

SENCO Newsletter

Dec 21

Welcome to our new half termly SENCO newsletter, which we hope will keep you up to date with what is happening in SEND in North Yorkshire. It would be great to use this to share some good practice too, please do let us know if you have anything you'd like to share, or request a briefing on. As a first edition we have lots to catch up on, it's been a busy term for everyone and we know that SENCos are feeling the pressure from all sides, increasing as families get closer to Christmas. We do wish you all a very happy Christmas break, hopefully some time for you to rest and recharge.

If you would like to get in touch or submit paperwork please use our email – sen@northyorks.gov.uk



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SEND review

The government have announced that their SEND Review Steering Group are concluding the SEND review at pace and are developing proposals to be set out in a SEND green paper to be published in the **first three months of 2022**. The proposals will specify plans to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, to improve the experiences of their parents and carers, and to deliver reforms that will bring financial sustainability to the SEND system.

Statutory Assessment and EHCP

We are currently receiving approximately 800 requests for statutory assessment per year and are monitored by DfE in terms of our performance to complete those agreed for full assessment in a statutory 20 week timescale.

Since mid 2020, the capacity within the educational psychology team has significantly reduced and despite several recruitment rounds during COVID we have not as yet been able to build the team back to its original capacity. This has meant that our ability to complete EHCPs in a 20 week timescale has also decreased, causing much concern for schools and parents/carers. We have now introduced a hybrid model to build capacity which is made up of a small internal team, locum psychologists and a commission with 2 external agencies.

Whilst we are starting to see some improvements in timeliness we do still have further work to do to regain our high levels of performance prior to 2020 which stood at 90%. It would be very helpful if SENCos could delay submitting new requests for statutory assessment until the first week back in January 2022, so that we do not lose 2 weeks of the timeline over Christmas – the timeline clock does not stop for this holiday and we, like yourselves, will have a number of staff taking leave during this period too. Many thanks for your help with this, it is appreciated.

Local Area Ofsted

Back in 2016 North Yorkshire had a SEND Local Area Ofsted inspection, this is part of a process where all local areas are inspected every 5 years. This inspection looks at how the local area (Education, Health and Social Care) identify and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. There is a new framework for these inspections planned for release in April 2022 although we have yet to receive confirmation of the launch date and this may well be affected by the release of the SEND Green Paper in the Spring.

We are aware that the new framework will focus strongly on how stakeholders work together to improve outcomes for SEND and will have a strong emphasis on the impact of lived experience and how we use this information to improve services and support .

New Head of SEND



Hello everyone,

My name is Anna Gray and I am delighted to introduce myself as your new Head of SEND at North Yorkshire County Council. I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to share a little bit about myself and the work I'll be doing with you.

I have lived and worked in Scotland for 16 years, first as an English Teacher and then in the area of Special Educational Needs. Within this specialism I have worked in several different roles in schools as well as central roles within the

local authority, including managing central SEN services, overseeing SEN provision in schools and Early Years setting across sectors, and overseeing 11 standalone special schools which meet a wide and diverse range of needs. I am passionate about ensuring equity and parity for children and young people with additional support needs, and their families, and I am committed to working collaboratively to deliver the highest possible standard of education and support for all learners.

Having grown up in a small town in the North-West, I am now planning to relocate to England and I am very fortunate that my move has coincided with the Head of SEND opportunity in North Yorkshire. In applying for this post, I have been excited to see the high quality of provision that you and your colleagues deliver for North Yorkshire's children and young people, demonstrating a clear vision for improvement and your ambition for learners with SEND. I am very much looking forward to working closely with you as Head of SEND to continue to develop and transform services, building on the many strengths already in the county.

A little bit about me: in my spare time I enjoy walking, biking and playing the piano badly (which my husband does not enjoy in the least). I am also a (very) fair-weather wild swimmer. I have family across England including the North-East, and I'm very excited about getting to know North Yorkshire better.

I will be in contact to arrange to meet you all when I take up post in February. In the meantime, wishing everyone a very merry Christmas when it comes!

Annual Reviews

We are aware that we have a number of annual reviews that are outside of the 12 month timescale due to workload pressures on schools and settings. However it is essential that we bring these up to date in the New Year to ensure we are compliant and ensure changing needs identified from the review are identified and planned. If you have already undertaken some reviews please return all paperwork to the local authority within the 10 days of completion so we can update the Plan and finalise the review.

Thank you to everyone who has sent us your dates for forthcoming reviews, if there are any outstanding please do send to the SEN Admin team by the end of term.
If you have any questions please email sen@northyorks.gov.uk

Phase transfers

Don't forget the statutory deadlines for phase transfers.

EHCPs must be finalised at the end of a key stage by the dates below:

- EYFS – 14th February
- KS2 – 14th February
- KS4 – 31st March

If you have any concerns or questions about these deadlines please contact us using the email above.

Calendar of Events

Next term's SENCO network dates are now online on NYES, starting 15th February. In the current climate we will keep them virtual for now, but will consider a mix of virtual and face to face in future.

The new Spring Term training brochure is also here, featuring some new courses for schools, settings and governors, including Neurodiversity, Using Sign to Communicate, and Unlocking SEND in Early Years.
<https://nyestraining.co.uk/>

Drop in hub sessions are also available for you to bring any queries you may have.

Post Implementation Reviews (PIR)

The new model for the PRS and the SEND multi disciplinary Hubs have been established since September 2020. It is now time to gain feedback on how well these 2 developments are working and so both will be subject to a PIR in the Spring term.

Views will be gathered from schools, parents/carers and children and young people through interactive webinars, meetings and survey feedbacks. Please look out for dates which will be released in the Red Bag in January and by email to SENCos.



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Interim staffing changes

As you will see we will have a new Head of SEND starting with us from the end of January. In the interim we have made some internal adjustments so that the post is covered until Anna starts with us. These are as follows:

Carol-Ann Howe – interim Head of SEND

Cerys Townend – Interim Head of Inclusion

Gavin Hayman – Exclusions and SWR Locality Board

Amanda Morphet – Lead for SEMH and Craven Locality Board

Targeted Mainstream Schools

As we approach the New Year our first three Targeted Mainstream Schools also approach the end of their first year of operation. East Whitby Academy, Grove Road CP and Holy Family Catholic High School have all been operational since Jan 2021. They have been a huge success for the children they support. In the New Year we will be showcasing the outstanding work of these schools and providing an insight from a school leaders perspective on their journey to date and the wider benefits these specialist provisions have brought to those schools.

We continue to develop more TMP's with Wensleydale School, West Cliff Primary School and Alverton CP coming on-board and Stokesley Primary Academy to follow in the New Year. These schools all have capital investment schemes underway or planned to enhance their facilities. We remain keen to speak to interested schools who would like to consider developing a TMP. As some areas are now approaching a full compliment of provisions we are particularly keen to talk to leaders in Harrogate and Scarborough. Thank you to all those schools mentioned and those currently working with us towards implementation.

Children and Family Hubs

The **Government** has committed to championing **Family Hubs**. They are a way of joining up locally to improve access to services, the connections between families, professionals, services providers, and putting relationships at the heart of family help. **Hub** buildings are supported by virtual offers, with services for **families with children** of all ages. How services are delivered varies from place to place, but these principles are key to the **Family Hub** model.

Discussions about what Hubs will look like in North Yorkshire are starting now so that we have time to co produce the model with key stakeholders, parents and children.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/childrens-minister-address-to-national-centre-for-family-hubs>

Digital EHCP

Thank you to everybody who has helped to shape the new Digital Education Health and Care Plan process which will be ready in March 2022. We plan to use the summer term to pilot the new model alongside training all colleagues in health, care and education so we are ready for a full launch in September 22

Let's Talk About Autism

We are working on a pilot project to improve access and waiting times for autism assessment in North Yorkshire. Several Selby schools and Scarborough town and rural schools are taking part in the pilot. The pilot Better Pathways aims to test the effectiveness of developing the option of a referral service led by schools into Autism diagnosis providers.

Early Identification Webinar

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to our Early Identification of SEND webinar in November with Natalie Perera from the Education Policy Institute, it was a thought provoking session, many thanks!