

# Our Voice



March 2021

## Our Voice

### Update from Fazilla Amide, Chair of Our Voice

The unprecedented challenges thrown up by the pandemic have had an enormous and often disproportionate impact on the families of children with SEND, so our support and advocacy have been needed more than ever over the last year.



The Our Voice Management Committee (from left to right) Akosua Osei, Tee Richards, Jackie Pummell, Fazilla Amide, Liz Willis, Seema Islam, Khilna Gudhka, Resim Clear, Natalie Sherman, Sonja Ibrahim and Rupali Bhullar

### What do we do

We support families by

- Listening to you
- We represent you when working with the statutory agencies and voluntary sector, provide a "bridge or connection"

- We network regionally and nationally
- We provide informal advice and information
- We provide training and opportunities to network
- But we can't lobby

### **Achievements over the last year**

- Attended over 125 Education, Health and Social Care meetings representing the parent/carer voice
- Ran 17 'Cuppa and chat' sessions giving parents a chance to catch up with each other in a supportive environment
- 12 Webinars and videoconferences on topics from Positive Behaviour Support to Home-to-School Transport
- 6 Zoom parties for children
- Joined 3 external virtual coffee mornings
- Our January lockdown 3 survey got 132 responses
- Our Autism/Covid support survey got 67 responses
- Attended 6 Pan-London meetings
- Attended 7 National Government sessions
- Provided 21 laptops/devices to families, and facilitated another 30 devices distributed by schools
- Provided parent support packs over the summer of 2020 (online & printed) and an updated version for winter

### **What difference has this made?**

- Our Voice surveys have been influencing government guidance and have been the basis for our discussions in Enfield with the Local Authority and Health
- More flexible arrangements for 'short breaks' offered (more than the rest of London)
- Health therapies remained in place (though we know they found it difficult to attend schools on a face to face basis)
- Re-visiting the time scales and style of the EHCPs

- Improved School Transport and personal budget options
- Parents help line supported by Educational Psychologists
- A number of opportunities to learn about key issues across the borough via our joint virtual sessions
- Over 50 Families have had greater access to online support and remote learning

### **Impact of health inequalities**

- Lockdown 1 and 3 surveys showed families still really struggling
- Lockdown 2 had less of an impact, because most of our children were in school or college
- We know our children have been significantly affected
- EHCP and SEN Support Annual Reviews more important than ever
- Our children need timely and EFFECTIVE needs assessments

### **How can we help?**

- Provide informal advice and guidance to parents on a variety of issues and sign-post other sources of support and guidance
- Provide opportunities for parents and carers to talk to each other through holding virtual coffee morning/evening sessions and deliver training/workshops on subjects including Positive Behaviour Support, SEND information sessions and sleep workshops
- Join our mailing list for regular updates on what's happening locally, events and other relevant information
- Contact us on 0751 6662315; [info@ourvoiceenfield.org.uk](mailto:info@ourvoiceenfield.org.uk), visit us [www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk](http://www.ourvoiceenfield.org.uk) or follow us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/ourvoiceenfield/](https://www.facebook.com/ourvoiceenfield/) or Twitter @enfieldourvoice

# SEN Services

## Update from Barbara Thurogood, Head of SEN Service



The SEN Service works in partnership with parents, schools and professionals across education, health and social care.

### Our highlights

- Head of Service, Barbara Thurogood, recruited July 2020
- SEN Manager, Stephanie Baiardo, recruited August 2020
- Expansion, there are now 12 SEN Advisory Officers and 6 Business Support officers
- A Tribunal Officer post is to be created and is currently filled by a Tribunal Consultant
- All posts fully recruited to as of December 2020

The service is currently under consultation with officers to consider if the current structure is making best use of the staff available.

Considerations are for:

- Assessment Team - to focus on EHCN assessment
- Annual Review Team - to focus on Annual Reviews
- We'll retain the LAC, vulnerable and complex team as it's highly valued by families and professionals in managing the needs of more complex children and young people
- Education Health and Care Needs Assessment decisions to assess - 78%
- Education Health and Care Plans, decision to issue a plan within 20 weeks - 64%
- To improve the quality of EHCP's and have put in place a Quality Assurance process where all plans are Red, Amber, Green rated

- Ensure that SEN Officers take part in Co-production meetings with parents and SENCOs to agree the draft plan
- Parents have the opportunity to contribute to an evaluation of the EHCP process through a survey, so we have understanding of parents' views, wishes and feelings

The Head of SEN, alongside Head of Education, Strategic Resourcing and Partnerships, Neil Best, has been working to identify additional school places. A range of ideas will be put forward to the Chief Executive for approval to have more SEN provision in Enfield.



## **Integrated Learning Disability Service**

### **Update from Vicky Main, ILDS**

We have continued to deliver vital services throughout these very challenging times

### **Our achievements**

- Completed more than 2,700 welfare calls to ensure needs continue to be met and any issues or concerns addressed
- Produced weekly newsletters since May, aimed at those where accessing information via the web is difficult as well as providing advice and information in accessible formats
- Prioritised urgent reviews
- Conducted virtual health appointments and clinic sessions plus essential face to face visits
- Experienced significant increase in referrals for psychiatry, psychology and into our Duty Desk as a direct result of the Pandemic
- Recruited a specialist Epilepsy nurse for our service

- Placed significant emphasis on improving health and increasing healthy life expectancy for the people with learning disabilities, including prioritising Annual Health Checks in Enfield

### **Pandemic response**

The Learning Disabilities community in Enfield suffered hugely because of Covid 19. Our mortality rate increased dramatically in April 2020 by 650%, which caused concern and anxieties. As a response, we established a Covid-19 Learning Disabilities discrete test site in July 2020. This has been, and continues to be, a huge success, hugely welcomed by parents and carers, service users and providers and supported the robust and cautious return to opening day services in September 2020. We're not aware of any other local authority that has provided this specific service to our client group.

During this time, we have also ensured PPE and lateral flow tests distributed to all providers and employers of staff via a Direct Payment to support our service users, families and our providers. This has played a crucial role in managing the spread of the virus. The level of vulnerability of our client group remained worryingly high throughout the winter until the Vaccine started to be administered. In early March, we established a discrete MH LD Vaccine Hub based at Chase Farm Hospital. The vaccine work is supported through our service and Psychology have run successful sessions on needle phobia.

Reviews have continued to take place throughout the pandemic, we had to increase our staffing numbers in order to meet these multiple additional demands and some shortfall in staff. The impact on our ILDS Duty has been quite significant; we estimate around 50% additional work is coming in specifically related to day service closures alone. This has placed strain on other parts of our service but being able to respond has been incredibly valuable to individuals and families in crisis.

We continue with our general case work: BIA assessments, MCA assessments, Moving On and Care Act assessments whilst sourcing

alternative placements and supporting people to move home, with hospital discharge and safeguarding service users from harm. Forty three young people have transitioned to adult services during the pandemic.



Last year was incredibly challenging for everyone including those who attend and provide day services. Due to national lockdown restrictions, most day services have been closed for most of the year. There were care and support shortfalls for some of our LD service users who were unable to access venue-based day services due to their closure or minimum provision. We worked closely with our Public Health colleagues, Senior Management team, operational teams, providers and families to make sure that the appropriate levels of support continued to be provided to the service users who have attended day services pre-lockdown. To meet needs, day services worked differently, providing some care in the home or community, as well as online sessions and home activity packs. Where necessary we have increased care packages for domiciliary care and support, working in a strength-based way with families and individuals. We reopened day services (Sept 2020) for 5 people per service, after day services, families and the ILDS all considered the level of risks to each user and completed a prioritisation matrix to ensure equality and fairness. Our cautious approach to reopening Sept 2020 stood us in good stead for reopening again, aiming for April 2021. We are currently planning the second re-opening alongside the Government's Roadmap following the latest Tier 5 lockdown.

We've developed an Enfield-wide Virtual Offer, a rolling calendar for service users and their parents/carers of virtual activities, including educational, social, and informational sessions. More information can be found [here](#).

We're modernising our approach to day services delivery to ensure that the positive changes introduced during the lockdown, such as utilising technology, are here to stay. This will enable us to create additional capacity for service users who require venue-based services and create a more diverse offer of opportunities across the board.

## **Transport**

### **Update from Des O'Donoghue, Service Manager, SEN Brokers Travel Assistance Team**

Enfield Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people have access to high quality education in a school or educational setting which meets their needs, enables them to meet their full potential and to lead independent healthy lives. For children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), this includes enabling them to develop the skills to live an ordinary life in adulthood and fulfil their right to independent living and employment.

We are committed to sustainable modes of transport for all children and young people, whether travel assistance is provided or not. Our aim is to encourage pupils to travel to school safely by using sustainable and appropriate modes of transport. This includes:

- Encouraging walking, cycling, public transport use, and where appropriate car sharing for the entire school community
- Promoting, supporting and assisting schools to identify and address school travel issues through developing and implementing individual School Travel Plans
- Providing an environment which is as safe as possible for all children and young people on their journey to and from school
- Ensuring future school planning and building design reflects the importance of sustainable travel principles
- Supporting the promotion of healthy lifestyles through implementation of the Enfield Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Healthy Schools

programme, by promoting more active travel to school and developing sustainable travel facilities

Independent Travel Training (ITT) is our preferred type of travel assistance as it gives children and young people the skills and confidence to travel independently on public transport and help prepare them for independent adult life. By reducing young people's dependence on specialist transport, we increase the opportunities open to them in future – such as going on to college, employment or just being able to get out and about with friends.

More information and how to make an application for travel assistance can be found using [this link](#).

### **Update from Julian Minta, Head of Fleet and Transport Services**



Despite a challenging year Transport has continued to function throughout the pandemic and has managed to deliver services despite the ever changing rules and transport requests from users and schools.

A thorough, continuous cleaning regime is in place for all buses to protect as best as possible all users and staff. We have been looking at ways to develop and streamline parts for the service and are currently working on a new text alert system for parents and schools to assist and keep everyone up to date with arrival times and delays.

Transport has gone through some internal changes this year with all staff, with the exception of contractors, now full time employees of Enfield Council so reducing the reliance on agency staff. Training services have been brought back in-house, so all required staff training can be delivered quickly and efficiently.

# Educational Psychology

## Update from Suzy Francis, Enfield Educational Psychology Service & Schools Emotional Wellbeing Service

Principal Educational Psychologist  
Strategic Lead for Children & Young People's  
Emotional Wellbeing & Mental Health



Enfield's Educational Psychology (EPS) and Schools Emotional Wellbeing Service (SEWS) is a large service with just under 50 staff including 30 Educational Psychologists (EPs), three Assistant Educational Psychologists and eight mental health practitioners. We're funded by Local Authority, the Clinical Commissioning Group, government grants, universities, schools and partners that enables us to deliver our service for Enfield and support the training of future educational psychologists and mental health practitioners.

Throughout the pandemic, our aim has been for children and young people, their families, educational staff and partners to be provided with a psychological service that complies with the Covid-19 restrictions. Our team have stayed in close communication as a team, with schools, partners and Our Voice Parent Carer Forum. This has enabled us to carefully consider the challenges experienced by all so that we could respond to and support all of our emerging needs.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, the Educational Psychology Service has provided direct support to over 1,300 children and young people (aged 0-25).

### **Statutory work**

Led by our Senior EPs, Sara Bierer, Dr Neerose Ubha and Dr Rachel Friend, our team has provided 528 statutory assessments and advices

contributing to Education Health and Care Needs Assessments. An average of 84% of advices meeting the 6-week statutory deadline. Since July the average has risen to 93%.

### **Early years**

The EPS has a team of Specialist Early Years Educational Psychologists led by Liz Jones, Senior EP for Early Years. There's a caseload capacity for 170 children and since April 2020 and the team has completed 127 statutory advices and on average 93% of these advices met the 6-week statutory time scale.

### **Autism**

This year, Claire Collins , Senior EP for Autism has worked closely with the Head of Enfield Advisory Service Autism (EASA) in developing a small team of Specialist EPs for Autism. The EPS has contributed to ATLAS online sessions for parents of children under 6yrs and Cygnet training for parents and siblings of autistic children over 6yrs old. The EPs deliver psycho-education support with individual children directly or in collaboration with SENCOs.

The EPS and EASA have worked closely with leads in Health and Social Care, Enfield Council and Our Voice to increase the autism offer for our autistic children/young people, their families and educational settings. This will provide an increased focus on early years and post 16 and this extended offer will be operational by September.

### **Community offer**

The EPS & SEWS Community Offer, led by Dr Emma Gore-Langton, Senior EP for Social, Emotional and Mental Health, and in collaboration with our EPs and our Trainee Childrens Wellbeing Practitioners, has reached over 500 parents/carers and young people through providing accessible telephone support, workshops, groups and individual therapy sessions.

Since the re-opening of schools, our team have started to visit schools and settings again to meet with and/or observe children and young people where this is possible and agreed by all concerned. However, our work with parents/carers, school staff and professionals, will remain mostly online. Our hybrid approach allows us to continue to work efficiently in ever changing times.

### **Support for my child from the EPS**

Schools can usually meet the special educational needs of children/young people, so if you're concerned about your child's learning, wellbeing or mental health, speak them first. They'll talk to you about your concerns, may discuss setting up an 'Individual Education Plan' and may involve the EP for further assessment and guidance. Schools purchase this service and prioritise in line with the needs of children in their school.

Children, young people and their families can access support from an Enfield EP when any one of the following apply:

- the EPS receives a formal request for a pre-school child living in Enfield from a professional e.g. an early years setting;
- the child or young person goes to an Enfield School that has purchased Enfield EPS
- the SEND service has asked for information and advice from the EPS as part of an Educational Health and Care Needs Assessment or to support the Educational Health and Care Plan of a child or young person
- the child/young person has been referred to another team which has asked for support from an EP.

We only become involved following consent from a parent/carer or from the young person if they're over age 16.

## **How does my child receive support from Schools' Emotional Wellbeing Service?**

If you are concerned about your child's emotional wellbeing or mental health contact your child's school in the first instance and they can consider with you what is needed in line with their provision. Schools that purchase SEWS prioritise in line with the needs of children in their school. Currently 10 schools in the borough purchase SEWS. Other schools may have alternative services or counsellors that they work with. They can also signpost children and families to mental health support available in the local area. You can also talk to your GP. Please also refer to the SEMH section of the [Local Offer](#).

## **How do I access the Community Wellbeing Support offer for Babies and Toddlers**

Enfield is focussing on supporting families with babies and toddlers in the context of the pandemic. Liz Jones, Senior EP for Early Years, has been leading a workstream comprising a network of professionals across Education, Health and Social Care in partnership with Our Voice. Information and support is regularly updated and available through this flyer. [Click here to access the leaflet and the booklet](#)

## **EPS Telephone Support line for Parents/Carers**

Since the start of the pandemic our EPs have supported over 150 parents/carers through the telephone support line. This will continue until the autumn term. [Click here to make a request to access this support.](#)

- Parent/Carer Workshops and support continued to be offered in partnership with Our Voice Events Page – [link here](#)
- Enfield Libraries Facebook page is the host for Children's Wellbeing Practitioner recorded webinars and are accessible via these links:

[Supporting Your Child with Challenging Behaviour \(Part 1\)](#)

[Supporting your Child with Challenging Behaviour \(Part 2\)](#)

[Supporting your Child with Challenging Behaviour \(Part 3\)](#)

- EPS & Children's Wellbeing Workshops for Parents/Carers and Young People to support wellbeing and mental health

Workshops such as these will continue to be advertised via Our Voice and through the Enfield Thrives Together network and @ENFIELDEPS twitter

## Joint Service for Disabled Children



### **Update from Sue Roberts, Head of JSDC**

The Covid pandemic has been particularly challenging for disabled children, their families and the people that support them. The sudden disruptions in routine, the inability to provide support and the anxiety about safety

have had an immense impact.

For many there's been financial insecurities and worry about the health and wellbeing of other family members.

Families who rely on support networks whether from their family and friends or professional networks, have described their sense of isolation as this has been disrupted and, in some cases, ended completely due to national lockdown and social distancing measures. Accessing the usual range of face-to-face, social networks has been severely impacted.

For many disabled children and young people, the loss of their routine, structure, social relationships, school and short breaks that they rely on, has impacted negatively on their emotional wellbeing and resulted in increased behaviours of concern.

Families living in accommodation that doesn't meet their needs, further exacerbated pressures for families with no access to outdoor space, impact of disrupted sleep patterns due to lack of routine, children sharing bedrooms with siblings which impacts on their wellbeing and often disrupts their home education programme.

## **We supported families with**

- practical support ranging from emergency shopping to benefit support plus sign posting to other relevant services such as debt and furlough
- emotional support and a chance for parents to talk when feeling isolated at home
- newsletters to update families with information on Covid-19 specific support and online links to Makaton programmes and home activities
- scheduled educational work continued remotely in the Early Intervention support service, statutory work in relation to EHCP needs assessment was completed within timescales, along with advice and guidance about home learning activities
- groups, events and courses moved online, including the Playing and Moving group, the infant massage course and Moving On Transition events were all delivered virtually
- work with schools was completed on target, with all schools contacted and transition planning undertaken virtually for children due to enter nursery in September 2020
- Picnics in the park for children with SEND and their families in partnership with SENDIASS
- managers attended webinars organised by Our Voice, including those relating to Short Breaks and Positive Behaviour Support to share information with parents

**The Cheviot's team** of Positive Behaviour Support Coaches and Practitioners had consultations with parents who wanted support managing behaviours of concern.

Weekly meetings with representatives of Our Voice with the Director of Education and Heads of Service in Education, Health, and Social Care ensured effective communication between the Local Authority and our parent forum.

The Head of Service in the JSDC and the Head of Service in the Early Help and Protection Service presented to the SENCO forum to reinforce the referral pathways should they be concerned about the wellbeing, safety or support needs of any children.

We built on our well established positive relationships with the special schools to establish the children and young people who were not attending school, whether this was due to parental choice, because they or family members were shielding or because the school were not able to offer a place at school. We worked with schools to assess the risks and consider together how these could be mitigated, balancing the risks and impact on the family, potential of family breakdown, need to safeguard staff and the child.

The multi-agency Dynamic Risk Register meetings became weekly to ensure that children and families most at risk were supported effectively and to ensure that there was communication across the professional network

The social work team continued to undertake statutory social work visits, reviews and assessments for children either virtually or face to face. We increased the capacity of our social work duty service to ensure that parent's queries were addressed, and appropriate referrals made for support were responded to quickly.

### **Short Breaks provision**



Many disabled children and young people couldn't adhere to social distancing, so numbers at the Cheviots' sessions were limited. High staffing levels, due to the complexity of children's needs, further limited numbers that could be in the building at any one time.

Families where there were complex and multiple factors e.g. safeguarding concerns, number of children in the family with disabilities, parent's health, were prioritised and continued to attend the sessions.

If parents didn't want their child to attend group sessions at Cheviots, if their child was shielding or where we were unable to offer sessions, parents were offered an alternative short break.

Cheviots continued to be open for all after school and weekend groups and to run playschemes throughout.

Families who received a short break grant or another playscheme service, funded by the Joint Service, could use the grant more flexibly to purchase play and leisure equipment for their child in place of their usual short break service

Playscheme providers, West Lea, VIPS, Centre 404, operated when they could, but often with limited places. Abundant Living with Autism ran during some holiday periods. They're now Ofsted registered, so can offer sessions to those under 8yrs.

### **Key priorities for 2021**

- Disability register - parents to register online and receive targeted information about services and support
- Gather views of parents and children and young people about play and leisure activities available in Enfield and what needs to be developed further. The link to the online survey is available on the Local Offer and will inform where we target our resources
- Working with Our Voice, ENAS, SEN-den and colleagues across all services to improve the information and lay out of the local Offer
- Some parents found virtual meetings more helpful and accessible than face to face ones, so we'll continue to offer both
- Review the use of the Short Break grants and implement more flexibility on its use
- Prioritise work with our commissioners to identify providers to extend the short break provision
- Streamline the processes for short breaks to ensure they're clear and efficient. Update short break statement accordingly

- Promote annual health checks for young people aged 14 years
- Work with SEN to recruit a social worker to improve the quality of social care involvement in the EHCP process
- Early Intervention Support Service will be embarking on a new project to work in partnership with EASA in extending the offer currently available for families and educational settings

I want to thank parents, voluntary and community organisations, provider services, colleagues in schools, health, education and social care, who have come together during the pandemic to build a network of support for children and their families during the pandemic.

I am looking forward to building on our positive partnerships to continue to improve the outcomes for disabled children and their families.

## **ENFIELD CAMHS SERVICE**



### **Update from Nick Clarke, Consultant Clinical Psychologist & Enfield CAMHS Clinical Lead**

There are five core teams within the Enfield Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), with further areas of additional provision.

**The Generic & Neurodevelopmental CAMHS Team** provides a comprehensive range of assessment and therapeutic interventions across the age range, for common emotional and behavioural difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Conditions and other neurodevelopmental conditions such as ADHD. It's our largest team with the highest volume of referrals.

**The Service for Adolescents and Families in Enfield (SAFE)** offers a rapid and flexible service for the most urgent and acute problems facing troubled adolescents, including self-harm and mental health crisis.

**The Service for Children and Adolescents with Neuro-Developmental Disorders (SCAN)** is a specialist team for children and young people with moderate to severe learning disabilities and neurodevelopmental disorders, coupled with mental health problems. The team works closely with special schools in Enfield.

**The Health, Education, Access and Resource Team (HEART)** offers services to improve the emotional wellbeing of Enfield looked after children. Including assessment and treatment for emotional difficulties, consultation for carers and professional staff, and support to therapeutic fostering services.

### **The Mental Health Support Team in Schools (MHST)**

This collaborative, pilot project between Enfield CAMHS and London Borough of Enfield Educational Psychology, increases access to mental health support and aims to deliver evidence-based interventions for mild to moderate mental health and emotional wellbeing concerns, support to senior mental health leads in schools to develop a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing and timely advice and signposting to schools.

There's additional CAMHS provision in a range of other services including Youth Offending Service, Custody Liaison and Diversion, Family Assessment Centre, Child Development Team and Enfield Parent-Infant Psychotherapy Service.

## Pandemic response



We've worked closely with partners in the borough to plan and coordinate services through the events and challenges of the past year, and to ensure continuing support for children, young people and families. Service opening hours and contact arrangements have run as normal and we've had a staff presence at our sites Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, with enhanced crisis/out of hours arrangements.

## Our achievements

- Implementing a mixed offer of face-to-face, phone and online groups
- Creation of duty line for professionals to respond to urgent crisis concerns
- Creation of the trust-wide 24/7 crisis line for children, young people and families (0800 151 0023)
- Diversion from acute hospitals to community crisis hubs where appropriate
- MHST complete the training of its 8 Education and Mental Health Practitioners in its first year. This has been with the support of 16 placements across the first wave of MHST schools with a plan to gradually increase its offer to up to 40 educational settings over the course of the pilot.
- The MHST has delivered a range of work in schools, including individual, group and family interventions, workshops, staff support and consultations and developing resources for schools. These included creating short videos and creative resources for children facing the disruptions of the past year, for schools to embed on their websites and share directly with families. They can be accessed via [Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey NHS Mental Health Trust Youtube channel](#)

- SCAN team continued to work closely with Special Schools with regular multi-agency meetings, including school, social care and SEND to discuss cases for concern and respond
- Early Years Speech and Language Therapy and CAMHS Clinical Psychology conducted a successful pilot on autism assessments via video call for children under 6yrs
- Young People's participation group continued to meet virtually
- Employing a new peer-support worker role in CAMHS, supporting us with co-production, and co-facilitation of children, young people and parent groups
- Our Looked After Children's service has started to extend its offer to the 18-25 age group through a new Local Authority funded role

### **Looking ahead**

- Further work across Barnet, Enfield and Haringey CAMHS to develop greater consistency across service areas and deliver the key priorities and timely access to services
- Reduction of waiting times for first appointment and improvement of pathways to minimise secondary waits for specific specialist interventions
- Developing new CAMHS liaison services to children and young people admitted to Barnet and North Middlesex Hospitals
- Extension of the MHST project to up to 40 schools in the Borough, and establishment of the team beyond the end of the pilot phase