

### **Setting the vision**

Barking and Dagenham has an effective multi-agency Children's Trust with a clear vision for children and their families. The Director of Children's Services recognised the need to take a holistic approach by embedding SEN and Disability across all service areas and cement the importance of cross-agency working. The Children's Trust and Safeguarding Board around all agencies is strong. In order to cover the vast agenda Children's Trust meetings are themed around agreed Children's Trust priorities. This means that partners can target themes for which they have the most responsibility and expertise, rather than spending their time on an over cluttered agenda with lack of space. This enables challenging and mature partnership decision-making.

Parents and young adults, as well as children have made strong contributions in what they want to see in the local offer, what they would like it to look like, how to access it, and what they experience as 'barriers' to support. Communication each way has been via film, drawings and discussion.

### **Developing a phased approach**

Within this context Barking and Dagenham has looked to developing their response to the Children and Families Bill as a continuation of their journey and invested in a post to create capacity to really get on with this in a staged approach.

#### **Stages:**

A. **Established** SEND Transformation Board. The themes for this are— the local offer, Assessments and Plans (EHC Planning), Integrated Commissioning, Personal budgets, Transitions, Information Systems and also Operational Design.

B. **Local Offer theme identified the following stages:**

#### **1. Audit (completed)**

- Invested in a post from April last year to do a service audit and ensure all information correct on what the current local offer is. Involved engagement with providers.
- Got together key partners representing providers to form small steering group to oversee this.
- This audit was also used to input into more parent friendly version (using format of York's local offer which parents were engaged in). The 'audit' version can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

#### **2. Engagement: (on- going)**

- Post continued to the next stage: to engage with the community as widely as possible
- Questions to stakeholders:
    - What should be in the local offer
    - What should it look like—how should information be arranged?
    - How would they like to access it?
    - Developmental: Where are the gaps, what is not working?

The audit of services, drawing in all existing services, has been really an important first step to make sure that all providers know they are part of this work. In this first stage Barking and Dagenham took the risk of publishing on line something which is not perfect or polished, but which encouraged all to get on board.

Learning has shown that co-production should have been started earlier for all of this work and it has been agreed that the approach to engaging the local community to develop the local offer will widen to include all areas of the Children and Families Bill.

### **Ways for working to deliver effective engagement & co-production**

To ensure we listened to stakeholder agendas first, we asked parents their views first and then asked them to comment on the parent friendly version to consider layout, accessibility etc. In addition, Barking and Dagenham has engaged with parent groups, schools (SENCOs, children and young people, head teachers), the voluntary sector, the Youth Parliament, the Young People's Progress Project (representing young people and young adults with SEN and disability, as well as with our special school youth council). This work is on-going to ensure Barking and Dagenham capture the input of children and young people and young adults in mainstream schools, our special school, children and young people with SEN (including LAC) and parent workshops advertised and supported via Parent Partnership.

Barking and Dagenham are using different ways of communicating and engaging, as appropriate, and decided by stakeholders. For example, young adults were presented with a personal picture of the speaker's likes and dislikes at work and leisure. Then young adults chose how they wanted to express their take on this at college/work and leisure in any form they like-some chose to make a film. This can be viewed by [clicking here](#).

One young adult has been co-opted for informal work experience (after college) to find out the views of his peers. There is currently a process in place to provide a traineeship/work experience for a young person with SEN or who is disabled to work alongside the project lead. This will also encourage young adults with SEN and disability who may currently be NEET to look at traineeship options, and be part of sustainable on-going training/education for independent adulthood, regardless of whether they are appointed.

### **Next steps**

- Communication strategy for wider transformation programme to be developed via the SEND Transformation Board and stakeholder co-production group and then disseminated by the sector representatives more widely. The audit, stakeholders' views and parent friendly version (changed and adapted by parents) will be used by a co-production group with stakeholders to replace our audit version with an

interactive website, and text version for those unable to access computers. These will be put into accessible formats.

- Film already made by young adults (progress project) will be put online as well as further films (in process). Interactive website and mobile phone access planned as well as written accessible publication for those unable to access computers.
- Wide dissemination of information on the Children and Families Bill and the consultation using ordinary places—estates, shops, G.P. surgeries etc. Frequently asked parent questions, information bulletins, flyers etc.
- Develop a review and response process engaging stakeholders to ensure that this is more than a service directory.
- Ensuring this process reaches out as far and wide as possible to those families/parents and young people who might not usually engage.