



Proposed changes to the way in which Telford & Wrekin Local Authority undertake a new education health and care needs assessment.

(Please note that these changes do not apply to transfers of existing statements of SEN to an Educational, Health and Care Plan)

The Local Authority is proposing to make a number of changes to the way in which new education health and care needs assessments are completed.

The main driver for this change is to ensure families receive a high quality service which listens and takes their views into account. There is also a need to ensure our procedures are as straight forward as possible and where possible, reduces the number of professionals that families encounter.

Please use the comment sections below if you would like to feedback about the changes proposed and submit them to SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk by March 31st 2017. You are able to feedback about all 8 changes proposed or only those that you feel are pertinent to you. We are seeking to implement the proposed changes from the beginning of the Summer term 2017.

Please indicate the following:

- I am a child or young person
 - I am a parent
 - I work in an educational setting (please specify if early years provider, primary, secondary, post 16 or special and your job role)
 - I work for the Local Authority (please specify your service area/team and job role)
 - I work for health (please specify your role)
- (Please tick)

Change 1: We will ask a professional who is already working with a family to complete a one page profile, which is part of the Education, Health and Care Assessment, rather than using a caseworker from the Local Authority Children and Families social care team.

Where a new education, health and care assessment is undertaken, parents/carers, children and young people are asked for their views and aspirations which is collected using 'one page profiles'. In Telford and Wrekin a caseworker from the Local Authority Children and Families social care team is normally the professional who contacts a family to complete the one page profile. We have received feedback that families are not sure why it is necessary to introduce a new professional to them to undertake this task as it has meant they have needed to repeat information that has usually been told to someone else. The Local Authority therefore proposes to ask a professional who is already working with a family to complete the one page profile or ask the family to nominate someone they would like. For example where a child is at a school, the SENCo may be asked by the family to complete the one page profile. The profile could then be submitted as part of the request for an EHC assessment. The Local Authority will offer training across early years providers, schools and post-16 providers about how to support families to complete a one page profile. This change also means that we are able to use caseworkers from the Local Authority Children and Families social care team to support the EHC assessment process in a different way – please see proposed change 2.

Comments

Change 2: We will ensure an education, health and care assessment includes a ‘family conversation’ with the Children and Families Care team where a family is not already known to other Local Authority children care services.

Currently our process for collecting care advice as part of the Education, Health and Care assessment has a gap where a family is not already known to Local Authority children care teams (for example Child Protection or Early Help). For the majority of children where we undertake an education, health and care assessment, direct intervention from these teams will not be necessary but signposting to other services in the local area may prove helpful. We will therefore ask caseworkers from the Local Authority Inclusion and Support Children Care team to contact a family who are not already known to the other care teams to participate in a ‘family conversation’, likely to happen at the family’s home, when a request for assessment has been agreed. Information that arises from the conversation, which will include advice in respect of services within the community, will then be written as care advice from the caseworker and contribute to the final EHC plan where one is issued. Where a family is already known to Child Protection or Early Help teams for example a caseworker will not become involved but rather the existing social worker/practitioner will submit advice, based on their current work with the family and that will contribute to the final EHC plan where one is issued.

Comments

Change 3: We will introduce a new health questionnaire as part of the request for an education, health and care need assessment.

As part of an Education, Health and Care Assessment, all children are offered an appointment to be seen by a Community Paediatrician for a general health check-up. Following this appointment, Paediatricians then provide written advice. Where health issues are found these are included in an EHC plan where it is issued. Some children and young people are already known to other community health professionals, for example Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, CAMHS, Physiotherapy, Community Children's Nurses etc. and advice is also sought from them to contribute to an EHC plan. At times families have reported that they are unclear why it is necessary to attend an appointment with a Paediatrician when there are no health concerns or where health needs are already known by other health services. We will therefore introduce a new health questionnaire which needs to be completed by families and submitted as part of the request for an education, health and care assessment. The health questionnaire will then be used by Paediatricians, after a request for an assessment has been agreed by the Local Authority, to identify who from health services are already involved and what, if any, further health assessment might be necessary. Where parents/carers have clearly indicated that they want a Paediatrician to undertake a general health check-up for their child, then when the request for an EHC assessment has been approved, this will be completed and the Paediatrician's advice will be submitted.

Comments

Change 4: We will introduce a new 'co production' meeting with parents / carers between week 12 and 15 of the 20-week timeframe to discuss the contents of a draft EHC plan where one is issued.

The Local Authority would like to work closer with families during the education health and care needs assessment process and provide better opportunities to coproduce an EHC plan where one is issued. We will introduce a new 'coproduction meeting' between week 12 or 15 of the 20-week EHC assessment where a SEND officer will meet face to face with parents, staff from the child or young person's setting and relevant professionals, where they are available, to discuss and amend as appropriate the contents of the draft EHC plan. At week 16 families will continue to be sent a formal copy of the draft EHC plan where they are able to make further representation. We feel this change will enhance the opportunity for personalisation and choice for families during the assessment process.

Comments

Change 5: We will introduce the use of one template for all children and young people who are issued with an Education, Health and Care Plan aged 0 to 25 years.

Currently the Local Authority has two templates that are used when it issues an Education, Health and Care Plan. One is for children aged 0 to 5 and the other is for children and young people aged 5 to 25. Feedback from settings, schools and parents indicate that two templates have caused confusion and there is no clear rationale why a difference exists as there is no substantial difference in the content of the plans. There is also an unnecessary burden on the team that writes EHC plans to convert from one template to the other as a child grows older. The Local Authority therefore proposes to adopt the use of its existing 5 to 25 template to cover all age groups.

Comments

Change 6: Where young children have received a multi-disciplinary assessment at the Child Development Centre (Stepping Stones) an education, health and care assessment will be triggered where it is deemed appropriate.

Some children in early years are assessed by a multi-disciplinary team at Stepping Stones. This team comprises a Paediatrician, Educational Psychologist, Physiotherapist, Speech and Language Therapist, Occupational Therapist and Specialist Nursery Nurses. Following a detailed assessment, a multi-disciplinary report is then written in which a child's needs are described and appropriate education, health and care provision identified. Currently, following a multidisciplinary assessment, a large number of children will then enter the Bridge Assessment Nursery (BAN) which is a specialist educational pre-school provision, where developmental progress is monitored for a further year. Before a child enters school, a decision is then made as to whether an education, health and care plan is required and a new set of assessments are then completed. Families and professionals alike report that there is mass duplication in terms of assessment and advice writing between a multidisciplinary assessment and the EHC assessment. Families are telling their stories to too many professionals more than once. It is known that a large number of children who have a multi-disciplinary assessment consequently meet criteria for an education, health and care assessment. The Local Authority therefore proposes to use the multi-disciplinary assessment as the trigger point for an education, health and care assessment where this is appropriate. All services who have not contributed advice through the multidisciplinary assessment or who wish to update their advice will be given that opportunity during the EHC assessment process.

Comments

The Local Authority is also proposing to make the following changes which will impact on the way requests are made for Education, Health and Care Plans.

Change 7: We will amend the Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment request form so that settings are more able to demonstrate how a child / young person meets the published criteria for assessment and how to evidence a high quality graduated response to meeting need.

The Local Authority will work with educational settings to ensure that information submitted in a request for an education, health and care assessment meets the published criteria. A key requirement is for educational settings to demonstrate how they have supported a child or young person's need through a high quality graduated response. Training will be provided by Local Authority SEND support services to educational settings so that it is clear what a high quality graduated response is which includes the need to develop support in waves, use outside professionals and implement recommendations while continually tracking progress against SMART targets. Briefings will also be provided to parents about how educational settings should support SEN through a high quality graduated response.

Comments

The Local Authority is also proposing to make a change to the way it specifies the allocation of resource when it issues an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Change 8: We will remove “hours” from EHC plans and replace them with a banded level to indicate the available resource (top up/school notional budget) that supports implementation of provision specified in section F of an Education, Health and Care Plan.

We will move away from stating ‘hours’ in EHC plans so that resources provided can be used more flexibly to support a child’s need. Provision specified in a child’s EHC plan can often include a range of activities that requires a personalised, individual package of support. This may include targeted adult support, delivering evidence-based interventions, but may also include group activity or equipment for example. Where ‘top up’ is provided, educational settings must be able to identify to families how they have used that resource to support their child or young person.

Comments

Please return your comments to: SENDandInclusion@telford.gov.uk by 31st March 2017.