

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

13 NOVEMBER 2019

PROGRESS UPDATE ON JOINT LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION / IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Background

1. The Joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) local area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) inspection took place 5 – 9 March 2018. The findings of the Inspection were published on 16 May 2018 (attached as an Appendix 1). The inspection raised concerns about the effectiveness of the Local Area¹ and requested that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) be prepared by the Local Area¹ and submitted to OFSTED/CQC. The WSoA was approved by CMR and CCG Governing Body in August 2018. Ofsted then approved the plan as fit for purpose.

WSOA Progress reporting at SEND Improvement Board

2. At the recent SEND Improvement Board (17 October), workstream leads shared progress, impact and next steps against the Key Concerns. Updates included support for mainstream schools through the termly SENCo Network Seminars, that 113 SENCOs attended. Key topics shared with SENCOs included EHC Plan development, annual reviews and a focus on statutory matters and lessons learnt from casework.

3. Parent/carers are instrumental in the delivery of the WSoA. Families in Partnership (FiP) members work with officers to identify, review and progress the improvements required. FiP has developed a Stakeholder Reference group to have a greater reach of parent carers across the county. A prototype parent/carer SEND Survey was distributed in July, the analysis of this will inform a wider survey later this year. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) has received additional funding from the DfE to increase engagement with young people, embed co-production in practice, increase and improve training offer for staff, and increase their reach on social media and other innovative approaches.

4. The multi-agency SEND Key Performance Indicator (KPI) data set has been remodelled to focus on indicators for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people's and delivering outcomes. The data shared with SEND Improvement Board in October included the provisional 2018/19 Key Stage outcome data which have improved slightly this year. Board members also noted trends around children and young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs) and additional vulnerabilities for example missing school or electively home educated. The percentage of Looked After Children with up to date Health assessments

continues to improve and referral to treatment timeliness rates for therapy services remain positive.

5. The development and sharing of the School Level Inclusion Profile with all schools has started. The profile provides schools with a tool to inform self-evaluation and planning. An updated profile will be distributed on a termly basis.

6. Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Leadership have nominated Dr Louise Bramble as the nominated SEND GP, together with SEND Champions embedded across Health and other partners. The CCG is continuing to deliver through Autism West Midlands, Autism and Anxiety Training for parent/carers. Together with additional workforce and a new support model to reduce waiting times for the Umbrella Pathway and access to mental health services, parent/carers are providing more positive feedback. A Mental Health Network for Secondary Schools has been launched, lead jointly by health and education.

7. The updated Graduated Response guidance for professionals was launched to early years providers and schools in September 2019. A parent/carer version is being co-produced starting with parent/carer workshops in October/November.

8. In 2018, the Council allocated additional resource to increase the SEND Assessment and Planning Team. The impact of this additional resource can be seen within the timescales of EHC plans. 63% of EHC plans were issued within the 20 weeks in July 2019 compared with 12% in August 2018. The SEND Group Manager and Lead Commissioner for Adult Learning Disabilities are working together to understand, plan and review the needs of young people and families using the Preparing for Adulthood principles approach.

9. The Local Offer website continues to be improved in terms of content. Promotion to parent/carers, young people and professionals is embedded into everyday practice. The number of visitors on a monthly basis continues to rise, 17,480 visitors in September 2019. A Children with Disabilities register is also now available, with 349 children registered to date (Oct19).

10. Academic Outcomes, behaviours and attendance are included in the SEND KPI Framework. 2018 attainment for SEN Support pupils in the EYFS was positive compared to national figures and continues to improve over time. Progress and attainment of school-age SEND pupils in 2018 showed variation with some areas of improvement apparent e.g. progress of children with EHCP in KS2. Early indications from 2018-19 academic outcomes data are positive and will be verified for Quarter 4.

Department for Education and NHS England Monitoring

11. Since June 2018 advisers from both DfE and NHS England have held joint monitoring visits to assess the progress on delivering the WSoA. There have been 5 monitoring visits since June 2018. The most recent being in October 2019. The monitoring visits coincide to include attendance and observation by the advisers of the SEND Improvement Board meetings.

12. DfE feedback from October 2019 monitoring visit includes:

- The Local Area is making good progress with the Written Statement of Action;

- the Company, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) launched at the beginning of October, there is a strong sense of drive and optimism amongst the SEND Partnership Board members;
- the appointment to the position of Assistant Director for SEND and Vulnerable Learners gives confidence, stability and continuity. Previous concerns about the continuity of effort across both the organisational change, and personnel change in key lead roles in SEND have been considerably assuaged by this visit;
- the planned integration of key SEND services in 2020 will bring great benefits to the sense of cohesion among Local Authority (LA) services;
- it is estimated that the SEND team has capacity to deliver a good service and rates of completion of new Education Health and Care Plans in 20 weeks are improving, but further improvement is needed.

13. Particular strengths noted by the Department for Education (DfE) Adviser from the reports presented to the SEND Improvement Board include:

- A co-produced recommissioning of overnight short breaks provision;
- referral to treatment rates for waiting times for health therapy services;
- new guidance issued for schools on the use of part-time provision;
- the development and publication of school inclusion data profiles;
- Director led weekly meeting on Children Missing Education;
- the success and service user feedback of the training for parents of children and young people with ASD and anxiety;
- updated guidance on school support and work with SENCo's in mainstream schools to embed it;
- improved coordination among SEND training providers and
- the development and prototyping of a Families in Partnership parents survey.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

14. Officers need to be supported to apply various aspects of education law to their core professional area of work.

Risk Implications

15. The Council needs to ensure compliance with the law. The Action Plan reduces the risk of non-compliance through activity and monitoring.

Impact Implications

16. A Privacy and Public Health Impact screening and a Health Impact screening have been completed in respect of the activity in the Written Statement of Action. The screenings did not identify any potential considerations requiring further consideration during implementation.

17. The Council must, during planning, decision-making and implementation, exercise a proportionate level of due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

18. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out in respect of the WSoA. This identified potential positive impact for children and young people with disabilities. The potential positive impact relates to improvements in access to information and support available, increased engagement and co-production, access to mainstream education (where appropriate). The recommended course of action can be justified because the activity in the Improvement plan will improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND. The full EIA is attached at Appendix 3.

Purpose of the Meeting

19. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the Report and:

- determine whether it would wish to carry out any further scrutiny, and
- agree whether it would wish to make any comments to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Findings from Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection report – 17 May 2018
- Appendix 2 – Written Statement of Action (SEND Improvement Plan)
<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer>
- Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment

Specific Contact Points for this Report

Sarah Wilkins, Director of Education & Early Help, Worcestershire Children First
Tel: 01905 846082 Email: swilkins@worschildrenfirst.org.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Education and Early Help) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- Agenda and Minutes of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 August 2018, 6 March 2019.

[All agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website here.](#)