

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Children with Disabilities

DATE:

Foreword by the Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

I am delighted to present the findings of this recent Scrutiny review into Children with Disabilities, where the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel presents its recommendations in response to some key questions raised by Members.

Councillors had the opportunity to meet with young people who have a disability, their parents, officers and providers of respite care. We were able to discuss many issues and learn about how children and young people work to ensure people understand they are individuals.

I would like thank everyone that took time to contribute to the review and look forward to receiving the response to our findings and recommendations.



Councillor Neil Gethin
Vice Chair of the Schools Children and Young People
Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The following recommendations proposed by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (CYP) and approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) following the group's review into Children with Disabilities. Support and reasons for the recommendations are detailed throughout the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Executive is asked to:

Recommendation 1

Consider actively promoting that parents of children with disabilities can contact their local councillors, to assist with directing them to appropriate support within the local authority and provide continued support to ensure they continue to receive the most appropriate cost effective support package.

Recommendation 2

Continue to support the need for an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) high functioning with sensory need resource and the work being undertaken to provide a pool of, or an increase in respite providers who can be brokered by the Council and parents.

Recommendation 3

Continue to support the work being undertaken to seek appropriate school placements for children and young people with ASD high functioning social communication difficulties (academically mainstream).

Recommendation 4

Ensure mechanisms and statutory guidance are in place to make sure Education Health Care Plans to enable correct interpretation, for example by schools and transport providers.

Recommendation 5

Investigate whether Council transport could be used/hired to take groups of young people out in evenings, using their personal budgets.

Recommendation 6

Support the POET Pilot and an evaluation be provided to a future Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Recommendation 7

Ensure continued work and commitment providing the best deals being procured for children where there is need to be placed out of authority.

Recommendation 8

- A) Consider writing to the Secretary of State for Education asking if thought could be given to the development of interactive examinations and other support aimed at young people with disabilities to help them overcome barriers forced through the formal examination processes.
- B) Support the current project with NEXT and investigate the possibility of such schemes being rolled out through the Borough by the Council and it's partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUPPORTING DETAIL

3. The Executive is asked to:

Recommendation 1

4. Consider actively promoting that parents of children with disabilities can contact their local councillors, to assist with directing them to appropriate support within the local authority and provide continued support to ensure they continue to receive the most appropriate cost effective support package.

Reason:

5. Parents wished to see more empathy and realisation that a diagnosis is just the beginning of receiving support for their child. It was stressed by parents that it was hard finding the correct help and support and expressed concern that if a child had physical disabilities, then it seemed that services were more easily accessible than for a child where the disability was unseen. Being actively encouraged to contact ward councillors would increase their support network.

Without a respite service provided by the Council or provision being commissioned for families then it could result in parents feeling isolated and unsupported.

Recommendation 2

6. Continue to support the need for an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) high functioning with sensory need resource and the work being undertaken to provide a pool of, or an increase in respite providers who can be brokered by the Council and parents.

Reason:

7. Members wished for families to see an increase in respite providers particularly those that could be brokered by the Council or parents. It was noted that in the past, the Council had a pool of respite providers which were regularly used. Staff were provided with good will training however, their skills became very attractive to the private sector and they gradually left to work elsewhere.
8. The Council has a Framework and standards that respite providers must meet before they can be commissioned to undertake work for families but there is always a risk that parents could be let down by the service from time to time due to unforeseen circumstances. Members were of the opinion that it would be advantageous to be able to call on a universal bank of staff to work solely for the Council.

9. Members noted that all requests for respite care were assessed individually and brokered on a customised basis and that due to the many variances required by families this can lead to a delay in provision. It was noted that the choice agenda for parents was an excellent idea but sometimes it could be difficult to provide for exact need.
10. Members learnt that there were approximately 100 plus individual packages, and personal brokerage can cause a huge endeavour for the local authority to resource, monitor and administer. Parents are involved in the respite process and meet providers beforehand with risk assessments undertaken.

Recommendation 3

11. Continue to support the work being undertaken to seek appropriate school placements for children and young people with ASD high functioning social communication difficulties (academically mainstream).

Reason:

12. Parents stressed that ensuring their child was in the right school for their ability was difficult to ensure the correct education was being provided. It was identified that some children with disabilities attend main stream schools with the assistance of an LSA (Learning Support Assistant). It was suggested that children with a physical disability could be supported more easily as the disability could be seen, however children with, for example, Autism, the pathways can be much different. It was explained that a child with Autism could be exceptionally intelligent but due to behavioural issues, had to attend a Pupil Referral Unit and in some cases this was inappropriate. It was identified with officers that this was potentially a gap in provision.

Recommendation 4

13. Ensure mechanisms and statutory guidance are in place to make sure Education Health Care Plans to enable correct interpretation, for example by schools and transport providers.

Reason:

14. During discussions there were many references made relating to young people, parents and school staff “wrapping children and young people in cotton wool”. The young people particularly recognised this and wanted to ensure that they were looked at as individuals and wished to live as independently as possible. One young person highlighted that correct interpretation of an Education Health Care Plan was essential. It was

explained that one plan referred to the need for a wheelchair, but it was explained it was not required all the time, but interpreted by school that it was, creating a little tension between the young person and the teaching staff.

Recommendation 5

15. Investigate whether Council transport could be used/hired to groups of young people in evenings, using their personal budgets.

Reason:

16. The young people explained that they had highlighted to local transport companies that it was difficult to use public buses, particularly with there being only one space for wheelchair and pushchair users. They also stressed that only a small number of taxis had facilities to carry wheelchairs.
17. The Ladder group (learning about disabilities, difference, equality and rights) outlined that its main goal was to champion the independent lives of children and young people with a disability. The young people explained it was difficult to attract new members to the group due to their reliance on parents, if they could not make their own way to the meetings with alternative modes of transport being difficult to secure. This was a common obstacle that young people had to regularly face and asked if Councillors could investigate whether local authority transport could be used/hired.

Recommendation 6

18. Support the POET Pilot and an evaluation be provided to a future Scrutiny Panel meeting.

Reason:

19. This pilot will assess if Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC) are improving the personal outcomes for children and young people. SEN statements are slowly and gradually being transferred to EHC Plans with the process due to be completed by 2017. Members expressed a wish to receive an update on the pilot and progress on the transfer of EHC Plans at a future Panel meeting.

Recommendation 7

20. Ensure continued work and commitment providing the best deals being procured for children who need to be placed out of authority.

Reason:

19. Members recalled the piece of work they had undertaken relating to children and young people being placed in care outside the local authority boundary and stressed that they wished to ensure that the best value for money continued to be achieved.
20. Members noted that concerted efforts were made with each child to ensure the correct support and value was being achieved. Sending a child or young person out of authority was the last option and fortunately, due to the hard work undertaken by the SEN team, no cases had gone to tribunal following parental challenge. To achieve this, the EHCP goes out in draft to parents and if feedback shows the Plan is unacceptable then officers meet face to face with parents to ensure provision is correctly designed. This approach was a big change in the EHCP process but had been extremely helpful with agreeing support.
21. It was noted that where a decision has been made that proven specialist need is required for complex cases, it is usually the case that no authority would be able to access service routinely and a decision has been made to move a child out of authority. Members were advised of a recently agreed high cost placement where access to the most appropriate provision could be accessed. It would be for a number of months where the young person would be assessed, receive appropriate care and support in readiness for reintroduction to Doncaster.

Recommendation 8A

22. Consider writing to the Secretary of State for Education asking if thought could be given to the development of interactive examinations and other support aimed at young people with disabilities to help them overcome barriers forced through the formal examination processes.

Recommendation 8B

23. Support the current project with NEXT and investigate the possibility of such schemes being rolled out through the Borough by the Council and it's partners.

Reason:

24. Members met with the Assistant Headteacher from North Ridge School and received a presentation relating to the project provided by NEXT, giving young people with disabilities the opportunity to undertake a 30

week work placement. The placement was based on 3 key elements with 10 weeks work on each area but consideration was currently being given to extending the range of activities.

25. Nine young people from North Ridge, Stonehill Pennine View Schools and Doncaster College had been successful in securing a placement with NEXT this year.
26. Preparation for everyday life was a priority for young people and this was regularly addressed by the school, and more so with the young people who were taking placements with NEXT. Examples of preparation included:
 27. Shopping at the local Aldi store – from discussions Members learnt that some of the young people could undertake this task really well, but if shopping at a different store was introduced then this could create difficulties, as it was not a store that was familiar to them.
 28. Local Café – The young people were providing breakfast for £2.50 to local people each Thursday. To prepare, in school practical lessons were undertaken. Again this was familiar to the young people and their capabilities reached with this task.
 29. What had become apparent to the school whilst ensuring young people were work ready, was that they were unable to complete the Food Hygiene Level 2 qualification. It was explained that they were not finishing the qualification as they were unable to concentrate for such a long time period of time or make progress due to the challenges brought about by their disability. This did not mean they were not capable of achieving the qualification requirements, it was just difficult for them to complete.
30. It was discussed that the development of interactive examinations, for example, Health and Safety and Food Hygiene to give young people with disabilities an opportunity to work in these fields.
31. Members supported the project provided by NEXT and appreciated the hard work that had gone into making arrangements to ensure it continued. There was a strong wish to see the expansion of such schemes across the borough to help young people with disabilities into employment and assisting them in working towards living independently.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

FOCUS OF THE REVIEW

32. To consider issues relating to how children with disabilities are supported to live an independent life.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

33. Scrutiny Panel Meetings and Visits:-

27 th July, 2015	Overview with officers
27 th August, 2015	Visit to Oaklands Respite Care Facility
3 rd September, 2015	Meeting with parents
9 th September, 2015	Meeting with young people
15 th October, 2015	Visit to North Ridge School
26 th October, 2015	Final evidence gathering meeting with officers

TIMESCALE

34. It was agreed by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel that the review would be undertaken through August to October, 2015.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOLS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillors:- Rachel Hodson (Chair) Neil Gethin (Vice Chair) Nick Allen Nigel Ball Bev Chapman James Hart Alan Jones Sue McGuinness Sue Wilkinson	Co-optees: Mr Damien Thorpe – Diocese of Hallam Roman Catholic Church Mr John Hoare – Diocese of Sheffield Church of England Invitee: Mr J Board - UNISON
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CONTRIBUTORS

Jo Moxon, Assistant Director, Education

Linda Calverley, Head of Service Special Educational Needs

Jane Mountain, Deputy Manager, Oaklands Respite Care Facility

Debbie Osbourne, Ladder Group

Davina Harding, Aiming High Team

Parents

Young People

Young People in Respite Care Facility

BACKGROUND

35. Due to the high demand across the service Members wished to consider the support services and Council respite in place for children with disabilities.

FINDINGS

Landscape

36. Children with Disabilities Social Work Team – provide a service to children with significant and long term disability.

The team includes:

Team Manager

1 Advanced Practitioner

4 Social Workers

1 16+ transitions worker – 4 days

37. At the time of the review the Social work team held case responsibility for 101 children. Of these 8 were subject to a Child Protection Plan and 33 were Looked After Children. Other children were subject to ongoing assessment and or Children In Need (CIN).
38. The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Audit and professional development) element of the service was reliant upon the Children's Trust as the Safeguarding function, including Doncaster Safeguarding Trust Board, was now located within Doncaster Children's Trust.

Current Challenges

39. It was recognised that high demand and managing expectations was a continuous theme across all of the services and that finances were precarious to manage. The Service was in budget at the time of the review however emergency situations could escalate budget predictions.
40. Recently improved communications between the service areas has encouraged a joined understanding of families' needs and helps to monitor access and availability of respite provision.
41. The Children with Disabilities Team (CWD) has improved basic social work competency after an independent audit of services, and an improvement plan continues to be in place and monitored.
42. Since the establishment of the Children's Trust, the CWD team are located 'long-arm' from the safeguarding function, and continued emphasis on communication and joint working is required. In the short

43. term this has been difficult to achieve consistently as there has been considerable changes of key staff. This remains a priority which senior officers are negotiating.

Oaklands Respite Care Facility

44. Councillors visited the respite facility, met with children and young people and staff.
45. The facility provides short breaks for children aged 6 to 17 with disabilities in a safe, warm and stable environment. It was refurbished last year providing much improved surroundings. The recent Regulation 44 Assessment was Good, and the last Ofsted inspection was also Good, including positive comments on the level of care and relationships between the staff and the children.
46. The vast majority of children accessing Oaklands will have an EHC (Statement of Special Education Needs) which the Council facilitates through a Person Centred Planning approach.
47. **Length of stay** – This was dependent on the care package agreed through the Council's Aiming High Team. It could be for 2 or 3 nights per week, a weekly day visit, 2 or 3 nights per month or a tea visit. All rooms are single occupancy with the children and young people being assigned the same room on each occasion for familiarity purposes.
48. **Numbers of children and young people** – the home can cater for 10 but tends to take 8, as this is a more manageable number.
49. **Bookings** – are undertaken on a monthly basis so parents are advised in good time. Parent's requests are taken into account as much as possible but sometimes, due to the number of bookings or mixture of children, may not be met exactly. It was noted that 75 nights and over spent in respite care can affect a child or young person's benefits.
50. The respite facility has accommodated children and young people for a longer term whilst awaiting foster care or assistance with preventing family breakdown, however it was noted that this can block a bed for short term respite care.
51. Emergency visits will be catered for if agreed by the Council's Aiming High Team.
52. **Cost of Placements** – The service remains Council run and offers competitive unit costs at £450 per overnight. All placements need to be approved through the Council's Aiming High Team with arrangements through Social Workers.

53. Details of a comparative independent provider were provided at £560 per night with others more expensive up to £1,000, if an emergency.
54. **Direct Payments System** – It was noted that this system had made the booking and use of the respite home for families more flexible.
55. **Premises** – There are two bungalows which have been created to be a home from home, for the children and young people:-
56. Bungalow 1 with 6 bedrooms for ages 6 to 15 years consists of a catering kitchen, which is well fitted and houses all the necessary appliances, a large lounge with television DVD player and music centre, a dining room and a sensory room.
57. Bungalow 2 with 4 bedrooms for ages 16 to 17 years consists of a kitchen where young people can prepare snacks and drinks with the supervision of staff.
58. **Staff** – The centre has a high staff – child ratio having:-
 - 1 Centre Manager
 - 2 Deputy Managers
 - 4 Senior Care staff; and
 - 20 full- time Care workers (approximate as these officers work varied hours)
59. The staff are medically trained to accommodate certain illnesses e.g. to support children with gravity or pump feeds. If a new child/young person attends the home then extra staff are scheduled to work to ensure there is 1-2-1 supervision.
60. Staff training can be accessed through Northridge, Coppice and Heatherwood Schools.
61. Staff have contracts for both 37 hours and 25 hours per week with the latter able to extend their hours up to 37 if additional support is required.
62. Night shifts – staff cover is dependent on the number of children and young people in residence but, for example, weekend is usually 2 waking staff and 1 sleeping.
63. **Activities and Outings** – The respite facility has a mini bus equipped with a rear lift for outings outside the home. It was noted that there was not the money to provide as many trips as has been the case in the past, due to budget reduction, like all local authorities.

Current activities include bowling, sports club, cinema/theatre and trips to the coast.

64. **Toys** – It was noted that the most basic toys were very expensive due to their specialist nature.
65. **Food** – Home cooked, good quality healthy food is provided and planned on a three week cycle. Schools are also contacted to ensure there are no duplicate meals.
66. **EU nationals and migrants** – it was noted that there had not been any additional impact on the service with regard to EU nationals and migrants using the service at this stage, for example, the use of and additional costs for interpreters. However, it was recognised that this could have an impact in future bearing in mind the change in population across the area.
67. **Private Sector Links** – it was noted that the respite home did not have any links with similar private sector facilities and the children and young people tended to either use local authority or private and did not mix respite across the two sectors.

Counsellors meeting with Parents

68. Councillors outlined to parents the purpose of their visit and what the Scrutiny Panel was considering with regard to children with disabilities.
69. **Respite** – the parents who met with Members did not use a respite service, however, concern was raised as to why it took so long to acquire respite care.
70. **Diagnosis** – It was stressed by parents that if their child did not have a visible disability then it was generally difficult to receive a quick diagnosis, particularly for Autism. Parents wished to see more empathy and realisation that a diagnosis is just the beginning of receiving support for their child.
71. **Access to services** – Parents were of the opinion that if a child had physical disabilities then access to services seemed to be more easily accessible.
72. **A child and young person's individuality** – it was felt that children and young people with a disability could be labelled and not treated individually.

73. It was stressed by parents that the Local Authority and Schools, in their opinion, needed to be more understanding of a child or young person's issues so negativity is not common place. It was stressed that A, B and C could be achieved but only if D, E and F had been put in place. Parents stated that they wished for positives with their children to be enhanced, but sometimes they, themselves, were hesitant in case support was removed by the authorities, therefore sometimes they created negativity to ensure continued assistance. In turn this could teach their children to look at themselves in a negative manner.
74. **Transport** – It was reported that on occasions there had been no indication prior to the contract for a child's transport being changed by the Local Authority and in turn could create unease for the child. This was an area where good service and relationships were required.
75. **Transition to adulthood** – Respite packages for a young person's short breaks remain until the Adults team have put measures in place. It was stressed that smooth transitions were essential to ensure they can live independently without support.

Councillors meeting with young people

78. The Young people wished to change the general public's attitude towards them, highlighting that each child or young person with a disability was an individual. They felt there was a lack of willingness to understand this.
79. **Awareness raising** - The Chair of the Ladder Group (Learning About Disabilities, Difference, Equality and Rights) explained to Councillors what the group was trying to achieve, that being championing the independent lives of children and young people with a disability. The young people who were members of the Ladder Group had various disabilities both physical and non physical and were looking to expand to include children who were deaf and blind. It was noted that it was difficult to attract young people to the group due to the reliance on parents to get them to meetings if they cannot make their way there.
80. **Facebook** – the Ladder Group has two Facebook pages to advertise what the young people do and increase awareness.
81. **Anti-bullying campaign** - The young people had made an excellent video, with the help of the college to coincide with the Anti-bullying week. This video gave a very strong message about how children and young people can be bullied and the effects it has on their everyday lives.

82. The young people said that with regard to bullying, “telling a teacher could sometimes only make it worse”.
83. **Learning and Support Assistants (LSA’s)** – the young people’s opinions were that some LSA’s were not as well trained as they could be particularly with understanding that each child or young person is an individual. Whether they understood the child or young person’s need was dependent on how good a school was. It was noted that generally an LSA post was used as a transient job and it was difficult to ensure such a small group of people were trained in detail for each disability.
84. The young people highlighted that the LSA’s at college listened to them carefully and better understood their individual needs.
85. A young person explained that they had to share an LSA at school with other young people and take breaks at different times to the rest of the school, meaning they had to spend the whole day together, rather than being with friends they made naturally. This meant that personalities could clash and cause difficulties with no natural separation throughout the day during both lessons or break time.
86. **Scribes** – Some young people had a Scribe assigned to assist them with mock examinations, however they were not provided for the real examinations. This could therefore put the young person in a worrying position and immediately at a disadvantage.
87. **Education Plans/Statements** – A young person provided an example of misinterpretation of a statement by the school: “it says I need a wheelchair, but it doesn’t mean I need to use it all the time”.
88. **Transport** – the Ladder group had undertaken consultation with First Transport who had taken their issues and concerns away for consideration. The young people had explained their main issue was there was only one disabled space on each bus which was regularly used by parents with buggies. They recognised however that they themselves could not discriminate against mums with buggies.
89. **Education** – An example was provided that a young person wished to attend university but was unable to, due to the specific support they required. However, some young people with disabilities did attend university to continue their education.

Visit to North Ridge School – NEXT Project (Project Search (American concept/company) or Employ Ability (National Grid scheme))

90. Councillors learnt about the project provided by NEXT giving young people with disabilities the opportunity to undertake a 30 week work placement. It had taken 6 months for NEXT arrange for the project to go ahead starting in 2014 and was now in its second year.

91. The placement was based on 3 key areas with 10 weeks work on each area and currently 9 young people were on placement this year.
92. The students who were offered the opportunity had skills that were from the top end of ability and aged 16 to 19, with applications from North Ridge, Stonehill, Pennine View schools and the College.
93. A post had been established, partly funded by the school and Adult Social Care, to help both the young people and staff whilst they were working at NEXT. The physical aspect of working in a warehouse was highlighted by Councillors, stressing that a Member of staff could be expected to walk up to 15 km per shift which could be difficult for a young person with disabilities. However, they were reassured that the young people were coping extremely well with the working environment and excelled in what they were achieving.
94. **Outcomes** – it was acknowledged by parents, young people and school that sometimes young people with disabilities could be wrapped in cotton wool, but highlighted that there comes a point when it needs to be removed and at this point it was noted that young people were surprisingly tough and resilient.

It was explained to Members that no young person from the school had been taken on in a full time position prior to the project being set up. How expectations were address and managed if the young people were not employed at the conclusion of the project, were discussed with the young person, including encouragement to undertake voluntary work.

95. **Evaluation of the young people's placement** – NEXT undertook a weekly rigorous evaluation of the young people to ensure appropriate support be given, if required meeting with parents was an essential part of the process.
96. **What needed addressing prior to a young person undertaking a placement** – all angles were covered, however it was noted that some issues had been raised as a problem, that both staff and parents did not envisage, for example, the inappropriate use of Facebook. Facebook was not allowed in school, but it was noted that students needed to ensure they were aware of its correct use in order to survive in external life. Such issues had now been addressed and resolved. Lessons had been learnt by the school and parents with regards to challenges and practices of social media. Other issues addressed included:
 - How to catch a bus and get to work for an early start;
 - How to tell the time – did the young people need to tell the time, or just recognise when to take a break at work?
 - How to shop;

- How to you teach a young person with disabilities to be safe in a working environment;
- Use of cutters, not knives;
- Working with parents to keep them informed.

97. Preparation for everyday life was addressed by the school regularly with incentives such as:

98. **Café** - In school practical lessons were undertaken preparing for work in a local church hall café each Thursday. The young people were providing breakfast at £2.50 to local people.

99. **Mock work environment** – It was explained that the School was looking for premises to provide their young people with a working environment where they could learn to build pieces of furniture, in preparation for a placement at NEXT or elsewhere, but it was proving to be difficult to find somewhere near to the school.

100 Councillors noted that something unique had been created by the school and NEXT and wished for it to continue and expand across the Doncaster business sector.

Meeting with officers

101 All decisions in a young person's care package are made to ensure the best outcomes are achieved.

102 **Direct Payments** - This was a facility for families to acquire short breaks/respite for their children, for example, from Oaklands, used to employ a personal assistant or broker a service through the Local Authority Aiming High team. The payments must be used for respite only ensuring families get a good nights sleep.

103 **Assessment for assistance** – can take up to a month but if a provider cannot be found immediately it can take some time. There would always be a delay if a broker could not be provided. Parents are kept up to date fortnightly and are offered the facility to broker care themselves. The package could be paid for 50% by the Local Authority and 50% by Health, but it was dependent on need.

104 There are many factors taken into account and outcomes are dependent on the child and family on the day they are assessed Referrals could be received from the family and partners including schools and health.

- 105. Scoring Mechanism for assistance following receipt of an application for support** – Every case is scored on its individuality and determines whether a family receives assistance. 175 points is the current assessment requirement and has been for 2 years but would more than likely be reviewed in the near future. There is always the possibility that the required points may increase. The points system and process is checked with “In Control”, a national organisation to ensure outside scrutiny and ensuring the Council is in keeping with rest of country. Aiming High Teams across the region meet to discuss rates to ensure scoring across local authorities are the same or very similar. There is no statutory prescription and has to be undertaken through negotiation.
106. Each child’s case was looked at individually and if very close to achieving the score but not quite managing it, resilience of the family is taken into account.
- 107. Bank of Personal Assistants** – The Local Authority no longer has a bank of personal assistants but ways of providing this were always investigated and considered.
- 108. Providers** – There is a standard framework that providers have to meet and all requests for a service are created on a customised basis. An improved commissioning and brokering system across the boundaries could improve the service and it was something that neighbouring authorities were considering.
109. Once a provider is chosen a risk assessment meeting is undertaken with parents. Providers are asked as part of their contract to ensure as much as practical the same carer is provided but this cannot be guaranteed.
- 110. EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plans) and RAS Assessments** - These assessments will be moving to the same timeframe with a review undertaken every 3 months. The child is heavily involved with the process ensuring plans are personalised.
- 111. Choice of schools** – Following the discussion with parents where concern was expressed with regard to children with high intelligence but emotionally not capable being education in a Pupil Referral Unit, it was noted that this gap had been identified and various avenues were being considered to try and address the situation. It was stressed that a mainstream school may have an enthusiastic head teacher that would create a teaching environment for young people in this situation, however on the other hand a new headteacher could remove the resource.
- 112. POET** – the Authority has volunteered to take part in this pilot scheme, to ensure that Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) are improving personal outcomes. The details of improvements to be made by the children and young people set out in their EHCP and can include targets, for example, how they make eye contact or how they make friends. They

may look like small steps but challenging for a child with disabilities which they will aim to continually build on.

107.Placements/Out of Authority – Members were reminded that 4 years ago the Authority was grossly overspent on placing children in facilities out of area. Stronger and improved commissioning has enabled the Local Authority to keep children within Doncaster and all areas were reviewed to ensure the best package was found for the child. It was stressed that placing a child out of authority was now the very last option, for example, if there is a proven complex specialist need that cannot be met in Doncaster. If this was the case the child or young person is reintroduced as soon as they can be properly supported at home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jo Moxon, Assistant Director, Education

Linda Calverley, Head of Service Special Educational Needs

Jane Mountain, Deputy Manager, Oaklands Respite Care Facility

Debbie Osbourne, Ladder Group

Davina Harding, Aiming High Team

Parents x 3

Meeting with Young People x 2

Young People in Respite Care Facility