

PPA Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reform Bulletin

October 2014



Welcome to our latest update on the SEND reforms

From 1st September 2014 systems for provision of services to children with special educational needs and disabilities started changing. The changes affect families who have children with special educational needs, whether they attend mainstream or special school, are preschool or in early adulthood.

Positive Parent Action (PPA) is Wandsworth's parent forum and has been involved in the process of the change. This bulletin gives a brief overview of our involvement. We really hope you find time to read the whole thing, but in case you can't here are **five KEY** things you need to know:

1 In England, from 1st September 2014, the law around Special Educational Needs and Disability changed. This means that some processes are now different from how they were.

2 In Wandsworth, parents/carers continue to be involved in shaping the way local changes happen. A key organisation in the parental involvement is Positive Parent Action (PPA), Wandsworth's parent/carer forum.

3 PPA is hosting parent/carer training on the legal aspects of the new SEND system. The training is being run by **Independent Parental Special Education Advice (IPSEA)** from 9.45am to 2.30pm on **Thursday 6th November**, at Battersea Library, 265 Lavender Hill SW11 1JB.

4 For those of you who can't get to meetings during the day, PPA and Contact a Family are jointly hosting an evening **SEND information session at the Early Years Centre 7.00-8.30pm on Tuesday 11th November**.

Both these sessions are free and are for adults only; unfortunately there won't be a crèche available. However we may be able to help with childcare costs if you can arrange that yourselves. We will reimburse travel expenses.

Places are limited so please book with Elizabeth by 3rd November – contact details below.

5 There is loads more SEND information on-line that you can access. Key points of information are:

Council for Disabled Children
www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Contact a Family
www.cafamily.org.uk

Positive Parent Action
www.positiveparentaction.org.uk

Parent Partnership Service
www.parentpartnership.org.uk

IPSEA
www.ipsea.org.uk

Family Information Service
www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis

NOTE: It is very early days for the new systems and everyone will take time to adjust to the changes.

Our experience so far has been that Wandsworth have put significant effort into the implementation of the reforms, and are aiming to achieve positive outcomes for our children. We welcome Wandsworth's ongoing willingness to include parental

involvement in the development of service provision. It has been a lot of work and there will always be a need to consult a wider group of parents, so PPA will continue to keep you updated through our events, newsletters and website and facebook www.positiveparentaction.org.uk. Please get in touch to make sure we can include your views too.

Other News

Wandsworth currently have a consultation out on how they plan to provide additional special school places over the next 10 years. It can be found here:

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/sen/consultations

We held two successful parent/carer SEND coffee mornings in Battersea and Roehampton before the summer holidays. We intend to run a similar one in Tooting in the near future.

Contact details

Elizabeth Nasse
Parent Participation Facilitator

Term time:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday

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020 8947 5260

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or:
positiveparentaction@yahoo.co.uk

Our next regular PPA meeting is at 10am-12pm, on Wednesday 19th November at the Early Years Centre. We always need new members, so please let Elizabeth know if you would like to come.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

PLEASE GET IN TOUCH IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO COME TO THE NEXT MEETING
Positive Parent Action c/o Contact A Family, 1 Siward Road, London SW17 0LA
www.positiveparentaction.org.uk and info@positiveparentaction.org.uk

Summary of feedback from PPA Co-Chairs and Reps

In Wandsworth, the reform process has been split into five workstreams. Here is a brief summary of what our parent/carer Co-Chairs and Reps have reported back from the workstream meetings over the last few months:

SEND Steering Group

Wandsworth have published many documents on their website which explain how the new SEND systems work locally. Because of time pressures, we've had more input in some documents than others and intend to take part in reviewing all the documents to see where they can be improved. Plans are being made for a SEND parent/carer information event to take place at the Civic Suite in January. This is a follow up to the joint event we held at the Civic Suite in March 2014. Details will follow later in the year.

The group has considered how parents can be involved in the EHC/Complex Needs/SEN panel process, which decides what services will be allocated to meet the outcomes in an EHC plan. Over the summer, families who took part in the EHC trial were invited to take part in the panel process along with three PPA parents who took on a role as impartial observer on the panel (with the agreement of the family involved). There is further thought needed on how this will work in the long term, but we are hopeful to finalise this soon.

Education Health & Care plans (EHC)

These are replacing Statements

- Wandsworth have developed a template for their EHC plan. They have used this for families taking part in the trial EHC assessment process and have revised the plan after feedback from parents and professionals. Although we can't comment on the legal aspects of Wandsworth's EHC plan, we are generally pleased with the layout. However we would like it to include arrangements for travelling to school.
- Wandsworth have developed a 'transition' plan showing how they intend to convert existing Statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments to EHC plans. We agreed with their proposed schedule for prioritising conversions between now and April 2018.

Personal Budgets

- Wandsworth have devised a flowchart which shows who is eligible for a personal budget and have written guidance to explain the principles. It can be found on the Local Offer website. It is likely that this guidance will evolve as families begin to use personal budgets in practice.

- Some messages have become clear. Despite the changes, there is no additional money available for provision for services.

Children at special schools are unlikely to receive personal budgets, because their personal funding allocation is pooled to fund specialist provision in school.

If you are eligible for a personal budget, but choose not to have one, you can be reassured that your child will still receive services to support outcomes identified in their EHC plan.

Local Offer (services that are available locally)

- Parents have been involved in the development of Wandsworth's Local Offer website and have asked for feedback mechanisms to be included in the website to highlight what gaps in services or quality there might be.

The Local Offer is supported by workers who can speak to you on the phone if you are not online - contact Wandsworth's Family Information Service on 020 8871 7899.

Joint Commissioning

Local Authority and Health working together

- Commissioning services is complex and it has been difficult to establish how this will work in practice. There is currently a trial of a jointly commissioned project at a Wandsworth special school and hopefully this will pave the way for further joint working.

Preparing for Adulthood Workstream

- We have asked for those young people with Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) to be advised how their LDAs will be transferred into EHC plans, in the same way as those with Statements. LDAs have to be converted into EHC plans by September 2016.
- The Preparing for Adulthood group has been reviewing a new draft document for families and young people about to go through transition. We are commenting on that document and have also requested that an easy read version is produced, aimed at young people with learning disabilities.
- The group has identified some issues around the way in which young people with learning difficulties are referred to adult health services by therapists and other medical professionals.
- An employment sub-group is about to start work on looking at new ways to support young people into employment.

AN UPDATED EXPLANATION TO SOME OF THE NEW TERMS

SEND reforms - The way education, health and care provision has changed for those children with Special Educational Needs and Disability. The reforms affect children and young adults (0-25years). The reforms have started and will continue over the next few years. Local Authorities have until April 2018 to complete the conversion to the new system.

EHC plans - Over the next three years, Statements of special educational needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) will be phased out and will be replaced by Education Health and Care plans.



Local Offer - this describes what provision is available and how to access it. Wandsworth's Local Offer can be found by clicking the FIS icon at the bottom of the: www.wandsworth.gov.uk homepage. There is a Google translate facility for those who find it easier to use another language.

Preparing for Adulthood - this is how provision will be continued from childhood into adulthood and is also known as 'transition' to adult services.

Personal Budgets - Some families, whose children have an EHC plan, may feel they want to have more flexibility in how their child's provision is made and may request a Personal Budget. This may include the option to receive payments directly from the Council, allowing families to choose services or may be a notional budget held by the Council, allowing families to decide how it is allocated. You do not have to opt for a personal budget for your child.

Pathfinders - These are Local Authorities that trialled the new processes over the last couple of years. Their findings have helped other Local Authorities make their own plans.

Parent Co-Chairs and Reps - These are Wandsworth parent/carers who have offered to give a parent's point of view of the SEND reforms. They are paid a small fee for attending meetings and giving their views and feedback. They attend PPA meetings and are committed to using their experience to represent all families in the Borough.

Family Information Service - This service provides wide-ranging information for all families in the Borough and along with Parent Partnership is the focus of local SEND information, including the Local Offer.

Wandsworth Information, Advice and Support Service (WAISS) *Previously called Parent Partnership* This service provides in depth SEND advice to help you understand how your child's educational needs should be met.

Independent Supporters - In Wandsworth, Independent Supporters will help families who find the new systems more difficult. Available from Contact a Family and WAISS.

Clinical Commissioning Groups - these are the organisations that are in charge of how NHS health services are provided.

**WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE
and WE DO NEED YOUR INPUT TOO!
PLEASE COME AND JOIN US**