

Communications Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) and their Families.

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group

2021-2023



this is Redcar & Cleveland



Contents

1. Introduction and Purpose	3
2. Glossary of Terms	4
3. Vision and Objectives	4
4. Governance	6
5. Priorities	7
5.1. Space	7
5.2. Voice	8
5.3. Audience	10
5.4. Influence	11
6. How our services and systems will be shaped by ongoing feedback.	12
7. Action Plan	13
What we will do to improve communications with children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers	13

1. Introduction and Purpose

Good communication, consultation and stakeholder engagement is vital to the delivery of quality services for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). It is imperative that we provide a broad range of inclusive services to give people the services they need and choose, regardless of their disability or circumstances. We aim to provide effective, outcome focused services and to do this we will listen to, and act upon, the feedback of children, young people, parents and carers.

Communication is a meaningful, two-way dialogue that recognises the varying degrees of need and that we as a system may need to do something differently to meet these needs. This strategy sets out how Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council (RCBC) and Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) will work together to communicate with children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers; including how we share information, ask for feedback and work in partnership with them to improve services. It refers to services which are provided directly by Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and those which are commissioned jointly with Tees Valley CCG and wider partners. Our partners and stakeholders include NHS staff, council staff, elected members, service providers, voluntary and community groups and organisations such as schools, the police. It is important that our stakeholders are involved in consultations to provide organisational perspectives and to share their insights from working with children and young people with SEND.

This document is intended to compliment the following documents:

- Redcar & Cleveland Council's Children & Families Voice & Influence Strategy (2021-2023). *Whilst the Voice and Influence Strategy covers RCBC's process of enabling, facilitating and acting upon the voices of children, young people and families in Redcar & Cleveland, the Communications Strategy refers specifically to children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers.*
- Joint Commissioning Strategy
- Redcar & Cleveland Council's SEND Strategy
- The SEND map of spaces where children and young people's can have their voices heard (to be developed as action plan task)

2. Glossary of Terms

General Terms

Term	Meaning
SEND	<p>'Special Educational Needs' is a legal definition and refers to children with learning problems or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children the same age.</p> <p>Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to learn. They can affect their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognition and learning• Social Emotional and Mental Health• Communication and interaction• Physical and/or medical
Stakeholders	Stakeholders include children, young people, parents and carers and partner agencies.
Stakeholder Feedback	Verbal or written communication from stakeholders expressing how they feel about the services and support available. Customer feedback should influence service delivery and strategy.

Co-Production Terms

Term	Meaning
Co-production	Co-production is an equal relationship between people who use services and the people responsible for services. They work together, from design to delivery, sharing strategic decision-making about policies as well as decisions about the best way to deliver services.
Co-design	People who use services are involved in designing services, based on their experiences and ideas. They have genuine influence but have not been involved in 'seeing it through'.
Engagement	Compared to the consultation step below, people who use services are given more opportunities to express their views and may be able to influence some decisions, but this depends on what the people responsible for services will allow.
Consultation	People who use services may be asked to fill in surveys or attend meetings; however, this step may be considered tokenistic if they do not have the power to influence or affect change.
Informing	The people responsible for services inform people about the services and explain how they work. This may include telling people what decisions have been made and why.

Educating	The people who use services are helped to understand the service design and delivery so that they gain relevant knowledge about it. That is all that is done at this stage.
Coercion	This is the bottom rung of the ladder. People who use services attend an event about services as passive recipients. Their views are not considered important and are not taken into account.

(Source: [Think Local Act Personal](#))

3. Vision and Objectives

This strategy contributes to the overall vision and aims for both Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Children & Families Directorate and Tees Valley CCG Children and Young Peoples Services Team:

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council's Children & Families Directorate Vision:

'Our vision is that all our children flourish and fulfil their dreams'.

We will achieve this by working in partnership to deliver excellence for children and families.

Tees Valley CCG Corporate Vision for Children and Young People:

Best Start In Life

Improve health

Tees Valley CCG Corporate Vision for Children and Young People with SEND:

Tees Valley CCG and its partners recognise that children are our future and are the next generation who will ensure the success and prosperity of each local area. It is therefore imperative that we invest in their development and create an environment in which they can grow and prosper. We work with five local authorities across Tees Valley and for more specific and detailed information relating to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) please view the CCG website at

<https://teesvallevccg.nhs.uk/our-work/send-local-offer/>

Effective communication and consultation with children, young people and their families is vital to achieving our shared vision. We will know we have been successful in facilitating effective communication with children, young people and their families when:

- 1. Children and young people with SEND will feel that their voices are listened to and contribute to service delivery.**
- 2. Children, young people with SEND and their families will be routinely involved and supported in making decisions about SEND service developments.**
- 3. Children and young people with SEND and their families will be aware of the various methods of consultation that they can become involved in.**
- 4. Parents/Carers will feel supported and listened to and services will be designed to meet the needs of our children and young people.**

The Action Plan in Section 7 details the activities which will take place to enable us to achieve our vision and objectives, as well as how we will measure our progress towards them and who will be responsible for ensuring this happens.

4. Governance

This strategy will be overseen by the SEND Strategic Leads group, which includes representation from:

- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
 - SEND Teams
 - Service improvement and participation
 - Commissioning
 - Data and performance
 - Quality assurance
 - Workforce development
- Tees Valley CCG
- NHS Provider Trusts
- Redcar & Cleveland Parent Carer Forum

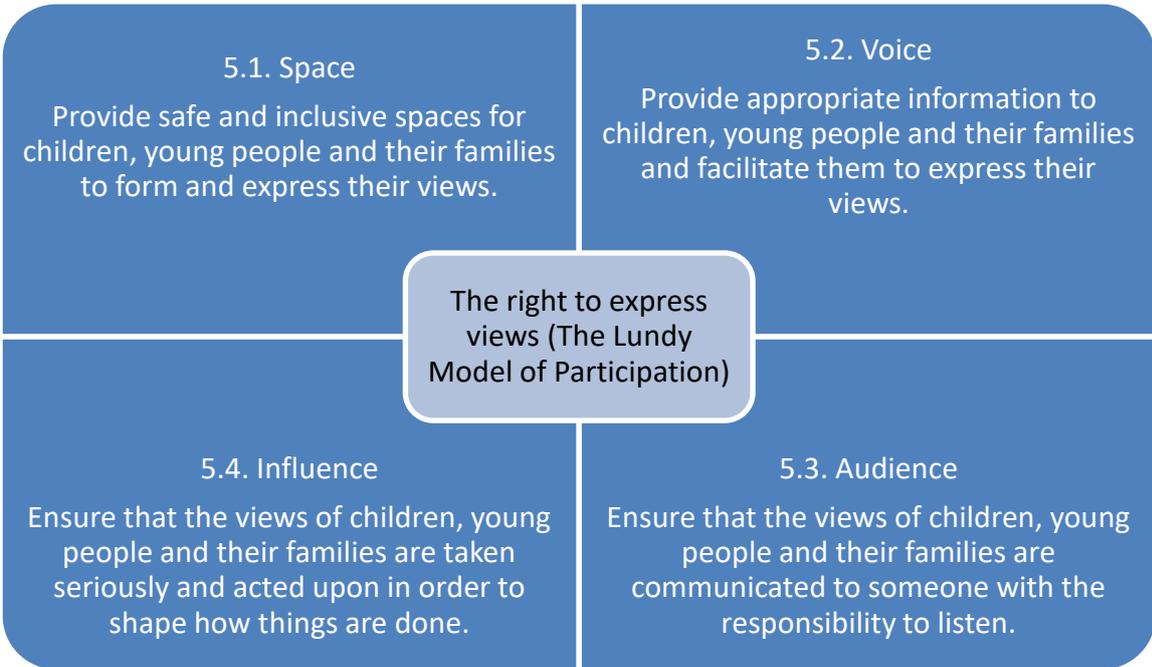
This group will be responsible for driving forward the strategy's communication priorities for children and young people with SEND, and their families, across the borough and having oversight of progress towards the strategy's objectives, as captured by actions on the workplan.

Progress will be reported to Redcar & Cleveland's Children and Young People Partnership Board.



5. Priorities

Our priorities for enabling an effective communication between us and children, young people and their families that leads to improvements in the services we provide is based upon the Lundy Model of Participation (2007). We will provide space, facilitate expression of views, ensure views are presented to appropriate audiences and shape our services accordingly.



5.1. Space

Children, young people and their families will be provided with safe and inclusive spaces to form and express their views about the issues important to them and the support they receive. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Tees Valley CCG will work in partnership to provide spaces for communication, this could include:

- Service development groups
- Stakeholder consultation sessions (eg focus groups)
- Engagement events
- Online and paper surveys (including EHC Plan Assessment Process Feedback Questionnaire)
- Drop-in information sessions (including Children with Disability Team Drop Ins)
- Existing forums for children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers, such as RCBC's Join Us Plus youth group and the Parent Carer Forum
- Digital methods, including Facebook and WhatsApp

We will provide a range of opportunities for children, young people, parents and carers to share their views and experiences. The approach to consultation will differ depending on the service and the needs of our stakeholders. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Tees Valley CCG will also work with wider partners, community and stakeholder groups to increase meaningful voice and influence activity with local SEND communities. It is vital that our partners and stakeholders, as outlined in Section 1, are involved in consultations to share organisational perspectives and provide feedback relating to their insights from working with children and young people with SEND.

A Stakeholder Communications Map, detailing existing spaces for stakeholders to provide feedback and be consulted, is a supplementary working document to ensure this information remains up to date following publication of this strategy. This will reflect changing circumstances of services and groups. A key priority for this strategy moving forward is to strengthen these existing forums so that they can be meaningful mechanisms for influencing our services. Additionally, many of our wider partners provide spaces for children, young people and their families to provide feedback on the services they receive, such as Healthwatch. We will work with wider partners to ensure that the feedback they gather from children and families is also used to influence our services.

5.2. Voice

We will provide appropriate information to children, young people and their families to facilitate them to express their views. It is vital that facilitation considers the diversity of communication needs within our community and that methods of communication are tailored to meet this range of needs. This includes providing suitable consultation methods which are inclusive of individuals who are non-verbal or unable to read or complete consultation activities on paper (such as surveys). A key priority moving forward, as outlined in the Action Plan in Section 7, is to develop a supplementary consultation guidance document to accompany this strategy. Details of consultation methods which promote inclusivity in facilitating the voices of children, young people and their families will be included in this document to support services to expand the reach of consultation, co-design

and co-production activities. This document will be updated to reflect developments in good practice and service learning regarding how to carry out inclusive consultations with stakeholders with a range of communication needs.

Information which enables children, young people and their families to express their views will be featured in/on:

- Public facing service newsletters.
- 'My NHS' (*Tees Valley CCG and NECS both actively encourage local people to be involved in our work in various ways, including signing up to 'My NHS' which provides emails on the CCGs work and ways to get involved with engagement events/consultations*)
- The disability register (*when signing up parents/carers indicate whether they consent to receiving information about consultations*)
- The RCBC Local Offer Website
- Digital platforms, including WhatsApp and Facebook

Depending on the breadth of the service we might consult with all of our service users, a sample of our service users or extend this to all people within the borough. It is, however, a priority that we aim to expand the reach of consultations and other opportunities to give feedback to as wide a range of children, young people and parents/carers as possible. This will enable us to obtain a diverse and representative view of the issues important to the community.

We will also look for ways to engage with our children, young people and families while they are using our services and request their feedback at key points. When and how we ask for feedback will be dependent on the service being delivered. Managers will be responsible for building such measures into their day-to-day processes. **For example, by seeking opinions about the EHCP assessment process after an EHCP plan is in place and the assessment stage has ended.** The information collected will differ depending on the service and may include national performance indicators some services are required to collect (for example, indicators set out by NICE, Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission). As standard, all our service user feedback requests should incorporate the following:

- If the service was easy to access
- Quality and appropriateness of information
- Timeliness of the service
- Quality of service
- What we could do better
- If the communication from the service was effective

It is essential that communication is a meaningful, two-way dialogue between services and children, young people and families. This means that whilst we will seek feedback by facilitating specific mechanisms and forums for consultation, we will also provide spaces and

mechanisms for stakeholders to communicate their views to us on their own terms. This includes a space on the Local Offer website to leave feedback and the complaints, complaints and compliments process of both RCBC and Tees Valley CCG. If our services receive a complaint, action will always be taken to communicate with the complainant and rectify their issue on an individual basis. However, complaints may also highlight issues with the overall quality of service and the processes we have in place. Learning from complaints will be a part of our continuous service improvement processes and factor into formal service reviews.

SEND complaints, compliments and comments are submitted to RCBC through the corporate complaints process or are handled by the Children's and Families Complaints and Information Governance Officer, if the complaint also involves Children's Social Care. Complaints to the Tees Valley CCG are managed through [NECS](#). Complaints can also be made to [PALS \(Patient Advice and Liaison Service\)](#) or to the [individual trusts](#) in relation to specific services.

5.3. Audience

Another key priority is that feedback from stakeholders is effectively communicated to an audience who have the responsibility to use this feedback to make a difference to the services provided to children, young people, and their families. Sharing feedback with identified audiences must always maintain prior agreements regarding confidentiality and anonymity on behalf of the individual providing feedback. When facilitating consultation and feedback activities services must make clear, as part of any consent or privacy statements, who the information will be shared with and whether the individual will be identified when their feedback is shared with others. An appropriate audience for stakeholders' feedback may be operational, strategic or both. An operational audience, such as a specific service manager, will handle complaints on an individual basis, as well as any feedback that relates to support or care on an individual basis, or the quality of their service. Operational audiences may also include practitioners and other stakeholders if this will aid in improving practice with children, young people and their families.

Strategic audiences, such as those listed within Section 4, will focus on identifying and addressing thematic issues identified in stakeholder feedback that will require a larger scale approach across a service (or services) to ensure service development. This may require a single or multi-agency response to instigate an improvement in services. Ensuring the views of stakeholders are communicated to the appropriate audience who have the responsibility to enable this work means that these views will be acted upon and used to influence the way things are done on an individual level for children, young people and their families and

also strategically to shape broader service improvement across the borough. Strategic audiences are likely to include:

- Stakeholders and wider partners such as Healthwatch
- Service managers in RCBC and the NHS
- SEND Strategic Leads
- Children and Young People's Partnership Board

5.4. Influence

Stakeholder feedback, once communicated to suitable audiences, will be used to formulate ideas about how the service/services could be improved, or to identify any gaps in the service/services which would suggest we could deliver better outcomes by linking up with other services or expanding our service specification. We will continually analyse feedback throughout service delivery and use this information to plan further, more in-depth, consultation around specific topics or issues. Our consultation findings will be a key part of our formal service reviews through which we will work with our service users to inform the scope and delivery of services. We will use key findings from our analysis of all feedback to plan further consultation activities and points for discussion where appropriate.

This Communication Strategy is built upon the principle of 'You Said, We Did'. This means that when stakeholders communicate their views to us, the relevant service or person will share the outcome of this feedback in influencing the service/services or, if the feedback relates to a change that is not possible, communicating why this has not been possible.

Methods of feeding this back will include:

- Redcar & Cleveland's Parent Carer Forum
- Newsletters
- My NHS and the Local Offer Websites
- Social media channels
- Direct communication with stakeholders in response to specific feedback
- Direct communication with stakeholders in response to complaints from RCBC or Tees Valley CCG (depending upon whom the complaint is reported to)
- SENDIASS

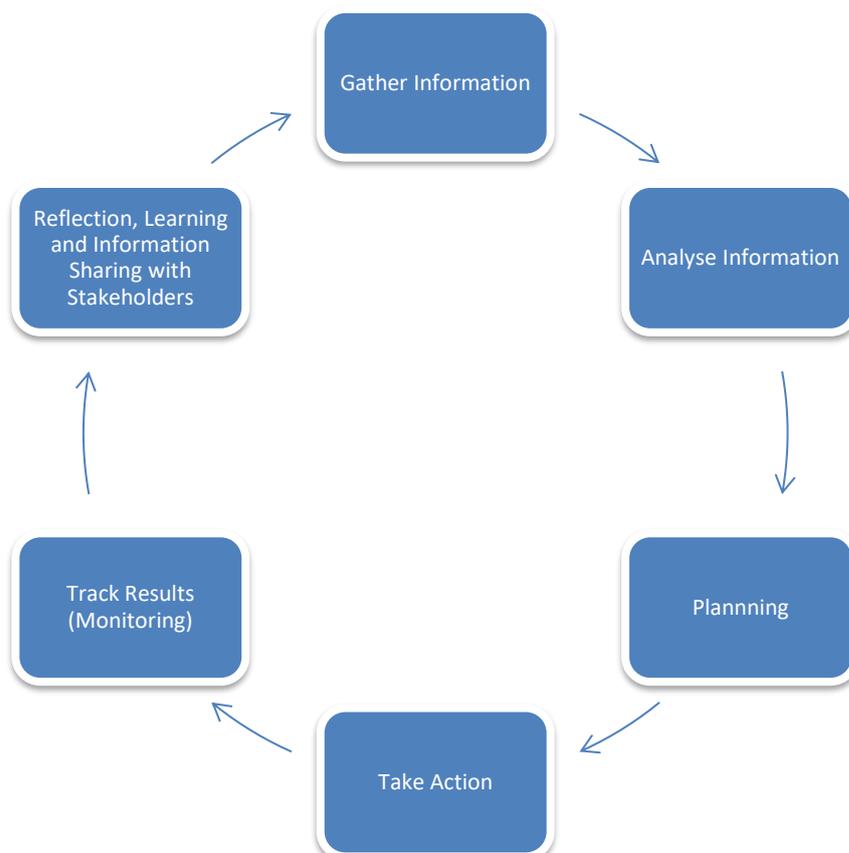
6. How our services and systems will be shaped by ongoing feedback.

Our approach to service delivery is a continuous cycle of improvement, through which engagement with children and young people with SEND and their parents/carers will inform the development of services.

This will happen in a number of ways, including:

- Service design and commissioning (including co-design and co-production)
- Stakeholder feedback (including feedback about experience of accessing services)
- Service evaluation (including feedback about the impact of services)

Feedback from these processes will always be used as a tool for learning and improving our services, a process broadly reflected in the diagram below:



7. Action Plan

What we will do to improve communications with children and young people with SEND, and their parents/carers

Objective	Action	By When?	Who is responsible?	How will we know we have been successful?	How will we measure it?
1. Children and young people with SEND will feel that their voices are listened to and their feedback contributes to the way they are offered care and/or support.	Support the Young Inspectors group to develop a scaling question for all services to use in their interactions with children and young people with SEND.	May 2021	TC	All services adopt the questions and start reporting back to the Local Offer and Communications Workstream	Quarterly data about feedback received and actions taken by services as a result of the feedback.
	Undertake a mapping exercise to understand and record what processes and groups already exist for children and young people to have their voices heard.	April 2021	All	Evidence of each service's process	% of spaces identified in mapping exercise that embed the use of scaling question.
2. Children, young people with SEND and their families will be routinely involved and supported in making decisions about SEND service developments.	Agencies will consult with Children, young people with SEND and their families whenever they are considering developing new services or changing existing services.	Ongoing	All	Consultations will be undertaken and reported back quarterly to the	The number of consultations that take place annually with C&YP and their families.

	<p>The Children's Commissioning teams will make Children, Young People with SEND and their families aware of any potential opportunities to be advertised to allow consultation to be undertaken to inform service design at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>This is an area that is missing from our service and needs to be developed.</p>			SEND Strategic Leads Group.	The outcomes from the various consultation exercises in terms of service design/development will be recorded and shared with C&YP/families.
3. Children and young people with SEND and their families will be aware of the various methods of consultation that they can become involved in.	<p>Develop a handbook/guide to support services to use a range of consultation methods when asking for feedback from C&YP and their families.</p> <p>Involve C&YP and their parent/carers in shaping the questions being asked in the various consultations.</p> <p>Undertake a mapping exercise of voice and influence opportunities and develop a measure of awareness with C&YP.</p>	<p>Sept 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2021</p>	<p>KC</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p>	<p>Handbook available for services to use.</p> <p>Practitioners report that questions are understood better by the audience due to involvement in questionnaire design.</p> <p>Measure will be developed.</p>	<p>Evidence that a range of consultation methods are being used.</p> <p>C&YP's reported awareness of opportunities to get involved.</p> <p>Parent/carer's reported awareness of opportunities.</p>

<p>4. Parents/Carers will feel their views are listened to and valued when considering the design of services to meet the needs of our children and young people.</p>	<p>Utilise the CCG virtual parent/carer drop-in sessions to give parents/carers the opportunity to directly feedback to services.</p> <p>Develop some scaling questions with the parent/carer forum that will be used by services in all types of consultation with parents/carers about service design or development.</p>	<p>March 2021 onwards</p> <p>July 2021</p>	<p>All</p> <p>JR</p>	<p>Scaling question agreed and given to all partner agencies or services to use in consultation</p>	<p>Number of services utilising the drop-in sessions to consult.</p> <p>Ofsted inspection feedback. Quarterly data shared by services at the SEND Strategic Leads group</p>
---	---	--	----------------------	---	---