

# **SENCO NETWORK**

**20th January 2021**

| **What was discussed?** | **With thanks to…** |
| --- | --- |
| **Strategic Update:** | Julia Katharine |
| **Annual Reviews - presentation and discussion** | Karen Spencer |
| **Differentiation and use of TAs during remote learning** | Debbie Anderson |
| **Introduction to the new DCO** | Tracey Fisher |
| **Short Break provision during Half-Term** | Sarah Christopher |
| **Brief Updates:**  **CAMHs**  **Children's Therapies**  **Portsmouth Parent Voice**  **Portsmouth SENDIASS**  **Inclusion Outreach Service**  **Volunteers for EHCP Audits** | Nigel Sampson  Neil Smith  Natalie Abraham  Hayley Legg  Lisa Caine  Karen Spencer |

**To begin…**

Sarah Christopher welcomed everyone to the meeting, giving a special mention to those who joined the SENCO Network for the first time:

Fran Shaul, Manager of the Link Coordinators

Karen McQuillan, SEN Adviser

Jaimie Lacey, SEN Adviser

Hayley Legg, Portsmouth SENDIASS

Jane Angwin, SENCO, Springfield

Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years

Kath Turner, Phoebe Dolby and Karen Grove, Link Coordinators

Nigel Sampson, CAMHS link

Tracy Fisher, Children's Complex Care Manager and DCO 0-25

## Strategic Update

Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion, thanked SENCOs for their work in welcoming into school children who are considered vulnerable, in particular children with EHCPs and additional needs.



She went through the embedded slides.

Regarding the Inclusion grants for mainstream schools, these are subject to confirmation of capital funding. If confirmed, we will let you know when/how the bids can be put in. Some examples would be a ramp for wheelchair users, setting up a sensory room on-site, hygiene facilities, improving playgrounds to make them more inclusive for physical/sensory impairment needs, etc. Something you do not have at the moment that would enable you to be more inclusive, and ideally something that would benefit more than one child.

From April, we will be moving into a model of banded funding for children with EHCPs in mainstream schools and inclusion centres. The exact amount of funding allocated to each band of funding will be confirmed next month by Schools Forum. It is a needs-led model and children's needs would be matched against published banding criteria as part of the EHC needs assessment process. Any request to change the band will need to be requested as a change through the annual review process in the usual way.

FAQ:

* Does the new funding model affect existing EHCPs?

Work has already taken place to translate the amount of each EHCP into a band. The levels and funding have been checked so they are not too different from what schools would expect. When you receive notification of funding of the new financial year, you will not need to do anything about transferring it into the banding system, because the SEN team will have already done it for those children with an EHCP.

For those children with a new EHCP, when the SEN team receives the draft EHCP, they will identify what band to allocate. If you have a query or you think it should be different, you have the opportunity to raise that when responding to the draft plan.

Equally, if a band has been allocated for an existing EHCP and you think it should be different, the annual review is the opportunity to raise that. Any other changes to an EHCP that would affect the banding would also be discussed during the annual review.

It would be important to have the evidence to support why you believe the banding should be different to what has been allocated.

* Are support staff still costed at an equivalent cost of £9 per hour?

Yes.

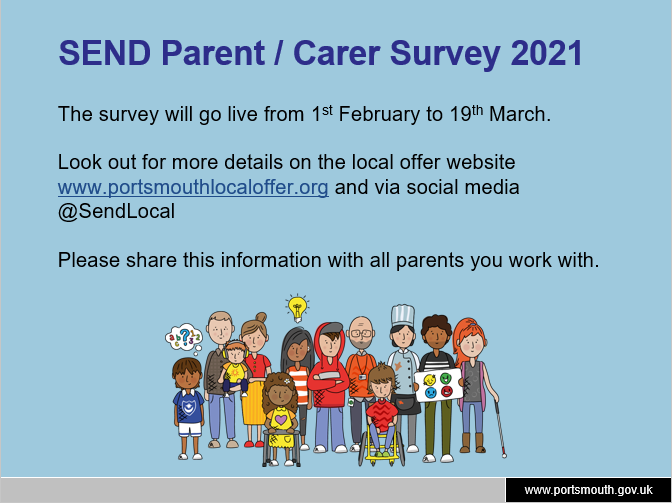
* Will banding be discussed at ISP?

We will be letting ISP know what band the provision will fall under in a similar way to what we do currently with the summary of provision.

Annual SEND parent/carer survey will go live from 1st February.

Information will be on the [local offer website](https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/) and @SENDLocal.

Please share the information on how to take part of the survey as wide as possible in your school community.



## Person Centred Annual Reviews

Karen Spencer, SEN Service Manager, provided a refresher of the annual reviews. 

Take note:

* Portsmouth City Council has been working to update its email security. This means that all of its email accounts are now secure and so there is no longer any need to have separate secure mailboxes.

The general SEN email to use: [sen.education@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:sen.education@portsmouthcc.gov.uk) (rather than the old secure version).

All of the relevant forms and website links are in the process of being updated and we would appreciate it if you could share the information about our updated email address with relevant people in your schools.

Please be assured that the council has set up a system to forward any emails that inadvertently get sent to the old email address whilst everyone gets used to the change.

Embedded the updated email addresses for the SEN Team contacts and school allocations.



* All paperwork must be accessed via the [Local Offer website](https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/).
* Please check the updated SEN timeline (embedded below) which now reflects the new dates for Specialist ISP.



* The New Monitoring and Review hub's initial task is to clear the backlog with responding to annual reviews.
* Try, wherever possible, to join the annual reviews with other reviews for the child, e.g. LAC review.

Participants discussed issues with annual reviews in groups. How are you making sure that the annual reviews are person-centred and that you get the right input from all people involved?

The following feedback was provided:

* Annual reviews are being held in a very different way – very much depending on parental preference. Some do not want video. SENCOs are responding on a case by case basis.
* They have been able to complete all their annual reviews but they might be a bit behind if things change in family circumstances, e.g. a member of the family becoming ill then annual review is not as priority for them.
* There may be a bit of a delay in the input from health colleagues since they are under a lot of pressure currently.
* Some students communicate better online.
* Recording virtual meetings can be helpful for getting an accurate account, but be aware all participants must consent to the recording taking place and that a copy of the recording can be requested.

A more detailed presentation around Annual Reviews was shared at the September 2020 SENCO Network. Embedded here if you are interested to read more about it.



## Differentiation and use of TAs during remote learning

Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early Years, mentioned that this lockdown is very different from the first one last Spring.

TAs are now playing a different role in remote education through this lockdown. She has heard from schools that TAs are doing work with groups, individuals, phone calls, supporting pupils with SEND. Also taking up bubbles which frees teachers to record lessons or do live lessons.

As SENCOs, you have massive power, so you can argue with head teachers and teachers about differentiated learning, age and stage appropriate, and insist there is differentiation, if there is not.

The recent EMAS Bulletin, which was sent to subscribing schools, includes tips and guidance for EAL pupils which will also be helpful for pupils with SEND. If SENCOs haven't seen this and would like a copy please contact [karen.thomas.emas@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:karen.thomas.emas@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

Messages coming from parents show that many still like paper packs, as well as virtual work, so they might need additional resources. Remote education does not always mean digital and online. Some of those pupils will need more time to access the same tasks.

There is a requirement that, by 25th January, schools have to publish on their website how they met the DfE expectations. She suggests for schools to use the [template from the DfE](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-information-to-parents-template). One of the boxes talks about the support for pupils with SEND.

Participants shared best practices in groups and the following feedback was provided:

* There are particular challenges in secondaries, where they don’t know the pupils as well.
* Paper packs if needed to support virtual.
* Knowing parents ability and software at home.
* Re-tasking TAs to mental health and wellbeing in secondary and 6th form. Facing so much exam anxiety.
* Weekly phone calls to parents and speaking with the children, paper packs plus other resources to support VAK learning.
* Phone calls to SEN families to check in - even if they are in school.
* Weekly check in calls to SEN parents (allocated across key staff) to keep communication open and troubleshoot any issues arising.
* Remote interventions, specific individualised tasks, doorstep distanced visits.
* Hybrid teaching - teaching those at school and home at the same time. Seesaw - alongside this to support that differentiation.
* Zoom interventions - working best for SALT. TAs are meeting children (and parents) twice a week in live lessons for SALT.
* Use of Seesaw- it's brilliant.
* Little short videos to go alongside info about fine motor skills/ how to work on tricky words etc. to support resources sent home. Parents appreciate phone calls.
* ELSA / Pastoral support for Pupils and families throughout. All those with any CAMHS involvement or even awaiting referrals are on our vulnerable list and invited in.
* Learning mentor support for breakfast meetings, having toast via teams and ensuring specific children are ready for the day and for their learning.
* Working 1:1 on EHCP targets/interventions using Google Meet.
* Using staff strengths, we have some highly skilled LSAs who deliver high quality interventions.

## New Designated Clinical Officer 0-25

Tracy Fisher, new Designated Clinical Offer, introduced herself. Her role is to help to improve outcomes for children and young people, support in clinical commissioning and ensure that health meet their statutory duties in regards to SEND.

Some of the ways she may be working with you is supporting children with medical needs in schools and reviewing existing policies around that and also future developments and pathways.

The other half of her role is complex care manager for children with continuing care packages. Ensuring quality assurance process evaluation and being part of panels that look at those children and getting the right support in place for them.

You can contact Tracy by sending her an email to [Tracy.Fisher@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:Tracy.Fisher@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

## Children's Therapies

Solent has sent out letters to schools, reflecting the pressures they are under at the moment. Some staff have started being redeployed and they are focusing on critical and urgent work.

Solent are trying to keep children’s services as normal as they can within restraints of staff and issues and minimal redeployment of the service. There is a plan for redeployment of some school nurses to CAMHS and possibly into the vaccine programme. Whilst under pressure, services continue to offer some support, please use your normal points of contact when needed for health visitors, duty school nursing and CAMHS SPA.

For up to date information on school nursing offer please contact the service with your query either via the duty school nurse number: 0300 123 6629 or email: snhs.solentmatsteamssocialcare@nhs.net.

## Short break provision during half-term

Enable Ability will run, as best they can, their usual short break offer during half-term. They provide fantastic support for children with high needs.

During the summer, extended short break provision for children who had not been at school at all was offered. Let us know if there is demand for some of those mainstream children to access short break respite during half-term. This has now been commissioned and SENCOs given further information.

## CAMHS

Nigel Sampson said that national NHS are clear that mental health service still need to be operated, so staff working on core teams will not be redeployed.

They are on red in their RAG rated system. They have had to restrict what they do and focus on priority urgent cases, such as self-harm, suicide, eating disorders, significant mental health. There are no national beds for children and young people for mental health problems.

Eating disorders presentations are more complex than before Covid and sometimes referrals are coming in late. If you have young people you are concerned about their eating, encourage discussions with the school nurse or their GP to ensure they are referred to CAMHS in a timely manner.

On a positive note, there is additional investment for eating disorders and neurodevelopmental teams. Also the 3rd wave of MHST are about to join CAMHS. Unfortunately, existing staff looking for a career change are going for those posts leaving vacancies in the single point of access team or extended teams. Therefore, they are stopping staff moving so quickly so they can manage the caseloads down.

They are continuing to look at 400 young people currently on medication, ensuring that they will receive phone or face to face medication review appointments.

Also looking at continuing with initiation of ADHD medication.

The duty team are still open during office hours. If they can't get to you right away, please leave a voicemail and they will get back to you as soon as they can.

## Portsmouth Parent Voice

Natalie Abraham, PPV manager, said that they have had a lot of positive feedback of the help that SENCOs have provided their families. She said well done!

Areas PPV have been watching:

* Amount of time pupils are spending in schools - sometimes families find it difficult if they only go for a few hours and they have other children in their care in their home.
* CAMHS and mental health support.
* Helping families understand mental health and anxiety, making them aware that there are ways to support young people through that.
* Positive feedback about annual reviews: everything has been delivered on time online, staff hand delivered information they needed, they communicated really well, even completing EHCPs through lockdown.

PPV will be running resilience training for families in February and also some money-matters training alongside their support group. This is an opportunity for parents to talk about experiences they are having, how they are coping at home, more than school focused feedback.

In terms of parental anxiety, Sarah reminded that MHST ran a course in the summer for parents around managing their own and their children's anxieties. These will be available remotely soon. Details will be shared with you when they are.

## Portsmouth SEND Information Advice and Support Service

Hayley Legg, Portsmouth SENDIASS, updated that they are still operating as normal with regards to supporting parents and young people, still offering Zoom meetings and attending virtual meeting with schools.

They are delivering online training for parents. See details in embedded programme.



They can link families to other services, e.g. financial advice or looking for food banks, etc.

## Inclusion Outreach Service

Lisa Caine, Inclusion Outreach Service coordinator, said that they are still completely operating to support you for any advice information or support needs, working virtually. Some of the coaching conversations can work well virtually.

You can phone 023 92606060. The line is available at any time. Please leave a voicemail and your phone number and Lisa will get back to you as soon as she can.

Alternatively, you can use the email address: [outreach@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:outreach@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

Keep a look for the PEP bulletin since some training will be released over the next couple of months. The PEP bulletin comes out weekly. You can subscribe to it [here](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKPORTSMOUTH/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKPORTSMOUTH_19).

Bespoke offer: You can contact to access personal coaching conversations with Solent Academy Trust consultants or the SEMH surgery sessions with MABS teacher advisers.

## Volunteers for EHCP Audits

There are termly EHCP Audits currently being held remotely and attended by members of education, health and social care.

The purpose of the audit is to ensure that our EHCPs are on track, that there is specific detailed provision and that the feedback has been received from the professionals involved with the child.

These audits have started looking at annual reviews and it would be helpful to have input from schools as well. If you would like to volunteer to become part of the EHCP Audits, please contact Karen.

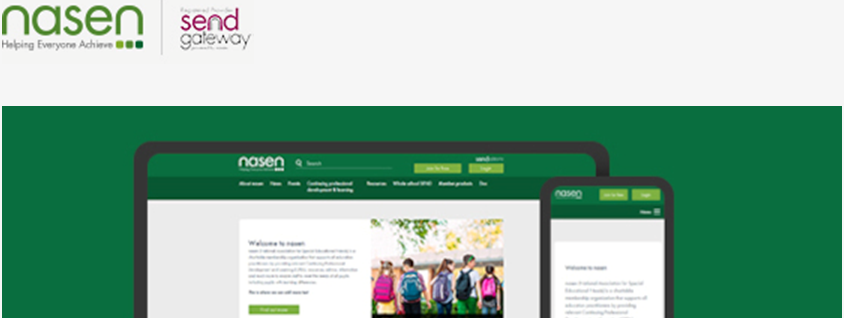
They consist of a planning meeting (1 hour) and a feedback meeting (2 hours). Between both meetings, some work would be needed to look at the assigned plans. The total commitment would be approximately 5/6 hours.

## Engagement Model Training

The engagement model is an assessment tool that helps schools meet their duties in supporting pupils who are working below the level of the national curriculum and who are not engaged in subject-specific study.

It is a free training and it will take place online. For more information, see embedded flyer. 

## Nasen's new free membership



Back in September last year, we announced an exciting change to our nasen membership offer – that it was to become FREE for all individuals across the UK.

We are delighted to confirm that this **free membership is now available.**

**As host of the Whole School SEND Consortium, nasen will also transfer all Community of Practice members over to this new offer.**

To start accessing this new offer, you just need to [**activate your account**](http://nasen.org.uk/user/reset/115872/1611378001/11ccwApyaUagGZTWVjKZgDHWEKh0AMYZ3KLevyoCFn8)

We are committed to ensuring that expertise in SEND is available to each and every school and setting across the UK. This is more important now than ever before, as the impact of the pandemic creates continued social upheaval for families and the education workforce.

If you cannot click on the link above, just copy, and paste this URL into your web browser. (http://nasen.org.uk/user/reset/115872/1611378001/11ccwApyaUagGZTWVjKZgDHWEKh0AMYZ3KLevyoCFn8).

## Neurodiversity Assessment Pathway Project



You can read an update on the Neurodiversity Assessment Pathway Project from the ND steering group in the embedded document.



## Next meeting

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday, 16th March from 3 to 5pm via Zoom**.

Do you receive the weekly [PEP bulletin](https://www.portsmoutheducationpartnership.co.uk/bulletins/test/pep-weekly-bulletins/)? If you don't and you would be interested in receiving them, please subscribe [here](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKPORTSMOUTH/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKPORTSMOUTH_19).