

Questions from Countywide SENCO Forum 19.01.22 and 20.01.22

Q- Could we please have a list of contact names, numbers and email addresses for the SEN Teams (including Ed Psych et al) across the county?

A- Kent County Council are putting together a document that will outline contact details and a structure of the SEN service. It is anticipated that it will be completed by the 7th and 8th February, in time for the scheduled Headteacher Briefings and will be cascaded, initially, to all Headteachers. The document will also be placed onto Kelsi and when this happens Rory Abbott will send out a link of where to find this. NB- This document will not include front line members of staff due to the level of change that is currently going on within the service.

Q- What support does PACT offer parents?

A- PACT offer parents and carers a support network, meaningful signposting for all things SEND (with/without diagnosis/EHCP). We are part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF/Contact) who also offer training and funding. Our strategic relationships with KCC and NHS are influential and we do represent the collective voice clearly. We have strong links to the charity/voluntary sector and are proud to empower parents/carers.

Q- Does the Local Authority prioritise responding to a request for an EHC needs assessment made by a parent over one made by a school? Why are some EHC needs assessments completed in the statutory timeframe of 20 weeks and others are delayed by months?

A- The aim is to address at least 90% of EHC needs assessment requests in 20 weeks; with the initial response from the LA giving the decision as to whether the LA has decided to assess or not to assess given within 6 weeks of receipt of a request.
For some years, following a rapid rise in EHC needs assessments (2016 to current date) that outstripped the LA's capacity to respond, a backlog of requests built up and the LA was out of timescale for most EHC needs assessments. This was due to the staffing capacity of the Educational Psychology (EP) and the SEN Services. Additional capacity to address the backlog of EP assessments was commissioned in April 2020. Since then, Kent EP Service has been addressing the backlog of requests (all out of timescale) as well as new referrals. The approach adopted since September 2021 was to address 80-90% of new referrals within the statutory timescale of 6 weeks from notification and, alongside this, address the backlog over a period of 6 months (ensuring that all historic referrals are allocated an EP no later than the end of February 2022). This has led to schools experiencing a delay for any requests remaining from last academic year and a timely approach to requests made this academic year. This anomaly will be resolved from March 2022 onwards. The approach adopted was necessary to resolve the backlog issue and get back on track with completing EHC needs assessment within timescales going forward.

Q- Please can you include the links to the useful resources to support Transition that were listed in the chat during the session?

- A- 1: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Supportinglearners-with-autism-during-transition.pdf> AET tool- but useful for ALL
2: <https://nasen.org.uk/resources/transition> NASEN guide
3: <https://www.autismspeaks.org/sites/default/files/2018-08/Transition%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>
Transition to adulthood- Autism Speaks
4: <https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/blog/supporting-autistic-pupils-transitionsecondary-schoolremotely> Supporting a Remote transition
5: <https://www.nurtureuk.org/product/transition-tool-box/> The Transition Tool box- Nurture Uk

Q- I really valued the talking head on Best Use of TAs. Could we have some guidance on the gold standard evidenced-based interventions. I have looked around, but the recommendations I am getting on EHC Plans through there are new interventions that I am not aware of. We are reviewing our interventions this year and it would be good to not to reinvent the wheel.

- A- Thank you for the feedback and we're glad that you found the session useful. We are reviewing all of your feedback from the last 3 sessions to enable us to plan where the need is with regards to the 'Talking Head/Focus Sessions'. We will hope to have more news on this at the next round of Countywide SENCO Forums in March. In the meantime, you can access free training that has been commissioned by the DfE via;
<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/events>
Attached to the email that you have been sent, you will find another document 'WSS Spring Events Calendar V3', which has a listing of all upcoming training. Once you have signed up to this portal via the link above you will also be able to access recordings of previous training that has been delivered.

Q- Is there any news on the reform of High Needs Funding? Is this likely to change dramatically?

- A- There is a High Needs Working Group that has been put in place to oversee plans for the High Needs Block. Any information gathered at the Countywide SENCO Forums will be passed onto this working group.

Q- Is there a link to the online form to request an EHCP assessment. Or do we currently still complete the relevant Appendix form from Kelsi and email it to our local SEN Office?

- A- <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs/educationhealth-and-care-plans/what-happens-during-a-needs-assessment> The link to the EHC needs assessment request form is on the page that can be reached through the link above. There is a hyperlink to the request form near the bottom of the page.

Q- What is the date of the next round of Primary and Secondary Forums?

A- Please find the dates below with links to CPD Online so that you can register for them...

Countywide SENCO Forum - Primary	SCH 22/308	24/03/2022	Zoom course
Countywide SENCO Forum - Primary	SCH 22/310	26/05/2022	Zoom course
Countywide SENCO Forum - Primary	SCH 22/312	14/07/2022	Zoom course
Countywide SENCO Forum - Secondary and Post 16	SCH 22/307	23/03/2022	Zoom course
Countywide SENCO Forum - Secondary and Post 16	SCH 22/309	25/05/2022	Zoom course
Countywide SENCO Forum - Secondary and Post 16	SCH 22/311	13/07/2022	Zoom course

Q- Do you think it would be wise to include questions related to COVID and EHCP Needs Assessment? Could distance learning have impacted the support levels/concern levels parents are feeling? - especially related to transitions and not understanding the universal offer of the next provision (specifically looking at surges in EHCP over the past 2 years)

A- Consideration of impact of COVID as a factor affecting parental concern is a good suggestion. However, the data is currently showing that the numbers of requests for EHCPs from parents has remained consistent pre COVID and subsequently. In terms of transition, we can plan to be proactive in adapting our universal and curriculum offer to support all children affected by the pandemic, especially SEND.

Q- I think that we need to be aware that some parents and carers may find the idea of having to make a request for assessment via an online portal very overwhelming, intimidating or potentially a barrier. Parents with SEN or other needs will require additional advice and support around the process.

A- We are working with Kent PACT and IASK to ensure we are more inclusive and have also reached out to the Shaw Trust in the hope of learning how to better support families with ESOL, who maybe can't read or write, and or those who have Learning Difficulties or disabilities themselves.