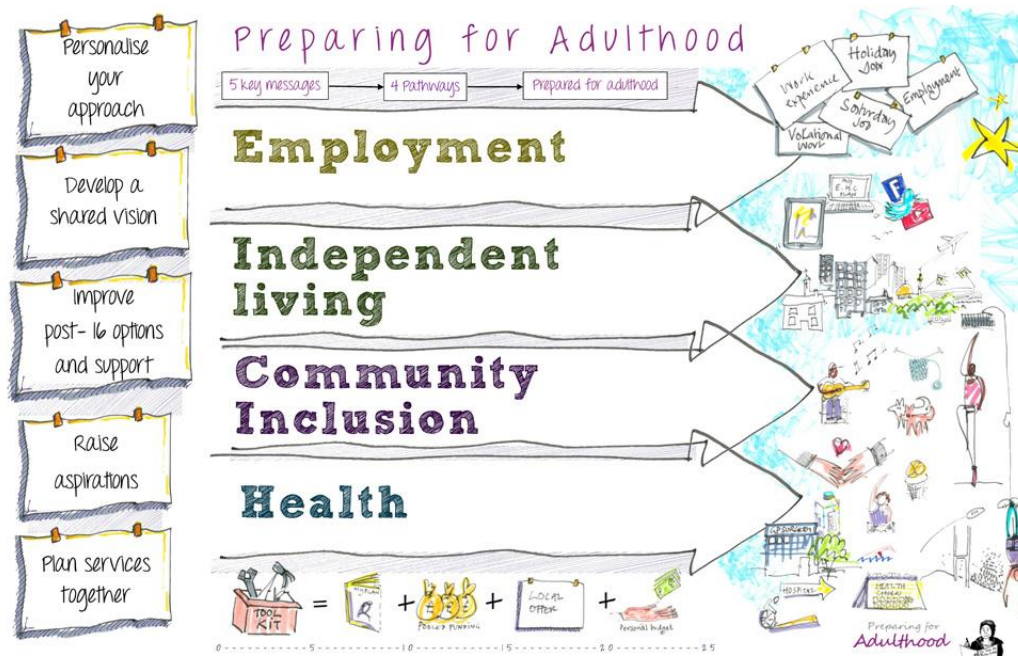


# Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Preparation for Adulthood

## Children and Young People Select Committee



**Final Report**  
**November 2017**

Children and Young People Select Committee  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
Municipal Buildings  
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Graham Barker (Head of Operations) and Stuart Dexter (Chief Executive), Daisy Chain  
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With thanks to Stockton Parent Carer Forum, and all children and young people, and members of staff the Committee met during the review.

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## **Foreword**

We are pleased to introduce the latest report of the Children and Young People Select Committee.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are a key priority for us. We need to ensure that services are the best they can be so that young people are well prepared as they move into adulthood. This work should start at the earliest possible age.

Such efforts will count for little unless we can ensure that sustainable opportunities, for example in employment, are available throughout adulthood wherever possible.

Although we recognise that improvements have been identified, there is clearly a lot of work being undertaken across the Borough and the commitment from members of staff was evident during our visits to local provision and multi-agency meetings.

It is particularly important we ensure that the voices of children and young people with SEND are clearly heard by those planning and delivering services.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the review by attending our meetings and hosting visits by our Members.

We hope that our review will contribute towards ensuring further improvements, and look forward to receiving an update on progress.

**Councillor Carol Clark**  
**Chair**

**Councillor Barbara Inman**  
**Vice Chair**

## Original Brief

### Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The **Council Plan 2017-20** includes the key objective to:  
Improve education and learning outcomes for all children and young people.

This includes implementing new approaches to the delivery of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with a focus on hubs, and a renewed focus on SEND support in schools and joint commissioning

Improving SEND delivery is also a key part of the **Children's Services Strategy for Change and Improvement 2016-18**.

### What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Children with SEND are a key priority vulnerable group identified in the Council Plan and Children and Young People's Plan.

The issues are multi-faceted and complex: ranging from the effectiveness of identification, and overall needs assessment, to the provision of support (which includes roles for the Council, schools, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS providers, early years providers, the VCSE, and families) and in seeking to ensure better outcomes.

SEND has been identified as an area for the Health and Wellbeing Board to pursue joint commissioning approaches (for example, for therapies).

A range of work is ongoing to further develop SEND services, including the design and commissioning of a new model for Additionally Resourced Provision in schools. The new model has Enhanced Schools meeting all four of the needs in the Code of Practice in each of the three areas of the Borough: North, Central and South. These enhanced schools will offer progression across the key stages and host more support for schools to access in outreach.

SEND is now subject to an Ofsted/CQC inspection process for the area (ie not just the Council's services, or education: this will also cover the quality of social care and health provision) by 2020.

It is proposed that the review will consider the wider context for SEND within Stockton Borough, and will focus in particular on preparing for adulthood. This includes support up to age 25, and transition into adult services where appropriate. This is an area that needs development to provide better planning for transitions.

Preparing for adulthood includes all aspects of SEND provision including education, health and care needs.

## Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report presents the outcomes of the Children and Young People Select Committee's review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Preparation for Adulthood.
- 1.2 The aim of the review was to consider the wider context for SEND within Stockton Borough, with a particular focus on preparing for adulthood as this was identified as an area for further development.
- 1.3 SEND services are now subject to a joint Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection process that will consider the quality of the planning and provision of health, care and education services. The inspection will look at the 'Local Area' as a whole, and Stockton-on-Tees is due to be inspected before 2020 as part of this programme.
- 1.4 Children and young people with SEND are a key priority for the Council, and following an honest self-evaluation process, a range of work is ongoing to improve the local planning and delivery of services.
- 1.5 Progress has been made to improve preparation for adulthood, but it is recognised that more needs to be done. The Committee has particularly focussed on the education and employment opportunities, and the links with health services.
- 1.6 The Committee found that, overall, there was a recognised need to bring forward the provision of support to prepare for adulthood to Year 9, and to earlier wherever possible. There is a wide range of good practice/existing work on the PfA agenda but this needs to be more consistently implemented and formalised.
- 1.7 The Committee was pleased to see how the Council and partners are working closely together, and has had the opportunity to witness this work first hand in both multi-agency meetings and in educational settings.
- 1.8 The continued development of meaningful education and employment opportunities is recognised as crucial. This needs to be underpinned by effective guidance for young people and families, and ensuring their voice is heard in service planning and delivery.
- 1.9 It is important that the Council and local partners, particularly in the NHS, learn from inspections elsewhere, and as work on this agenda continues, the Committee looks forward to further updates in due course.
- 1.10 The Committee has made the following recommendations:
  1. **Activity to prepare children and young people with SEND for adulthood should be formalised at Year 9, and at an earlier age wherever possible;**
  2. **The production of the guidance for young people, parent/carers, and professionals be endorsed, and the Committee requests an update following the initial roll out;**

- 3. Case studies should be used as part of wider improvements to the information provided to young people and their parents/carers, in relation to their future options;**
- 4. The Council should explore options to work with colleges to facilitate earlier entry into the further education sector/environment for some of those students who may stay in the school environment until the age of 19 in order to increase their independence;**
- 5. The Council continues to work with post-16 providers and employers to develop meaningful employability and employment opportunities, and as part of this work, further develops its own role as an employer;**
- 6. Improvements to data collection are made in relation to the destinations and outcomes for young people with SEND;**
- 7. A further update on progress within the CCG/local NHS on their improvement plans and preparation for inspection, be provided to the Committee within six months;**
- 8. The Council should ensure effective arrangements are in place to capture the voice of children and young people with SEND, particularly in relation to views on transition into adulthood.**



## Introduction

- 2.1 This report presents the outcomes of the Children and Young People Select Committee's review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – Preparation for Adulthood. This took place during municipal year 2017-18.
- 2.2 The aim of the review was to consider the wider context for SEND within Stockton Borough, with a particular focus on preparing for adulthood as this was identified as an area for further development.
- 2.3 SEND services are now subject to a joint Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection process that will consider the quality of the planning and provision of health, care and education services. The inspection will look at the 'Local Area' as a whole, and Stockton-on-Tees is due to be inspected before 2020 as part of this programme.
- 2.4 During the review the Committee has considered information from Children's Services, local schools and colleges, and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group. The review has been supported throughout by officers from the Schools and SEN Service.
- 2.5 Members have undertaken a number of visits to local provision including: Abbey Hill Sixth Form, Egglecliffe Secondary School, Stockton Riverside College, and the Daisy Chain autism support charity. Members also attended a discussion group hosted by the Stockton Parent Carer Forum.
- 2.6 Members were also able to attend a range of officer-led multi-agency meetings, including the SEN Development Group's development day.
- 2.7 The Council's SEND Development Group has established several workstreams to improve local SEND delivery and these have been undertaking work at the time of the Committee's review.
- 2.8 A key aspect of this work in relation to transition into adulthood, has been the preparation of new guidance and information for children and young people, parents and carers, and professionals.
- 2.9 The Committee had the opportunity to consider various iterations of the information, and feedback was provided during the review.

## Background

- 3.1 Issues related to the planning and provision of services to Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are multi-faceted and complex. These range from the effectiveness of identification, and overall needs assessment, to the provision of support and in seeking to ensure better outcomes. There are clear, crucial roles for a range of local service providers, including the Council, schools and colleges, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS providers, early years providers, and the voluntary and community sector. All must be shown to be working closely with each other, in partnership with children and young people and their families and carers, to improve local outcomes
- 3.2 The types of need across the cohort of children and young people with SEND varies widely. Some students may be academically very able but have high levels of need in relation to socialisation skills, for example. Others may have complex and additional needs.
- 3.3 The four broad areas of need that make up SEND are as follows:
- 1 Communication and interaction
  - 2 Cognition and learning
  - 3 Social, emotional and mental health
  - 4 Sensory and/or physical needs
- 3.4 The definition of SEND provision is 'special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for others of the same age, ie. provision that goes beyond the differentiated approaches and learning arrangements normally provided as part of high-quality, personalised teaching.'
- 3.5 The Children and Families Act (2014) reformed legislation relating to children and young people with SEND:
- there is a clearer focus on the participation of children and young people and parents in decision making at individual and strategic levels;
  - there is a stronger focus on high aspirations and on improving outcomes for CYP;
  - there is guidance on the joint planning and commissioning of services to ensure close co-operation between education, health services and social care;
  - it includes guidance on publishing a 'Local Offer' of support for children and young people with SEND.
- 3.6 There is now greater focus on support that enables those with SEND to succeed in education and make a successful transition to adulthood.
- 3.7 Pupils and students may be provided with SEN Support while in school or college, for example speech therapy. For children and young people with more complex needs, a coordinated assessment process and the new 0–25 Education, Health and Care (EHC)

Plans replace statements and learning difficulty assessments (LDAs). These plans should outline and help co-ordinate the range of support a young person needs. Young people with apprenticeships were now able to receive support via an EHCP as they apply until age 25, where appropriate.

- 3.9 The full SEND Code of Practice is available at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>
- 3.10 The new joint Ofsted/CQC inspection process will look at three main questions:
- Question A – How effectively does the local area identify children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Question B – How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities?
- Question C – How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities?
- 3.11 In order to evaluate how effectively the local area assesses and meets the needs of children and young people with SEND, inspectors will take account of:
- engagement and co-production with CYP, and their parents and carers.
  - effectiveness of coordination of assessment between agencies in joint commissioning
  - satisfaction of parents and carers and CYP
  - the suitability of EHC Plans
  - the Local Offer
  - that planning is appropriate to meet the needs of children and young people receiving SEN support (i.e. those without an EHC plan)
- 3.12 In order to assess how well the local area improves outcomes inspectors will take account of:
- outcomes across education, health and social care
  - leaders' assessment of the effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.13 A number of completed Local Area inspection reports were available to consider during the review, including those from Hartlepool and Middlesbrough.
- 3.14 The Local Area Inspections for Hartlepool and Middlesbrough identified areas of weakness, and Ofsted/CQC will expect that Stockton will have acted on learning points from other inspections.
- 3.15 This is particularly important given the shared CCG in Hartlepool's case. Areas for improvement from the Hartlepool inspection included weaknesses in relation to joint commissioning, monitoring the effectiveness of services in improving outcomes, and the provision of clear and timely information to families.

## Findings

- 4.1 The Committee found that a range of work is ongoing to further develop SEND services in Stockton, following the completion of a self-evaluation of local services.
- 4.2 An Action Plan has been produced to address areas for improvement, and the SEN Development Group has been established in order to oversee this work. This provides challenge across partner agencies in respect of their duties and responsibilities, and is attended by the Director of Children's Services. Members of the Committee were invited to attend meetings of the Development Group and the multi-agency working groups set up to take forward specific themes.
- 4.3 The Action Plan covers a range of issues including the development of Local Area SEND Strategy; engagement and co-production with parent/carer/children/young people; development of the Local Offer; development of joined up and multi agency approaches in the early years; and development of the SEN Support offer.
- 4.4 Overall the identified key priorities for improvement in Stockton were:
- understanding our SEND population now and in the future;
  - developing quality, co-produced Education Health and Care Plans linked to personal budget where appropriate and a robust annual review procedure;
  - improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND;
  - establishing robust joint commissioning for children and young people with SEND;
  - understanding the views of parent/carers and children/young people and using these to improve provision for children and young people with SEND;
  - ensuring appropriate and sufficient specialist provision for children and young people with SEND;
  - developing a coordinated approach to preparing for adulthood, and development of a strategy.
- 4.5 Recent work to improve services includes the commissioning of a new model for Additionally Resourced Provision in schools. The new model has Enhanced Schools meeting all four of the needs in the Code of Practice in each of the three areas of the Borough: North, Central and South. These enhanced schools will offer progression across the key stages, meaning that pupils will have to move school less often, and host more support for schools to access on an outreach basis.

### Preparation for Adulthood (PfA)

- 4.6 Preparation for Adulthood supports young people with SEN and disabilities to achieve life outcomes of paid work, independent living, good health and community inclusion as they move into adulthood.
- 4.7 Effective work on Preparation for Adulthood is underpinned by the following characteristics:

Taking a personalised approach - Development of a shared vision - Improved post-16 options and support – Raising aspirations - Planning services together

- 4.8 NICE and Social Care Institute for Excellence produced 'Building independence through planning for transition: a quick guide for practitioners supporting young people' (2017). This highlighted the breadth of change faced by many young people and their families at this phase in their lives. The guide points out that 'there may not be a single equivalent service to support the young person after transition. Adults' services focus on the young person as an independent adult. This change can be difficult to adjust to.' A parent is quoted as saying, 'from the pond, you are picked up and put in the sea'.
- 4.9 Whilst this focusses on the transition between health and care services, it reinforces the wider context of the Committee's work. The Guide highlights that 'planning and preparing early will help make it a more positive experience and build confidence and independence for transition to adults' services. Every young person's development will be different, so plans and services need to take account of this'.
- 4.10 Good practice guidance is clear that preparing for adulthood should start from year 9 onwards, and from earlier where possible. For example, this includes ensuring that when a child is very young and/or SEND are first identified, professionals inform parents and carers that with the right support the great majority children with SEND are able to live independently, work, and contribute to the community.
- 4.11 The Committee is clear that young people with SEN and disabilities should have equal life chances as they move into adulthood. This should include: paid supported/employment, further or higher education, housing options and independent living, good health, friends, relationships, community inclusion and choice including control over their lives and support.
- 4.12 To help achieve this young people and their families should be involved in strategic planning and service design and able to engage on their own terms, in order to support commissioners in the design and development of future services.
- 4.13 The SEND Code of Practice contains a chapter on Preparation for Adulthood and can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>. An extract from 'SEND – A guide for parents and carers' is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.14 There are clear duties for the Local Authority to undertake, in conjunction with partners (see page 123 in the Code). The development of draft guidance for young people, families, and professionals is intended to ensure that these duties are translated into meaningful information and guidance at the local level.
- 4.15 Education Health and Care plans should support positive outcomes for young people into adulthood. After compulsory school age, the right to make requests and decisions under the Children's and Families Act applies to the young person directly rather than to their parents, to enable them to prepare for adulthood. Parents/carers and other

family members can support this, providing the young person is happy for this to take place.

- 4.16 The Committee found that services that have a statutory responsibility should focus on how they can support people to progress towards PfA outcomes and mainstream agencies should be more inclusive and engaged in this process. Within Stockton there is scope for agencies to become involved at an earlier stage.
- 4.17 The Local Offer should provide children, young people and their families with up to date and clear information on what is available locally through the Local Offer. The Local Offer will also have a feedback and review mechanism for commissioners to capture information on where the gaps are for families.

### **Stockton Progress on Preparation for Adulthood**

- 4.18 Stockton's Self-Assessment identified that there needed to be a more strategic approach to developing the the PfA agenda. PfA Manager, Operational, and Employability Sub Groups have been established in order to take this work forward, reporting in to the overarching Development Group.

- 4.19 These groups have initiated a range of work which was ongoing at the time of the Committee's review. Examples include:

- a) Education Health and Care Plans are being revised in order to better reflect identified PfA outcomes. EHCPs will also in future be RAG rated (Red – Amber – Green) in order to improve the level of quality assurance. This reflects learning from the Hartlepool inspection report;

- b) The Moving Forward transition guarantee is to be developed for the Secondary into Post 16 stage. This approach has already been adopted for transition from Primary to Secondary, and from Early Years into Primary. It provides a structured method of highlighting the progress and individual needs of the child as they move between phases, and is particularly beneficial for improving outcomes for more vulnerable children, including those with SEND.

During 2017-18 Northfield and Eggescliffe Schools are taking part in a pilot with Stockton Riverside College, and this is due to be refined and rolled out Borough-wide ahead of transition into the Autumn 2018 term. This could also potentially be rolled out to colleges based outside of the Borough, reflecting the different pathways taken at post-16 stage;

- c) The Development Group/sub-groups are working in partnership to improve services, with good engagement from Stockton Riverside College and Abbey Hill, and representatives of secondary schools;

- d) PfA self-assessment documentation has been circulated to partners including schools, in order for local services to benchmark themselves against the standards required. Feedback from schools had not been provided at the time of the

Committee's report, and Members would encourage schools to feedback to enable a better assessment of the current position;

e) Following a staffing restructure in the SEN Team, there is to be greater emphasis from the Council on ensuring the quality of the provision of SEN Support at school (ie. for those who do not have EHCPs), including how this supports transition;

f) Two SEN Officers are undertaking Careers Information, Advice and Guidance (CIAG) qualifications in order to be able to advise during the review process;

g) Independent Travel Training is offered by the authority, and a dedicated post has been created, with partners increasingly aware of this provision;

h) The local Parent Carer Forum now has a refreshed membership and chair, and this will need to be fully engaged with the SEN improvement agenda as it moves forward. The Forum has been involved with the development of information and advice, and Members were able to attend a meeting;

i) Stockton's Local Offer website has been peer reviewed by Redcar, and feedback is to be acted upon;

4.20 Draft guidance has also been prepared in order to provide clarity and information regarding what should be expected at each stage of the transition process, and should be a key driver of consistent practice. Versions are being produced for young people, parents and carers, and schools/professionals. The different versions are being developed in consultation with their respective intended audiences, and the Committee has considered drafts during the review.

4.21 Feedback was provided at the October meeting of the Committee, and Members requested an increased focus on employment and training options, as well as college. There was also a request for greater clarity around references to the rights of young people to make decisions and when judgements about capacity under the Mental Capacity Act would apply, and the Care Act 2014.

4.22 The Committee found that, overall, there was a recognised need to bring forward the provision of support to prepare for adulthood to Year 9, and to earlier wherever possible. There is a wide range of good practice/existing work on the PfA agenda but this needs to be more consistently implemented and formalised.

### **Support Planning, Voice of Young Person, and Aspirations**

4.23 As noted, a key aspect of effective SEND provision is joint working across agencies and with families. EHC Plan reviews should happen on an annual basis. Feedback from professionals and parents suggests that attendance at annual reviews needed to be reviewed to ensure the right services were represented, and that attendance was more consistent. Parents and carers also noted that input into EHCPs needed to be more relevant and personalised in some cases. For example, physiotherapy input was reported as often being the same each year which did not help with progression. Professionals also noted that sometimes parents and carers did not attend, and so

information reinforcing the need for all relevant people to attend Plan reviews would be helpful.

- 4.24 The review has identified a recognised need to improve the ability of services to hear a consistent children and young people's voice / advocacy in relation to SEN services. Mapping has identified current opportunities across children and adults. Advocacy and ensuring the voice of the child is heard is achieved through a variety of methods in children's social care (including National Youth Advocacy Service, Citizen's Advice Bureau, and the Let's Take Action Group) however these are not exclusively for SEND.
- 4.25 Following discussions at Committee surrounding options to use creative methods to develop ways to hear the voice of young people with SEND and use this to shape service planning and delivery, work is planned with the Blue Cabin community interest company to look at this further. Blue Cabinet is already undertaking initial work in relation to Looked After Children, and work to develop the voice of young people with SEND will follow.
- 4.26 Impartial advocacy services for young people with SEND up to the age of 25 have now been secured through the National Youth Advocacy Service. A SEND Pupil Voice Development Group has also been established and this will assist with developments across the 0-25 age range. For those of school age, developments include using the new virtual SENCO network to regularly send out surveys to pupils with SEND to gather their thoughts on key issues.
- 4.27 The local cohort of young people with SEND cohort is varied, and a range of outcomes can be demonstrated including vocational success and attendance at university.
- 4.28 Members were pleased to see that Egglecliffe School reported very high level of aspiration and careers awareness amongst its SEN cohort (made up primarily of pupils with SEN Support rather than EHCPs) during the Committee's visit. There is some evidence that professionals identify a disparity between parent/carer views and expectations of long term goals compared to the young person involved. Conversely, the Parent Carer Forum requested case study examples in order to be able to share with young people the potential opportunities that were available to them. The request for good quality case studies was repeated elsewhere, and the Committee agrees that this would be an effective way of raising aspirations, and providing information in a consistent way.
- 4.29 Within service providers themselves, it was felt important for all agencies/stakeholders to have a good appreciation of the options for people within adulthood, for example the greater focus on personalisation and independence in adult care and the shift away from more traditional forms of service provision.

## **Education and Employment**

- 4.30 Members visited a range of school, college and charitable provision as part of the review.



- 4.31 The Committee noted that it was important to maintain the overall school improvement framework wherever possible, as this was the main route through which the Council maintained links with schools. Although all schools will need to abide by their statutory duties in relation to SEND, effective relationships at the local level are necessary to ensure this is done in a meaningful way that adds value. Progress in secondary schools (for pupils with SEN) was not as strong as primaries, and comparative analysis of learning outcomes of young people in the 16-25 phase needed to be improved.
- 4.32 The Committee found that work was ongoing/needed to improve the range of accredited courses available at school age (for those not in mainstream), the range of courses available at post-16, and supported employment opportunities. Review has identified a need to ensure young people were able to access meaningful courses, and demonstrate progression when moving between courses, and when onto employment programmes/employment. An identified area for development was the provision of careers guidance to the SEND cohort. As noted above members of the Council's SEN Team were undertaking CIAG qualifications in order to bolster this area of support.
- 4.33 Eggescliffe School recognised that planning for the future needed to start at an earlier stage. For all pupils, whether with SEND or not, career aspirations may change between Year 7 and Year 11, but it was viewed as being important to start the conversation. Pupils with SEND spoke about their work experiences, and these included college placements, office work, graphics industry, and kennel work.
- 4.34 The school benefitted from in-house careers provision, and a draft 'passport document' called 'My Career Story– a record of education, information and guidance gained at Eggescliffe School' was discussed with the Committee. This was in the final stages of development and would enable pupils including those with SEND to track what guidance they had received, and reflect on their aspirations on an annual basis.
- 4.35 Members visit Abbey Hill specialist Sixth Form to inform the review. The Sixth Form is in a purpose built building which is part of the wider Abbey Hill site. There are three other buildings providing secondary education for students with autism, learning disabilities, and more complex/medical needs. The site has a road linking the buildings, including pelican crossings to help with travel training, and a bistro is in a separate unit at the centre of the site (this provides students with a realistic working environment).
- 4.36 Students are enrolled on one of four Pathways that bring together the academic and vocational units a student will study. Students were studying at a range of learning levels within the Sixth Form environment, from Milestone Level to Entry Level to GCSE/Level 1 and 2. There is a greater input from Special Needs Teachers in Pathways 1 and 2, often using a variety of experiences to build on communication skills. Pastoral care forms a large part of the teachers' work across the Pathways.
- 4.37 Students may access different elements of the pathways depending on their needs. For example may access maths as part of Pathway 3, but access art through Pathway 4. There is a focus on preparing students for employment wherever possible, and those on Pathway 4 should have the ability to be able to work. Abbey Hill recognises that some parents and carers need further reassurance that their children will be able to access some form of employment in future.

- 4.38 Destinations following Abbey Hill included forms of employment/supported employment, social care provision, or further education including Askham Byran or Stockton Riverside College.
- 4.39 A range of development work had taken place with and by colleges to make them more accessible and this was continuing. Information was gathered from Stockton Riverside College (SRC) as a key provider of post-16 education and training. SRC has students with SEND within both its Foundation Skills base, and attending its mainstream provision. In-reach was provided by community health workers and social workers.
- 4.40 For those in mainstream, work to increase accessibility has included taster days, dedicated SEND support rooms, and modified timetables (for example, greater routine and supervision was included in the timetable of a student with autism).
- 4.41 Students on Foundation Skills courses were able to study Entry Level/Level 1 Courses focussing on employability, which covered independent living skills training and vocational elements. Following the end of a Foundation Skills programme, depending on a student's needs, onward progression may either be to:
- supported internship, provided by College;
  - potential social care referral;
  - vocational courses, after using the Foundation Stage to settle in to college life.
- 4.42 The more mainstream college environment is different to schools, including the sixth form provision provided at Abbey Hill, and has more focus on students experiencing greater independence. The Committee found that students are often able to make progression in a range of areas due to this increased independence. There were potentially some students who may stay in a special school environment up until the age of 19 whereas with the appropriate support they may have been able to progress to alternative further education provision at an earlier stage.
- 4.43 Across the local picture, although there was widespread agreement that improved pathways needed to be developed, there should also be recognition of the options available locally. Existing options are mainly vocational, and include the Skills Academy which is managed by SRC and based in Billingham, with a greater focus on vocational skill development. Development of new options including animal care were being progressed locally, as an example of work between SRC and Daisy Chain. It is important that schools and young people are aware of what exists and is available, in a more consistent manner.
- 4.44 The Committee found that although some information was gathered as part of the review, it was identified that the information held by the Council regarding the destinations of young people with SEN post-school and college, needed to be improved. Colleges are now aware of the need to gather destination data for their leavers, including for those who leave education and move into employment or adult care. Youth Direction will be working to improve this information with the SEN Team.
- 4.45 Some information was gathered as part of the review. To give an example of destinations of those with an EHCP or High Needs Funding into / within post 16 education:

- in 2016-17, 54 young people in Year 11 will be transferring into mainstream provision, and 48 will be transferring into specialist (47 of whom were already in specialist);
  - at the post-16 stage, within special schools, the majority of students continue within the school moving up their pathways. Between 2015-16 and 2016-17, 47 young people moved from special school into Further Education provision (generally at either Year 13 or 14). 32 went to Stockton Riverside College, 10 to Middlesbrough College, with the remainder attending East Durham and Houghall, Percy Hedley, or bespoke provision;
  - in 2016-17, of those young people who moved beyond Further Education, two students attended University (one with an EHCP, and another with Higher Needs funding).
- 4.46 Data on other destinations is to be gathered as outlined above.
- 4.47 To improve employment options, there is widespread agreement on the need for greater engagement with employers, in order to develop approaches such as Supported Internships, and support and guidance for employers themselves. Work has begun to take place with Stockton Riverside College, and Daisy Chain, to develop accredited Supported Internship programmes for young people with EHCPs.
- 4.48 Supported Internships are based primarily at the employer, and are a five day a week programme, generally for a period of one year, with a focus on work experience, but with opportunity to study for relevant qualifications. They are not paid, but 70% of students currently progress into employment at the end of the programme, and the Department for Education state that there should be an expectation of employment at the end, should the student meet the required standard. As with apprenticeships, students are able to retain their EHCPs during the period of participation.
- 4.49 The Council is supporting lobbying government to offer access to lower level Supported Apprenticeships starting at Entry Level 3 as the minimum is currently Level 2, which restricts access when this model could have wider benefits.
- 4.50 Aftercare and appropriate support should a particular placement/programme not prove suitable for a young person, was recognised by the Committee as being important.
- 4.51 As another example of support, the STEPS Supported Employment and Community Bridge Building service is highly regarded but access is only available to people with Adult Social Care assessed needs which not all young people with SEND will have as they move into adulthood. There is an appetite to develop better employment/inclusion support services for people with SEND as a whole.
- 4.52 It is important to maximise job and learning opportunities when they arise. For example, the SEN Team has been working with Health Education North East on its Project Choice programme, which is aimed at providing work experience and internships for people with learning disabilities, difficulties, and/or autism, within NHS settings.

## Role of the health services

- 4.53 NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) have a number of statutory duties in relation to SEND (attached at **Appendix 2**). From a CCG's perspective, these cut across all age groups, and so work is not necessarily defined as contributing to 'preparation for adulthood' in their plans. However one specific point to note in relation to PfA is the requirement to have transition plans in place to facilitate the smooth movement into adult services (including physical and mental health services).
- 4.54 Following the results of the Hartlepool Local Area inspection, the Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees (HaST) CCG has been engaged in improvement work at Hartlepool, and is part of the Development Group within Stockton.
- 4.55 The transition point for most NHS children and young people services is 18 years. An area which the CCG is reviewing is in relation to identifying any services that could be commissioned differently to cover the 0-25 period, in order to reduce the number of transitions a young person makes at that stage in their lives.
- 4.56 Following the Hartlepool inspection, the CCG is focussing on a number of areas for improvement, as follows:
- the importance of early identification of needs;
  - improved data analysis to inform the development of an overall needs assessment;
  - ensuring staff roles and responsibilities were clear;
  - provision of clearer information on the Local Offer and Personal Budgets;
  - ensuring the voice of child is always heard in plan production;
  - joint commissioning of services with the Council;
  - ensuring the identification of a Designated Medical Officer (DMO) / Clinical Officer (DCO).
- 4.57 The CCG needed to better understand how improvements were being made across specific cohorts of children and young people (for example, those with autism) and better use of data would assist with this.
- 4.58 There were known issues included issues relating to data (for example, there was no code for 'SEND' within NHS systems as this was not a commissioned requirement), and the CCG was not currently able to view education-based SEN data, as well as restrictions on what could be shared between NHS services. Ongoing work included making an application to be able to use data in different ways in order to increasingly look at the whole journey of the child through all services, rather than in isolation.
- 4.59 Following the Committee's meeting with the CCG, it has since been arranged for the recruitment of a DCO. This role will contribute to assessing the quality of ECHPs from a health perspective, provide a point of contact for services, and ensure transition processes are in place. A priority has also been placed on joint commissioning of speech and language therapy, and occupational therapy services. This is identified in the Action Plan for achievement by April 2018.

- 4.60 A communication briefing was to be developed for all staff outlining their roles and responsibilities in relation to SEND, and a process was to be established to keep this up to date.
- 4.61 As well as NHS commissioners, health provider services also undertook the self-assessment in relation to PfA and this identified a number of potential issues, including:
- need for greater consistency in care planning, including giving greater thought to the longer term aspirations of children and young people;
  - better co-ordination of health professionals and their input into support planning;
  - recognising that young people with learning disabilities do not always have a formal diagnosis at the point of entering adulthood, and this can create a delay to entering services;
  - the level of NHS provision that someone receives at childhood can be different compared to adulthood (as with social care);
  - transition from the North Tees Trust Children's Therapy Team (for example) occurs at a different point (age 19) to other services.
- 4.62 These issues will need to be addressed wherever possible as part of local SEND development, and the Committee requests an update in due course.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.1 Children and young people with SEND are a key priority for the Council, and following an honest self-evaluation process, a range of work is ongoing to improve the local planning and delivery of services.
- 5.2 Progress has been made to improve preparation for adulthood, but it is recognised that more needs to be done. The Committee has particularly focussed on the education and employment opportunities, and the links with health services.
- 5.3 The Committee was pleased to see how the Council and partners are working closely together, and to have had the opportunity to witness this work first hand in both multi-agency meetings and in educational settings.
- 5.4 The continued development of meaningful education and employment opportunities is recognised as crucial. This needs to be underpinned by effective guidance for young people and families, and ensuring their voice is heard in service planning and delivery.
- 5.5 It is important that the Council and local partners, particularly in the NHS, learn from inspections elsewhere, and as work on this agenda continues, the Committee looks forward to further updates in due course.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1

### **Extract from Special educational needs and disability: A guide for parents and carers (Department for Education, August 2014)**

#### **'Young people aged 16 and over in further education**

This section looks at what you can expect if your child is in further education.

Many young people with SEN or disabilities, once they are over compulsory school age, move into further education (FE), such as FE and sixth form colleges and 16-19 academies. For simplicity, this section refers to all post-16 providers as colleges.

Colleges should be involved in plans for young people to leave school and enter college, so they can be prepared to meet their needs. They should give young people the chance, before they enter college, to say whether they have SEN or a disability which might affect their learning. Colleges should then discuss with young people and explain how they will provide support to meet their needs.

If your son or daughter has SEN, the college needs to use its best endeavours to give them the support they need. Support for most young people will be provided through SEN support (see section in this guide on Support for children and young people with special educational needs). This might include support from outside the college. The college should keep the support it provides under review and discuss it regularly with you and your son or daughter. They should keep records of your son or daughter's progress and the support they receive up to date and keep you all informed of progress.

At age 16, and beyond, young people will often become increasingly independent and may want to exercise more control over the support they receive for their SEN. Colleges, your local authority and others who provide services for young people when they are over compulsory school age are expected to communicate directly with the young person. You should talk to your son or daughter and agree how best you can be involved and how much support they will need as they get older. Once you have agreed arrangements which work for you, your son or daughter should let their college know so that you can receive the information and support you need as a parent to continue to give your child the support that they need from you.

If a college, despite its best endeavours, can't meet a young person's needs then a young person, with support from their parents, should consider whether they need an Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment, which might lead to an EHC plan (see section in this guide on Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans). If you think your son or daughter needs an assessment, you should both discuss this with the college. A request can be made for an EHC plan up until a young person reaches the age of 25.

For more information about support for young people aged 16+ in further education who have SEN or disabilities, please look at Chapter 7 of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice.

You can also check your local authority's Local Offer (see section in this guide, The Local Offer). Or you can speak to your local authority's Information, advice and support service.

**Questions you might want to ask:**

- if my child has a statement or EHC plan in school, does that carry forward to college?
- where can I find out information about colleges that are able to provide the right support for my son or daughter?

**Preparing for adulthood**

This section looks at how services should work together and support you to help your child prepare for adulthood, such as going into higher education, independent living, being involved in their community and being as healthy as possible in adult life.

From the age of 16, the law recognises young people have rights to take some decisions for themselves (provided they are capable of doing so). For example, they have a right to request an Education, Health and Care plan directly from their local authority, and a right to request a Personal Budget. That doesn't mean that you, as parents, are excluded. Your local authority or your child's college should still continue to involve you –particularly when your child is 16 or 17. Typically, young people this age will still want support from you as parents and will want your advice on decisions that affect them.

As children get older and become young people and adults, it is important that they are given opportunities to take more control over their lives. All young people need support at this important time – from you as parents, and from professionals such as teachers, college lecturers, youth workers and others. This is particularly important for young people with SEN or disabilities.

Preparing for adulthood is about preparing for things like higher education, independent living, being involved in the community and being as healthy as possible in adult life. It needs to start early – schools and other service providers should start having discussions with young people about long-term goals, ideally before they reach the age of 14. As parents, you of course need to be included in those discussions.

Recognising the increasing independence of young people once they reach 16 and beyond, your local authority has a number of legal responsibilities such as:

Making sure information, advice and support is available directly to young people, independent of their parents if they wish it. Information, advice and support services should work sensitively with families, and explain to you what this means for you as parents

Including information in the Local Offer (see section in this guide, The Local Offer) about preparing for adulthood, and support available to them in higher education

Making sure that all reviews of Education, Health and Care plans (see section in this guide on Support for children and young people with special educational needs) for young people from age 13-14 onwards, include a focus on preparing for adulthood

Making sure services they provide – such as housing and adult social care – help children and young people prepare for adulthood

Carrying out an adult care transition assessment for young people aged 18 and over with SEN or disabilities, if they think it will benefit that young person

**Further information**

More information about preparing for adulthood can be found from your local authority's Information, advice and support service and from your local authority's Local Offer (see section in this guide, The Local Offer). More details about what this means and what the law requires can be found in Chapter 8 of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice.

**Questions you might want to ask:**

- what happens if I am excluded from discussions about my child's future?
- what if my child and I disagree?
- what if my child is not capable of making decisions for him or herself?

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## Appendix 2

### CCG Duties in relation to SEND

The SEND code has been broken down into five key areas where actions is required these are defined as; Information and advice, Identifying Joint Outcomes for Children and Young People (C&YP), Working together to deliver Outcomes for (C&YP), Developing the Local Offer and Assessing and developing Education Health and Care Plans.

The CCG has responsibilities within each of these domains below is a summary of these:

#### Information and Advice

1. CCGs must ensure that they publicise the availability of information and advice and opportunities to participate in strategic decision making
2. CCGs must ensure that children, young people and parents are provided with information, advice and support to enable them to make decisions about their care

#### Identifying Joint Outcomes for C&YP

3. CCGs must make joint commissioning arrangements for education, health and care provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities
4. CCGs must promote the integration of services
5. CCGs must develop effective ways of harnessing the views of their local communities so commissioning decisions are shaped by users experiences
6. CCGs have a statutory duty to consider the extent to which children and young people's needs could be met more effectively through integrating services and aligning or pooling budgets in order to offer greater value for money, improve outcomes and/or better integrate services for children and young people with SEN or disabilities

#### Working together to deliver outcomes for CYP

7. CCGs must give the childs parents opportunity to discuss their opinion before informing the local authority
8. Local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) must make joint commissioning arrangements for education, health and care provision for children and young people with SEN or disabilities

## Developing the Local Offer

9. CCG are required to co-operate with the local authority in relation to the local offer.
10. CCGs must work together with local authority to ensure information is available through the Local Offer.
11. CCGs must ensure that they publicise the availability of information and advice and opportunities to participate in strategic decision making.
12. The CCG must make sure that the Local Offer is accessible for people with different abilities

## Assessing and developing education Health and Care Plans

13. CCGs must place children, young people and families at the centre of their planning, and work with them to secure better outcomes
14. CCGs must co-operate with the local authority in supporting the transition to adult services
15. CCGs must determine which services it will commission to ensure they meet the reasonable health needs of children and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom it is responsible. These services should be described within the Local Offer.
16. CCGs must ensure that commissioned services are mobilised to participate in the development of EHC plans
17. CCGs are responsible for decisions in relation to health
18. CCGS can delegate key decisions to Designated Medical Officers (DMO) or designated Clinical Officers (DCO's)- this can include agreeing the health services in an EHC plan.