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**TRAFFORD  
COUNCIL**

## **AGENDA PAPERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date: Tuesday, 19 March 2019**

**Time: 6.30 p.m.**

**Place: Committee Room 2 and 3, Trafford Town Hall, Talbot Road, Stretford,  
M32 0TH**

<b>A G E N D A</b>	<b>PART I</b>	<b>Pages</b>
6.	<b>REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY</b>	1 - 8
	To receive a report from the Acting Director of Safeguarding.	
9.	<b>SEND TASK AND FINISH GROUP</b>	9 - 56
	To receive a report from the Committee's Task and Finish Group.	

**SARA TODD**  
Chief Executive

### Membership of the Committee

Councillors D. Western (Chair), Miss L. Blackburn (Vice-Chair), T. Carey, J. Coupe, J. Dillon, J. Holden, D. Jerrome, A. New, J.R. Reilly, G. Whitham, A.M. Whyte, D. Acton (ex-Officio), R. Chilton (ex-Officio), Goodstadt and Khan.

### Further Information

For help, advice and information about this meeting please contact:

Alexander Murray,  
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## Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday, 19 March 2019

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# Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 19th March, 2019

Empowering families,  
transforming adoption

# Regionalsing adoption

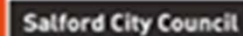
May 2015, the Government announced changes to the delivery of adoption services by proposing that all adoption services would need to be delivered on a regional basis by 2020. The premise for this was to:

1 Increase the number of children adopted

2 Reduce the length of time children wait to be adopted

3 Improve post adoption support services to families who have adopted

4 Reduce the number of adoption agencies thereby improving efficiency effectiveness



# Our aims

To provide children with the right adopters at the right time, approving those equipped to meet the needs of children waiting.

To minimise changes of plan away from adoption

To reduce delay and improve timescales for matching and placement for all children –working with care planning processes in each Council to improve early identification / twin track planning and to achieve best practise and consistency across the region.

- To improve earlier permanency planning using:
  - Concurrent Planning
  - Fostering for Adoption
- To take innovative approaches to placing 'hard to place' children
  - linking children with adopters from enquiry stage onwards where appropriate
  - thoroughly preparing child and family for placement
- To reduce the likelihood of placement breakdown through timely and improved matching, preparation and adoption support.

**adoption  
counts** ●

Supporting  
families  
through  
adoption

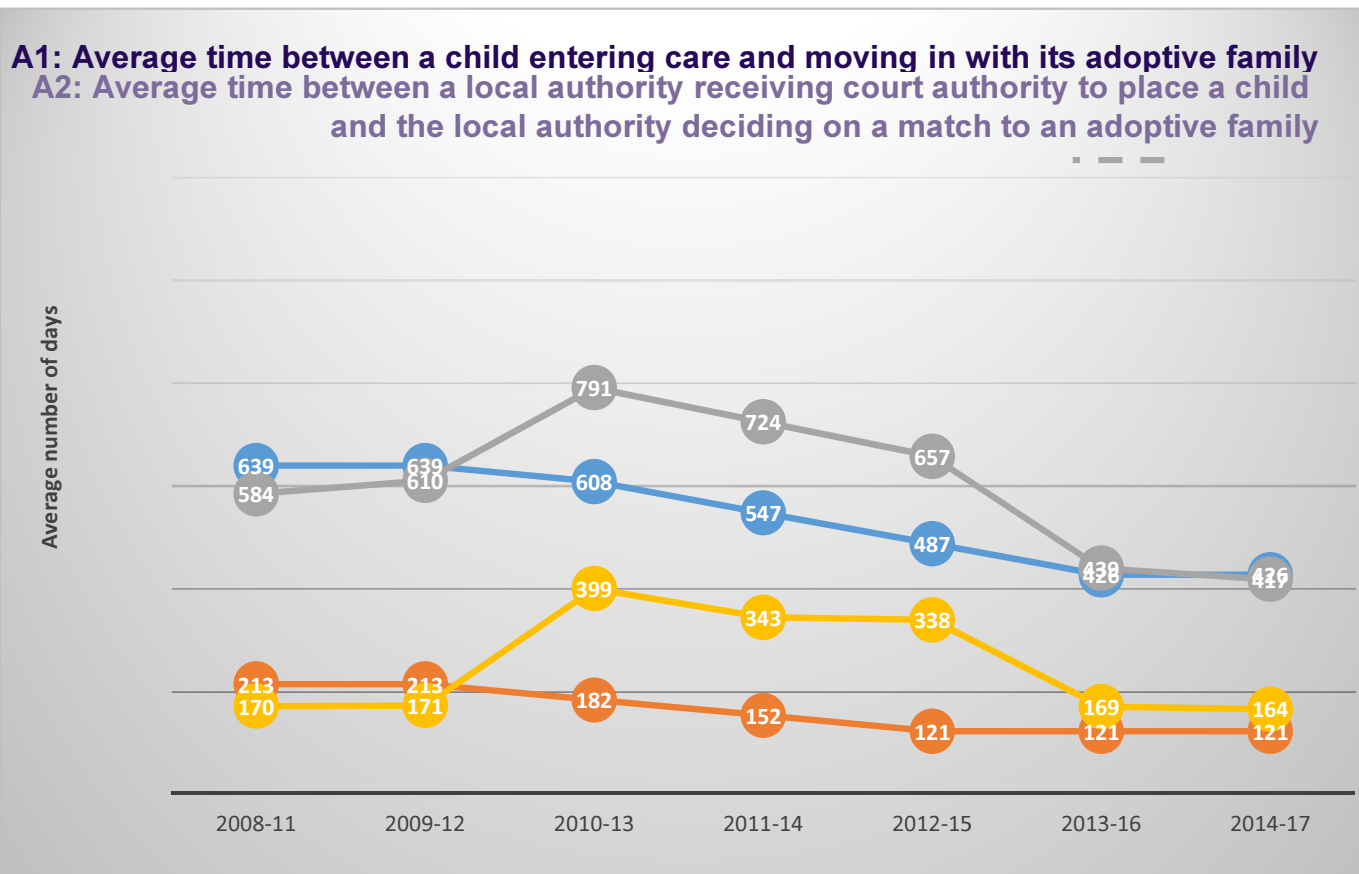
# Working with Trafford

Partnership and accountability are embedded at all levels;

- The Board
- Bi-annual meetings
- The Operations Group
- Tracking – both in the LA and the RAA
- Positive working relationships between managers and social workers promoted through sharing best practice and learning

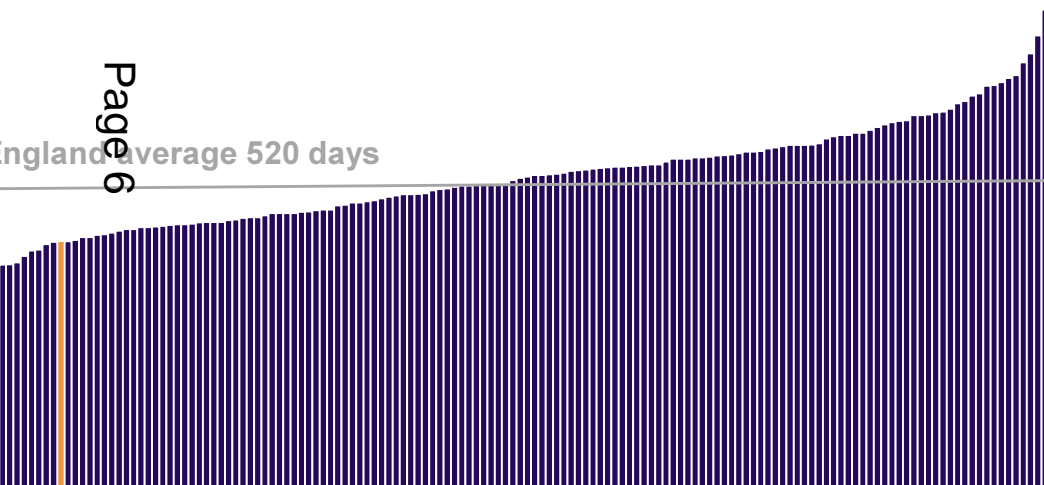
# Adoption Scorecard performance

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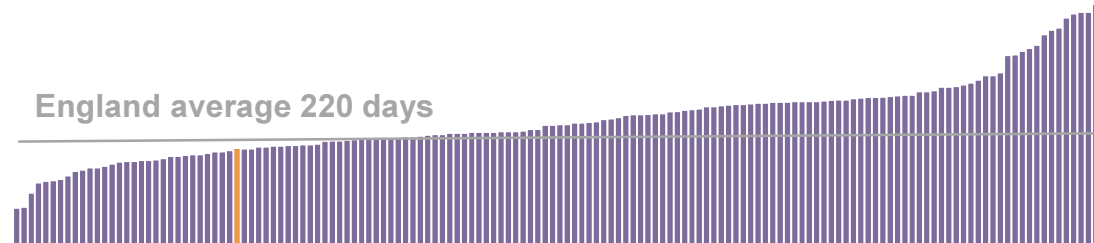


# Adoption Scorecard performance

A1: Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, 2014-17



A2: Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, 2014-17





# Performance 2018 – 2019 to date

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	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total to date
ADM decisions	3	4	8	15
Placement Orders granted	1	4	1	6
Matched with prospective adopters	3	4	0	7
Placed with prospective adopters	2	2	3	7
Adoption orders granted	2	1	1	4

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## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Children and Young People's  
**Date:** 19 March 2019  
**Report for:** Approval  
**Report of:** Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group: Review of the Education, Health & Care Plan Process

### Report Title

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Review into the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Process in Trafford.

### Summary

The report details the work of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee in reviewing EHCPs within Trafford. The report details the approach taken and the sources of information gathered by the Councilors. The report then details the findings of the Councilors in 10 areas of concern that were identified relating to EHCPs.

### Recommendations

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Alexander Murray

Extension: 4250

## **Background**

EHCPs have been part of the provision for children with Special Educational needs since they were introduced in 2014. The Councils Scrutiny Committee had previously done a piece of work on EHCPs in 2016 (Appendix 1) which made five recommendations to the Executive. The report in 2014 identified that there were a number of issues with the delivery of EHCPs and the Councillors wanted to see whether progress had been made in these areas while looking to see whether any new issues or areas of good practice had developed.

## **Membership**

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee (CYPS) agreed at their first meeting 10 July 2018 that they would like to form a task and finish Councillors within their first year. Committee Members were asked to contact officers if they wished to partake in the work and the following Councillors volunteered;

Denies Western (Chair),  
Jayne Dillon  
Adele New  
Daniel Jerrome  
Graham Whitham  
Johnathan Coup.

## **Approach**

The Councillors agreed to follow a similar approach to that taken by the previous review by gathering information from and meeting with senior officers and parents involved in the service. In addition the Councillors met with the EHCP team to understand the work that they were doing and how they perceived the position within the Council. Through the review process it became clear that the Councillors would not be able to do a full extensive review within one year. The work that has been conducted this year, summarised within this report, will help to structure further work of the Committee so that a comprehensive review of the EHCP process within the Council can be completed.

## **Initial Meeting**

At the first meeting of the group in August Councillor Jerrome informed the other Councillors that he had been contacted by a resident whose children had Autism and had issues in accessing support. Councillor New added that she was aware of issues that parents were having in getting their children assessed and recognised as having SEND. The Councillors then discussed the importance of early identification of need and swift implementation of support for children with SEND. The Councillors agreed that EHCP assessment would be the main area of focus. The Chair informed

the group that the Scrutiny Committee had previously completed a piece of task and finish work looking at EHCPs in 2016 and the Councillors requested copies of the report for information. The group then discussed the aspects of assessments and came up with a list of questions to be put to senior officers in order to focus their work. The Councillors came up with 16 questions and requests for information which were then submitted to the Acting Corporate Director for Children's Services and the Director Education Standards, Quality and Performance. The officers were also asked to attend the next meeting of the Councillors on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

### **Meeting with Acting Corporate Director of Children's Services and Director for Education Standards, Quality and Performance**

Prior to the meeting the responses to the questions posed at the first meeting were sent through to the Members (Appendix 2). At the meeting the Councillors and officers went through each question, the response that had been provided to the Councillors, and then the Councillors asked any further questions that stemmed from the response. It was made clear to the Councillors that as the Head of Service had been on leave there were a number of answers that could not be provided or that were incomplete. There were also some questions which were vague so while information had been given the officers were not certain whether it was what the Councillors wanted and asked them to clarify if they wanted other information.

The Councillors had asked for anonymised versions of successful and unsuccessful referrals so that they could compare them and better understand why they had been successful or not. The Officers had been unable to provide these example forms as they were held on liquid logic. However, the team were working on training SENCOs on how to complete the forms and they would share that with the Councillors once it was ready. The Officers explained the training and told the Councillors that it was aimed at setting the expectations of what was required for an EHCP to be awarded and the information the panel required to make their decisions.

At the meeting the Councillors were satisfied with many of the answers and explanations that they received from the Officers. It was clear that the Council still had a number of issues regarding SEND and that officers were working on ways of improving the service. The Officers made it clear that they wanted to work with both Scrutiny and parents in improving the service.

### **Meeting with Trafford Parent and Young Peoples' Partnership Service (PYPPS)**

The Councillors met with the Chair of PYPPS, the lead support officer for the service, the Head Teacher of Delamere School, and two Trafford Parents. At the meeting the Chair of PYPPS raised a number of concerns with the Councillors. Their concerns included; the level of communication between the Council and parents, the number

of cases refused by the Council, the quality of EHCPs being completed and the time that it took to complete them.

The two parents who attended the meeting had varying experiences when trying to access support from the Council. One parent had been well supported throughout and her child had been placed on an EHCP plan quickly and received the support they required. The other parent had needed to battle the Council at every juncture and it had taken years for her to gain any support at all. Hearing these stories it seemed clear to the Councillors that the child who had a clear disability was given the support they required. However, the parent of the two children who were high performing in school had struggled to get the Council to recognise their children's disabilities and had to pay for independent assessments by child psychologists in order to confirm that her children actually had special educational needs.

The Head teacher of Delamere School spoke about the journey that the school had been through to get to a point where they were recognised as a school that provided excellent SEND support. At the meeting she expressed her concerns over communications with the Council and the lack of a cohesive collaborative approach towards SEND between schools and the Council. This included a lack of involvement with the council in the review of plans. She stated that the best plans for children in her school were the ones which were created by the school.

All those who were at the meeting told the Councillors about their concerns regarding the cuts to funding that were planned by the Council. While this issue lays outside of the area that the Councillors were looking at they were concerned that services which appear to be struggling to cope with demand, and that parents feel are currently failing them and their child, will be reduced further.

Following the meeting PYPPS sent two reports (Appendices 3 and 4) to the Councillors for information. These reports gave an overview of PYPPS understanding of the position of SEND services within Trafford and the work that PYPPS were undertaking to support parents in the area. The information from these reports has helped to inform the Councillors of the issues within Trafford, covered in detail below, and given the Councillors ideas in where they need to focus their continued review as well as some possible solutions to problems.

### **Meeting with the Trafford EHCP Team**

The Councillors met with the managers and members of the EHCP team along with a number of officers who helped to provide the other services which supported the work of the team. Some of those in attendance sat upon the assessment panels and were able to give the Councillors an insight on how the panels worked. At the meeting the work of the EHCP team was described to the Councillors which included the process that the panels went through in order to make their decision. The EHCP

coordinators were the key officers for each case and coordinated the work being done by schools and parents in order to prepare cases to go to the panel. The Councillors were told that if the panel ever felt that the information provided was not adequate that they would request further information from the parent or school as required. Following the panel's decision the EHCP Coordinator continued to work on the case meeting with the other people involved in providing support to the Child and working with them to write the EHCP. The Coordinator would then be involved in conducting reviews and act as a point of contact for those providing support for the child going forward.

The Councillors were informed of the changes that had been made within the team in the last 12 months. The team had been increased so that there were 8 EHCP Coordinators and 2 Senior Coordinators. The Councillors were told that the Council had a number of staff hired as plan writers who had been brought in to help the team in clearing a backlog of plans. This backlog was close to being cleared and it was made clear to the Councillors that these positions would not be permanent. There had also been a large change within the team in terms of the levels of support offered to them by managers and the Council in general.

The Councillors were told that the implementation of the Liquid Logic System had greatly improved the processes relating to EHCPs. As a single system was now being used by all of the professionals from both health and social care it meant that they all had access to all the information relating to each case. The system also set reminders and aided the coordinators in the organisation and management of their workload. The attitude of all of the EHCP team who were at the meeting was very positive and they all spoke of the improvements that had been seen in the past year.

### **Task and Finish Councillors Findings**

Following the meetings and the review of the documents and information provided by both the Officers, PYPPS, parents, and the Head Teacher of Delamere a number of issues became apparent within Trafford. As shown by the 2107 data provided by PYPPS Trafford had been performing at one of the lowest levels out of the 23 Councils within the North West. Below is a summary of each of the issues that were identified by the Councillors, and what they would like to do next.

#### **Increase in Referrals**

In all of the meetings that the Councillors attended the increase in the number of referrals, especially parent referrals, was listed as an issue. Despite all parties being aware of this there was very little known about why the number of referrals was increasing. The Councillors want to better understand the issues surrounding the increase in referrals through an analysis of where referrals are being received from so any trends within Trafford can be identified. The Councillors would like to look at trends among parental referrals in particular as the increase here suggests that

either the needs of parents are not being met or that parents do not understand the process they should be following.

With regards to needs not being met the Councillors had concerns that children who were disruptive within class would be the ones most likely for schools to refer for support. It was felt that those children who had SEND but were quiet and well behaved maybe being over looked and this could be causing parents to make referrals themselves. The Councillors want to look at the referrals received from parents to see if this could be a reason behind the increase.

#### SENCO Training and Support

In the two meetings held with officers the Councillors were informed of the two SENCO forums that had been created. The Councillors were told that these forums were well attended and that they functioned well in providing a conduit for communication between SENCOS and the Council. However, at the meeting with PYPPS the Head Teacher of Delamere School spoke of the lack of engagement with school staff in general although whether this was with the SENCO in particular or the wider faculty was not clear.

The Councillors were told by officers about the new guidance and training that was being developed for SENCOS. The Councillors would like to see the new guidance and the training programme for SENCOS, which was offered when they met with Officers on the 9 October 2018. The Head Teacher at Delamere and the PYPPS both raised that training should be offered to all staff involved with SEND as such the Councillors would like to know whether the training being offered to SENCOS could be rolled out on a larger scale.

#### Panel Process and Decision Communication with Parents

From the beginning of the work the Councillors tried to gain a better understanding of the panels decisions regarding referrals. It was not until they met with members of the panel that a clear coherent picture of the process followed by the panel became known. Once the process was explained to the Councillors they were satisfied that it was robust and that the panel were looking at each case in detail. However, this was the experience of Councillors with the support officers who provided them with information and met with them face to face, not that of a parent that had no one to contact to aid them.

PYPPS highlighted the lack of communication and understanding around decision making as a major factor in the frustration of parents. When speaking to parents the Councillors were told the lack of detail in this response had a negative impact upon them. If parents were not informed of the reasons they are left to assume what the reasons are and this can lead to doubt of their perceptions of their child and their ability as a parent.



The Councillors would like there to be a full review of the documentation available to parents. This is to include the guidance available on the council's website, the documents that are sent to parents at each stage of the process especially those following a decision. The Councillors would like to be part of this review along with representatives from PYPPS.

Another possibility raised by PYPPS was the taking of formal minutes for the panel meetings. While there could be issues in terms of child protection and GDPR the Councillors would like for the possibility for this to be considered for distribution to those involved with the case up to the point that it goes to the Panel.

The Councillors would also like for full process maps and customer journeys to be provided for each stage of the EHCP process so that they can be assured that communication with parents is built into the system at all key points. If process maps and customer journeys are not available the Councillors would like for them to be developed in collaboration with PYPPS.

#### Tribunals

All the people that the Councillors met with and information they received showed that there had been an increase in the number of cases going to tribunal. While all those contacted noted the increase the reasons for the increase differed greatly. Parents felt that lack of communication and a focus upon budgets above children's needs were the main reasons behind the increase. Conversely officers believed that the increase was due to external factors making parents more adversarial towards the Council.

Of the 15 tribunals that were entered into only 2 ended in the panel's decision being overturned. Only 9 of the 15 got to the stage of the decision being challenged and of those 5 cases had reached an agreement with the Council. The low number of overturned decisions suggests that the decisions reached were accurate. The large number of cases where agreement was reached indicates that Trafford's mediation process is not performing well with parents not partaking in the process and preferring to go to tribunal.

The Councillors would like look at the mediation procedure and find out why parents are unwilling to take part in these meetings. At the meeting with PYPPS it was highlighted that parents often felt intimidated by the mediation process as it was held entirely with Council officers. The Councillors would like to look into ways that independent support, such as a PYPPS member, could be offered to parents going through mediation so that they did not feel outnumbered and isolated.

This is another area where the communications that are sent to parents following panel decisions are vital, especially in cases when a child should be in receipt of

other support. The Councillors want to know what follow up is in place in these cases to ensure that the children are set on the path to receiving that support.

The Councillors would like to look into ways that contact could be made with parents going through a Tribunal to ascertain the reasons for their action. It would be particularly useful to hear from those parents who refused mediation but then reached agreement with the Council afterwards.

#### EHCP Assessment

A large area of concern for the Councillors was the difference in assessments that had been reported by parents who had paid for their own assessments to be conducted. The Councillors had concerns about this from the start of their work as the parents who had contacted Councillor Jerrome had expressed that they had paid for an independent assessment and found that it was far more in depth and of a higher standard than that of the Council. Another Councillor backed this view up due to their personnel experience with the service and this was further supported by the information received from the PYPPS.

When concern was raised with officers about the quality of the assessments the Councillors were told that it was hard to tell which one was of better quality without having them side by side. The reason that assessments were a particular concern for the Councillors was the cost of external assessments meant that only affluent parents could afford them. This meant that if there was an issue with Trafford's approach it would disproportionately affect disadvantaged families.

The Councillors would like for this comparison to be carried out to provide assurance that the Trafford assessments are of an adequate standard. One of the differences in the assessments between those of the Council and those by external therapists was that external therapists gave a declaration giving their professional guarantee to its quality and accuracy. The Trafford assessments do not have this and it is felt that such a declaration would help assure parents that these assessments were being done to the best of the therapist's abilities.

#### EHCPs

The quality and consistency of EHCPs was another issue that was highlighted by PYPPS. In the information provided to the Councillors they described how parents felt that the quality of their child's EHCP was down to the luck of which officer was writing the plan. They gave reports of plans that looked like they had been simply copied and pasted from other plans with some having the wrong child's name on them. However, the information received also stated that an improvement had been noticed since the Ofsted inspection in 2017. Given the information received by the Councillors regarding the improvement within the EHCP team it is felt that this improvement could be a lasting change. The Councillors would like to receive a random selection of anonymised plans for them to see the standard that are being

produced. The Councillors would also like the PYPPS to contact them if they receive any further reports of low quality plans.

#### EHCP Reviews

The parents who contacted Councillor Jerrome and the PPYS reported that while schools made changes to the EHCP annually following their reviews the Council did not. When the Councillors met with the EHCP team they were told that this was due to them trying not to make too many adjustments to the plan and instead focusing on changes at key transitional phases and following any major disruption. The team explained that there were a number of other elements to the support received by children that were updated in accordance with the outcomes of the annual review. The Councillors felt that this approach was not being communicated well, if at all, to parents and that this was another area where the PYPPS should be consulted to improve the service.

#### Advertising and Capacity of PYPPS

When the Councillors asked officers about support for parents the Councillors were told about PYPPS. All feedback received about PYPPS and the Councillors own experience of working with them was extremely positive. The report conducted in 2016 recommended that the working relationship between the Council and PYPPS be championed and encouraged. When meeting with PYPPS it seemed as though this recommendation had not yet come to fruition. The Councillors would like to reiterate this recommendation and to look at ways that the Council could help parents to find and contact the service. The Councillors are aware that the documentation sent out to parents going through the EHCP process mentions PYPPS as a contact but the Councillors want to ensure it is clear that PYPPS are independent from the Council and exist specifically to support parents.

An area of concern for the Councillors was the part of the report received from PYPPS which spoke about their own capacity. It stated that they were functioning at the limits of their capacity and would struggle to provide additional support. They were looking at ways of coping with this demand themselves, by seeking additional funding and peer support, but the Councillors feel that the Council should look at how they can support PYPPS to increase their capacity as the service represents excellent value for money, which would be increased further through full utilisation by Council officers.

#### Exclusions

The Officers and PYPPS both acknowledged that the number of exclusions within Trafford had been increasing. This was an area that the Councillors had very little time to spend on but due to the wide reaching impact these cases have upon the system they feel that this area should be reviewed in depth. As exclusions are often the result of issues within the system the Councillors felt that this review should happen once they had gained a good understanding of the system.

When exclusions were raised with Officers they informed the Councillors of work that was ongoing to tackle the issue. These pieces of work included increasing the number of schools within the area that are well suited to supporting children with challenging needs. There is also an organisation called “the Bridge” who works with schools to help challenging children back into education. The Officers informed the Councillors that the number of exclusions were on the rise across greater Manchester so it maybe something that needs to be looked at in a wider context.

#### EHCP team structure and the high turnover of staff

The final area that was highlighted throughout the Councillors meetings was the high level of turnover of staff within the EHCP team. This was noticed by the Councillors through their own experience and highlighted as one of the main concerns of PYPPS. The high level of turnover had a huge impact upon the service as relationships between the officers, school staff, and parents are vitally important to providing consistent high quality support to a child.

When the Councillors met with the EHCP team they were assured that the changes that had been made to the structure would create a more stable environment and that the high level of turnover would reduce. They were also told that the implementation of the liquid logic system would greatly reduce the impact that staff leaving would have, as there would not be the loss of information that happened previously as it was all held within the system. PYPPS had also noted that since the Ofsted report in 2017 there had been an improvement in communication with the team and that the coordinators were more approachable. This is an area that the committee would like to keep an eye upon to ensure that the improvements that have been seen are long term. One way that they would like to do this is to conduct an anonymised survey with staff to get their feedback on their working environment and the progress being made by the service.

#### **Recommendations**

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 22 March 2017  
**Report for:** Approval  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group: Review of the Education, Health & Care Plan Process

### Report Title

Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group Review into the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Process in Trafford.

### Purpose

With the introduction of the Children and Families Act of September 2014, children and young people (who require them) are now provided with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) instead of a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Anyone with an existing Statement of SEN must begin the 'Transition' to an EHCP and the duty is with the local authority to complete this process by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

Following a number of issues encountered during the 2015/16 academic year when the new processes were introduced, Members agreed to undertake a review of the EHCP process and how it operates in Trafford.

### Recommendations

That the recommendations set out below be endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee for referral to the Executive:

Recommendation 1 – That the Executive support the EHCP Manager's team restructure proposals in section 9 of the report, including authorising the additional administrative assistant positions requested.

Recommendation 2 – That the working relationship between the Council and Trafford Parents Forum be championed and encouraged.

Recommendation 3 – That applicants be provided with as much information as possible at the start of the EHCP process, including the options available to them in relation to education (see section 8 of the report).

Recommendation 4 – That the Executive support the scheme of adopting SENCO Champions to encourage good practice in schools.

Recommendation 5 – That the Executive support the proposals to amend the EHCP funding structure, ensuring that the service’s budget is managed in the most efficient way possible.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Chris Gaffey

Extension: 2019

## **1. Background**

With the introduction of the Children and Families Act of September 2014, children and young people (who require them) are now provided with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) instead of a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN). Anyone with an existing Statement of SEN must begin the 'Transition' to an EHCP and the duty is with the local authority to complete this process by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

The parent or anyone involved with the child can choose to apply for an EHC Needs Assessment, and all requests are considered by the Trafford Assessment Panel. If the panel decides to start an EHC Needs Assessment, a named EHC Coordinator is assigned to support and guide the child or young person and parent through the process, which includes a series of discussions, observations and assessments over a 12 week period. If a request for an EHC Plan is accepted, the final Plan should be issued within 20 weeks of the original request being received.

Following the introduction of the new system for the 2015/16 academic year, a number of issues and complaints were raised by service users. In July 2016, the Scrutiny Committee agreed to conduct a review of the EHCP process in an attempt to understand and make recommendations to resolve the concerns that had been raised.

## **2. Review Approach**

Members set out to have a better understanding of the process, and requested a meeting with Senior Officers to learn more. Members were also keen to meet with service users to hear about their experiences with the new system. The overall aim was to produce a report with the group's findings and recommendations to the Executive on how they believe the service could be supported. These are set out in the report.

## **3. Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference for the review was

To undertake a review of the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Service, ensuring the issues encountered during the 2015/16 academic year are resolved and that robust processes are in place to ensure that a good service is provided going forward.

## **4. Membership of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

The review was carried out by

Councilors: K. Carter, R. Bowker, M. Cordingley, Mrs. P. Dixon, J. Harding and M. Young.

Co-Opted Member for Education Matters: Ms. Saadia Khan.

## **5. The EHCP Process**

There are three different strands of the EHCP process:

## EHC Needs Assessments

- New applications for an EHC Plan
- The process takes 20 weeks to complete
- 6 month wait to reapply for a plan (if rejected) in line with the national statutory guidance

## EHC Annual Reviews

- All current EHC Plans need to be reviewed and amended accordingly on an annual basis
- The Annual Review is a statutory requirement
- The Annual Review is shorter than a full application, lasting 14 weeks in total (the first 6 weeks is the 'Presentation Stage', with the actual assessment lasting 8 weeks after this)

## EHC Transfers

- Children / young persons with a Statement of SEN need to be transferred to the new EHC System
- The process takes 20 weeks to complete

## **6. Introduction of the new legislation and the resulting issues encountered during the 2015/16 academic year**

Under the new process, the EHCP Team confirmed that they encountered several issues. It was found that:

- There were issues with incomplete forms and information for all three strands
- The system in place at the time to capture the required information was substandard, which meant that a lot of resource was used to chase missing information, causing delays
- Schools had not fully understood what was expected of them and did not contribute in the ways that the service had hoped
- The writing of the EHCPs was initially outsourced, something that several Local Authorities had done nationally, however it was felt that the quality of the Plans would be of a better standard when done locally and were brought back in house
- It was nationally recognised that the timescale set were difficult to achieve

The service recognised there had been failings initially, however new processes are now in place and many of the issues have been resolved.

The Group feel that the Council was caught by surprise by these substantial changes, and that proper precautions had not been taken to ensure a smooth transition to the new system. The outsourcing of the writing of the EHCPs involved the sharing of confidential information about the families without their permission. When this came to light, some of the families found this extremely distressing. It was also extremely expensive for the Authority. The Group are pleased that this practice has ended, and the writing of the EHC Plans is now done by Trafford's EHCP Team.



## **7. Steps taken to address these issues**

In April 2016, a new EHCP Manager for Trafford was appointed. In September 2016, the Group met with the new EHCP Manager, the Interim Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing, and the Head of Service for Access and Inclusion to discuss their concerns. The Officers acknowledged that there had been issues when introducing the new process initially; however new and robust processes were now in place to ensure this would not happen going forward. Over the last year, the following actions have been undertaken:

- A new team structure is now in place and the Council have recruited well
- A mapping exercise was completed to map the whole system and process
- A full timetable has been created to ensure that the assessments, reviews and transfers are correctly managed and tracked (Appendix 1)
- New forms have been created for all three strands to ensure the correct information is being captured first time
- There is now a greater emphasis on coproduction with parents
- New ways for service users to contact the team have been introduced, making it easier for parents to raise any concerns they might have
- Training has been provided at all levels, and will be ongoing to ensure the new processes are embedded

## **8. Service User Experiences**

In January 2017, the Group met with several parents with varying experiences who had agreed to provide their views on the process of applying for / transferring to an EHCP. The Director of the Trafford's Parents Forum was also in attendance.

Several of parents had entered the process during the 2015/16 academic year, and most of these experiences confirmed the issues that were raised at that time. It was clear that some cases were not dealt with at the level of service the Council would expect to provide, and legitimate concerns about staff continuity and delays in issuing the Plans were raised. Members also felt that an important connection between the Council and the Trafford Parents Forum had been diluted, and recommended that both organisations work closer together going forward. Parents also raised their concerns about the outsourcing of the writing of the Plans, and felt that this was an error on the part of the Council.

Following the meeting with parents, the Group had the following observations / recommendations:

- If it is not already standard practice, all documentation relating to EHCPs should be provided to applicants in their initial pack. Although it is understood that all information is available on the Local Offer page of the Trafford Directory, the Group feel that as much information as possible should be provided directly to applicants as standard.
- The Group feels that there should be more information provided to parents on what the child or young person is eligible for in relation to education before they make an application. At present, parents are not sure what to apply for – Members feel that more transparency in this area would make the process less stressful for parents.

- Members feel that the system shouldn't be reliant on parents having to raise issues in order to obtain the services they want.

## 9. Current Situation

The Service recognises that there is still work to be done, but feel that the positive direction of travel demonstrates that the service has improved dramatically and will continue to do so. Following the new EHCP Manager's appointment in April 2016, a monitoring system was introduced to log parents' questions, queries and concerns (these are not formal complaints). As the table below demonstrates, the number of these queries has reduced substantially. April 2016 saw 19 queries raised, with only 3 raised in January 2017. Out of 39 queries raised since April 2016, only 3 were ongoing at the end of January 2017.

Month	No of Issues Raised	No of Issues Resolved	No of Issues Still Active
Apr-16	19	7	12
May-16	8	5	15
Jun-16	1	2	14
Jul-16	1	4	11
Aug-16	0	0	11
Sep-16	1	3	9
Oct-16	3	4	8
Nov-16	3	2	9
Dec-16	0	7	2
Jan-17	3	2	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3</b>

The above figures should also be considered in the context that, at the end of February 2017, there were approximately 1500 children or young people with an EHC Plan or were going through one of the three different strands of the process.

In addition to the queries raised, the service has received 36 compliments from parents between September 2016 and January 2017.

It is also clear from the below that service delivery has improved significantly over the past year.

Year 6 completion in time for 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016 = 25%

Year 6 completion in time for 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 = 80 %

Year 11 completion in time for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 = 0%

Year 11 completion in time for 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 = projected 60% (currently at 25%)

Year 12/13 Transfers – 100% completed by March 2017 as requested by DFE

### New Team Structure

The team has now been split into two phases:

Phase One: 0 - 14 years old

Phase Two: 15 - 25 years old

The EHCP Manager has a deputy responsible for each phase, both of which provide the Manger with regular progress updates. Every EHC Plan is reviewed by the deputies and the manager to ensure adequate scrutiny is undertaken before they are signed off.

The service has recently filled the one vacant position on the EHCP Team (this person is expected to start in in April 2017), which means they will have a full complement of staff for the first time since April 2016. The team's staff are currently on temporary contracts. The EHCP Manager stressed the importance of administrative support – the team currently operates with one general admin assistant, and one financial admin assistant, who are responsible for all of the team's administrative duties.

Members were keen to know the EHCP Manager's views on what was required in the team's structure to ensure that the service is effective going forward. The EHCP Manager suggested the following:

- That the current positions be changed from temporary posts to be permanent posts
- Raising the amount of administrative support posts from two to four - two for each phase, which would ensure that the EHCP Co-ordinators could focus entirely on the work of co-ordinating the plans themselves.

The Group strongly support these suggestions and would ask that the Executive take them into consideration.

### Co-Production

A bigger emphasis is now put on ensuring that parents are an integral part of the process, with co-production championed. Some service users felt that there was not enough emphasis on this when the new system was introduced.

### Funding Restructure

The service's Senior Officers, in conjunction with the EHCP Manager, are currently considering a revised funding structure of the EHC Plans to be more specific. Under the current structure they feel that the funding bands are too wide, meaning some plans might receive more funding than required, with others not receiving enough. Under the new structure, the introduction of more funding bands with a narrower range would allow this to be more focused. This would make the funding more accurate and efficient, leading to a better management of the service's budget. It was suggested that the revaluating of the funding for current EHPs could be done at the EHCP review stage, meaning the additional work would be kept to a minimum.

### SENCO Champions

A better understanding of the EHCP process and when referrals should be made is required by schools in the borough. Trafford is currently above the assessing average, meaning we are receiving a relatively high number of EHCP Assessment referrals for cases that could be dealt with by the school and their resources.

The EHCP Manager has suggested introducing a system of appointing 'SENCO Champions', who would be responsible for cascading the correct information out to schools, as well as assisting with the completing of application forms and other procedural queries. They would be invited to take part in the scheme on a voluntary basis, provided training, and would then advise schools on the correct processes. It is important that schools understand the criteria for referring a case to the EHCP Team. Reducing the amount of incorrect referrals will help the service run more efficiently and enable them to focus their resources effectively.

## **10. Risks to be monitored**

The new legislation means that the scope of the EHCP has gone from 5-16 year olds (under the old SEN system), to cover children and young people between the ages of 0-25. Although the 0-5 cohort will be relatively small, they could be part of the system until they are 25 meaning a much longer period of required support. Also, the 16-25 cohort will continue to grow year on year as more young people transition beyond the age of 16 –under previous legislation they would have ended their journey through the SEN system at this point. No new funding has been provided to account for these additional persons that the Local Authority is required to assist.

## **11. Ensuring that the progress that has already been made continues**

The Group are satisfied that considerable progress has been made since the issues encountered during the 2015/16 academic year, and are keen to ensure that the changes made over the 9 months remain embedded and that progress continues to be made. The Group would like to make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – That the Executive support the EHCP Manager's team restructure proposals in section 9 of the report, including authorising the additional administrative assistant positions requested.

Recommendation 2 – That the working relationship between the Council and Trafford Parents Forum be championed and encouraged.

Recommendation 3 – That applicants be provided with as much information as possible at the start of the EHCP process, including the options available to them in relation to education (see section 8 of the report).

Recommendation 4 – That the Executive support the scheme of adopting SENCO Champions to encourage good practice in schools.

Recommendation 5 – That the Executive support the proposals to amend the EHCP funding structure, ensuring that the service's budget is managed in the most efficient way possible.

## **12. Summary**



There is no question that serious issues were encountered in the early stages of adopting the new EHCP system, demonstrated by the concerns raised by parents when going through the process during the 2015/16 academic year. However, Members are confident that the service has improved dramatically over the last year and that the direction of travel is now positive. The new leadership, structure and

processes give the Group confidence that the issues encountered are on the way to being resolved. The Group would urge the Executive to consider the above recommendations and provide the service its full support to ensure that the recent changes are embedded, and the service improved as a result.


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### SEND Information for Councillors

Question	Response
What Assessment provisions are in place within the Council and when was this last reviewed?	<p>The LA funds the Statutory assessment function of the Educational Psychology Service and the EHC team to coordinate the assessments.</p> <p>With regard to educational provision where EHC needs assessments can be carried out –these can be carried out in mainstream or in some specialist settings. Specialist provision settings are listed on the SEND Local Offer.</p>
How many referrals are being received?	<p>The data below captures total referral trends over the last 3 years.</p> <p>2016 – 157 referrals received            2017 – 219 referrals received            2018 – 243 referrals received to date</p> <p>Parental referrals are as follows:            2016 – 27 referrals            2017 – 59 referrals            2018 – 71 referrals received to date</p>
How many assessments are done?	<p>Again from 2016:</p> <p>2016 – 127 cases assessed            2017 – 178 cases assessed            2018 – 199 cases assessed to date</p>
Is there a waiting list and if so is it increasing?	<p>We do not hold a waiting list as we are working to statutory timescales of making a decision and informing parents within 6 weeks of receiving a referral. There is always an increase in referrals near the end of the school term so additional panels are held to meet timescales.</p>
Where did the 20 question point checklist come from?	<p>This checklist was introduced as guidance for SENCOs in making a request for an EHC needs assessment. To enable the decision making panel to check the evidence provided by settings making a request against the expectations of the SEND Code of Practice. Settings are expected to follow a graduated approach to identifying and meeting needs. The Code expects a four part cycle of assess, plan, do and review. (See SEN Support in schools 6:44 SEND Code of Practice)</p> <p>The LA produces practical guidance on what it expects education settings to provide for pupils and this is called Trafford’s Graduated Approach Guidance. Links are provided below for information.</p> <p><a href="https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/advice.page?id=GWN-yIDsWX4">https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/advice.page?id=GWN-yIDsWX4</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.traffordpypps.co.uk/Docs/Trafford-Graduated-Approach-Guidance-October-2014.pdf">http://www.traffordpypps.co.uk/Docs/Trafford-Graduated-Approach-Guidance-October-2014.pdf</a></p>
Is there any training available for teachers for completing	<p>There has been training on the Trafford Assessment Panel threshold document delivered by the previous EHC team manager.</p> <p>Sessions were provided for SENCOs on the completion of the EHC needs assessment referral from on our electronic system Liquid Logic. SENCOs have</p>

referrals?	<p>asked for a 'What a Good One Looks Like' guide and this is being worked on between SENAS and the Trafford Teaching School Alliance who are going to present it at a session for SENCOs in October.</p> <p>The termly SENCO forum meetings regularly cover updates on referrals and EHC processes.</p> <p>The National Award for SEN Coordination which SENCOs have to complete within three years of taking on the role also covers aspects of this. Trafford has delivered this annually in partnership with MMU since the regulations came in 2009.</p>															
Who decides whether a child gets assessed and what are the criteria for making that decision?	<p>Please refer to the attached EHC Guide to Decision making and <a href="#">Trafford Assessment Panel Threshold (TAP sheet)</a></p> <p> EHC Guide to Decision Making v1.0</p>															
How long do an assessment take, how in depth are the assessments, and what is the process?	<p>Please refer to '<a href="#">Guide to EHC needs assessment process</a>'. This provides information regarding statutory timescales.</p> <p> EHC guide to needs assessment process.</p>															
How specialised is making an assessment and which staff are able to do them?	<p>The Assessment process involves the professionals and services working with the child from education, health and social care as explained in the SEND Code of Practice Para (p.155/ 9.49). See attached '<a href="#">Guide to EHC needs assessment process</a>'.</p>															
How many SEND related Tribunals have been lodged by parents with the Council annually since 2013?	<p>Information available from 2016:</p> <p>2016 – 16 cases 2017 – 14 cases 2018 – 13 cases to date</p>															
How many children have been excluded (formally and informally) annually from Trafford schools since 2013?	<p>Informal Exclusions are illegal and as such we would not have been notified of any.</p> <p>Records show the following information;</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="443 1686 1169 2007"> <thead> <tr> <th>Academic Year</th> <th>Total PX</th> <th>PX with an EHCP</th> <th>School indicated child was on SEN support</th> <th>Received EHCP following PX</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013-14</td> <td>26</td> <td>0</td> <td>19</td> <td>Awaiting PRU response</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014-15</td> <td>43</td> <td>0</td> <td>20</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Academic Year	Total PX	PX with an EHCP	School indicated child was on SEN support	Received EHCP following PX	2013-14	26	0	19	Awaiting PRU response	2014-15	43	0	20	
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2013-14	26	0	19	Awaiting PRU response												
2014-15	43	0	20													



	2015-16	50 sec 6 primary	3	24		
	2016-17	67	2	33		
	2017-18	75	4 (1 from a non- Trafford School)	18		
What percentage of Health Visitor 2 year visits is being completed?	The 2 year developmental assessments run by the Health Visitors service complete between 90 and 95%.					
Could you please provide an organisational chart for the SEND team?	 EHC TEam Organisational Chart					
What has been the level of staff turnover since 2014?	<p>Since Alison Milne has been in post, there have been 4 members of staff leave the service.</p> <p>The EHC Team was established 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 with a view to transferring the Education Statements over to EHC plans</p> <p>The Team in 2015 consisted of 7 staff all of which remained in post that year</p> <p>2016:  9 new members of staff joined the team  5 members of the team left  20 new team total staff</p> <p>2017:  8 new members of staff joined the team  5 members of the team left  20 team total for the year</p> <p>2018:  To date 7 members of staff have joined the team  To date 3 members of the team have left  To date there are 23 on the team</p>					
Can you explain why the recent job adverts for EHCP writers not require previous experience of the job and did not detail what training the successful	<p>It was not felt necessary to advertise for experienced staff. As all the new staff will have to follow our induction programme, which is the Liquid Logic data base training and the Trafford LA on- line modules. Furthermore they will also have training on writing an EHCP plan. However, although one of the candidates has experience of writing plans, we will still ensure they cover our own plan writing training.</p> <p>The staff come with a range of experience including a previous Ofsted Inspector, a Social Worker, Teacher and Senior Residential worker all of which bring additional valuable and relevant knowledge to the team.</p>					

<p>applicants would receive?</p>	
<p>Roles and responsibilities of those involved in decision making.</p>	<p><b>The Trafford Assessment Panel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EHC Assessment Team Manager</li> <li>• Principal Educational Psychologist</li> <li>• SENAS Service Manager and Inclusion Advisor</li> <li>• Service Manager Sensory Impairment Service</li> <li>• School SENDCo</li> </ul> <p>Additional professionals may attend as appropriate (eg. EHC co-ordinators / Social Care &amp; Health reps)</p> <p><b>The Moderation and Resource Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EHC Assessment Team Manager</li> <li>• Principal Educational Psychologist</li> <li>• SENAS Service Manager and Inclusion Advisor</li> <li>• Service Manager Sensory Impairment Service</li> <li>• Service Manager, Complex Needs</li> </ul>



Trafford Parents Forum

## TRAFFORD PARENTS FORUM SEND OVERVIEW IN TRAFFORD

Trafford Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny  
Committee December 2018

Trafford Parents Forum  
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## INTRODUCTION

Trafford Parents Forum has independently delivered parent carer participation and engagement since 2013, and with some members of our Management Team and Steering Group involved personally with the Pathfinder task and finish groups' pre-2014 SEND reforms, and the forum believes that we have an excellent overview of SEND in Trafford.

With the recent changes to Trafford Council since the local elections in May 2018, the Forum took the opportunity to provide the new Executive Administration of Trafford Council, a sound and independent viewpoint of SEND services in Trafford from the parent carer experiences shared with us at our events, online and face to face drop-ins.

Whilst the below comments outline issues, concerns and shared experience, we wanted to draw attention to the new Administration that huge strides have been made by key stakeholders to improve participation and engagement opportunities with parent carers in Trafford including the recent successful business case for an Engagement Development Co-ordinator that the Forum put forward to Trafford Council for a voluntary grant (this came from a Department of Education SEND grant given to local authorities 2017/18). The Forum currently has two representatives on the SEND Board, and two representatives on the Communication and Engagement Working Group, and the Forum and parent carers have been involved in a number of positive engagements around Short Breaks, Capital SEND Funding, ND/ADHD Pathways, the Local Offer and Special Schools Speech and Language Therapy Services, a review of the Graduated Approach guidance document.

Co-production has also been a regular agenda item for key stakeholders since it was identified as 'an area for development' within the OFSTED/CQC SEND Inspection January 2017. There has been a 'Voice' co-production workshop for parent carers and professionals from across Trafford back in July 2017, and it also has been a constant agenda item at the SEND Board. There is a foundation from which to build a smoother, more joined up framework for partnership working.

The Forum would like to highlight that there are individuals and pockets of service that are delivering positive outcomes for some families. However, finding the balance of capturing those experiences are often very difficult as those parent carers and families are less likely to seek support from the Parents Forum or share their experience. However, there are all kinds of feedback that has been collated and is continuously updated by the Local Offer Team, and you may wish to look through these to help balance parent carer viewpoints.

Whilst this list is not exhaustive Trafford Parents Forum would like to highlight the priorities in our opinion that should be reviewed by the new Administration. The key areas of priority are listed below:

- Education, Health and Care Plans – All aspects of service including Educational Psychology reports and panel decisions.
- SEND Funding Cuts.
- Exclusions – All aspects of exclusions (official and non-official).
- Therapy Services – Healthy Young Minds, Speech and Language Therapy, Sensory OT, OT Services, Visual and Hearing Impairment service.
- Transition from Children's services to Adult services.
- Co-production and implementing cultural change.
- 

## EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCP)

The on-going issues for children, young people with SEND, their parents and families plagues this area of SEND continuously in Trafford. On a positive note parent carers report that since the 2017 OFSTED/CQC SEND Inspection that there has been an improvement with communication with the Team and the co-ordinators are more approachable. With high staff turnover, parents are constantly worried that

they will lose the relationships they have built up over time in relation to the child or young person, and as highlighted in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Code of Practice Chapter 9, their involvement or young person's involvement will be adversely affected. More recently we see an increase in the EHC Team but then Co-ordinators are then reassigned, no clear communication with parent carers and confusion. Parent Carers have expressed a wish that the Scrutiny Committee find out why the workforce has such a high turnover, what motivators are the team receiving? how are they being best supported in the role that they are doing? In turn, we feel that a workforce who is committed and passionate, respected and feels worthy will do the best they possible can to produce plans that are well written, quantifiable and specific for the child or young person with SEND.

Exponentially, the forum is hearing from parent carers either from our information events, drop-ins or online with staggering stories of Tribunals around Refusals to Assess for ECHP and Refusal to Issue an EHCP, EHCP's still in draft plan stage even though the process started over 12/14 months, continuous change of EHC co-ordinators, no quality control of plans and no clear explanation about the decision making panels with decisions quite often going to schools first before the family, the list goes on but the most common issues are highlighted below:

- Tribunal Figures
- Referrals for Assessment including how panel decisions are made
- Information, Support and Documents
- Quality and Content of EHCP's
- Timescales

The latest statistical figures from the Department of Education SEN2 which were submitted by Trafford Council for 2017 show that in 2017 the local authority had 1,378 Statement of Special Educational Need (SSEN) or Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) and as a % of EHCP requests against those existing plans is 16.26% and Trafford rank 20th out of 23 North West local authorities for this.

The document also highlights that in 2017 Trafford Council received 224 assessment requests\* of which 44 were refusals to assess and 56 were refusals to issue (Refusal to assess/issue as a % of requests is 44.64% and Trafford are ranked 2nd worst out of 23 performing NW local authorities).

The figures also highlight that plans issued in 2017 is 91 (plans issued in 2017 as a % of 2017 requests is 40.62% and Trafford rank 23rd out of 23 NW local authorities) and that 83 referrals were still being assessed (assessments still in progress as a % of requests 37.05% and Trafford rank 3rd out of 23 NW local authorities).

In comparison Trafford's local authority statistical neighbours Stockport and Cheshire East perform as follows:

Local Authority	2017 Plan No (SSEN/EHCP)	2017 Assessment requests	2017 EHCP requests % & rank	2017 Refuse to assess	2017 Refuse to issue	2017 Refusal to assess/issue % & rank	2017 Issued EHCP % and Rank	2017 Still being assessed % and Rank
Cheshire East	1868	378	20.24% 14 <sup>th</sup>	115	3	31.22% 5th	163 43.12% 21st	189 50% 1st
Stockport	2005	247	12.32% 23rd	36	2	15.38% 17th	205 83% 6th	44 17.81% 10th
Trafford	1378	224	16.26% 20th	44	56	44.64% 2nd	91 40.63% 23rd	83 37.05% 3rd

**Tribunals**

Parent carers forced into a position whereby they are filing for a tribunal hearing has increased in Trafford and with the impact of SEND funding cuts on support unclear, we can only surmise that the figures will not plateau but increase significantly as the reduction or removal of services takes hold.

Parent carers whose children have a supportive teacher/SENCO/Head teacher who get involved, and help drive the process have indicated a slightly more positive experience. The Local Authority's Graduated Approach guidance for schools and colleges seems to be in theory a very comprehensive support document for schools, however, is quite often used as a barrier to access the EHCP referral process.

Some parent carers are repeatedly told by Schools that their child will only be eligible for an EHCP Assessment if they

- Have an EP report
- Been through 2 cycles of plan/do/review at SEN Support.
- Are two years behind their peers?
- The school have spent £6000 additional support funding

**In reality the legal test for statutory assessment under the \*Children and Families Act 2014/SEND Code of Practice is in fact whether the children or young people has or may have SEN and it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or the young person in an EHCP.**

We appreciate that Trafford Council has a criteria for making decisions on assessment but these must NOT impose a higher threshold than the legal test.

In our opinion training on SEND law is imperative for all Trafford SEND staff including School Staff and Governors, and not one-off or in-house training but a consideration of an on-going programme that makes sure that all staff will benefit from, without barriers to access and the level of knowledge is kept current and relevant. This training MUST be delivered by an independent and qualified organisation like IPSEA.

Parent carers would like to see a more transparent approach from the council with regard to their tribunal figures. A few questions that have been asked before, that this Committee may consider approaching themselves, are highlighted below:

- How many tribunal cases have been lodged against Trafford Council in 2017?
- How many cases have been resolved amicably before a tribunal in 2017?
- How many cases have been conceded by Trafford Council before a tribunal in 2017?
- For those unresolved or not conceded, how many cases go through to a full tribunal in 2017?
- How many of those cases are heard by the Tribunal as 'paper' cases?
- How many of those cases heard by the Tribunal are represented by a barrister on behalf of Trafford Council?
- How much money does it cost the LA for each full tribunal case?

### **Panel Decisions**

Parent carers repeatedly raise their concern about the TAP (Trafford Assessment Panel) and MAR (Moderation Resource Panel) panels and the major delays they are experiencing in either getting a decision about whether to assess, a decision to issue a plan and agreement to support provision or educational provision. The TAP decision making process, as it generally is around whether or not to access, can be done without a major panel meeting, we are sure that the EHC Manager and her Senior Co-ordinators can determine whether a referral could go through to assessment based on the legal test, which will speed up the process for families.

Parent carers have expressed concern that there are no formal panel meeting minutes or formal notes taken. Parent carers have been told that main actions and the final decision is noted but not readily available to them. Parent carers have also expressed concerns how the new General Data Protection

Regulations (GDPR) fits in around these panels, has it been discussed and is there a sound procedure, and how is then communicated to parent carers.

Parent carers who have had a refusal to assess are highlighting to us that on receipt of a decision letter, are not receiving clear reasons for the refusal, which is leaving them very much in the dark and confused. This is having a detrimental impact on a child's on-going support needs and on parent carer's health and wellbeing.

### **Information, Support and Documents**

Information and documents on the Local Offer around EHCP's and those documents used by school staff and parent carers differ from family to family. There appears an inconsistency across the borough and therefore leaves parent carers feeling they are receiving an inadequate service in comparison to other parent carers they know who would seem to be have a smoother journey through the referral, assessment and review processes.

Also, those parent carers who are able to keep themselves well informed about SEND developments and SEND services express that they feel they have had a slightly better experience primarily because they feel much more aware of the processes and the legislation. Parent Carers inform us that letters from the local authority notifying them of their right of appeals can be very different, with very important information often missing.

The number of parent carers who had the support of TPYPPS since September 2014 has exceeded 850 and Independent Support project September 2014 until July 2018 has been over 500, and those parent carers accessing information/workshops (sometimes attendance more than once) from TPF since 2014 has exceeded 800.

Parent carers continually comment that access to this independent information, advice and support is invaluable to them with parent carers citing these services as exemplary, supportive, committed, lifesaving, a reassuring one point of contact. With the closure of the Independent Support project on the 31<sup>st</sup> July, parent carers are concerned that TPYPPS which is already working at capacity, will be over-subscribed and understaffed.

The Forum is trialling a parent carer peer to peer/expert by experience one to one support network providing low level support, working with our IASS (TPYPPS) to identify families most in need. The type of support the peer to peer supporters will accompany parent carers to meetings as a friend or take notes for them at meetings, help parent carer with paperwork, chat, coffee and cake. The Forum also has used Facebook as a 24/7 support platform for parents with our Closed Facebook Group which is moderated by the forum but parent carers lead the support for each other. However, the ongoing project would require further funding something which the Forum is looking into.

### **Quality and Content of Plans**

There has always been a significant variance between good and bad quality plans in Trafford. Parent Carers tell us that the reason that their child or young person has a good plan is down to them re-writing the plan themselves or luck in whoever you get as your co-ordinator. Those Parent Carers who are not so "lucky" consistently report to us:

- Plans are often 'cut and pasted' with frequent grammatical errors or another child's name.
- No apparent quality control or mark of quality control; Senior Co-ordinators or EHC Co-ordinators signing final EHCP's in the signatory box marked for EHC Manager.
- No consistency in the layout of plans and forms
- The version control of plans are sometimes confusing for parent carers, schools and the co-ordinators themselves.

- Plans being held on individual co-ordinators laptops; which means if they leave or are off on long term sick leave quite often other staff cannot get access to the EHCP.
- Plans are reported as not being SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) for example writing in Section E of an EHCP that “Jonny will be able to ride a bike” is not time-bound or that “Jonny will be able to hold a conversation by the time he is 25” is not specific or measurable. Some parent carers have expressed the opportunity be given to them to share with you their child or young person’s plan so that you may see a sample of plans issued.
- Parent Carers report that in the lead up to the final issue date for the transfer of Statement of Education to an EHCP, that Co-ordinators were telling parents that they needed to finalise the plan and that they could make further changes by calling a review after the plan had been issued before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014.
- Parent Carers report that their final EHCP had a significantly different date marked on the plan than that date that it was issued by email and typically, before the transfer deadline.

These issues are frequently mentioned by different parent carers to the Forum Team at our events, and on-line, and parent carers are extremely critical about the statement made by the local authority that they had met the deadline for transfers from Statement of Education to EHCP, some saying that it was weeks after before they received a final plan.

Providing quality plans should not be down to ‘luck’ or a ‘postcode lottery’, parent carers experience should be consistent every time.

### **Timeliness of EHCPS**

Parent carers are still exasperated by the length of time it takes to complete draft plans and issuing final plans. Many parent carers are concerned that the multi-agency approach, Education, Health and Social Care is not as cohesive as the reforms intended. One of the obstacles for the EHC team to issue timely plans is due to the difficulty they face in receiving feedback or reports from Health and Social Care; though the latter is a persistent offender. The forum would like you to consider sampling the journey of an EHCP from its first referral through to the final stage wherever that may take you, scrutinising all aspects of the process, it may need to be done a couple of times. The forum is confident that seeing the process in action would be incredibly insightful for both the new Administration, the Scrutiny Committee and useful as a review tool for the EHC Team.

### **HIGH NEEDS BLOCK FUNDING AND SEND FUNDING CUTS**

The Forum has been aware since February 2018 of the major school funding crisis for Trafford in particular the High Needs Block Funding. Whilst the local authority has attempted to respond to some of our questions and respectfully minuted the forums disappointment at a SEND Board meeting when it announced the shortfalls faced by SEND in Trafford earlier this year. The Forum did respond to the Executive Councils funding proposal outlined in July 2018. The Forum’s response was very clear, parent carers, children and young people with SEND do not have the time to ‘wait and see’ the impact on their lives and it is wholly unfair to make them do so! The Forum stated very clearly that parent carers WILL challenge any cuts to the High Needs Block Funding and the LA should be mindful of this.

The Forum prides itself on the genuine and respectful relationship we have with Trafford Council, and as we have emphasised frequently, we see our role as a critical friend. As a critical friend, we are committed to encouraging and being supportive towards the council in an honest and candid way which may make for awkward conversations sometimes, we understand the pressures the council faces and have always expressed willingness to receive a more detailed analysis of how the council intends to balance the High Needs Block Funding. Equally, we are here to support the collective voice of parent carers in Trafford and as such, we will be supporting any parent carer group who wishes to legally challenge Trafford Council on SEND funding cuts. The forum cannot support any such cuts to our SEND community.



The Forum has received an invitation from Karen Samples Director of Education to join other key stakeholders at an initial discussion meeting around High Needs Block Funding and the difficult situation faced by Trafford Council on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, the Forum welcomes this move.

Trafford parent carers have already been given some information and were updated by the forum on the SEND funding cuts at our last information event and there are a significant number of parent carer seeking out more information, understandably! These cuts will affect every family with a child or young person with SEND (EHCP and SEN Support). The Forum is committed to ensure that the voice of parent carers is heard and we will continue to update families on the funding situation in Trafford.

The forum would like to share with the Scrutiny Committee their major concerns that Trafford will be forced to do:

- Apply local policy and override the law; in particular ignoring the legal test for conducting an EHC needs assessment as set out in s. 36 Children's and Families Act 2014.
- Trafford Council may attempt to offer additional funding levels allocated through a SEND Support plan, whilst this would suggest that an EHCP was not necessary, it would question whether families would receive the same benefit of others who already have an EHCP. This would be a different test than required by law s. 37(1) Children's and Families Act 2014; an LA must issue an EHCP if following an EHC needs assessment, it is necessary for provision to be made through an EHC plan.
- Trafford will use an unlawful blanket 'banding' policy related to resource and not needs driven.
- Trafford Council may assume that a child or young person who needs more than £15,000 funding, their needs would be best met in a special school (which operates a different funding model). A child or young person cannot be excluded from mainstream school simply because of financial cost of their needs under S. 38(2) (b) Children's and Families Act 2014 choice of school is that of the parent or young person, and the right to a mainstream school.

## **THERAPY SERVICES**

- Healthy Young Minds
- Speech and Language Therapy Services
- Sensory OT
- OT
- Visual/hearing Impairment Services

The forum continuously receives comments and concerns about all of these service areas.

- Parent carers report a high turnover of staff or no replacement for those professionals who leave.
- In some cases over a two year waiting time after the first referral has been sent through before they have been seen by a suitable professional qualified to make an assessment.
- Difficulty in receiving reports for the EHCP process.
- Inappropriately trained staff.
- Lack of communication with families
- Attempts to hastily discharge children and young people sooner than is necessary.
- Overworked service so is only working on 'Crisis' mode and not looking at positive ways for early intervention support.
- Speech and Language Therapy Service never having any specialism/experience of deaf children and young people in Trafford.
- Direct speech and language therapy all but disappeared within mainstream school and in some instances special schools, with the preferred method of co-ordinating support to school resources (i.e. Teaching Assistants).
- More recently the temporary removal of Specialist School Community Paediatrician clinics.

Again the list is not exhaustive and just scratches the surface of the endemic experiences that families with children and young people are being faced with in Trafford. More recently there has been an interest from services to find out about the concerns and issues faced by families but the Forum would appreciate that all of these services are continually scrutinised and a review report of the council's findings shared with parent carers. The Forum would like to see the voices and involvement of parent carers, children and young people at the very heart of the action planning stages.

## **TRANSITION FROM CHILDREN SERVICES TO ADULT SERVICES**

This is an area of major priority, and one which must not be let to wander into the local policy abyss as there are many services connected to this. The experiences of families is an awful tale of being left on the edge of a precipice, with no support and no direction! The local authority already admit that this is a huge problem for the council, young people with SEND and their families in Trafford, and it is an agenda item on the Transition Board.

The forum is working with LA officers to find a way of capturing feedback through a parent carer/young person journey mapping evaluation, and to play a major role in the influence of change required to give families a more cohesive and positive experience, whilst ensuring that the right services are in place at that transition point and beyond into adult life. The forum would like assurances that this will be a priority for the new Administration too, and the commitment to ensure that parent carers and young people will be at the very heart of changes that are desperately needed.

## **CO-PRODUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATING CULTURAL CHANGE**

Whilst co-production has been one of the main stalwarts to come out of the SEND Code of Practice, it has been the most difficult to impart. Co-production is not just another way of engagement, it is a whole cultural change that has to be guided and nurtured from the top, and everyone takes ownership of the journey ahead.

It is not just an attitude change, it is the openness and willingness to work towards embedding collaborative working into the very fabric of the Councils function. We know there are no quick fixes here since first talking about co-production with LA officers back in 2013. The 'Whole Trafford' approach to co-production is not only about the LA but our Health and Social Care partners too, and any other key stakeholder in SEND in Trafford. This will be a huge challenge at all levels and working towards a clear workable guidance document and a signed commitment charter to working collaboratively will be the start of the journey.

## **CONCLUSION**

To summarise, the experience of parent carers, children and young people with SEND in Trafford varies immensely right across the board of Education, Health and Social Care. The Forum is not referring the differences in support level because those support needs are individualised, but the delivery of services, the whole journey experience for families, the perception for families that getting the right support for the child or young person is going to be an almighty battle, feeling that they are being set up to fail, and feeling that their child or young person is seen merely as a financial inconvenience.

The Forum identifies that there has not been any move to challenge why Trafford parent carers, children and young people with SEND are feeling this way, which is why the forum would welcome another local SEND review similar to that conducted back in 2012, with a clear objective, measurable and demonstrated positive outcomes, with parent carers, children and young people as equal partners in the process.



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# Trafford Parent and Young Peoples' Partnership Service

## Annual Report September 2017– August 2018

Welcome to the annual report of the Trafford Parent and Young Peoples' Partnership Service (PYPPS). This report gives a snapshot of the activities carried out by the PYPPS from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 to the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. These reports were started in 2011 so this is the eighth Annual report that I have produced.

It has been a very busy year and there have been changes in staffing. In November 2017 Louise left as our admin assistant and went to work in a primary school. Joanne McLeod was appointed as our new admin assistant in April 2018. So we have a staff team of four consisting of a full time Manager, two case workers (term time only), one part time and one on a temporary contract until March 2019 and one part time admin assistant.

A new IASP project was announced for IASS services in England in June 2018. Trafford PYPPS put in a bid and was successfully awarded monies for phase one to carry out a detailed self review of the service and make detailed plans for the future of the service going forward.

Trafford LA had already started this process by completing a review of Trafford PYPPS in January 2018. Their main recommendations were;

- to keep the service in house,
- re establish the Steering group
- to review the staffing and management structure

This report will significantly add to the self review plan required for the IASP national project.



The role of the PYPPS continues to be to ensure that parents, young people and children have access to confidential and impartial information, advice and support on Education, Health and Social Care issues so they can make informed decisions.

This is achieved by working in partnership with parents, young people and children providing information, services and training, working with relevant agencies and ensuring that their views influence local policy and practice.

There are Quality Standards for the service which provide a national quality framework to support the provision of free, accurate impartial information, advice and support for the Impartial Information, Advice and Support Services. The service continues to strive to meet the standards outlined in these documents and the format of the report is based on these standards.

The Quality Standards(IASS) are being reviewed and there will be new minimum standard for the service to work too at the end of this year.This is likely to be the last Annual report in this reporting format as I am anticipating a lot of changes to the service in the next 12 months.

**Geraldine English  
Manager  
Parent and Young Peoples' Partnership Service  
September 2018**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Who we support?**

The Information, Advice and Support Service became statutory when the SEN legal framework in the Children and Families Act 2014, and its related regulations and guidance (including the SEN and Disability Code of Practice), became law. The SEN and Disability Code of Practice Chapter 2 outlines the requirements for this service which requires that quality information, advice and support is offered to:

Children and young people with SEN up to 25 years;  
Parents of children with SEN;  
Disabled children and young people up to 25 years;  
Parents of children with disabilities.

This report will look at our service under the five main headings of the Quality Standards:

- Commissioning, Governance and management arrangements;
- Strategic Functions;
- Provision of information and advice;
- Supporting individuals;
- Professional development and training.

## 1) COMMISSIONING, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

### a) Identity and Branding

#### i) Location

The Trafford PYPPS is an in-house service and is based on the fourth floor of the Waterside offices in Sale in a separate office. The service moved from the open plan first floor location in January 2018 to allow the service to operate in a more confidential manner so that conversations with parents and young people could not be overheard. It has proved to be a much improved location.

The EHCP assessment team is still based on the second floor of the Waterside offices in Sale.

Such proximity means the service still does not achieve the current Quality Standards recommendations which state that the service should be located in premises separate from the LA SEN teams and ideally not in the main LA premises.

The LA are aware of this and are awaiting the new revised Quality Standards recommendations about location.

#### ii) Identity and Branding

We have our own Logo and a separate phone line with a helpline operating from 9-12pm from Monday to Fridays throughout the year. For those times where we are out of the office we have telephone answer machines.

We have an independent website - [traffordpypps.co.uk](http://traffordpypps.co.uk). The website has information on our service, information leaflets and booklets as well as our policies and the annual report.

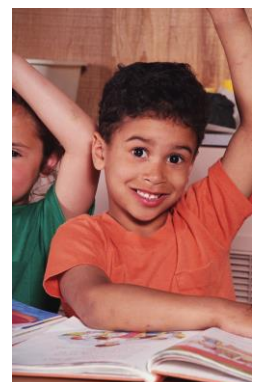
We also have a Twitter page 'Trafford pypps' and a Facebook account 'Trafford PYPPS'. Our service details are on the Trafford Local Offer, Trafford Council's website, Trafford Parent Forum's website and the National IASS website.

### b) Budget

We have a delegated and ring-fenced budget. For the last financial year 2017/2018 the budget delegated to the PYPPS was : £77,492.

In addition to this budget we received a grant of £20,880 for an Independent Supporter for the financial year 2017/2018 from funds managed by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) on behalf of the Department of Education.

Simon Frankham has remained in post as a caseworker using this funding. As there was some money remaining from this grant, which had been awarded since July 2014, Simon's post is funded until March 2019.



**c) Service Development Plan**

We have a service development plan which covers each academic year and is reviewed 6 monthly. It identifies specified improvement targets to meet service users' needs and priorities and includes the continuous professional development needs of the team members.

**d) Safeguarding**

All of our team have received training and knowledge of safeguarding procedures during the last 18 months. We have a **Lone Working procedure** which we require all staff to follow.

**e) Steering Group**

The Steering group is a requirement of both the current Quality Standards and will be in the new minimum standards. There was a steering group for Parent Partnership but it was not well attended and ceased to operate in 2014.

Arrangements are currently being put in place for this to be re launched with an initial meeting to be held in October 2018.

**f) Service Level Agreement**

The service level agreement is contained within the Service Development Plan and is reviewed with the LA Link person every six months. The LA Link person is currently Joanne Gibson who is a Specialist Commissioner.

**2) STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS**

**a) Informing Local Policy And Practice**

**i) Parent Forum**

The PYPPS works closely with the Trafford Parent Forum and the Manager is a member of the steering group. They jointly deliver training and information to parents/ carers on a variety of topics.

**ii) IS Agency**

The funding for the IS agency in Trafford ceased in July 2018 as all the statements had been transferred to EHC plans by March 2018. During the year there were meetings between the Independent Supporter VCAT Manager, a representative from LA EHCP Team and PYPPS with the emphasis on informing parents of the closure of the service and where alternative information and advice could be found.

**iii) Lets Talk event**

PYPPS staff were involved in the planning of this event for 14-18 year old young people with SEN(d) which was held in March 2018 at the Life Centre. The event wanted to hear the views of pupils with SEND aged 14-18 about their education, their lives and their views on the Trafford Local Offer. There were also workshops on budgeting, staying safe, relationships and recycling. PYPPS had a stall at the event as well.



**iv) CAHMS and ND Pathway working groups**

PYPPS staff were involved in these two groups which were working on preparing a clear and effective pathway and process for families who are following this to get diagnoses and support for their children and young people's needs.

**Launch/ new pathways?**

**v) Communication and Engagement working group**

The Manager is involved with this group which meets bi-monthly and reports to the SEND Board on improvements to SEND services. The group also organises SEND events such as "Lets Talk" . The group also contributes to the Link SEND newsletter which is distributed termly electronically and keeps parents/carers up to date on all things SEND.

**vi) Voluntary and Community Groups**

We have links with a number of local voluntary and community groups including Health Watch, Aspirations, National Autistic Service (NAS), and Centre for Independent Living (CIL) transition group for young people. Unfortunately some local voluntary organisations have closed due to a reduction in their funding. CIL was one of the organisations that ceased in July 2018 although it is hoped that the transition group for young people project will be picked up by another local organisation. At time of writing it is not yet clear where the transition project will be housed.

**vii) Service Users concerns**

During this year we have listened to our service user's views and informed Trafford Council of these concerns. This has been largely through individuals contacting us with their concerns. Some of the concerns raised were about the same issues.

The main, concerns were

- EHC process and time scales
- Exclusions and the 6 day provision for young people with SEND/ EHC plans
- Special school placements both in and out of borough

**b) Contributing To National Policy And Practice**

**i) Regional Groups**

Trafford PYPPS is part of the NW IASS group of services which meets 4-6 times a year around the region to share good practice, raise concerns, contribute to National policies consultation and provides relevant training. The Manger attends this group on a regular basis.

**ii) Northern User Tribunal Group**

The Manager of the Trafford PYPPS also represents the NW IASS at the Northern Tribunal user group which meets three times a year. She is able to represent the views of the NW IASS services about their experiences of the tribunal system for themselves and the families they work with. She also is able to share information with the IASS group about tribunal pilots and upper tribunals decisions.

### 3) PROVISION OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE

#### a) **Publicity and Promotional Materials**

We have produced a range of information about our service and information regarding the EHC process, which is reviewed on a yearly basis. This is all available to download from our website. We are currently in the process of reviewing all our literature and, following feedback from parents and young people, hope to produce some new information in 2018/19.

The website also has information about relevant documents and legislation which parents and young people may find useful and a copy of all our policies. We have been reviewing our website to update it more frequently and make it more user friendly. We have also added a section for young people.

We also have a Facebook page and a Twitter account.

Some of our leaflets are available in print form and when we attend events such as transition evenings at special schools they are available for parents and young people to take a copy.

We have leaflets available in libraries, health centres and schools. Some of our local schools have a noticeboard which is for information about the PYPPS and upcoming events. We are always happy to extend this service to any other interested local schools.

We have a display stand publicising our service which we can take to events.

We are also included on the Trafford Local Offer.

If required we are able to get our information translated into other languages or into other formats such as large print or braille.



**b) Accessibility**

We have an equal opportunity and accessibility policy.

We offer a range of access options for parents and young people to contact or meet with us. Our office is an accessible building with hearing loops in the meeting rooms. We can arrange visits to other locations or the family home and will arrange late afternoon/ early evening appointments if required.

We accept referrals from parents and young people or from a third party with permission by phone, email, text, social media, letter or face to face.

If required we will arrange to meet the parent or young person with an interpreter or BSL signer.

We have a response time of within three working days to enquiries and monitor this on a weekly/monthly basis. Contacts can include parents/carers, young people, schools/colleges/ health and social care staff, education staff, voluntary organisations etc

Month	Number of contacts	Percentage answered within 3 working days
September	190	96%
October	137	85%
November	295	95%
December	162	90%
January	318	95%
February	179	73%
March	189	82%
April	163	98%
May	261	89%
June	419	95%
July	318	93%
August	57	95%

Total number of contacts 2688                      2017/8

Total number of contacts 1113                      2016/7

Increase from 2016/7 is 141.5%

The number of contacts recorded has increased significantly over the past two years. This is due to several reasons.

- We are now recording all emails and text messages where as we used to concentrate on telephone and foot fall contact.
- Some of this is due to the age range we support increasing from 0-18 to 0-25 year.
- Despite these two reasons contributing there has clearly been a huge increase in contacts which corresponds with the increase in referrals which is shown in section 4 f.

The percentage of contacts responded to in three working days was an average of 90.5% which just falls within our standards of 90%

Looking at the figures there were four months when the total fell below 90%. The worst two months were February/March and can be explained by there only being two members of staff in the office during this time period of the Spring term.

**c) Feedback from Service Users**

We keep comments, compliments and complaints from our service users and each year we analyse these to see if we can seek to improve our service further.

We have a monthly telephone evaluation process with service users who have contacted us the previous month. The six questions are used by all IASS services across the country and allows for a National comparison to be undertaken so we can benchmark our service against others.

The next National Evaluation will be held in January 2019. In Trafford this evaluation is undertaken by PYPPS volunteers who contact the families we have worked with for an evaluation of our input and impact.

As we had no admin assistant in post from November to April the service did not organise any parent evaluations during this period. The 49 who have been contacted during this year were from September 2017 and April to July 2018 only.

**Answers 0 to 4 with 0 being not at all and 4 being very.**

**Q1. How easy was it to get in touch with us?**

- 0 2.0%
- 1 0.0%
- 2 4.1%
- 3 18.4%
- 4 75.5%

Average rating 3.7

**Q2. How helpful was the information, advice and support we gave you?**

- 0 2.0%
- 1 0.0%
- 2 2.0%
- 3 12.2%
- 4 83.7%

Average rating 3.8

**Q3. How neutral, fair and unbiased do you think we were?**

- 0 0.0%
- 1 0.0%
- 2 0.0%
- 3 6.1%
- 4 93.9%

Average rating 3.9

**Q4. What difference do you think our information, advice or support has made for you?**

- 0 2.0%
- 1 0.0%
- 2 8.2%
- 3 24.5%
- 4 65.3%

Average rating 3.5

**Q5. Overall how satisfied are you with the service we gave?**

- 0 0.0%
- 1 0.0%
- 2 6.1%
- 3 10.2%
- 4 83.7%

Average rating 3.8%

**Q6. How likely is it that you would recommend the service to others?**

- 0 0.0%
- 1 0.0%
- 2 0.0%
- 3 10.2%
- 4 89.8%

Average rating 3.9%

We need to extend the reach of the survey in the next academic year and are going to be sending out the surveys to service users we have been unable to contact by telephone and for whom we have an email contact.

Looking at the results from this year, based on low figures, the service scores well on all questions achieving over 90% on answers as good or very good apart from question 4 which scored 89%. This question is about the difference our information, advice or support made and was only rated as very good by 65.3%. and good by 24.5% This question is a much more subjective figure to unpick as it could include those who were hoping for more positive information to help them with their decision making options. This is something which will need to be explored further in the self review exercise the service will be undertaking next term.

#### 4) SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

##### a) Confidential Support

We have a confidential phone line with an answer machine that is not accessed by anyone outside the team. Our database is only accessible to members of the team.

We have a confidentiality policy which is reviewed yearly, and signed by all members of the team. It is available on our website in the policies section.

##### b) Data Protection Compliance Privacy Policy /GDPR

In line with the GDPR regulation, which came into force on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018, we have produced a privacy policy which is available on our website.

We now ask for written consent from parents/carers or young people over the age of 16 years to record details on our database. We also record if they have given permission for us to contact other professionals on their behalf.

Our phone line and answerphone is only accessed by members of our team. Our message book and filing cabinets are also locked at the end of each day.

##### c) Impartial Support

We have an Impartiality Policy which is reviewed annually and signed by all team members. It is available on our website in the policies section.

We worked with the Trafford Independent Support Service and made referrals to them for families and young people who were moving from a Statement to an EHC Plan as per the Memorandum of Understanding.

In April 2018 we started attending a drop in at The Life Centre in Sale in partnership with Trafford Parents Forum. They offer a weekly session and we attend once a month. We will continue to offer this next term and will then be able to assess the best way forward.



**d) Appeals and Tribunals**

**i) SEND Tribunal**

We support parents and young people through disagreement resolution, mediation and Tribunal as required and will attend tribunals to support a family.

In the year 2017/8 the team attended two tribunal hearings with parents. One was about refusal to issue and the other was a section B.F and I appeal.

The team has supported with 5 paper hearings which are about refusal to assess cases. The team assisted with another appeal concerning placement which was agreed before the hearing.

Currently the team are supporting four families who have lodged appeals with the tribunal and will have a hearing in the Autumn term.

**ii) DDA Tribunal**

We have given information and advice to several families about the DDA Tribunal but currently are not supporting any families through this process.

**iii) Admission appeals**

We have supported two families with admission appeal cases for local schools.

**iv) Exclusion appeals**

The team have supported three families at Pupil Discipline Exclusions appeals and one of these went to Independent Review Panel as well.

Major area of concern this year is the number of exclusions of YP with SEND /EHCP plans has increased.

Also a number of excluded YP with SEND not recognised by schools and not on school support.

**e) Mediation and DRS**

The Local Authority contracted with a new mediation provider this year and the contract was awarded to Essential Mediation

We have been involved with three independent mediation meetings this year but have supported parents at many informal meetings to try to resolve issues.

We believe that mediation and informal meetings have helped to resolve many concerns that could have led to a tribunal appeal being lodged.

**f) Casework**

The service had 451 referrals open at any point during the time period September 2017 – August 2018 which is an increase from last year of 34.65%.

**i) Reasons for referral**

<b>SEND concerns ( about SEN support, assessment, EHC Plans)</b>	<b>422</b>
Exclusion	7
Bullying	4
Transport	2
Miscellaneous ( other reasons such as Social Care ,Health, Apprenticeships/ Internships)	12
Admissions	4

**ii) Post 16 case work**

From the 451 referrals open at any point there were 51 post 16 cases.

**iii)How we supported service users?**

<b>College Meeting</b>	<b>6</b>
Email	747
Face to Face	101
Home Visit	62
School Meeting	99
School Visit	19
Text Message	55
Telephone Call	117
Meeting	107



## 5) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

All staff have an Annual PDRP where their training needs are discussed with a 6 monthly review. All staff had their Annual PDRP in July 2018

### a) Local Training

This year, all staff have received local training on:

- Information Governance.
- Freedom of Information
- Data Protection/ GDPR
- Safeguarding

In addition

- Nicky attended the information session given by the Trafford Speech and Language team on their new approaches to supporting schools and families with children with speech and communication needs.
- Simon and Jo attended the Trafford Council CMS website training so they can update the website.

### b) National Legal Training and other IASS/CDC Training

Simon attended a one day training event on SEND Tribunals.

Geraldine attended a training session on SEND Exclusions and attended the NWIASS training on Intervention levels for case work involvement.

Geraldine has attended one training day with CDC for Managers of IS and IASS services in the North West region.

Jo has completed the IS on line training and is working on the the IASS /IPSEA level one Legal training .

Simon has completed the on line and face to face training for IPSEA legal Training Level one and is currently working on Level two.

Jo is just starting the Level One on line IPSEA Legal training

### c) Local Training Events

- i) The NW IASS network meets bi-monthly and part of the meeting is a training session on an area that the meetings have identified.
  - ii) Geraldine has attended the Trafford Senco Forum to give updates.
  - iii) Geraldine has attended the NE Exclusions group to give information on the SEND Disability Tribunal and Exclusions.
  - iv) Simon attended the ADHD Parenting Group in Trafford to give information and support to parents.
  - v) Geraldine attended a CAHMS (Healthy Young Minds) staff training session on the role of the PYPSS.
  - vi) Geraldine attended the NASEN-SENCO training day to explain the role of IASS
  - vii) Nicky attended the meeting for the parents of new year 7 pupils transition event at Manor Academy to represent the service
  - viii) Geraldine attended the “Beyond Brentwood” information even at Brentwood College for parents/carers and young people about options available post Brentwood College
- What about attending the SALT transition course at Lostock College?

### d) Parent/Carer Training

In October/November 2017 a five session training course was delivered by PYPSS with the Trafford Parent Forum for parents/carers on “Preparation for Adulthood for Young People with SEND”. The courses had five day time sessions and involved contributors from adult health organisations, adult social care, the LA Adult Autism Coordinator as well as local voluntary groups. This is the second time this course has been run and was well received.

Comments from the evaluations included:

“A very helpful course with lots of information that I will use”

“The speakers were all excellent”

## 6) WHAT WE HAVE BOUGHT IN THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2015/16

A copy of PYPSS spend in 2017/2018 is available on request.

Most of our budget is spent on salaries, travelling costs and mobile phone charges.

Trafford Parent and Young Peoples’ Partnership Service is part of the NW IASS network and pays an annual fee for support, information and training of £125 per year.

Nearly all of the training events staff have attended this year have been free of charge apart from the Exclusions Training Day which cost £50.

### Trafford Parent and Young Peoples’ Partnership Service

Geraldine English  
Joanne McLeod  
Nicola Montes  
Simon Frankham

