

Special Educational Needs SEN Reform Newsletter

**Keeping You Informed About SEN
Reform In Stockton-on-Tees**

February 2014
Edition 1

Who is this information for?

Parents or carers, professionals and practitioners working with children, young people or adults up to 25 years old with special educational needs or a disability.

With the introduction of the Children and Families Bill 2013 and the proposed special educational needs (SEN) Reform, the Government is introducing a new law around how children, young people and adults up to 25 years old with special educational needs receive their services.

If you are a parent and carer of a child, young person or adult up to 25 years old who has special educational needs, who may be receiving support at 'School Action' or 'School Action Plus', or who has a Statement or Learning Difficulty Assessment, you need to keep informed about these changes and how they will affect you.

If you are a professional working with children, young people or adults up to 25 years old, you will also need to keep informed about the changes to working practices.

This newsletter is the first in a series that will be distributed by Stockton Council to keep you informed and connected about SEN Reform in the Borough.



What's Inside?

My Life/His World - a poem	Page 2
The timeline of change	Page 3
What does this mean for you?	Page 4
Education, Care & Health Plans update	Page 5
Keep informed and connected	Page 5
What happens next?	Page 5
Dates for your diary	Page 6
Information & events	Page 6
Introducing Personal Budgets	Page 7
Important contacts	Page 8



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Children and Young People

Big plans for the young people of our Borough

Putting People at the Heart of Change

Every change presents an opportunity to challenge ourselves and make sure we are doing all we can to support and improve the lives of children, young people and adults up to 25 years old who are living with special educational needs or disabilities.

With this in mind, the following poem was written by Carole Wilson and her son, Ryan (16 years old) a young man with Asperger's Syndrome, and shared with members of Stockton's Complex Needs Partnership. Together, Carole and Ryan have put into words the daily experience of living with Ryan's elder brother, Matthew (19 years old) who has complex needs.

My Life/His World

The alarm goes off, he's awake, he's up and its only two o'clock.

'Go back to sleep' Mum says to me but I'm awake no sleep for me

So I get up

To watch Mum and Dad sip coffee from their 3rd or 4th cup.

A brand new day but the routine's the same.

But this is our life no one's to blame

His room, his television, his toys, his time.

All given to him to keep him calm.

Locks on the windows, locks on the doors.

Alarms scattered around the house on all floors.

We have to know where he is to keep him safe.

As previously he has escaped.

Maybe today we will go:

to the park - oh no it's too open, there's no contained space

to the cinema - oh no it's too loud, too dark, not a good place

to the seaside - oh no it's too cold

a holiday to Spain - oh no it's Butlins again

a trip to a farm - well maybe oh just to have a day to have fun and be free

A trip into town doesn't make it any better,

people stop, stare, whisper and utter.

I hide in my hoodie and disappear.

Why can't people just accept him without their faces showing their fear.

The anger, the frustration, the emotional drain, the constant battle to not be a pain.

No concept of time, no fear of danger, no

knowledge of friends, family or stranger.

It's hard for me to watch this struggle

as everyday he lives in his own bubble.

My Mum, my Dad have so much to do,

sometimes they forget I am here too.

No friends round for tea, no sleepovers for me.

Just school and home and time in my room, to avoid the disruption, avoid the destruction.

Respite is a word that means so much.

My time for Mum and Dad to concentrate on me.

I plan an event, a place to go.

Then it gets cancelled and I'm back in his shadow.

But he's also their son and he's my big brother.

Would I replace him for another?

Not for a second, a minute, an hour.

I'll be his rock, his strength, his tower.

I'll be his friend, cuddle him when he's stressed,

even help him to get dressed and undressed.

'Cause he's my brother and I know he's a pest,

but I love him to bits 'cause he is the best.

A Timeline of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Reform

Please find below a timeline showing changes which have taken place and further planned changes. Please turn to the back page where there are contact details for further information.

March 2011	<p>The Government published a Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability'. This set out proposed changes to the way disabled children and children with SEN receive support.</p> <p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council responded to the consultation on the Green Paper.</p> <p>Stockton United for Change (SUFC) also responded to the consultation.</p>
September 2011	<p>20 pathfinders from 31 local areas started to test the ideas in the Green Paper. Hartlepool and Darlington are Stockton's local pathfinders.</p>
February 2013	<p>Children and Families Bill introduced into parliament.</p>
October 2013	<p>Draft Code of Practice, regulations and transitional arrangements published for consultation.</p>
9 December 2013	<p>Consultation on Draft Code of Practice, regulations and transitional arrangements closed.</p> <p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council responded to the consultation.</p> <p>Stockton United for Change (SUFC) also responded to the consultation.</p>
12 December 2013	<p>The Government amended the Children and Families Bill. Now, disabled children, young people and adults up to 25 years old who do not have special educational needs will be included in a number of clauses in the Bill, including the Local Offer and local joint commissioning arrangements. 'Commissioning' describes the way Council chooses and pays for services you use. 'Joint Commissioning' means the Council will buy services together with other organisations, such as the NHS.</p>
20 December 2013	<p>Young people's consultation on Code of Practice closes.</p> <p>Young people from Stockton-on-Tees responded to the consultation.</p>
February 2014	<p>Children and Families Bill expected to receive Royal Assent.</p>
September 2014	<p>The Children and Families Bill will be implemented. It is likely that changes will be introduced over a period of time.</p>

What does this mean for you?

For Parents/Carers

If you have a child or young person with SEN, who may be receiving support at 'School Action' or 'School Action Plus', or who has a Statement or Learning Difficulty Assessment - the changes are likely to impact on you in the following ways.

- Statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments will be replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans.
- An Education, Health and Care Plan will be a legal document describing the needs of the child, young person or adult up to 25 years old, the provision to meet those needs and the suitable educational placement. It will be developed in partnership with you and your child, young person or adult up to 25 years.
- You will have the option of a personal budget if your child, young person or adult up to 25 years has an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- The Local Authority will publish a 'Local Offer' which will give information on the provision it expects to be available for your child, young person or adult up to 25 years old, both within and outside your local area.

- There will be no categories of 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' but schools and other education providers will be given information about how to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs.

For Professionals/ Practitioners

If you are a professional or practitioner working in health, a local authority, school, college, voluntary or community organisation, you will need to familiarise yourself with the changes taking place as part of SEN Reform.

These include

- Introducing Education, Health and Care Plans to replace Statements and Learning Difficulty Assessments.
- Supporting information and service delivery through the development of the 'Local Offer'.
- Working across age groups to ensure service provision works smoothly from 0-25 years old.



Stockton

Across the Borough of Stockton, the Council has big plans for the young people of the Borough – where every single child in the Borough is important and each and every one is provided with as many opportunities as possible to help them be the very best they can be in life.

Managing Change

A Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Project Management Team led by Jane Harvey, Early Years and Complex Needs Manager, is managing the introduction of SEN Reform. The Project Team includes representatives from the Local Authority, Health and from Stockton United for Change.

Education, Care & Health Plans Update

The content and format of the new Education, Care and Health Plan is currently being developed and the first draft of a proposed Education, Care and Health Plan format will be ready for consultation with parents, carers and professionals in the coming months. Further updates will be provided in future editions of this newsletter.

Keeping Informed & Connected

The Stockton Council Project Management Team with representatives from Stockton United for Change have developed a communications plan to help you keep informed and connected.

This includes a regular newsletter, events and on-line information via www.stockton.gov.uk/sensupport and Facebook (Stockton United for Change) SUFC Stockton. You may also receive short surveys and questionnaires to see if we are communicating with you effectively.

There is also a consultation programme currently being developed which will provide a range of opportunities to feedback at key stages of SEN Reform.

Members of the Project Management Team are also providing briefings and information sessions at meetings, briefings and in work-place settings.

What happens next?

A range of different people and organisations are set to be affected by SEN Reform.

There is now a range of work underway - with practitioners, professionals, schools, parents, carers and children and young people - to make sure the reforms are put in place.

Across the Tees Valley

Twenty UK 'pathfinder' local authorities have been identified and, with their health partners, are testing the proposed reforms. In the Tees Valley, Hartlepool and Darlington are leading on the SEN Pathfinder; this work covers four strands.

Strand 1. Co-ordinated Assessment and Single Plan ('One Plan' approach)

Strand 2. Personal Budgets

Strand 3. Support for Parents and Young People

Strand 4. Support for Vulnerable Children

SEND Pathfinder information packs are available at www.sendpathfinder.co.uk

Dates for your Diary

At the moment is proposed at least two key communication and consultation events take place in 2014, these are:

6 February 2014 - event led by Stockton Council around the SEN Reform. The venue is George Hardwick Carers Centre, Wellington Square, Stockton, TS18 1RG
There will be two sessions for parents/carers at 10 am - 12 noon and 4.30 pm - 6.30pm. (Limited crèche places will be available for the second session.) Please contact Elisha Smith on 01642 527164 or e-mail elisha.smith@stockton.gov.uk to book your FREE place.

12 March 2014 - event led by 'Stockton United for Change'. This will be a SUFC parent/carer conference where an update on the SEN Reform will be given.

It is likely that more events will be held as the year goes on.

Other Networking Events

Stockton United for Change also provide the following meeting opportunities.

SUFC - Monday to Friday (term time only). 11am to 1pm at the George Hardwick Foundation Carers Centre, Stockton. A face to face friendly 'drop-in' session (for parents or carers of children, young people up to 17 years).

SUFC - A monthly Parent Carer Network Forum. 10am-1pm at the George Hardwick Foundation Carers Centre, Stockton. No need to book, just turn up (for parents or carers of children, young people and adults up to 17 years). Next dates are 12 February & 2 April.

SUFC - Bi-Monthly Service Provider Meetings. 12.30pm-2.30pm held at the George Hardwick Foundation Carers Centre, Stockton. Providers of services working with ages 0-25 years with various complex and/or additional needs come together to share information, good practice and network. Next dates are 24 January & 21 March. Please note these meetings are for service provider staff only.

SUFC 2 - A monthly Parent Carer Network Forum. 10am-12noon held at the George Hardwick Foundation Carers Centre, Stockton. No need to book, just turn up (for parents or carers of adults from 17 up to 25 years). Next dates are 13 February, 27 March & 24 April.

For further information, please see contact details on the back page of this newsletter for 'Stockton United for Change'.



Keeping Parents & Carers at the Heart of Change

Stockton Council and its partners are working with 'Stockton United for Change' - a parent participation group who represent the views and opinions of parents and carers of children, young people and adults up to 25 years with special educational needs or a disability.

Representatives from Stockton United for Change are part of the team helping to deliver change.

If you are a parent or carer and want to find out more, please contact Stockton United for Change using the contact details on the back page of this newsletter.

Introducing Personal Budgets

There will be changes to how children and young people will be supported – offering more choice and control by parents or carers. This new way of funding is called 'Personal Budgets'. Basically, you, as a parent or carer, could be given more control over how some funding and money is spent. And, as the child or young person grows older, if appropriate, they will directly input into how they want the funding provided for them spent.

Personal budgets will be optional and parents and carers or the child, young person or adult up to 25 years do not have to have them.

Personal budgets are not from a new pot of money, children and young people won't get the support they get now and a personal budget. Personal budgets are just a more transparent way to spend the money that is available on support for children, young people and adults up to 25 years with special educational needs.

Personal budgets can provide parents, carers and potentially the child, young person or adult up to 25 years, with the decision-making power to select their own services.

If people themselves have more control of the resources available to them they may find solutions and support that work best for them.



Important Contacts

Stockton United for Change

Stockton United for Change (SUFC), the recognised parent participation forum, who represent the views and opinions of parents and carers of children, young people and adults up to 25 years old with complex/additional needs. It was set up in 2008 and helps influence the development of local services for families.

For more information or to get involved, please contact Stockton United for Change.

- ☎ 07935 447375
- ✉ stocktonunitedforchange@gmail.com
- Visit www.facebook.com/sufc.stockton

Council for Disabled Children

The Council for Disabled Children website contains a range of information to help and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

- Visit www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Contact a Family North East

Contact a Family provides support, advice and information for families with disabled children, no matter what their condition or disability.

Working at a local and regional level, they provide up-to-date information on local services and support for families.

- Visit www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast

Department for Education

The Department for Education website contains information about SEN Reform.

- Visit www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/send

School

If your child attends a mainstream school you can ask the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) for information. If your child attends a special school you can ask your child's teacher or the Headteacher.

Stockton Borough Council

Stockton Council's website has an on-line area dedicated to information for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities.

- ☎ 01642 527225
- ✉ fis@stockton.gov.uk
- Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/sensupport

