
February 2018

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National policy context for SEND

Significant legislative and government policy reform to the education, health and social care of children and young people with SEND (0-25) and their families and/or carers took place in 2014. The introduction of the Children Families Act, 2014\(^1\) provided reforms to SEND and also to adoption, care, family justice, flexible working, childcare and child welfare. The consequent revised SEND Code of Practice\(^2\), 2015 replaced that from 2001.

The government purpose in reform focus for SEND largely centres on:

- Implementation of a new approach to joining up education, health and care from birth to 25;
- Ensure help is offered at the earliest point;
- Ensure children and young people, parents and carers are fully involved in determining their goals and in decisions about the type of support they need to achieve these;
- Establish more efficient ways of working; and ultimately,
- Bring about better outcomes for children and young people.

The specific requirements of the reforms are outlined in the Children & Families Act 2014. Guidance on implementation can be found in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. A summary of the main requirements of the legislation on local authorities can be found below:

- To involve parent, families, carers, young people and children in shaping the provision of services for those with SEND, and to develop close co-operation with partners including settings schools, academies and colleges, health providers, social care services as well as other local authorities and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- To produce a “Local Offer” which details all the services to support children and young people with SEND and their families in a clear and transparent way so they can understand what is available.
- To undertake joint assessment, planning and commissioning of services for children between educational, health and social care to ensure more streamlined and integrated support through a streamlined process and single plan (EHC Plan) covering a child and young person from birth to age 25.
- To introduce a duty for joint commissioning to ensure joint responsibility for providing services.

\(^1\) The Children and Families Act 2014
\(^2\) Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 – 25 years, Department of Education and Department of Health, January 2015
• To provide entitlement for parents, families and carers and young people to have a personal budget to extend their choice and control over the education, health and social care services they receive.

• To ensure positive transitions at all key stages within 0-25 age range, especially in preparing for adulthood. Providing greater powers for the Local Authority to continue services post 18 and introducing new protections for young people aged 16-25.

• School Action and School Action Plus abolished and replaced with a single school category, SEN Support, posing the question of what the school offer should look like to achieve better outcomes.

• To extend the SEND legal obligations of maintained schools to Further Education Colleges and academies (including free schools).

In addition to local authorities, a range of other public bodies are required to have due regard to the Children and Families Act and Code of Practice 2015. These include:

• schools, further education colleges, early years providers, NHS commissioners and provider organisations, local Health and Well Being Boards and Youth Offending Teams.

An underlying tenet of the legislation and associated guidance, is ensuring that all these bodies work more effectively together in the provision of the support for children and young people with SEND, including ensuring that they experience better transitions.

The specific responsibilities of other public bodies are underpinned by a variety of legislation and guidance, for example, the NHS Mandate3.

**Northamptonshire’s 20:20 vision**

The Local Authority took a very positive approach to developing a shared and collaborative 20:20 vision, with events across the county (March 2017) designed to co-produce principles, intended outcomes and a plan of action to implement priorities for SEND.

The priorities are:

• To ensure that every child and young person with SEND makes excellent progress, through access to high quality provision;

• To engage with children, young people and their families to promote early identification and support that meets need;

• To develop smooth progression to adulthood for all young people with SEND;

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3 The Government’s Mandate to NHS England 2017 – 18, Department for Health, March 2017
To improve the quality and timeliness of multi-agency assessments and quality of plans for those who require specialist levels of support.

This vision and delivery of key priorities are underpinned by the following principles:

- Collective responsibility – SEND is everyone’s business and we need a fair system where everyone plays their part to solve even the most complex of problems;
- Early Support and Intervention – Early help and support through a high quality graduated response to prevent difficulties becoming entrenched
- Inclusion - The majority of children and young people with SEND will attend mainstream settings with support from specialist providers;
- Appropriately trained workforce – The workforce across services is confident and competent to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
- Localisation - Children and young people should be educated as close to their home as possible to support meaningful engagement in their community;
- Personalisation - A personalised approach leading to greater choice and control for families, valuing unique circumstances;
- Co-production - Parents and carers know their children and families the best. They are active participants in decision making and help to develop and shape services;
- Partnership – Integration, joint commissioning and co-ordination of approaches to deliver better outcomes for children and young people with SEND; and
- Culture Change – Our ‘SEND offer’ must change, which means we need to think in different ways, create alternative methods for delivery and develop more flexible approaches to support children and families.

What does the data tell us about the SEN profile of Northamptonshire?

There are just over 11,000 children and young people in education in Northamptonshire who are receiving some form of SEN Support. This equates to approximately 10% of the school age population (4-19 years).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corby</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>1220</td>
<td>1601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daventry</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1075</td>
<td>1230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Northants</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1237</td>
<td>1373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>1307</td>
<td>1781</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>3517</td>
<td>4595</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Northants</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1377</td>
<td>1626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellingborough</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>1352</td>
<td>1792</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1374</td>
<td>1539</td>
<td>11085</td>
<td>13998</td>
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E= EHC Plan  S= Statement  K= SEN Support

Figure 1. : NCC  2017 Schools Census Data  by district; SEND
The largest of the four districts of Northamptonshire is Northampton and consequently has the highest proportion of pupils receiving SEN support; 80% of the school age population are educated in mainstream provision, with 5% accessing PRU provision.

There are just over double the number of boys compared to girls who are registered at SEN Support in mainstream schools in Northampton, indeed across all areas of the county.

**Primary area of need**

Currently 21% of pupils’ primary area of need at SEN Support is identified as Moderate Learning Disabilities (MLD) in Northamptonshire. Given the consistently high numbers of MLD recorded, how does this relate to the SEN Support offer within mainstream addressing the features of this area of learning difficulty? Could the evidence suggest that conflation of low attainment and MLD is occurring in the identification and assessment of SEN? If this is the case then what impact is the prevalence of behaviour difficulties, social communication difficulties over influencing a label of MLD for low attaining students?

**Social, Emotional, Mental Health Needs**

The social, emotional, mental health needs of pupils operating across schools at SEN Support have risen significantly across all areas of the county. This particular primary area of need is identified as the second largest group according to the latest school census data.

The Northamptonshire Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) is a coordinated training, support and consultation programme designed to build capacity within schools to better meet the mental health needs of all children, led by the Educational Psychology Service.

Locally there is no agreed definition of a mental health need within education which is unilaterally accepted across health and social care. Schools report that where they identify SEMH needs of pupils, the level of need may well not meet the threshold for accessing local CAMHs services.

The success of the TaMHS programme provided for and made accessible to schools in the local area has a significant part to play in addressing the lack of clarity around identification of SEMH needs in schools of pupils operating at SEN Support.

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Typically, across the local area and its districts, approximately twice the number of boys are represented within the SEN Support population of pupils than girls. National data relating to school exclusions\(^5\) indicates that boys with SEN are seven times more likely to be fixed term excluded from school.

Statistically, significance related to primary area of need by gender for those pupils with an EHCP or a Statement of SEN (SSEN) indicates a higher proportion of boys identified with ASD and SEMH.

The capacity of schools across the country to meet the increasing challenge of the growing complexity of pupil needs, particularly in relation to ASD and SEMH, is likely to continue. Evidence suggests that early intervention for children whereby a baseline of provision provided by all schools is consistently delivered across a local area, can impact positively on growing capacity at a strategic level, for example through the effective introduction of the AET (Autism Education Trust) training.

\(^5\) Department for Education Statistics: exclusions 20 July 2017
model via the AET training hubs now provided regionally across the country for local areas and schools to access.

It would seem sensible for the local authority to target those areas where the prevalence of ASD and/or SEMH needs is higher: for example in Kettering, Corby and Northampton and South Northampton districts.

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<tr>
<th>E/S combined - primary need by gender</th>
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Figure 4: NCC Data; E/S combined – primary need by gender

<table>
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<th>Numbers of SEN support (K) by NCY &amp; gender</th>
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<td>Figures</td>
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Figure 5: NCC Data; Numbers of SEN Support (K) by NCY & gender, Numbers of SEN (E/S grouped) by NCY & gender

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6 Autism Education Trust, www.aettraininghubs.org.uk
The percentage of children and young people who are elective home educated (EHE) with EHCP/SSEN is hovering around 5%. This equates to around 46 pupils EHE.

The independent review:

Northamptonshire County Council commissioned SEND Consultancy to undertake a sufficiency review of SEND across the 4 districts within the county along with a capacity review of schools to meet the current local profile of SEND and the future local profile according to the trends identified. The LA must publish, by March 2018, its intentions for accessing a new government grant to support capital programmes to develop places for children and young people with EHCPs.

Local Authorities must ensure that there are sufficient good school places available for all pupils, including those with SEN and disabilities. This capital (£2.8m available to NCC) is not ring-fenced and can used by local authorities as they see fit to improve special provision for children and young people with education, health and care plans. This funding can be invested in mainstream schools and academies, special units and special schools, academies, early years settings, further education colleges or to make other provision for children and young people aged 0-25.

In line with the SEND Capital Funding Announcement March 2017 https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-provision-capital-funding-for-pupils-with-ehc-plans, the local authority recognised the opportunity to address the Local Area SEND Review comments,

“The extent to which mainstream schools meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is variable. Provision is improving and pupils spoken to during the inspection were typically very positive about their experience of school and felt well supported. However, leaders recognise there is more to be done to ensure that this is more consistently the case across the area.”

This review/ needs analysis will inform the programme of development and projected spend of the SEND Capital funding allocation for Northamptonshire for the next 1-3 years.

A key area of concern is around sufficiency of provision for those pupils who clearly have a mental health need/ anxiety related needs leading to emotional/behavioural issues which the current school provision is seemingly unable to provide for. This group of children and young people are identified as falling below the threshold for CAMHS intervention.
Scope of the review

A needs analysis of the four areas across Northamptonshire, which will identify current effective, inclusive provision and practice across mainstream education settings (0-25yrs) and schools and health and social care.

Four Areas of Northamptonshire

- Northampton Town
- Kettering and Corby
- Daventry and South Northamptonshire
- Wellingborough/Northamptonshire East

Methodology of the review

A systematic process of gathering information was undertaken to develop an effective response that will address the four areas needs. The following methods were used for determining a needs analysis:

- Setting and Stakeholder Needs Surveys
- SEND profiling
- Focus groups; providers; parent carers; young people; commissioners- other agencies
- Indicators of legislative compliance
- Sufficiency analysis of current best practice
- Evaluation from any prior learning activity undertaken by NCC related to sufficiency analysis for SEND
- Recent trends in pupil population and how they may inform future provision requirements
- Others including: QI data, prevalence and pupil characteristics data, identification and assessment data of SEND, improving outcomes data, joint working between special and mainstream.

The scope of the review also sought to determine the difference between current knowledge/practices (what we are doing now) and current evidence based practices (what we should be doing). Gaps were identified in knowledge, skills or practice and the local authority requested that the review indicated examples of best practice. The review report indicates these.

During the course of the review activity there were aspects of the work, which the review group was not commissioned to do, but these may infer recommendations as part of supporting wider school improvement work the local authority may wish to undertake. The following issues were identified which do not relate directly to the outcomes of this review but are related:
- Apparent conflation of challenging behaviour and SEMH
- Lack of definition relating to mental health in education and how this perceived area of need can be at odds with health definition of what constitutes a mental health need
- Independent Specialist Provision (ISP) proposal for post-19 provision designed by special schools group submitted to LA in October 2017
- Poor engagement between post 16 college providers and special schools
- Lack of agreed and co-produced transition protocols for post 16 students with complex needs
- The review provides points for consideration and raises questions, which may identify for NCC areas for development, which they can prioritise and build into local SEND Development Planning as appropriate.

What evidence did we review?

- Local Government Inform
- Local Authority Interactive Tool
- ChiMat (National Child & Maternal Health Intelligence Network)
- Office of National Statistics
- National Schools Census Statistics
- Statistical First Release SEND DfE 2017
- NCC own data sets
- NCC 20:20 vision
- Dip sampling of school Ofsted inspection outcomes where SEND is specified
- Dip sampling of school SEN information reports
- Dip sampling of school SEN policy documentation
- NCC Local Offer
- NCC SEND Descriptors
- NCC SEN provision listings
- On line surveys: settings, schools and colleges
- On line surveys: parent and carers
- On line surveys: children and young people
- On line surveys: SEN Support Services
- Interviews and structured conversations with a range of stakeholder groups

Areas of strength

‘Talking Success’

Following a considered policy to phase out of a number of the Local Authorities Language Units, the LA and DCO embarked on a joint initiative to develop capacity in all mainstream providers, through the delivery of a comprehensive SLCN (Speech, Language and Communication Needs) training package primarily aimed at
increasing the capacity and capability of mainstream primary schools to make effective provision for children with SLC needs who may previously have had access to unit provision for therapy.

This CPD rolling programme, which began in February 2016, has now been delivered to 80% of primary schools across the county and it is the ambition of the NHFT Children’s SLT team to have reached all primary schools by 2018.

The impact of this training can be evidenced in the reduction of the number of primary school-age referrals to the Children’s SLT service, since the training commenced, from 1,576 (2015 – 16) to 997 (2016 – 17); a variance of -579.

The SLT team’s own evaluations following training evidence a consistent view from participants that staff now have greater skills to screen for SLCN, knowledge and use of profiling tools to support the identification of need and assessment of progress, greater understanding of the need to look beyond behaviours to identify possible unmet SLC and/or literacy needs, the use of strategies to support provision in the classroom and also knowing when to refer to SLT.

Over the course of the review, the success of this programme was also referred to by the Lead SENCO / SEN SLE group and also the Special School Head teachers.

With a view to recommending a similar model of CPD across other areas of SEN, it was important that the review considered why this programme had been particularly successful. The following features were considered key drivers to its success:

- A joint initiative by the LA and Health incorporating a high level of commitment to deliver a comprehensive, well-resourced, high-quality programme of CPD
- Strong and effective leadership by the DCO for SEN and Disability
- Training programme is free to schools
- Written and delivered by Northamptonshire SLTs with local therapists co-presenting alongside the lead facilitator.
- Attendance at the training of SENCO, class teacher and TA ensuring a whole school approach and increasing the likelihood of effective implementation.
- Variety of venue options across county
- Comprehensive course consisting of 5 days plus two additional half days' training requiring a significant commitment from school to attend.
- An iterative programme where improvements were made following evaluations.
- Maintaining momentum through the establishment of follow-up local network meetings.
- Comprehensive approach to advertising the course across a number of LA services including School Improvement, Inclusion Networks and NHFT web site.
As the programme continues to be rolled out to the remaining primaries across the county, the DCO is committed to evaluating the impact of this programme on outcomes for children and young people and expects to produce a full evidence of impact report in 2018. It is also the ambition of the DCO to look to delivery of a similar programme for secondary schools and FE (see recommendations).

**TaMHS**

The Northamptonshire Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) is a coordinated training, support and consultation programme designed to build capacity within schools to better meet the mental health needs of all children. It is led by the Educational Psychology Service and includes input from the Educational Inclusion Officer for mental health, Parent Support Coordinators and CAMHS Early Intervention Team.

The initial Northamptonshire TaMHS Project ran from April 2009 - March 2011. It features a consultative approach, which seeks to identify and agree current needs, which are addressed through evidenced, based programmes across a universal and targeted ‘building blocks of provision’. An evaluation of the programme by the EPS reported that it had enabled 13 schools (primary in particular), as well as others to significantly improve their capacity to promote children’s mental health and to intervene where needs are identified, resulting in improved outcomes in terms of emotional wellbeing, attendance, behaviour, exclusion and attainment.

Since then, approx. two thirds of county schools have accessed the TaMHS programme to some degree. Although there has not been a widespread take-up of the TaMHS accreditation award, there are a few schools which the EPS have featured at the 2017 TaMHs conference where there is clear evidence of the impact on improving both whole school approaches and targeted support for children’s mental health (Moulton Infants School and Ruskin Infants School)

The range of programmes schools can buy into for training are comprehensive and evidence-based and there is a clearly coordinated approach to delivering support for schools in Northamptonshire that is passionately driven by the EPS team and associated partners.

**Lead SENCOs and SEN SLEs**

The role of the Lead SENCo was originally established by the LA School Improvement Team and is now co-ordinated by Fairfields TSA along with the work of the Teaching School’s SEN Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs). There are currently ten primary SEN SLEs and/or Lead SENCos and one secondary SEN SLE. They are currently able to provide support and guidance predominantly to primary schools and primary SENCOs addressing issues, for example, advice on meeting the
needs of individual children with SEN, support for new SENCOs, SEN auditing, and guidance on the application process for High Needs Funding and training.

Although it is important to note that there is currently no summative and coordinated formal evaluation of the impact of the work of the Lead SENCOs and SEN SLEs on outcomes for children and young people with SEND, their role is valued by schools and can be seen to have the greatest impact where the head teacher of the school is engaged in any solution-focused conversations with the Lead SENCos / SEN SLEs and the school SENCo. Although the work of this team is predominantly reactive to requests for support that come in to the TSA, two of the Lead SENCos are now running a new primary SENCO course to address the pragmatics of managing the role.

**Person Centred Approaches**

Throughout the review process, schools, colleges and LA services reported that they were confident in their understanding of what Person Centred Approaches look like at the statutory end of the EHC pathway and also in their commitment to apply this with increasing consistency and quality. The Local Authorities PCA training is generally well regarded and it is a strength that this training is continuing and incorporates all those involved in working with children and young people with SEND across education, health and social care. It was noted by the SEN SLEs, and Lead SENCOs that Person Centred Approaches remains a regular agenda item at the termly Inclusion Network meetings, ensuring these approaches continue to be embedded into regular school practice. Essentially, this is an area of practice, central to the successful implementation of the reforms, which is a work in progress; it has begun well but has a way to go in establishing person centred practices, beyond the statutory work of transfer reviews, to children and young people and their families at SEN Support.

**Further Education**

Northamptonshire’s Further Education Colleges have a strong commitment from the FE sector implementing the new statutory duty on their sector to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice and to develop their capacity and capability to use their ‘best endeavours’ to improve their offer of high quality provision and outcomes for young people with SEND.

The review found evidence of this drive in the following areas:

- two colleges whose SEN leads are undertaking the SENCO Award this year
- whole college teaching team training on neuro-diversity
- psychological support for students through college counsellor
- Key staff trained on person centred approaches and use of one page profiles
- College ASD coordinator and college ‘base’ for young people with ASD
• Access to University of Northampton training on ASD
• Use of IAG or key workers alongside students with highest need
• Staff allocated to observe students in school prior to transition days
• Offer of taster days and summer schools to support transition
• Business centre of college beginning to actively supporting inclusion and employment
• Two colleges are also developing their reach into schools by attending Special School open days to raise young people and parents and carers awareness of the courses they have to offer and wider provision to support students’ needs.

To implement these changes effectively, the Code outlines that FE colleges will need to build links with local authorities, the commissioners of high needs students and contribute to the local plans around implementation, including the development of the local offer. They are keen to build stronger partnerships with local authority SEN services and each other.

**Early Years**

The Early Years School Standards and Effectiveness team and the Head of SEN Support Services, following the introduction of the new SEND Code of Practice, to ensure local authorities engage with all funded early years providers in the maintained, private, and voluntary and independent sectors, have ensured that there is awareness across the sector, of the requirements of the new Code has been comprehensively applied. This has been achieved through a strategic and now, well-embedded approach, clearly aimed at supporting settings to use their ‘best endeavours’ to make sure that every child with SEN gets the support s/he needs.

This can be evidenced through the following factors:

• The team have a known and named SEN lead contact for each setting
• An established and well regarded Early Years SENCo training programme which can now boast that almost every EY setting in the county has a SEN lead who has undertaken this training.
• A popular further enhanced skills SENCo training programme for those who have been in post for more than 2/3 years for which there is a waiting list to join.
• Termly Early Years Inclusion Network Meetings with flexible time-slots and a regular bulletin to every provider with news, updates, training and key contacts.
• Locality based EI officers in 3 areas of the county who have developed relationships with their link providers.

An integral part of the enhanced skills SENCo training is a gap task, which requires experienced SENCos to work with and support other settings. Over time, this had led to the establishment of NIMP (Northamptonshire Inclusion Network Partnership)
charity headed up by a group of experienced EY SENCOs who offer mentoring to other settings and have established specialism in areas such as sign language, behaviour management, autism, emotional wellbeing and provision mapping as well as cluster meetings for members of the group. Developing sector-led approaches such as this is crucial to supporting the authority’s implementation of the 20:20 vision to develop a system where everyone plays their part to problem-solve and encourages leadership for SEND and inclusion.

The team report that the levels of confidence of settings to understand and meet children’s needs across the four broad areas has become increasingly apparent; although they recognise that a particular area of challenge that remains is around supporting children with attachment disorder and also some children with ASD.

Where settings are supporting parents, they are confident that they are ‘able to make a difference’ and attribute the success of this, in part, to the LA’s Happy, Healthy Me programme.

Work has also been undertaken by the team on improving transition from settings to schools. This approach encourages a shift in focus for schools away from their first consideration being what is currently the ‘problem’ with the child that may mean a successful transition is unlikely, toward considering with parents and their child’s link setting, what the school can have in place for the child to be ‘ready’ for transition. This is an approach that is strongly needed at a time when the temptation to drawdown curriculum content, as dictated by expectations required at the end of Key Stage 1, further down into Foundation Stage, is being strongly felt across the sector.

**School Nursing Service**

Since the implementation of the reforms, the CCG has provided additional resource to school funding to acknowledge that many are now supporting children more directly and specifically with their medical needs. Through our focused conversations with Schools, there was praise for the effective working of the School Nursing service which the Lead SENCOs and SLEs considered to be ‘lynch pins’ in supporting access to other health services, aided by their access to an online system that enables them to track and chase referrals that may be in ‘the system’. The effectiveness of this service is kept under review through regular meetings with community nursing and Special School and mainstream school nurses and to see where the pressures are and find ways forward. There is not currently a view as to whether this has led to an increase in the number of children enabled to remain in mainstream education which is area worth exploring when considering impact measures to secure commitment to any future commissioning arrangements.

**School Improvement for SEND**

The LA School Improvement team’s role in developing a more strategic approach to improving the quality of education for children and young people with SEND is an area that is just beginning to take shape after a period of change over the last three
years. Although this aspect of school improvement work is in its early stages, the drive, commitment and strategic thinking, is evident in Senior School Improvement Manager role.

The SI (School Improvement) team now has a growing knowledge of sector specific outcome data for CYP with SEN. The team’s knowledge of SEND provision, SEND outcomes enables the identification of good practice in SEND provision and outcomes across districts and also across a range of type of school (larger / smaller urban / rural etc) in order to gain a clear and in time pragmatic picture of good practice. The SI team have recently reintroduced visits to special schools, and are encouragingly sharing intelligence regarding risk and positive practice with the EHC Service team.

Partnership with Fairfields TSA is developing as the SI team is now beginning working with the TSA lead to look at schools with less effective SEND outcomes and identify where support can be brokered through school to school support plan to work with the school much more proactively.

Gaps in provision

Support for children with SEMH/needs, which manifest themselves in behaviours that may challenge

Despite the strengths noted above in terms of TaMHS and other areas of provision, such as restorative practice, we heard from many groups that there are gaps within support, the graduated response within mainstream, and within teacher skills, to meet the needs of behaviour that challenges and SEMH needs. During the review period, it was identified that the variation in graduated responses within mainstream schools; pressure on school places which limited physical areas for break out and quiet areas; budgetary pressures within the LA and schools; all impacted upon the graduated provision and arrangements within some schools. There was insufficient time within the review period to visit sufficient schools to identify whether SEMH was sometimes misdiagnosed, where the child or young person may have experienced a less effective curriculum offer.

A continuum of provision

Special schools within the county are both effective (rated as good or outstanding by OfSTED) and outcomes are better for those young people with EHCPs, in special schools. There is some evidence of outreach and support from special schools to mainstream schools. The Fairfields Teaching School offers support through Inclusion Networks, though we were concerned that more schools did not attend than did attend; those schools, which do attend, value the networks. As noted above, special schools do not appear to work with mainstream providers at present to enable some students, for whom it is appropriate, to return to mainstream provision. There would appear to be much more that could be achieved through special schools strategically
supporting the capacity building of mainstream schools, as a sector led support approach.

**Enhanced resources in mainstream schools**

Northamptonshire has a number of resourced provision or units, which enable young people with additional needs to attend mainstream providers. In the 2010 OfSTED report A statement is not enough\(^7\), HMI reported that the best educational outcomes for children and young people with Statements (now EHCPs), were to be found in enhanced resource provision.

We found that the availability of secondary places for young people was much more limited than in primary units/resourced provisions. There are a smaller number of resourced provision/units within secondary provisions.

There could be a clear case for developing more secondary enhanced resource provision for the most significant gap areas - SEMH and ASD needs.

**Key themes**

- *Relationships between LA and providers and cohesive local area vision for inclusion/SEND*

From interviews and focus group discussions across the county it would appear that this is a work in progress.

Strengths outlined above indicate where elements of the shared vision are working well, for example, the commitment of NCC commissioners and the DCO to implement ‘Talking Success’ in schools, and the willingness of schools to instigate the programme within their curriculum offer.

In other aspects of development- for example, the commissioned work from the Teaching School Alliance at Fairfields School- the commissioning of Specialist Leaders in Education (SLEs) for SEND, and Lead SENCOs, is reported in the OfSTED/CQC Local Area SEND inspection as a strength in respect of the Inclusion Network. This does, indeed work well for those schools and academies, which attend, though a majority appear to not attend. Lead SENCOs and SLEs have great strengths and knowledge, but are not systematically deployed, which limits their impact. This is an area of strength, which is underdeveloped and could exert much greater impact upon developing a more cohesive local vision, in a period in which the LA capacity is reduced, and sector-led approaches should be emerging to provide the leadership for SEND and inclusion which enables the shared implementation of the 20:20 vision.

- *Relationships between providers (e.g. FE and schools)*

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\(^7\) A statement is not enough Ofsted review of special educational needs 14 Sept 2010
Reflecting the challenge in an era of reducing resources to work outside of one’s own area of influence and responsibility, relationships are variable across the county.

One stark area identified within our review, was the relationships between schools, particularly special schools- and FE colleges. Special schools had made an application to develop a new post-18/19 provision for learners with more complex needs. FE providers reported attempts to develop their presence in special schools, offering to be present at parents’ evenings and transition events, though they were, in the main, not taken up on this offer. It appeared that there had not been partnership discussion between the special school and FE sectors regarding need and gaps in provision, which may necessitate a different provision post-18/19 for a group of learners with more complex needs. The application also appeared to not have referenced health commissioners nor other providers, for whom there would be implications for future resourcing.

As noted earlier, the relationship between Lead SENCOs and SLEs for SEND can be extremely positive, with a request for support largely emanating from schools themselves. This could be further maximised if the School Improvement service, which commissions the Teaching School Lead SENCOs and SLEs, was more systematic and strategic in identifying schools which might, for example, have a new SENCO or may have had an application for additional resourcing turned down on the basis of their descriptor knowledge.

- **Identification of need at SEN Support level- conflation of SEMH/challenging behaviour across phases**

The category of Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs was introduced in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. The code states the following:

“6.32 Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties, which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

6.33 Schools and colleges should have clear processes to support children and young people, including how they will manage the effect of any disruptive behaviour so it does not adversely affect other pupils.”

‘Mental health and behaviour in schools: Departmental advice for school staff’ March 2016\(^8\) was published by DfE to support schools in identifying and supporting pupils

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\(^8\) Mental Health and behaviour in schools, Department for Education, 2016
with social and emotional difficulties, and those for whom their difficulty is based on mental health needs.

Challenging behaviour is defined as:

“Culturally abnormal behaviour(s) of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit use of, or result in the person being denied access to, ordinary community facilities.”

In meetings with focus groups and practitioners, some of those working with children and young people with social and emotional needs, which resulted in behaviours that could impede their own progress and the progress of other learners, was sometimes described as ‘challenging behaviour’ by practitioners. As can be seen above, this conflation of the more significant behaviours relating to safety and serious injury, with those behaviours which do affect classroom learning, but could be modified by classroom practice changes or through graduated response interventions and support, is unhelpful.

Some behaviours could indicate that a child or young person has an unmet or unidentified need.

Practitioners were consistently suggesting that there is insufficient capacity or support for children who could be described as having SEMH. This included gaps in mainstream capacity, such as spaces to break out and offer nurture support, due to space limitations in school buildings, to those who required a more bespoke offer of support to meet need.

- **Closure of enhanced resource bases at secondary level**

There are 42 secondary schools and academies serving the county, four of which have an enhanced resource for students with SEND. There are currently 10 to 15 places in three secondary schools, and one school offers 75 places (in an area where a new special free school will open in September 2018). This represents 115 places at secondary age compared with 249 places in primary DSPs (Designated Special Provisions). The corresponding special places to be developed within the school organisation plan intended an increase in special school places from 1252 to 1464, not including the new free school places.

This trend is national, and reflected in the number of special school places across England rising, and the number of students with EHC Plans at secondary schools in England decreasing.

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10 Source: School Organisation Plan 2016 to 2021: Local place for local children, NCC

11 Source: DfE SEND Data 2 May 2017
In February 2017, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons noted the increase in special school places and reduction of mainstream pathways in the English education system, noting that the country should:

- Develop a comprehensive and coordinated legislative and policy framework for inclusive education, and a timeframe to ensure that mainstream schools foster real inclusion of children with disabilities in the school environment and teachers and all other professionals and persons in contact with children understand the concept of inclusion and are able to enhance inclusive education;

- Strengthen measures to monitor school practices concerning enrolment of children with disabilities and offer appropriate remedies in cases of disability-related discrimination and/or harassment, including deciding upon schemes for compensation;

- Adopt and implement a coherent strategy, financed with concrete timelines and measurable goals, on increasing and improving inclusive education.

Whilst an approach which develops the whole mainstream graduated response, linking through to specialist provision for those who require such a place is a medium term and longer term initiative, in the near future, it would be helpful for the LA to work with secondary providers, to consider the need to develop or to redevelop enhanced resource provision attached to mainstream schools/academies, with access across the county. The significant gap areas appear to be both communication and interaction, and social, emotional and mental health needs.

There would appear to be an opportunity to develop a secondary partnership for both behaviour and learning, equally led and facilitated by schools, the local authority and clinical commissioning groups/health providers.

- **Voice of young people - included in processes, but not yet heard within individual planning nor strategic planning – the “over-patrolled” culture**

Children and young people are increasingly benefitting from opportunities developed within the EHC pathway, including person centred approaches, to give their views and aspirations within a one-page profile. However, person centred approaches could be even further developed, using materials within the PSHE/PSD curriculum for students at SEND Support level.

Shooting Stars are a key group, and give very helpful feedback and coproduction possibilities to the county and health providers/commissioners, though they represent a small number of young people with SEND across the whole community.

At this point in the development of person centred approaches, it would appear that young people are included but are not yet fully involved in the strategic design or planning for services/provision/opportunities, across schools, colleges and local area
planning, and are involved in a small degree over factors that influence their personal experiences.

One young person within the Shooting Stars meeting, described his school having an “over-patrolled” culture - he felt that too many adults in his personal vicinity prevented his ability to explore, take risks and develop.

- **Harnessing the potential to work strategically with NPFG/wider parents**

The Northampton Parent Forum Group (NPFG) represent parents across the county, and has active steering group members with children in both mainstream and specialist provision.

Parents active in NPFG and Time for Support noted the following:

- There is a variation in the knowledge and capability of mainstream schools and SENCOs to implement the legal duties arising from the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equalities Act 2010, and the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs 2015.
- There may be some myths and misunderstandings within schools and services, for example, of whether a diagnosis is required to access an EHC Plan/pathway.
- Some parents note that more joined up working across different professional practices could help to support children for example, if a student has both an EHC plan and PEP or a health action plan, etc, these could be reviewed together, where appropriate.
- Families are not clear about pathways and diagnostic routes, and would benefit from clarity within the Local Offer.
- A greater focus upon the graduated response for pupils with needs at SEN Support and specificity within both EHC Plans and SEN Support would better provide for individual pupil needs. NPFG were concerned about the understanding of some schools in enabling access to the £6,000 funding within all school budgets.
- NPFG were concerned about waiting times for some medical services, for example, CAMHS.

Parents are clear that mainstream schools can work very effectively for their children and young people, but more needs to be done to ensure that mainstream providers:

- Can identify and assess need;
- Meet their legal duties under both the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice 2014, by making reasonable adjustments, ensuring that the family is enabled to fully participate in planning and reviewing the aspects of a graduated response which their son or daughter needs;
- Develop workforce capacity to meet the needs of young people across the four broad areas of SEND- cognition and learning; communication and
interaction; sensory and physical; and social, emotional and mental health needs. This means class and subject teaching as a high quality first approach to meet needs without other support;

- Communicate with parents/carers and hear the voice of the young person, as the SEND Code of Practice 2014 specifies.

Parents/carers could and should be a vital source of knowledge and support in ensuring that schools meet their legal duties, and also co-design and co-produce with them and their children, to secure improved planning, implementation and outcomes.

Parent Carer Forums across the country are aware that they do not reach all parents. It could be that the LA and CCG consider commissioning the NPFG and Time for Support to survey the views of parents/carers across the county, including those parents/carers of children and young people at SEN Support.

- Uncovering the home-schooled issues - how many have been identified with additional needs?

NPFG and Time for Support both reported that families in Northamptonshire are being advised by some schools to home school their children.

**Key Recommendations**

1. **Outcomes**

The vision for outcomes for children and young people with SEND is the same as the vision for all young people, as the Minister for Children & Families stated in the SEND Code of Practice, 2014:

Our vision for children with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

The outcomes which we describe in this section, relate to how the Northamptonshire local area can work even more effectively to create a whole system approach which enables young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood, and to have happy and fulfilling lives.

The SEND reforms themselves focus particularly upon the EHC pathway. A majority of young people with SEND will be placed in mainstream early years settings, mainstream schools and academies, and general FE colleges. It is mainstream capacity and sufficiency, which requires most development in the county, our research has indicated.

We recommend the following system developments to promote better outcomes for children and young people:
1. Outcomes

1.1 That the principles of the 20:20 vision with regard to collective responsibility, early identification, inclusion, localisation, personalisation, coproduction, partnership and culture change are taken forward through the local area SEND Partnership Board.

1.2 That the SEND descriptors are revised to enable mainstream schools and academies to take forward their implementation to develop a more effective high quality graduated response to meeting SEND needs.

1.3 The local area consider developing a shared understanding of what a positive inclusive school/setting/college looks like, perhaps based upon a Northamptonshire Inclusion Charter- similar to the Rotherham Genuine Partnerships charter, which is co-produced with parents and young people.

1.4 The strengths of the TaMHS work and restorative practice within the EPS system is made more widely available, potentially through a joint strategic application for a Strategic School Improvement Fund bid, in order that the graduated response for children with emotional, social and mental health needs is better developed and more consistent in mainstream schools and colleges.

1.5 That Lead SENCOs and SLEs for SEND are even more effectively harnessed as an asset to build mainstream capacity, through identification of schools requiring support to develop a high quality first approach to inclusion- this could be achieved through both the School Improvement and Statutory Assessment services working with the Teaching School, developing more specificity within the commissioned SLA.

1.6 Talking Success is implemented within mainstream secondary provisions and FE colleges, to better support young people with SLCN.

1.7 That the positive work of the NPFG and Shooting Stars groups is developed further through more strategic roles- (see recommendations 4.1 to 4.3 below.)

1.8 That the SEND sufficiency capital programme funding available to the county, (£2.8m) should underpin the development of the local continuum of provision, identified within this report, quality assuring the Annual Review process and ensuring that pupil outcomes are met within EHCPs/ SSEN, determine a review of provision along the continuum. This will require a re-articulation of the role of the special school in Northamptonshire and the role of school-to-school support for SEN improvement.

1.9 That the LA consider identifying a group of students where their current SEN needs can be met within their local mainstream school/setting/college with support of a linked specialist provider- harnessing the success of the special sector to offer school-to-school capacity building. This sector-led approach to developing joint county-wide solutions/evidence based piloting, could support the cultural change and leadership desired within the 20:20 vision.
1.10 Person centred practice could be further developed in schools, settings and FE colleges, through the county’s SLEs/Lead SENCOs.

1.11 The LA and providers should work together to look at the Trafford EHC plan exit criteria, as some schools reported to us that pupils might not need to continue with a Plan or could be better placed from special to mainstream. The Annual Review checklist from York LA could be developed with providers to better update and improve outcomes within EHC planning

2. Leadership

- Many individual elements of the system are providing leadership within their own area regarding outcomes and provision for children and young people with SEND; this could be much more significant and effective if such leadership is harnessed as a collective, local area endeavour.
- In a school-led system, SEND continues to be a major legal obligation of local authorities and CCGs, delivered through universal early years, school and college provisions.
- Leadership - of the ‘horizon-scanning’ nature identified in the National Standards for Excellence for Head Teachers\(^\text{12}\), is necessary, in order to:

  Create outward-facing schools, which work with other schools and organisations - in a climate of mutual challenge - to champion best practice and secure excellent achievements for all pupils. (Domain 4.1)

Recommendations:

2.1 SEND Partnership Board, continues to take forward priorities and actions, which relate to both the SEND Local Area inspections outcomes and to take forward leadership of the actions from this review;

2.2 Recommend a revision of the agreement with Teaching Schools to support more strategically identified needs within Northamptonshire schools, in partnership with the LA school improvement commissioners.

2.3 Secondary leaders are key to the county working well for young people with SEND in mainstream, and across the different MATs and school structures, are an essential champion to take forward an inclusive approach to effective schooling.

2.4 Identify schools where SENCOs have completed the National Award for SENCOs and identify those schools, which do not have a fully trained SENCO.

2.5 Challenge and support the leadership and management of schools to do what is in the best interest of individual children, even when it creates anxiety about league table goals. Governors and Trustees are key to this initiative, and may benefit from updated training and CPD on SEND duties

\(^{12}\) National standards for excellence for headteachers, January 2015 Department for Education
3. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEND.

We have accessed OfSTED reports for every school and college within the county, and used the intelligence and information from sources within the county, to arrive at a view regarding teaching and learning.

It is clear that parents and carers believe that there is significant inconsistency within schools regarding their ability to meet needs of a more moderate level; to identify more accurately the reasons that children and young people behave in ways that may challenge adults, and other pupils, as this may indicate an unmet or unidentified need.

It is clear that some schools are keen to develop their skill set beyond the SENCO, in order that all staff can fulfil Teachers Standard 13.

“A teacher must:

Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils

- know when and how to differentiate appropriately, using approaches which enable pupils to be taught effectively
- have a secure understanding of how a range of factors can inhibit pupils’ ability to learn, and how best to overcome these
- demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and intellectual development of children, and know how to adapt teaching to support pupils’ education at different stages of development
- have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs; those of high ability; those with English as an additional language; those with disabilities; and be able to use and evaluate distinctive teaching approaches to engage and support them.”

Recommendations:

3.1 Lead SENCOs and SLEs for SEND could be even more effectively deployed through a linkage with the School Improvement and Statutory Assessment Services, in order to identify schools requiring support to develop the graduated response.

3.2 Capacity building of the school to school system could focus upon refreshing the SEND descriptors, perhaps refining them further, with a link to the application for top up and EHC funding to reduce the burden on schools administration. SLEs for SEND and Lead SENCOs could assist in this role out within the four areas of the county.

13 Teachers’ Standards 2012 Department for Education
3.3 SEMH was identified throughout the review as an area of need for practitioner development. The TaMHS work undertaken by EPS services could be harnessed through SEND strategy resourcing or through a SSIF bid, if successful, to support more consistent and systematic development of positive well-being, and emotional development, being better developed in both mainstream primary and secondary schools.

3.4 Build capacity within mainstream secondary schools and FE colleges through an age appropriate strategy, which builds upon the ‘Talking Success’ programme devised and run by health providers, commissioned by NCC.

4. Working with Pupils and Parents

Parents and carers are most effectively involved at an individual level in being seen as partners in the learning and development of their son or daughter. At their optimum in Northamptonshire, parents and carers feel very much engaged, valued and share the intended outcomes within planning at both SEN Support level, and for young people with EHC Plans. This is not the consistent case across the county, and in other schools, parents do not feel listened to, nor considered. It was reported that some parents have been advised to home educate their son or daughter, or to attend for very short periods during the school day.

Strategically, there is a clear opportunity to work even more effectively with NPFG and Time for Support, to hear their ideas about improving planning and outcomes for their children, and to identify gaps in provision, and within the Local Offer.

Young people told us that they are not at the centre of planning and arrangements for their support, and that they can contribute even more to school and college understanding of how best to support them. Shooting Stars could offer even more, in developing the views and interests of young people across the SEN Support and EHC pathways.

4.1 NPFG and Time for Support work with the county to identify what is working well and not working so well, three years on from the inception of the SEND reforms. This could lead to an action plan and agreement to review processes within the Local Offer and with regard to communication approaches, on an annual basis. NPFG could be commissioned to survey the views of parents and carers (at least a sample) of young people at SEN Support level.

4.2 Shooting Stars could assist the county in hearing the views of a wider range of young people, perhaps through a Young Ambassador volunteer role, such as Kingston Upon Thames undertakes, for example, sampling all special school council meetings etc.
4.3 Northamptonshire could consider the Durham Young People’s One Point Promise\(^\text{14}\), which is developing as a co-design and coproduction set of principles for SEND arrangements across their county; www.durham.gov.uk/onepoint

5. **Assessment and Identification**

Recommendations:

5.1 Work with schools and colleges to improve their understanding and capability to identify special educational needs, providing clear guidance as to what an effective ‘continuum of assessment’ looks like that sits within the Graduated Approach and incorporates approaches to assessment of need at both a Universal and Targeted level. This should also support an improved clarity as to what is low attainment as opposed to SEN and when a more specialist level of assessment is required.

5.2 Given the high proportion of children identified as MLD, most of whom sit within SEN Support, ensure there is county-wide clarity over the definition and assessment arrangements needed to attribute a diagnosis of MLD. The current SEN descriptors do not mention MLD but refer to GLD. This potential confusion, if not conflation, needs addressing within the descriptors document.

5.3 Monitor Annual Review returns with a view to identifying where an EHCP may no longer be required and support schools, with parents/carers and young people, to consider what SEN Support is now appropriate and best placed to meet current need. In a similar way, look to monitor the Annual Review returns of children and young people in Special Schools where an ‘exit plan’ to support placement in mainstream may now be appropriate and better placed to meet need. See the Trafford EHC exit plan.

5.4 Develop a locally agreed definition of a mental health need, which is unilaterally accepted across health, education and social care. Also look to addressing the current conflation of what constitutes SEMH as opposed to challenging behaviour.

5.5 Look to targeting the high quality AET training offer to those areas where the prevalence of ASD and/or SEMH needs is higher: for example in Kettering, Corby and Northampton and South Northampton districts.

6. **Monitoring, Tracking and Evaluation**

Recommendations:

\(^{14}\text{The One Point Promise, Durham City Council}\)
6.1 Recommend the LA collect data regarding those children and young people who are turned down for statutory assessment, establishing any patterns or trends within this information to support where further guidance is needed for schools, which, perhaps, may sit within future iterations of the SEN Descriptors and may guide the work of other relevant SEN Services.

6.2 Identify and share best practice that exists within Northamptonshire settings, schools and colleges in monitoring, tracking and evaluating the progress of children and young people with SEN within a whole school systems that often exclude the identification of progress from individual starting points.

6.3 Recommend there is a robust process of monitoring the profile of children and young people who are Home Educated, particularly those without an EHCP alongside the LA Safeguarding team. Investigate why the route of HE has been ‘chosen’ and what potential failures of identification of need and provision are lacking for this course of action to have been taken by parents and carers.

6.4 Recommend the monitoring of exclusion data and findings to identify what high quality SEN Support needs to look like to avoid exclusions in the future, which could be, included in future iterations of the SEN descriptors.

7. **Efficient use of Resources**

Recommendations:

7.1 The development of the local continuum of provision, quality assuring the AR process and ensuring that pupil outcomes met within EHCPs/ SSEN, determine a review of provision along the continuum. This will require a re-articulation of the role of the special school in Northamptonshire and the role of school-to-school support for SEN improvement.

7.2 Identifying a group of students where their current SEN needs can be met within their local mainstream school-setting/college with support of their host specialist provider. Exploration of how the SEN Support offer for students with EHCPs/SSEns require a level of enhanced resource to enable those with the greatest level of need to access local mainstream provision.

7.3 ERP is predicated by a high quality SEN Support offer which is customised to the unique profile of pupil need – e.g. some schools specialising in the provision which is well matched to meeting the needs of pupils with SEMH needs, the development of greater number of nurture provision.

7.4 The local area looks to facilitate through the SEN Support offer a graduated approach across its district according the specific pupil profile of need; e.g. management of challenging behaviour is addressed through rigorous behaviour management approaches along with reduced exclusion, increased restorative justice practices.
Concluding comments

The vision for SEN Support provision in Northamptonshire needs to better reflect the local profile of need. Northamptonshire knows itself well, however, the perception of and expectation of what good quality SEN Support looks like is inconsistent across the county.

Some of the potential to develop further, in an era of reducing resources, resides within greater coherence and consistency, and partnership working.

Thanks

Thanks and appreciation to all the contributors of this review. The memorable meeting with Shooting Stars, Young People’s Forum and their articulate discussions of their aspirations to live ordinary lives is inspiring.

Parent members of NPFG who took the time to meet with the reviewers, expressed a strong sense of ambition for their children, however, were able to evidence clearly how the strengths and interests of their children are overlooked in the important support work around preparing for adulthood.

The review team was not able to meet directly some groups of staff across services and providers, and in these cases made use of publicly available data and information.

SEND Consultancy

SEND Consultancy is a collaborative association of leading consultants in SEND, Jane Friswell, Pat Bullen, Kate Browning. All three associates have a strong history in leadership and advocacy for SEND at international, national and regional level. This includes; Headship within Special School sector, SEND Advisory and School Improvement Leadership roles, Regional DfE SEND Leadership responsibilities, Third Sector Chief Executive leadership of SEND, parental experience of SEND.

SEND Consultancy is underpinned by the following principles, they:

- Are Generous in giving
- Are Gracious in listening
- Connect leaders in SEND who transform
- Generate mutual trust and support of one another by one another
- Challenge and overhaul what you believe and how you do your job
- Change working habits, behaviours and attitudes
- Only do work that matters
- Maximise making a difference
- Maximise the spread of ideas
- Maximise impact
- Do business differently, more flexibly, more responsively, more efficiently
- Keep personalisation alive and realistic
- Improve lives
- Commit to making a significant difference and effect change to SEND commissioning, service design, and provision in a person centred way

They conduct themselves by….

- Upholding the highest professional standards in our work and treating everyone that we encounter during commissioned work fairly and with respect and sensitivity.

They will:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and work without fear or favour
- uphold and demonstrate our declared values at all times
- evaluate provision/services in line with frameworks, national standards or regulatory requirements if necessary or where agreed
- base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
- declare all actual and perceived conflicts of interest and have no real or perceived connection with any provider that could undermine objectivity
- report honestly and clearly, ensuring that findings are fair and reliable
- carry out our work with integrity, treating all those that we meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- take all reasonable steps to prevent undue anxiety and minimise stress
- act in the best interests and well-being of service users, prioritising the safeguarding of children and learners at all times
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being reviewed or affected by our work, and communicate findings sensitively but clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests

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The Children and Families Act 2014

The One Point Promise, Durham City Council

The Government’s Mandate to NHS England 2017 – 18, Department for Health, March 2017

APPENDIX

Special Provision Capital Funding

What can this funding be spent on?

The £215 million fund is to support local authorities to invest in provision for children and young people with SEN and disabilities aged 0-25 to improve the quality and range of provision available to the local authority. It is intended for the children and young people with education, health and care plans for whom the local authority is responsible. It is entirely legitimate for the local authority to spend some of the capital funding on provision that happens to lie outside the local authority’s boundaries, if the local authority places children and young people there and believes that the capital investment will improve the quality and range of provision available. Local authorities can invest their share of the special provision capital fund in:

- Creating new (additional) places at good or outstanding provision
- Improving facilities or developing new facilities

This can be through:
- Expansion(s) to existing provision including at the same site or at a different site.
- Reconfiguring provision to make available the space for the additional places or facilities.
- Re-purposing areas so that they meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Other capital transactions that result in new (additional) places or facilities’ improvements
- Investing in provision that is located in another local authority where this supports providing good outcomes for children in their area.

Examples include:
- Expand outstanding special provision that helps children attend school in the local area so that children gain independence within their local community
- Add resourced provision to a successful mainstream school.
- Set up a new learning kitchen to teach pupils the skills they need to be independent in adulthood and skills that can support them in employment.

Local authorities should consider how to invest capital and revenue in a joined-up way to get the most out of each project. Local authorities may also combine their special provision allocation with other capital funding. Groups of local authorities may wish to pool capital resources to develop provision, which can support a wider area.

The funding is for a range of provision types where this benefits children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans between 0 and 25.
This covers the following provision types:
1. Mainstream school or college including:
   • Mainstream school or academy (including free schools, faith schools and grammar schools)
   • Further education (FE) college • Mainstream sixth form college
   • University Technical College (UTC) or studio school
2. Special unit or resourced provision, including:
   • Special unit / resourced provision at mainstream school or academy (including free schools, faith schools and grammar schools)
   • Special unit / resourced provision at mainstream sixth-form college
   • Special unit / resourced provision at further education (FE) college
   • Special unit / resourced provision (other) i.e. at another provision type that caters for children and young people aged between 0-25
3. Special school or academy including:
   • Special school (whether maintained or academy, including special free schools)
   • Non-maintained special school (NMSS)
   • Independent special school
   • Special post-16 institution
   • Hospital school
4. Pupil referral unit and alternative provision academy
5. Nursery or early years provider including:
   • Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) providers
   • Nursery school (LA maintained)
   • Reception or early years provision within a school or academy
6. Other provision
   • Any other education provision that is attended by pupils who have education, health and care plans and are aged between 0 and 25 and not otherwise covered.
   Local authorities should provide further details
   Note that local authorities should list boarding provision against the relevant provision type and set out in the optional additional information box that this includes boarding provision.

The funding is not intended for:

• Higher education including universities and other higher education provision
• Any provision for those aged 25 and over.
• Expanding provision specially to create additional places for pupils who do not have education, health and care plans. We recognise that facilities for pupils with EHC plans might bring a wider benefit and help other children.
• Reasonable adjustments that schools are required to fund as part of the accessibility requirements. This includes ramps or widening doorways.
• Revenue expenditure such as furniture (chairs, desks), teaching apparatus such as white boards, training or staff costs.
• Individual mobility equipment such as wheelchairs. However, local authorities can spend this funding on capital installations such as ceiling hoists for lifting non-ambulant children into a hydrotherapy pool.
• Maintenance work, which will be covered by Devolved Formula Capital funding.

**SEN Support Sufficiency Review Outcomes which could be realised by SEND Provision Capital Funding**

**Recommendation 1.8:** The SEND sufficiency capital programme funding available to the county, (£2.8m) should underpin a review of the local continuum of provision, quality assuring the AR process and ensuring that pupil outcomes met within EHCPs/ SSEN, determine a review of provision along the continuum. This will require a re-articulation of the role of the special school in Northamptonshire and the role it plays in school-to-school support for SEN improvement.

The local collective ambition of special schools currently, all of which are either good or outstanding schools, has indicated a gap in the post-19 provision for young people with high needs of SEND in relation to the preparing for adulthood pathways; community inclusion, independent living, employment and health. However, the recent proposal submitted by the special schools Head Teacher group (September 2017) describes the extension of special school provision up to the age of 25 years which does not fully support the local ambitions of Northamptonshire’s 20:20 vision for SEND.

Locally there is the sixth form vocational centre for young people with additional needs, the successful Beehive Café facility, part of Northgate Secondary School & Arts College Academy Trust located one mile away from the café.

The Beehive provides a café, conference hall, commercial kitchen, second hand shop and a well-being centre. This business centre provides students with first hand real life experiential learning. The chosen vocational pathways of each young person provide distinctive industry focused learning environments.

The staff at the Bee Hive are a dedicated and passionate team who strive only for the best outcomes for the young people that attend the provision. A day time provision that provides individualised learning experiences that develop key employability and supported living skills for students with moderate learning difficulties and ASD needs.

The aim is to provide individual learning programmes which enable students at all levels to excel educationally and vocationally; to develop young people’s independence by providing an enriched personal and social development programme; independent living skills; travel training; employability skills.

The SEN Support sufficiency review identified a number of missed opportunities for the local special school sector and further education college providers to work more collaboratively in delivering a sustainable and meaningful post-16 pathway for those students who would benefit from vocational and practical training which would lead to securing employment.
Building on the concept of the Beehive café provision in collaboration with a federation of FE providers, a comprehensive post 16 offer for students could be realized with additional capital funding. The key elements of this new provision would be:

- Deliver nationally recognised qualifications in functional Maths and English
- Deliver work related practical training in for example; hospitality, catering, food hygiene, customer service, stock control, barista skills
- Travel training and personal money management
- Independent living skills development and training
- Managing own health and well-being needs

The ambitions of such a facility should include that every student leaving the facility will do so with the minimum of a supported internship in place or supported employment opportunity secured. The provision of job coaching and mentoring will be a core requirement of the provision within a scaled approach to developing young people’s talents towards securing supported internships with local business partners. This successful model which can and does lead to securing paid employment would benefit from accessing the successful lighthousefuturestrust.org.uk

Lighthouse Futures Trust is an ambitious, innovative, caring and dynamic charity with a can do attitude. Their goal is to partner with special schools and colleges to support the growth of employment opportunities for those furthest away from sustainable employment.

Their experienced programme managers and job coaches build strong relationships with major employers in both local and national organisations where they plan and deliver supported internships for groups of young adults with an autistic spectrum condition or learning difficulties.

They aim to impart key business skills to their young people through a series of micro-businesses where interns can develop in a highly-supported environment and learn customer service skills, supply chain knowledge, barista skills, work-based skills, social media and marketing skills and much more.

The potential of this new provision should provide the basis of a professional partnership drawing on the strengths and interests of all post-16 providers for the benefit of those young people who continue to require an EHCP post-16.

Working with local employers and particularly the local enterprise partnership (SEMLEP) in the region, specific training could be provided to meet local labour market demands.

**Recommendation 1.9:** That the LA consider identifying a group of students where their current SEN needs can be met within their local mainstream school/setting/college with support of a linked specialist provider- harnessing the success of the special sector to offer school-to-school capacity building. This sector-led approach to developing joint county wide solutions/evidence based piloting, could support the cultural change and leadership desired within the 20:20 vision.
**Recommendation 5.3** Monitor Annual Review returns with a view to identifying where an EHCP may no longer be required and support schools, with parents/carers and young people, to consider what SEN Support is now appropriate and best placed to meet current need. In a similar way, look to monitor the Annual Review returns of children and young people in Special Schools where an ‘exit plan’ to support placement in mainstream may now be appropriate and better placed to meet need.

ERP is predicated by a high quality SEN Support offer which is customised to the unique profile of pupil need – e.g. some schools specialising in the provision which is well matched to meeting the needs of pupils with SEMH needs, the development of greater number of nurture provision

**Recommendation 3.1:** SEMH was identified throughout the review as an area of need for practitioner development. The TaMHS work undertaken by EPS services could be harnessed through SEND strategy resourcing or through a SSIF bid, if successful, to support more consistent and systematic development of positive well-being, and emotional development, being better developed in both mainstream primary and secondary schools.

From the work of this review, it is clear that the annual review approach of young people’s EHCPs is not sufficiently progressive. There is little local evidence of outcome at annual review of transfer to an appropriate mainstream learning opportunity provided to young people educated in special school, who clearly are making good progress on meeting their EHCP outcomes more generally.

There is no systemic presumption of mainstream education for all children and young people in Northamptonshire who have an EHCP and as such the pressure on special school provision has been immense and will continue to be unless this culture is challenged.

There are a number of good and outstanding mainstream schools whose aspiration to extend their support to students with SEND is increasingly hampered by lack of core resource. The LA need to capitalise on schools inclusive vision and desire to grow.

The SPCF could provide funding for four district “hubs”, all mainstream school based, two of which would provide a provision focus for young people with SEMH and two for students with ASD. All students attending will have a high level of need indicated by their respective EHCPs. However, there could be an additional function of the hubs to provide a comprehensive holistic assessment for those students who are struggling to maintain a full-time mainstream school placement.

Local need would suggest that initially two hubs for each educational phase are likely to be required; primary and secondary.
The basic premise of the hubs will be to maintain the pupil place at the student’s local mainstream school and the student’s access to this. The hubs could be managed by the EPS as part of the LA’s response to the high level of need for nurture provision and should provide a base for TaMHs leadership and coaching to become more focused and coaching driven at district level.

The core purpose of these hubs is to assess, plan and deliver nurture informed support to the students attending, drawing on the collaborative ambitions of local health providers as partners in the provision offered, along with the student’s mainstream school.