

Executive Advisory Panel – Future Communities 2nd November 2023

Briefing Title	SEND and EHCP update
Briefing Author	Charlotte Franks – Interim Head of SEND charlotte.franks@northnorthants.gov.uk

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Performance Data for Education Health and Care Plans

1. Purpose of Briefing

The Executive Advisory Panel requested an item of Education, Health, and Care Plans to be discussed at the next EAP. This report provides updates for the SEND services and provides specificity around the EHC team.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This Children’s Services report, which provides data for this item, covers the period October 2022 to September 2023.
- 2.2 There continues to be a high volume of requests for statutory system which is placing pressure across the system. SEND services need to continue to invest in early help services to support emerging needs as they present themselves to support children and their families at earlier stages of their SEND journey.
- 2.3 There has historically been seem lost faith in the system and repairing relationships with schools and families continues to be a high priority.
- 2.4 There has been instability within the EHC team and the permanent recruitment and development of this team is a high priority.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The local authority continues to invest in earlier preventative support in the form of outreach and early help support to mainstream schools.
- 3.2 There is continued improvement of engagement with the sector including half termly SENCO meetings, SENCO conferences, Meet the Team parent events. There has been recent training from the EHC team on the phased transfer process and annual reviews and these have been well attended by the sector.

- 3.3 Permanent recruitment within the Education, Health and Care team is underway. This will provide the service with much needed stability and enable them to continue to develop and improve services. A re-organisation of roles within the service will also improve communication.
- 3.4 The SEND services continue to invest in opportunities to expand specialist provision. They also continue to look for opportunities to bid for new special schools.

4. Briefing Background

- 4.1 The EHC service has been under close monitoring with the development of the Children's Services Performance Report. On a monthly basis the data is circulated, and service leads are invited to provide commentary. This report is then discussed in Children's Services monthly Improvement Board. This report has been included to provide some data for EAP to consider.
- 4.2 Whilst data demonstrates that the performance with meeting 20 week timescales is high, there are other factors to consider.
- 4.3 Due to the timeliness of advices (from Educational Psychology, social care and a range of health services) this often leads to finalising the plan by naming a type of provision as opposed to an actual school name.
- 4.4 The increased number of EHCP's is placing strain on the system. There is increased demand of both the Higher Needs Funding block that funds EHCP support. There is also increased demand for specialist settings.
- 4.5 The quality of EHCP's is not where we would want it. There needs to be significant work done to improve the plans. With such a large number of plans (over 3700) improving the quality of all plans will be a significant exercise.

5. Timeline

- 5.1 None

6. Implications (including financial implications)

- 6.1 The increased number of children with SEND and children/young people with an EHCP places financial strain on the local authority.
- 6.2 The lack of capacity in the specialist sector is providing a financial strain on the commissioning of independent school placements which often cost significantly more. They are also less likely to be in the community of the family.
- 6.3 Without investment in support for the EHC team, they are unable to fulfil statutory duties and therefore there would be reputational risk for the council.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Continue to monitor the EHC performance data, and enhance the measures to look at timeliness of all advices and plans finalised by type.
- 7.2 To continue to look at the sufficiency of specialist places including the opening or expansion of unit provision.
- 7.3 To look for opportunities to enhance the offer and support for SEND children in mainstream schools.
- 7.4 To reinvigorate the quality of EHCP action group.
- 7.5 To continue to provide forums and events for the sector to improve relationships.