

Your reference
Our reference
Date 19th April 2018



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Children and Family Services
Civic Centre
Glebe Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 1HH

Dear Parents/ Carers

High Needs Review Engagement

I am writing to invite you have your say about the High Needs Review currently ongoing in Stoke on Trent

To find out more about the High Needs Review, that the Government has asked us to do, please read the key messages attached with this letter.

We would like to hear your views, before the 4th May 2018, about the education provision for children and young people funded using High Needs grants

The Council is seeking the views of people who make use of high needs provision, including children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their families and organisations supporting children, young people and their parents/carers.

What does High Needs mean?

High Needs includes children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans, children and young people attending Pupil Referral Units and those being educated out of Stoke on Trent in Specialist provision.

Have you already given your views?

You may have already given us your views about education provision for children and young people with SEND by attending the parent and Stakeholder event on 17th April 2018 or by feeding your views through parent group discussions we have had over the past year.

These views are all being looked at, but we wanted to make sure everyone has an opportunity to share their views or add anything extra that they want us to consider.

How can you have your say?

To give us your views about the high needs review you can have your say in a number of ways:

Please tell us if you need this letter in an alternative format

contacting the council:

minicom: 01782 23 6037

text: 07786 200 700

email: Enquiries@stoke.gov.uk

telephone 01782 23 4234

stoke.gov.uk

You can access a copy of the questionnaire.

- Online via the Stoke on Trent Local Offer website: localoffer.stoke.gov.uk
- Requesting a copy of the questionnaire from your child or young person's school
- Requesting a copy from PEGIS.
- Completed questionnaires can be returned via email or by post. Emails should be returned to localoffer@stoke.gov.uk.
- Posted responses should be sent to Mrs J Lomas, Strategic Manager for Inclusion, Civic Centre, Stoke on Trent, Glebe Street, Stoke, ST4 1HH. An envelope can be requested if needed from Sheila Cowell on 01782 236809.
- Hand delivered to the Civic Centre reception.

If you don't want to complete a questionnaire, you can submit your comments in writing or by emailing us at: localoffer@stoke.gov.uk

If you have any problems completing this questionnaire, or need assistance to access please call our Local offer administration support: Sharon Tudor (01782 233358)

We look forward to receiving your views, which will be taken into account when making decisions about future services in Stoke on Trent for High Needs Learners. The strategic plan for how Stoke on Trent will support High Needs Learners in the future will be available on the Local Offer website by **10th May 2018**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Johnstone', is written over a thick, horizontal black line.

Rob Johnstone
Interim Assistant Director, Learning Services
Email: Rob.Johnstone@stoke.gov.uk
Telephone: 01782 236892



City of **Stoke-on-Trent**

High Needs Review : Key Messages

High Needs Funding

The Council receives funding from the government to provide services for pupils with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND). Stoke on Trent Council must try to meet all high needs provision from within the grant.

The funding includes place funding and top up funding for pupils in special schools and pupil referral units. It also provides top up funding for pupils with Education, Health and Care plans in mainstream schools and academies, placements for pupils educated at specialist provision outside the city and in independent specialist provision. High Needs Funding also funds specialist advisory teachers and staff to support settings with meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND including Looked After Children and children in early years.

The Children and Families Act 2014 and associated Code of Practice expect inclusive education for children and young people meaning that they must be educated in mainstream schools wherever possible.

Changing Patterns

There has also been a marked growth in the following cohorts of children and young people:

- Pupils with an EHC plan based on a Social, Emotional and Mental Health Need and who have challenging and complex behaviour.
- Pupils on the autistic spectrum with other learning difficulties
- New responsibilities for young people up to the age of 25.
- Before 2015 the number of statements across the city (replaced by the EHC plan) remained steady at 1,400. Between 2015 and 2016 this number rose to 1,800. The growth has slowed down – we now have 1,893 EHC plans but requests for assessment remain high. This reflects the national picture, where there is also growth in requests and plans issued.

The Impact of the Changes outlined above means:

- The population of the four Special Schools in the city has increased significantly and has changed in its composition.
- There has also been a change in where this group of children with SEND go to school. The proportion of children and young people who attend our mainstream schools has decreased significantly.
- The proportion of children and young people who attend our special schools has increased significantly, which could be linked to parental preference for specialist provision.
- Due to the growth referred to above, the demand for special school places has outstripped the current local provision and the local authority has had to increasingly use more costly independent specialist provision to ensure that sufficient places are available.
- Many of the independent placements used are located at a considerable distance from Stoke-on-Trent for example near to Stockport, Derby and Rugeley. In some cases children are travelling a considerable distance to access a placement.

Stoke on Trent Council is working hard with partners to improve the provision for children and young people with high needs.

The current focus of work is

- High needs provision planning across the city
- Developing understanding of Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Developing multi-agency partnerships to support pupils with SEN needs
- Re-design of the financial matrix related to the allocation of funding to schools
- Ensuring Special Education Needs Coordinators have appropriate training

Through the High Needs Provision Planning the Council proposes

- Expansion of the current maintained special school provision to provide places for pupils with autism, SEMH needs and severe and profound learning needs.
- Expansion of provision for pupils with SEMH needs in the city through a new free school application. This would provide capital funding to renovate a suitable facility (subject to DfE approval) within Stoke-on-Trent and would provide revenue funding for planned places for two years.
- Expansion of provision for pupils with Cognition and Learning needs through a new free school application.
- Development of “satellite” provision at mainstream schools under auspices of the Special Schools Trust, places commissioned by the city council. Special schools will liaise with mainstream primary and secondary schools to provide additional classes of up to 10 pupils each year. Pupils would be registered at a special school and return there for specialist lessons. Discussions are already underway with a number of schools who have the capacity to offer such provision.
- Expanding the use of Additional Resourced classes based at Mainstream schools to ensure appropriate provision for pupils with communication and interaction needs.
- Developing Specialist Nursery Provision so that more time can be taken to assess if children with more complex needs will need a special school placement.