

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEWS

FREE

Summer
2023

First family hub for Leicestershire opens

see page 5



Produced by

 Leicestershire
County Council

A warm welcome to the new edition of SEND News

Dear parents and carers,

▶ Another school year is almost coming to a close and it's been a busy year for SEND in Leicestershire, we launched the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire programme – working with many stakeholders from across the system to look at making sustainable improvements, we kicked off a round of Local Offer Roadshows where we'll be visiting every district/borough in

Leicestershire to provide parents with information and support, and we're working to launch a new portal allowing for information on children and young people to be shared much more easily within the system.

In this edition of the newsletter, you'll read updates about the TSIL programme, the return of the Holiday Activity

Fund providing summer activities for children and young people and progress on the local area Accelerated Progress Plan. ■

Alison Bradley
Assistant Director
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Council



Best Practice Toolkit

Partners from across the system have worked together to understand how to develop inclusive practice within education settings in Leicestershire. We worked with a group of 10 schools and parent representatives to trial and co-design a best practice toolkit. The toolkit was created because it was clear from design groups that more support was needed to navigate the SEND system successfully.

The aim of the best practice toolkit is to provide a common set of expectations for schools and families about what support should be available for children

and young people with SEND, and how this support can be accessed.

It outlines the process of provision for children and young people with SEND within Leicestershire and provides a framework to talk about provision. Some of the topics include:

- Principles of the different levels of support a child could receive.
- Expectations for supporting different need types in mainstream settings.
- An introduction to EHCPs and Annual reviews.
- A full list of the external support offer in Leicestershire, including

what they offer and who can use it

The toolkit will be available later this term to be used by everyone across the system, including SENCOs and local authority teams, to help ensure that we are all offering the right support at the right time for children across Leicestershire to meet their outcomes. We will also be developing training and resources to support consistency across the system.

If you have questions about the best practice toolkit, please email **TransformingSENDI@leics.gov.uk**.

Wider TSIL updates

The Early Years Transition Document is available now on the Leicestershire County Council website to be used by early years SENCoS and other professionals.



► **Special School Outreach** – we are developing a new model with each of the heads of special schools who offer outreach. From September 2023 we are hoping to trial new types of outreach support for our mainstream settings. We will then be looking to understand how impactful the new offer is to ensure it is adapted and best supports the system to meet the needs of Leicestershire children going forwards.

The Synergy Schools (Gateway) Portal Trials – we are continuing to explore how useful access to the portal is for SENCoS to share information with parents. The evaluation of the trials will

conclude this term and we are continuing to look at how we can roll this out to schools and academies later this year.

Utilising Our Specialist Provisions – we are in the process of documenting what all our resource bases offer to provide to our schools and parent/carers, alongside working on building a new tool to improve tracking of our placement allocations.

Educational Psychologist Support – Leicestershire County Council is being supported by a team of locum Educational Psychologists (EPs) to support us to reduce the current backlog of EHCNAs.

To ensure the backlog doesn't return to the levels we are seeing currently, LCC is exploring a number of different options, including:

- Developing the EP workforce
- Reviewing approaches to assessment

If you have any questions about any of the updates given on the TSIL programme, please email TransformingSENDI@leics.gov.uk. ■

Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire



Changes within the SENA Service

To ensure children and families are receiving a fair service, we are bringing visibility and clarity to the processes in our SENA service. We are also considering the best way to set up our SENA teams to manage demand.

▶ We are currently looking to design and implement change in SENA that will enable clear and effective processes for prioritising and completing work. This includes a change model away from purely locality based but to areas of specialism. This will allow processes to be carried out in the most effective way.

These changes will lead to more effective prioritisation and allocation of work, and remodelling teams and roles.

Over the summer work will continue to design and trial changes within the service with the aim to implement changes as we head into the Autumn term.

If you have any questions about this work, please email TransformingSENDI@leics.gov.uk. ■

Service Transformation: SENA Workload Management & Operating Model

Summer
Term
Update

To ensure children and families are receiving a fair service, we are bringing **visibility and clarity to the processes** in our SENA service. We are also considering the **best way to set up our SENA teams** to manage demand.

Some important things are not working in our SENA teams:



Unmanageable workloads for staff & many competing priorities



Schools & parents aren't receiving clear or timely communication



Placements are not being confirmed in a timely manner

For more information on the SENA changes, please email: transformingsendi@leics.gov.uk

To enable SENA to deliver all these things, we need 2 things to be true:

There needs to be clear and effective processes for prioritising and completing work within SENA

The structure of SENA needs to facilitate these processes in the most effective way

This has led to 2 change activities within SENA:

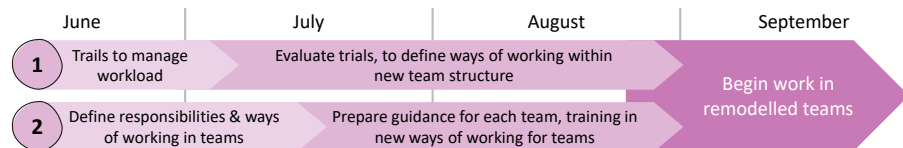
1

More effective prioritisation and allocation of work
Currently in trials

2

Remodelling teams and roles
Currently co-designing with SENA service

Timeline for Implementation



First family hub for Leicestershire opens

Leicestershire's first ever 'Family Hub' has officially opened.

► The new 'one-stop-shop' where parents and carers can access support and advice is now up and running in Coalville.

It's the first in a raft of family hubs for the county where families with children between 0-19 (or 25 for young people with special educational needs or disabilities) can receive information on a range of issues.

Staff can give support and advice on a variety of topics including health, relationships, education, employment, finance and housing, as well as signposting to help from other local agencies and organisations.

The Coalville centre is one of more than 20 family hub locations that have been confirmed so far by Leicestershire County Council, with more areas being considered.

Loughborough's Family Hub opened on June 1, followed by Melton and Hinckley later in the month and Market Harborough and Wigston Magna in August.

Leicestershire is one of 12 local authorities to secure a slice of a £12m pot of grant funding to transform the way services are delivered for families.

As well as creating the physical hubs, there are plans in the county to carry out outreach work and create a new website containing helpful family information and advice.

This will mean that the hubs, whether in a building or accessed digitally, will be where information, advice and support will be found easily in one place.



The idea is that parents and carers can easily receive support right from conception, helping them to navigate parenting through the early years, right into adulthood.

The full network of physical hubs, which will make use of existing spaces such as Children and Family Wellbeing Centres and libraries, is expected to be fully open by spring 2024.

For more information on Family Hubs in Leicestershire, email familyhubs@leics.gov.uk. ■



HAF sessions are back: Free holiday clubs for children and young people

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES & FOOD PROGRAMME

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) sessions have returned and are being run through the Leicestershire Holidays Together programme. The free holiday clubs are designed to provide memorable moments of fun and growth for children eligible for benefits-related free school meals.

The HAF sessions offer an extensive range of activities that cater to diverse interests and promote holistic development. From sports and outdoor adventures to music, arts, and hands-on workshops, there is something for every child to enjoy. These engaging activities not only provide entertainment but also encourage creativity, build confidence, and foster social interaction among participants.

In addition to the activities, each

child attending the sessions will receive a nourishing meal each day, ensuring they have the energy and nutrients needed to make the most of their time at the holiday clubs.

Many of our HAF providers are able to offer places to eligible children with lower-level SEND/ additional needs. We also have SEND specific provisions available. If you are unsure if a provision is suitable for your child, please contact the provider directly to see if they have places

available and can support you.

Find out more about Leicestershire Holidays Together and the summer HAF offer at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/HAF - or, if you're ready to sign up, go straight to the **eligibility checker** and sign-up link and then contact your chosen provider(s) directly to book. ■



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Leicestershire local area Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)

The Leicestershire local area received a SEND re-inspection in November 2022. Two areas were the focus of the inspection:

1. Lack of a Joint Commissioning Strategy
2. The quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's)

▶ The inspection team reported that the lack of a Joint Commissioning Strategy had made satisfactory progress but that the quality of EHCP's needed further work.

The Department for Education (DfE) has requested that the local area develop an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) of EHCP's. The purpose of the APP is to ensure accelerated progress on a set of actions. The Local Authority, Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB – formerly the Clinical Commissioning Group) and SEND Hub (Leicestershire's Parent Carer Forum) developed the plan over the required four-week period and was signed-off by the DfE. The DfE will meet formally with the local area in September to assess progress being made.

Three workstreams have been identified to be worked on:

1. **Quality of EHC Plans following initial EHC Needs Assessment:**
Consistent implementation of a robust, child-centred, statutorily compliant EHC needs assessment, with education, health and care joint working. This will deliver accurate identification of needs and provision for children and young people with SEND.
2. **Quality of EHC Plans following amendment at Annual Review:**
An equitable and consistent process which ensures all EHC plans remain a relevant and accurate reflection of a child's or young person's needs, outcomes to be achieved and required provision.
3. A rigorous multi-agency quality assurance process, which provides meaningful measures of performance, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from across the tripartite system, to create a continuous review and improvement cycle with effective feedback into both strategy and operation.

A range of key performance indicators (KPI's), along with survey information will provide information on the progress being made. The KPI's include the issue of initial EHCP's within 20 weeks alongside a number of KPI's that form the Annual Review process.

The Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme continues to bring together a range of information that will inform processes that are carried out within the EHC needs assessment process and the Annual Review process. There will be the opportunity to take another look at the EHCP template.

An open invitation to staff across the partnership and the SEND Hub was offered to participate in training provided by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) with a particular focus on Preparation for Adulthood and a session on Supported Internships. Further training will be led by the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) on audits and the quality assurance process. This will support the current quality assurance process that takes place bi-monthly to further develop exemplars to provide guidance for advice givers to improve the quality of EHCP's.

The Local Authority has invested in additional capacity to begin to bring down the length of time taken for initial EHCP's to be issued. There is additional locum Educational Psychologist support to carry out statutory assessment and additional staffing to work on the backlog of Annual Reviews amendments that are in the system.. ■



Leicestershire Special Schools given Good Ofsted rating

Both Foxfield Academy and Oakfield School have recently received a 'Good' rating in their latest Ofsted inspections.

► Foxfields Academy is a specialist all through school for SEMH pupils (Social, Emotional, Mental Health) aged 5 to 16 years, and Oakfield is for primary aged children (from the term after their fifth birthday) who have been permanently excluded from school or are at risk of permanent exclusion.

Oakfield was previously inspected in 2017 and has maintained a 'Good' rating. In the latest report it was observed that "The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders understand the school's strengths and areas needing development". The report also noted "Staff manage pupils' behaviour very well. They have high expectations of pupils and use appropriate strategies to engage pupils with their learning."

Justine Roberts, Headteacher of Oakfield Short Stay Primary, has said:

 "This is a fantastic achievement for everyone involved with the school. The good outcome reflects the hard work and commitment from all and we are delighted that the achievements of our pupils have been recognised."

In Foxfield's first inspection report since opening in 2021, the school received an outstanding for personal development. The report noted

"pupils of all ages thrive at Foxfields Academy". Ofsted also included that "the school caters very well for pupils' academic and social and emotional needs. Pupils who may have had negative experiences

in the past receive well-planned support to overcome their difficulties".

Ashley Caress, Headteacher of Foxfields Academy, is delighted with the outcome:

 "I am extremely proud of everyone associated with our school. I feel that the report reflects the efforts of our school community and provides us with an excellent platform to continue to grow and develop in the future". ■