

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Corporate Director for People

to
Cabinet
on
15th March 2016

Report prepared by: Ian McFee, Group Manager SEN

Southend's SEND Strategy
Third Annual Report on the Implementation of Southend on Sea's 2013 – 2016 SEND Strategy "Early Help, Partnership Choice and Ambition" and the plan for the next 3 years

People Scrutiny Committee – Executive Councillor: Councillor Anne Jones

A Part 1 Public Agenda item

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To report on progress of the third year of the implementation plan of the strategy for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. The report gives a summary of progress made on the 5 key proposals with further details that carried the strategy forward.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the SEN strategy for the next 3 years "Working together to improve outcomes 2016 - 2019" (Appendix 2)

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note this report for the third year of the 2013-2016 SEN Strategy (Appendix 1)
- 2.2 Members are asked to comment on the progress of the 2013-2016 Strategy
- 2.3 Members are asked to agree the Strategy for 2016-19

3 Background

- 3.1 Southend on Sea's Strategy for Special Educational Needs 2013-2016 was approved by Cabinet on 18th June 2013 following a period of extensive consultation with a range of partners and stakeholders. The strategy set out both local and national developments and priorities.

- 3.2 The strategy was ambitious for all children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and described how all schools, services, parents and partners could work together to improve outcomes for young people. The strategy, entitled “Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition’ is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The strategy and action plans are monitored by the SEN Strategic Board. This is the third and final annual report on the progress of its implementation.
- 3.4 The 2016-2019 SEN strategy identifies 5 priorities that continue and extend the proposals identified in Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition and aims to build on the progress already made in Southend and ensure the required changes are effective and sustained.

4 Progress Report on 2013-16 Strategy

- 4.1 The 2013-16 strategy has 5 key proposals. The following is a summary and highlights of some of the progress that has been made so far on implementing the strategy.

4.2 Proposal 1 – Early Intervention

The focus of work for the last year has been to continue to implement the SEND reforms and the new 0-25 SEND Code of Practice which came into effect in September 2014. The reforms are wide ranging and include the following:

- Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) replaced with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for children and young people age 0-25. There is a phased transition plan to convert existing statements and LDAs to EHCPs by April 2018.
- EHCPs have a clear focus on person centred planning through a co-ordinated and integrated assessment process that places children and young people at the centre.
- New guidance for schools and settings on taking a graduated approach to identifying and supporting pupils with SEN – called SEN Support. This replaced the previous School Action and School Action Plus.
- The requirement to publish a Local Offer that sets out the support available to all children and young people with SEND across the Borough including leisure, health, care and post-16 training and apprenticeships.
- Parents and young people have the right to request a personal budget as part of the EHCP and this is linked to the Local Offer.
- Local Authorities must provide Information Advice and Support to children, young people and their parents and carers. This service replaced Parent Partnership.
- A requirement for joint planning and commissioning between Health (Clinical Commissioning Group) and the Local Authority’s education and care services to ensure that provision is in place to meet needs of the local area.
- Increased focus on preparing young people for adulthood and ensuring there are pathways into employment, independent living, participation in society and good health. Young people are more closely involved in the decision making and can request an assessment up to their 25th birthday.

Work to further integrate services across Education Health and Social Care has continued and the multi-agency EHC panel. Social Care, Health and Locality involvement at EHC panel is now well established. Reviews for Children with Disabilities who receive direct payments is now carried out by schools within the EHCP review process. The EHCP documentation has been reviewed and amended in light of evidence from schools, parents and officers to highlight the 'golden thread' between aspirations, needs and outcomes and provision recommended as good practice by the DfE.

The Transition Plan to convert Statements to EHCPs is well underway. Conversion review meetings are being held in line with the timescales set out on the plan but there has been some delay in issuing final plans – mainly due to a delay in the SEN team approving draft plans. Following the annual update on progress of the transition plan, a slight change has been made to the original timeline to allow time to catch up on the backlog. A revised Transition Plan was issued in November 2015. This will deliver the conversion of statements by the statutory deadline of April 2018, with contingency capacity built in should we encounter any further issues in future. The SEN Board and Department for People management team will continue to both robustly monitor the on-going completion of the transition to EHCP, and where necessary undertake mitigation actions to ensure that targets are met.

4.3 Proposal 2 – Working in Partnership with Parents

Parents and carers are involved in the EHC needs assessment process from the start. Every assessment and conversion involves a face to face meeting with a named officer from the local authority, all children and young people have a named lead professional, and every parent that requests impartial support receives it either from the Information Advice and Support Service or Independent Support.

The local offer sets out in one place information about provision that is available for children and young people in the area who have Special Educational Needs. The local offer is hosted on SHIP which is now overseen by the SHIP strategic board. Work has been on-going to promote and encourage wider use. Work is also underway to review whether the current site provider can meet the requirements of Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014, offers value for money and is fit for purpose and user friendly.

The personal budget policy has been agreed by the SEN Strategic Board and is awaiting formal sign off by health and education. New request for personal budgets are being considered although the number of education personal budgets both requested and agreed is still very few. Existing personal budgets (direct payments) from health and/or social care are being incorporated into EHCPs.

4.4 Proposal 3 - Access to high quality provision

An audit of school needs has been completed and appropriate training being signposted or provided. A new SENCO induction programme is in place. Cluster groups and termly Borough SENCO network established. Advisory SENCOs are supporting schools and further developing cluster groups to provide ongoing

support and moderation. All SENCOs required to have the recognised qualification have it and we are aware of when those who will require it to be undertaking the course.

The plans to reconfigure targeted and Specialist Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) provision across the Borough by bringing existing resources into one single framework to better meet the needs of more children was completed. Seabrook College was created from the federation of the Renown PRU and Priory special school. The school has very recently been inspected by OFSTED, and we await the publication of the final report. The DfE are now recommending preferred sponsors for the college as it becomes part of an established Multi Academy Trust.

The Behaviour Outreach Service was reformed and sits within the management of Seabrook College. This is working with schools across the Borough and feedback from the schools using this service is positive, as were Ofsted. However, the number of permanent exclusions is increasing and the age range reducing – Southend had its first permanent exclusion from KS1. Permanent Exclusions from Southend Schools continue to be lower than national.

Training offered to schools to develop nurture arrangements was well received and nurture principles are well embedded in a number of schools. With one of the two nurture bases having to close and following consultation with primary schools it was agreed to shift the focus of the support to behaviour. Seabrook is now managing the Harbour Unit as a behaviour development centre. The behaviour steering group will take over the original role of the nurture steering group and carry forward this work.

There is now a mental health service from young people with learning difficulties or disabilities over the age of 12. The new Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS) commissioned from North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) provides services across south Essex, including Southend. Waiting lists are still high. In addition Workshops were delivered to school staff on Managing Anxiety by Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS) professionals in Spring 15.

4.5 Proposal 4 - Raise attainment and expectations for learners with SEN and/or Disabilities

The 3rd and 4th Annual SEN conferences have been held. The 3rd was held in March 2015 had Speech Language and Communication as its theme. It was well attended and received by Headteachers, SENCOs and staff in services with national speakers attending and training given by speech and language staff from the LA and special schools. The 4th had maths difficulties and dyscalculia as its theme and included a presentation from a world leading Oxford University academic via Skype.

Narrowing the gap in attainment for children with SEN in Southend compared to similar children nationally continues to be a challenge. The gap remains higher than national. Taking account of prior attainment and contextual factors, Southend's SEN pupils without a SSEN or EHCP achieved lower than similar SEN pupils nationally in 2015. However, in key stages 1 and 2 the achievement

of those with a SSEN or EHCP is in line similar SEN pupils nationally over a 3 year period. Over the last two years Southend SEN pupils without a SSEN/EHCP have achieved their estimated outcomes based on similar pupils nationally in the main attainment indicator. SEN pupils with a SSEN/EHCP have achieved 3 percentage points lower than similar pupils nationally in the same indicator. Improving the attainment, progress and narrowing the gap for these learners remains a high priority in the next iteration of the strategy.

The transition protocol has been updated and a working party is being set up to look at further developing this with the preparing for adulthood themes of increasing employment, independence, social integration and good health for all young people with SEND.

4.6 Proposal 5 - Using resources effectively

The SEN budgets are on track. Resources are monitored via annual review, conversion reviews and at EHC panel. Systems are in place to ensure the correct funding allocated to pupils is paid to schools. There is an increase in demand for special school places which is exceeding population growth and available spaces. The cause of this growth in requests, and potential solutions that do not put significant additional burden on the High Needs Block, will need to be considered going forward.

Performance indicators for EHC plans show a very low number completed in 20 weeks. Currently only around 12% of all new plans are completed within 20 weeks. More concerning is that some cases are taking over 26 weeks, when over 97% of all cases in 13-14 were within 26 weeks. The major contributing factor to this delay is the length of time taken to receive health contributions. This has been raised with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

A joint commissioning team is in place at the council, the council and CCG have children's commissioners who work closely together. Initial work has begun on commissioning a redesigned children's paediatric service. Ongoing work is required around extending choices for personal budgets.

5 Conclusion and SEND Strategy for the next 3 years

- 5.1 Good progress has been made in implementing the new SEND system. Schools, supported by the LA through regular training and sharing of good practice have enacted the changes required. The local offer is in place and meeting statutory requirements. The processes for issuing EHCPs following both new assessment and conversion have been implemented and established, including efficient sign off routes by all 3 agencies when required.
- 5.2 Collaborative working is taking place, as evidenced by the multi-agency involvement in the EHCP process and joint children's commissioning teams.
- 5.3 Given the changes to both the age range of EHCPs and the extension to cover young people in colleges, comparisons to the numbers of children and young people with statements and in other LAs is harder to gauge. The changes to school based SEN Support, as well as 'life without levels' also makes comparisons with previous years meaningless and trends harder to judge.

- 5.4 The main aim of the SEND reform legislation has been to achieve cultural change to improve the outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people and their families. This involves changing systems and processes and good progress has been made on this front. However it also involves changing attitudes – not only of service providers, but also of service users. These changes will be harder to achieve and take longer to embed. The strategy for the next 3 years aims to build on and reinforce the progress already made, and ensure the further changes required are effective, sustained and supported.
- 5.5 The strategy for the next 3 years “Working together to improve outcomes” identifies 5 key priorities which continue and extend the proposals identified in Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition.

Priority 1: Timely Intervention – Improve the identification and assessment of SEND across agencies in order to offer help at the earliest opportunity; Share information effectively to help parents and carers ‘tell their story once’.

Priority 2: Partnership working – Work in partnership with parents, carers and young people to provide information and develop the local offer of provision; Work in partnership across agencies so that parents and carers experience a co-ordinated and joined up service for children with complex and acute needs; Ensure a smooth progression to adulthood for all young people with SEND.

Priority 3: Quality and effective SEND provision - Commission or deliver a range of high quality provision for all children and young people with SEND; Provide access to mainstream and specialist provision and outreach services that work together flexibly to meet children’s needs and offer a choice for parents and carers.

Priority 4: Raise attainment and expectations– Set sights high for every child and young person so that their hopes and aspirations can be realised both now and in their future lives.

Priority 5: Ensure value for money – Resources are used effectively, are cost effective and distributed equitably and transparently with performance monitoring and measurement of impact; Provide all children and young people with the option of a personal budget as an integral part of the Education Health and Care plan.

- 5.6 Each priority has an action plan to take the strategy forward. This is included as appendix 1 of “Working together to improve outcomes”.
- 5.7 In addition to the on-going issues identified in Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition there are actions to address a number of new duties and expectations that have been included such as assessing children and young people in the secure estate.
- 5.8 It is proposed to re-establish workstreams that report to the SEN Strategic Board to drive the strategy forwards. The 7 workstreams established under the previous strategy that enabled Southend to be ready to deliver the reforms for September 2014 lapsed as the work to implement the changes began, but just

over a year into the reforms it is now evident which areas continue to require development.

- 5.9 Local areas will be expected to show how they are implementing the new duties that came into force in September 2014 in the Children and Families Act 2014 to identify and meet the needs of disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs aged 0 to 25. The 'local area' includes the local authority and health commissioners and providers, together with all of the area's early years settings, schools and post-16 further education sector. Ofsted and the CQC will be inspecting local areas on their effectiveness in fulfilling their new duties from May 2016.
- 5.10 The implementation of the strategy will be measured against a number of high level proxy indicators. Progress towards these will be monitored by the SEN Strategic Board and will also be used to demonstrate the local areas effectiveness at inspection.
- 5.11 The SEN Strategic Board have contributed in the consultation and development of this strategy. The board has members from education, children's and adult's social care, Southend CCG, Southend Family Voice, Southend Carers Forum, mainstream and special schools.

6 Corporate Implications

- 6.1 **Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**
The strategy contributes to the Success For All priorities of raising achievement and securing good outcomes for the Borough's children and young people.
- 6.2 **Financial Implications**
From 2013 new financial arrangements have been in place for the funding of SEN in Schools and for Special Schools and Units. These arrangements are kept under review and reports are received by Southend on Sea's Schools Forum as required.
- 6.3 **Legal Implications**
The new Education Health and Care Plans and the new SEND Code of Practice came into force in September 2014. They have the same legal status as statements of SEN. These are being implemented as per government guidance and the new SEND Code of Practice.
- 6.4 **People Implications**
Over 500 staff in schools and services have received training to meet the new requirements of the changes to the Education Health and Care Plans and the new SEND Code of Practice as well as the wider SEND reforms. Training will be on-going.
- 6.5 **Property Implications**
There are on-going requirements for suitable accommodation to be provided to ensure the successful implementation of Seabrook College, the Local Authority's provision for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs. A plan is being developed that will link to the corporate work stream on the use of buildings.

6.6 Consultation

There has been extensive consultation and engagements with a wide range of stakeholders on the strategy and the implementation of the SEND reforms, in particular, parents and children and young people. There is a workstream made up of parents and carers for the implementation of the Local Offer.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

Data is regularly monitored to ensure that there is a match between demand and the provision that reflects the demography of the population. Processes are in place to ensure that there is a fair distribution of resources across schools to meet the needs of pupils with SEN and that resources are targeted to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

6.8 Risk Assessment

There are a number of potential risks associated with the implementation of any strategy and change programme. One is a potential lack of engagement with stakeholders. This has been mitigated through regular meetings with headteachers, SENCOs and staff in services. An annual SEN conference keeps the profile high with headteachers. Another key risk was associated with introduction of the new systems and processes for the implementation of the new Education Health and Care Plans – this is a major change project. The risk was mitigated with the establishment of a multi-agency project board and underpinning workstreams. Also through regular consultation with stakeholders and partners and training for the workforce in schools, early years settings and services.

6.9 Value for Money

Monitoring the use of SEN resources is incorporated into the strategy. The change to the new systems and processes for the EHC plans will be implemented within existing resources and with the SEN reform grant that has enabled temporary staff to be appointed into the SEN team to meet the additional demands of converting over 1000 existing statements and LDAs to EHC Plans over a 3 year period.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

None

6.11 Environmental Impact

None

7. Background Papers

DfE Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0-25 years.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Southend on Sea's SEND Strategy 2013-16 "Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition"

Appendix 2: Southend on Sea's SEND Strategy 2016-19 "Working together to improve outcomes"