

# SEN Reforms in Islington

*A brief guide for parents and carers*



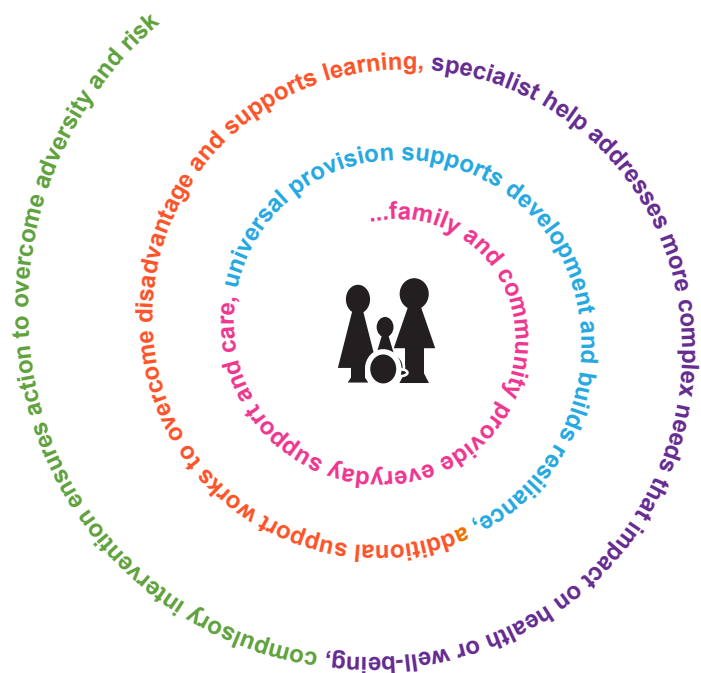
# What are the SEN Reforms?

You may have already heard about some big changes that are being made by the Government to the way that children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities and their families will be supported from September 2014 onwards.

These changes are known as the 'SEN Reforms' and they will be taking place right across the country. This leaflet explains how we are working to put things in place in Islington.

As well as letting you know what's happening, we will also tell you where you can get more information, and where you can send us your views, thoughts and ideas.

## What has happened so far?



The Government said that they wanted to make some changes back in 2011. They wanted parents of children and young people with SEN to:

1. be more involved in decision making
2. to only have to tell their story once
3. and to have more choice and control over support provided.

Since then they have been developing their ideas. A new law - the Children and Families Act 2014 - was agreed in March 2014, setting out the new arrangements.



*'I really like the profile part of the plan. It lets everyone know what's important to us and helps prevent duplication.'*

Parent, SEN Reforms Pilot

# What have we been doing?

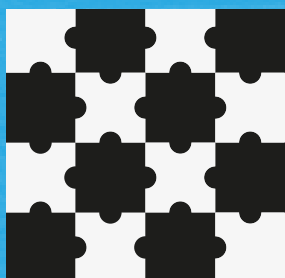
This is a very big job! There are many areas that need to change and fit together better to make the SEN Reforms work. We have already been testing a lot of ideas with parents who have volunteered to help us.

## So what are the big ideas?



*To give children, young people and their parents more say about the help they get.*

We will put families at the centre of everything we do, take notice of what you have to say about the help you are given and, as much as possible, involve you in decisions about what help you get.



*To make sure all the services that support children and their families – especially education, health and social care – work closely together to meet these needs.*

We will redesign our services so that they can work better together.



*To make sure children, young people and families know what help they can get.*

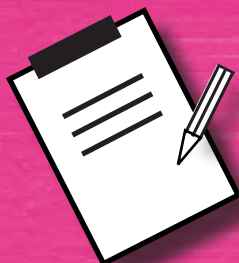
We will write down all the help there is in the area. This information will be called the 'Local Offer' and will include every kind of help - from health to travelling to school, from leisure activities to training and work and from social care services to independent living. You will be able to find the Local Offer on the internet.

Each Islington school is also preparing a School Information Report describing how they support children with special educational needs. They will publish this information on their websites.



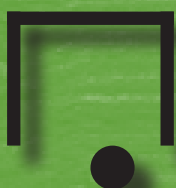
*Families have needed to tell their story too many times to a lot of different people. Things need to be more 'joined up'.*

We will make sure you only have to tell your story once.



*Following a 'coordinated assessment' children and young people will, if needed, have a plan for meeting their education, health and social care needs in one place. The plan can run from birth to 25 if it needs to.*

We will take a new approach to assessment, looking at your child's special educational needs together with their health and social care needs, and bring all this information together in one document. We're calling this a 'coordinated assessment'.



*Education, Health and Care Plans will be much more focused on the outcomes that children and young people and their families want to achieve. This means saying clearly what your child hopes to do at the end of an agreed period of time.*

Children who need one will have an Education, Health and Care plan. We will work with you to agree priorities and goals (outcomes) and set them out in the plan so that your child's progress can be easily measured.



*Where appropriate, families with an Education, Health and Care Plan can ask for a personal budget.*

For some parts of provision it will be possible for you to receive a direct payment to give you more choice and control. The Local Offer will give you information about how and what services you can buy.



*Help to sort things out if you disagree with what is being proposed.*

We hope this won't happen, but if it does you will be able to ask for an independent 'mediator' who will listen to all sides and help sort things out.



*New protections for young people aged 16-25 in further education, and a stronger focus on preparing for adulthood.*

Young people who need to stay in education after the age of 19 to finish a course, or do some further study to get the right job or living skills, can do so.

# Things are starting to shape up!

We have the first versions of our Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans which will have a "Pupil Profile" section that you can complete. Volunteer parents who have already filled these in tell us they have found this very helpful.

The Government has issued the first draft of a Code of Practice that shows us what we need to put in place to be ready for September 2014. This will give us time to train staff in things like writing clear outcomes, and making sure families are at the centre of the process (you can see the latest draft Code of Practice at [www.education.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations)).

## What happens next?

Our main targets for September 2014 are:

- That parents, children and young people know what's going on, and know where to get more information if they need it
- Having an agreed assessment process in place that will work for all ages up to 25 and can cope with all contributions from different services
- Publishing our Local Offer
- Getting a new computer system in place that will give you and the people who work with you secure access to your plans and reviews - families have told us they think this would be really helpful and that it would be good to have everything stored in one place
- Having in place arrangements to resolve any differences parents may have with us by ensuring there is an independent service to help us do that



*'We want the best for your child too and will be with you all the way. Through working together we will achieve the best outcomes for your child's future.'*

Alyson, SEN Keyworker

# Further information

You can find out more at:



[www.islington.gov.uk/parentsofdisabledchildren](http://www.islington.gov.uk/parentsofdisabledchildren)



[sen.reforms@islington.gov.uk](mailto:sen.reforms@islington.gov.uk)

## We'd like your feedback

We really welcome your feedback so please do get in touch if you'd like to make a contribution, if you feel there's something missing, or you have comments. Your input will be much appreciated.

We have already had a lot of help and ideas from families and the people who work with you (such as schools, health professionals, social workers) which has also been very useful.

Finally, we want to take this opportunity to say 'thanks' again to all those of you who have helped so far; we hope more people will get involved to make sure we do the best we can for all of the families who will be involved in these changes.

