

SEN Green Paper Pathfinder Pilot 2011-12

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Introduction

The **SEN Green Paper** was published in March 2011, setting out proposals for a single education, health and care plan to replace statements of SEN and also introducing personal budgets for parents of disabled children and children with special needs. One of the reasons for a Single Assessment is to reduce what the Government calls "over-identification of special needs" but the new definition has not yet been published.

In September 2011 the Government published the list of Councils which were participating in the **Pathfinder Pilot trials**.

Responses to Freedom of Information requests in April 2012 revealed that children and families have not yet been selected for the Pilots, as indicated below.

On **March 26th 2012** I posed the following questions and I have obtained permission to share the responses covering the majority of Pathfinder Pilot areas.

- 1. whether a policy decision was taken about including home educated children in the pilot**
- 2. whether any home educated children are in fact included in the pilot**
- 3. the methods used by the local authority to inform home educators about the pilot**

Bexley

The criteria for inclusion in the pilot is children with complex needs and a statement of SEN. The Council do have home educated children included in the pilot and they have been identified through discussions about their statements.

Brighton and Hove

"Brighton and Hove's Pathfinder project has not yet reached the stage of making decisions about which children should be included in the pilot. General information about the Pathfinder has been made public via a range of media, including information in the Amaze newsletter and on the Amaze website. Amaze is the main local voluntary organisation which supports parents with children with special needs, irrespective of where they are educated. Home educating parents of children with SEN who are actively involved with the LA are made aware of the existence of a range of support and information available to them from Amaze."

Bromley and Bexley

Bromley and Bexley Pathfinder is focusing on children with the most complex of needs. No policy decision has been taken about who should be included in the pilot for testing yet. At present we are developing a draft single health, education and care plan in partnership with Bromley Parents Voice our Parents forum and undertaking 'virtual' testing before we seek volunteers families through Parents Voice for children with the most complex of needs to be involved in the pilot.

Bromley Parents Voice our Parents Forum have widely circulated details about the Pathfinder programme. A Parents Voice conference was held on the 3rd March with a focus on the Pathfinder. This was well attended by both parents and supporting professionals across a range of services. A booklet has also been produced to inform both parents and professionals about the Pathfinder programme. This is available on the web site.

2 parent workshops have been held to work with parents on the emerging single plan. At present no families have been selected to take part because the Pathfinder work has not reached that stage yet.

<http://www.bromleyparentvoice.org.uk/>

Calderdale

May 24th 2012: The pathfinder project is in the process of recruiting 60 disabled children and young people from the age of 0-60 to be involved in the development of a single assessment. Calderdale's approach is to develop family owned single plans which would replace current assessments across health, social care and education.

School aged children will be recruited from a variety of provision which could include those who are home educated. The pathfinder is working with a relatively small group of children and young people identified by a number of stakeholders across health, education, social care and VCS partners. Although home educated were not excluded from the selection process there are no home educated children identified within the initial cohort of children and young people. The pathfinder has developed a communication strategy to ensure all stakeholders are kept informed of its work, the communication activity is predominantly being delivered by Calderdale Parents and Carers who are using a variety of mechanisms to ensure all disabled children and young people and their families in Calderdale are kept informed. These included email bulletins, media coverage, information to services and practitioners, newsletters.

Cornwall

A policy decision was not taken about including home educated children. Please note that as the SEND pathfinder relates to SEND systems and processes the expected outcome is that any benefit drawn by DfE through the testing/development evidences will apply equally through statute. The Cornwall/Isles of Scilly has produced one (to-date) pathfinder briefing which has been published in different formats to share and engage with multiple partners on developments and actions. As second edition is pending publication/circulation. The Cornwall/Isles of Scilly Pathfinder is using some of the pathfinder grant to directly support both Cornwall's and Isles of Scilly Parent Carer Councils to encourage engagement and solution finding. This includes planning, governance and practical arrangements to collect, collate and use "the voice of the child/young person and respective families".

Darlington

The Hartlepool and Darlington Pathfinder decided to include children who fall into three categories –Under 7s without a statement, young people yrs 9-11 who have ASD and Looked After Children with statements. Home Educated children could fall into any of these categories and therefore be part of the pilot. Darlington Borough Council is in the early stages of registering families and as yet no Home Educated children have been identified who fit into the criteria detailed above. There will be three cohorts throughout the year and parents can put themselves forward for the pilot co-ordinated assessment and single plan. The pilot has been publicised through the Council's website and for Home Educated children with statements it is discussed as part of the home visit to conduct the Annual Review.

Devon

No specific "policy" has been taken with regard to home educated children however the pathfinder as it is, looks at children with additional needs from a health social care and education support perspective would look at how the single plan framework can support all children with those SEND needs which may include children educated in a variety of settings. The current statutory guidance regarding the LAs requirement to ensure that the needs of SEN home educated children are being met sufficiently is still part of this work as we are working within Statutory SEN guidance. If a child has a social care/health plan at present they may at review be offered a single plan. If a home educated child's parents are requesting support this could form part of a single plan process once our process is identified. The LA has a list of children with Statements who are home educated which is part of a wider list of home educated children and as and when we need to we would be communicating specifically with those families. Families are also accessing information via Disc plus information services, SEND pathfinder newsletters a new website and twitter accounts.

East Sussex

There has been no policy decision about including home educated children in the pilot. Families have not yet been selected for invitation however I am not aware that any home educated children have been put forward. Home educated families will access pathfinder information in the same way as all other families. For example, via the websites, through parent partnership, and the East Sussex Parent and Carer Council.
<http://www.eastsussexpacc.org/>

Gateshead

No policy decision was made around including or excluding any specific group of pupils from the pilot. The vast majority of pupils who have been put forward to be part of the pathfinder either have statements, have had statements or are undergoing statutory assessment. There is a working group who are developing the single plan process and suggested names have been put forward by a range of professionals. To my knowledge no home educated pupils have been recommended for the pilot, but families are still being identified. No specific action has been taken to notify home educators. There was a launch event at the end of March and parents of pupils with statements and those pupils attending Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools (ARMS) without statements were sent a letter about this. I think there is only one statemented pupil who is currently home educated and I assume they would have been invited to attend this launch event.

Greenwich

One element of our pilot focuses on children under 5. We are currently in the process of identifying families and if any of those involved wishes to home educate their child, we would not exclude them. The second element of the pilot is young people preparing for adulthood. This work is focussed in Charlton Special School and, therefore, would not include young people who are home educated. We are currently identifying families for the under 5s pilot. Information about the Pathfinder and specifically information events for parents were advertised through the Disabled Children and Young People register, Greenwich Parent Voice so that any parent who is home educating their child who is a member of GPV or whose child is registered on the disabled child's register would have received this information. We also advertised in Greenwich Time, a local free newspaper delivered to every home in Royal Greenwich.

Hampshire

There hasn't been a policy decision to include or exclude any groups of children in the pilot. It's too early in our pilot to say who will be finally included. One of the parent representatives on one of our pathfinder work streams is a home educator and it is anticipated that part of her contribution will be to advise on this. It is worth noting also that the Local Authority is in the process of putting together a public website on the work undertaken in the SEN pathfinder. Furthermore newsletters about the pathfinder will shortly become available.

Hartlepool

Home Educated Children, with a statement for SEN, can be included in the pilot if the parents chose to do so. Through the pilot some children might have a personal budget to use for home education if this has been identified as part of their co-ordinated assessment and single plan. Home Educators who have children with a statement for SEN have/will be informed during their next home visit.

Hertfordshire

There is no policy decision to either specifically involve or exclude home educated children from the Pathfinder. We cannot say at the moment whether home educated children will be included as we are still working to identify a cohort of families to be involved in our Pathfinder. Once a target group is identified families will be assigned randomly as to whether new approaches will be trialled with them or whether they will be in a comparator group. The cohort of children involved in the Pathfinder will have significant SEND and will already be in receipt of services from at least two agencies out of education, health and social care. Information about the Pathfinder is available on herts.direct

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/healthsoc/childfam/specialneeds/projects/17245020/>

Isles of Scilly

As a very small Local Authority we are taking part in the SEN Pathfinder work in partnership with Cornwall LA. Locally parents of children with a disability/SEN are actively engaging with the Pathfinder project. These organizations may represent the parents of home educated children with SEN.

Kent

Kent County Council has determined that the pilot area for the SEND Pathfinder in Kent will be Thanet. To this end there have been a significant number of meetings and discussions regarding the cohort of children/families who might be likely to seek support through this Pathfinder. I can confirm that no policy decision has been taken to exclude families who seek to home educate their children however there has also been no overt activity to include this group. Over the coming months the publicity for the Pathfinder will build in Thanet to ensure that parents/carers/schools/other agencies (including the voluntary sector) are conversant with the aims of the Pathfinder. I would hope therefore that any home educators in the Thanet area will have an opportunity to consider whether or not they might wish to contact the Pathfinder. This link to the Kent Parents as Equal Partners website - <https://www.kentpeps.co.uk/green-paper.aspx> – should provide you with some more detail regarding the Kent SEND Pathfinder which I hope will be of interest/use to you.

Lewisham

The cohort of children and young people that will be tested in our pathfinder are:

- MAPP (Multi Agency Planning Pathway) new referrals and case reviews.
- ASD referrals to the Communication and Interaction Team, within the Inclusion service.
- Those families agreed at SEN panel to proceed for a Statutory SEN assessment will be provided with a choice to opt in to the new single assessment process and plan as an alternative.

Home education is not a determining criteria for participation in the pathfinder, however, children and young people who are home educated are within the scope of our cohort, and may be within the groups of children and young people who are selected to test our proposed approach. Individual children, young people and families have not yet been identified to take part in the pathfinder. We are using as many opportunities and methods to keep parents and carers of children with SEN and disability informed as the pathfinder progresses as possible. This has included events with Lewisham Parents and Carers Forum, and SIGNAL. We will continue to utilise existing groups and events through the life of the pathfinder to keep parents and carers, including those with children who are home educated, informed of developments.

Manchester

It was an open referral system and any young person within the targeted age range with SEN or disability could be referred for the pathfinder cohort. No home educated young people are included in the pilot and we did not have any young people who are home educated nominated. Briefings have been provided on the pathfinder and how to nominate young people for the pathfinder to a range of health services and practitioners, voluntary sector partners, parents/carers forum and other parents/carers groups all of which can be accessed by parents/carers of children with SEN or a disability and who home educate. Home educators will benefit from Pathfinder local offer developments - we are improving the Family Service Directory and looking at a range of other ways that we can communicate information on all the options relevant to young disabled people and their parents/carers.

Medway

The Medway SEN & Disability Pathfinder is committed to including children from diverse backgrounds and disabilities in trialling new single assessment and planning processes. Medway has yet to select the very small number of early years children and 14 plus young people to be involved in the trial and to seek agreement from their parents and carers. We are working in Partnership with six other south east authorities (known as SE7), so will be sharing information about work with children from other age groups or circumstances across the region. This is to ensure, where possible, that the SE7 Pathfinder as a whole covers a range of needs and schooling options. The Medway Pathfinder has a strong relationship with the Medway Parents and Carers Forum (a representative voice for parents and carers of children with complex needs).

MPCF and other voluntary and community sector representative groups are members of the Pathfinder Change Board.

MPCF (www.medwaypcf.org.uk) and Medway Children's Trust (www.medwaychildrenstrust.co.uk - currently being redesigned) websites reflect local Pathfinder activity.

We have produced two newsletters (attached) which have been circulated widely to disability organisations, health, education and social care agencies. An 'Easy Read Guide' to the Pathfinder (attached) is available on request. There has also been a feature in the local press ("Your Medway") and an interview on RadioKent by the co-chair of MPCF.

Northamptonshire

The bid submitted by the Northamptonshire and Leicester City Consortium was specifically based around children and young people who attend Designated Special Provisions (DSPs) which are attached to mainstream (i.e. not special) schools in the two areas. This approach was taken as this is a provision which is not common across all areas and it was therefore felt that the pilot should be tried out with this group of children and young people. The activity which we are undertaking is therefore with children and young people in DSPs which, by definition, excludes home educated children.

North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire is one of 20 Pathfinders nationally, testing some of the ideas that were proposed in the Government's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Green Paper last year. Our pilot is relatively small scale in order that we can achieve something realistic in the time available - now only twelve months. Specifically we are trying to develop a process to generate a single education, health and care plan for any child or young person from birth to 25 years who has special educational needs or a disability and to produce a software system that will capture appropriate information from any agency involved with the child and to control access to that information via informed consent. We will trial some of the elements with disabled children under five in the Hambleton/Richmondshire area and other aspects with special school leavers in Scarborough.

Home educated children were not specifically discussed in relation to the Pathfinder, either to include or exclude them. No children or families have yet been directly involved in testing any aspects of the new processes. If home educated children were to fall into one of the pilot groups, then with the informed consent of the parents they would be included. However, given the defined groups we intend to work with, then it is not very likely, unless a disabled child under five in Hambleton/Richmondshire happens to live in a family where older children are home educated.

The specific publicity about this pilot has been low key because the Pathfinder work is only one aspect of a much larger programme to change and improve services and provision for children and young people with SEND across the County. There was an article about the Pathfinder in the February edition of North Yorkshire Now, which is available on line to all North Yorkshire residents

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/recruitment/newsletter/nyn0112.htm> and further information about the larger

SEND Change and Improvement programme can be found on the County Council's website

<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2996> Further publicity may follow if we have messages to disseminate to specific groups or to whole communities about what we are doing or have achieved but nothing is planned so far.

Nottinghamshire

The focus of the pathfinder scheme varies from authority to authority. In Nottinghamshire we have concentrated upon providing a comparison between the existing system and possible alternative systems through identifying differing cohorts of statemented children. A decision was taken not to include Home Educated children within Nottinghamshire as the cohort would not have been large enough to provide a significant statistical comparison. The pathfinder communication strategy aims to provide information about the scheme to all children with SEND, their parents and carers (this includes home-educated children). APTCOO (the voluntary partner in Nottinghamshire) is developing a website as a part of the strategy.

Information will also be disseminated through briefings for the voluntary and community sector (including support groups) and through IRIS (the information service for parents of children and young people with disabilities in Nottinghamshire).

Oldham

No policy decision was taken about including home educated children in the pilot and we're open to such children being involved. The pilot group is still being determined for the various aspects of the project - they will be finalised over the next month. We will be sending out newsletters / info on our website / invitations to events

Rochdale

Rochdale MBC is currently in the process of formulating what the criteria will be for selecting the families to be included in the pilot. When we are at this point, a decision will be taken whether this is an open application or whether there will be an element of targeting around a particular age range and/or a particular additional need – home-educated children will be included whichever decision is taken.

Solihull

Solihull's bid did not have a focus on home education and consequently we have not included this aspect of work in our local programme. Home educated children are therefore not included in the pilot at present. All parents who are home educating receive regular information about local matters through our Family Information Service and are kept informed of local developments in this way thus receiving information in the same way as all families in the area.

Surrey

A policy decision was not taken about including home educated children in the pilot. Each Pathfinder LA has key strands that they must focus on. For further information about the key strands that Surrey will be focussing on, please check the SE7 website www.se7pathfinder.co.uk At present, the pilot has not started. This will be starting over the next few months. Surrey's Local Change Board is in the process of arranging and agreeing a communications strategy. This will be looking at ensuring that all professionals and related parties, including parents and the voluntary and community sector are informed and invited to participate in the pilot.

Trafford

No policy decision has been taken in relation to including home educated children in the pilot. Children that will be going through the pilot have not yet been identified. The selection criteria have not been decided. At the moment Trafford are looking to include children that have needs in social care, health and special educational needs, and should a child with these criteria be home educated, they will not be excluded from the pilot on this basis. Home education will not be used as exclusion criteria. The communication plan for the pilot identifies different sets of stakeholders, however home educators are not individually identified. Communication is currently through membership of the advisory board, and this is made up of a wide range of different stakeholders including parents, voluntary sector, schools, SENCOs, Commissioning and so on.

West Sussex

No specific policy decision was taken about home educated children, but they could be included in the pathfinder. The process of recruiting families to the pathfinder has only just started so it is too early to give a definitive answer. The pathfinder has been publicised through the WSCC website and via Reach Out a specialist West Sussex website for children & young people with SEN or disabilities, their parents and those working with them.

Wigan

Wigan maintains a Disability database which currently holds details of almost 700 families with children attending a range of educational settings including home education, and this is the main vehicle for providing information to parents. In addition information regarding the Pathfinder is shared via schools and a range of

agencies such as School, Education Support Services, Social Care, Health and the local voluntary sector. It has been widely disseminated and promoted via leaflets, newsletters, promotional opportunities in the community, mailshots and information on the internet. The intention is to ensure that a wide representation from parents and families is secured in the Pathfinder work and this includes not only involvement as a Pilot but also in the focus groups and information sessions that are being held throughout the duration of the project. Wigan is seeking to involve approximately 20 families in the Pilot and have formulated a matrix to ensure that those involved are a most appropriate representational spread of age, need, geographical location, educational setting, whether mainstream, special or home educated etc.

Pilot families have not been confirmed as yet.

Wiltshire

No specific decision about home educated children, but if they are eligible; all children and young children who have a SEN and/ or who require tier 3 social care or specialist health care from the Children's Continuing Health Care team may be eligible to apply to be part of the Personal Budgets pilot. However, please note that the pilot does not include the provision to fund home education. The pilot is due to start on the 1st April 2012 so, to date, no children have been included yet. The Local Authority uses a number of mechanisms to inform all parent carers

about the work of the DCA Pathfinder including regular updates in "Your Wiltshire" magazine, which is sent to every resident in Wiltshire, updates and newsletters on the Wiltshire Council website, updates on the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council website, and workshops held in conjunction with Wiltshire Parent Carer Council. Through all these routes we also highlight an e-forum established just for the pathfinder, which anyone can join to see the current work and debates being held on the pathfinder.

Links

<http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00198359/20-pathfinders-to-test-out-proposals-in-the-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-green-paper>

<http://edyourself.org/articles/sengpfoi.php>

<http://edyourself.org/articles/SENGreenPaper.php>

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201212/ldhansrd/text/120423w0001.htm#12042310002735>

Parliamentary Question about the SEN Pathfinders April 2012

In April 2012 **Lord Lucas** asked the Minister "whether any of the Special Educational Needs pathfinder pilot local authorities have included home-educated children in the pilot; if so, which authorities, and how many children in each authority; if not, why not, and what steps they will take to address this issue. "

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools, Lord Hill of Oareford, replied that "since the launch of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) pathfinder programme in late 2011, the 31 pathfinder local authorities and their health partners have been working in partnership with parents and carers from a wide variety of backgrounds to design and develop their approach to testing the key reforms set out in the Green Paper *Support and Aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability*. The pathfinder programme is intended to test the Green Paper reforms across the spectrum of SEND, including improving assessment and planning for children with the most complex needs who would normally receive a statement through the education, health and care plan, and improving transparency about services available locally through the introduction of a 'local offer'. It is up to pathfinders to identify and recruit their particular cohort of families locally, but we expect cohorts to include children and young people with a range of needs and in a range of settings (eg including early years provision, special schools, maintained schools, Academies and other settings which might include home educated children). We do not expect the evaluation to report on the impact of the Green Paper reforms on specific types of schooling."