

Education Health and Care Plans – Our Story so Far in Norfolk

Action Research completed by Willow Tree Learning

Essential SENCO Network - Autumn 2015

Context

The views of 228 members of the Essential SENCO Network were elicited as part of an action research project completed during the 2015 Autumn Term Essential SENCO Network meeting. Colleagues were asked to share their experiences of the Norfolk Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) assessment process so far, identifying what is working well, what they would like improved and areas for further clarification. Members were also asked to write 'words' that they associated with this process, which were used to create a wordle. Responses were submitted by 51 groups, who indicated the number of participants engaging in the process. A summary of the key messages are outlined below:

Background

- 228 SENCOs and or SEN Practitioners worked collaboratively within 51 groups
- Participants reported to have made 186 new EHCP referrals
- Participants reported that 193 existing Statements had been converted to EHCPs
- Participants reported that 803 Statements were still to be converted
- 42% (96/228) of Participants looked at the EHCP criteria before making a referral

Question: What is working well?

The following themes were referenced by more than one group, (if a comment was only made by one group it was not included in this summary.)

53% (27 groups) commented that the EHCP process promoted greater involvement of Parents/Carers and Pupils and was considered more child focused than Statements

27% (14 groups) referenced the work of their EHCP Co-ordinator as working well

14% (7 groups) stated that nothing was working well

10% (5 groups) stated that the end document especially the outcomes were better than Statements

6% (3 groups) stated that the multi-agency approach of EHCPs was working well

4% (2 groups) referenced the sharing of practice in their Cluster as a positive

Question: What would you like improved?

39% (20 groups) referenced greater consistency and communication with EHCP co-ordinators

37% (19 groups) want an improvement in the time lag between referral and completion of EHCPs

33% (17 groups) requested greater involvement from Health and Care in this process

29% (15 groups) requested improvement in communication with them during the process

22% (11 groups) cited improving the referral process and reducing duplication of information

22% (11 groups) requested an improvement in the online application
12% (6 groups) want greater consistency between pupils with converted EHCPs and new referrals
8% (4 groups) requested simplified guidance and training on the process
6% (3 groups) cited the dependency on LA EP visits prior to referral as an area for improvement
4% (2 groups) requested an improvement in the quality and specification of pupil outcomes

Question: Is there anything that still requires clarification?

20% (10 groups) requested greater clarification of when to refer for an EHCP
18% (9 groups) asked for clarification on the statutory duties and roles of Health/Care professionals
14% (7 groups) requested clarification on personal budgets
12% (6 groups) asked for clarification on the conversion process and timescales
12% (6 groups) referred to increased understanding by other professionals about the process
10% (5 groups) requested clarification on the role and responsibilities of EHCP co-ordinators
8% (4 groups) want clarification on the timescales associated with the process
8% (4 groups) want more information on finance and funding
8% (4 groups) requested further information on how to host a person centred review for an EHCP
8% (4 groups) requested clarification on the role of the SENCO in the process
6% (3 groups) referenced outcomes and targets in EHCPs as an area for clarification
4% (2 groups) requested clarification on how to communicate with EHCP co-ordinators

Additional Suggestions requested by Essential SENCO Network members:

- Emphasise to Head teachers that the EHCP does not in itself bring money to the school
- Review how some Clusters are linking money to Statements and EHCPs as this is putting pressure on SENCOs to refer
- Ensure that EHCP co-ordinators have sufficient training on person centred planning and SEN knowledge
- Publish a simplified guide on the process
- Ensure that Health and Care Professionals engage with the process
- Communicate regularly with Parents/Carers so they understand where they are in the process
- Clarify what is meant by the 'specific right to apply for an EHCP' and the 'non-specific right to apply as outlined on page 6 of the Criteria document

Frustrating

Child-focused

Confusing

Pupil-centred Laborious

Lengthy

Protective

Parents

Communication

Responsible

Nurturing

Outcome-focused

Limited-clarity

Slow

Flexible

Shambles

Long-winded

Erratic

Positive

Unclear

Efficient

Challenging

Inclusive

Delays

Unfair

Hard-work

Delayed

Person-centred

Ambitious

Paperwork

Potential

Education-focus

Long

Limited-training

Budget

Lottery

Fragmented

Collaborative

Family-centred

Time-consuming

Inconsistent

