

Report on Education Inclusion Service for HWBB

The SEN Strategy is focusing on increasing provision within the local area for children and young people with SEND. This has a major impact on various areas within the LA and is proven to be of major benefit for the children, young people and their families.

Areas this impacts:

- Improve life and educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND by providing excellent quality provision within the local area
- Improving the social aspects for the children and young people by supporting them to be part of their local community
- Enabling young people to access employment and training opportunities offered within BANES for example Project Search, Learning for Work and Partnership 4 Learning all BANES driven opportunities to aid young people to transfer into employment.
- Reduce the costs of the placements in expensive out of county independent special schools therefore easing the pressure on the High Needs budget
- Reducing the costs and the carbon footprint in relation to transport.

Since the SEN reforms in 2014 the number of Education, Care and Health plans (EHCPs) within BANES has more than doubled with the figure now standing at 1681 and increasing. The number of requests for Needs Assessments has also increased in the last few months. In the period January to July 2021 there were 260 requests in the same period last year there were 183.

This data shows the pressure in the system. There is pressure on the teams involved not only the SEN Team but all the other agencies that feed into the assessment process e.g., Educational Psychologists, Social Care, OT & Physio, Speech & Language and the newly formed SASS (Specialist Autism Support Service).

Linking into the above these figures also highlight the pressures on the educational settings within BANES. Both generic special schools are full for 2021 and 2022, Aspire Academy for social Emotional and Mental Health young people has expanded numbers and is increasing to a total of 120 places within the academic year 2022/23 but for September 2021 is also full. This puts pressure on the mainstream sector and the independent sector. With the increase in mental health difficulties following the pandemic there is also a chance that there will be more exclusions due to poor behaviour and schools struggling to manage. However, BANES is committed to working with schools to reduce exclusions.

Within the next couple of years BANES will need to consider investment in more special school type places and one way of doing this is to work with MATS to set up resource bases attached to mainstream schools. At present BANES has 5 bases and we are working on increasing this. It is imperative that these bases provide a full and excellent curriculum and education for those attending.

We continue to support excellence in SEND teaching and practice and ensure key local and national priorities are communicated via our SENCO conferences. BANES is also working closely with schools to embed the Graduated Approach (Assess, Plan, Do, Review) this should be a whole school approach and if adopted can lead to a reduction in the requests for EHCPs.

Challenge through COVID

The main challenges in SEN linked to the pandemic are that during the lockdown period was the lack of face-to-face meetings. This affected assessments and the quality of the advice that the professionals could provide due to the lack of seeing the child/young person especially at their educational setting. The delivery of the provision within the EHCPs was also affected, however, therapists were great at providing support through the virtual platforms. The increase in workload as evidenced above was also experienced through the last year and continues. As yet we do not have clear evidence that this is linked to COVID, however it is likely that an increase in mental health and parental requests are as a direct result of COVID.

Following the lockdown, a survey was sent out to all families with children with an EHCP and to all young people with an EHCP. Attached is the report from this survey, showing a positive result.

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