



SEND Parent and Carer Newsletter

22-28 November, 2021

This is the SEND weekly parent/carer update for Monday, 22 to Sunday, 28 November, 2021.

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EHCP Requests



We know that many parents and carers are worried about the length of time it is currently taking for the Local Authority to assess children and young people where a request has been made for an EHCP assessment.

At the moment we are processing requests for assessment between 25 and 30 weeks, which is slightly longer than we would like and outside of the statutory timeframe set by the Department for Education at 20 weeks.

There are a number of reasons for this:

- As a result of COVID, the school year 2020-21 when schools were closed for a period and subsequent bubble closures and disruption during the spring and summer terms

meant that Educational Psychologists, and other specialists were unable to complete face to face assessments causing a back log

- Since schools re-opened we have experienced a rise in the number of parents, carers, professionals and schools putting requests in for EHCP assessments
- There is a national shortage of Educational Psychologists to complete statutory assessment work

We have already implemented a number of strategies to support our Educational Psychology team, to complete the backlog and rise in number of requests that we are currently experiencing. Measures include:

- Seeking additional capacity for qualified educational psychologists through agencies
- Providing additional business and administration support
- Working with Sheffield university to secure 2nd year student educational psychologist, who can support some of this work whilst they train and learn
- Providing additional capacity from the Specialist Advisory Team qualified staff where appropriate and able to do so
- Working with local organisations that provide educational psychology services to identify what they can be commissioned to do to support the Local Authority

The leadership team across SEND and Inclusion, continue to seek creative and evidence based ways to address the current shortfall of staff, and would like to thank parents, carers and professionals for their patience during this time. Education settings and parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible by a member of the Educational Psychology team when they are ready to undertake your child's assessment. We cannot be specific about exact dates and times, but we do know that there is approximately a 5-10 week delay. This is kept under close monitoring to ensure that the Local Authority and partners continue to seek other solutions that can support with this huge area of work.

We do understand that the delays, are having an impact on schools abilities to continue to finance provision, and in some cases children accessing the correct support. Regular updates have been shared through headteacher and SENCO forums with school staff, to identify the steps we are taking. From a financial perspective, all education settings will receive their top up funding backdated to week 20 where a delay due to educational psychology capacity has been experienced. This is currently for EHCPs issued between 1st August and 31st December 2021, and a further update will be provided in the new year, once we have reviewed our current caseloads again.

I appreciate that this isn't an ideal situation, and it isn't one that is unique to North East Lincolnshire, as many of our colleagues working in other Local Authorities are experiencing similar challenges in both increase of demand for EHCP assessments and recruitment challenges for Educational Psychologists. I am committed to ensuring that we do all we can to process requests for assessment as efficiently as we can.

If you do have a question, or want to discuss anything further, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Contact Rebecca Taylor, Head of SEND and Inclusion, rebecca.taylor@nelincs.gov.uk.

Discover Kooth- Parent carer session



How much do you know about Kooth?

[Kooth](#) is a great online platform for young people. It offers free counselling, self-help, and forums on key topics that affect young people.

As a parent or carer, you are a key influence in where your child goes for information, advice and support.

Why not sign up to learn more about the platform and recommend it to your child.

[Discover Kooth: Parents & Carers Session Tickets, Thu 9 Dec 2021 at 12:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Pheonix Park pop-up event success



The SEND pop-up event on Friday, 19 November at Pheonix Park was a great success for both parent carers and professionals.

One parent said: "It was so nice to meet professionals face to face, in one place".

Professionals also gave positive feedback based on the conversations they had with parents.

Enquiries have already increased to two of the services that attended as parents are now aware of who they are and how they can help.

Read more about the event, [NELC SEND Local Offer | Successful SEND pop-up event at Pheonix Park Academy \(nelincs.gov.uk\)](#).

SEND Banding Review



What are we doing?

We are taking a look at our local area SEND banding to see what is working well and what needs to change. We are working together with parents/carers and professionals from education, health and social care to carry out this review and implement change.

Why are we doing this?

Our SEND Banding has stayed the same since 2015. There may be alterations that could be made that would help improve provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND?

What does NE Lincs SEND Banding look like at the moment?

Currently, we have banding descriptors that suggest a range of needs that children and young people may be presenting with. The SEND panels work with education settings to decide which set of banding best describes a child or young persons needs. For each banding descriptor there is an associated amount of high needs top-up funding that is allocated to a learner's setting through their Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

What are some examples of changes that may be considered?

Some people have suggested that rather than one fixed sum of funding , finance could be provided in line which the specific needs of each pupil and the cost (*e.g. 3 x speech and language sessions costing £X, as well as 5 mornings of TA support costing, £X*).

Another suggestion is that the banding descriptors should include the interventions that should be offered at each stage in a graduated approach. Also suggested has been that education settings are monitored by each other to check and challenge how SEND funding is being spent and how well outcomes for learners are being achieved.

How can I get involved in working together on the Banding Review?

If you are a parent/carer contact Lauren.Thompson@nelincs.gov.uk to join our Banding Review parent/carer focus group or tell us your comments and ideas through our SEND Banding Review survey.

If you are a SENCO or teacher, headteacher, principle or governor or health or social care professional contact Rebecca.Taylor@nelincs.gov.uk to register your interest or look out for the planned SEND Banding Review events in our SEND Newsletter.

Special Guardianships and SEND



A Special Guardian is usually someone with a close relationship to the child, such as a family member, former foster carer or family friend.

They need to apply to the court which will consider their suitability and the child's needs, based on a report from the local authority. Special Guardianship is a formal court order which places a child or young person with someone permanently and gives this person parental responsibility for the child. This could be a grandparent, close relative or

a family friend. Special Guardianship means that the child lives with carers who have parental responsibility for them until they are grown up.

SEN

Children who are looked after and children who have been in care are significantly more likely to have SEND than their peers. Of those with SEND, a significant proportion may have EHC Plans and are more likely to experience social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) challenges that their peers.

For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills, forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings, sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transition or change. This can impact on their behaviour and education. (DfE Feb 2018). They may also struggle with:

- Emotion regulation
- Peer relationships
- Speech and language delay
- Difficulties with executive function
- Managing the developmental tasks and transitions of childhood

(Syne, Green & Dyer, 2012)

For more information, advice and guidance on Special Guardianships and SEND take a look at [Anna Freud- Adoptive Parents, Special Guardians, Kinship Carers and Foster Carers](#).

Preparing for adulthood, professionals Q&A



We are always improving our local offer for everything related to SEND. This includes preparing children and young people for adulthood.

We want to ensure that they get high quality support, lots of opportunities to do everything they enjoy and a strong future outlook that they feel is well suited to them.

A big part of this is the work between professionals, parent carers, and children and young people.

Learn more about the importance of preparing young people for adulthood, and become more familiar with our local offer with an online Q&A featuring speakers from Linkage College and Focus (adult social care).

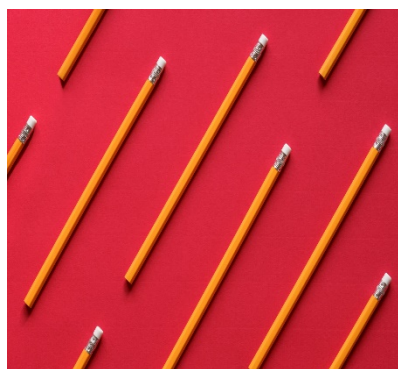
This event is part of a series of events to help professionals better understand the four main streams of preparing for adulthood (PfA) and the responsibilities they have.

We would also like to welcome parent carers and children and young people to join the online event.

[Book onto the Preparing for Adulthood professionals Q&A on Tuesday, December 14 at 10:30am-11:30am.](#)

Stay posted for future events linking education settings with local services to explore PfA health, employment, money and more.

School



Read the latest [National COVID guidance](#) and [local guidance](#).

Follow the [Department for Education](#) on social media.

Contact Jennifer.steel@nelincs.gov.uk if you have a query about school exclusions.

SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs Disability Information Advice Support Service).

Special Educational Needs and/or Disability



[SENDIASS](#) provides free impartial information, advice and support to disabled children and young people aged 0-25, and those with SEN. Get in touch Monday-Thursday, 8.30am- 4.30pm. Friday 8:30am- 4pm. Leave a message and we'll get back to you within three days.

Email: nelincs@barnardos.org.uk

Facebook: [@NELSENDIASS](#)

Web chat

The web chat is monitored by one of our experienced project workers every week day between 10am and 11am. Any queries which are received via the chat function outside of these hours, or on a day an adviser is unable to log in, the message will be redirected to our email which will be actioned as soon as possible.

If you have questions about SEND we are always here to help. Please don't hesitate to email sen@nelincs.gov.uk. We always try to make sure that children and parents/ carers voices are heard.

These Weekly SEND parent/carer newsletters are shared with teams within education, health and social care as well as parents/carers SENCOs, the DfE and local charities.

If parents/carers or young people over 16 do not have access to the internet or if they prefer to receive paper copies only please contact sen@nelincs.gov.uk.