



Department
for Education

Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
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Tina Russell, Director of Children's Services, Worcestershire Children First
Simon Trickett, Chief Executive / STP ICS Lead Herefordshire & Worcestershire ICB

10 October 2022

SIX MONTH PROGRESS REVIEW AGAINST YOUR ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN (APP)

Dear Ms Russell and Mr Trickett,

Thank you for meeting with Department for Education (DfE) SEND and NHS England (NHSE) officials on 22 September 2022 to review the progress you have made against your APP over the last six months.

We are grateful for the contributions from all partners. It was clear that the local area is beginning to make sustainable improvements to SEND services and to the lives of children and young people.

The evidence provided, including (but not limited to) progress reports from each of the workstreams, feedback from the parent carer forum (PCF), your accountability and governance structure and the presentation you shared at the meeting, alongside feedback from partners, demonstrated the range of actions you have taken to accelerate improvement.

We are grateful to parent representatives and the schools' representative for confirming that they are included on every work stream, and it is felt that there has been a positive shift in working relationships between WCF and partners.

Progress is being made in your APP and it is encouraging that:

- Over one hundred schools have attended inclusion events.
- Oversight, tracking, and action plans are now in place for children and young people (CYP) awaiting specialist provision and those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) not at school and with no school named.
- You had held a roundtable event and have established task and finish groups to inform your local sufficiency plan.
- In relation to sufficiency planning, you said you will be applying for a free school and expanding your existing Resource Provision.
- You are planning to improve the Early Years offer which will include a review of joint Health and WCF processes.
- You have developed a co-produced communication framework, although it was acknowledged that improvements being made need to be embedded and impact demonstrated.
- You have developed a Quality Assurance and Performance Management framework to audit and capture the family experience.
- You are focusing on carrying out a Preparation for Adult (PFA) audit.
- You are progressing work on data management and analysis along with the development of the digital SENCO/practical toolkit.

The overall progress made to date by accessing local intelligence, supports the local area in identifying challenges and the needs of the population. The area has understood that self-evaluation and a shared response to solution focused outcomes needs to include the voice of young people and parents.

We will continue to monitor the APP and meet with you in 6 months for an update on:

- How you are engaging those schools who have not yet been involved with the inclusion events.
- The work being undertaken to demonstrate that changes are embedded, and for the outcomes of these changes to be captured through case studies and scenarios.
- The actions being taken to address the processes around the oversight, tracking and action plans in place for children and young people awaiting specialist provision and/or for those with an EHCP not at a school and/or no school named.
- The impact of your local sufficiency plan.
- Evidence that the voice of children and young people is heard as the area develops pathways, provision, and services.
- Ensuring that the scope of the newsletters inform, celebrate, and hear the voice of the CYP, parent and carers and professionals.
- The impact of the actions taken to support improvements and whether the engagement tool kit could be used to gather evidence of impact.
- The work being undertaken to capture the overarching difference the service operating procedure (SOP) and audits have achieved on the lived experience of children, young people and families with SEND.
- Whether contributions from health and social care are improving and how this can be evidenced.

Your next six-month review meeting will be scheduled to take place in **April 2023**. In the meantime, the SEND and NHSE Advisers, Pat Tate and Debbie Ward and Deanne Michie as your DfE Case Lead will continue to provide you with support and challenge. If you have any questions or need any further support, please contact any of them in the first instance.

We are copying this letter to Simon Geraghty, (Leader of the Council), Mel Barnett (WCF Director, All Age Disability), Andre Imich (DfE Lead Professional Adviser), Pat Tate, (DfE Adviser), Deanne Michie (DfE Case Lead), Lorraine Mulroney (National Specialist Advisor- SEND, NHSE), Nick Harrison (NHSE Senior Programme Manager, Children, Young People & SEND), and Deborah Ward (NHSE Adviser).

Yours sincerely,

K. Moore

Katie Moore, Regional Lead
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