

# East Sussex Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Disabilities (D)

## Comprehensive Needs Assessment Summary and Recommendations

Updated due to amended ASD information, 2016

East Sussex Public Health Department

A wide variety of information sources have been used for this Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) including: National evidence, strategies and guidance; wider national sources of information such as key relevant organisations; local databases including the SEN database, DLA data and the Social Care CareFirst database; local data from services, local surveys and key documents; existing local consultation documents; and semi-structured interviews conducted with service providers. This summary provides a synopsis of the full JSNA and highlights key facts, issues and gaps, and assets. The full needs assessment is available on request including the learnings from this process.

# KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

## Current population

- East Sussex has 27% of the population aged 25 years or under, lower than the South East (30%) and England (31%)
- There are currently 13,500 children with SEN known to schools, a rise of 4.4% of the school population compared to 2004 (12,700).
- Between 2010 and 2013 DLA claimants aged under 16 rose 5% from 2,700 to 2,800.

## Population Changes

- There is no expected rise in the number of disabled children, yet complexity of need and demand on service is increasing.
- In comparison to nationally:
  - The number of young people claiming Disability Living Allowance is rising with girls increasing nearly twice as fast as boys, although 70% DLA claimants under 16 are boys.
  - The rate of Moderate Learning Difficulty is lower than nationally but is rising faster (from 2.29 per 1,000 in 2008 to 2.74 in 2012, compared to 3.60 to 3.65 nationally).
- There is a correlation between the distribution of SEN and areas of deprivation.

## Education

- Against declining national trends the number of the school population with statements locally has increased (from 1.89% in 2008 to 2.28% in 2013 compared to a national decline from 1.87% to 1.81% in the same period).
- Since 2004 the school census shows a continuous upward trend in pupils identified with:
  - Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) (340 pupils in 2004 to 600 in 2013).
  - Visual impairments (VI) (25 pupils in 2004 to 30 in 2013).
  - Profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) (10 pupils in 2005 to 30 in 2013).
  - Speech language and communication needs (SLCN). (370 pupils in 2004 to 580 in 2013).
- In contrast to rising national trends, Key Stage 1 attainment of SEN pupils has fallen in East Sussex in reading, writing and maths.
- East Sussex has the highest rates of exclusion and absence amongst our statistical neighbours, with exclusions weighted towards:
  - Primary schools.
  - Children with SEN.

## Children in Need

- Safeguarding referrals for children with SEN are increasing resulting in rising demand for placement outside the family.
- SEN agency placements for moderate learning difficulties have increased 114% over the last year.
- The most prevalent type of SEN for children in Need (25.7%), those with a child protection order (37.8%) and Looked After Children (46.4%) is behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
- One in four children with a child protection plan have a special educational need and despite recent decline, the rate of Child Protection Plans (65 per 10,000) remains almost twice that of England (37.8 per 10,000).

## Wider Findings

- Evidence indicates that there will be increasing pressure on social care Transition Services.
- Over two fifths of SEN NEET young people (530 or 41%) have emotional or behavioural difficulties, representing a 4% increase from 2012.
- The numbers of children accessing short break services increased 2.5% between 2011/12 and 2012/13 (736 to 755).
- Preliminary data indicates that females, and those with communication needs are more likely to take up the i-go leisure card.
- Demand for equipment is increasing, which can be expected as the complexity of need is increasing.

# KEY ISSUES AND GAPS

While there are a number of key issues and gaps that have been raised through the needs assessment process, it is expected that the new ways of approaching SEND being implemented through the legislative reforms are addressing some of these issues and gaps, or will be addressing them through the opportunities for improved information, joint working and child and family centred approaches to provision. The recommendations build on areas that are working well, as well as address key issues and gaps.

## Service design and delivery

- Within **service design** there is currently:
  - No common definition of disability or consistent disability recording, particularly in health.
  - A need to improve understanding and acceptance of disability within the wider community.
  - A lack of transparency of entitlements and thresholds (but the Local Offer is expected to address this).
  - A paucity of parent/carer/young person feedback within and across some services.
  - Little strategy in place to involve young people in service design decisions.
  - An increase in inclusion of parent's expertise in service design and delivery, but this could be further improved.
- Within **service delivery** there is currently:
  - Improved joint working between education, health and social care brought about by the SEND reforms.
  - Service provider consensus that current financial and funding directives have made service delivery more challenging, indicating a need to ensure improved joint commissioning right across disability services.
  - A challenge to change practitioner and family mindset to a new child-centred, outcome based way of joint working. Silo working prevails as no common language is in place both within and between services.

## Education

- Support for SEN is excellent in some schools but there is a lack of understanding of targeted, universal and special support and how to ensure they're in place. Best practice is needed across all schools to ensure that schools are confident in meeting the needs of all children.
- A more inclusive culture is needed within schools regarding provision of educational support for SEN.
- National and Local evidence suggests there are inequities in level of provision for pupils with behaviour related SEN compared to that provided for pupils with physical disabilities.
- Overall, at Key stages 2-4, there is an increasing gap between SEN and non SEN pupils in both Maths and English.
- Exclusion in primary school for SEN pupils has increased significantly in recent years and is a growing problem.

## Health

- There is a lack of alternative residential provision for those who cannot remain with their family in the local area. This is currently being addressed by changes to the fostering process and respite provision becoming longer term.
- Communication between health and other agencies could be improved with regards to referral processes. .
- There have been high numbers of referrals to some services which have not resulted in that service being provided, notably for therapy services and the Children's Disability Service. This needs assessment does not include information on those who are not accepted by services and it is expected that the Local Offer will clarify referral processes and eligibility criteria
- Acute services are not providing appropriate services for 16-17 year olds with SEND, particularly through transition to adult services.

## Wider Issues

- Young people with SEN/D report being bullied because of a lack of knowledge about their SEN/D and assumptions about their abilities.
- Young people with SEN/D report a lack of confidence that teachers are generally equipped to deal with bullying related to disability.
- Service providers, young people and families have all identified the need to enable young people with SEN/D to travel to school trips with their peers rather than travelling separately. For example there is no accessible coach in the county that schools can use
- There are a number of barriers preventing parents accessing childcare: cost, lack of appropriate services and inadequate information.

## Specific Groups

- Small babies are surviving longer due to medical improvements such as ventilation and currently services tend not to take the long term view in relation to future support these babies will need services are needing to provide support for greater numbers of smaller children with highly complex needs. Those with milder needs or emotional or behavioural difficulties often don't meet eligibility criteria for SEND services but the Local Offer should make alternative support that is available more transparent.
- Children with ASD need greater support, particularly from mental health services and for behavioural needs.
- Local and National evidence indicates that differing end points of services has led to a gap in general support for some 16-18 year olds. Local and national parent carer perception is that support is geared towards primary carers and support for secondary carers or for separated parents could be improved.

# WHAT IS WORKING WELL

## Key Assets

- The **legislative reforms of SEND** are providing opportunities for joint commissioning, culture change to improve services and support, greater integrated working and greater choice and control for young people, their families and their carers
- The **Local Offer** is a new approach to delivering information in partnership with parents and young people in a transparent way with clarity of information which will address several of the communication, information and service issues outlined in the needs assessment.
- The work of the **Well Child Nurse** has effectively developed cost-effective provision of local care packages to support children at home as opposed to in tertiary placements.
- A new **local model of equipment provision** shows faster turnaround, greater flexibility, greater use of recycling and decontamination of equipment and initial reports of increased family service satisfaction.
- Over 12% of all **equipment is now recycled** and this is increasing, with potentially large cost benefit.
- The choice, range and flexibility of **short break services** being offered is highly valued by families and those referring them.
- The **key worker role** is very highly regarded for the in-depth knowledge of the child and their needs, and as single point of contact for parents and services, creating more efficient communication and less duplication. The form of keyworking is changing with keyworking functions being extended to the remit of all staff in contact with children and young people with SEND as outlined in the full needs assessment.
- East Sussex County Council received the highest national grading for the social care **transition process** for meeting all statutory and guidance requirements.
- Early evaluation of **personal budgets** suggests that increased choice and control has had a positive impact on disabled children and their families as a whole, with valuing the support plan process and the ability to decide how the budget can meet the agreed outcomes for their child.
- East Sussex **anti-bullying resources**, produced to support SEND children and young people were used to inform the development of national training resources which are being rolled out to all Achievement for All schools in the country.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on robust evaluation of local and national evidence and guidelines and should be used to inform commissioning of SEND services in East Sussex.

In order to meet the strategic direction of the SEND pathfinder approach the following principles should be adhered to:

- a) Information collection within and between services is improved and aligned.
- b) Communication across services and with children and their families is transparent and consistent.

## SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** It is recommended greater joint working is developed around shared outcomes and integrated services

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** It is recommended the key-worker service is expanded to support greater numbers of children and families as it is highly valued by current service recipients both locally and nationally. This is being addressed through the current reforms to keyworker provision in East Sussex.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** It is recommended further evaluation is needed on the work of the WellChild Nurse. Research suggests local placements enhance parent and carer wellbeing and are potentially financially beneficial for local authorities. If local evidence supports this then it is recommended this service is further developed.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** It is recommended the potential to expand the new local model for provision of equipment is explored to further improve family service experience and for the cost benefit of addressing issues such as provision duplication and recycling.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** It is recommended the range, quality and availability of short breaks continue to be developed as they are highly valued by parents, carers and children both nationally and locally.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:** It is recommended predicted increases in some types of SEND should be incorporated into forward planning of children's services, particularly:

- Services for ventilated babies and those surviving longer with more complex needs
- Mental health services for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder

## TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** It is recommended that data collection of information regarding children and young people with SEN/D is improved in the following ways:

1. That all sectors agree a common definition of 'disability' to enable consistency in disability recording and knowledge.
2. That a database of children and young people with disabilities and/or complex health needs is developed across health, social care and education, potentially including young people whose level of need does not qualify them for SEN provision.
3. That there is regular collation of the service user feedback collected at service provider level so that this evidence can better inform policy and practice across whole services.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** It is recommended engagement with service users is improved by:

1. Continuing to build on the current development of methods to better engage parents and carers in service development and delivery. This is being developed through SEND reforms.
2. Improving engagement with children and young people with SEN/D in provision, design and service delivery in line with national guidance. This is being developed through SEND reforms.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** It is recommended communication with practitioners and families is improved by:

1. Providing clarity around the roles of different agencies to assist improved partnership working.
2. Agreeing common eligibility criteria across services that are then made more transparent for families, referrers and providers through the Local Offer.
3. All providers contribute to the Local Offer
4. Examining communication pathways and referral processes within and between services

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION BY CHILDREN'S DISABILITY SERVICES

**RECOMMENDATION 1:** It is recommended further research is needed to address the dearth of information on lifestyle behaviours of children and young people with disabilities and how this impacts on their needs.

**RECOMMENDATION 2:** It is recommended specific research with service users and their families and carers is needed where there are gaps indicated in qualitative information. This would be subject to local research governance procedures.

**RECOMMENDATION 3:** It is recommended consultation is undertaken with schools and other educational settings and provision regarding the needs of children and young people with SEND and the confidence of the settings in meeting these needs.

**RECOMMENDATION 4:** It is recommended that social media resources such as the Information for Families' FaceBook page are investigated as potential opportunities for engaging a wider cohort of young people and their families in service design and delivery.

**RECOMMENDATION 5:** It is recommended that more focused research is undertaken locally with those using personal budgets to inform future commissioning work.

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