need to personalise support and not deliver a standard offer. For children in mainstream I would expect that their needs are reviewed every term. We have a range of provision available, including 23 Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) in our schools, which is more than any other area in the Region. We also have a team of specialist teachers that schools can access for additional support and expertise through our single point of contact (SPoC). The impact from this is fabulous, but it has limitations, as there is some confusion about how to access the support available. We are reviewing the process to make it clearer and stronger. We have lots of specialists who can help us get it right.*

*We are carrying out a survey for parents who have children at ARPs, to get some steer about what is needed to improve and what works well.*

1. **What provision is there in Newcastle for a child on the autism spectrum who is academically very able and highly verbal but whose needs cannot be met in a mainstream school even with an EHCP?**

*There are many able and highly verbal children with ASD in mainstream schools either in their local schools or in ARPs. The question for me is, what are the barriers to their learning and inclusion? This is so different for every pupil. It may be about sensory needs, social and emotional understanding, learning styles etc. If a child has SEND it is important that the support that is offered is personalised to meet their needs, not just a standardised offer. If those needs aren’t being met and the child is struggling to cope, then we would expect a review to be called (annual if EHCP or termly if on SEN Support), so that what is available can be reviewed and amended. There are specialist professionals available within the council e.g. the Communication and Interaction teachers, and the Education Psychology Service who can support schools to review the child’s needs and what is being offered. Placement in a communication and interaction ARP could also be an option for this child.*

1. **Is there any possibility of schools receiving funding to be able to adopt evidence-based approaches such as Thrive?**

*Several schools already use their notional SEND budget to fund approaches such as Thrive and organisations such as Kalmer counselling, so there is already precedence for this type of approach. Advice on evidence-based strategies and approaches is available through the SEMH elements of the Single Point of Contact (Educational Psychologist (EP) time and advice from Trinity staff) as well as through EPS traded work.*

*As part of the SEMH project the EPs are looking at research into what works for SEMH and Chris Rollings at Hadrian has raised Thrive as something to consider. We have invested in AET (Autism Education Trust) this year – we hold the license for this training. We will be making this available to all settings which we envisage should lead to a baseline of understanding. Our expectations and challenge will rise and hopefully parental confidence in turn will increase.*

1. **What is the time scale for the Autism Education Trust training?**

*We are now an accredited Autism Education Trust training provider to ensure that mainstream colleagues have all the skills they need to deliver excellent services to children with ASD in mainstream schools. Training will be offered across all settings, including early years, from September. The training is free for all settings in the first year. The timescale will be agreed with each school*

1. **If services cannot be met, or there are substantial delays due to NHS availability, what do you propose to do? Children with Autism have been without Speech and Language Therapy for a number of years until January 2020 when the contract was extended but it appeared to be acceptable by the LA.  Likewise, where Occupational Therapy or other services are needed and stipulated in Section F within an EHCP, waiting lists can be 12 months and longer, so needs are not being met.**

*These waiting times are absolutely not acceptable. As soon as I was made aware of the timescales, I escalated them to the SEND Executive Board. This data is currently being validated, however at the next SEND Exec we should have a clear set of health, education and social care PIs that feed in on a regular basis. Once the data has been verified, we will be instructing the need to review the reasons why and agree what needs to be done. On an individual basis if children are not getting what is written in their plan, I would want to know about it so that I can escalate and challenge.*

1. **This year’s focus was on Autism. Is there an Autism strategy? Where can it be found? What progress has been made so far?**

*Although we have not published an autism strategy, we have invested in: Autism Training through our membership of the Autism Education Trust (AET); additional specialist school places; and additional specialist Educational Psychologists and specialist teachers to support young people with Autism. I am aware of the unacceptable timescales for autism diagnosis and I am absolutely committed to working with the CCG to address this and ensure that pre and post diagnosis support is accessible.*

1. **Will a review be undertaken of current practises within the LA and will the service become more transparent? If so, will you include parents who use the service to gain further insight?  For example, panel meetings have no published minutes (who goes to these, what was reviewed, if the proposed provision is not agreed, why not?)**

*I am currently reviewing all our current practices. I am looking at how we can improve, and I intend to build a system of person-centred practice from start to finish. I started with feedback from parents/carers on what they think of our services at team level. We are reviewing each stage of SEN Support and the Statutory EHC process. We are auditing all the panel processes, which will include the membership, terms of reference and decision making. I hope you appreciate, however, that some things, e.g. minutes will not be published. However, I would expect that families are given direct clear feedback with a rationale for the decision. We will publish terms of reference which clarifies panel membership and decision-making powers.*

1. **I have no doubt everybody wishes to deliver person centred services. All schools & services have had to adapt to changes. It can feel as if services are left behind. My personal experience here is of the Educational Psychology Service which is paper based. This means as parents we have to wait until schools are back before we can receive a copy of a report for children were seen March, the last week of full school opening. We have good WIFI access. We might have been able to use that advice to help over the last term. What plans are there to ensure services have the right resources and systems to be able to work well?**

*Covid-19 did cause initial difficulties in getting reports for children at SEN support level out to parents as the available administrative capacity had to concentrate on disseminating EHCP advices. However, we are now sending out reports as well as advices, my understanding is that whenever reports have been sent to schools they have also been sent to parents at the same time. If a parent has not yet received a paper copy of a report, I suggest they contact the EPs.*

*Up to this point the EPS has been a paper-based service due to concerns about sending reports out on insecure network connections. However, the use of cryptshare is now being investigated for all SEN services and all receivers of reports.*

1. **There was a recent parent questionnaire with a very short timeline for completion. Why was this done with such urgency? Many parents were not aware and did not have opportunity to respond. Was this a 'tick box' exercise? Have the results been analysed and what was your response rate?**

*Apologies for the people that did not have the opportunity to respond. We have done a lot of surveys recently as I am keen to understand what people feel. This could have been my survey with my Talking Head? This initially had 3 weeks turn-around time however it may have taken some time to get out. This survey was to find out what people think about services and I know Jill has sent it out again. I needed a quick response as I want people’s views and experiences to feed into my initial thoughts for a SEND service review. If it is this one, I have had 32 responses to date, and I don’t do tick box. I am looking at a building a systematic approach to ensure that we always tell people what we are doing differently as a result of what you have told us.*

*Working together is not going to be a quick fix, I know that. We need to build trust and take it a step at a time. We won’t always get it right, but we want to be creative and try out new things. I want to do this in partnership with parents and that takes time. However, there are also some things that I just need to do, to try to get improvements happening as quickly as we can.*

1. **A recent questionnaire was issued, and I think Deanne said there had been over 500 responses received, are there any trends that you will be focusing on and will details be published/ shared? Can that survey be published and shared for parents to see. I know it has been seen and used by staff.**

*Here it is:*



It led to the production of guidance documents for schools that are referred to in question 30.

1. **Is there a mechanism/awards/acknowledgment process that we can use to log praise for individuals, schools (our primary school) and certain teachers (SENCo, class teacher) when they have provided excellent SEND provision to us as an individual family?**

*There is no official mechanism, but it is really important to recognise good practice. We want to look at how we build that into our local offer in some way. Some parents do let schools and services know and parents could inform Judith Lane,* [*sendiassadmin@newcastle.gov.uk*](mailto:sendiassadmin@newcastle.gov.uk) *or contact Sheila Kingsland, School Effectiveness (*[*sheila.kingsland@newcastle.gov.uk*](mailto:sheila.kingsland@newcastle.gov.uk)*) as we do acknowledge good practice through our SENCO networks. We would have to be careful to make any awards/recognition based on one parent’s perception, and also schools are understandingly careful about over promoting. We are reviewing our Local Offer and will consider whether it can have a function to enable direct feedback and highlight good practice I am also looking at the accessibility of our complaints and compliments information on the local offer.*

1. **A number of parents: Newcastle has a number of summer activities but very little for those with SEND. What plans are there for more activities in the future?**

*This year I offered all our special schools a chance to be involved in the ‘Best Summer Ever’ programme. Only two schools had the capacity to deliver the programme during the holidays. As the cost of transport was a barrier, we agreed to jointly fund the transport with Children’s Social Care. The schools offered the service to the children that they thought would benefit the most. I had a call with the Head to hear about the activities the children were engaging in. It seemed that everyone was having a fantastic time. Next year I would want to look at rolling it out more widely.*

*Our short break offer is an issue, over the next year we need to have full consultation about what we need to do to improve. We are currently scoping the work out and have no timescale yet. Parent/carers will be involved in this work.*

*The contacts I’ve made in social care have been fantastic, they have joint funded transport and are up for working well with us.*

1. **I am a carer for my granddaughter, we have good support so far for her but if I did have an issue, I would like to think that I could get the services we need. I do think there is an issue in social care as there isn’t the capacity to give children a disability social care worker, when they need one. Need to make sure that provision and support is directed into the right place.**

*I cannot comment on capacity within social care however every family should know where they need to go to for help. My review will look at capacity in SEND local authority education services and I see where we need to change and what we need to do differently.*

1. **As a lack of parent/carer forum or participation with the LA affected the Ofsted inspection, how can you reassure us that the LA is seeking a genuine partnership and not just ticking boxes? I used to work for the LA and my experiences have been that sometime things can be tokenistic I wanted to make sure that this wasn’t going to be the case.**

*It will take time to gain trust and confidence. I am in this role because I am absolutely passionate about getting it right for CYP. I decided to come to Newcastle because there is opportunity to invest. We have fantastic specialist services. I want to get it right and we need to work together to get it right. We all want to have a system that works well and can be responsive. If I don’t work with and listen to P/C and CYP, then fundamentally I won’t get it right. You are the people that can inform and challenge me. We need to be working in partnership and get it right together. As long as we have the SEND system across the local area set up which is informed by the views and experiences of Parents and carers and children and young people and we are able to identify and meet needs, I will be happy. This is an exciting time for us to develop new ways of working and starting from a clear page. We really want to get P/C forum established as soon as possible as we need their input to the things we need to do to move things forward. The voice of our Parent/Carers is important for us getting it right together.*

*I am hoping that we do get to have a formally recognised P/C forum established and I hope that by working with me your confidence and assurance will grow. I absolutely operate in an open and honest way. I have nothing to hide and wherever possible I will always provide a rationale as to my decision making.*

***Catherine:*** *I**have worked with Deanne in another authority and we established a P/C forum that is still going strong. She is committed to making this work well. We want to develop a P/C forum with you all to work strategically across Education, Health and Social Care so that we can get it right for your children. We really need you. There are 12 LAs in the Region and they have representatives Regionally as well as Nationally which links to central government. The swell of parent voice is fantastic. A neighboring authority have managed to get a forum together despite lock down. So, we can do this together because Newcastle children deserve to have their voice heard. We want to develop a P/C forum with you all. Let’s decide what it is and what it isn’t. There is a grant for P/C forum of £15,000 to run it. It really needs to work strategically across Education, Health and Social care so that we can get it right for your children.*

1. **Are there plans for a parent panel?**

*Are you referring to an advisory panel of some sort? We used parental advisory panels as part of the accelerator programme in Tees that I was heavily involved in. It worked really well, in fact, I think it has just been referred for a national award. It really raised awareness and positively impacted on some young people’s experience in mainstream schools. This is certainly something that I would like to consider developing in Newcastle. Potentially we could have parental advisory boards around each area of need.*

1. **I am aware of Voices work with young people. Is there a plan to raise awareness of SEN support with pupils and parents generally? How to access it? What to expect? Where to go if something goes wrong?**

*We are going to have a job opportunity for a young person to work alongside Jill and part of this role will be to look at how we develop communication with SEND children and young people and raise awareness generally to create positive learning environments. We are really excited about this as we know having a peer led approach works exceptionally well. As we move forward with our ‘getting it right together’ approach, we will look at how we develop communication approaches. With your help we will get a lot better at this.*

1. **My children do not understand SEN services even though they have had support. They just feel they don’t understand. What can we do to get awareness out there for everyone?**

*We need to do more to raise awareness of the SPOC. I am keen to challenge the idea that SEN support will be different in each setting. I want to see consistency. 100s of children accessed early support last year but not all settings are aware of it. I want to change that and make sure that all children have access to the same offer.*

1. **Are there minimum expectations of what schools and services should deliver? What data is kept? How is it held accountable?**

*The expectation is that schools follow the SEND mainstream guidance which outlines provision the LA would expect to be in place at SEN support for pupils in mainstream schools.*

*SEN services (SENTASS, EPS, EEAST, HI, VI) support schools to help them identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils at SEN support.*

*Ofsted will look at provision for pupils with SEN when they inspect schools. Sheila Kingsland, School Effectiveness, SEN adviser reads all Ofsted reports and letters and follows up with individual schools to ensure good practice is shared and areas to improve identified.*

*The SEND review framework is a self-evaluation tool which schools can use to look at their own practice. If there were concerns about SEN provision in a school then the LA could carry out a formal review of SEND, using this framework to identify areas for improvement.*

*In Newcastle we want to ‘Get it Right Together’ so we prefer to work with schools, sharing good practice and offering support to improve.*

1. **I have an easily distracted child, doesn’t like to write and has difficulties following instructions. How can we help a child like this?** **He has SEMH but we as parents think there is something else which affects his ability to follow instruction and do writing. This really affects his school life.**

*All children can be easily distracted. We have all had problems like this. We need to look at assessment, do they need extra support etc. The school special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) is the person to ask advice about this. One option would be for the school to refer to the SENTASS service. We have a mainstream guidance document on LO which sets out what mainstream schools should be delivering:* [*SEND Mainstream Guidance | Newcastle Support Directory*](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/kb5/newcastle/fsd/advice.page?id=jry0WoXRz1Y)

1. **We have 3 teens ages from 13-19. They know what SEND is have awareness of various disabilities and are generally positive about inclusion. I have been shocked how little they know about SEN support, during lockdown. All 3 believe it did not or does not exist in their schools or college. They did not know or think they could raise concerns themselves. All 3 have accessed SEN services they have had positive experiences of assessments, staff and other professionals. What it comes down to is nothing changed to support them day to day with their identified needs and in some cases, it led to them feeling blamed or the expectation they could not complete work. Peers also struggled to access help.  They felt less included as a result.  With that in mind what plans do Newcastle have around SEN support?**

*Thank you for bringing this to my attention. I have become aware that there is currently little oversight of SEN support in Newcastle. The expectation is that a child should have a SEN support plan or Individual Education Plan which is reviewed on a termly basis. This plan should set out their needs and progress reviewed. There is currently no consistent approach to this in Newcastle. I am considering this in my review of the structure as to where I may need to build capacity to support this.*

*I know that in September 2019 the SPoC was introduced. Specialist education teams sit round a table considering referrals for CYP who are at SEN support. This SpoC has been great. I have just been evaluating the impact of this for our Education and Skills annual report and between Sept 2019 – Jan 2020 and a total of 171 children and young people were able to receive additional early support as a direct result of SPoC. Also, Communication & Interaction teachers have trained 90 school staff and worked directly with individual pupils which has helped maintain their mainstream placement. Specialist Communication and Interaction teachers in early years have provided interventions for 104 children through SPoC since September 2019 and delivered training to 70 practitioners on supporting children with ASD in Early Years Settings.*

*This next year, I want to increase accessibility of SPoC – widen awareness, increase agency reps at the table (SALT, OT, PT, CYPs) but also increase the expectations of schools. They will need to demonstrate that a SEN Support plan is in place that has been regularly reviewed with P/C and the CYP.*

1. **What plans are there for children with SEN to support them with returning to school in September?**

*Discussions with schools indicates that they are very aware of the need to support children with SEND as they return to school in September, but every school is likely to have a slightly different approach. I recommend that parents contact their own schools for details.*

*Several documents have been prepared to help schools in their work with children with key transitions at this time; back into school, between early years settings, age phase transfers, into post 16 settings. There is also a document that specifically relates to ASD pupils. Social and emotional wellbeing is recognised as a key priority and a guidance document about supporting students to develop resilience and strategies for coping with change has also been sent out to all schools. You can read the documents here:* [*Guidance and best practice | School Transition Documents | Services to Schools*](http://www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Article/75681) *. In addition, we are working on developing little videos with key messages that will be available for parents to use to help them support their child.*

1. **Parents need to know how we get that extra help for those children struggling with basics.**

*This comes down to quality teaching and I encourage parents to speak your schools and the SENCO about what can be put in place at school.*

1. **Where EHCPs are in place and annual reviews submitted how will the LA challenge areas where no progress has been made and no outcomes met?**

*I am aware that we need to have more robust oversight of EHCP annual reviews. This is an area that I am considering in my service review.*

1. **EHC plans: At the Feb 2020 Health Scrutiny Committee it was shared that between 20% -70% of plans are completed on time, depending on the time of year. The quality was variable. Has there been any progress on this? A common factor was missing health or social-care advice. Has there been any changes implemented to improve health and social care input?**

*The timeliness and quality of our EHCPs is one of my priorities to improve. The timeliness was improving but is still not acceptable and quality is still variable. I am currently pulling together a ‘Getting it right together’ Quality Assurance (QA) Framework, which some of you may have already contributed to. This framework sets out our intentions of what QA activity we plan to do and who will be involved. The voices and the experiences of children, young people and parents/carers are at the heart of this.*

1. **Did the review on school exclusions of pupils with SEND happen? Are there any recommendations?**

*The current review of SEMH provision has started and will include looking at the data re exclusions. Initial findings/recommendations are expected to be published in October.*

1. **Having an easy to find, place on the Local Offer web page for parent questions and answers would be a good.**

*We will publish this note on the local offer once we have agreed it with you. We are looking at redoing the LO website and this is a key area for us to get right. We will be sending out a LO survey and asking for P/Cs who have an interest**in this to let us know so that they can be part of the working group to trial out a new site. We will also be considering a place on our LO for parents Q&As going forward.*

1. **How can parents who haven’t got ‘connectivity’ be involved?**

*The parent/carer forum will gather that voice, if there are immediate questions please could you email me or write at the following address.*

[*Deanne.Taylor@Newcastle.gov.uk*](mailto:Deanne.Taylor@Newcastle.gov.uk)

*Deanne Taylor*

*Head of SEND*

*Newcastle Council*

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