

TSIL Engagement & Collaboration - October 2022

The Event Overview

On Wednesday 12th October, the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) Programme held an Engagement & Collaboration Event via Microsoft Teams.

The one-hour session brought together a range of people from across the Leicestershire SEND system – parents, carers, young people, school leaders, SENCos, and staff from Leicestershire County Council's Children and Family Services and other departments – to begin a collective conversation about how we can work together to make improvements for our children with SEND and their families.

Jane Moore, Director of Children and Family Services, kicked off the event by addressing the wider challenges causing the SEND system in Leicestershire to have come under strain, and outlining reasons to be optimistic. **Peter Merry, CEO of OWLS Academy Trust**, spoke next about the collective commitment of the SEND system to ensure children have opportunities to succeed and thrive.

Then came a discussion between **Alison Bradley, Assistant Director of Education, SEND and Commissioning at Leicestershire County Council**; **Emma Pepper, Headteacher at St Botolph's Primary School**; and **Chris Parkinson, CEO of LiFE Multi-Academy Trust**.

The three spoke openly about their experiences of SEND system challenges, and their views on the action that we can take to address them.

Interactive Exercise

What followed was an interactive exercise on Mentimeter, during which participants were invited to respond anonymously to a series of questions about the current system, its challenges, and possible improvements. The event was rounded up by a final discussion between **Robert Martin and Louise Engels, Co-chairs of the Leicestershire SEND Hub**, who shared their experiences of the system as parents.

One question asked during the Mentimeter exercise was "We know that not everything is working well now, but in 1 word tell us the things we all should keep doing". From the answers collated here's what came out:



Outcome

The event ran successfully and was positively received.

More than 220 people attended, with participant numbers remaining above 200 throughout. 148 attendees participated in the interactive exercise via Mentimeter, contributing a total of 1,077 responses – a hugely valuable and mutually beneficial team effort.

Feedback from people across the system said that the council and other system leaders showed “courage” in sharing these messages, and that it set the scene for the programme as a “shared endeavour as a system”.

Philip Saxton, Trust SENCo at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust, said: *“The event was really informative – incredibly brave of the local authority to put everything out in the open in the hope of moving forward together.”*

Constructive criticisms about the format of the event were gratefully received and will be factored into the planning for future TSIL engagements.

We promoted that after half-term we'd broaden this discussion, as well out outline what we're aiming to achieve through the TSIL programme. This would include opportunities for people within the service to contribute directly via a series of follow-up round table discussions.

For dates, times and details on how to sign up, please visit leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability – and please contact transformingsendi@leics.gov.uk with any questions or feedback.