

Support and advice services for Parents and Young People with SEN, including support to resolve disagreements as part of the Education, Health and Care Process

In Wakefield we have always worked closely and very successfully with parents, children/young people and nurseries, schools and colleges to make decisions about help for children and young people with SEN or disabilities. We do this by taking a person-centred approach where the views of the child/young person and their families are taken into account at all times. We are now supporting this through the 'My Support Plan' process.

There are a many services which can offer advice and help to parents and young people who have SEN needs. These are designed to help ensure that any extra help that is in place is centred on the child/young person and meets their needs. This support aims to reduce disagreement between the Local Authority and parents/young people. However, we do know that there may be times when a parent or young person disagrees with a decision and we will always do our best to work with parents to resolve these disagreements.

We would advise that where there is a need for support or an area of disagreement, parents and young people should always talk about this with the school/education provider, service or the Local Authority (LA) in the first instance to try and resolve this as soon as possible.

Support and Advice Services:

The Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team (SENART) are always available to support and provide guidance to parents and young people. You can contact them on 01924 302465

There are lots of services working together to help parents. If you contact a service and it's not the right one they will talk to you about who can provide that support and direct you to them.

Further information about all support services can be found on the Wakefield Council Local Offer website: <http://wakefield.mylocaloffer.org>

WESAIL

Wakefield Early Support Advice Information and Liaison (WeSail) provides early help for families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities living within the district. WeSail look to provide a 'one stop' service to provide information and advice alongside early support through a key worker service providing advice, information, emotional and practical support to families. They can also provide a wide range of information to parents.

Contact: 01924 379015 / wesail@kids.org.uk / www.kids.org.uk

Parent Partnership

The role of parent partnership is to provide free, impartial information, advice and support to all parents and carers whose children have, or may have, special educational needs (SEN). They also work with organisations, professionals and schools who support children and young people with SEN and their families. Specifically this can include help with completing forms, understanding documents and reports, to resolve disagreements between parents/ carers, the local authority and schools and to support parents with meetings with other professionals such as school meetings.

Contact: 0345 4859 644 / parentpartnership@wakefield.gov.uk

Independent Supporters

The role of the independent supporter is to provide parents and children/young people with impartial information and advice in relation to assessments leading to Education, Health and Care Plans and conversion of statements to Education, Health and Care Plans. An independent supporter can help parents and young people to understand the local referral process and the local offer. The supporter can act as the main contact person for the parent/young person throughout the EHC assessment and planning process; liaising across a range of services to help gather information required for an EHC plan.

Contact: 01924 304152 / wakefieldindependentsupport@barnardos.org.uk

Advocacy for young people

Barnardo's Children's Advocacy and Participation Service (CAPS) provide an independent advocacy service for young people transitioning from a Statement of Educational Needs to an Education Health and Care Plan or being assessed for an EHCP. The service will work directly with young people whose voice may not be clearly heard to contribute to the decisions about their EHC plan. CAPS will work to ensure where there is conflict of opinions regarding the EHC plan that the young person's views have equal representation. The service should be used by young people when the support from connexions and independent supporters is not enough.

Contact: 01977 552493 / wakefieldCAPS@barnardos.org.uk

Connexions

Connexions support young people aged 13-19 who need extra help to move on successfully post-16 and young people aged up to 19 (or up to 25 with a learning difficulty or disability) who are unemployed. Connexions Personal Advisers are trained to support young people through a range of issues which impact their lives. They will meet with young people in school, college, or at their learning provider to discuss and assess their needs, putting an action plan in place to ensure that they understand clearly what steps they should be taking.

Contact: 01924 371579 / connexions.wakefield@prospects.co.uk / www.connexionswakefield.co.uk

Appeals and Disagreement Services:

Sometimes there may be areas where a parent or young person is not happy following all the advice and support they receive about the provision in place through the My Support Plan and EHCP. If this is the case there are routes available to them to progress at a more formal level.

Disagreement resolution

Disagreement resolution services are for all parents of children and young people with SEN, and young people themselves with SEN. Using the service is voluntary and covers SEN provision as well as disagreements about health and social care. There are three areas of disagreement that this service can help with:

- If you disagree with the LA, school/education provision about how they are carrying out their education, health and care duties. This applies if your child has any kind of SEN – it's not just if they are going being assessed for an EHC Plan or already have an EHC Plan.
- If you disagree with the school/education provision about the SEN provision they are making.
- If you disagree with the LA or Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) about the health or social care provision whilst your child is being assessed for an EHC Plan or about their EHC Plan, Review or Reassessment.

Within Wakefield the Disagreement Resolution Service is provided via KIDS who can be contacted on 03330 062 835 / senmediation@kids.org.uk / <http://www.kids.org.uk/Event/sen-mediation-service-wakefield>

Mediation

Mediation is also a voluntary process for parents/carers and young people, which can be used if you cannot reach an agreement in matters relating to EHC Plans. The service only covers disagreements you might have in the following circumstances:

- Where the LA decides not to carry out an EHC needs assessment or re-assessment
- Where the LA decides not to draw up an EHC Plan, once they have completed an assessment
- Where the LA decides not to amend an EHC Plan after the annual review or re-assessment
- Where the LA decides to cease to maintain an EHC Plan

Where the LA has drawn up an EHC Plan, mediation is available if you disagree with:

- The parts of the plan which describe your child's special educational needs
- The special educational provision set out in the plan

The LA provides access to an independent mediation advisor who you will need to contact for information about mediation if you wish to go to mediation or are thinking about appealing to the SEND Tribunal. If you decide to go to a mediation meeting, the mediation adviser will inform the LA who will meet you within 30 days.

The mediation service is run by an independent mediator who has accredited training. We aim to ensure that this is at a place and time that is convenient to you and will arrange this with you. You can bring a friend, adviser or advocate to support you. When the mediation has finished the mediation adviser must issue a certificate within 3 working days. You will need this certificate if you wish to register an appeal to the SEND Tribunal. You can also go to mediation about the social care and health parts of an EHC Plan. To do this you must tell the LA that you are unhappy with these parts of the plan.

Within Wakefield the Mediation Service is provided via KIDS who can be contacted on 03330 062 835 / senmediation@kids.org.uk / <http://www.kids.org.uk/Event/sen-mediation-service-wakefield>

Appealing to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Tribunal

The SEND Tribunal is a legal body. It hears appeals against decisions made by the LA about EHC assessments and EHC Plans. You can appeal to the Tribunal if the LA decides:

- Not to carry out an EHC needs assessment or re-assessment
- Not to draw up an EHC Plan once an assessment has been completed
- Not to amend an EHC Plan after the annual review or re-assessment
- To cease to maintain an EHC Plan

You can also appeal if you disagree with what the LA includes in an EHC plan such as:

- Description of Special Educational Needs
- The SEN provision in place
- The school/education provision the LA names
- If changes are made to the EHC Plan without your agreement

Before you can appeal to the SEND Tribunal, you must have contacted a mediation adviser. The only circumstance that this is not the case is if your appeal is only about the school named in the EHC Plan. You will need a certificate from the mediation adviser to register an appeal with the SEND Tribunal. You have one month from receiving the certificate or two months from the original decision (whichever is later) to register an appeal.

The SEND Tribunal also hears disability discrimination claims against schools and the Local Authority if it remains responsible for the school.

You can contact the SEND Tribunal at:

HM Courts & Tribunals Service, Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal, 1st Floor, Darlington Magistrates' Court, Parkgate, Darlington, DL1 1RU.

Tel: 01325 289350

The 0-25 SEND Code of Practice, 2014, provides full details of how you can challenge decision or raise complaints, including details of disagreement resolution, mediation and the SEND Tribunal.

Contact information:

Special Educational Needs Assessment & Review Team (SENART)

Tel: 01924 302465

Email: SENART@wakefield.gov.uk