

**Marian Simpson, Senior SEN Officer has answered the questions which were posted by parents and practitioners at the SEND Reform Event held at the Welcome Centre on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

*Q. Because SEN becomes the responsibility of this Local Authority, will schools no longer see SEN as their responsibility?*

**A. The Local Authority has always had legal responsibilities relating to pupils with SEN. Schools also have responsibility for using their best endeavours to ensure that the necessary provision is made for any pupil with SEN. The expectation continues that the majority of children and young people will have their needs met through mainstream education providers. The new Code of Practice will have a chapter specifically setting out the responsibilities/expectations of schools.**

*Q. Will children with physical difficulties and no SEN also be able to apply for an EHC Plan?*

**A. The definition of SEN has not changed. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:**

**(a) have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;**

**or**

**(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.**

**The Local Authority will continue to have criteria for statutory assessment. Some children with physical difficulties may meet the criteria for an EHC plan but most will be able to have their needs met without the need for an EHC Plan.**

*Q. Do the new plans include such things as daily physio etc.?*

**A. If physiotherapy is identified as necessary provision to meet a child's SEN through the statutory assessment process then it would be included in the EHC plan.**

*Q. Currently families can access tribunal, what re-dress do parents have if unsatisfied in the future?*

**A. Parents of pre-school and school aged children will continue to have the same rights to go to SEN tribunal. The new legislation also increases that right to parents and young people post 16 who attend post 16 institutions to go to SEN Tribunal.**

*Q. Would the Government input sanctions against LEA or School if it fails any of the criteria of the new reforms?*

**A. Schools and Local Authorities are both inspected and that would be the process to identify and raise any issues.**

*Q. How will you capture 19-25 year olds from September?*

**A. We already know the 19-25 year olds who currently have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDAs -the FE equivalent to a Statement of SEN). We are working with the colleges to ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to bring the new system into place. LDAs have to be converted in to an EHC plan in a 2 year period i.e. by August 2016.**

*Q. How will SEN training be enforced or monitored across a school e.g. teachers, teaching assistants to ensure good outcomes?*

**A. That is the responsibility of the headteacher and governing body of the school. Schools are inspected by Ofsted who focus on the outcomes of children and young people, including those with SEND.**

*Q. Requirement for all schools to have a SENCO is there any legislation that states the minimum number of hours SENCO is employed and the role of SENCO?*

**A. All schools are required to have a SENCO who is a qualified teacher. I am not aware of any legislation that states the number of hours they work but the SEN Code of Practice does give detailed information on their role.**

*Q. If IEPs are not required under the plans and SEN support is not legally enforced, how can parents ensure their child gets the help they need if they don't have an EHC Plan? What forces the school to do it?*

*Q. What measures will be in place to ensure it works well as at the moment our school is putting up the barriers to our children's learning and development?*

*Q. If there is no IEP but a statement or EHCP isn't really required, what is there for parents now?*

**A. Schools are inspected by Ofsted who considers the outcomes of young people, including those with SEND. The Governing Body of a school has responsibilities to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place.**

**The new SEN Code of Practice will make it clear what schools are required to do. That will include termly contact with parents and an annual report for parents on their child's progress. Talking to the school is key. But ultimately if parents are not satisfied with arrangements there are formal complaints arrangements.**

*Q. 1300 with statements, 380 with LDAs, but do you have a figure for CYP with disabilities in Coventry and/or 0-25 with disabilities in Coventry?*

**A. There is no requirement at the moment to capture that information. Most of the children and young people with Statements and LDAs would meet the definition of disability. But there will be many more who are disabled but do not require a Statement/LDA.**

*Q. Who pays for external specialists that are required? The Ed. Psych. only comes into school for 2 hours per term. Will she be coming in more?*

**A. There are different arrangements depending upon the external specialist. The money for Educational Psychology was delegated to schools many years ago so schools now pay for that provision and make the decisions about where they get the support from.**

*Q. Under the new bill can you go to your Local Authority to request an assessment for your child, if the school SENCO is refusing an Ed. Psych?*

**A. Nothing is changing in the new Act in relation to this. Parents can already write to the local authority to request a Statutory Assessment.**

*Q. How do we find out about schools that are actually working well with children with special needs (I have a son with down syndrome and I am desperate)*

**A. All mainstream schools should be able to meet a range of needs. You know your son best. I would suggest you contact local schools and look at their website to form a view about which would be the most appropriate placement for him.**

*Q. Under the plans, is there anything to ensure schools are receptive to parent's views?*

**A. One of the key principles of the new legislation and SEN Code of Practice is that children, parents and young people are involved in decision making and there is greater choice and control for young people and parents over their support. As a last resort if parents are dissatisfied with the contents of an EHC plan they can appeal about the Local Authority's decisions to SEN Tribunal.**

*Q. Will the local offer be available on a website? How can those without internet access get information?*

**A. The Local Authority is required to make the Local Offer available on a website but also by other means. We need to talk to parents about what other ways they would like the information. We will also make sure that there are places within accessible buildings where parents can get access to the internet.**

*Q. One Voice Parents Group and others: will you ever do courses at the weekends as can't get time off work?*

**A. Coventry Parent Partnership Service occasionally put on training sessions for parents during the evening which are advertised via the website notice board, mailing lists and schools [www.coventry.gov.uk/parentpartnership](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/parentpartnership) there are two planned for May and June. One Voice and Parent Partnership are currently planning an evening session during May.**

**We have in the past held adventure days for families at the weekend however more parents are needed to help organise such events as all of the parents volunteer their time. We need to consider how we can do things differently to ensure that parents, including those who work, can be involved in some way.**