

## **Parent Carer Forum questions to John Macilwraith**

10/04/2020

### **Q. Is there a helpline number for parents of children with SEND or will there be one?**

A. The council and health services have put in place a range of support for parents of children with SEND. We are not setting up a central single phone line but would advise the following:

- Parents can speak to their school SENCO about education matters and social workers where they have one about care needs.
- The SENDIASS service exists to provide impartial advice and guidance to parents about SEND issues and can continue to be contacted.
- The Autism Education team are moving their normal phone line help service to be email based so that they can respond to more queries. Details of this will be provided shortly.
- Health services are working to put support in place for families known to them.

**Note from SPCF:** Information about changes to local SEND services and their contact details can also be found on the [Local Offer website](#).

### **Q. Is there a consistent approach being taken by schools to support families of children with SEND?**

A. We are working with schools to provide them with guidance on contacting families of children with SEND. Schools are best placed to agree the method and frequency of this contact with individual families but we are encouraging that for all children with SEND, schools should make regular contact with the family directly to offer support and advice. If a family is concerned about their child with SEND they can contact the school SENCO, but please be aware that it may take a little time for the SENCO to respond due to current ways of working.

### **Q. What support is available from health and therapy services?**

A. Our health colleagues are being asked to support the NHS efforts to keep the country safe which understandably means they cannot always do as much as they would like. They are, however, working on support for families of children with SEND and are risk assessing their caseloads to offer support. They will work with schools and families to offer support where needed.

We will also shortly be providing a guide for parents of children with SEND which will include further details about how support can be made available.

**Note from SPCF:** Information about changes to local SEND services and their contact details can also be found on the [Local Offer website](#).

### **Q. Can direct payments be used more flexibly to offer support where a personal assistant is not available for the child?**

A. We are looking into how short break support can be adapted but have not got any particular guidance on this at the present time. We do need to recognise that direct payments are often used

to employ staff and consider the implication of changes around this. We will update the parent carer forum as and when we can on this.

**Note from SPCF:** Disability Sheffield have published [FAQs about individual employers and PAs](#).

Please note, most of the responses relate to **adult** social care.