

The Sunflower Project

Jo Rountree – Highly Specialist Occupational Therapist

South Tees Foundation Trust

Vicky Baker – Highly Specialist Occupational Therapist

North Tees Foundation Trust

Rachael Wilcox – Designated Clinical Officer Tees Valley CCG



Where it all began

Diagnosis focussed through collaboration with families and working with St Helen's CCG we developed a needs led pathway.

Waiting lists for an OT are ever increasing and the demand was around sensory provision, We wanted to produce a pathway that empowered families and gave the right support to children.

NR money was used £61k for one year to develop the pathway and embed it into the system. The idea being to enable a reduction in waiting time for OT, caseload numbers. This would lead to a pathway change to improve flow through the service. If additional input is needed the focus will be on joint commissioning OT longer term.

Band 6 (37.5) and band 3 (13 hours) back fill. Chose to do this so the programme planning could start and the new staff could be used to develop other areas of the pathway.

Key
Performance
Indicators
(KPI's)

360 children and
families through the
pathway in 12
months.

260 other
professionals trained
(school, 0-19, social
care staff etc)

What is the sunflower project?

Two elements parental and professional.

Parental Ethos – Needs led education programme that empowers parents to help understand their child and how they impact and change between environments. This is very focused on the child's needs.

Professional Ethos – More generic and educational to help the staff understand how this can affect a child's participation within learning and make referrals more appropriate.

How do you access it?

Parent training is accessed through a professional referral only. This can be a GP, doctor, therapist or school SENCO.

Education training is an opt in system. Any school can ring up and book on to the twilight session. This can be held in school or in the child development centre. This is free to schools.

What does the process look like?

Firm rules around behaviour and the running of the group.

2 qualified OT's running the session (3 in the third session in Middlesbrough)

12 families Redcar and Cleveland and 22 families in Middlesbrough

Parent training:

- 3 consecutive sessions 2.5 hours each
- First session – theory based
- Second Session – Getting the child into the 'just right' frame of mind
- Third session – Practical strategies on how to help, this is very parent led
- Parents work through a work book

Professional training:

2 one week, 3 next week and once a month at the CDC and any adhoc session would be done on site.

One OT

- 1 off session 1.5 hours
- How senses affect the child – Over/under responsive
- Just right frame of mind
- Developing a pack of strategies that can be executed in the classroom
- School receive a booklet as a resource

Positives

Professionals understanding about how a child needs a joint or tripartite responsibility has improved meaning a more holistic understanding for the child.

Built relationships with education partners and schools to build bridges.

Parents have commented that the training has helped their understanding where previous private reports have been over complicated. They have felt enabled to respond to their own child's changing needs and how to adapt to those which we anticipate will impact on re-referral rates.

We found that some other professionals were saying 'its sensory' and discharging without input and actually by empowering the parent and school they are more able to challenge that and say well this bit is... but we really don't think this bit is... allowing needs to be met more quickly.

Parents and professionals feel more able to question and reflect on themselves.

Challenges

COVID – getting people in and venue arrangements – however this is easing a bit.

Moving forward – we only have money for 12 months then the service will be absorbed with the aim of the waiting list being reduced

Parents initially were cross because they had been on a waiting list and wanted a face to face initial assessment. With some discussion and negotiation have actually come out of the pathway feeling more empowered than previously.

Parents who couldn't attend all of them through their own appointments or being away affects the continuity

How are we measuring success

KPI's – 360 families through parent

260 education staff/professionals through the system

Parents are given a score sheet about how well they feel they understand sensory process and how equipped they feel to deal with their child. This is repeated at the end of the programme. We want to see 75% of families and professionals feel more empowered and more equipped at the end of the 12 months

Was a 52 week wait now a 40 week wait South Tees

Qualitative feedback

Parents quotes

“I think this training was fantastic. I have a lot better understanding now. I've been on private training but this training was outstanding and really opened my eyes. Thank you”

“The sunflower programme has been invaluable to me as a mother of an autistic boy, who struggles daily with Sensory issues. . I believe there should be more help/ courses/ guidance for parents like myself.

I have been banging my head against the wall for a long time. There is just no help/ support/ guidance out there for families with children who are autistic. THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE LIKE THIS.”

“Brilliant course. Thankyou thoroughly enjoyed it and it has helped break down his senses”

“A great informative course. Thank you for your help”

Thank you
Questions?

