

SUPPORT AND ASPIRATION: A NEW APPROACH TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY - SEN GREEN PAPER BRIEFING

AGENDA ITEM 17 APPENDIX 1 SEN GREEN PAPER BRIEFING

Brighton & Hove City Council

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Special Educational Needs Green Paper (Support and Aspiration: A New approach to SEN and Disability), published March 2011 proposes a radically different approach to the current system. The consultation period ended on 30th June 2011 and Brighton and Hove submitted both an individual authority response and also contributed to the South East 7 local authorities joint submission (Documents A & B).
- 1.2 From September 2011 a group of local authorities will start piloting the proposed new approach involving a single assessment process and a single plan for children and young people and their families (see separate briefing paper SE7 Pathfinder). Legislation is proposed from 2012 this is needed to secure the single assessment and plan and to support the use of personal budgets.

2. VISION FOR CHANGE

- 2.1 The current process for the assessment and provision for children and young people with special educational needs has been in place for nearly 40 years. It is now considered by all to be overly bureaucratic and not 'fit for purpose'. The current system involves separate assessments made by educational settings, an educational psychologist, health professionals and social care colleagues. At the end of this process where a child or young person is considered to have severe and complex special educational needs a Statement of Special Educational Need is produced. The current system is considered by parents, professionals and the voluntary community sector to be overly bureaucratic and not 'fit for purpose, leading to disjointed provision.
- 2.2 The aim of the new approach proposed is a radically different system that:
- supports better life outcomes for young people;
 - gives parents more confidence by giving them control;
 - transfers power to front-line professionals and to local communities.
- 2.3 The Green Paper proposes:
- a new approach to identifying SEN
 - a single assessment process and a 'Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)'
 - a local offer of all services available
 - parents to have the option of a personal budget by 2014

- giving parents a real choice of school
- greater independence to the assessment of children's needs.

3. KEY POINTS OF THE GREEN PAPER

3.1 There are 5 key chapters within the Green Paper:

1. Early Identification and assessment
2. Giving parents control
3. Learning and Achieving
4. Preparing for Adulthood
5. Services working together for families

4. MAIN APPROACHES PROPOSED FOR EACH AREA

4.1 Early Identification and Assessment:

- Help professionals identify problems as they emerge through a robust system of early checks for children involving education, health and social care
- Put in place a reformed assessment process for children with complex needs with a single multi-agency approach and an Education, Health and Care Plan for 0-25. This will focus on outcomes, giving parents the same statutory protection as the current statement of SEN
- By 2014 all children that would have a statement of SEN or Moving on Plan for FE should have a single statutory assessment process and Education, Health and Care Plan, from birth to 25
- Make clear who is responsible across education, health and social care and which services and includes a commitment from all parties to provide their services
- Like a statement of Special Educational Needs sets out needs but also set out learning and life outcomes
- Would be transparent about funding for support packages.

4.2 **Giving Parents Control** - Parents will be at the heart of decisions about their child and feel confident that support will be in place. It is proposed to:

- Make services more transparent for families – services publishing a 'local offer' (what local services are available for parents to access)
- Strengthen the choice and control given to parents with the option of personal budgets by 2014
- Support families through the system with trained key workers to help parents navigate the system
- Ensure that parents have a real choice of a range of schools
- Ensure that parents and local authorities always attempt mediation before making an appeal to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal.

4.3 **Learning and Achieving** – all children must receive a high quality education whether in mainstream or special schools, it is proposed:

- Address over identification of SEN with a single early years and school based SEN category to replace School Action and School Action Plus
- Sharpen accountability on progress for the lowest attainers, introducing a new measure into school performance tables
- Better equip teachers and support staff to address SEN and poor behaviour through training and continued professional development
- Give schools more autonomy to innovate and transform SEN provision and allow special schools to become academies

4.4 **Preparing for Adulthood** – All young people should have successful transition to adulthood, it is proposed to:

- Increase the range and quality of learning opportunities
- Provide effective help for young people to move into employment
- Improve joint working across paediatric and adult health services
- Help young people to live independently by working across government to build on the forthcoming disability strategy

4.5 **Services Working Together for Families** – the green paper vision requires a strong role for local government alongside schools, health agencies and social care, it is proposed to:

- Set up a strong role for local authorities as champions for families and vulnerable children
- Encourage greater collaboration between LAs and services in the local area
- Explore a national framework for funding specialist provision for children with SEN that improves consistency across areas and allows local flexibility.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 It is intended that the Department for Education will put out more detailed plans by the end of the year. This will form the basis of any necessary legislative changes to be taken forward from May 2012.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Document A : Brighton and Hove City Council response to ‘Support and Aspiration: A New approach to SEN and Disability Consultation’ (SEN Green Paper)

Document B: SE7 response to ‘Support and Aspiration: A New approach to SEN and Disability’ (SEN Green Paper)

