

# Countywide SENCO Forum- July 2024

## Post- Session Q&A Document

### Siobhan Price- KCC

- Where are the details of the funding workshops?
  - o They were shared at the area workshops and are for HTs and Business managers
  
- Do we apply as usual for HNF like last year and then we will get an update on how this will change next year?
  - o Yes, this is correct.
  
- What is the link for the Special Schools Consultation?
  - o <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/special-schools-review>
  
- Why are you not taking the same approach to non EHCP children then? Children who do not have an EHCP are not being directed to their nearest school, they have 3 'preferences' which doesn't seem like a fair process.
  - o It is the law. Once a child has EHCP, there are different rules
  
- Could you please clarify, a child with disabilities requiring an EHCP will be directed to their nearest mainstream school, where that school can meet need, yet a child without disabilities does not have to attend their nearest mainstream school despite their nearest mainstream school being able to meet their need. Is this correct?
  - o Yes, this is correct.
  
- Which roadshows is Siobhan referring to re phased transfer?
  - o Sharon McLaughlin presented on the roadshows. That is what Siobhan was referring to. It is not specific phased transfer roadshow.
  
- Do you have a date that phase transfer review paperwork needs to be at LA?
  - o All dates are on the slides which you were sent out after the forum sessions
  
- Can a parent accept a place so their child is in school but still appeal?
  - o Yes they can.

- Is it right that if parents put specialist as their one choice and then it is not agreed, they are given their nearest mainstream and are not allowed to have a preference?
  - It is not that they are not allowed a preference... they have expressed a preference of specialist but the view of the LA is that special is not needed, therefore, yes, they are allocated their nearest mainstream school.
  
- Will the Report act as a Policy? Our current Information Report is called SEND Information Report and Policy?
  - Schools will need an Information Report and a SEND Policy. Before they were merged but not appropriate and dated. The SEN information report launched here is the first step. The Policy template will follow.
  
- Will the policy template be available for the start of the 2024/25 academic year, to use alongside the SEN Information Report template?
  - Not for the start of the year, but as early as possible in the new academic year.
  
- Could you make clear how the SEND Information Report and the SEND Policy would differ from one another as our school combine these two documents?
  - Previous Kent advice has been to combine the two. The advice now, based on national guidance is to have two separate documents
  
- Has the report been sent to all schools as I have had it alongside slides for today but not in any other way. So if people aren't booked they won't have received it?
  - An editable version is being sent out after these meetings to all SENCOs and also to HTs via KALE.
  
- I am sure in a previous forum meeting, we were told that parental preference for a school was not always taken into account if Special school was requested, however, if county recommended a special school, parental views for mainstream it would be. How can this be? If there is a need for a special school then they should get it. Parental choice only when it suits SEN!
  - It is not parental choice, it is parental preference. But if the LA view is that the child's needs can be met in mainstream, then the child will be placed in mainstream. The Code of Practice presumes mainstream and states that every child has the right to a mainstream education.

- It would be really helpful to have a staff breakdown for all the areas of SEN and who we need to contact for what- eg Phased transfer/EHCP's and who allocated case workers are please.
  - o We are working on this and hope to be able to publish this in the next academic year.
- How often will these directories be updated?
  - o The first iteration will be updated on a termly basis. The plan is to dedicate resource to keep it as live as possible. This will depend on how it is used and how useful schools find it.
- How do heads join the funding workshops?
  - o HTs have already responded and we have a wide variety of HTs already attending.
- How do parents and schools request an early EHCP annual review? In the past schools were able to do this but I understand the process has changed?
  - o Awaiting an answer
- Is there any guidance that SENCOs can use to share with parents the criteria for applying for an EHCNA? Too many parents ask for them so I need to be able to set out clearly when one isn't required. Just not sure how.
  - o Awaiting an answer

### **Sam Avison- Williams- KCC**

- If we could have a secondary version with symbols for KS3 and then one without for KS4? Also a primary form without symbols?
  - o Thank you for your suggestions. There are plans to develop versions of the template both with & without symbols that would be suitable for young people in Key Stage 3 or 4. The 'without symbols' version would also be suitable for those wishing to use it with Primary-aged children. None of the templates produced will have fixed age-ranges. SENCo's & families are strongly encouraged to use their professional & personal judgement to identify the template most suitable for a specific child or young person. A guidance document will be published alongside the new templates in due course.
- I am finding that at Annual Review, parents complete a new Appendix 1 if they feel needs or their views have changed. I then send it off with the review paperwork and then we are receiving a no amends letter within days. What is the point of a thorough AR recording changes and updates, sending Appendix 1 and then neither having any impact?

- I am sorry to hear this has been your experience. I will pass on your feedback to relevant colleagues. Tackling the challenges & concerns around the current Annual Review process is a key area of development. On behalf of the QAPD Service, I hope to present a progress update to you in the next academic year.
- Further clarification and support on Annual review's process is definitely needed and evident from the chat and both breakout rooms I was in, senco's feel very frustrated that the hard work put into AR's are dismissed, ignored, and that we are not seen as professionals and able to make changes when appropriate, particularly when EHCPs are so out of date.
  - Thank you for your feedback, I am sorry to hear this is the experience of so many SENCo's. I will share your frustrations with relevant colleagues. Tackling the challenges & concerns around the current Annual Review process is a key area of development. On behalf of the QAPD Service, I hope to present a progress update to you in the next academic year.

### **Sharon McLaughlin- KCC**

- Is the participation workshop the events that take place during half terms by KCC to capture children's voice?

Yes, these participation activities are intended to capture the child / young person's voice. The Youth Participation team are holding half term activities for mainly secondary school age (a few have been from age 10 when asking about school transitions) as part of their Have Your Say SEND Forum.

The events are being advertised widely to bring in new young people to the forum, but they do act as one-off events for young people to come along, join in a fun activity and also to share their views.



**KENT YOUTH VOICE**

# SUMMER HAVE YOUR SAY ACTIVITIES 2024

OPEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND AGED 11-18.

- ART ACTIVITY DOVER** **AUG 8**
- AUG 14** **ANIMAL WORKSHOP ASHFORD**
- SPORTS DAY MAIDSTONE** **AUG 22**
- AUG 27** **FOREST SCHOOL SITTINGBOURNE**

FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SIGN UP GO HERE:  
[HTTPS://FORMS.OFFICE.COM/E/G1B9608MKF](https://forms.office.com/e/G1B9608MKF)



### Get involved this summer!

KCC's i-THRIVE & Participation Team are hosting four activity afternoons over the summer for young people aged 11 – 18 years with SEND.

**1. Thursday 8 August, Dover, 12.30 – 3.30PM** - An afternoon of art at the Dover

SmART project gallery, 3 Waterloo Crescent, Dover, Kent CT16 1LA. We'll be making our own sketch pads and drawing portraits & lots more.

**2. Wednesday 14 August, Ashford, 12.30 - 3.30pm** - An afternoon at Victoria Park cafe, Ashford. You can hang out with all kinds of tiny creatures, from cute mammals to fascinating reptiles and invertebrates. The staff will share fun facts about these animals while you chill.

**3. Thursday 22 August, Maidstone, 12.30 - 3.30pm** - An afternoon at Shepway Youth & Community Centre, Cumberland Avenue, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 7JN. Choose from football, badminton, basketball, lasertag and lots more. Be active and have fun!

**4. Tuesday 27 August, Sittingbourne, 12 - 3PM** - An afternoon of forest skills at Out to the Woods forest site, Sittingbourne ME17 1QP. We'll be bug hunting, creating art and learning how to use tools to make bracelets and key rings from natural resources, den making & lots more fun in the woods.

Each of the activity afternoons provides the chance to get involved and try out some fun activities as well as the opportunity for young people to share their ideas and have their say on a range of issues. For more information and to sign up for any of the activity days please go to <https://forms.office.com/e/G1b9608mkF> or for more information please email [kycc@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kycc@kent.gov.uk)

In addition this information is going out in the Parents SEND newsletter

- Maybe the LIFT groups could be contacted directly for the roadshows, as these are by area and it could be run as a group of schools.
  - o Thank you for this suggestion. I will make sure this is incorporated into our communications channels and work with our Family Hub District Manager's to reach this group.
  
- If I wanted to take up the offer of a coffee morning, how do I go about this?
  - o Contact SEND Roadshows - CY [sendroadshows@kent.gov.uk](mailto:sendroadshows@kent.gov.uk).

Use a clear subject heading so we know you are not a parent trying to book onto a Roadshow. Something like **SUBJECT HEADING: School IAG request.**

And our team will let you know that we have received your e-mail request and keep you in the loop of any developments here. We would like to reach out to interested schools in the autumn term to explore what this would look for you and plan what we are able to deliver

### **Inclusion Champions**

- When will we need to use the new format for the SEN Information Report? I'm about to review our current policy and SEND Information Report.
  - o The expectation is that these will be used across the county from September 2025 but if you are in a position of updating yours currently, then we would encourage you use it this academic year. We would welcome any feedback from you and your school community. Please note that this document should now be separated from the school's SEN policy as per national guidance.