

By: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Education and Health Reform
Julie Ely, KCC Head of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

To: Kent Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 29th May 2013

Subject: Kent's Pathfinder for the Children & Families Act 2014

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This paper provides the Kent Health and Wellbeing Board with a briefing on the Kent Pathfinder which is testing reforms proposed in the Children and Families Bill.

It also draws attention to a Bill amendment (March 2013) which will impose a legal duty on Clinical Commissioning Groups to secure the health services that are specified in Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans.

Background

Twenty Pathfinders, involving 31 local authorities and health partners, have been invited by the Government to test the proposed reforms in the Children and Families Bill. Lessons learned from the pathfinders are informing the provisions in the draft indicative code and the development of associated regulations.

Kent is a member of the SE7 Pathfinder group which consists of East and West Sussex, Medway, Surrey, Hampshire, Brighton and Hove.

The SE7 Pathfinder was initially due to finish in March 2013 but the Department for Education has extended the timescale for testing to September 2014 to coincide with the introduction of the statutory changes.

The Children and Families Bill

The bill introduces a new, single system from birth to 25 for all children and young people with SEN and their families, expanding the current 0-19 age range. It demands a more streamlined assessment process for those with more severe and complex needs, integrating education, health and care services and involving children, young people and their parents.

It replaces statements and learning difficulty assessments with a new birth to 25 Education, Health and Care Plan, which co-ordinates the support for children and young people in a way that focuses on desired outcomes including, as they get older, preparation for adulthood.

It gives families and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan, the offer of a personal budget, extending choice and control over their support.

An amendment to the draft Bill (March 2013) will place a legal duty on Clinical Commissioning Groups to secure the health services that are specified in EHC Plans.

It will introduce a new requirement for local authorities and health services to commission education, health and social care services jointly

It sets out a duty on all agencies to publish an 'interactive and web based 'local offer' setting out the support which is usually available for children and young people with SEN and their families. It specifies that this must be more than a directory.

Pathfinder progress

SE7 is developing a common framework for assessment and applying agreed core principles with partners. At the heart of this, is the development of a Child and Family Centred Plan bringing services together and improving outcomes.

Kent's work has been focused on:

- Co-production and partnership with parents/carers; a strength of the Kent pathfinder is that parents are actively involved in influencing and shaping the testing. The Pathfinder Change Board is led by a parent.
- Developing an understanding of effective key working approaches to support for families
- the development of the local offer, through a range of working groups helping to author the content informed by a series of Kent wide road shows engaging parents in driving the information that they need to know
- Identifying how multi-agency assessments can be integrated
- prototyping the format of an integrated EHC plan to replace Statements and the separate Learning Disability Assessments (formerly S139a) for college
- piloting the use of personal budgets

The extension of the Pathfinder provides an exciting opportunity to accelerate and expand the reach of the Kent Pathfinder beyond the initial one district (Thanet) approach to trial approaches across Kent.

Recently the SE7 Pathfinder group was designated as a champion for this work, and we will be working with other local authorities to share our experience of developing this new integrated approach to meeting the needs of children and young people.

Issues which the HWB may wish to consider:

- ✓ Ensuring staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills to provide the right support for children and young people who have SEN or are disabled;
- ✓ New duty - LAs and clinical commissioning groups to work together to plan and to arrange local services to meet the education, health and care needs of disabled CYP and those with SEN.
- ✓ *Amendment to Bill (March 2013): a legal duty on Clinical Commissioning Groups to secure the health services that are specified in EHC Plans.*

Recommendations:

The Kent Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to

1. Note the briefing
2. Consider the proposed statutory duties
3. Ensure the health perspective is reflected in Pathfinder developments.

Contact Officers:

Julie Ely, Head of SEN Assessment & Placement

Julie.ely@kent.gov.uk