

Annual SEND Survey 2020 Improvement Plan -Executive Summary

This improvement plan has been co-produced as a result of the feedback received from parents/carers, young people and professionals through the second annual SEND survey (2020), within a 'You Said, We Did' format. A summary report of the annual survey feedback itself can be viewed here:

<https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/annualsendsurvey>

You Said

There were stable levels of satisfaction with SEND services compared to previous years.

69% of young people indicated they receive support at the right time with an increase in number of young people feeling that SEND support has improved in last 12 months. Similarly, significantly more professionals feel 'Very satisfied' or 'Satisfied' about the level of support for children with SEND.

Parents' responses however, have shown a slight reduction from the previous year with support at the right time and levels of support. Given the unique challenges of 2020 it was important to listen to how the pandemic has impacted levels of satisfaction. Parents would like faster, simple and more transparent processes to support feeling listened to.

We Did

Early Help have refined their pathways for SEND support and have developed clear processes to receive requests for SEND support at the Early Help Hub (EHH). This has been supported through **£450,000 being made available for SEND Support** and the introduction of the **Team Around the School** to run in conjunction with the existing **Team Around the Family** model.

The **Core Standards** are published and set out the expectations of education providers in relation to the identification of SEND and the provision for pupils with SEND.

A review of the **Specialist Advisory Teaching Service** and its effectiveness was completed in 2020. The service has returned to the Local Authority to strengthen the SEND support and statutory service offer to children and young people.

A **review of CAMHS and TAMHS** is now underway in partnership with parents, carers and other key stakeholders.

The **'I-Thrive' framework** demonstrates a joint approach across all **children and young people's mental health services**. Building on the existing **Single Point of Access (SPA)** and developing a 'No Wrong Front Door' model linking closely with Early Help Hub, Mental Health services and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to provide a seamless referral process for Swindon.

SEND Transport –We undertook a piece of work with Swindon Send Families Voice to develop a policy around supporting children and young people with medical needs on our transport.

Statutory SEND team –We undertook a review and restructure of this team during 2019/20 and again in October 2020 which has resulted in an additional investment of £400,000 to increase the number of EHCP Co-ordinators from 9 to 17.4 so that they have a lower number of cases per officer, which will improve the timeliness of local authority duties for Annual Reviews.

A **COVID Recovery Plan** is in place which addresses areas where service delivery has been impacted by the pandemic and what actions are in place to address this.

What's Next?

By July 2021 communication will be provided to residents via the Local Offer regarding the progress made in delivering the SEND Local Area Written Statement of Action, what the local area response has been for pupils with SEND during the pandemic and how we are proposing to meet needs as we recover from the pandemic.

You Said

Parents/carers feel more optimistic that previous years about their child's good health. However parents also told us that waiting lists for ASD and Autism assessments should be improved.

The **Neurodevelopmental Conditions (NDC) Pathway** was redesigned and launched in October 2019 to improve the experience of children and young people and families seeking a diagnosis for neurodevelopmental conditions (including Autism and ADHD). More detail with regards to the most recent updates on the NDC pathway waiting lists and initiatives to reduce waiting times can be found here: [Swindon Local Offer - Neurodevelopmental Conditions Pathway Updates](#) Improvements have also been made to a **patient information booklet** provided to families on acceptance to the NDC Pathway.

Following feedback received about the Local Offer, a new set of pages were co-created for information and advice on **Autism Spectrum Conditions and ADHD**. [Swindon Local Offer - Information and advice on learning disabilities, autism and ADHD](#)

What's Next?

All families with a child or young person on the waiting list will receive a letter by the end of June 2021; setting out what is being done and ensuring they have a point of contact if they believe services are not currently in place to meet their child or young person's needs regardless of a diagnostic label.

You Said

Professionals told us that there is better joined up working and communication compared to previous years. Parents and young people told us they would like to be listened to and communicated with more.

Young people told us that school, college, Teaching Assistants and STEP are good sources of support. Some young people told us that they do not feel involved in discussions: we need to ask young people more questions, check understanding with them and listen to them, not just their parents.

We Did

There is an established **programme of regular meetings between Swindon Send Families Voice and senior leaders** within Children's Services and Health to promote coproduction, ensuring that the voice of parents and carers is consistently captured and that there are open and transparent relationships.

We have listened to what parents have told us through the **COVID survey undertaken by Swindon Send Families Voice** in the summer of 2020 and this has resulted in a number of changes in how services are delivered including: additional posts funded in speech and language therapy and occupational therapy jointly funded between Swindon Borough Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group, additional staff in the statutory SEND Team and continuation of virtual appointments where helpful for families.

Launch of Parents SEND Newsletter - Every week SBC send out a SEND News Splash one page newsletter to professionals about general SEND news. We have worked with Swindon SEND Families Voice to adapt this to make it a monthly newsletter specifically for parents, to be launched in June 2021.

Reshaping Conversations is a project led by Swindon Send Families Voice, collaboratively produced with other local parent groups. The aim of the project is to inspire positive change in the language used by professionals when speaking to parent carers. <https://reshapingconversations.com/>

Day One Calls - In January 2021, we introduced Day One calls for all new applications for Education, Health and Care needs assessments. Any family whose child is going through assessment will on the day of receipt of the application receive a call from the allocated EHCP Co-ordinator to introduce themselves and to start to build what will become an important relationship.

SEND Professional & Citizens Portal - The Citizens Portal App is being rolled out across the SEND Family Network with all parents who are currently in the Statutory Assessment stage, being offered the opportunity to sign up to the portal so that they can communicate directly with the Local Authority.

'This is Me' annual review contribution – As a result of feedback from young people, schools and other professionals now have an age appropriate resource to capture the voice of children & young people, prior to their annual reviews and Education, Health and Care needs assessments (EHCNA).

Ending involvement with services – If a child or young person's social care case is closed or there is a transfer to a new Social Worker, the parent/carer and child/young person receive a letter outlining the reason for the closure or change, whom they should contact if their circumstances change and where they can obtain further information and advice.

Branches Support Group relaunch - Throughout the COVID restrictions the Swindon SEND Families Voice 'Branches' group was unable to meet for their regular monthly face-to-face support group, so instead they took the group online as 'Chat & Chill' sessions, with the focus on reducing isolation through informal chats. The face-to-face sessions will be relaunched as soon as restrictions allow.

Swindon Send Families Voice have recently introduced a new **Listening and Support Phone line** for parents and carers of children with additional needs, Tel: 07486 873405.

The SEND Young People's Forum ('Thought Tank') have been engaged in a wide range of activities leading to improvements across health, education and social care. For example, Involvement in the creation of films to promote good practice participation, such as their 'I have a Voice' and 'SEND Annual Survey' films available here: [Swindon Local Offer - Good Practice Participation Films](#)

We have supported **young people's attendance at the SEND Strategic Board** and these individuals have reported how much they have valued this opportunity to share their voice within a forum where strategic decisions are being made.

What's Next?

We will ensure that the performance page established on the Local Offer continues to provide updated data on the performance of services and will seek to extend this every other month.

By August 2021 we will publish the Local Offer Annual report that sets out what feedback you have provided on Swindon's local offer and what we have done in response to your feedback.

You Said

Professionals told us they have seen improvements in providing the right support at the right time, better joined up working and communication and improvements in working with the statutory services as a result of the restructure. Parents however told us that they would like to see better communication between services and for services to work together better for SEND support.

We Did

After a brief pause during the first lockdown, the **SENCO Network meetings** have resumed virtually and have continued to receive positive evaluations throughout the pandemic. This is a network of all SENCOs and other SEND professionals or interested organisations, which meets 3 times per year to share and develop good practice in SEND. The SENCO Network is the primary vehicle for providing whole authority training for SENCOs. It includes updates from the SEND Service and it responds to the changing priorities of the LA and the needs of the SENCOs.

The **Strategic Inclusion Forum** is due to be piloted in the summer term, with the first meeting scheduled for 15th July. The key aim of the forum is a commitment to work in partnership with settings to develop inclusive practice to enable children and young people to be supported so they can achieve good outcomes; including achievement, attendance, fewer exclusions and increased participation.

The **Children and Young People's Emotional and Mental Health Strategy Group** is led by Public Health, meets every 2 months and is attended by a multi-agency group including representatives from Education, Health, Early Help and third sector organisations such as Barnardo's. This group has been responsive to the needs of children, young people and families emerging from the COVID pandemic in response to feedback from schools and families about their children's emotional health.

From December 2020 all **Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA)** have included social care advice and there are increased contributions from health into Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). There is also better joined up working between EHCP **Annual Reviews**, health and social care assessments and reviews to holistically review the needs of the child and ensure the right support is in place.

Participation Champions -A Participation Champions group exists to embed good practice with regards to the participation and engagement of service users within all teams across the Council. The Participation Champions have been instrumental in supporting the co-production of the new **Participation Strategy** for Swindon which is close to being finalised.

A group of **co-production and participation tools** have been co-produced to support staff/practitioners in Education, Health and Social Care in becoming more confident in using participative methods in the planning, design and implementation of services. The tools are available on the Local Offer [Swindon Local Offer - Your voice](#).

What's Next?

We will ensure that the performance page established on the Local Offer continues to provide updated data on the performance of services and will seek to extend this every other month.

By July 2021 we will finalise a communications strategy that sets out the duties of all partners in ensuring they access the communications routes being used to share key messaging. We will share this with all stakeholders through the wide range of communication routes we currently have in place and through new routes being established through a strengthened governance eco-system across the local area.

You Said

Most people told us that they find out about services available on social media, through the Parent Carers Forum or on the SEND Local Offer website. Parents told us that they would like more information about what services are available. Professionals told us they would like increased guidance and signposting to services.

We Did

The **SEND pages of the Local Offer website** are constantly being improved based on feedback from parents/carers and young people. For example there have recently been significant improvements made to the health pages [Swindon Local Offer - Health](#)

The **Swindon Local Offer** publishes an annual report showing the progress and improvements which can be viewed here [Swindon Local Offer - What does Co-Producing the Local Offer Mean?](#)

The **Local Offer Roadshow 2020** was held for 2 weeks in October 2020, offering a series of virtual focus groups, forums and information sessions based on what children, young people and parents/carers said they would like more information about.

COVID FAQs -Through COVID-19 the Local Offer website was utilised to keep children, young people and families up-to date of how to access health services and any changes to SEND services as a result of the pandemic.

What's Next?

By August 2021 we will publish the Local Offer Annual report that sets out what feedback you have provided on Swindon's local offer and what we have done in response to your feedback. Furthermore we will work with the Parent Carer Forum -Swindon SEND Families Voice to continue to listen to what information you would like and publish this on the Local Offer.

You Said

Young people told us that they feel positive about their Social Life & Relationships and Good Health (65% or more 'Very Positive'/'Positive'). Thinking about the future; parents and young people would like more information and support for young people for independent living skills and social relationships.

We Did

The **Transitions Programme** is a programme of work across Children's, Adults and Health, with different work streams, designed to improve the multi-disciplinary approach to supporting young people preparing for adulthood, stating the following objectives to be achieved.

'**Planning Live**', the '**Preparing for Adulthood Transitions Roadshow**' and the '**Young Person's Roadshow**' are large scale person-centred events designed for parents, carers, professionals and young people who support a young person with additional needs around preparing for adulthood. Unfortunately these events could not go ahead in 2020 due to COVID restrictions; however there is a clear plan for their re-launch from September 2021 (restrictions permitting).

What's Next?

We have developed a pilot which commences in September 2021 and sets out to improve the quality of transition planning at Annual Reviews across all services. We will provide feedback on how this pilot is progressing during January 2022 and May 2022 and will share what changes will be made as a result of the pilot by July 2022.

You Said

Professionals told us they would like to see more specialist provision.

We Did

The local authority has commissioned an additional 55 special school places and extended the commissioned outreach service whereby special school leaders and Educational Psychologists provide cross working in mainstream to upskill the mainstream school workforce. This service has worked with over 60 children during 2020/21 and has been positively evaluated by the schools and parents involved.

What's Next?

By July 2021 we will use our local population data to inform a Specialist Sufficiency Position Statement that sets out what is required in the local area over the next five years.