

SENART Restructure: New Posts Created

The introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 also brought the biggest SEND reform for 30 years. North East Lincolnshire is about half way through the three and half year implementation process (September 2014 – April 2018). The key aims are to improve support for children, young people and their parents/carers, increase participation, give them greater control and choice in decisions and ensure that needs are properly met.

As part of the reforms all Statements of SEN must be transferred to Education, Health and Care Plans, where necessary. This has been a priority for the EHC Plan Co-ordinators along with processing the new requests for statutory assessment of children and young people's education, health and care needs.

The number of requests for statutory assessment received by the Local Authority has more than doubled in the last year. The Local Authority has prioritised this work and supported the Transfer Reviews so we can create good quality EHC Plans. By doing that most of the work has been completed on time. Unfortunately, that has led to big delays in processing the annual reviews of Statements of SEN.

The Local Authority has about 600 children or young people with either a Statement of SEN or an EHC Plan. So far more than 300 have been transferred to EHC Plans. It aims to transfer about 180 Statements of SEN to EHC Plans this year. Letters and further information will be sent out to families and schools.

Angie Kershaw (SEND Statutory Process Manager) said "I am very sorry about the delays some families are experiencing, this should not affect the support the children and young people receive. We are doing our very best to get back on track. The new process can take up to three times longer and we have had twice the number of requests for statutory assessment as last year. Although we have more officers, unfortunately we are still not managing to complete all the work within statutory timescales. It's a small consolation that NELC is performing better than similar Local Authorities with regards to transferring the Statements of SEN to EHC Plans."

To support implementation of the SEND reforms, the Local Authority has restructured and expanded the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team (SENART). SENART manages, monitors and reviews the arrangements for the statutory assessment, reassessment, placement and annual review of children or young people with complex Special Educational Needs.

As a result of the restructure, SENART has six new EHC Plan Co-ordinators. The posts have been created as a result of merging SENART and the former Transition Service into a single team working with children and young people age 0-25 years. The team also has an SEND Business Support Officer and a SEND Finance Officer.

The restructure means that all children or young people with a Statement of SEN or an EHC Plan will be allocated an Education, Health and Care Plan Co-ordinator; a key worker to provide information, advice and support. This supports the SEND reforms' *Tell Us Once* approach and the recommendation of a single point of key working contact that is valued by families.

The new Co-ordinators will try to attend reviews so parents or carers can put a face to a name and know who to call if they need information or advice. They will work in partnership with families and professionals and be able to signpost to local support such as NELPPF and services that can be found on our updated Local Offer at www.nelincs.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-and-local-offer/