

19 April 2021

People Directorate
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To: Parents and Carers of Children and Young People with SEND

COUNCIL INVESTS IN MORE CAPACITY IN THE SEND SERVICE

I would like to share some updates and good news in terms of current changes in the SEND service.

I am pleased to inform you that the Council has agreed to additional financial investment for the third consecutive year and as a result:

- We are further expanding capacity in the SEND service to enable the service to continue the improvement journey, and
- We are increasing capacity in our Educational Psychology Service and as soon as these changes are confirmed I will provide a further update.

When deciding on what additional capacity we need we have considered the feedback we regularly receive from the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) and direct from parents to ensure the investment has the greatest impact. An example of this is that we received feedback from PCF and directly from parents that preparing for adulthood is a big priority and we have, therefore, created a team that can ensure we strengthen this part of the service.

The updated structure chart is attached. I have summarised below the key changes in the structure.

I am delighted to inform you that Laura Rogerson has been appointed permanently as Head of Service - Inclusion. Laura has made a really positive impact over the last 12 months and is passionate and committed to leading the SEND service on its journey to being the best. We know we have a way to go yet, however, working TOGETHER with the PCF and our amazing children and young people we are confident we will sustain current improvements and move forward at even greater pace.

In addition, I am delighted that Health have agreed to extend the secondment of Jo Williams as Head of Service - SEND Integration & Service Improvement. Jo will lead on service improvement across the SEND partnership ensuring even greater integration across health, care and education with a focus on service improvement.

Importantly our reflection and learning over the last twelve months provides evidence that the locality model has led to improvements in communication and engagement with parents. It means locality teams get to know the families in their area and understand and build relationships with the local education provision. The updated structure, therefore, retains this approach through a team who is aware of your child's needs and are able to work together to further improve communication and engagement.

We have created a fourth team within the structure which will focus on Post 16 and lead on implementation of the partnerships recently launched [Preparing for Adulthood Strategy](#). We know from the PCF that this is a priority for families in Cheshire East and this team will ensure we have dedicated capacity with specialist knowledge on Post 16 to enable us to play our part in delivering the preparing for adulthood strategy which was coproduced with PCF and the Youth Forum. Key workers in the team will retain their geographical caseload and continue to work closely with the other locality teams. I am delighted to inform you Becky Boothroyd has been appointed to the Locality Manager - Post 16 and Preparing for Adulthood, and will take up this role once we have recruited a new manager to take up her current position as Locality Manager - South.

In terms of other Locality Manager positions, I am also delighted to confirm that Chris Broadhurst has been appointed permanently to the Locality Manager - Central, which she has been fulfilling on an interim basis. We also welcome Anna Pike who joined us on 19 April as Locality Manager - North. I am sure she will be a great addition to the SEND service and brings a valuable different set of skills and experience to the team.

We have created a new role of Senior Key Worker in the North, South and Central teams. The main aim of these roles is to support Locality Managers by line managing the plan writers and business support staff, they will lead on more complex cases and provide greater management capacity to support quality assurance and other key management tasks. We have appointed to these internally and I am pleased to announce that Lisa Handy, Susan Pletnick and Diana Bowen have been promoted into these posts. We will now be recruiting to back fill their Keyworker posts.

We have increased the capacity of plan writers to include additional plan writers that will ensure amended EHCPs are issued more timely following annual reviews. This is in addition to the plan writers supporting the writing of EHCPs as part of the need assessment process. This should lead to further improvements around our annual review arrangements.

We have also increased the business support capacity as with a significantly increasing number of needs assessments and plans we want to ensure we have the capacity to carry out to essential administrative parts of the process.

We have also created a Business Support and Data team. This team will be responsible for the continuation of the development of our customer services approach. I would like to assure you that there is an ongoing commitment to learning from compliments and complaints to improve the day to day service for our children and families. Additional posts are being introduced to support tribunals, mediation, complaints and Local Government Ombudsman enquires. The team will ensure that we are learning from these and developing practice accordingly. The team will also lead on managing the local offer, be responsible for our annual surveys of parents, young people and school views and ensure links with school admissions, transport and other wider education services.

It will take some time to recruit the right people and get the new structure fully in place and embedded. This could create some staff changes as staff take up different roles but I am confident that this approach will help us to build upon the progress to date and further improve the services for children and young people with SEND in Cheshire East.

The locality teams will be liaising with the PCF to arrange the next set of coffee mornings and the teams will look forward to introducing any new staff and explaining the changes. We would like to encourage you to try to join one if you haven't yet had the opportunity to so.

We look forward to continuing to work with the PCF and Youth Forums to further improve our services to families. If you wish to give any feedback, please contact the PCF directly who will be able to share this with us.

Yours faithfully



Jacky Forster
Director of Education and 14-19 Skills

Att: SEND Structure Chart