

## Countywide SENCO Forum- May 2024

### Post- Session Question & Answer Document

#### **Questions for Siobhan Price, Assistant Director- School Inclusion, Kent County Council**

Q - Why are KCC looking at secondary SRPs specifically and not primary as well?

**The data is telling us there is no need for primary expansion but there are other possibilities. All will be explained at the area workshops as it is a very complicated picture and every area is different.**

Q- If we already have a Trust template for the SEN Information Report will we have to use the Kent template?

**This depends on whether the trust has schools in other counties. In other LAs, the expectation is that everyone uses the template. Remember, the main audience is parents, and they need to be able to compare schools.**

Q - Will the SEN Information Report template be emailed out to all SENCOs?

**It will go out through this Countywide SENCO forum and it will sit on KELSI.**

Q - Has consideration been given to linking the SEN Information Report to school Information systems e.g. Bromcom so that they can be dynamically updated with current data?

**This is a great idea and something which we would need to work on. The first iteration of the SEN Information report will not be able to do this but we can certainly look in our evaluation stage as to how we can do this.**

Q- Having seen the Kent PACT presentation, it states that SENCOs must meet with parents three times a year, in addition to parents evenings. This is not the case - the code of practice states that the **school** must meet with parents three times a year. It doesn't say this can't include parents evenings and it doesn't have to be the SENCo. I am concerned that parents are being told this, as SENCOs cannot possibly meet this requirement. I'd appreciate some clarity on this.

**This is about interpretation of the CoP. It does not have to be the SENCO, it can be someone else on the SEN team. The KentPACT presentation says that the meetings can**

**be held on the same evening as the school parents evening. This is common practice as it is a good use of time. Options evenings, Welcome Evenings and other events can be utilised for this purpose. Every context is different. The key element is that there is maximum opportunity for parents to meet with the school. This is what will improve parental confidence in the system.**

Q- I'm glad the SEND Information report is being upgraded. At our very recent Ofsted Inspection, our SEND report was criticised, when I explained that it was the Kent template, I was advised to not use it. Hopefully, the new version will be Ofsted approved - is this possible?

**Absolutely. We have informed Ofsted that we are doing this work.**

Q- I know the locality model has to go to Education Cabinet Committee do you have a date?

**Yes. This has gone to cabinet. More information will be given at the Area Workshops.**

Q- Has the new Dyslexia/SpLD policy been issued and will there be training?

**It is still in draft but it will be published on KELSI very soon. More information to follow.**

Q- Are there any workshops or training to help support completing an EHCP request within school please?

**Workshops are being planned for Term 6.**

## **Questions for Samantha Avison-Williams, SEND Quality Assurance and Practice Development Officer**

### EHC Plan related Q's

1. Can we see the grade criteria/would you share the criteria you use to deem a plan as good?

**Unfortunately, there is no single/simple criteria document that can be shared. A software which formulates a range of factors is used in the grading process. The criteria is also for internal use only. However, the criteria has been developed in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice so if you want to understand more about what a 'good' plan should contain please refer to that document.**

2. We are receiving plans that have no interventions or provisions from school or Specialist teaching service. All the interventions are from the EP meaning that when the plans come through the provision needs to completely change we effectively should stop interventions that we already know work because they are not on the plan . This needs looking at because again it would appear that no

advice is being taken from the school or the professionals working most closely with the child.

**There is no guidance which suggests that interventions that are working must be stopped & replaced only by interventions documented within an EHC plan. An EHC plan should typically state intervention that is required which is over and above what is already available. Therefore, existing & EHC plan interventions can co-exist. If an intervention is already in place at the SEND Support level, there isn't always a need to make the intervention statutory.**

3. It's good to hear the quality of EHCP is improving. However, information on recommended provision gathered from different agencies is often just written in to the plan without checking for overlap. e.g. The SaLT may recommend a '30 mins weekly, group intervention focusing on interpersonal language skills', the E.P. might recommend '30 mins weekly, social, emotional development intervention including explicit teaching of social skills and personal/interpersonal skills', and the OT might recommend 'small group work to develop turn taking & cooperation skills 2 x weekly sessions of 30 mins'. Essentially these are the same intervention but as they are written in the plan as different interventions, the child is effectively out of the classroom for 2 hours a week instead of 30 mins.

**Whilst the recommended provision may appear to overlap, it is likely that there are subtle but significant differences. Each of the professionals (EP, SaLT, OT) should offer recommendations which sit within their field of speciality, therefore, there should be variation in their approaches to achieving a common goal. Professional advice contained within a plan's appendices should offer additional context for interventions documented within Section F. Whilst this is a hypothetical example, it is important to consider whether the child or young person's needs might be such that they require 2 hours per week of intervention. An attempt to condense/combine the interventions may not be sufficient in meeting the child or young person's needs.**

#### Annual Review related Q's

5. With changes in services i.e not all children being open to STLS or Speech and language, schools do need to be able to make changes to EHCP outcomes at Annual reviews, without the need for outside agency recommendations as it isn't always possible to get them to AR's, will this be looked at?

**In agreement with the parent, schools are able to suggest outcome changes. Professional advice/recommendations are only essential when a change of outcome will require a change in provision.**

6. Will schools be able to attend the Annual review workshops? This was mentioned a while ago but no further details seem to be have been shared?

**Due to the recent Localities workshops, the timeline for the Annual Review workshops had to be pushed back. The plan remains to hold the Annual Review workshops which will be open to schools to attend. Further updates will be provided in due course.**

#### General Q's

7. How much longer will EP assessments be allowed to take place over TEAMS rather than face to face? Appendix 5 from EPs now seems to form Section F which is why it is so important that the EP meets the child...

**Wherever possible EP assessments are carried out face-to-face. However, due to the sheer volume of requests received, there is an ongoing need to use the services of locum EP's who may not be based within Kent.**

8. When caseworkers leave please can parents and schools be informed!

**Currently, there is no automatic system to notify parents and/or schools when a case worker leaves. When a case is reallocated to another case worker, parents should be contacted & informed. Unfortunately, due to high caseloads, there is often a delay in this communication.**

9. just a suggestion, perhaps some Workshop Wednesdays for SENCOs might be helpful. Looking at what a good Appendix 2 looks like for example? As far as I am aware, no such training currently exists.

**Workshop Wednesday's are currently delivered by the SEND Quality Assurance & Practice Development (QAPD) Service for internal staff only. The SEND QAPD service do not currently offer direct training for SENCO's relating to Appendix 2, however, please do refer back to previous forum presentation slides as there has been feedback/information shared in relation to Appendix 2 on several occasions.**

**In a previous forum, SENCO's very kindly & generously offered feedback to support with the evolution of the Appendix 2 template. The updated template & accompanying guidance is due to be rolled out in the near future.**

#### **Questions for Emily Duddy- Community Paediatrics Team (West Kent, Dartford and Gravesham)**

Q - Please clarify the situation moving forward for different health areas such as EKHUFT. Will this be rolled out to all health areas?

**This is the case for the North and West, I am unsure about any other area.**

Q - After a virtual nurse appointment is it possible for school if they have made the referral to also receive a copy of the outcomes in order to continue to support the child and parent?

**The parents will need to request the report/outcomes to be sent to the schools. If you know a child is having a NLA please ask the parents to do this.**

Q- Will paediatrics communicate to schools if children have been discharged or is this down to parents to inform schools?

**Communication is always with the families, the families will need to request reports to be sent to school, or they can share them with schools themselves.**

Q- What's the criteria for accessing the single (24months) or the joint (48months) on the social communication pathway?

**The paediatrician will use reported parental concerns in the appointment, supporting evidence and clinical observation to decide the best assessment for that child's needs. You can look at these for more information "asd pathway" [Paediatric timelines | Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust \(kentcht.nhs.uk\)](#)**

Q- Are Community Paediatricians assessing for ADHD now? It has been NELFT only in Faversham.

**The Community Paediatrics accept referrals in North and West Kent up until the age of 11 years, after this time referrals need to be made to NELFT.**

Q- Emily, we are still awaiting some training on Adhd? Do we need to contact you again?

**We ran an ADHD workshop at Heathside and plan to run one in Dartford next academic year. I have some training prepared. If you would like to email me please do [emily.duddy@nhs.net](mailto:emily.duddy@nhs.net)**

Q- Will schools be told who has been discharged from the service by the nurse> How will schools be informed re: any further referrals so we can update our information and provision.

**It will be for the parents to share information with schools, they are able to request that reports are shared with schools.**

Q- For looked after children, or adopted, do you still have to wait until 6 years old to refer for ADHD or can this be younger now?

**The current criteria is that the child is 6 years and over for a referral for ADHD. However, you can refer to the Community Paediatric service from birth to 11 years old.**

## **Questions for Sharon McLaughlin SEND Engagement, Operations and Assurance Manager- Kent County Council**

Q - What the parents are trying to feedback to the service is that the waiting lists are too long and it builds frustration. You don't need pie charts to tell you this. Once there is more funding in the service, wait lists will shorten and feedback will improve. Their feedback is about the service not the accessibility of info about the local offer - it's the dedication to delivering the local offer.

**You are quite right to highlight that this a significant frustration for families and we do hear this a lot. We have explored putting the waiting times onto the Local Offer to let parents know what to expect. However this could cause more problems that it might solve – for instance waiting lists for each service whether health, commissioned services etc would have to be updates manually. If we were unable to reach the organisation for their updates or key personnel had changed and we were unable to find the right person, our information would very quickly become out of date. Out of date information is a significant reputation buster for any provider of Information, Advice and Guidance. We are a part of the National Local Offer Forum run by the Council for Disabled Children and we can see that this is a national problem that all Local Offers are grappling with. So unfortunately I am unable to give you a fix on this at this time – sorry**

**Regarding the Pie Charts, what they also show us is the key themes that families are dissatisfied with the largest area of concern by far at 45% of all respondents is with communication – both lack of it and the tone of it in some instances. Please be Assured that these findings are fed back to Senior Management via our Feedback Officer**

Q- I can't find videos about sleep support or anything similar on the website. I actually don't find it that parent friendly as it's a lot of block text.

**I agree with you re the block text, it is overwhelming and unwelcoming, however, this is outside of our control as we are hosted on the KCC mainframe website. The new Family Hubs website does give us the opportunity To work with the Digital Comms team to try to improve the look and tone of the website, unfortunately I don't have a time line of this at this stage – The information for videos and further support can be found through the following links**

**A- The section on the website with videos and factsheets etc is**

**[Understanding autism - Kent County Council](#)**

**And the handbook is further down**

**[A handbook for families - Information on Autism and ADHD in Children \(kent.gov.uk\)](#)**

**There is also a new handbook co-produced with families**

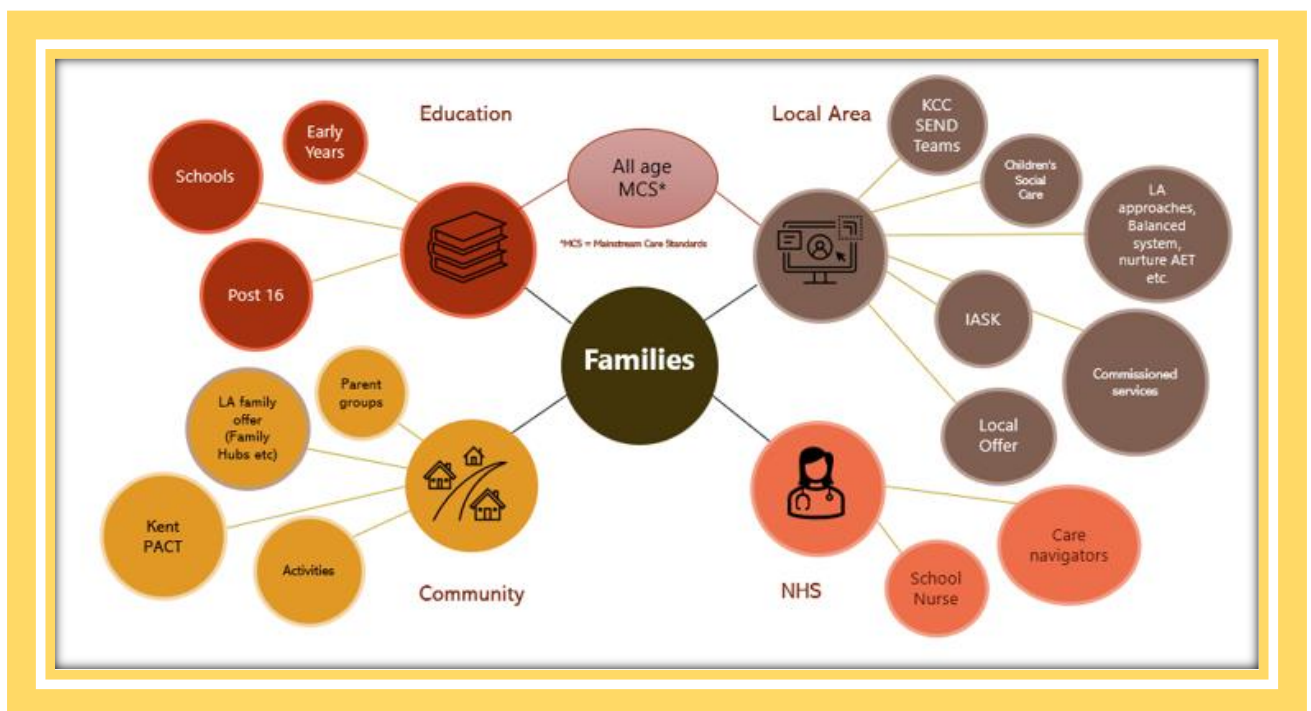
**[A guide to supporting autistic young people to manage their periods \(kentresiliencehub.org.uk\)](#)**

**Please feel free to check all of this out, there is loads there**

Q- My concern is that we might be over promising what mainstream schools can offer and support with. Whilst this is the direction of travel, we are all seeing an increase in higher needs and these children currently need a lot of extra support. This additional support still needs to be resourced and most of us are facing staffing cuts. I think it is important that we are realistic about how much can happen and how quickly otherwise we are going to have a lot of disappointed parents.

Again, I agree with your concern here and please be assured that the information shared with families is that which is readily available to all, The Mainstream Core Standards and Best Practice Guide for Early Years and where it is available; things like the Balanced System. Within the Roadshows there is a whole host of support shared with families such as school Nurses, Community Groups and crucially Family Hubs. These are presented to families as an Eco map of support around them – see below . This Eco map complements the Locality Model, albeit for a different audience

I hope that this has answered your query



Q- What is the handbook on the hub that you have referred to?

The handbook below is the one mentioned in the presentation. There are lots of other useful guides and tools on the website please feel free to get in touch with the

**Contact the SEND Enquiries Hub Team**

Or call our contact centre on [03000 41 99 94](tel:03000419994) (Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm) who will take your enquiry and pass it on to the SEND Enquiries Hub Team.

If there is something you are looking for and cant find it. If the Hub team cant find it they can raise with the Local Offer Coordinators who are a part of the same team to look at developing the information you need

[A handbook for families - Information on Autism and ADHD in Children \(kent.gov.uk\)](https://kent.gov.uk)

### **Questions for Teri Rutherford, SEND Support and Inclusion Manager, Kent County Council**

I am afraid that at the surgery the items that have been discussed are not actioned, several surgery appointments are made to discuss the same cases again and again. A shame as these are a good idea.

**I am sorry to hear that your experience of the SEN Co Surgery hasn't been positive. We will be seeking feedback from SENCOs next term about the support of the SEN IA team. We welcome feedback to improve our support to schools. I wonder if the topic might have needed a longer appointment?**

### **Questions for Ruth Gately, School Improvement SEND Specialist, The Education People**

I'm a Trust SENDCo and need to attend the Oct. conference.

**The issue that we have is that we have 400 spaces for the conference and over 600 schools in the county. Therefore, it may be a case of going back to your schools and having a conversation with your school SENCOs to decide who will attend.**

**Subsequently, those who do attend can then cascade that information to the remaining staff after the day.**