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Democratic Services
The Corby Cube,
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NN17 1QG

Meeting: EAP Education, Skills and Employment
Date: Tuesday 22nd November, 2022
Time: 5.00 pm
Venue: Remote meeting, via Zoom

The meeting will be available for the public to view live at the Democratic Services North Northants YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/DemocraticServicesNorthNorthantsCouncil>

Committee Membership:

Councillor Scott Edwards (Chair), Councillor Wendy Brackenbury,
Councillor Leanne Buckingham, Councillor Philip Irwin, Councillor Ian Jelley,
Councillor Dorothy Maxwell and Councillor Lee Wilkes

Agenda Supplement

The following additional reports have now been published which were not available at the time the agenda was published.

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Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer
North Northamptonshire Council



Proper Officer
22 November 2022

This supplementary agenda has been published by Democratic Services.
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School Admissions Briefing

EAP – Education, Skills and Employment 22

November 2022

School Admissions team

- Building new team for NNC
 - School Admissions Manager
 - Senior Admissions Officers
 - Supervisory Admissions Officers
 - School Admissions Officers
-
- 15 in total
 - Main task = to ensure that school age children have a school place

Northamptonshire – Composite prospectus



NNC is the admission authority for North Northamptonshire

- Schools have '**admissions authorities**' which are responsible for setting the admission arrangements for its schools (PAN/ Oversubscription criteria etc.)
- Types of schools – Community, Voluntary controlled (VC), Voluntary aided (VA), Foundation, Academy, Free Schools
- NNC, the local authority, is the admission authority for Community and Voluntary (VC) schools in North Northamptonshire Other schools – Governing body for VAs and Foundation schools; Academy Trust for Academies and Free Schools
- The School Admissions team administers the admission arrangements for its schools on behalf of the council and undertakes LA duties under school admissions law

Legal basis

- SSFA (1998), as amended;
- Admission authorities are bound by the **School Admissions Code** (2021) and the School Admission Appeals Code (2022);
- Applies to all maintained schools;
- Academies are required by their funding agreements to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions - Secretary of State can vary this requirement where there is demonstrable need.

LA – Several hats:

NNC is:

- **Admission authority** for Community and VC schools
- **Responsible for the co-ordination** of applications to both maintained schools and academies / Free Schools at points of entry – Reception, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 12
- Responsible for ensuring that children of school age have a school place

School Admissions – what do we do?

- Co-ordinated Schemes
- In-year scheme
- Fair access
- School Admission Appeals
- Consultation/ Determination/composite prospectus
- LA annual report to the Schools Adjudicator

The application process

- 3 preferences in rank order
- Equal preferencing
- Closing dates
- Offer dates
- Appeals

Oversubscription criteria

- Admission authority sets the oversubscription criteria for its school – needed when more applicants than places available
- PAN = minimum number of children must admit if enough apply

No definitive list of criteria. Usually:

- looked after/ previously looked after children
- sibling
- staff child
- distance from the school.

- Place offered at the highest preference – or, nearest school with a place available

Co-ordinated schemes

Apply to:

- Primary, Infant and Junior
- Secondary
- Points of entry – starting at the school in the lowest year group:
Reception/ Year 3/ Year 7
- Schemes open ~10 Sept 2022
- Secondary national closing date – **31 October 2019**
- Primary + Junior – national closing date – **15 January 2020**

Co-ordination

- Statutory responsibility of the LA
- Apply to LA where you live
- LAs co-ordinate applications for schools in their area

- National Offer Day – secondary – **1 March 2020**
- National Offer Day - primary/junior – **16 April 2020**

Applications

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- Vast majority are online applications
- Paper forms available
- Online – receive email
- Paper – receive letter

Number of applications

When we were the county council:

- In 2018/19 the School Admissions Team processed the following number of applications for entry in September 2019:
 - 10,259 secondary
 - 10,215 primary
- and
- 10,012 in-year applications during the academic year

In-year applications

- Applications made throughout the year- to any year group.
- Huge increase in number of IY applications s in last 9 years (N'hants)
- 2013/2014 – 7, 012
- 2018/2019 – 10,012
- 2019/2020 ~ 8,000 (Covid)
- 2020/2021 ~ 8,000 (Covid)
- **2021/2022 – 11,036**

NNC in 2021/22

- In the first full year as a unitary authority, we processed:

- 'coordinated' applications:

Reception – **4541**

Junior – **1155**

Secondary - **4560**

- In-year applications: **4,849** – **50% in the summer term**

- Fair Access cases: **23** in 2013/14; **184** in 2021/22

IY challenges

- NCC co-ordinates for most secondary schools (3 do their own) - scheme
- All except one of the state secondary schools in Northamptonshire are academies /free schools
- Schools - some reluctance to share information about numbers on roll
- LA can refer academies/free schools to Secretary of State – lengthy
- August holidays – issues with contacting schools for decisions
- Pressure on school places – in-year application increase
- EHE – new pattern emerging
- Complaints increasing
- NEW SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CODE (2021)

Fair Access

- Fair Access Protocol (FAP) – new SA Code
- Unplaced children
- Most are secondary FAPs – points system used to identify the next school due to take a FAP child
- FA panel meetings - monthly
- Large increase in the number of children placed via FAP – from **23** in 2013/14 to (NCC) – to **184** in 2021/22

School Admission Appeals

- Parents/carers are entitled to appeal if they are refused a place
- The appeals team organises the appeal – clerk/panel/venue
- **Appeal** – opportunity for the independent panel to make a place available. The panel balances arguments; decision binding
- The School Admissions Team provides Presenting Officers for Community and VC school admission appeals – and offers this service to academies/Free Schools who want to commission the LA to present at appeals on their behalf

Consultation and Determination

People age faster than others when they work in School Admissions!

We experience 2 years at same time – the offer year and the determination year.

Consultation – changes to admission policies (or not consulted in the last 7 years)

Determination – all admission policies MUST be determined annually by February 28

Compliance – role of LA in ensuring that admission arrangements of all schools comply with the SA CODE (2021).

Any questions?

- Please get in touch any time if you have any queries or concerns
- Jan Baines, School Admissions Manager
- Jan.Baines@northnorthants.gov.uk



North Northamptonshire Local Area – SEND Peer Challenge Report

Held: 21st & 22nd October 2022

North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is a relatively 'new' local authority area, coming into being in April 2021, with a shared Integrated Care-Board (ICB) and Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT) with neighbouring West Northamptonshire. NCT has been in existence for approximately two years, and Integrated Care Northamptonshire (ICN) commenced from 1st July 2022.

Methodology:

Over two days, a team of three SEND leaders from within the East Midlands challenged the area, with a focus on Coproduction, a central plank of all SEND/Inclusion strategies and the lived experiences of families.

Over 90 people were interviewed from a range of backgrounds- parent/carers; young people; practitioners and leaders from health providers/health commissioners/school leaders including SENCOs/leaders and practitioners from the Children's Trust for social care/leaders and practitioners from the Local Authority (LA)/ Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) providers.

Peer reviewers met with focus groups of practitioners, leaders and parent/carers and young people over the two-day challenge period. In advance of the meeting, key documentation and information was sent to establish the evidence base for the key line of enquiry, coproduction.

Focus/Key Line of Enquiry:

A Peer Review Planning Group consisting of representatives from NNC, Northamptonshire Parent / Carer Forum Group (NPFPG), NCT, and ICN met in July to discuss the possible focus for the Peer Review and support preparation for the Peer Review. The group were mindful that the Peer Review is mainly over one day, and of the consequent need to be very focussed to get the most from the process.

A range of options were considered, and the peer review planning group suggested the following focus:

- The impact of the work being undertaken to develop true partnership working and improve co-production at:
- An individual level (child and family)
- An operational level (services and schools / settings with children and families)
- A strategic level (collectively agreeing the issues and challenges and co-designing the next steps at a strategic level).

Findings

SECTION 1

Key Line of Enquiry- KLOE 1

Individual Coproduction / partnership working

Strengths

- 1.1 A growing shared understanding of personalisation and the collaboration required to ensure a Preparing for Adulthood (PfA)/wider outcomes focus is developing across this relatively new local authority area, shedding the legacy of the previous LA boundary
- 1.2 Parents told us about some schools which offer a 'gold standard' of inclusion and support, identifying needs at an early stage and making appropriate adjustments, whilst communicating effectively with families- this hugely improves lived experiences and outcomes
- 1.3 Parents told us of positive experiences with multiple health provision from birth to year 6, starting with Sure Start support and referrals / input from Community Paediatricians, neurology specialists, geneticist, orthopedics, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy
- 1.4 New Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) [issued in 2022] and the emerging Annual Review practice within special schools, are improving the quality and person centred focus within section A of the plan
- 1.5 The multi-agency QA process has initiated joint QA and action planning for improving the Quality of EHCPs
- 1.6 The offer from Action for Children, commissioned by NCT, enables short break support for families to access without EHCPs and during the assessment process, which families value highly

- 1.7 Young people in specialist provisions are optimistic about their current provision and their preparation for adulthood
- 1.8 We found pockets of good practice in schools within the Annual Review process, including updating pupil views, interests and aspirations (Section A of the Plan) and particularly in primary and special schools

Areas for development

- 1.9 Improving the quality of the 'backlog' of older EHCPs and some independent moderation/QA – there is a 'lag' in the overall perceptions and experiences of families regarding the quality of older plans and previous Annual Reviews
- 1.10 Not all schools use a person centred approach to assessing the strengths and interests of children and young people; not all schools have a clear Graduated Response to meet individual needs and this variation is significant in creating dissatisfaction for families and poorer outcomes for children and young people. The current work to co-develop graduated approach guidance will support clarity of expectations and best practice across the area.
- 1.11 Parents felt in some cases, that their views were not taken account of in some school Annual Reviews
- 1.12 Some parents that we met wanted the LA to be more flexible regarding EOTAS- Education Other Than At School. Some good examples of practice exist within the region in other LAs which we can link the area to, if desired
- 1.13 Some parents noted the need for clear accessibility for families where English is not the community or home language of the parent/carer
- 1.14 There is a 'lag' in developments rolling out to all families, and there continue to be reports from some parents, of poor quality in timeliness and quality of EHC assessments and plans on social media, which adversely affects confidence in the area's progress

Recommendations

- 1.15 The region could assist with a specific triad or paired moderation of EHCPs to corroborate the quality assurance processes within the area
- 1.16 Consider person centred workshop/s for school SENCOs to improve the consistency of practice in hearing voice as the starting point of a strengths-based approach to

assessment and planning (in Assess, Plan, Do, review cycle), building upon the successful relaunch of the SENCO networks

- 1.17 Consider developing a template for children, young people and their parents/carers to make on-going contributions to the Annual Review cycle
- 1.18 Consider using the refreshed Local offer, when it is available, to show short film clips of the good practice that we heard about in some schools, and parental views of the newer plans

KLOE 2- Operational Coproduction / partnership working

Strengths

- 2.1 The timeliness of EHCP assessment completion is improving and is significantly above national current levels
- 2.2 We found evidence of improved communications at practitioner level- EPs/locality assessment officers- Meet the Team approaches are valued by providers as they forge closer links with staff
- 2.3 The Newsletter/SENCo network refresh and workshops in localities are valued by schools and are developing partnership and confidence
- 2.4 Northamptonshire Parent Forum Group, NPPFG, is growing membership and knowledge across a wider range of parent leaders
- 2.5 Mental health and well-being services are available through Northamptonshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (NHFT) and the voluntary sector and the REACH collaborative , with a positive partnership across agencies, and a suitable navigation within the Local Offer from health partners and schools to support individual children/young people- a video of young people describing their interviewing for practitioner posts indicated their coproduction involvement and their sense of achievement at doing a good job
- 2.6 Young people engagement/involvement in specific areas, such as YAAP- Young Person Autism Advisory Project/Shooting Stars/Young Inspectors in social care- empowers young people to make a significant contribution to codesign and coproduction via these positive enablers

- 2.7 Work on the Single Front Door for families is underway- and would benefit from feedback during initial roll out to check with parent/carers that it is indeed, reducing the need to tell their story many times
- 2.8 Preparing for Adulthood activities within the VCS has several strengths- Bewitched Cafes, Youth Counselling support, and Care Leaver apprenticeships reflect some of the positive practice emerging within the county

Areas for development

- 2.9 Some health providers noted that the changes to the ICN/ NCT and two separate LAs, have impacted operational partnership- for example, the increased number of EHC decision making panels in North Northants and other multiagency meetings can impact on practitioner time for face to face work
- 2.10 Not all schools are as inclusive and welcoming as the 'gold standard' schools cited by parents- some do not welcome and include, nor make reasonable adjustments. In the SEND Green Paper this is to be tackled potentially, through the Local Inclusion Plan, and it would be advantageous for school leaders to contribute to this process ahead of what will be wide-ranging legal changes
- 2.11 Parent/carers raised issues regarding their ability to access section 17 social care assessments, and some practitioners noted the gap between Direct Payments (DP)/short breaks available to some families but not seemingly available to all. Issues about thresholds and eligibility were described in several meetings with parent/carers as unclear and opaque
- 2.12 Workforce turnover- as an emerging new LA, staff churn has had an impact upon families and the people that they link with- the LA and ICB are largely in place with staffing, and Meet the Teams has helped develop relationships both ways, but retention will be a determining factor in further progress in SEND/Inclusion in the county
- 2.13 Schools told us that they would like to have wider representation across the SEND/Inclusion workstreams across the area
- 2.14 The Local Offer is historic- a legacy from the preceding county area, and schools told us how important it is to update and revise the Local Offer, which the LA is undertaking having implemented a mystery shopper exercise.

Recommendations

- 2.15 Develop the locality data dashboard to share with areas, and consider an individual 'scorecard' for schools to facilitate a structured conversation regarding inclusion
- 2.16 Further develop the Coproduction Charter –in a similar manner to the Genuine Partnership (Rotherham) model, this could include indicators for services and schools to achieve a North Northants Quality Inclusion mark, which parents and young people play a part in monitoring
- 2.17 Consider work with the regional Young Researchers and University of Derby to develop a more cohesive strategy for young people's coproduction, which builds upon existing pockets of good practice and weaves this together across the area- we gave the example of the collective Drop Box used by all partners in one local area, from the ICB, LA and VCS, to collect the views and suggestions of young people – in order that we do not keep asking the same questions from different services, but have a sound body of evidence about the views and aspirations of our young people and children
- 2.18 North Northants could consider a 'next steps' meeting when the LA refuses to assess- this has the benefit of schools hearing from the LA about why the assessment was refused, what the school can do to offer a further graduated response- an approach such as this is used in Derbyshire, contact alex.howlett@derbyshire.gov.uk for further information
- 2.19 Staff turnover- some areas have a clear SEND induction online training for new staff and could share this with North Northants, as parents that we met felt that this would consolidate consistency of practice including knowing the legal duties of SEND

KLOE 3- Strategic Coproduction / partnership working

Strengths

- 3.1 The commitment, honesty and desire for change which is evident within the new strategic leadership team in the new LA is a huge development and has the potential to really change the prevailing culture of the area
- 3.2 A commitment to take time to genuinely improve coproduction, which can take more time but deliver a longer lasting improvement in culture and relationships between families and practitioners and between agencies

- 3.3 The Coproduction Charter, which is almost completed, and the workshops/processes which have developed it, as they have been equally important in sharing thinking and values
- 3.4 The SEND data dashboard has the potential to provide a strong platform for improvement, planning and joint commissioning utilising the Power BI system
- 3.5 The Learning Disability and Autism Key working programme is an example of a powerful and effective coproduced and codesigned service, including the positive development of those with lived experience in North Northants, embracing the VCS as delivery partners- Barnardo's and ENFOLD. Young people have also made a significant contribution to the development of this service, which is in its infancy, but based on very firm codesigned and coproduced foundations. This practice sets a high standard for other services to emulate
- 3.6 The development of Family Hubs has been codesigned with families, and the Hub will have a parent-carer coordinator within it
- 3.7 Outcomes based approaches are being utilised in joint commissioning approaches, such as Adult Short Breaks (which affects some of the 'older' young people with EHCPs) and emanating from the Autism Champions group. This group has over 400 members, and has contributed to developments such as the commissioning for brighter futures approaches

Areas for development

- 3.8 The completion of the SEND SEF/JSNA/Joint Commissioning strategy will enable the area to be prepared for the new inspection cycle for SEND which commences from January 2023
- 3.9 Whilst coproduction is developing strategically, parent/carers and young people need as much notice as possible of events/times to be able to fully participate, and good communication both about the events and the results (You Said, We Did) to be fed back to participants who have given their time and energy to make improvements happen

Recommendations

- 3.10 Develop a Coproduction Action Plan alongside the Charter, to monitor progress and develop confidence
- 3.11 Consider paired working with e.g. Lincolnshire, who have a strong SEND SEF and an excellent recent inspection outcome, to corroborate the emerging strategic planning materials

- 3.12 Consider apprenticeships and Supported Internships to develop a Young People's office, which brings together the positive practice of groups such as the Young Inspectors/YAAP and Shooting Stars, and takes it one step further. This could link with the regional research approach that the East Midlands region has commissioned, if of interest- contact pat.bullen@sdsa.net and Professor Debs Robinson, D.Robinson@derby.ac.uk

Summary:

North Northamptonshire has developed a new and fresh identity as a new local authority area, building on the cultural changes which the Children's Trust and ICN have commenced. The clear commitment and honesty of the Director of Children's Services, sets a standard and a high expectation of the codesign and coproduction values of the area, which are evidenced in activities such as ongoing locality workshops to meet parents and carers; the focus on developing further the voice and role of young people, and the codesigned Key Working service.

There is a 'lag' in the experiences of some families, as the area seeks to address a backlog of ARs and less well developed EHCPs from the inherited past, and families will need to maintain confidence that this is being addressed and reported, through clear and frequent communication to them.

Working with schools has begun a refresh, and schools that we met evinced confidence in the leadership of the LA to facilitate change. It is imperative to engage with all providers across the area, to ensure more individual coproduction and positive satisfaction in the outcomes and experiences of children and young people experiencing SEND.

Pat Bullen, EM SEND LA Peer Network lead and Lead Reviewer for the North Northamptonshire SEND Peer Challenge

Other team members:

- **Alex Howlett**, Strategic Lead, SEND Assessment Service, Derbyshire County Council
- **Paula Nightingale**, Head of Service, SEND Derby City Council

Early Childhood Review Update

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Update to EAP November 2022

Agenda Item 6



North
Northamptonshire
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Early Years Review

The Early years review has been initiated to examine the existing offer of all services for families with children under 5 and to understand what services are provided and by whom. The desired outcomes of the review are to:

- 1) Identify gaps in provision
- 2) Identify areas for improvement
- 3) Identify opportunities to centralise activity in North Northants to achieve efficiencies and secure consistency of delivery, operations and quality assurance
- 4) Identify opportunities to achieve efficiencies and a more collaborative approach



Alignment of services

The review will aim to identify ways to align all current commissioned services for under 5's and their families including those commissioned by Public Health

A more collaborative approach to delivering the universal and targeted children's centre offer in North Northamptonshire

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Work with Health Visitors and Midwifery services to support families at the very earliest opportunities by providing more choice and access to both universal and targeted groups and the publishing of a start for life offer by March 2023 as part of the development of Family Hubs

Develop locality networks across the Early Years Sector including schools to support sharing of good practice, opportunities for peer support and to ease transitions from early years to school for children and their parents/carers



Some of the progress to date

- Numerous meetings with partners across the sector including, health, education, JCP, midwifery service, commissioned providers and some voluntary sector partners in order to understand the current offer for families with children 0-5 and identify any gaps in provision
- Analysis of all commissioned services for under 5's and their families
- Beginning to pull together a comprehensive data set to understand the need across the LA which will be further developed to support future delivery of services and monitoring of outcomes and impact
- Alignment of all work with the development of Family Hubs in North Northamptonshire
- September 2022 - Development and implementation of SENIF funding to support children in settings with low and emerging needs
- Undertaking a CSA to understand sufficiency and pressures across the childcare sector to be published annually in Spring 2023

Early Years Provision in North Northants

- There are sufficient places across North Northants to enable children to take up their free entitlements should they wish to do so
- 97% of all settings in North Northants are judged good or outstanding - the number of settings judged as outstanding is 2% higher than national average
- Take up of disadvantaged 2 year old places is currently at 52% but we are working to increase that in the first instance in line with national average of 62% - the sector are only just starting to recover following the pandemic
- Take up of universal 3 & 4 year old places is at 88% which is 4% lower than national average numbers are starting to increase following the pandemic



Development of an Early Childhood Board

- The Early Childhood Board will be launched in December and will consist of a variety of partners and stakeholders across the sector and will feed into the Start for Life and Family Hubs Programme Board
- This Board will co-develop a start for life offer to be published in March 2023
- This board will oversee the development of a North Northants Early Childhood Strategy and delivery plan with an supporting outcome framework
- This group will drive the operational development of services to support children and families in North Northants and act as a critical friend to support and challenge

Next Steps

- Finalise review with recommendations
- Develop one North Northamptonshire Early Years Team
- Work to support the delivery of Family Hubs through the Early Childhood Board
- Align all commissioned services for under 5's and their families to achieve better outcomes for children and families whilst ensuring best value
- Develop a more systematic approach to support take up of disadvantaged 2 year old places whilst supporting parents into the workplace
- Co-develop a shared North Northants Early Childhood Strategy



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