



POSITIVE FUTURES

Meeting Individual Needs in Mainstream Schools

Meeting Individual Needs in Mainstream Schools is a video for parents of children with special educational needs in Essex.

All parents and carers have to make choices that directly affect the future of their children. For the parents and carers of children with special educational needs making these important decisions can seem very difficult.

This video is about people who have made those difficult choices, sometimes faced with what seemed like a lack of information or conflicting advice. Through a series of case studies they describe the challenges



and successes their children have experienced while attending their local school. The video begins with children in the foundation years, covers all the key educational stages and ends with a young man who is now teaching adults.

The children in the video all attend Essex schools and the cameraman works in a local secondary school. The video was edited by ex-pupils of his school at 'The Lab' in Braintree.

To find out more about this video call Lucy McManus on 01245 436694 or email lucy.mcmanus@essexcc.gov.uk

Goodbye... and hello

Farewell to Claire Lazarus

In April 2002, after three years with us, Claire Lazarus left her post as the Eastern Region's SEN Co-ordinator. Claire's pioneering work and her commitment and enthusiasm for children with special educational needs, coupled with an ability to motivate others, has led to a number of important developments across the region, many of which have been nationally recognised.

It is a fitting tribute to the quality of her work that Claire is leaving us for an appointment as the newly created National Advisor for the eleven SEN Regional Partnerships in England, which includes overseeing the work of all the Regional Co-ordinators. We are grateful for her tremendous contribution, and wish her every success in her new role.

André Imich, Chair, Eastern Region Officers

Hello to Jackie Jackson-Smith

From September, I will be taking over from Claire as the Eastern Region SEN Facilitator. For most of my professional life I have been a teacher, for many years working as a SENCO in a large comprehensive school. For the past four years I have worked in a local education authority as development officer for SEN provision. I am really looking forward to my new role and to working with everyone across the region ...

Jackie.jackson-smith@essexcc.gov.uk

Specialist childminding for school-age mothers in Bedfordshire

A sum of £5,000 was earmarked from the Bedfordshire teenage pregnancy budget 2001/2 to provide childcare for school-age mothers. While the sum was insufficient to sustain or even pilot childcare schemes, it formed the basis of discussions with the Bedfordshire EYDCP about the possibilities of enhancing childcare options for young parents.

Thanks to an additional grant of £10,000 from the Early Years

Partnership, a pilot scheme has been established. This will recruit experienced childminders working within the vicinity of three Bedfordshire upper schools, to provide free term-time childcare for mothers wishing to remain or return to their mainstream school. The schools were selected to reflect catchment areas with high rates of deprivation and teenage pregnancy.

The National Child Minding Association is managing the

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The SEN & Disability Act

From September 2002 the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 will be amended to include the duty for schools not to discriminate against children with disabilities and to plan for increasing their access to every aspect of school life.

The Disability Rights Commission has issued a Code of Practice to schools that gives guidance on discrimination through a series of case studies.

The DfES has also issued a planning framework for schools called *Accessible schools: Planning to Increase Access to Schools for Disabled Pupils*.

From September 2002, the newly renamed SEN and Disability Tribunal will hear discrimination cases brought by parents against schools. It is hoped that this new legislation will encourage schools to take a positive look at their



policies and practice and work towards making the education of children with disabilities as inclusive and accessible as possible.

In addition, from April 2003, all schools will have to publish an annual access plan in the governors' report to parents.

Further information please contact:
www.dfes.gov.uk and www.drc-gb.org

Quality Protects Management Action Plans for 2002/03

The Social Services Inspectorate has produced a report summarising key findings from Quality Protects Management Action Plans for the 10 Eastern Region Local Authorities. It outlines the strengths and areas for development across the Region.



Key strengths:

- good progress in listening to children and young people and enabling them to participate in planning;
- improved access to services by children and families from minority ethnic groups;
- generally good performance in visiting and reviewing looked-after children and those on child protection registers;
- strengthening services to care leavers;
- strong focus on the needs of children and young people with disabilities;
- good performance in family placement and permanency planning.

Areas for development:

- achieving greater consistency in care planning from referral and initial assessment to core assessment and service delivery;
- reducing the numbers of children and young people placed outside council areas;
- improving commissioning arrangements;
- developing family support services to encompass services for children with disabilities and their families to reduce need for formal accommodation;
- obtaining better information on children and young people excluded from school, and use of 'alternative' forms of education;
- agreeing benchmarks for services and resources to meet agreed targets;
- developing a strategic approach to the provision of supportive housing and moving-on accommodation for care leavers;
- embedding and monitoring children's participation issues;
- developing more effective strategies for the recruitment and retention of foster carers and adoptive parents for children with complex needs.

Copies of the report are available from
scrcemp@doh.gsi.gov.uk
or phone 01223 597591.

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Working with independent and non-maintained provision

We are delighted to report another success for our Region. In January 2002 the work of the Eastern Region SEN Partnership on the use of out-county and out-city provision was highlighted by the DfES as an example of good practice.

Working together with Social Services, the 10 LEAs have developed a regional database and undertaken analyses of categories of need and the costs involved in out-county and out-city placements. This work informed the mapping of available provision and the establishment of procedures for monitoring non-maintained provision.

Since then, this work has been developed further. Each LEA in the region has taken responsibility for a nominated out-county or out-city provider, disseminating useful information about them across the region so that everyone can make informed decisions about placements and fee increases.

We are currently expanding our regional database on school and non-educational provision. This is being achieved through close work between Education and Social Services and is seen by both agencies as a high priority.

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Specialist childminding for school-age mothers in Bedfordshire

project and is offering incentives to participating childminders that include free training and membership of an early excellence network. They will also be given training in basic counselling skills and it is hoped that they will give valuable parenting support and transfer

their skills to the young mothers.

There are few schemes of this kind in the UK, and staff are keen that it will develop as flexibly as possible – for example, by funding free places for 16+ mothers at college or sixth form if there is insufficient demand from school-age mothers.

For more information please contact
Meriel Devekey on 01234 792054
meriel.devekey@beds-ha.nhs.uk

Educational Psychologists for Inclusion

In June 2002 more than 100 educational psychologists (EPs) from the Eastern Region attended a conference on Supporting Inclusion. Guest speakers included Tommy McKay, former President of the British Psychological Society, and Keith Venables, founder of the national group, EPs For Inclusion.

A number of workshops explored the problems faced when supporting inclusion and how psychology can be applied as part of the solution. There were also presentations about tools that EPs can use in their work with schools and young people in pursuing inclusive practice.

Finally, there was a powerful presentation from two young people with profound hearing loss who described their experience in mainstream education and emphasised the value that young people themselves place on achieving full inclusion in the community.

Evaluation of the day was extremely positive and the Regional Principal EP group will be planning another conference next year.

Update on the NASS/LGA agreement

The Eastern Region has been a key partner in the national working group that recently drafted a new national contract for the placement of children and young people in day and residential independent and non-maintained special schools.

The contract builds on the existing Eastern Region inter-agency contract. After national consultation and minimal amendments, it is hoped that the new contract will be launched this autumn.

We are proud to have been associated with this work as it is based on best practice. It will be the first time that a national contract has been developed in conjunction with education, social care and non-maintained and independent schools.

The contract is available from:
www.hertsdirect.org/senregional/project
or www.nassschools.org.uk

Conference celebrates the culmination of the Index for Inclusion

In July 2002 a one-day conference at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, celebrated the culmination of the Index for Inclusion project, which has been in progress in schools and LEAs across the region since June 2001.

Delegates heard from a diverse range of speakers about national and international policy, implementation issues, practitioner experience and practical approaches to inclusion.

Two schools that have participated in the project, Albert Pye Primary in Suffolk and Ashcroft High in Luton, told their story. Sue Rickell of Disability Equality in

Education gave an insightful and inspiring talk, 'Inclusion is Cool', putting inclusion in perspective. Professor Tony Booth spoke about the future of the Index for Inclusion, a revised version of which will be launched at the end of Inclusion Week (11-15 November 2002).

Barbara Newton, the Project Manager, is preparing a final report to share the learning from the projects that will be disseminated this autumn.

From September Barbara can be contacted at Suffolk County Council Education Department, County Hall, Ipswich IP4 1LJ.

£4.12m Government funding for drug prevention

In April 2002 the Department for Education & Skills issued a grant of £4.12m on behalf of the Department of Health, through the Education Health Partnerships element of the Standard Fund to Local Education Authority (LEA) Directors of Education.

This alternative funding route has been used for the first time to make it easier for local partners to plan, deliver and evaluate drug education in primary schools within the context of the local Healthy Schools Programme. The purpose of the funding remains the same as it was in 2001/02 – to further develop local education and health partnerships.

There is a requirement that the funded activity is included in the local Healthy Schools Programme Action Plans as well as local DAT Young People's Substance Misuse Plans and HIMPs.

Local healthy schools co-ordinators and their contact details can be found on www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

A copy of the notification issued in April 2002 can be found at www.doh.gov.uk/drugs/standardsfund308.pdf

East in Focus

For the first time the Eastern Region Public Health Observatory has included regional population details according to age in its East of England Health Profile. This includes infants (0-1), children (1-14) and young adults 15-24. The report looks at health issues in the widest context, including the issues of deprivation and vulnerable populations. In the foreword David Pencheon, the Director, hopes the report will be useful for every agency in the region with responsibility for health.

Further information is available from
<http://www.erpho.org.uk/>



www.hertsdirect.org/senregionalproject