

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

24 MAY 2023

UPDATE ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN AND WORCESTERSHIRE STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND 2023-26

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and the Director of All Age Disability have been invited to the meeting to:
 - update the panel following the Department for Education (DfE)/NHS England (NHSE) 12-month review of the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) that took place on 29 March 2023.
 - update the panel on the Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023-26.

Update on the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)

2. In November 2022 the Panel received a report on the DfE/NHSE monitored APP following the 6-month review by the DfE and NHSE. This served to update on progress made against the four remaining areas of weakness identified in the November 2021 SEND Local Area reinspection of the SEND Written Statement of Action.
3. The November 2021, reinspection identified that progress had been made in addressing eight of the significant weaknesses identified at the initial inspection and four significant weakness remained outstanding. An outcome of this revisit inspection was that the Local Area was required by the DfE and NHSE to produce an APP to demonstrate how the remaining areas of weaknesses would be addressed.
4. The APP sought to address the four remaining areas of weakness as follows:
 - The variation in the skills and commitment of some mainstream schools to provide effective support for children who have SEND.
 - The lack of suitable specialist provision to meet the identified needs of children and young people.
 - Fragile relationships with parents and carers and a lack of meaningful engagement and co-production and collaboration.
 - The poor quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) and limited contributions from health and social care along with the process to check and review the quality of EHC plans.

5. Since the implementation of the APP, the progress of the 4 workstreams has been carefully tracked. A recent summary of the progress to date was presented to DfE/NHSE colleagues during the 12-month review held on 29 March 2023 (attached as Appendix 1). This outlined the progress reached at the 12-month review stage.
6. In addition to the 6-month and 12-month review stages, the Local Area SEND and All Age Disability Partnership Board meets monthly. Alternate meetings are attended by the DfE and NHSE and used to 'Deep Dive' into workstream progress; what is working well and what else needs to change. The Director of Children's Services also meets regularly with workstream leads to monitor and oversee progress.
7. The outcome of this latest review stage has resulted in a letter sent by the DfE SEND Regional Lead to the Director of Children's Services and the Chief Executive of the Integrated Care System for Worcestershire. This letter (attached as Appendix 2) recognises the "vast amount of work that has taken place" and the value of the contributions particularly from parent carers and school representatives. The letter includes the detail of evidence that demonstrates accelerated and continued improvement. The outcome of this letter is that the DfE have included a range of further evidence they would like to be presented to demonstrate further development and embedding of change. A further review meeting is scheduled for September 2023.

Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND 2023-26

8. Local Authorities and partners must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) which provides statutory guidance on duties, policies and procedures relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations. It relates to children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and disabled children and young people up to the age of 25.
9. The previous Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with SEND 2017-2021 was approved by Cabinet on 8 February 2018.
10. The purpose of Worcestershire's SEND Strategy is to deliver the local partners' statutory duties by setting out a case for change and improvement. This refreshed Strategy (attached as Appendix 3) has been co-produced with the SEND and All Age Disability Partnership Board including the Parent Carer Forum. Workshops were also held with school children to inform the priorities.
11. Six Strategic Priorities were identified as part of the development of the latest SEND Strategy and they are:
 - i. Identification and assessment of SEND is timely and effective
 - ii. There is sufficient and effective SEND provision
 - iii. There is awareness and understanding of SEND within local communities

- iv. Outcomes for young people with SEND are improved as a result of effective planning, preparation for adulthood and better coordination of service delivery to ensure positive transitions as they progress through their education
- v. Children and young people (CYP) with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place
- vi. Emotional health and wellbeing is actively promoted for CYP with SEND and their families and effective targeted and specialist support is available for those CYP at risk of, or experiencing difficulties

12. These priorities form part of a plan to drive a programme of work that will be overseen by representatives of the accountable bodies through the SEND and AAD Partnership Board reporting to Children and Young People's Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Purpose of the Meeting

13. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Consider and comment on the information provided in respect of the outcome of the latest review of the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan
- Consider the SEND Strategy
- 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 Education

Supporting Information

Appendix 1 - WCF Accelerated Progress Plan – 12-month overview

Appendix 2 - DfE letter following the 12-month review of SEND APP

Appendix 3 - Worcestershire Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 2023-2026

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Assistant Director for Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 8th February, 2018](#)

Agendas and Minutes of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 8 August 2018, 6 March 2019, 13 November 2019, 16 June 2020, 23 February, 3 November 2022.

[Agendas and Minutes for Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel are available on the Council's website here](#)

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