

Darlington Borough Council local plan for phasing the conversion of Statement of Special Education Needs and Learning Difficulty Assessments to the new 0 to 25 Education Health & Care Plans, from 1st September 2014.

From the 1st September 2014 new legislation (The Children and Families Act 2014) in relation to children and young people with special educational needs has been introduced..

A government guidance document “Implementing the new 0 to 25 special needs system: Transitional Guidance; July 2014” requires local authorities to publish information in relation to their transition arrangements for converting Statements of Special Educational Need and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) into Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). A further document “Transition to the new 0 to 25 special educational needs and disability system” was published in August which provides further information.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348591/Transition_to_the_new_0_to_25_special_educational_needs_and_disability_system_statutory_guidance_for_local_authorities.pdf

We are keen to roll out the new EHC process to as many eligible children and young people as possible in Darlington, but we need to be realistic about the number of children and young people currently with a statement and plan a sensible transition programme. This document provides children, young people, families, carers and professionals with information of the groups that will be prioritised for conversion and the timescales. We will endeavour to exceed the number of transfer groups where capacity allows.

Currently in Darlington there are 408 statements of Special Education Needs and approximately 91 Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDA's). Darlington Borough Council is required to ensure that all conversions are achieved by April 2018. This must be by **1 April 2018** at the latest for children with statements and by **1 September 2016** for those with LDA's. In order to achieve this Darlington Borough Council are recruiting 2 temporary SEN caseworkers, in addition to the existing team of 3 SEN caseworkers, to support the process.

The Government guidance document makes the following requirements on local authorities:

2014/15 to transfer:

- Young people moving into further education or training from school in September 2015 (in 2014/15 this must be completed before 31 May 2015, and by 31 March in subsequent years)*

2014/18

- To make the new arrangements available to all children and young people as quickly as they are able to. where possible children should transfer to the new SEN system at points in their education at which a significant review of the statement would have otherwise taken place;
- to prioritise the transfer children and young people in years subsequent to 2014/15 from early years to school; infant to junior school; primary school to secondary school¹; all year 6 pupils; secondary school to post-16 institution or apprenticeship; all other children and young people in year 11²; mainstream to special or vice versa and those moving between one authority and another;

So in 2014/15 the government requirement for transfer is minimal. However, in Darlington we believe we should prioritise other cohorts of children as detailed below. In addition to the priorities identified by central government Darlington also consider a number of other cohorts to be priorities which are:

- Young people who receive support as a result of a LDA who request an EHC needs assessment.
- Children and young people who have been issued with draft EHC plans.
- Children and young people where the education placement is at risk.
- Children and young people attending special schools – because we only have 2 special schools giving information to parents, carers and schools will be easier. Local authority staff can rationalise work by only needing to be in one place. Teams of local authority staff could work with particular schools.

How will transitions be organised?

The guidance requires local authorities to:

- conduct a transfer review by undertaking an EHC needs assessment in accordance with article 5 of *The Children and Families Act 2014 (Transitional and Saving Provisions (No.2) Order 2014*. Local authorities should have regard to the 0-25 SEN Code of Practice in undertaking the EHC needs assessment;
- finalise an EHCP, where one is needed, within 14 weeks of the start of the transfer review.

So all transfers will require what is effectively a re-assessment of need, undertaken in line with legislation and within a 14 week timescale. The Darlington approach to EHC needs assessments is to work very closely with parents, carers, children and other agencies.

¹ in 2014/15 local authorities will be able to consider whether to transfer children in year 6 to EHCPs, but **must** take into account the wishes of families. Those children in year 6 not transferred in 2014/15 **must** be transferred to EHCPs by 1 April 2018 at the latest.

² not just those who are moving into further education

It is the case that many statements will be up to date; they may have been fairly recently amended or be fairly new assessments. In these cases it is likely that the transfer will be relatively straightforward and can be undertaken following a person centred annual review. For children and young people with more complex needs or where the statement is older (say more than 2 years) it is probable that a multi-agency meeting will also be necessary to determine what additional information is required to ensure the EHC plan is as detailed as possible. During 2014 and 2015 the LA will support annual reviews for pupils with statements, or who are supported through an LDA to be undertaken in a person centred way, which will help to support the transfer process.

With the above caveats in mind, listed below is the **latest** possible time which Darlington expect to transfer the statements of each child or young person to an EHCP. Those which are highlighted are the cohorts central government are **requiring** us to prioritise in 2014/15

Cohorts as at Sept 2014	Latest date statement will be transferred into an EHC Plan	Max numbers
Young people moving into further education from school in Sept 2015	Between 01/09/2014 and 31/5/2015	77
Young people with draft EHC plans	Between 01/09/2014 and 31/8/2015	100
Children and young people attending special schools	Between 01/09/2015 and 31/8/2016	139
Young people remaining in further education	Between 01/09/2015 and 31/8/2016	78
Children and Young People in transition years	Between 01/09/2016 and 31/8/2017	26
Children in years 1,3,4,5,7,8,9 &10	Between 01/09/2016 and 31/8/2017	79

Learning Difficult Assessments (LDA) are to be transferred to ECHPs by September 2016. An Information Advice & Guidance assessment will be undertaken to support the conversion of a Learning Difficulty Assessment to an EHCP or to produce an exit action plan signposting young people to opportunities that will support progression or sustain pathways to employment and adulthood. Darlington will review each LDA on a case by case basis to decide whether and when the LDA needs to be transferred to an EHCP.

As mentioned above we envisage that we will allocate teams of LA staff to work in special schools and similar teams to work with groups of mainstream schools. The team will plan with the schools/colleges and liaise with parents about the individual timing of the review and transition, within the broader plan. Colleagues in social care and health will be kept informed and engaged in the process wherever this is applicable..

The Groups that were consulted in developing the new system including the EHC plan for Darlington:

- Children and young people
- Parent Partnership
- Special School Head teachers

- Headteachers
- FE College Principals
- Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)
- Health
- Social Care
- SENCO Group
- Pathfinder Steering Group

<p>How and when parents of children with SEN and young people with SEN, and their educational institution, will be made aware of the arrangements for a child or young person's transfer;</p>	<p>The transition plan will form part of The Local Offer which can be found at http://darlington.fsd.org.uk/kb5/darlington/fsd/disabilities.page?disabilitieschannel=0</p> <p>Letters will be prepared to be sent to all parents of children who currently have a statement in the Autumn term 2014 – for mainstream and special schools the letters will be sent for the schools to distribute. For out of county, independent schools and children educated otherwise than at school, the letters will be sent directly from the local authority</p>
<p>Where can I find sources of independent SEN information and advice?</p>	<p>Parent Partnership Service http://www.darlington.gov.uk/education-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/parent-partnership.aspx</p> <p>DAD http://www.darlingtondisability.org/</p> <p>Independent Supporters http://www.darlingtondisability.org/</p> <p>http://darlington.fsd.org.uk/kb5/darlington/fsd/disabilities.page?disabilitieschannel=0</p>
<p>How can I find out when a child or young person's statement will be transferred to an EHC plan</p>	<p>As above and Darlington Borough Council SEN Team Telephone: 01325 388850 Email: senqueries@darlington.gov.uk</p>
<p>Who do I contact if I have a query or complaint about the transfer to a Single Plan?</p>	<p>If you have any comments, queries or complaints about the move from statements to a Single Plan please contact the SEND Team at Darlington Borough Council on 01325 388850.</p> <p>If you would prefer to write, you can contact the team by e-</p>

	mail at senqueries@darlington.gov.uk or write to SEND Team, Children, Families and Learning, People Services, Darlington Borough Council, Town Hall, Darlington, DL1 5QT
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