

6 SEPTEMBER 2018

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SEND UPDATE

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on preparations for the Local Area Inspection of SEN services.

2 Detail

- 2.1 In preparation for inspection and to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities to support the Inspection and more broadly the SEND agenda, information about the inspection and what it entails is outlined in this report.

3 Progress to date

- 3.1 This report seeks to update Scrutiny on progress since the last report and to highlight risks in each of the key areas.
- 3.2 In arriving at the judgement about how effectively the local area identifies children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, Inspectors will report on three key questions progress in each of these areas is identified below:

Question A. How effectively does the local area identify children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

In terms of how effectively services respond to concerns raised by parents and young people our evaluation based on the evidence provided through panel meetings shows key improvements in this area. Responses to parents are timely and appropriate in the majority of areas including responses to schools and parents following requests for statutory assessment. Evidence provided by the Designated Medical Officers (DMO) shows that responses from paediatric services are appropriate and parents speak highly of the provisions. Concerns still arise in terms of access to CAMHS and Children and Young People services; however, this is to be addressed by the Clinical Commissioning group. Issues also exist in the provision of therapy services in particular Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. The aforementioned services are subject to review although timescales are yet to be agreed.

All conversions of statements to Education, Health and Care plans were completed within the agreed timescales. Since the completion of the conversion process the number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

being completed within the 20 week timescale has improved from 65% to 85% in June 2018. We are working toward meeting a target of 95% of all plans being completed by December 2018.

A pathway for the identification of children 0-2 has been agreed and consultation processes have started with schools, early years private and voluntary sector providers, and health colleagues reflecting the new requirements identified in the revised Health Visitor contract and linked to Early Help referral processes.

Colleagues from Together for Children, Local Authority and Health have met to draft a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for SEN. As part of this process a range of data across services (health and education) has and continues to be collated to provide a clear understanding of the needs of children young people across the City. The current draft has been shared with parents and other partners. Feedback has been given and additional information is being collated to inform the next iteration of the assessment.

A joint commissioning group has been established and greater engagement of all partners was evident in the last meeting.

The quality of identification of individual need from professionals across and within services remains a challenge. This is being addressed by extending training opportunities led by colleagues from the TfC SEN unit to a range of providers.

A range of opportunities are being provided for parents to give feedback on current processes; however, feedback from young people is limited and is an area for future development

Areas for development and risks

- Engagement of social care in the process of education, health and care planning remains an area of improvement. The recent appointment of a Team Manager in the Children with Disability team is facilitating greater dialogue between SEN and social workers. Engagement of colleagues in adult social care disability teams remains an area for improvement particularly around transitions from children's to adults services.
- Improve mechanisms for engaging young people in the evaluation of current systems for identification of need and subsequent provision.

Question B. How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

In terms of engagement and co-production with children, young people and their families there are strong links with local groups in particular the parent/carer forum who are able to offer both support and challenge to

education, health and social care colleagues in the delivery of services, engagement in processes and in the provision of feedback.

Parental views are gathered through evaluation following the statutory assessment process and regular reviews carried out by individual services. Information is collated and informs future service delivery; for example, in a recent survey parents expressed concerns regarding the quality of support for pupils at SEN support stage. As a result training opportunities are being provided by the SIO – SEN to promote good practice.

A transitions protocol document has been agreed to enhance the transitions process from children's to adult services. The document has attracted interest from the Council for Disabled Children and is seen as being a robust document; however, the systems identified in the document need to be implemented consistently across all services in order to allay the parental concerns and ensure smooth transitions for young people.

Given the challenges identified in terms of a joined up process, the quality of plans can be enhanced by further alignment with the social care Child in Need and Child Protection plans. However, there is evidence (recent safeguarding inspection) that there is now a greater alignment between EHC plans and Personal Education plans for Children Looked After (CLA).

At an individual level, in Paediatric health care, all decision-making is shared with children, young people and their parents or legal guardians and documented in clinical letters addressed to families and shared with all who need to know.

Paediatric therapies: children and young people and their families are involved in their decision making; exploring their ideas, concerns and expected outcomes. In groups particular for older children they jointly plan how they will achieve their outcomes (evaluation of groups).

At strategic level, parent carers are embedded in the Interagency Strategic Partnership for Disabled Children and Young People in Sunderland, as is the children and young people's Participation Officer.

The Area SENCo Team/School Improvement service works across the all phases of education to deliver person centred support as part of best practice, involving and seeking the views of all parents, carers, and their children where applicable.

Analysis of current data sets identifies that the number of children accessing specialist provisions has risen over the last three years and is 10% higher than national and regional neighbours. This would appear to reflect the lack of confidence that some parents have in the provision made for some children and young people with special educational needs in mainstream schools (survey monkey outcomes – March 2018). This is an area that is to be addressed through a robust training programme to support SENCOS and schools to make effective provision at SEN support.

Pressure on specialist places continues at Columbia Grange, Sunningdale and Barbara Priestman schools. Whilst additional provision has been made this is not sustainable long term and pressure for places for children with Autism will continue until the new ASD Free School opens in 2020.

Areas for development/Risks

- Commitment from all partners to regular attendance or representation at the strategic partnership, so that it can move forward in 'doing' effective joint commissioning, including supporting personal budgets.
- Appoint a participation officer to facilitate greater involvement of children and young people in the transformation of services for children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure consistent high quality person centred preparing for adulthood reviews take place at year 9 and focus on the four outcome areas through the delivery of high quality training.
- Need to look at supported internships.
- Work with providers to extend provision for pupils with ASD post 16 - City Of Sunderland College, Springboard.
- Housing arrangements for young people transitioning into independent living.

Question C. How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?

Robust challenge is offered to all colleagues in ensuring that baseline assessments of children's needs are carried out through the assessment processes. Schools have access to moderation exercises through the work of the school improvement service. The thoroughness of the understanding of a young person's needs by all professionals has improved over the last three years. Assessments now provide a more detailed assessment of need rather than a focus on provision required.

University research completed in March 2017 identified that there is a need to ensure commonality in the use of terminology such as moderate learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and learning disability terminology used by health. A working party to comprise of health, education and social care colleagues is to be set up to agree terminology and thereby accuracy in identification processes.

Each school now has a SEN dashboard that records all outcomes at a school and individual pupil level (currently attainment only) against the key areas identified in the SEN Code of Practice. Progress data is to be included this academic year which will allow a greater understanding of the overall achievement of pupils. This tool is to be used by SEN Officers and School improvement colleagues to offer support and challenge to schools.

The quality and performance team provide analysis of all data for all schools and this is used in all risk analysis against schools. Work has been carried out with SENCOs to look at processes for checking EHCP outcomes across the school (particularly secondary) to ensure that all staff are aware of need. Schools are also refining their tracking systems to ensure that they can track progress of children with SEN in a more refined manner particularly for those young people in mainstreams schools with more complex learning needs.

The involvement of parents/carers and young people in the co-production of targets is inconsistent across the City. Person Centred training has been provided for all school settings and colleges since the implementation of the reforms and will continue to be an area of focus.

A revised 'Including all Children and Young People: Guidance for Implementing the SEN code of practice 2015' has been refreshed and provides a clear framework for expectations and thresholds at each stage of the code. Decisions making processes are transparent – SEN Panel & resources panel have clear terms of reference.

Regular meetings of the local offer sub group ensure that the local offer is kept up to date. Additional services are added regularly. In order to promote the Local

Offer a new poster has been produced. This has been distributed to various localities across the city including, all schools, GP surgeries, private and voluntary childcare settings, Everyone Active leisure centres, and Customer Service Centres. A number of smaller flyers have also been produced and these are being used by the Children with Disabilities Team and the SEN Unit to send out to families at initial contact.

Every opportunity is taken to attend events/meetings where it might be possible for the Local Offer to be promoted: Parent conferences; Early Years Conference; SENCO Conference; Parent Information events.

Area for Development

Analysis of data identifies that no young people have the opportunity of a supported internship and limited numbers have access to apprenticeships. This is a significant gap in current provision and will be a focus of development during the autumn and spring terms. The work will be carried forward by a part time secondee who will work with business partners across the city to identify opportunities for young people. Consideration should be given to Together for Children and Sunderland Council leading the way in offering such opportunities.

4 Recommendations

4.1 The Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- Share this report and the [inspection handbook](#) within their own agencies, ensuring that staff within their services are aware of the inspection and their roles and responsibilities within it.
- Support the establishment of an operational group to prepare for inspection and should ensure their agencies are represented if required.
- Jointly commission and input additional data where appropriate into a JSNA for SEND, using Together for Children's research report and the 0-19 JSNA as a basis.

5 Background Papers

Appendix 1: Current RAG rating against inspection framework
Supporting document: Improvement action plan

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