
Meeting: Corporate Parenting Panel
Date: 1 December 2014
Subject: Engagement and Involvement of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Report of: Sue Harrison, Director of Children's Services

Summary: The report set out how Children's Services are responding to the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014, to include children and young people with SEND in the development of the Local Offer.

Local authorities **must** publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area in their area who have Special Educational Needs or are disabled.

Contact Officer: Ken Harvey, Head of Service, Children with Disabilities.

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Central Bedfordshire Council's Strategic Plan 2012-16 Priority 3 – Promote health and wellbeing and protecting the vulnerable

The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2014 Priority 2 – Protecting children and keeping them safe.

Financial:

1. The work has been commissioned and monitored by the Head of Service, Children with Disabilities and funded from core budget. The work is monitored through the Support and Aspiration Board (*Work stream 2 :The Engagement and Involvement of Children and Young People with SEND*)
2. Further funding will be required to continue the development work and a bid will be made to the Support and Aspiration Board, against the SEND transformation grant, to support the children and young people's contribution to the Local Offer and for ensuring that a forum to support development through the SEND reforms is established.

Legal:

3. The Children and Families Act 2014 came in to force on 1st April 2014. Part 3 of the Act sets out the changes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) which were implemented from 1st September 2014.
4. Section 30 requires local authorities to publish and maintain a local offer. The Local Offer is information that sets out the education, health and social care provision that the local authority expects to be available for disabled children and young people and those with SEN. This specifically includes provision that will help them prepare for adulthood (Section 30(3)).
5. The Local Offer will set out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. EHC plans will replace statements of special educational need
6. As well as providing information about services, the Local Offer should be used as a tool to measure how well services are meeting local need and achieving the outcomes set out in the joint commissioning arrangements. Local authorities have a duty to publish comments from children, their parents, and young people on the Local Offer and any actions they intend to take in response (Section 30(6)). These views and comments should be used to inform future commissioning decisions.
7. The Local Offer must be developed by local authorities and their health partners, together with children, their parents and young people.

Risk Management:

8. Not engaging children and young people in the process would result in non compliance with the Act.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

9. There are no immediate staffing issues but workforce development across the SEND services will be essential if the children and young people are to be effectively engaged in the shaping and delivery of services through the Local Offer.

Equalities/Human Rights:

10. These are addressed throughout the SEND reforms.

Community Safety:

11. There are no community safety issues.

Sustainability:

12. The work has been commissioned in response to Section 30(6) of the Children and Families Act 2014. The Council will assist children and young people in establishing a forum which will support the transformation of the SEND reforms to 2017.

RECOMMENDATION:

Corporate Parenting Panel to note the progress made in implementing the 'Engagement and Involvement of Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)'

Background

13. Central Bedfordshire Council have successfully engaged in a coproduction model with parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. The Parent Carer forum, known as the Special Needs Action Panel (SNAP) are fully involved in the SEND reforms. The reforms are the most radical change to services for SEND for over 30 years.
14. The work with children and young people has been less developed to date. Shortland - Palmer Consultancy have been commissioned to begin the work of ensuring that effective and meaningful participation for children and young people with SEND is evident in the SEND reforms.

Commissioned work

15. The Project Overview, Learning, Structures and recommendations are set out in Appendix A.
16. The commissioned work has involved in put from 180 children and young people to date. The work has been undertaken with a range of schools and organisations:
 - The Chiltern School
 - Weatherfield Academy
 - Harlington Upper School
 - Samuel Whitbread Academy
 - Central Bedfordshire College
 - MENCAP
 - Families United Network
 - Outside –iN
17. The work was undertake through a range of methodologies including questionnaires, leadership and self expression workshops, focus groups, home visits, music workshops and depth interviews.
18. An event was held on 28 October 2014 to bring together a group of young people with SEND and begin the work with them of gaining the confidence to share their views and experience of services. Central Bedfordshire Officers attended for part of the meeting to hear the outcomes of their assisted workshop
19. There are some early key messages coming from the work:
 - Children and young people are often not involved in decisions about their lives. They want to be listened to more and would like to be more involved in decisions about their lives
 - All children and young people can communicate, sometimes using sign language, body language or using pictures
 - Children and young people can help adults make a better website to let them know activities they can do and what help they can get.

20. Further detail about the views of children and young people can be found in Appendix B which will be presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel by Ben Palmer and Sarah Walker with the assistance of young people who have been involved in the project.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Project Overview

Appendix B - The 'Effective and Meaningful' Participation Children and Young People with SEND (slide presentation)

Background Papers:

None