

SEND Reform Evaluation



Evaluation of Education, Health and Care Assessment, Conversion and Planning processes and outcomes

- assessment, conversion and planning processes including outcomes of EHC Plans
- To include children and young people, parents and carers, schools and other professionals in the evaluation
- To create methods of seeking feedback which are quick and easy for respondents and which maximise the number of respondents
- To ensure that the evaluation process generates feedback that can be used to further develop and refine the Education, Health and Care assessment processes and plans

METHODS:

1. Surveys

(a) Surveys specifically addressing EHC processes

A sub group of the SEND Reform Steering Group was set up in 2014 to work on the development of evaluation processes for EHC assessments and plans. The sub group included parents, school representatives and other professionals. The group designed a series of three questionnaires, one for parents and carers, one for schools and one for other professionals.

At the end of the 2014-15 academic year, the survey monkey questionnaires were e-mailed to all parents, schools and professionals who had been involved in EHC assessments or conversions during the year. The EHC Coordinators who had facilitated the assessment or conversion process made personal contact with parents to encourage participation. The survey was also made available on the Local Offer website.

The results of the 2014-15 survey were published on the Local Offer website, were reported to the SEND Reform Steering Group, and were used to make amendments to the EHC processes including the format of EHC Plans.

The same process was followed at the end of the 2015-16 academic year.

It was decided, in consultation with parents, that the West Berkshire evaluation questionnaires would be replaced in 2016-17 with the POET evaluation tool. The Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool is a national evaluation tool commissioned by the DfE and developed by an organisation called 'In Control' in conjunction with parents and young people. The advantage of the POET evaluation tool is that it allows West Berkshire Council to benchmark itself with other Local Authorities. The first year's feedback from POET will be published on the Local Offer website in autumn 2017.

(b) SEND Survey of parents / carers 2017

In 2017 the Local Authority worked with the West Berkshire Parent Forum to develop a survey for parents covering a broad range of issues related to SEND, but with a specific focus on provision made by mainstream schools.

All mainstream schools were asked to e-mail the survey to parents of children with SEND, including those at SEN Support and those with a Statement or Education, Health and Care Plan.

This survey had a much broader remit than the ones relating specifically to EHC processes, but it generated some feedback relevant to the development of EHC assessment and planning.

A summary of the survey responses will be published on the Local Offer website in autumn 2017.

2. Focus Groups

(a) SEND Focus Groups for Parents 2017

During the Summer Term of 2017 a series of focus group meetings for parents/carers was held. The meetings took place in a range of schools, including special schools and mainstream schools. These were led by a consultant employed by the Local Authority to gather views on SEND arrangements and provision in the local area.

The discussion was structured in line with the 6 themes of the self evaluation being carried out by the Local Authority in partnership with the Health Clinical Commissioning Group. These were:

- Information and advice for parents / carers and children about SEND and participation in individual and strategic planning
- Identification of SEND
- Assessment and provision for children with SEND
- Outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Joint commissioning

A report of this consultation will be published in autumn 2017 and will be used to inform self evaluation and action planning. Some of the feedback gleaned from this exercise was relevant to EHC assessment and planning processes.

(b) Themed focus groups for parents and professionals

There have been a number of task and finish / focus groups for parents and professionals prior to and since implementation of the SEND Reforms in 2014. These groups have all been sub groups of the SEND Reform Steering Group and have all included parents. Some groups have completed their work and have been disbanded.

The focus groups which are currently in existence are as follows:

- Early Identification
- Early Years
- Preparation for adulthood
- Information and advice
- SEN Support for schools
- Children and young people with SEND and additional vulnerabilities
- EHC Assessments and Plans.

The Focus Groups have explored:

- What is working well?
- What is not working well and areas for development?
- Ideas to address the areas for development.

The outcomes of the EHC Assessments and Plans focus group will be used to further inform development of EHC processes.