

Annual SEND Survey 2020 -Improvement Plan: 'You Said, We Did'

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>

This plan shows how we are using the constructive feedback from the annual survey to get better at the things we know need to improve upon; to make sure we get things right for children and young people with SEND and their families.

The improvement themes identified in relation to what feedback has told us are shown within the 'You Said' boxes. What we are doing to make the necessary improvements is provided beneath each of the relevant 'You Said' themes within the 'We Did' boxes.

There are also 2 other versions of this report available to ensure accessibility for different audiences: Executive Summary and Easy Read Summary.

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 – 'Always' or 'Most of the 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

Throughout 2020/21 and particularly during the COVID pandemic 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.**

All education providers can make SEND support requests which are triaged through the Early Help Hub by a small group of professionals as part of the overall triage of early help requests, which include RF1, Early Help requests, Single Point of Access (SPA) referrals for Mental Health Support and referrals to services commissioned by the Family Intervention Support Service. All requests for SEND Support are triaged within 2 working days. In order to achieve this the EHH has increased their staffing capacity by 1 fixed term full time EHH Co-ordinator and 1 permanent full time Senior EHH Practitioner. SENCO Champions in schools and an Early Years SENCO will also support this process starting in June 2021. From September 2021, all SEND Support requests must include an Early Help Assessment and Plan together with reviews, which include evidence of a graduated response. To support the wider needs of the child within the family a **Team Around a Family (TAF)** meeting may be required. The Early Help Hub (EHH) will support the TAF Meeting.

The Team around the School (TAS) is a multi-agency problem solving meeting that is operational following a successful pilot during 2019/20. It has the ability to recognise wider service gaps or obstacles, so that strategic work can be taken forward in other ways. A TAS will be considered in the following circumstances:

- The Lead Professional requests a TAS, for an individual family where there is insufficient positive change via the TAF process, including children with SEND. The family will not be in attendance at this TAS, but must have consented for their child to be discussed. The TAS does not supersede, or take over case responsibility; this remains with the Lead Professional.
- Themes are identified by the Local Authority or partner agencies, that are impacting on a number of families from a particular school or a request by partners to discuss specific issues in communities affecting schools.
- Requested by a school to consider a small group of pupils where specific themes are identified affecting a number of pupils.

Communications are now being implemented to ensure that all settings are aware of the final revised processes (senior leaders and SENCOs have been kept up to date with the developments and their views have informed the final process). These will be shared at the relevant Head Teacher Briefings and SENCO meetings with support from our school SENCO champions.

EHH staff are receiving training to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of SEND through the **mandatory SEND training** that has been implemented across the local area during 2021 and informally through case discussions with colleagues.

Language Development -248 staff have been trained to an accredited level to support families to improve language development. Feedback from parents was positive. The evaluations show the impact of intervention is improving outcomes for children. The approach has now been absorbed as 'business as usual' within the Early Help Service.

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. They are being introduced into early years and post 16 settings. The feedback from the SENCO Network is that the Core Standards are being well received and are being used.

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.

TAMHS/CAMHS Review -Feedback from service users has highlighted the need for us to review the set-up of the resources in place to care for children, young people and families with mental health needs: Swindon Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Targeted Mental Health Service (TAMHS). We want to ensure that access to these services is easier for families to navigate and that the services available can meet the increasing demand we are seeing; partly due to the impact of the pandemic. We also want to ensure that pathways of support are fairer, by being graduated according to need rather than diagnosis. A review of CAMHS and TAMHS is now underway in partnership with parents, carers and other key stakeholders, with the next review point scheduled in early August.

The **'I-Thrive' framework** demonstrates a joint approach across all **children and young people's mental health services**; with the aims of understanding the young person's journey, building closer links and relationships between services and ensuring a more equitable provision so that children and young people access the right service at the right time. 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. The initiation of the 'No Wrong Front Door' working group commenced in the summer 2020, starting with reviewing existing referral forms across partners and developing a universal form for professionals and creating a self-referral. All this work has been co-created and developed with parent/carers and young people and education and primary care professionals have also been consulted with. There has been some delay due to COVID, however the working group will re-commence in June 2021 with the aim of a launch in early autumn.

SEND Transport –Parents told us that they were experiencing difficulties with SEND Transport arrangements for their children. There were a number of things they said concerned them for example; communication, escort training and independent travel. As a result of this 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 and whilst this policy will be implemented in September 2021, a number of changes have been made in advance of this and is starting to have a positive impact for children and their families.

We have also worked with our Passenger Transport Team, Change Management Team and an external consultant to review all processes around the provision of transport for children and young people with SEND. The final report has resulted in a number of actions including a new SEND Transport Officer post who will be responsible for working across the Statutory SEND team and Passenger Transport Team. This officer will be responsible for ensuring that decisions made about transport eligibility are in line with the policy, that customer experience is reported as positive and that risk assessments undertaken for individual children inform training required to transport children safely.

Weekly meetings have been held since September 2020 between the local authority, Swindon Send Families Voice and specialist schools with transport discussed each week to ensure arising concerns are addressed without delay and communication is co-produced to ensure families are kept informed of changes made to transport during the pandemic. This included additional provision of vehicles during national lockdowns when risk assessed as appropriate. The SEND Transport Policy for 2022-2023 has been approved by the Council's Cabinet and is now available on the Local Offer. The Cabinet were extremely pleased to note the engagement of families in the consultation process around the policy. During 2020, an online application form was implemented to support an accessible method of making applications for SEND transport which can be accessed through the Local Offer. A business case is currently underway to provide all passenger transport assistants with a mobile phone as part of a risk assessment response.

Statutory SEND team –In response to feedback about the need for a more stable workforce, we undertook a review and restructure of this team during 2019/20 and the new improved structure was implemented in March 2020 with new permanent members of staff joining the team between March and September 2020. This was further reviewed in October 2020 and 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.

During 2020 we sought to improve the phase transfer process through engagement with Swindon Send Families Voice and education providers. The impact of this was very positive: 100% of all key stage transfers being completed by the February and March deadlines (pre-school, primary and year 11 phases) and 94% of all key stage transfers being completed by the March deadline (year 14 phase). Additionally 84% of young person's preferences were met at post-16 and 71% of parental preferences were met for the pre-school and primary placements.

It was identified following meetings with Swindon Send Families Voice that there was a common theme of parents having difficulties implementing advice and interventions after seeking **assessments/reports from private professionals**. The DCO alongside Swindon Send Families Voice produced guidance explaining how to escalate concerns within commissioned services if parents were not happy with the chosen service as well as what questions to ask and considerations to take into account if parents did choose to seek a private assessment. This is

awaiting sign off to include organisation logos for publication. Where a private clinical diagnosis is made, these are accepted and where children are waiting for an NDC Pathway assessment it will not be necessary for Paediatricians to confirm a diagnosis made through this route. The Designated Medical Officer (DMO) is working across the local area to review any private assessments should serious concerns be raised by any party.

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.

Neurodevelopmental Conditions Pathway - 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). Ongoing concerns were highlighted at a recent SEND Board meeting in relation to reducing the NDC waiting list. As a result, a workshop was held in March 2021, with key individuals across services to review the pathway, challenges and opportunities as well as how it links in with other services and work streams to support children, young people and families in Swindon. An action plan has been co-produced focussing on the longest waiting families. A collaborative piece of work with Community Paediatrics and Early Help Hub is underway where families are being contacted to review the support that is in place for families whilst they are waiting. The community paediatric team continue to decrease the previous early years pathway list using an experienced junior doctor from another team with an interest in community paediatrics. 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](#)

Patient Information Booklet -Following the Local Offer Roadshow sessions in October 2019 and feedback from parents, carers and families, improvements were made to a patient information booklet provided by the Community Paediatrics Team on acceptance to the NDC Pathway. The information within the booklet has been co-produced with Swindon Send Families Voice, Community Paediatrics, and the Educational Psychology Team. The patient information booklet is sent to parent/carers and families as soon as the child or young person has been accepted onto the pathway. The booklet provides details on the team, the pathway and what they do. It also provides additional details around what happens at the assessment. Information has been added to inform parents that on occasions the Community Paediatrics Team will need to expedite referrals onto the pathway due to presenting clinical needs of the child. New information and details have been included to support carers and families whilst they are waiting, including information on how schools can support, along with signposting to the Swindon Local Offer which has dedicated areas of support information and resources. In addition, information about the Special Educational Needs and Disability

Information Advice and Support Service (SIAS) along with Swindon Send Families Voice and how they can support parents/carers and families is provided. We will continue to work closely with Swindon Send Families Voice to improve communication and provide a high-quality service. These improvements and actions carried out aim for children, families, and professionals to be able to access the right support, from the right service, at the right time.

Following feedback received about the Local Offer, a new set of pages were created for information and advice on **Autism Spectrum Conditions and ADHD**. [Swindon Local Offer - Information and advice on learning disabilities, autism and ADHD](#) These pages were co-produced by Swindon SEND Families Voice and the BSW CCG following feedback that there was not enough information available to support children, families and professionals while waiting on the diagnostic pathway.

There is also a specific page on the Local Offer dedicated to information designed to change perceptions round autism [Swindon Local Offer - Video Resources for Autism and ADHD](#) which includes specific information about **autism in girls**.

Autism awareness training across all ages and services has been considered through the autism board as part of the autism self-assessment. Great Western Hospital has awareness training for its staff and the uptake of this is monitored and reported through the hospital contracts. Health professionals have access to the SEND training to support the understanding of providing a graduated response to meeting the needs of a child regardless of diagnosis.

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** to promote coproduction,

ensuring that the voice of parents and carers is consistently captured and that there are open and transparent relationships: Corporate Director of Children's Services and Director of Quality and Nursing for the BSW CCG (6 monthly), Director of Inclusion and Achievement (monthly), Designated Clinical Officer (monthly), Head of Statutory SEND (weekly).

The weekly meetings between Swindon Send Families Voice and the Head of the Statutory SEND Service provide a useful opportunity to address any immediate concerns and share information. This was particularly useful during the early stages of COVID when there was lots of information and guidance to be shared with families, as well as feedback from families to be shared with the LA. The concerns and feedback discussed at the catch-ups are then taken back to other services within the LA to inform and shape better practice that leads to a more positive impact for families. For example, the concerns raised about SEND Transport, led to a whole service improvement review being undertaken by the SBC Business Improvement Team.

Swindon Send Families Voice's monthly meetings with the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) support the DCO to have oversight across all health professionals for care provided to children and young people with SEND and for parents, children and young people to have more positive experiences in their dealings with health colleagues. Information from discussions is fed back to service leads to support improvement and has provided a positive impact for individual families that the DCO has supported as a result of discussions.

"Thank you very much for getting back to me. Your email was reassuring and informative. I have been in touch with GWH Community Paeds to switch to Virgin Care. The school have been amazingly supportive and have accepted the private diagnosis." (Parent reply to DCO following conversation resulting from Swindon Send Families Voice meeting).

COVID Response -We acknowledge that the pandemic has been hard for most people but especially so for our SEND population. This is reflective of the national picture for SEND whereby Ofsted published a report on 15 June 21 *Ofsted report SEND pupils during the pandemic* reporting the cumulative effects of disruption caused by the pandemic on the health, learning and development of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Ofsted in their national report describe the negative experiences of children and families, including missed and narrowed education, the absence of essential services such as physiotherapy or speech and language support, and long waiting times for assessment and treatment. In Swindon, we have been meeting on a weekly basis with Swindon Send Families Voice to be proactive and listen to children and families experiences and ensure joint working has continued. We have been tracking the impact through the temporary changes to the delivery of provision of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), referred to as 'reasonable endeavours'. We have also undertaken an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses to inform service delivery during COVID recovery and are working closely with education providers around the catch-up support being provided to students.

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, continuation of virtual appointments where identified by individual children as a better engagement model and a change in services education providers can buy into incorporating training packages alongside the purchase of external professionals time.

Launch of Parents SEND Newsletter - As part of a Swindon Send Families Voice survey that was carried out during the pandemic, we asked parents how they could be better communicated with, and many said that they wanted to receive emails direct from Swindon Borough Council (SBC). Every week SBC send out a SEND News Splash one page newsletter to professionals about general SEND news. Swindon SEND Families Voice have worked with the Local Authority to adapt this as a monthly newsletter specifically for parents and this will be launched in June 2021.

Reshaping Conversations is a project led by Swindon Send Families Voice and was 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. Over 200 parent carers told us that they have felt the impact of words said to them by professionals to be unhelpful. The Reshaping Conversations booklet, video and website has been designed to show professionals more positive and helpful language to use with parents. A new training module has been created by Swindon Send Families Voice in coproduction with the LA and BSW CCG. The module will form part of the mandatory training by Children's Services and will also be shared within the BSW CCG and NHS. <https://reshapingconversations.com/>

Strength Based and Place Based Programme approaches - Work is underway on Strength Based approaches with the National Development Team for inclusion (NTDi), and we are planning to deliver some joint briefings in June where we will work together to link Strengths Based Conversations with Swindon Send Families Voice work on Reshaping Conversations. We will work to deliver this to a range of partners including BSW CCG for their awareness and interest.

Day One Calls - In January 2021, we introduced Day One calls for all new applications for Education, Health and Care needs assessments. These are exactly what they say; any family whose child is going through assessment should 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. This provides an opportunity for the Local Authority to gain as much information from parents at the very beginning of the assessment, talk them through the process and answer any queries they may have. Feedback recently received from a parent about Day One calls was: *'The EHCP Co-ordinator called me yesterday regarding the parental EHCP application I put in for my son on Friday (gave up with school doing it in the end). She was very*

lovely and warm and welcoming. It was a courtesy call to introduce herself, acknowledge receipt and give the chance for questions to be asked etc. She explained the next stage of the process also. I thought it was really nice given how busy they are and only expected an email or a letter!"

SEND Professional & Citizens Portal - Parents told us that they wanted to improve communication channels and the introduction of the SEND Professional and Citizen's Portals will assist with this. 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 part of a review around the implementation of feedback cards it became apparent that young people did not understand or feel they were included in both the EHCP and Annual Review processes. A discussion with young people was undertaken to find out the scope of this and to gauge their involvement and understanding. It was found that young people did not feel included as much as they should be, and that not enough preparation and explanation was given prior to young people's annual reviews.

The findings were presented to the SBC SEND Lead and an action was taken forward for young people to co-produce a document, which will be completed by young people to ensure they are aware and prepared prior to their annual review. During a focus group young people initially came up with what they felt was important to include in the document, thinking about what they would like to contribute to their Annual Review (i.e. what would you like other people to know in this meeting?). Young people thought that it would be a good idea if there was a document for older and younger children and young people, and it should be colourful and easy (fun) to complete. The young people's ideas were forwarded to the SEND Commissioning Officer who put their ideas into a draft design. Children approved of the documentation with only a few minor changes and this has now been launched as the 'This is Me' template, available on the Local Offer website. The SEND Workforce now have a resource to capture the voice of children & young people, prior to their annual reviews. Children and young people now have the opportunity to contribute to the review process using a document that has been designed with their suggestions and is appropriate for them. The impact of these contribution forms can be seen in the case studies presented here:

'This is Me' case study 1 (extract): He completes the 'This Is' Me document with his Teaching Assistant before he attends the Annual Review. The SENCo sends it home with all the other paperwork in advance so we can read everything before the meeting. Me and my husband love reading what he's put. He comes into the meeting to share what he wrote in the 'This Is Me' document and also to talk about and show work he has done that he is proud of. He also talks about what he needs help with, and what things he enjoys in school.

'This is Me' case study 2 (extract): It really highlighted how she wanted to be involved, what is important to her in life and showed off her sense of humour. Had she been put on the spot to tell everyone about herself she would not have contributed and would have felt anxious and uncomfortable. All too often as a parent we speak for our children, but this is a great way of getting their voice heard.

Ending involvement with services – Parents have told us that they would prefer to see that when professionals (including commissioned services) are ending involvement with children/young people and families, professionals are clearly communicating when and how families can get further support in writing, not just verbally. As a result, when a case is closed or there is a transfer to another/new Social Worker the parent carer, child or 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. Also, at the conclusion of Social Worker involvement the parent carer, child/young person receives a final letter/report outlining what has been achieved for the child/young person and where further advice can be sought if necessary, including reference to other resources.

Branches Support Group relaunch - Throughout the COVID restrictions the Swindon SEND Families Voice 'Branches' group were 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, rather than having guest speakers as usually would have happened. As parent members all became more used to the restrictions, Swindon SEND Families Voice incorporated some guest speakers into these virtual meetings, including a SEND Information and Advice Service (SIAS) worker, a Family Support Worker and an Autism Specialist to answer questions about challenging behaviour. They are planning to resume face-to-face meeting from September 2021. Feedback from a parent: *"I love the chats for parents, they've been a proper rock to me through the last very weird year."*

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. They support many parents on Facebook and email, but as not everyone uses social media they wanted to provide another way for parents and carers to get in contact with them for not only signposting but also to help with any isolation parents were feeling through the lockdown. Swindon Send Families Voice launched the phone line in January 2021 and this is now open on Monday mornings and Thursday evenings. They provide the time and support that is needed to help people feel properly listened to and supported. They usually get a couple of phone calls at each session and each one lasts at least one hour. The team member answering the phone also often follows up the conversation with an email or another phone call, after putting together some suggestions, such as where to find information about Early Help, or supporting those whose children are refusing to attend school. Feedback from a parent: *"After staring at my phone for half an hour, I finally got the courage to phone the help line, and I am so glad I did. I got so much support, reassurance, understanding and a lot of helpful*

information that I am so excited to look into. I am not someone who often goes to others for help. This was a big step for me. I wish I'd done it sooner."

The SEND Young People's Forum –The 'Thought Tank' have been engaged in a wide range of activities leading to improvements across health, education and social care. For example, as part of the Mental Health Trailblazer Outreach Consultation, young people told us that they would like the option of having their therapeutic interventions outside school. As a direct results of this feedback, Barnardo's have created a dedicated therapeutic room based within their office space where children and young people can visit. Other examples of participation work with young people include:

- Designing key surveys alongside services to ensure they are accessible for young people - such as the Annual SEND Survey, the COVID impact survey and the SEND Capital Investment fund survey.
- Developing more accessible website pages for different platforms and services such as the Local Offer Website and the Educational Psychology Service website pages.
- Contributing to the development of key strategies, such the Transitions Strategy as summarised in the story board found here: <https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/media/34813/step-transition-strategy-outcomes-storyboard.pdf>
- Recruitment to key posts within SEND provision through contributing to the interview process.
- Involvement in the creation of films to promote good practice participation, such as their 'I have a Voice' film which can be viewed here: [Swindon Local Offer - Good Practice Participation Films](#)

Youth Council – We have recruited to a post to run a Youth Council for Swindon with the aim that this is representative of the young people of Swindon and will have members from various participation groups, school councils and other groups throughout Swindon who sit on it. This will include members from the Children in Care Council, Young Carers Forum and SEND Young People's Forum.

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. Young people's views are also being heard at a strategic level within the Corporate Parenting Board (e.g. through a video communication with the Chair Person) and through direct attendance at Children's Health Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny meetings.

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

The **SENCO Share & Solve Hubs** were initially set up out of necessity during the first lockdown in July last year; responding to the needs of SENCOs during the pandemic whilst the SENCO Network meetings were put on hold temporarily. These are 6 weekly virtual meetings, which are locality based and structured as informal, professional support for SENCOs within a coaching style session. The Share & Solve Hubs were so highly valued that they are now continuing to run alongside the SENCO Network as an additional source of support.

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 currently being piloted, with the first meeting having taken place in 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 forum is Local Authority led, which provides support and challenge to settings regarding provision and practice for children with SEND.

From December 2020 all **Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) have included social care advice**. A social care worker attends SENRAP to inform decision-making. We have engaged with the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) to facilitate a workshop to inform an action plan for social care advice compliance. From May 4th, a pilot has been in progress with an aim to embed a social care advice process within Early Help for all children where they are not open to social care. Regular engagement with Swindon Send Families Voice is now in place to ensure parents are informed of the new process and are consulted with about the pilot process. The multi-agency quality assurance process (MAQA) evidenced improved occurrence of social care advice in EHCPs. We are also developing a targeted response at key stage Annual Reviews for amending historic EHCPs to include social care advice. There are also **increased health contributions into EHCPs** and joined up

working between EHCP Annual Reviews, BSW CCC assessments/reviews and social care assessments/reviews to holistically review the needs of the child and ensure the right support is in place.

Child in Need procedures have been amended to reflect a child's EHCP in assessments. The agenda for Children Looked After has been changed to prompt the Independent Reviewing Officer to check if the child has an EHCP; ensure that a combined Personal Education Plan and Annual Review of the EHCP takes place for the child which informs their Care Plan or Pathway Plan. For Child Protection Conferences the Child Protection Chairs are aware of this additional vulnerability for a child if they have an EHCP and will be aware of this and how it impacts on their risk and harm. An audit is taking place of Child in Need, Child Protection and Children Looked After cases in June to seek assurance of how well embedded these changes are.

Participation Network -This is a regular meeting of all professionals in Swindon who are involved in the engagement and participation of children, young people and vulnerable families. We work to ensure we all have a clear understanding of what already exists within the Swindon Borough Council area. Participation Network meetings allow professionals to work collaboratively to share good practice and create new opportunities whilst ensuring that the voice of children, young people and vulnerable families is heard at a strategic level through the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership.

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. Participation Champions support their team to embed and share best practice for participation and engagement across children, families and community health. The Participation Champions have been instrumental in supporting the co-production of the new **Participation Strategy** for Swindon which is now very close to being finalised.

A group of **co-production and participation tools** have been 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](#). The tools have been co-produced with Education, Health, Social Care, parents/carers and children/young people with SEND. They can support staff/practitioners in working with children and young people in relation to gaining children's voices and opinions; for example in their statutory EHC plans, or Early Help assessments.

A variety of **films celebrating good examples of participation** are now available to view on the Local Offer website: [Swindon Local Offer - Good Practice Participation Films](#). The short film clips within this library show the positive impact of participation and co-production; providing

examples of how working together can improve services. They show how children, young people and their families are actively involved in the development of services at all levels.

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** can be viewed here: [Swindon Local Offer - Swindon SEND Local Offer](#) Each year the **Swindon Local Offer** publishes an annual report showing progress and improvements made - [Swindon Local Offer - What does Co-Producing the Local Offer Mean?](#) In addition, 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. As part of the Local Offer Roadshow 2020, a focus group with young people from the young person's 'Thought Tank' group was held. The aim of the focus groups was to explore young people's views on how easy it is to navigate the website and to explore their preferred method of finding out information on social media. Feedback received about the use of jargon led to the implementation of a **jargon buster** which is accessible on the top of each page of the Local Offer.

Other feedback was received from Swindon Carer's Centre, Trailblazer launch, Health Watch and Swindon SEND Families Voice through events and activities throughout the year. Based on the feedback received, **improvements to Swindon's Local Offer website** were made including:

- Following feedback via the website that it was not easy to find information about Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), a new drop down was added on the 'Education' page linking to the ECHP page.
- A 'Pathways into Employment' page was published to help provide information and advice to young people to transition from education into paid employment.
- The 'Health' section was updated and divided into multiple sections e.g., Learning Disability Annual Health Check and a page on the Designated Medical/Clinical Officer role.
- The Health Visitor page now has a menu page which also includes images for each section. An introduction page which guides readers to the content was also created as well as information for fathers and resources for expectant and/or mothers with a new born baby.

- A new page was created following the SEND Service re-structure so young people, families and professionals could have key information about the newly designed service e.g., the names, roles and contact details of all staff. 'All About Me' profiles for each member of staff in the service are included on the website.
- The SEND Portal (including a 'frequently asked questions' document) was added and is being used by families and professionals to make a request for a statutory assessment and to keep up-to-date with the assessment process.
- A copy of the SEND Strategy has been uploaded to the Local Offer.
- An 'easy read' guide for young people was uploaded on the website to help young people with giving their view during the annual review process.
- Information about temporary changes to the SEND legislation was uploaded during the COVID pandemic.
- The SEND News Splash editions have been uploaded on to the website on the SEND News and Events page.
- The SEND Survey was uploaded to the Annual SEND Survey page alongside the 'You Said, We Did' pages.
- Information about the revised Core Standards was uploaded in November 2020 to the Education menu pages.
- The ELSA and Cygnet evaluation reports were published on the Swindon Educational Psychology Service page.

Following the Designated Clinical Officer's (DCO) review of the local offer; feedback from Swindon Send Families Voice, the local offer audit and the rapid work that was completed through COVID-19, a plan to redesign the health pages to provide a more needs led approach to providing information and advice to children, families and professionals has been developed. The DCO began working with the Local Offer Development Officer in August 2019 to review and update the local offer website to ensure clear information on health services for children and young people. Evidence of these **improved Health pages** can be viewed on the Local Offer website here: [Swindon Local Offer - Health](#)

The feedback from a parent on specific advice and information shared from the draft pages demonstrates the impact that this work has had for families. *"Thank you for all the links and resources. I was especially interested in the one that gave advice for how to organise a bedroom. That will be really helpful when we move."*

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. A rapid response and coproduction between Swindon SEND Families Voice, the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon, and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BSW CCG) and the Local Authority (LA) began; **keeping families up to date with developments relating to the COVID-19 pandemic**. The multi-agency response included Swindon Send Families Voice collating frequently asked questions from families and working with the LA and BSW CCG to ensure that these were answered quickly and clearly. There was a positive impact on families feeling supported through the coproduction of information being added to the local offer. The impact is shown in the feedback from parents below:

- *“Thank you for keeping us updated and providing resource suggestions.”*
- *“Local offer has been good.”*
- *“Well done SEND Families voice I feel you’ve handled everything really well, I’ve seen non-stop support online and seen you help those who are truly in need with no-one else to help. You guys are amazing!”*

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. For example a mapping exercise was carried out within the group to document the whole range of local support and resources available to schools and families in relation to emotional and mental health and wellbeing and this was shared as a single document with schools as one ‘go to’ document rather than having lots of pieces of information shared with them from separate sources. A ‘Family Support Pack’ to support families with their children’s emotional wellbeing was also initiated by this group and subsequently shared with families via schools and through Swindon SEND Families Voice.

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:

- Young people are better prepared for independence. An Independence Framework is developed for Children Looked After and Care Leavers - key actions for young people should then become part of their plan for independence.
- A skilled and able workforce that is focused on working with young people and their family/carers so that they gain the skills and experiences that prepare them for adult life. The group will consider what training the Children’s and Adults workforce may need in the future to ensure that progression planning is embedded in social work and provider services.

- All young people have been able to express their views through, for example, Planning Live and have a comprehensive assessment, with a strengths-based support plan. That Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards are in place, as needed.
- All Providers are working on increasing young people's skills and abilities (based on an agreed, progressive support plan).

The Positive Futures Leaving Care Team have worked with a consultant to produce the **Independent Living Scheme workbook** for professionals to use to support Children Looked After (CLA) and Care Leavers from the age of 14 onwards to develop their independent living skills. The aim is to ensure they are able to successfully transition into an independent adulthood in which they are able to carry out key tasks such as budget, pay bills, cook and take care of a home. The Positive Futures Leaving Care Team requested feedback in the form of a letter from the Children in Care Council (CiCC) on the use of the workbook and why it is important. This letter is now included in the workbook, which goes out to all CLA at the age of 14 to support their independence skills, ensuring that CLA and Care Leavers feel comfortable using the workbook having been given reassurance from the CiCC about its use.

Planning Live is a personalised, person-centred approach to planning for adult life. It's an opportunity for the young person to have a facilitated conversation with the people who are important to them to think about their life, what is important to them now, and what they aspire to achieve in the future. It gives space and time for the young person to think about what they as an individual can achieve, and what their family and community can do to help. The Planning Live model that Swindon has used involves a number of young people within a group, engaging with Planning Live in a large room. It would be very difficult to have the same quality of event virtually, as participants wouldn't get the opportunity to engage so well in a group and to share their ideas: therefore COVID restrictions in 2020-2021 have made face-to-face Planning Live events impossible to continue with during this time period. Although Planning Live events have not been running during 2020-21, there is a clear plan in place to get these started again once COVID restrictions are lifted. In the meantime, practitioners have been using creative ways to continue having preparation for adulthood conversations with individuals using the planning live framework and poster headings and Social Workers have also been continuing with 'Life Story' work with young people on an individual basis.

The 'Preparing for Adulthood Transitions Roadshow' is a large scale annual event designed for parents, carers and professionals who support a young person with additional needs. This event provides a personalised and person-centred approach: professionals working together with parents and carers, providing them with the opportunity to have informal, positive, face-to-face conversations with providers and support organisations across the four preparing for adulthood outcomes: employment/training, independent living, good health and social life/relationships. Although COVID restrictions have meant that this event did not taken place as planned within 2020, instead a virtual transitions workshop was delivered to parents/carers and practitioners at the Local Offer Roadshow series of virtual events in October last year and plans are now in place for the large scale event to go ahead again in September this year (restrictions permitting). [Swindon Local Offer - Preparing for Adulthood Transition Roadshow](#)

Young Person's Roadshow -The first ever Young Person's Roadshow was held at Commonweal school in October 2019. The event was planned by SBC, Swindon SEND Families Voice, STEP, Great Western Hospital, and Crowdys and Commonweal schools, and was supported by volunteers from SBC Transitions and SEND Team. Young People had asked us for an event for them that was similar to the 'Preparing for Adulthood Transitions Roadshow', which is for parents and professionals. The Young Person's Roadshow aims to provide a personalised and person-centred approach towards supporting young people to plan for their transition to adulthood. The Roadshow was attended by 20 young people from Commonweal and 20 from Crowdys, so they could experience different activities to help them think about what life might be like when they leave school or college. Full evaluation interviews and a summary report was completed with young people following the event and this will inform future Young People's Roadshows. For example, when asked the question 'What Did You Like about the Roadshow' young people's responses included the following:

- *Everything was interesting*
- *Relaxation and how to relax and be less stressed*
- *Teaching us life skills*
- *Help and support for our future*
- *It gave me confidence to ask about different types of disability sports after trying the boxing*
- *Money and budgeting - I now have an understanding about what I can spend in the future and how difficult it could be*
- *Being in small groups so we could ask questions*

Unfortunately the 2020 Young Person's Roadshow not possible due to COVID restrictions; however this is due to be re-launched as soon as is practical, restrictions allowing, following on from the re-launch of the Transitions Roadshow.

You Said

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

We Did

In order to deliver **improvement in parental preferences for placements** the local authority has commissioned an additional 55 special school places and extended the commissioned outreach service whereby special school leaders provide cross working in mainstream to upskill the mainstream school workforce. This service has worked with over 60 children during 2020/21.

The SEND outreach service supports students in mainstream provision with an EHCP who would benefit from the provision of outreach support from a special school and/or other specialist services (i.e. Educational Psychologists). The service aims to promote inclusion across the local area by providing workforce development and partnership; working with school staff to improve outcomes through sharing expertise and good practice.

Survey data from SENCOs shows us that confidence in mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with particularly complex needs has improved since the outreach service was introduced in 2020. Survey responses received from parents also indicate that the service has been successful in supporting mainstream schools to meet the needs of their children/young people. Positive feedback from parents who's child/young person is receiving support from the outreach services: *"Xxx loves coming to school and has formed a lovely relationship with the member of staff working with them"* (parent 1). *"Xxx is always happy talking about school and what they did."* (parent 2).