

## SENCO training needs survey

Thanks to the very many schools who submitted information on SEND training needs. The school improvement service is finalising an Autumn SEND conference for SENCOs and a comprehensive training package across the coming year. Details will be in schools before the end of September, along with the information about the national SENCO training qualification. In addition, the service has developed a SENCO handbook which includes guidance to schools on graduated responses to different types of need. Watch out for an email arriving in schools very soon!

## Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs – workstream update

We are delighted that, in response to feedback on growing needs in this area, the clinical commissioning group has funded an increase in provision. Northumbria Health Care Trust has been commissioned by the CCG to double the capacity in their Primary Mental Health Worker team. Recruitment is already well underway and each locality/school partnership will have a named Primary Mental Health Worker. The PMHW team are also developing a 'consultation line' which will give schools a dedicated telephone slot to seek advice and guidance to help them to meet the needs of pupils. The workstream group continues to meet to help to explore school training needs so that the PMHW team and CYPS (CAMHS provided by NTW) can offer training and support to complement the offer from the local authority education SEND team for ASD and behaviour.

## Specific Learning Difficulties including dyslexia – workstream update

.A team of school representatives, local authority education officers, a representative from the parent/carer forum and the SpLinter group, as well as Dyslexia North East and a young adult with dyslexia from Northumberland have reviewed Northumberland's approach to persistent literacy difficulties. The group have agreed that Northumberland will adopt the definition of dyslexia outlined in the Rose review:

*Dyslexia is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and verbal processing speed. Dyslexia occurs across the range of intellectual abilities. It is best thought of as a continuum, not a distinct category, and there are no clear cut-off points. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia. A good indication of the severity and persistence of dyslexic difficulties can be gained by examining how the individual responds or has responded to well-founded intervention.*

The working group have developed an assessment tool which can be used by SENCOs in schools to identify strengths and areas of relative weakness in relation to a pupil's skills. This will help schools to determine those pupils who may need additional support. The group have also agreed a pathway for schools to access external support and a report format which schools will receive when the Literacy & Communication team have undertaken assessments with a pupil and prepared recommendations for a programme of support. The assessment tool and pathways document will be with schools by the end of September and we look forward to receiving your feedback on how the new approach is working for you.

## SEND jargon busting!

You can find a jargon buster on our local offer website on [this link](#). We recently issued guidance to health professionals on their role within the SEND Code of Practice. In addition, we have circulated a new 'pathways on a page' guide for health and social care professionals to help them to understand where to refer families and children for support with SEND. If you would find this information useful and haven't received it, contact any of the clinical commissioners or any lead officer within social care named overleaf.

## Local Area Self Evaluation – Briefings for local authority staff and health professionals

We have undertaken a process of self-evaluation across the local area to review the quality of our SEND provision and the findings will be shared with local authority officers and health professionals in a series of briefings at County Hall. You can book a place and find more information on dates by visiting [this link](#).

## The Designated Clinical Officer

Dr Paula Batsford, a serving GP in Northumberland, is our designated clinical officer although some of the DCO's typical responsibilities are also shared by Rachel Mitcheson, Head of commissioning (children) who has a clinical background. The DCO is a statutory role, set out in the SEND Code of Practice 2015. Paula is a key contact for any health professionals who need advice or guidance re SEND or for any schools, colleges or social care colleagues who need health advice in relation to SEND. Paula's contact details can be found below.

## Local Offer

In response to the feedback received from families, we have redeveloped our local offer page for SEND. The local offer website should contain information on all the services available for children and young people with SEND – a 'one stop shop' for families. You can find the local offer by visiting [this link](#). If you feel that information about your service is not fully represented in the local offer, please don't hesitate to get in touch with [alan.carrick@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:alan.carrick@northumberland.gov.uk).

## How can you get involved?

***If you have a SEND issue you're struggling to resolve, an idea to improve our local area provision or would like more information, you can contact your representative on the SEND strategic group:***

Representing	Name	Title/Role	Contact
Health professionals	Dr Paula Batsford	Designated Clinical Officer	<a href="mailto:pbatsford@nhs.net">pbatsford@nhs.net</a>
Clinical commissioning (children)	Rachel Mitcheson	Head of commissioning (children)	<a href="mailto:r.mitcheson@nhs.net">r.mitcheson@nhs.net</a>
Clinical commissioning (mental health)	Kate Brundle	Head of commissioning (mental health)	<a href="mailto:k.brundle@nhs.net">k.brundle@nhs.net</a>
Clinical commissioning (public health)	Karen Hearne	Commissioner for public health/Public health service manager	<a href="mailto:Karen.Herne@northumberland.gov.uk">Karen.Herne@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
LA education service	Alan Carrick	SEND schools' commissioner	<a href="mailto:Alan.Carrick@northumberland.gov.uk">Alan.Carrick@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
Mainstream schools	Andrew Day	Executive Director, Northumberland Church of England Academy	<a href="mailto:andrew.day@ncea.org.uk">andrew.day@ncea.org.uk</a>
Mainstream schools	Nichola Irving	Headteacher, Horton Grange Primary School	<a href="mailto:Nichola.irving@northumberland.gov.uk">Nichola.irving@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
Special schools	Michael Thompson	Headteacher, Hexham Priory School	<a href="mailto:Michael.Thompson@northumberland.gov.uk">Michael.Thompson@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
Northumberland parent/carer forum	Elizabeth Johnston	Chair, Northumberland Parent/Carer Forum: <i>In It Together</i>	<a href="mailto:elizi_elizi@hotmail.com">elizi_elizi@hotmail.com</a>
Social care (adult)	John Young	Head of Service Care Management	<a href="mailto:John.Young@northumberland.gov.uk">John.Young@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
Social care (children)	Cath McEvoy	Service Director: Children's Services	<a href="mailto:cath.mcevoy@northumberland.gov.uk">cath.mcevoy@northumberland.gov.uk</a>
Joint Commissioning	Lynn Bryden	Children's Commissioner	<a href="mailto:Lynn.bryden@northumberland.gov.uk">Lynn.bryden@northumberland.gov.uk</a>

**Chair: Claire Brown, Senior Manager** [Claire.brown@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.brown@northumberland.gov.uk)