

# **SEND Sensory Support Service consultation 2019 – Feedback report**

## **Why did we consult?**

Parent carers and young people have told us that they would welcome changes to the way this service is currently delivered so that it has a greater impact on the long term outcomes for children and young people who have sensory impairments. This was following a review of the Service undertaken by the National Sensory Impairment Partnership in 2016 and service user and stakeholder survey activity as well as engagement events that took place between March and August in 2018

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who completed the consultation on line, and for the very valuable comments that were made. We have taken them into account and they have informed our thinking on the way forward. The consultation was on line and easily accessed by all parents and professionals, across the four local authorities, in total we have 174 responses to the online consultation, in addition we held 9 drop in events that parents, carers or professionals could attend.

3 in Bristol 2 in Bath and North East Somerset( BANES), 2 in North Somerset and 2 in South Gloucestershire

The consultation started on the 9th October and ended 4<sup>th</sup> December.

## **Consultation Feedback**

A detailed summary of the responses against each proposal is outlined below.

- Total number of responses 174
- There were in the 99 narrative responses a number that both praised and valued the Sensory Support Service

“As a carer of a blind child, I have experienced the benefits of the group sessions (Explorers). The input of the specialist staff is very valuable as is the opportunity to share experiences and concerns with other parent-carers. However, I have also witnessed with even greater benefits of the 1:1 home visits by specialist professionals. The advice and support they give, relating to specific skills and activities in the child’s own home environment is invaluable and I believe it would be a retrograde step to reduce these visits.”

“As a parent of a recently diagnosed deaf child, I have found the 1:1 support from our teacher of the deaf invaluable. We have no experience of deafness and the 1:1 meetings have helped us through a very difficult time. We do not feel ready to full immerse ourselves into a group setting and I feel that the other families may feel the same. It’s a very personal journey and groups should be optional not the only option.”

“Please do not lose the personalised approach that schools experience. Sensory support, advice and intervention for the VI and HI students in my setting is the best out of everything/all of the other

services. I feel safe in the knowledge that students are receiving the support they are entitled to and I value that we are held accountable for the reasonable adjustments that need to be put in place.”

<b>We asked</b>	<b>You said</b>	<b>We did</b>
<p><b>Proposal 1</b>  <b>To extend the Sensory Support Service to help CYP from birth to 25 years.</b></p> <p>Future service would be provided to all children and young people up to the age of 25 as long as they are in education. This would include Further Education colleges (but not universities).</p>	<p>85% of you agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal            5% disagreed            9% neither agreed or disagreed</p>	<p>The service will provide support to all children and young people from birth to the age of 25 as long as they are in education. We will work with Further Education colleges to develop our offer.</p>
<p><b>Proposal 2</b>  <b>To replace 30% of early years one to one family learning sessions with increased group family learning sessions for all age groups.</b></p> <p>Continue with current Early Years groups’ provision and provide other Early Years groups in more local areas particularly accessible to Bath And North East Somerset and North Somerset</p>	<p>40% of you said that you did not want early years one to one support to be replaced by group family learning sessions (with a high proportion of parents responses here)            41% agreed            19% neither agreed nor disagreed</p>	<p>We will not change the level of one to one support for yearly years.            We will provide the current early years’ groups and some groups in more local areas and work with parent/carers to develop these.</p>
<p><b>Proposal 3</b>  <b>To implement a new increased sensory impairment training offer to early years, school age and post 16 education settings across the four authorities.</b></p> <p>Develop a training programme for a range of professionals (workforce development) to ensure that there is a good level of awareness of the needs of children and young people</p>	<p>55% of you agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.            21% disagreed            23% neither agreed nor disagreed</p>	<p>We will develop our training offer to raise awareness and develop understanding and skills of other professionals. We will investigate and make best use of technology to reach a wider audience and use our time effectively.</p>

with sensory impairment, promoting effective identification, recognition of needs and willingness to meet Equality Duties		
<p><b>Proposal 4</b></p> <p><b>To use more ways of providing information to service users increased to 50 weeks per year from 39 weeks per year</b></p> <p>To create a helpline accessible via email or telephone to families, settings and young people with sensory impairment for advice and support or any queries related to support from the Sensory Support Service</p>	<p>68% of you either agreed or strongly agreed with finding better ways to provide information to families 52 weeks a year</p> <p>11% disagreed</p> <p>20% neither agreed nor disagreed</p>	<p>We will introduce a helpline and publish information about it so parents/carers, young people and professionals understand how to access it and what the aim of the helpline is.</p>
<p><b>Proposal 5</b></p> <p><b>To jointly commission a Habilitation contract from Habilitation provider in all four authorities.</b></p> <p>To provide a contracted habilitation service across the 4 LAs under 1 contract.</p>	<p>71% of you agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal</p> <p>5% disagreed</p> <p>24% neither agreed nor disagreed</p>	<p>We aimed at providing a contract over across the 4 LAs but in practice this was difficult to achieve and a decision has been made to provide a contract over 3 LAs and the other LA (North Somerset) will commission this service individually. All LAs are committed to provide habilitation service to children and young people in their area.</p>

The 5 Proposals have now been adjusted to reflect the consultation feedback.

### Proposal 1

- Future service would be provided to all children and young people up to the age of 25 as long as they are in education. This would include Further Education colleges (but not universities).
- Develop clear pathways with clear information about what is available and how to access it as well as links to our partner organisations
- Implement a 3 level support system and publish this information ensuring service users can access this. This would include an a) advice and information level; b) core support with targeted interventions and c) on-going direct teaching support .

### **Proposal 2**

- Continue with current Early Years groups' provision and provide other Early Years groups in more local areas particularly accessible to Bath And North East Somerset and North Somerset
- Develop some opportunities for peer support and information sharing for families in collaboration with our partners, e.g. voluntary sector
- Develop some opportunities for peer support and skill development, etc. for young people in collaboration with our partners, e.g. voluntary sector
- Investigate possibility of offering some of the 1-1 sessions in a local area, e.g. Early Years centre for those parents who can attend reducing travel time (when appropriate)
- Based on the consultation feedback it has been decided that no reduction will be implemented to 1-1 sessions due to the fact that there are crucial aspects of service provision that cannot be provided in a group situation and the response to consultation shared serious concerns on the negative impact of such reduction.

### **Proposal 3**

- Develop a training programme for a range of professionals (workforce development) to ensure that there is a good level of awareness of the needs of children and young people with sensory impairment, promoting effective identification, recognition of needs and willingness to meet Equality Duties.
- Some of the training provided could be developed as part of a wider training addressing not only sensory impairment but other SEND as well, e.g. focuses on communication needs.
- Ensure that there are appropriate opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues to promote effective working practices and service development, e.g. attendance of meetings like CHSWG (Children's Hearing Services Working Group). Publish a list of these and review regularly.

### **Proposal 4**

- To create a helpline accessible via email or telephone to families, settings and young people with sensory impairment for advice and support or any queries related to support from the Sensory Support Service. This would be available all year round but outside term time these requests would be diverted to other SEND teams in Bristol (to be decided) who would triage and liaise with specialists as and when required so that any queries would be answered by the relevant specialist.
- To develop further ways of providing information and advice, e.g. toolkits, video resources, etc.

## **Proposal 5**

- A habilitation jointly commissioned contract has been agreed across 3 local authorities , Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset, it is anticipated that this will be a direct award to Guide Dogs for the Blind . North Somerset will continue to spot purchase habilitation services for the fewer than 14 age group, they also have a contract for Habilitation with Vision for the over 14 year olds.

We would like to reiterate how much we value all the responses we received, and we hope you can see that we have shaped the service to reflect what you said.

As we are committed to co-production with parents and carers, we would like to invite applications from parents and carers who would like to volunteer their service to support continued service design and delivery to join the governance group for sensory support. The role and application is attached below. This is a real opportunity for parents and carers to have a voice and shape services in their local area.