

Welcome!

Welcome to this, the first update from your local area SEND strategic group. The group is newly formed, meets monthly and has strategic responsibility for reviewing Northumberland's work for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and for commissioning work to tackle specific issues and areas we need to improve. Our most important job is to work out how well we're improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Overleaf you'll see the group membership and the person that you can contact if you have any issues, ideas or solutions to help improve our provision for SEND. After each meeting, we will issue a SEND strategic group update to keep you up to speed with our progress and the things we're working on.

You are shaping our priorities...

At our most recent meeting on 4th May 2016, we discussed the feedback that headteachers had given us at the recent SEND/safeguarding conference in April. We asked them: what works well; what could be improved; what support do you need? Their views, along with the early findings from our parent and carer SEND survey and the views of our SEND strategic group (SSG) members, have informed our decisions about some of the workstreams we will be pursuing over the next 6 months:

A. Early identification of SEND issues and preventative work

B. Services to support specific learning difficulties including dyslexia

C. Effectiveness of provision to support children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing

D. Capturing the views of children and young people with SEND

E. Integration of services to support children and young people with the most complex needs

F. The effectiveness of speech and language support and intervention in meeting children's needs

We have already begun our work on the first workstream and we're bringing key professionals together from health, education and social care, including SENCOs from mainstream and special schools and the vice-chair of Northumberland's parent/carer forum in a specific working group. They will explore the good practice that currently exists and identify ways that we can improve our provision, particularly in relation to school readiness and early work to support children with special needs. Thank you for the input from headteachers in the Blyth partnership which has led to the prioritisation of this workstream.

How can you get involved?

If you have a strong view on any of the workstreams we have prioritised or have ideas about issues we should prioritise, please contact your SSG representative (contact details overleaf). We are keen to include other professionals and those with SEND expertise in our working groups – let us know if you can contribute your time. Thanks to those who have already volunteered to help with our work.

Parent/carer survey

We were delighted to have received almost 300 responses from parents/carers of children and young people from over 90 education provisions. Many thanks to schools, colleges and EY providers for facilitating the survey. We are analysing the comments and feedback and will be presenting a report to the next meeting of the SSG at the end of May. After that meeting, results will be shared by senior managers, through the parent/carer forum and via our next SSG update.

At our meeting in early May, our clinical commissioners outlined their specific responsibilities to ensure that we have clarity about who is responsible for commissioning provision:

Rachel Mitcheson: continuing care for children with complex needs, primary mental health workers, therapies including OT, physiotherapy and speech and language therapy

Karen Herne: universal services including school nurses and health visitors, healthy child programme

Kate Brundle: mental health including CYPS

They will be delighted to hear from you if you have questions about their commissioning roles.

Referrals for Education, Health and Care plans or high needs top-up funding

Our SSG also reviewed the newly introduced guidance and application forms for EHC needs assessment and high needs top-up funding. The documents should be used by anyone completing a referral for a child or young person to our SEND team. You can request a copy of the forms and guidance by emailing sen@northumberland.gov.uk.

If you have a SEND issue you're struggling to resolve, an idea to improve our local area provision or would like more information, you can contact your representative on the SEND strategic group:

Representing	Name	Title/Role	Contact
Clinical leads	Dr Paula Batsford	Designated Medical Officer	pbatsford@nhs.net
Clinical commissioning (children)	Rachel Mitcheson	Head of commissioning (children)	r.mitcheson@nhs.net
Clinical commissioning (mental health)	Kate Brundle	Head of commissioning (mental health)	k.brundle@nhs.net
Clinical commissioning (public health)	Karen Hearne	Commissioner for public health/Public health service manager	Karen.Herne@northumberland.gov.uk
LA education service	Alan Carrick	SEND schools' commissioner	Alan.Carrick@northumberland.gov.uk
Mainstream schools	Andrew Day	Executive Director, Northumberland Church of England Academy	andrew.day@ncea.org.uk
Special schools	Michael Thompson	Headteacher, Hexham Priory School	Michael.Thompson@northumberland.gov.uk
Northumberland parent/carer forum	Elizabeth Johnston	Chair, Northumberland Parent/Carer Forum: <i>In It Together</i>	elizi_elizi@hotmail.com
Social care (adult)	John Young	Head of Service Care Management	John.Young@northumberland.gov.uk
Social care (children)	Marcus Weatherly	Children's Services Manager	Marcus.Weatherly@northumbria-healthcare.nhs.uk

Chair: Claire Brown, Senior Manager for Partnerships and Resources Claire.brown@northumberland.gov.uk