

# Special Edition PPA SEN Reform Bulletin

February 2014



## Welcome to this special focus on SEN reforms

From September 2014, sweeping changes will affect how children with additional needs are provided

Positive Parent Action is Wandsworth's parent forum and is involved in the process of the change.

The changes will affect families who have a child with special educational needs, whether they attend mainstream or special school, are pre-school or in early adulthood. This special edition gives an overview

of what parents may expect. The Council officer who is managing the change process, **Liz Malcolm** also talks about the reforms from the Council's perspective. We really hope you find time to read all feedback, but in case you can't, here are **FIVE KEY** things you need to know:

**1** From September 2014, the way **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** are met will start changing across the UK.

**2** In Wandsworth, parents/carers are involved in shaping the way local changes will happen. A key organisation in the parental involvement is Positive Parent Action (PPA).

**3** You are invited to attend an SEN Reform event, hosted jointly by PPA and Wandsworth Council on **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2014, 9.45am to 2.30pm** at the Civic Suite, Wandsworth Town Hall to hear all about these important changes. Speakers will include:  
**Philippa Stobbs** – from the Council for Disabled Children,  
**Claire Lazarus** – expert on Personal Budgets and  
**Carol Payne** – Wandsworth's Head of Children with Special Needs and Disabilities Service.

After lunch there will be workshops to allow you to ask questions and give your views. You will receive a detailed invitation around half term, but **please save the date for this really important event.**

**4** You can get involved and even take part in trials of the new processes. Please get in touch with us.

**5** You can access lots more information on-line. Key points of information are:

**Council for Disabled Children**  
[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

**Contact a Family**  
[www.cafamily.org.uk](http://www.cafamily.org.uk)

**Positive Parent Action**  
[www.positiveparentaction.org.uk](http://www.positiveparentaction.org.uk)

**Parent Partnership Service**  
[www.parentpartnership.org.uk](http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk)

**IPSEA**  
[www.ipsea.org.uk](http://www.ipsea.org.uk)

**Family Information Service**  
[www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis](http://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/fis)

**Liz Malcolm** *Interim Principal Educational Psychologist & Development Manager from the Schools & Community Service*  
The Schools and Community Psychology Service says:

The changes that will take place are designed to ensure that the process of assessment and support for all children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability are improved. In a recent workshop that involved parent chairs and representatives, a number of key principles that will underpin the changes were discussed.

These include:

- ✿ Involvement of families and young people is central.
- ✿ A **TELL IT ONCE** approach.
- ✿ Improved multi-professional collaboration and communication.
- ✿ Assessment better coordinated and a single clear and transparent route.
- ✿ Improved choice and control for young people and parents about the support they receive.

### 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](http://www.positiveparentaction.org.uk) and [info@positiveparentaction.org.uk](mailto:info@positiveparentaction.org.uk)

# SEN summary of feedback so far

PPA has 13 parent/carers participating in Council SEN reform meetings and their feedback from the first couple of months is summarised below. We have also included an explanation of some of the wording that is used most frequently:

**SEN reforms** – the way education, health and care provision is changing for those children with Special Educational Needs. The reforms will affect children and young adults (0-25years). It will be a gradual process and will start happening from September 2014.

**EHC plans** – Education Health and Care plans. Over time these will replace Statements.

**Local Offer** – this will describe what provision is available and how to access it.

**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.

**Pathfinders** – these are Local Authorities that have been trying out the new processes for the last couple of years. Their findings are helping other Local Authorities make their own plans. Wandsworth have been learning from southern Pathfinder boroughs like Bromley, Bexley and Southampton.

**Parent Co-Chairs and Reps** – these are parent/carers who have offered to give a parent's point of view of the SEN 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 will be the focus of local SEN information.

**Parent Partnership** – This service provides in-depth SEN advice and will be able to help you understand how your child's educational needs should be met.

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

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

## Education Health and Care plans (EHC)

*These will replace Statements*

- ❖ Like many other boroughs, Wandsworth have not yet finalised what their EHC plans will look like. They will develop the plans, by adapting examples that Pathfinders have drafted.
  - ❖ There is widespread concern about thresholds for qualifying for an EHC plan and how provision is made for children that do not get one.
  - ❖ EHC plans should focus on outcomes. Agreed goals need to be drawn up in conjunction with parents and young people.
  - ❖ Statements may start to be replaced by EHC plans from September 2014. Trials of EHC plans may start from March/April 2014. Some families have volunteered to take part in the trials
- ## Joint Commissioning *Local Authority & Health working together*
- ❖ Commissioning services is complex, for example some therapies are deemed to be education and therefore come from the Local Authority budget and some fall under Health and therefore are commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Group.
  - ❖ Wandsworth already have a Joint Commissioning of Therapies and Specialist Nursing group, but do not joint commission or pool budgets etc. This group will become the SEN Reforms Joint Commissioning Group.
  - ❖ The group is currently made up of representatives from Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and St George's Hospital.

## Preparing for Adulthood Workstream

- ❖ There are concerns about how those without an Education Health and Care Plan would be assisted in preparing for adulthood.
  - ❖ Families will be asked to pilot new arrangements in early 2014.
- ## SEN Reform Co-Chairs, Reps and Steering Group
- ❖ The Family Information Service website will be the focus of SEN information for all parents.
  - ❖ The Council will be meeting and consulting with SENCOs, Heads of Schools, Special Schools, professionals and families.

## Personal Budgets

- ❖ The workstream will be using the experiences of other local authorities to devise Wandsworth's scheme.

## Contact details

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There is a great deal of uncertainty about how the reforms will end up, but this summary provides an outline of the kind of process that PPA is involved in. It is a lot of work and there will be an increasing need to consult a wider group of parents, so this summary will be followed by up-dates as the reforms progress. This information is also on our website: [www.positiveparentaction.org.uk](http://www.positiveparentaction.org.uk)



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