Children & Families Bill Part 3 Sheffield’s Journey

Mary Collins/Principal Educational Psychologist

New SEN proposals “the biggest reform for 30 years”

“*Yes, special needs children deserve more, and that’s what we will give them.”* (Sarah Teather, May 2012)

- Like Warnock, morally motivated
- Will it deliver?
- Affordable?

Experience of families

- Process is a battle – waiting too long
- Services not joined up
- Financial pressures in local authority budgets limits what is possible
- Early intervention rare - too little too late
- Staff need better training & skills-set
- Parents not treated as equal partners
- Schools not always welcoming

“Learning Lessons from Complaints” (March 2014)Jane Martin LGO

Delays in:

- Issuing final statements
- Admitting children with SEN /Disabilities into education
- Illegal use of exclusions
- Carrying out Learning Disability Assessments for post 16 provision

Conspiracy theory?

- Getting it wrong is easy
- Getting it right is undoubtedly challenging

- It is in no one’s interests to frustrate families, deny children/young people their entitlements or blame schools and professionals

Key Changes

- Focus on improving pupil outcomes rather than processes
- Local Offer
- Person centred planning
- Co-production with parents/carers
- Services working better together to wrap around families
- Single H/E/C plan replacing Statement from September 2014
- Age range 0-25 years for those in education/training
- Removal of school action/action plus – single school-based instead

What is happening in Sheffield?

- Multi-agency strategic group “Future Shape SEN” established & meets half termly
- Governance - links to Children’s Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership
- 5 work streams to implement local changes

continued

- Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and coordinated Assessments - local pilots
- The Local Offer
- Joint commissioning/ personal budgets
- Communication Strategy
- Workforce Development

Sponsors for each sit on the local strategic board and have a nominated lead

Parental confidence is key

- Local Offer to set out “ordinarily available” entitlements
- Graduated response to assessment/ meeting needs to continue
- Statements and High Needs Funding separated
- Changing culture takes time – we won’t get it all right from the outset

Final thoughts …

- Children & young people learn from each other as well as from TAs and other adults
- Inclusive schools build inclusive cultures
- Valuing diversity - Peer education is critical in promoting understanding and tolerance
- Better for all - or just for some? (the willing and able?)