

Topic of Importance Response

<p>Deadline for response:</p>	<p>Nov 2021</p>
<p>Topic of Importance</p>	<p>Educational Experience</p>
<p>Areas for Consideration</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For PCC to consider developing easy to digest guidance for EHC Needs Assessment Requests – this to mirror guidance for PfA coproduced after a previous ToI 2. For continuation of key messages to all SEND parents via letters from the PCC, as started during periods of lockdown 3. For PCC to share more widely their statistics relating to EHCp's from requests to assess to plans issued
<p>Who is this response from? (i.e., service, panel, person?) Please consider all relevant areas suggested above, and state where areas are not applicable.</p>	<p>Antonio Munoz Bailey – Assistant Director SEND & Inclusion Sheelagh Sullivan – Head of SEND and Inclusion Services</p>
<p>Response from local authority / services</p>	<p>Response to issues raised by parents :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is taking too long to get an EHCp. The statutory process of requesting and, if agreed, carrying out an Education, Health and Care assessment should take 20 weeks. At the moment the national average for meeting this target is around 50%. We are pleased to report that in Peterborough our performance is much higher. In September we processed all requests and completed all assessments on time on approximately 90% of all occasions. At the request of FV the Statutory Assessment and Monitoring team (SAMS) has presented data around performance to FV forums. We have also shared our data so that it can be posted by FV. We want information to be accessible to our families so that all is open and transparent. However, we do appreciate that families find the process long but pulling together the most up-to-date advice from all agencies, allowing new assessments to take place where needed (e.g. EP) does take time which is why the timescale set by government is 20 weeks. 2. The application process is confusing and time consuming. We have invested time in trying to make the process as clear as possible. There is a lot of information on the Local Offer and we welcome feedback on any ways in which this can be improved further. SAMS have recently rewritten the application form (for professionals and families as either can make a request) on the basis of feedback from service users, including families. It's important to get the information needed to make the right decision so detail is needed. We have coproduced the new form with Family Voice and professionals from other services and hope we have got the balance right.

3. Some parents are still feeling that they are viewed as a problem and the LA has no time for them.

Feedback from our Peterborough families is really important to us and SAMS have invested time and effort to really encouraging families to comment on the service they have received. This too is being shared with FV. Many families have been kind enough to say lovely things about officers and the support they have given but we also want to know where we can make things better. There are so many opportunities to feedback and we would encourage families to let us know if they are unhappy. Please be assured that we are looking at what you say, using comments to make things better and being honest about what is said with our teams and partners, including FV.

The Head of SAMS (Katy Blessett) has worked with FV to provide opportunities to meet with families to explain the statutory process and answer any questions. We hope this is evidence of the commitment has to giving time to families. We are open to further suggestions on how we can improve the service

4. More support is needed to manage the application process for an EHCP.

We agree that families need as much support as possible around the EHCP process and the LA needs a service that is sufficient to manage the work that is involved. In the last year the team has expanded so that, for example, we now have dedicated officers for transition points which allowed us to be one of the best performing LAs in the country this year around meeting statutory deadlines for those moving to new phases of education.

We also listened to families who said that they really appreciated contact in the first 6 weeks of the statutory process which is the time in which a decision to assess is made. SAMS now have a dedicated officer who contacts and keeps in touch with every family through this stage. They also follow up on any missing information so that the LA has done all that it can to gather the information needed to make the right decision at the right time. Feedback from families has been incredibly positive about this post, even when decisions have not been what the family had wanted.

One of the next steps that we are currently putting in place is a 'way forward meeting' for families and settings where an assessment is refused. These are generally attended by specialist teachers rather than SAMS officers. The intention is to look at how the child or young person will be supported in the setting albeit that an EHCP has not been agreed. The majority of resources that schools have to support SEN comes from funding that should be used to support all young people with SEN in the school. These meetings look at how this resource will be used to support the child or young person in school so that everyone is clear about what to expect.

The above represents just a few of the changes we have made with increased resource. We have also managed to significantly reduce our annual review backlog and the majority of review documentation that we receive is now processed in timescales.

5. When services are received things are better.

It's really pleasing to hear this. It echoes the positive feedback that SEN Inclusion services in general are receiving from service users. Thank you.

	<p>6. Some parents have improved relationships with some setting and LA/ Health professionals.</p> <p>It's great to share positive feedback with service partners in schools and other services like health. It has been a difficult year for all but there has been a real effort made by so many services to keep in touch with families and ensure that gaps are closed and services delivered.</p> <p>Our multi-agency SEND forums which are attended by partners from health social care, FV and wider parental organisations are a real opportunity to share information and improve relationships and understanding. Forums were increased to weekly during lockdown periods and have generally enjoyed high attendance rates. We intend to continue with these forums so that people are hearing the same message, getting the same information and are able to share their thoughts and ideas.</p>
<p>Actions / Impact of considerations (please use bullet points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• For PCC to consider developing easy to digest guidance for EHC Needs Assessment Requests – this to mirror guidance for PFA coproduced after a previous Tol</p> <p>This is underway. Having co-produced new request forms we are now working with other professionals and FV to improve the guidance for completing forms. The Local Offer team are helping with this process by producing an 'Easy Read' version of the guidance, where appropriate.</p> <p>• For continuation of key messages to all SEND parents via letters from the PCC, as started during periods of lockdown</p> <p>The LA is very happy to commit to this. We were able to work with FV and other parental representatives during lockdowns this year and last to keep families informed. We held regular meetings to facilitate this. We agreed with FV and other professionals that these meetings should continue on a fortnightly basis with an extended remit. These meetings are now used to take forward through coproduction our EHCP improvement plan. If further periods of lockdown occur we can use this meeting to decide what communications are needed and agree the message together.</p> <p>• For PCC to share more widely their statistics relating to EHCp's from requests to assess to plans issued</p> <p>The LA has already agreed to do this and values the opportunity to be transparent, open and share challenges as well as success. We hope that more families will join the forums that FV organise to share this information and ask questions or make suggestions that make things better for all.</p>