

The Shropshire Council SEN Team and the Shropshire Parent Carer Council (PACC) work closely together to ensure that the voice and experience of Shropshire parent carers inform how support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEND) is provided locally.

As part of this commitment to co-production we all recognise the importance of establishing good communication between local decision makers and families and therefore from Autumn 2016 we will be jointly issuing a termly parent carer SEN newsletter.

Shropshire SEN News will share information about all the key developments in in local SEN systems and provision in Shropshire. It will also provide updates on the implementation of the SEND Reforms, including transfers to Education, Health and Care plans and news about training and consultation events that might be of interest to parent carers or young people with SEND.

### Developing Specialist Provision in Shropshire

In Shropshire we believe that all children have a right to a mainstream education. We think that it is important for children to have the opportunity to be a part of their local community and we work with all of our settings to support this to happen. However, for a small number of children and young people it may be necessary to access a more specialist learning environment. If this is the case then we will work with parent/carers to find the most suitable placement possible. This means that we continually evaluate the provision that we have available so that we can be sure that we have provision in place to meet the changing needs of Shropshire children and young people.

Over the last year Woodlands School has developed the Acorns Centre. This specialist provision is co-located with Holy Trinity C of E primary school in Oswestry. It supports children who have an Education, Health & Care Plan within Key Stage 2. Children who access this provision may have

challenging behaviour associated with a Social, Emotional or Mental Health needs (SEMH). Acorns is also able to support children with additional needs, including learning difficulties and Autism. This is achieved because the provision is small, only catering for a maximum of 12 children at any one time, with a well-qualified and experienced staff team.



The Woodlands Centre

Children at Acorns are able to be supported through the transition into the secondary stage of their education and this can include any of the following: Mainstream high school; Woodlands specialist provision; an alternate specialist provision as appropriate.

In addition to the current Acorns provision in Oswestry, Woodlands School are working with the Local Authority to provide a similar provision in the south of the county. The intention is that specialist provision remains local and that children will not have to travel long distances to school.

You can find out more about this provision at [www.woodlandscentre.org](http://www.woodlandscentre.org)

Shropshire Council are also supportive of a free school bid that has recently been submitted by Shrewsbury Academy Trust. If this is successful it will provide a specialist environment, located in Shrewsbury, for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties who are not able to access a mainstream curriculum.

We are working with PACC to ensure that this proposal is developed with the input of parent carers and more information about this will be provided in the near future if the initial bid is successful.

Two other projects include a specialist hub in South Shropshire and local early years provision. We are looking to implement a range of training in order to support early years settings across Shropshire to meet the needs of children with SEND within their local community. We will provide more information about these initiatives in the near future.

## Assessments for an Education Health & Care Plans

Shropshire continues to have a greater percentage of children and young people with Statements/EHCP's than the National average.

All schools % with statement/EHCP	2013	2014	2015
National	2.8	2.8	2.8
Shrops	4.0	4.1	3.8

## EHCP's and the Early Years

From 2014 Shropshire Council has been working with the child development centre (CDC) to provide a more integrated approach to assessment for younger children aged 0 to 5. For many children this means that a multi-disciplinary assessment will also be an assessment for an Education Health Care Plan

(EHCP). This has proved a great opportunity for parents and professionals to work together at an early stage to discuss aspirations and identify appropriate outcomes. As a result of this we have seen an increase in the number of EHCPs being issued for children aged 0 to 5.

Over the last year requests for an assessment for children with social, emotional and mental health needs (including those with an autistic spectrum condition, ASC) have continued to feature prominently.

## How are we performing?

Prior to 2014 the Local Authority had 26 weeks to issue a Statement of SEN once it had received the initial request. In September 2014 with the implementation of the Children and Families Act this timescale was reduced to 20 weeks. Whilst we had a difficult start and initially were only managing to hit this target for 33% of the EHCPs that were issued between September 2014 and January 2016 we have recently

managed to improve this and from January 2016 we have been able to complete 85% of new assessments on time.

## Transition from a Statement to an EHCP

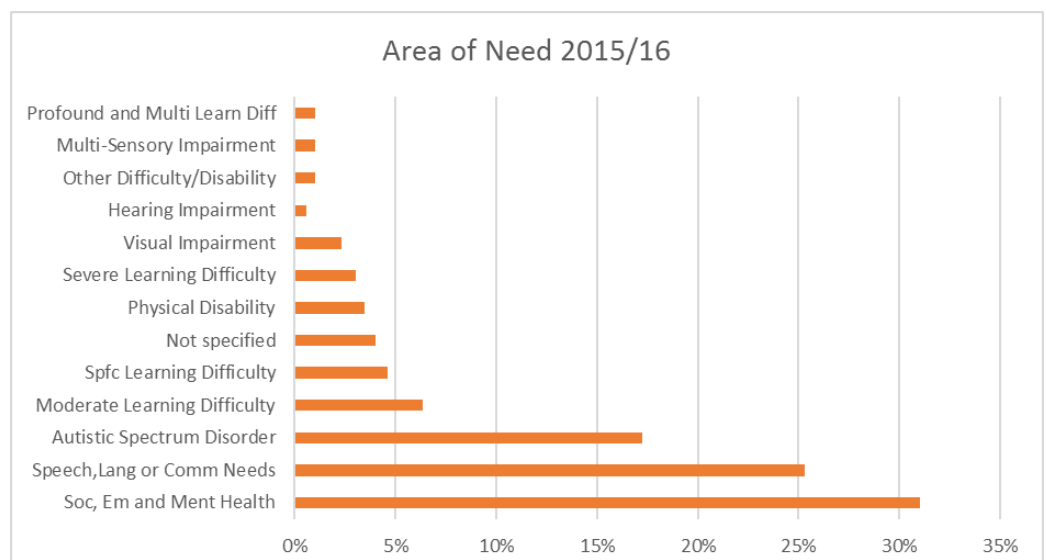
We have until April 2018 to transfer Statements of SEN to EHCPs. The local authority are working hard to complete this work on time. This year the priority year groups are Years 2, 5, 9 and 11. All children in these year groups with the exception of those attending Severndale School should have a transition review this year unless they already have an EHCP. If you are unsure please look at the timetable on the local offer. You will also be able to find out more about this process by following this link.

[www.shropshire.gov.uk/local-offer](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/local-offer)

If your child attends Severndale Specialist School please contact the school directly for more information about when the transfer review for your child will take place.

## Requests For EHCP's

Over the last year requests for an assessment for children with social, emotional and mental health needs (including those with an autistic spectrum condition, ASC) have continued to feature prominently. The graph below shows the breakdown in need for children and young in Shropshire who currently have a Statement of SEN or an EHCP.



## Local Area SEND Inspections - Be Involved

These new local area inspections will look at the effectiveness of local SEND systems. The SEN Team is working across education, health and social care to prepare for inspection and is using this as an opportunity to review processes, to ensure that we are doing the best we can to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people with SEND. A key part of the inspection is that parent carers are available to provide feedback on their experiences of support. Please see the letter below introducing the inspections and how parent carers will be able to get involved.

### Dear Parent Carer

#### Local Area SEND Inspection

I am writing to you to let you know about the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of local area services for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a new SEND system. At the heart of this system was a commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and ensuring that children, young people and their families are fully involved in decision making processes. Over the next five years Ofsted and CQC are carrying out inspections to evaluate the effectiveness of local areas in fulfilling their responsibilities in relation to children and young people with SEND. We do not know when Shropshire will be inspected but I wanted to make you aware of this process and the opportunity it will provide for your involvement.

As part of the inspection process the inspectors will want to talk to children and young people and their parents and carers. They will also identify providers that they wish to visit, including nurseries, schools and colleges. The inspection team will focus on the following key areas;

- How effectively the local area identifies children and young people who have SEND.
- How effectively the local area meets the needs and improves the outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

In addition, inspectors will look at how education, health and social care services work together in the best interests of children and young people. They will look at how effectively assessments and reviews are coordinated in order to reduce the risk of unnecessarily repetition, especially at each stage of the young person's transition towards adulthood.

Inspectors will want to meet parents and carers who are representative of the local area and may ask to meet parents/carers as part of a visit to a setting, school or college. The inspectors may also want to talk to learners with SEND to seek their views on the support they receive. They may review case studies, inspection reports and evidence of outcomes.

We will notify schools, colleges and other services, during the five days before the inspection starts and request that they in turn notify all young people and the parents/carers of children with SEND. We will also notify all young people with an EHCP who do not attend a school setting. PACC as the Local Parent Carer Forum, will also be notified of the inspection and we will work with the Forum to ensure that parent carers are fully involved in the inspection.

Following the inspection, Ofsted and CQC will publish a report in the form of an outcome letter that will be sent to the local authority in its lead role for the local area. This report will outline a summary of their findings, including key strengths and areas requiring further development.

Further details of the inspection framework and handbook are available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-framework>

Yours sincerely

**Julia Dean Service Manager SEND** [julia.dean@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:julia.dean@shropshire.gov.uk)

## All About Me, All About Us; Person Centred Approaches in Shropshire



Having monitored your responses to the 'all about me/us' sections of the EHCP we have identified a number of priorities that we need to implement to secure better outcomes for Shropshire children with SEND.

Shropshire local authority recognises the importance of embedding person centred approaches into all areas of practice. Person-centred approaches empower people to create positive change. They are about involving young people, children and their parent/carers in decision making, and ensuring that they are truly listened to and are kept at the heart of all decision-making.

Shropshire Council are working in partnership with Shropshire PACC and external training providers to deliver training for schools, parents/carers and other practitioners to promote a cultural change across all services and settings. There is a launch event on 15<sup>th</sup> November at the Shrewsbury Town Stadium followed by subsequent training events to be held regionally. Further information can be found on the local offer. <http://shropshire.gov.uk/local-offer/>

## Ensuring quality of provision

We acknowledge the importance of creating realistic, yet challenging, outcomes for Shropshire children and young people with SEND backed up with quality interventions and support that enable CYP to make at least expected levels of progress.

We are working to ensure that settings have skilled and knowledgeable practitioners and they have access to specialist support when required. We are developing processes to monitor, support and challenge settings to make reasonable adjustments and are providing them with training opportunities to develop knowledge and skills around meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN.

The first of a series of training sessions around creating SMART outcomes was attended by professionals from Health, Education and Social care.

## Shropshire's Specific Speech and Language Impaired Children's Team (SSLIC)

The SSLIC team is made up of specialist speech and language therapists and specialist language teachers. They work in close collaboration with schools and parents to support children with severe speech and language impairments within KS1. Children are referred through the speech therapy service, schools

and parents can refer a child to the speech therapy service. Children who access this service receive a package of intensive support, based on their level of need. The therapy is mainly in the form of individual work, however, it might also involve small group work and classroom observation. Activities will also be sent home for parents to share with their child, as research shows that a child will make most progress when supported in all areas of their life.

Parent and teacher comments about SSLIC

**"You have helped us to understand the challenges our child faces and given us the tools to continue to support his development."**

**"An enormous thank you, you have made a big difference to us all."**

## Working Together for a Better Future - Parent Carer Feedback

Our daughter, 'P', has had Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and ME since the end of primary school. Her condition resulted in frequent absences from school, often being unable to attend until the afternoon. Despite this she attained grade A's in a range of GCSE's at a local high school. The school reluctantly agreed for 'P' to continue at their Sixth Form to take A levels but made no attempt to provide an IEP or make reasonable adjustments, despite there being identical lessons available in afternoons

that P was missing in mornings.

While P was going through a particularly difficult period with her health in September 2014, I contacted Shropshire SEND for support and advice. I spoke to Ms Sarah Sweeney who suggested I meet with the school to discuss P's IEP. At the meeting I was told that P was not coping and might need to leave. I contacted Ms Sweeney again and she agreed to support us at the follow-up meeting. The school demonstrated a reluctance to listen to our concerns or make any adjustments. Ms Sweeney challenged the school on grounds of Disability Discrimination. After an extremely stressful period of

time the school made some adjustments to enable P to access her education. Ms Sweeney continued to support us, taking the time to get to know P better and accompanying us at subsequent meetings.

The changes that the school eventually made enabled P to get grade A's in her AS levels and go on to achieve a grade A in 'A' level Biology and an A\* in Psychology. She is now studying for a Psychology degree at Keele University. We know that if it had not been for the support and advice from Sarah Sweeney and Shropshire SEN Team, this might not have been such a happy and successful outcome.

## Co-Production in Shropshire

The Children and Family Act 2014 set the expectation that Local Authorities ensure that children and young people with SEN and their parents, are involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support and about local SEND provision.

The **Shropshire Parent and Carer Council (PACC)** is Shropshire's local parent carer forum and specifically works to develop opportunities for parent carers to be involved in local decision making about SEND. PACC is an independent charity run by parent carers and offers information, support and opportunities to participate, for parent carers of a young person with any special educational needs or disability, aged 0-25. They work closely with Shropshire Council and other statutory services to ensure that the parent carer voice is heard when planning, commissioning and reviewing education, health and social care services. If you would like to know more about PACC please visit their website [www.paccshropshire.org.uk](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk)

## PACC AGM & Open Meeting 2016

**24th November - Shrewsbury Baptist Church, 9.30-2.30pm**

### Lunch & Refreshments provided

The theme for this event will be exploring how parent carers can use person centred approaches to have effective conversations with professionals. The morning session will include an introduction to Shropshire Council's approach to embedding a person centred approach in all SEND activity. This will be followed by afternoon workshops which will consider and ask for your feedback on how parental contribution to SEND referrals, assessments and reviews can be supported and best delivered.

The event will start with the PACC AGM providing a chance for you to hear more about the work that PACC does and our plans for the future.

Booking essential – <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pacc-agm-open-meeting-2016-tickets-28498754542> or email PACC at [enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk) or call on 0845 601 2205