

Suffolk SEND Strategic Steering Group

Response to SPCN Survey 21.11.16

Dear Anne and Jo,

Thank you for sharing the results of the Suffolk Parent Carer Network's (SPCN) survey on Friday 11th November and for following that up with your comprehensive assessment of where and how we can work together to improve services and outcomes for families and children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across Suffolk. I am very grateful for all the work you have put in.

I welcome your acknowledgement that not all of the points raised in the document are "quick wins" and that many of them as part of the whole system and working culture change embodied in the 2015 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice and set out for Suffolk in our 2015-18 SEND Strategy which is currently under review. It is very disappointing to learn of parent carer frustrations and I was deeply moved by the individual accounts of dealing with a system that, far too often, feels like it is not trying to help. I hope we can all take a little comfort in the progress has started to be made in a number of the areas where parents raised concerns. However, there are many things set out in the "quick wins" document that the steering group can address swiftly.

Things we are already doing

- Suffolk County Council (SCC) and Ipswich and East and West Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are inviting parents through SPCN to co-produce job descriptions and to sit on interview and selection panels including for the Strategic Head of Inclusion for Children and Young People's Services in Suffolk. The Council for disabled children and Family Voice Norfolk were involved throughout the recruitment process of the Designated Clinical Officer for Great Yarmouth and Waveney CCG
- SCC has established a group to look at the workforce development needs and training requirements for staff working across the SEND arena. Much workforce development is shared with the CCGs and available online. SPCN, Scope and SENDIASS are all represented in this group and help to frame training needs and solutions.
- SCC has recently written out to parents via SPCN to inform them of our priorities and what they should expect through the EHCP process.
- Last month Suffolk relaunched its local offer website to make it easier for parents/carers to access information around support, services and provision for

SEND. (www.suffolksendlocaloffer.com). We are aware the website still needs further work and welcome all feedback on it so we can make it as useful as possible.

Instant Wins

- We will share job descriptions for special needs officers, and mental health practitioners as requested. These will be sent to SPCN by the end of November.
- Several of the processes (EHCP, transport etc) that parent/carers feel are unclear are already mapped out and we will make them available on the local offer website by the end of November.
- The membership (job roles) of the EHCP assessment panel, the county placement panel and the in-year fair access panel (IYFAP) will be shared with SPCN and published on the local offer website by the end of November 2016.

Quick Wins

- A commitment to a single named caseworker or point of contact was made by Allan Cadzow in his letter to parents in October. This will be in place for new EHCP applications by Christmas 2016.
- Where process maps do not already exist we will make them available on the local offer website along with the timescales parents should expect things to happen in and information on where to access support and how to escalate concerns if you feel you are not receiving the required level of service by Christmas 2016.
- The SEND steering group will work with SPCN to develop a definition and statement on co-production which will be published on the local offer website. The definition provided by SPCN forms a good basis for this. This will be done by Christmas 2016.
- Allan Cadzow will discuss SPCN membership of the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing Board with the Director of Public Health. Healthwatch are already a member of the HWBB.

Quick process wins (which will take time to embed in culture and practice)

- The SEND steering group welcomes the offer from SPCN for parents to give up their time to help with staff training where relevant. The means by which training needs and solutions can be co-produced is the workforce development workstream. Although training can be put in place quite swiftly (CDC outcomes training for EHCPs) it will take time for the culture change and impact to fully embed.
- A joint commissioning framework between the CCGs and Suffolk County Council was agreed over the summer and is publicly available. In many cases existing contracts of service are already in place and review periods must be adhered to and the co-

production of service requirements and commissioning will inevitably take time to impact on the ground.

- Where a need for “ways of working protocols” have been identified we will work with SPCN to draft up these protocols (for example co-production enshrined in service development, or staff response to phone calls and email response times). Protocols will be made publicly available to all parents through the local offer website and SPCN. However, it does take time to embed new behaviours and ways of working across organisations and we hope that SPCN and others will continue to help us get it right by pointing out the things we could do better and when we are getting things right.

Working together for future improvement

- SPCN have a central role in the newly established key partners’ group. The purpose of this group is to look at the process of developing EHCPs and to review it or reinvent it as necessary to make it more efficient and allow for more child centred planning and co-production. The development of the EHCP process is being done in tandem with SCC’s broader digitisation strategy and will help make education, health and social care assessment and review processes more aligned.
- Co-production is vital to ensuring that we are best able to meet the growing demand for provision for children and young people with SEND. We are committed to working with SPCN to find the best way we can to align education, health and care services. This will minimise the number of times that families have to repeat their stories, remove the lack of clarity over funding responsibilities, and speed up the ability for support to be put in place in a timely and effective manner.
- The local offer website was designed to become the single point of access for parents, carers, children and young people. The site will contain information on all the available provision and support for those with SEND and their families. It will take time for the website to contain all the information that we would like it to and for us to work with parents, carers and young people to identify how we can make it better in future.

In addition to the above, I have attached a copy of the “quick wins” with individual point responses shown in red so that responses can be clearly related to individual concerns and in order to assist you in responding to parents.

Many of the issues raised do highlight a very important point about how we can ensure that the whole of Suffolk develops a positive way of working when there are so many independent organisations, such as schools and FE colleges over whom local authorities have increasingly little influence. I believe that we can best address this through supporting and challenging all institutions to do better and in sharing good practice where it has been

identified. We can also do more to support and empower parents, carers, children and young people to understand what their rights are and the ways in which they can ensure they get the provision and support they need to meet their own individual outcomes.

Thank you once again for all the hard work and dedication that SPCN put in to support other parents and carers across the county. We look forward to working with you into the future and hope that in next year's SPCN survey we can start to see the benefits of the developments we have put in place together.

Yours sincerely,

Allan Cadzow – Service Director for Children and Young People's Services, SCC

(Chair Suffolk SEND Strategic Steering Group)