

SEND BRIEFING

"Children and young people will be happy and reach their full potential"

OCTOBER 2019 / ISSUE 1



Welcome to the first monthly SEND briefing.

We have tried to keep this briefing short – but if you want to read more, click on the links below.

We are aware of the high volume of complaints and the much-needed changes necessary to ensure Birmingham schools and services provide the best for ALL its learners. To do this we are introducing some changes to improve the way we do things, and in doing so, provide earlier help to schools and families. Our emphasis is on supporting the workforce and families across four localities – the North, South, East and West.

We are also currently reviewing all of our specialist support and provision to ensure that we have the right support in the right place and that the majority of learners are educated within their local community.

[Click here to find out what is important to us](#)

LOCALITY PANELS FOR ACCESSING SPECIALIST SUPPORT AND PROVISION

For the majority of learners with special educational needs and disabilities, their needs can and should be met without an EHCP. In Birmingham, schools and families have needed an Education Health and Care Plan to access specialist services and enhanced provision – including CRISP funding and specialist placements.

We are changing the way we do things and introducing weekly locality panels. Requests for specialist outreach support as well as for placements for specialist provision can now be made through these panels. There are four panels; one each in the North, South, East and West.

[Click here to find out how to make a referral to your locality panel](#)

SEND LOCALITY TEAMS

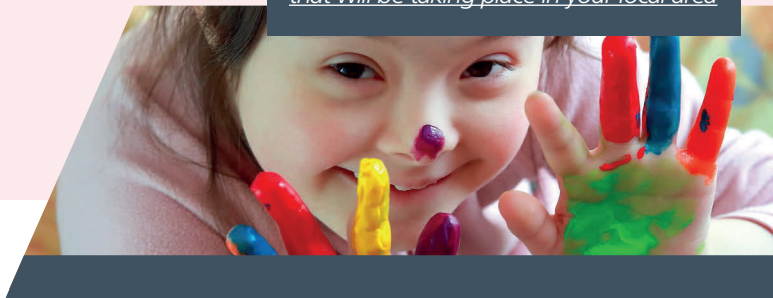
We are developing integrated specialist teams of health and education professionals to work in the North, South, East and West of the city. The teams will be made up of educational psychologists, specialist teachers, therapists and parent liaison officers. The teams will support families and schools in the early identification of need, ensuring easy access to specialist help through locality forums. This means that school professionals and families can talk to their specialist team through the local drop-ins.

[Click here to find out more about the local team](#)

COMING SOON

The new locality teams will be meeting with each school in January 2020. The meetings will provide an opportunity to problem-solve areas where the school has become stuck and to identify areas which require additional support, in order to ensure that the needs of children are met in their local school. The meetings will also discuss children and young people who may require specialist support and provision and look at ways the team, schools and families can work together to ensure the best possible outcomes for learners.

[Click here to find out about the forums that will be taking place in your local area](#)



REVIEWING AND REALIGNING OUR SPECIALIST PROVISION

We want to make sure we are maximising and making the best use of all our resources. In particular we want all our children in Birmingham to be educated as near as possible to their local community. We are currently undertaking a review of our specialist schools, resource bases and the independent schools we commission. We want to ensure we have the right amount of specialist placements and build the links between the different levels of tiered provision to share best practice. In January 2020, we are introducing a special school outreach service to support mainstream schools and to share some of the great practice taking place in Birmingham.

[Click here to find out the timetable for the reviews taking place](#)

SUPPORTING FAMILIES

We know things aren't working as well as they should be by the number of complaints, the high level of appeals and the high use of our dispute resolution service. Time taken up on dealing with these, as well as assessing children and young people for EHCPs before they can access specialised services is taking our teams away from the really important front line work with schools and families. To build up our working partnerships and ensure families are really involved with the work we are doing to improve our services, we are appointing PARENT LIAISON OFFICERS. There will be a central coordinator and four officers based in the North, South, East and West of the city.

[To find out more about what the Parent Liaison Officers will be doing click here](#)



PLACEMENTS FOR RESOURCE BASES AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

We realise that the way we currently place children and young people in special schools and resource bases is not working. Head teachers, specialist teams, families, and children and young people need time to plan and prepare for a significant change like a change of school. To this end we will be working with all our families and schools towards a September intake for our children and young people. Of course, there will have to be exceptions, but by working in this way it means that the schools and services can undertake the planning for timely transitions for our children and young people. We will be holding meetings with our special schools and resource bases in November and December 2019 and with all our mainstream schools in January 2020 to discuss placements for September 2020.



HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

We have heard from some schools and families how the transportation of children to and from school has been working well. However, for a number of children and young people there is still a long way to go. We have been working closely with our new providers National Express to address the difficulties that families have been experiencing as well as reviewing our contracts with the existing service providers. We have to improve the current way the transport is working.

[Click here to read about the things that are taking place to address this](#)

CONSULTING ON DIFFERENT WAYS OF WORKING

We will be holding a series of consultation events to talk to families, schools and support services during autumn and winter.

[Click here for dates and times of events happening near you](#)

In addition we want to hear from you. It's working together that we really can make a difference for all our learners. We appreciate there is a lot to do and changes need to happen to ensure we are making the best use of our resources.

[Click here to have your say](#)

LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

We are delighted to be holding our first SEND young people's forum. Listening to the voice of young people is at the heart of all the legislative changes that have taken place over many years. In our view, they are the most central part of how we should be shaping the developments and how we make the best use of our resources going forward.

[Click here to see the recent invitation to young people to apply for a place on the SEND young people's forum](#)