

SEND REFORMS

TORBAY

A new approach to SEN & Disabilities

JUNE 2020 | ISSUE No.13

Working during Covid

TORBAY
COUNCIL

NHS
Devon
Clinical Commissioning Group

Torbay Local Area SEND

[Find out more by visiting the SEND Strategy and the SEND Updates pages.](#)



Introduction

Dear All,

When I wrote the introduction to the last SEND newsletter, I could never have imagined that I would be writing this one in such unusual times.

Lockdown has been a challenging time for many families, but for our SEND families in particular we appreciate that it may not only have been challenging, but exhausting too. We recognize that many of you will have experienced a disproportionate impact on family life from lockdown, especially where you have chosen or been advised to shield.

We want you to know that help, support and advice

are still available for you. Our SEND team, SENDIASS and Tissues and Issues have all been working virtually throughout lockdown (and I would like to extend my thanks to them all for their continued dedication and focus on our SEND community). Please don't struggle on your own, get in touch! We know these are exceptional and challenging times for all, please never be afraid to ask for any help you need. We are still here for you, albeit working in a slightly different way.

As life slowly begins to return to normal, we know that the challenges you have faced during lockdown will not simply disappear overnight. It can take a while for

disrupted routines to settle back into their old rhythm and that might be a new challenge in itself. For some it may be an opportunity to adopt a new routine or incorporate and keep things that might have worked for you as a family during lockdown. Whatever you chose to do, remember, if you have any concerns or need any advice, we are always here for you.

Stay safe!

Cordelia

Cordelia Law
Member for Children's Services



Message from SEN Team

The SEN Team would like to thank all of the children, young people and their families for their efforts to keep themselves and others safe at this time. We know people's lives have been uprooted and progress that was being made may have been halted. We appreciate how hard this has been on everyone and understand the difficulties our families are facing.

The team have been working throughout the pandemic, still trying to meet our statutory deadlines as best we can and working with schools and colleges to ensure that when things can safely return to normality there is an enhanced level of transition for all those with special educational needs. We know it will take time and we are here to support you all.

If you have any concerns please do not hesitate to get in contact with the team on 01803 208274 or sensation@torbay.gov.uk



Torbay SEN

Requests for Statutory Assessment (RSA)

Since September 2019, the investment in the additional staff resources for the SEND Team has enabled EHCPs for children and young people to be issued on time within 62% of cases, which is in line with the national average. The team will continue to work with partners to ensure all information is received on time, however it is anticipated that the Covid pandemic will have an impact

	Sept 15 – Aug 16	Sept 16 – Aug 17	Sept 17 – Aug 18	Sept 18 – Aug 19	Sept 19 – Aug 20*
Requests for Statutory Assessment	176	216	236	293	189
Refused Assess.	42	40	35	88	54
Stopped Assess.	3	4	2	2	3
No EHCP following assessment	1	2	6	13	4
Issued	130 (74%)	170 (78%)	193 (82%)	188 (64%)	55
In Progress	0	0	0	2	73
Final EHCPs issued on time	81%	88%	83%	21%	62%

*EHCPs in progress

Education, Health and Care Assessment Feedback.

Young people and parents are invited to complete a feedback questionnaire as part of the EHCP assessment process. Below is a selection of representative comments received from parents since November 2019 about the support offered by Schools and the SEN Team.

“”

The school has communicated their concerns with us.

“”

SEN could do inspections to check for delayed responses in schools.

“”

I thought the EP report and the EHCP itself were very thorough and well written.

“”

Always supportive!
(SEN Team)

“”

Home visit support to understand the process. The plan was late, too much paperwork without a clear explanation.

“”

I have been fully consulted and supported regarding the EHCP application process... needs have continued to be fully met.

“”

The Head only seemed bothered about the money.

“”

Things should be sent home so I can help her as well. She loves going to school she's such a happy little girl.

“”

(SEN) used the questionnaires to come up with a comprehensive and effective plan.

“”

The support we have from the school is really good, any problems or worries they help us.

“”

We found SENDIASS very helpful they took their time explaining all the forms.

“”

No one has been in contact with me from the SEN Team.

“”

(SEN) really listened to our views and the views of the child.

Torbay Educational Psychology

Torbay EP Service continues to play an important role supporting children and young people in Torbay. Paul William, Senior EP, has written a brief update on the team's activities, summarised below. The full article can be found on the [Torbay Educational Psychology & Specialist Teaching Service \(TEPATS\) local offer page](#) which is full of really useful resources for schools and families.

One of the first concerns was how would the lockdown affect children's mental health and well-being. We recognise that schools play a significant role in supporting the general well-being of all children, by giving young people structure, specific interventions, and identifying children who may need additional support. The problem was 'how could schools continue to support children and young people's well-being when they were not in school?' So, one of our first jobs in the pandemic was drawing together virtual resources that could be shared with schools who could then choose to distribute these to their school population. We had been able to produce three sets of resources, that we have shared with schools,

with one set focusing on bereavement and another on transition.

As the summer term began, we were able to continue to work with schools offering planning meetings, consultation and supervision around the needs of pupils. As the term progresses, our thoughts have begun to focus on children returning to school. The team has worked around supporting the psychological well-being of young people as they transition from year 6 to year 7, and we have provided guidance to schools to support this. We have also been concerned about the overall impact of coronavirus as a critical incident and are working to develop critical incident materials that can also be shared with schools.



Local Offer

fis.torbay.gov.uk



Visit **Local Offer in Torbay**

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities



We are pleased to see that individual visits to the Torbay Local Offer have been steadily increasing over time.

The Torbay Local Offer has been a vital source of information and resources during Covid 19, with the following Covid 19 related webpages having been created and kept up to date in response to demand:

[Covid 19 resources for Schools, Parent and Carers in relation to children and young people who have SEND](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ's\) in relation to children and young people with SEND during period of Coronavirus \(Covid 19\)](#)

SEN Capital funding update

So far the SEN Capital funding has been used to support the creation of the following additional provision:

- STEP's at Paignton Academy. This has been in operation since [Sept 2019]
- ASD provision at Spires Academy. This has been in operation since [April 2018]
- Increased inclusive provision and practices for children and young people in mainstream setting. There were 10 projects approved in 2018 which have now been completed and 18 projects approved in 2019, many of which have now been completed – further details of each of these projects can be found on the Torbay Local Offer SEN Capital Funding webpage - http://fis.torbay.gov.uk/kb5/torbay/fsd/advice.page?id=T5AfXCp_VJ8

There are further proposals to create additional resourced provision for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH) within at least 1 mainstream primary school and at least 1 mainstream secondary school.

The deadline for the final year of bidding for projects to increase inclusive provision and practices in mainstream settings has been extended until 30.05.2020, due to Covid 19 conditions.

Supporting Young People with SEN during Covid home learning

The staff at the Hearing Support Centre at St. Margaret's Academy have been working hard to try to ensure they are meeting the needs of hearing impaired children at St. Margaret's whilst the children are at home.



For the British Sign Language (BSL) users at the school this has required an online platform that enables clear vision of the children and their communicators, and for those with listening equipment this has meant a requirement for clear sound, with the possibility of streaming directly into cochlear implant processors. The children and families have had several sessions each week with staff.

For the BSL users there are very few resources available that young children can access, so the Deaf Inclusion workers and Teacher of the Deaf at St. Margaret's have been devising resources that can be shown on-screen, or sent in advance in the post and then worked through during the session. Anton, Year 2, below, proudly showed his mum the parts of the body he had labelled with his Deaf Inclusion Worker online.



Meanwhile Deaf Awareness Week (May 2020) would normally mean activities taking place at the school to heighten awareness of deafness and communication.

This year that has not been possible, but the team in the Hearing Support Centre did manage to film a video of themselves signing the colours of the rainbow in BSL.

The video can be seen at: www.stmargaretstorbay.org.uk/website/deaf_awareness_week_during_lock_down_may_2020/478739

We hope you enjoy it!

Jo Saunders
Teacher for Hearing Impairment

Online Portage sessions keeping children happy and connected.

TORBAY Portage Team, May 2020

Covid 19 has changed our lives and has made everyone adjust and adapt to our evolving world. Mandy, Carolyn and Luisa were no exception and once the novelty of finishing paperwork was completed a new approach had to be found in delivering the service.

Portage offers 3 main elements which are child led play, focused teaching and family focus. Little imagination was required for family focus as we were able to keep in touch offering strategies and support over the phone, and sending resources through email. As lockdown started to become the 'new norm' online singing and story sessions started to appear

which allowed children to see their familiar practitioners completing familiar songs and stories. Although these sessions were great for most children it didn't offer the individualised approach that portage children require. We decided that using technology that suited our families we would offer individual sessions through Zoom, Whatsapp or Facetime.

It has to be said that initially parents were skeptical and we weren't sure it was going to work either, so with bag in hand, lighting and position all considered we had our first sessions.

To read about how Portage has successfully used technology to support families please [visit this link to full article](#)

Early years advisory teacher for SEND - Working Differently

Makaton Tasters by Zoom

Despite having to cancel several 'live' groups planned for the end of the spring and early summer term, in settings or with parents/carers, I have managed to continue to offer a training service via Zoom. All accredited Regional Makaton Tutors have been given the 'go ahead' by the Makaton Charity to deliver online training and so I have been trialling this with bespoke Makaton Taster sessions. So far it have been well received and good fun! Anyone who would like to have a bespoke Makaton taster session, please email me judith.thomas@torbay.gov.uk I have 3 planned sessions in June with a maximum of 3 participants at any one time.

Keeping in touch

It has been business as usual with regard telephone support to setting SENCOs and parents/carers, with follow up written advice for further support. Please continue to make requests for dedicated support over the telephone, it is great way to problem solve together and create new ways forward for our young children with SEND, in school nurseries or PVI settings.



Transition

Our focus is now on the transition arrangements for our young children starting primary school next academic year. Support has been given to setting staff and parents, where needed, to make links with the receiving school. A strong picture of all our school starters with SEND is being finalised over the next few weeks and will be shared with relevant school and Educational Psychology colleagues.

[For more information please follow the link to the SEND and Vulnerable Children Bulletin.](#)

Judith Thomas EYAT SEND
Early Years Advisory Teacher for SEND

Post 16 update

Case study for 1:1 remote LSA support



M is an A level learner who has a complex medical condition, resulting in them being completely reliant on 1:1 support for any tasks requiring note-taking, typing etc.

Coupled with this, they are not familiar/confident with using technology and previous to this lockdown has barely even used text or email.

M lives at home with parents who are currently working from home and therefore, M relies fully on external support to complete their college work. The IT specialist suggested that they trial some dictate software so this was provided however, M has been very reluctant to trial this.

In order to make supporting M remotely more efficient, it was decided to reallocate their LSAs

to 1 per subject. This reduced the number of tutors that each LSA had to liaise with. It was decided to keep the 1:1 support sessions at the times that M's usual lessons would take place. This enabled M to retain some routine in the week which they benefit from.

To facilitate this support, the LSA contacts M via Microsoft teams. The LSA opens a word document which they then share with M on One Drive. This enables M to dictate their work to the LSA and for M to see the text as the LSA is typing.

The tutors also have Microsoft teams set up for the whole class. When group tasks/work is being discussed. The LSA and M both join these sessions so that the LSA can note take, replicating M's usual classroom support.

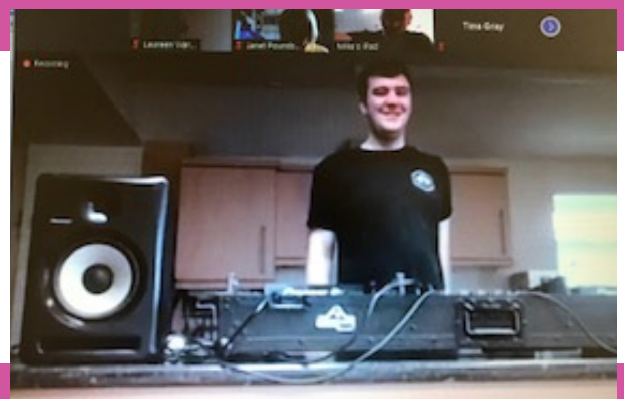
Tutors also engage via a 3 way call on Teams with M and the LSA weekly to talk through any problems/issues M is having.

The SENDCo has a weekly phone conversation with M to ensure they are coping and any issues are addressed.

To date, this support mechanism is working really well and both M and their parents are pleased with how it is meeting M's support needs.

Online DJ success

This is Brookin Ford and is a talented young DJ. Brookin played a live set over Zoom, supported by Robert Owen Communities College (ROC) and had over 100 hits to his page. He was really pleased and did a second set the following week!



SEND Monitoring Team

Although the SEND Monitoring Team are all currently working from home due to Covid 19 it has been business as usual and we will continue to provide as prompt a service as possible. Since the Covid 19 crisis we have been producing a Bulletin for SENDCos to support CPD and to continue to build positive relations with schools.

It has been lovely to hear from SENDCos and parents through phone calls and Zoom and we have appreciated the feedback that we have received, some, which is included below:

SENCOs

'During this time of 'lock down' and reduced access to school it has been extremely useful to be able to talk with the SEND team. I have been supported in completing the appropriate risk assessments in collaboration with the Local Authority and parents to ensure a shared understanding and approach has been in place. As we have been planning for the reopening of schools on June 1st our SEND Monitoring school link has been readily available to discuss questions and unknowns, offering suggestions of solutions and possible approaches that we could consider. This is a time of uncertainty for us all but having that outside input has been greatly appreciated.'

Hannah Sennett

SENDCo, Sherwell Valley Primary School.

'Many thanks to support from the SEND Monitoring team for SEND support and advice during the COVID-19 period. I have contacted them with a number of enquiries during this time and they have always been very prompt to reply, giving useful and current responses. It's been invaluable having the support of the Torbay SEND team during these unprecedented times.'

Jess Fisher

Inclusion Leader, Galmpton Primary School.

Feedback from parents;

'His educational journey has been studded with people that make a difference and you have definitely been one of them, Thanks again.'

'Excellent, thank you so much for accomplishing this (an amended EHCplan) so swiftly and capturing J.... as he is now. You have definitely reaffirmed our faith in Torbay.'

The SEND Monitoring team look forward to continuing to work with you all as we try to secure the best possible outcomes for the young people for Torbay, especially during these unusual circumstances.

To read the full update on how the Monitoring Team is working to support young people [please visit this link.](#)

SEND Monitoring Team



In partnership with South West Parents' Forums, the NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group has put together a frequently asked questions about health services during the coronavirus pandemic for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities <https://devonccg.nhs.uk/health-services/children-and-young-people/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-coronavirus-advice>

These questions will be reviewed weekly.

Designated Officers SEND

The Designated Medical Officer (DMO) and the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) have key roles to support joined up working between health services and local authorities and to implement the Children and Families Act reforms.

Torbay: Dr Jane Dunlop (DMO) and Paul Leach (DCO)

Devon: Dr Jane Dunlop (DMO) and Paul Leach (DCO)

We endeavour to work as a virtual team, with all officers being able to offer support and advice can be contacted at the single mailbox: d-ccg.send@nhs.net

Health Storyboards

In the last six months, colleagues in health have provided us with the following storyboards which illustrate some of the work to support children and young people with SEND in Torbay:

- Clinical pathway for children with sensory needs
- Speech and language therapy pathway
- Single point of contact for Child Health Devon for EHC assessments
- Children's multi-disciplinary hub
- CAMHS Paediatric triage
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder waiting lists
- Post diagnostic support for Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Children's Learning Disability Service
- Development of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME) workshop for young people

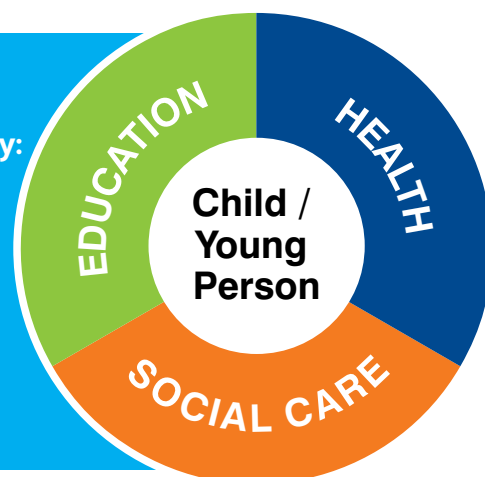
For further information please visit www.torbay.gov.uk/send-updates and view Self-assessment Storyboards.

Torbay Local Area SEND

Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND by:

- Better joint working
- Developing the local offer of services and support
- Joint commissioning
- Enabling co-production
- Preparing young people for adulthood

Find out more by visiting the SEND Strategy and the SEND Updates pages.



Useful Links

Corona Virus Information

www.torbay.gov.uk/coronavirus/

Torbay Local Offer

All SEND related local services and information

<http://fis.torbay.gov.uk>

Torbay Council Website SEND landing page

The portal for all local information including guidance and forms

www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/send/

SEND Code of Practice

Statutory Guidance in relation to SEND

www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25

Many thanks...

to all those who have
contributed to this
newsletter during
this busy time.

