



**Children, Young People and
Education**
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Dear Parent

The experiences of many children, families and young people in the past have meant that the final EHCP plans have been issued late, they might have been waiting for annual reviews for too long or for these to be processed. If this is your experience, we would like to apologise and share with you our determination to improve the experiences for children and young people in Kent with SEN.

The voices of parents across the County have set out very clearly what the issues are and the improvements we need to make. These were also picked up in our OFSTED/CQC inspection over a year ago.

We want you to know that we have a recovery plan which will provide more capacity and skills training where there are gaps for the service, as well as greater support and guidance across our integrated services. Clearing the backlog of EHC Plans and Annual Reviews will take a few months and this process is already underway.

Currently, we are working hard to increase capacity within our educational psychology service. This is important so that children and young people have all the appropriate advice and information from professionals, including an Educational Psychologist, in order for the draft plans to be finalised. This is our statutory duty and we have to do this.

In response to clear messages from parents, we have made changes to our Education, Health and Care Plan templates, which will be used for those children and young people with new plans, as well as for those going through phased transfers next September (2021). These changes mean a more streamlined template, adhering to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice.

By developing a new quality assurance framework, we are meeting the challenge to improve the ongoing quality of our EHCP plans and the experience of children, young people and parents/carers, during the planning process and afterwards. This process includes parents and children to ensure that we hear people's lived experiences.

We are working hard to improve communication and our timeliness in responses to complaints.

We are keen that you know we are working towards the delivery of a better service to which you, your children and carers are entitled to.

Below is a brief introduction to us:

Mark Walker, Interim Director for Special Educational Needs, Disabled Children and Young People

My role previous to this interim position was as the Assistant Director for Disabled Children and Young People's services. I have over 30 years' experience of working in the health voluntary sector, social care and education and I have a real desire and commitment to improving the lives for children and young people in Kent. I have been in Kent since 2001.

Jackie Ross, Interim Head of SEND

I am an interim Head of SEND and work across the country. I used to be a SENCO in a secondary mainstream school in East London. I learned from the voices of children, young people and their parents what makes a real difference. I have worked in a number of London authorities (including Newham, Hackney and Greenwich), as well as local authorities in the Midlands and East of England. For me it has always been important to join up with the voices of parents and young people. I have professionally found this a great support in making a difference. I have come to roll my sleeves up to help improve delivery of SEND services and look forward to working with you.

Louise Hickman, SEND County, Monitoring and Inclusion Manager

I started my career in education as a science teacher in secondary schools before becoming a SENCo. I have an interest in how children and young people with Autism experience education and was lucky enough to be given the opportunity to establish and manage a Specialist Resourced Provision for children and young people with ASD. I found during this time that working closely with families was key to securing good outcomes for the children we supported. Since joining the SEND team at Kent, I have worked as a Senior Provision Evaluation Officer and SEN Monitoring and Inclusion Manager.

Yours sincerely



Mark Walker

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