



**Children, Young People and Education**

Sessions House

Maidstone

Kent ME14 1XQ

Direct: 03000 415534

Date: 19 March 2021

From strategic meetings with Kent PACT we have been asked to make a statement regarding our performance in meeting the EHC needs assessment timescale of 20 weeks.

We are fully aware that some families are experiencing unacceptable delays with the completion of the assessment and the issue of a Final EHC plan and that in these cases, we are failing to meet statutory duties for which we sincerely apologise.

As background we can share that we are often waiting for the information and advice we need from professionals contributing to the assessment which impacts on our ability to meet the 20-week statutory deadline.

In an effort to improve the service to families we have taken the following steps:-

- Increased Educational Psychology capacity
- Employed additional SEND caseworkers
- Engaged specialist EHC plan writers
- Provided enhanced training for our staff including IPSEA training
- Enhanced our quality assurance measures

If requests for EHC needs assessments remain at the levels we are predicting, we anticipate that the service will meet statutory timescales within this academic year. Exceptions may occur when we remain reliant on others to provide information and advice, but measures are in place to monitor keeping the plan on track wherever possible. Please be assured that the SEND team are being held to account at a strategic level including our parent partners – Kent PACT.

Yours sincerely

**Mark Walker**

**Director for Special Educational Needs, Disabled Children and Young People**