

Proposed Staffordshire Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do-Review (EAPDR) Pathway and Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support Model (SEDIS) Consultation

Outcome from Public Engagement Events

28 June 2023

12.00pm and 6.00pm

Dr Halit Hulusi, Head of SEND



Outcome from the EAPDR Pathway and SEDIS Model Consultation Public Engagement Events

1.0 Introduction

Staffordshire County Council invited parents and carers of children and / or young people with SEND, to engage in our public engagement sessions.

The two sessions took place on 28th June at 12pm and 6pm. 20 parents / carers attended the first session, and 4 parents / carers attended the second session.

It was great to see so many local parents and carers, and the energy, enthusiasm, passion, and challenge within the room was there for all to see.

The purpose of the public engagement events was to engage and communicate with Staffordshire's parents / carers, and to gather their feedback on the proposed EAPDR Pathway and SEDIS Model. This gave people the opportunity to comment on their hopes, fears, concerns, and share their general thoughts on the proposals.

The outputs from the sessions have been collated and are captured below.

2.0 Outputs

2.1 What are your thoughts and comments?

There were numerous valuable comments recorded on the flip chart paper provided on the tables in both sessions. These comments were grouped into themes, which are listed below:

- Settings and Environment
- Awareness
- Childs Voice
- Demand
- Funding
- Governance and Accountability
- Guidance and Support
- Parent / Carer Involvement / Being Heard
- Process and Pathway
- Provision
- Resourcing
- Timeliness
- Training

Please note that the list above does not include all comments from the two engagement sessions as we only captured duplicate or similar comments once for the purposes of this document. In addition to the latter, we also excluded comments of a personal nature. However, all comments from both sessions have been collated for our records and have been taken into consideration.

Some of the comments relating to each of the themes listed above are detailed below:

Theme: Settings and Environment

- Reasonable adjustments in Mainstream Schools.
- Support needs to be child centred and tailored.
- Need to identify and put support in early, nursery and primary.
- Currently, children are excluded from activities, instead of putting things in place so that they could be included.

Theme: Awareness

- Need a better comms network.
- Model needs clarity and brevity for parents.

Theme: Childs Voice

- See and understand the child before report writing.

Theme: Demand

- Concerns around which CYP will be able to access support as there are only circa 853 cycles of EAPDR.
- The LA are not going to be able to manage demand, resulting from sharing and implementing the new model.

Theme: Funding

- SEND budget spent by September on TA's, nothing left to support children who present need during the year, and no support for academically able.
- Theme: Governance & Accountability
- Schools not doing the right thing.
- Need that accountability in school, and local authority support.
- Specialist independent schools are not monitored by SCC, this needs to change, i.e., lots of money being spent for no benefit.
- Have experience of the LA putting these great plans in place, and within a few weeks it is not being done / it is lost.
- Concerns over academies and the fact that they cannot be held to account by the LA.

Theme: Guidance & Support

- A simple guide for parents and carers to help and support them would be helpful.

Theme: Parent / Carer Involvement / Being Heard

- Advocacy - SENDIASS / PCF / Experienced parents involved in conversations.
- More support is needed for parents who have not got a clue where to start.
- Model is great, but it's getting the school to listen to parents / carers, especially when the CYP is masking at school. Therefore, it would be a challenge to get to the APDR pathway, let alone the EAPDR which is one of my biggest concerns.

- Remote conversations are not working, need to be meeting in person.

Theme: Process & Pathway

- Can't change my journey but let's help others on theirs.
- Storytelling to multiple people.

Theme: Provision

- I like the idea of help at school, without a diagnosis.
- There's a huge gap in provision for academic children with complex needs who cannot attend mainstream.

Theme: Resourcing

- Concern around mainstream school resource to do this, as they would need support staff.

Theme: Timeliness

- Interventions are time critical; kids grow up very quick and intervening early in life will save money in the long run.

Theme: Training

- A bad experience at school can cause so much trauma to a child and change their perception. Teachers need to understand needs, and how to approach them.

2.2 Parents and carers questions.

Q. If we are going to use the existing funding that sits in the SEND district hubs, for the new model, what impact will this have on the support currently being funded through the district Hubs?

A. The new proposed model, subject to Cabinet approval, will set a new method for commissioning services from April 2024. This should provide a more efficient, responsive, and quality assured commissioning process. Provision currently commissioned by districts is subject to a broad range of commissioning arrangements which means there is not always equality of access for children and young people known to SEND & Inclusion Hubs across the County. Where provision required in districts falls beyond the scope of what the SEDIS and EAPDR model can offer, there will be a framework which can be utilised to source provision, which ensures each Locality Management Group (LMG) still has choice and control in their district.

Q. What are the timeframes around intervention and support - what will these be?

A. The proposed new model will be supported by a swifter commissioning framework that should reduce any delays from point of agreeing additional support to the provision of this support. It is anticipated that support cycles will mirror the existing graduated response approach which is usually a term (12 weeks). However, as this is an evidence based model of support, some interventions may vary in length dependant on the individual needs of the child and/or the intervention.

Q. How will the schools be held accountable when the model is implemented?

A. The proposals provide schools with more support to work with children who do not have and Educational Health and Care Plan but may have additional needs. The Enhanced APDR Pathway will set clear expectations of schools regarding their responsibilities where the Local Authority and the District Hubs provide this additional resource.

Q. Are the schools aware of what is out there in terms of the District SEND & Inclusion Hubs?

A. Schools are aware of the SEND and Inclusion Hubs and the support that they can provide as part of support for the graduated response. This support model has been in place for a while now and the model and the support it can offer is raised in a range of meetings including sessions with SENCOs and Head Teachers.

Q. Will we see more involvement from parents? - We (parents) are the experts on our CYP.

A. The proposed Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do Review pathway places the voice of children and their parents at the centre of the process. They will be involved in all aspects of decision making in the pathway including discussions around whether it is appropriate to request an Educational, Health, Care Needs Assessment.

Q. How can the Local Authority do this with existing funding?

A. The proposed models will be funded by existing resources that are currently in the SEND & Inclusion District Model. The new model presents us with an opportunity to realise efficiencies as well as better targeting of these resources. It will also allow us to respond more equitably across the whole county so every child can benefit from the support they need.

Q. Need to hold schools to accountable to ensure this works, so how will this be done?

A. The proposed Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do Review pathway provides a more effective method of oversight for the District Hubs to monitor needs, interventions and progress for children. The new commissioning arrangements will also ensure more robust requirements for accountability from schools and the providers of the interventions. We will be able to spot where things are working and ensure that we share good practice with schools and Districts where practice is less effective.

Q. How will you ensure equitable use of the funding?

A. Currently, District funds are delegated equally to each District. The proposed model suggests a central pool of resources that can be accessed by all Districts based on the identified need. This way, the model will enable a flexible, needs driven approach.

Q. Who will make the decision on whether the child gets SEDIS support?

A. Determining whether a school or setting can move to Enhanced Assess- Plan-Do-Review will be down to the District SEND and Inclusion Hubs. Access to SEDIS support will be determined by the Local Mainstream Groups (LMGs) based on a proposed provision map submitted by the setting or school.

Q. Is there going to be training in Mainstream schools?

A. All Staffordshire schools will be required to access training in the Autumn term of 2023 in preparation for the launch of the Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do-Review Pathway in January 2024. The training is being drawn up by a multi-disciplinary group of teachers, SENCos, parents, Local Authority SEND Officers and Educational Psychologists.

Q. The current system is not working, so what has been done to improve this and why are we not tackling it?

A. The proposals are primarily about improving support for children, families, and schools in the future. Alongside this work, we have undertaken a huge piece of work to increase the number of SEND Key Workers and Educational Psychologists by 33%. This has been done in recognition of the significant increase in demand for EHC Needs Assessments. We have successfully recruited to all the SEND Key Worker posts and colleagues will be in post by September 2023. We have recruited 5 Educational Psychologist and have a good plan to recruit a further 5 by September 2024. Increases in staffing capacity alongside a huge programme of training and support should mean that children, families, and schools feel a real difference in their experience of services from the SEND team.

Q. How can parents be confident that the Local Authority can meet their statutory duties and if they fail what are the consequences?

A. In addition to the current proposals, the Local Authority has also taken exceptional steps to increase capacity in the system to meet the significant increase in requests for Educational Health Care Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews and more generally to improve how we work with children and families.

Q. SEND children are more likely to have social anxiety and trauma. How can a mainstream school approach and handle this new aspect of SEND?

A. The Educational Psychology Service is developing a significant offer for educational settings to support their work with children who might be struggling to access school as a result of emotional needs, including anxiety. This work is launching in September 2023.

Q. Who will help those children that fall in your gaps? New plan helps children earlier, what about those that needed help last year?

A. The proposed models will further support schools and settings to better identify children who may require additional support. This will build on the current support that is accessed by many schools through the SEND and Inclusion Hubs that every school can access.

Q. How will you make sure schools do a graduated approach as it currently doesn't happen in lots of cases?

A. The Local Authority's role in the Graduated Approach is primarily to support schools to discharge their duties. The proposed models will provide all schools additional resources and technical and specialist support. The proposed model will provide us with better information related to which schools are accessing this provision, how they are using it and importantly, what the impact of that support is.

Q. How will you handle the need for personalised tailoring but also consistent delivery of solutions?

A. The Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do Review Pathway is essentially a personalised plan that can focus interventions towards the individual needs of the child. This is a guiding principle within the model.

Q. How will the new changes help my child?

A. The proposal will provide schools additional support that they can access to meet the needs of children in their school who have additional needs. The Enhanced APDR Pathway

Q. How are you clearing the backlog?

A. The Local Authority has increased the number of SEND Key Workers and Educational Psychologists in order to address the unprecedented level of requests for Educational Health Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs). In the short-term, we are also drawing on the support of a team of quality assured associate Educational Psychologists who will enable us to process the current backlog of EHCNAs.

Q. What research and information has been gathered to inform the plans?

A. The Local Authority completed a countywide review of special provision and a comprehensive detailed gap analysis, which provided an evidence base and informed the proposals we consulted on between the 17 May and the 5 July. We also held a workshop in November 2022 to obtain thoughts and ideas from parents and carers and the proposed EAPDR Pathway and the Strategy for Strategy for Special Provision, (including the SEDIS Model), have been co-produced with representatives from mainstream settings, special schools, PRUs, Health & Social Care professionals and parents/carers.

Q. Is funding guaranteed?

A. The proposed model will utilise the resource which supports the current SEND & Inclusion Model. Subject to Cabinet approval, we are looking to guarantee this funding for the next 3-5 years to ensure the proposed model embeds and grows.

Q. What will happen to academic children with complex needs?

A. The proposed model provides schools with the opportunity to access additional support and resources to meet the needs of children with a wide range of needs. For some children, whilst they may not specifically require additional support for cognition and learning, they may require additional support with social interaction and communication. The proposed model enables schools to meet a wide range of needs.

Q. How will academies be held to account?

A. Where academies are delivering any provision, they are considered a 'provider' therefore appropriate financial models, contracts, T&C's, governance, and QA processes will need to be in place.

Q. Why do no staff in schools have SEND training?

A. SEND awareness and training is a core feature of all practice in schools. The Local Authority recognises that there is more support we can offer schools to help them

increase their levels of SEND awareness. The proposed models will roll out a raft of additional training for all schools in Staffordshire to support them access the additional resources associated with the Enhanced APDR Pathway.

Q. What about the kids who mask their behaviours in school and come home and explode? If there was more help in school, they would not explode at home.

A. The proposed models are specifically designed to address this very challenge. The Local Authority is making sure that additional support and provision is accessible to schools in order to meet the needs of children.

Q. In primary if the child is meeting targets, what incentive is there for schools? They act out at home and mental health deteriorates, can be kicked down the road, until they leave primary.

A. The EAPDR pathway is designed to focus on the child's SEND in the school, the family, and the community. The pathway will be launched with a range of training for schools to ensure that they understand how and, why they might access this enhanced support.

Q. Who decides what reasonable provision looks like without a diagnosis?

A. The proposed model takes a need driven, rather than diagnosis focussed approach. It recognises that each child, regardless of any diagnoses that they might have, is an individual with unique needs. The Team Around the Child working in the school will be responsible for determining what provision the child requires.

Q. Will there be a county wide EAPDR template to ensure consistency?

A. Yes. We are developing a single EAPDR 'One Form' that will be accessible virtually to all parties, including the parents of the child. This is a countywide strategy with a single countywide process.

Q. Who would mediate if parents felt there is a need, but schools disagree?

A. Our work in this pre-statutory space is not subject to any formal mediation regulations. However, we are expecting the Team Around the Child, which includes parents, to have those open and honest conversations together. As part of the roll out of this strategy, schools and partners will have a raft of training. Having effective conversations will be a significant part of this training.

Q. Does this impact getting an EHCP?

A. No. The proposed strategy does not impact on the legal right of the parent or the school to request an Educational Health Care Needs Assessment. In fact, as part of the graduated approach, the EAPDR pathway should ensure that, if an EHCNA is required, the assessment evidence is already developed, coproduced and of significantly higher quality as it is developed overtime. This should result in better quality EHC Plans, should that be required.

Q. Will the PRU's be part of the pre pilot?

A. We would welcome the inclusion of our PRU colleagues in any piloting work undertaken in the Autumn term of 2023.

Q. Outreach / Inreach: How will the impact be measured?

A. Evaluating the impact of the work that is commissioned is a central component of the EAPDR process. A key feature of the proposed strategy is to ensure accountability and the effective and efficient use of these resources.

Q. Will the SEDIS providers be Autism trained?

A. Prospective SEDIS providers will be required to place an expression of interest in the Autumn term of 2023. Providers will be selected based on a range of criteria. These will include a range of indicators including evidence of higher order SEND knowledge, experience, and quality of practice.

Q. What training and documentation will be in place for schools?

A. Training for all Staffordshire Schools starts in the Autumn term.

Q. How does this impact PRU's / where do / how do PRU's fit into this?

A. PRUs are a key player in our work to ensure that children's needs are met and where possible, mainstream educational environments are enabling children to thrive. The EAPDR process will be available to PRUs. We would also welcome expressions of interest to be SEDIS providers from our highly skilled colleagues in PRUs.

Q. Who is going to be trained, just the SENCO, or will training be provided for school leadership? School leadership needs training.

A. Training for all Staffordshire Schools starts in the Autumn term. We would expect SENCOs and senior leaders in schools to access this training.

Q. Will you share the slides after the session?

A. The slides from the public engagement event were shared on the 30 June.

3.0 Summary

We would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all that attended these engagement sessions and, more broadly those who took the time to engage with the wider consultation. Your time, constructive comments and ideas are much appreciated. Listening to your lived experience provides us with a significant steer for this new strategy. We look forward to working with you as we go forward with this exciting strategy to ensure that our children thrive in school and become the best versions of themselves that they can be.

Dr Halit Hulusi

Head of SEND