

## Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

21 June 2018

### Report 109/2018: SEND and Inclusion

Questions
<b>1. Para. 3.1. How well do the parents on the SEND Strategic Group represent all parents rather than simply the interests of parents whose children have similar needs to their own?</b>
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p>The SEND strategic Group is focussed on our approach as a partnership for supporting children and young people with SEND. As such we have 4 parent/carer representatives on the group some of whom are members of the Rutland Parent Carer Voice (RPCV). RPCV is an independent representative body for all children and young people with SEND and has a large and increasing membership of parents, representing a wide range of views. We are required under the Code of Practice to engage, consult and seek the views of parents and carers and as such we support RPCV to help them expand their membership to reflect a broad and representative view of all parents and carers. We regularly engage them to ensure our services are responsive to the needs of parent, carers, children and young people.</p> <p>To broaden parental views we expanded representation on the SEND strategic group to parents who are not part of RPCV but have experience of services for children and young people and therefore can provide their views on how the system in Rutland has and does work.</p>
<b>2. Para. 3.2. What user feedback has there been on the redesign of the local offer website?</b>
<p><b>Response:</b></p> <p><u>Prior to redesign:</u> Feedback was gained from parents/carers, children/young people and professionals via focus groups, Annual Parent/carer event in May 17, Rutland Parent/carer Voice (RPCV), Rutland Disabled Youth Forum (RDYF), feedback via the website and the Ofsted/CQC inspection.</p> <p>Feedback highlighted that the site was difficult to navigate resulting in users not finding the information they needed and believing content was missing. This was further backed up by some usability testing with parents and RCC staff completed in Autumn 17.</p> <p><u>During redesign:</u> Families were consulted on layout, categories, logos and content as various events which included;</p> <p>PRCV picnic 28.07.17, Choice Unlimited 10.10.17, Rutland Rotaract (RRFSC) parents drop in 27.10.17, RPCV Coffee morning 05.12.18, Tree Jack exercise with parents 30.01.18, RDYF 22.02.18</p> <p>Parallel test site tested by parents pre go live on 02.05.18. We have been using a website usability testing approach which is well established in the online usability industry, in which we record users undertaking typical tasks on the site while talking aloud about the process. We then analyse these recordings to guide site improvements. This offers live insights into the site 'in motion' that are effective in helping to focus in on the most important issues to be resolved.</p>

Reflecting wider good practice, we plan to continue with this approach across the site, running regular test cycles focussing on themes of importance to our user base to ensure that the site continues to meet their needs.

New site consultation to date: Post live consultation has taken place at RRFSC drop in on 25.05.18 and the SEND Annual event on 05.06.18.

Consultation will continue at all appropriate events and groups as well as with internal and external professionals. Users have the opportunity to give feedback via the site and we will be using Google analytics to measure number of users, returning users, page views, top searches etc which will all feed into the continued development of the site.

To date, anecdotal feedback has been positive with all recognising a huge improvement in look and feel, lay out and ease of use.

**3. Para. 3.2. Are there sufficient services to support the emotional well-being and mental health needs of children and young people and are the thresholds for access to CAMHs at the right level?**

**Response:**

There are a wide range of services available in Rutland to meet the emotional health and well-being needs of children and young people. These have recently been collated and published on the SEND Local Offer website so that parents, carers, young people and professionals can see the range of early help services available to them which can meet needs at a lower threshold than for children requiring specialist CAMHS support.

The Early Intervention service also work closely with schools to increase their knowledge and resilience to support young people and enable schools to both access and promote the services which available for children and young people, such as the emotional health and well-being nurse.

We have also introduced a new service called Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) for children and young people which is delivered by an RCC clinician. This referral based service helps support a child or young persons' psychological and emotional well-being needs, utilising a Cognitive behaviour Therapy approach to address depression, anxiety, separation, low mood and panic.

More widely CAMHS is currently undergoing transformation and the Head of Service for Early Intervention, SEND and Inclusion is part of the CAMHS Transformation Board looking at how the service will be delivered in the future, this includes reviewing how earlier access can be provided and how lower level needs which do not currently meet thresholds can be met.

**4. Para. 3.2. Are the health assessments for children looked after placed out of County now to timescale?**

**Response:**

The assessments for children out of county are undertaken by the resident County Health Service. As such our Children Looked After Nurse works closely with other Counties to ensure the assessments are undertaken in a timely manner which requires regular liaison.

Currently 24 children looked after have their health assessment out of county with 2 currently out of date. The reasons are;

- One child who is with their mother and mother did not attend the appointment and this is being rearranged
- One which was due in April 2018 and we are still waiting to hear from health in that area if this has been completed.

We continue to review this area regularly and ensure oversight and scrutiny with performance reviewed and reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

**5. Which elected members are on the SEND capital programme board? Does this Board conform to Rutland's Project Board structure and processes?**

**Response:**

Cllr Wilby and Cllr Hemsley are members of the SEND Capital Programme Board. Both Councillors and Councillor Foster receive written updates from key meetings, such as those with schools, and visits to other sites as a matter of course and face to face briefings as required. Updates are also provided as part of regular Councillor Briefings.

The programme is managed in line with RCC project methodology and adheres to standard documentation and recording. Dr Tim O'Neill is the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) who chairs the monthly Programme Board, Dee Rajput, RCCs Programme Manager is also a Board member.

**6. Para. 4.3.3. Why are schools not using the SEND toolkit? What pressure can be put on schools to use it? Can we make using the SEND toolkit a requirement for access to the MCNA process?**

**Response:**

Schools have and do use the toolkit and positive feedback has been received by schools on its contents. However overall use of the toolkit has been patchy or it is has not been clear that it has been used and changes in staff SENCOs may be one reason why this is not routinely adopted.

Training has been delivered to SENCOs on the toolkit and schools have been made aware of expectations that this is seen as good practice. Further training and awareness raising is planned for schools and is part of our on-going training package. We plan to ask for further feedback from schools to ascertain if anything requires changing.

We currently ask for a range of evidence from schools as part of the EHCNA request, however this is not always provided. On the back of school feedback we changed the request form to make it straight forward for schools to complete, this launched in April and we are currently assessing what impact this has had on quality.

**7. Para. 7.2. Does this mean the projected overspend of a quarter of a million pounds could be an underestimate? How are other LAs coping with the financial implications of this increase in demand?**

**Response:**

Potentially this could be an underestimate and the overspend is likely to be at least that highlighted in the report. However the current projected overspend is subject to change as it includes estimations for children based which are based on average costs but these can change once school consultations have been completed. In addition existing costs for EHCPs can and do change and this can result in a reduction or increase in placement costs during the year but

this is not known until the annual review has taken place or special schools notify us of a change in placement costs.

As there are currently a high number of assessments in the system it is likely a high proportion will result in the issuing of EHCPs and require subsequent funding. However the amount of funding varies from case to case, and through consultation with the schools, and therefore it is not easy to predict this future spend with a high degree of accuracy.

Other LAs are also experiencing an increase in demand and subsequent overspend and are adopting a multi-pronged approach to how this can be reduced. This varies from area to area and includes but is not limited to;

- Working with mainstream schools to increase their capacity.
- Challenging special school costs – part of a regional response.
- Identifying children earlier in the system to prevent escalation of needs.
- Reviewing DSP provisions.
- Introducing opportunities to access High Needs funding earlier.
- Commissioning therapeutic services, utilising high needs funding.

As part of our work whole system approach to the SEND service we are keeping our approaches under review.

#### **8. Para. 7.2. What scope is there to reduce costs for these services by jointly procuring with a group of upper tier authorities?**

##### **Response:**

Local Authorities in the region recognise that the increasing cost of placements is an issue and have established a project designed to address this.

Following on from the study commissioned by NHS England in 2016; [Reducing Distant SEND Placements, Increasing regional sufficiency.](#)

Further collaborative work has been undertaken across the east midlands on behalf of the Regional Commissioning Champions Network.

An outcome of this work is the appointment in January 2018 of a SEND Regional Project Manager. The post holder is leading a 12 month project to undertake a regional needs assessment and market analysis. Rutland has been influencing the scope of this work which was commenced on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018

The vision for this work is to;

*“Establish a regional approach to commissioning for children and young people (0-25yrs) that fully understands their education, health and care needs; consistently offers local placements and delivers positive outcomes for those young people that settings find most challenging.*

*Development of a local partnership model/s, (individual LA, sub-regional and/or regional) that identifies and addresses unmet needs via pro-active multi-agency working and that delivers responsive value for money solutions in a person-centred way.*

*Communication with children and young people and their families is clear and transparent. Local provision is well advertised and easily accessible and its impact on positive outcomes is well evidenced and widely understood.”*

In addition to this specific project there are regular regional meetings with SEND Leads and good communication between the Local Authorities.

**9. Para. 13.2. Our small size will affect our percentage as each young person in Rutland is a bigger percentage of the total than in a larger authority such as Leicestershire. Therefore the 0.2% higher level of EHCPs than the national figure has no significance statistically. How do we compare with smaller authorities such as the Isle of Wight, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire?**

**Response:**

Our figure is only marginally over the national average and as with many statistics in Rutland our percentages can be influenced significantly by our small numbers and therefore they are not always representative, however the cohort is of 7733 pupils which does add weight to the comparator.

Comparisons to smaller authorities, but still significantly larger in population, show a varying trend;

Bracknell Forest (2.1%), Isle of White (3.6%), Poole (2.5%), Torbay (4.5%),

Whilst our numbers are in line nationally and not as statistically significant due to our size with current demand for assessments we could, potentially, see a further increase which is further above national trends. This indicator remains a key line of enquiry for Ofsted and CQC inspections and we would be expected to highlight our understanding of numbers and trends in demand.

**10. Para 14.1.3. If the provision at Catmose is underused why is it still supported by RCC?**

**Response:**

Catmose DSP provision supports children with mild learning disabilities (MLD), the provision has 25 places for children with SEND, and are required to ensure children are educated alongside their mainstream peers.

RCC and the School Leadership have met this year to review the provision and there is a commitment to ensuring these places are fully utilised. The solution to a full provision is part of the wider SEND whole system reforms being led by the SEND Strategic Group.

**11. Para. 14.1.4. Shouldn't the working group include school leaders if the aim is to get/keep more CYP in mainstream?**

**Response:**

School leaders are engaged through the SEND strategic group which has been set up to review our response to children and young people with SEND with a core goal of educating children, where possible, locally within mainstream education. The vast majority of system changes are being developed and run through this group.

The working group is focussed on internal Rutland County Council policy and approaches, with the view to identifying and agreeing our approach and potential solutions which would then be taken forward and discussed in wider forums where appropriate.