

Report for Health and Well-Being Board

Subject: Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Date: December 2020

From: Brin Martin, Director of Education and Early Years

1. Background and Purpose of this report

HWBB received and discussed a briefing paper about children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in September 2020. The paper outlined new Leadership and Governance arrangements which would ensure effective strategic and operational leadership and governance of the SEND agenda across the Local Area. It also provided an update on progress and future plans to complete the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) as a result of the SEND inspection in October 2018, including co-producing an honest and robust self-evaluation, focussing particularly on evidence of impact and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Monitoring arrangements for the WSOA have recently been refreshed with monitoring now taking place against seven key workstreams which in turn feed into the four main areas of concern identified by Ofsted.

The purpose of this report is to update the Health and Wellbeing Board on the progress made on the local SEND offer and updates against the seven key workstreams, including highlighting where progress has been made and where challenges remain.

2. Leadership and Governance

1. The newly established SEND Strategic Partnership Board met for the first time on the 2nd November.
2. The Board agreed membership and Terms of Reference
3. The Board approved the proposed Governance Arrangements including establishment of a SEND Operations Board and a Joint Commissioning Board which would both report into the SEND Strategic Partnership Board.
4. The Joint Commissioning Board met under revised Terms of Reference on 5th November and identified three key priorities for Joint Commissioning which were;
 - a. Education Health and Care Plans
 - b. Therapies Commissioning
 - c. Pooled Budget/Joint Resourcing
5. All 3 workstreams have established Task and Finish Groups and work is being undertaken at pace to progress these joint commissioning priorities.
6. The first meeting of the SEND Operations Group has been scheduled for early December where Terms of reference and membership will be confirmed. All new Boards are multi-agency and contain a range of stakeholders from educational settings.
7. Ongoing parent/carer representation has not been agreed due to a new 'official' Parent/Carer Forum for Southend only recently having been established. An introductory meeting with the new Forum is currently being arranged to plan their induction and a

Comms strategy to ensure that all relevant parties are aware of their existence and their role in supporting families and coproducing with the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group.

3. Knowing ourselves: current evidence of how we are doing including self-evaluation, survey results and measuring outcomes and impact in the future

3.1 Self-Evaluation and Strategy

Development sessions have taken place with relevant stakeholders to review current evidence and finalise the self-evaluation and agree priorities and areas for improvement for the next period, resulting in a refresh to the current SEND strategy in December. Children and young people, parents, carers, the community, and voluntary sector will be integral stakeholders in this. For reasons explained in 2.7 above the Parent Carer Forum have not yet been engaged in this review but this will be picked up during December.

The Development Sessions provided a rich discussion about what had worked well and areas that required further focussed concentration.

3.2 Current evidence

Summary progress against the seven workstreams are provided below:

- 1. Leadership & Strategic Commissioning:** Original actions relating to establishing and embedding roles and groups had largely been completed. However, a review of governance and decision making commenced in June 2020 to further strengthen local area effectiveness and leadership. This includes a better 'line of sight' by HWBB and new arrangements which were presented to the Strategic Partnership Board on 2nd November. Commissioning priorities were developed in March 2020 and there are projects in place to deliver. There have been delays due initially to identification of funding to provide Commissioner capacity and then inability to successfully recruit to this role.
- 2. Engagement & Co-production:** There had been good engagement with the previous Parent Carer Forum to the extent they were an intrinsic part of all meetings, recruitment, and quality assurance activity. There have been good examples of engagement and co-production across the local area, such as the Local Offer Website Review, Parent/Practitioner Engagement Events, EP webinars and young person engagement survey, and SENDIASS parent and practitioner training. Further work is planned to ensure that there are high but achievable expectations across the local area around engagement and co-production, and a new strategy and guidance produced. This will be an integral part of working with the new Parent Carer Forum, as well as children and young people.
- 3. Workforce Development:** Whilst the review and restructure of the SEND service took longer than initially planned, it has undergone a successful restructure with the majority of roles filled with high calibre staff by Sept 2020, and a strong induction plan in place.
- 4. Effective Identification:** There has been significant progress made in building the infrastructure to share information across the SEND partnership, this includes the procurement and

implementation of Open Objects EHCP Hub, the creation of the SEND Dashboard, a new SEND profile, protocols and weekly data share and follow up re Children Missing Education and Electively Home Educated.

5. **Education Health Care Plans:** Capacity and competence in delivering high quality EHCPs that meet the needs of SEND learners and their families is now increasingly within reach as a result of the staffing restructure. Timeliness continues to be good, including during the Covid19 period. More rigorous Quality Assurance processes are now in place. Improvements are either in place or planned in gathering and sharing information as part of assessment.
6. **Local Offer:** The Local Offer website has been significantly improved following a parent lead redesign, with clear processes for ensuring it remains up-to-date and is shared with parents, carers and schools. Increased use of Social Media supports the sharing of timely information and the collection of 'customer' views.
7. **Effectiveness and Outcomes:** Understanding the effectiveness of local arrangements to improve the outcomes for CYP has been disjointed, but there is now a greater focus on outcomes for CYP and the impact of services and activities. A project to create an outcomes framework is underway. Work continues on Open Objects to ensure that pupil outcomes are recorded within the EHCP and are regularly reviewed and updated.

4. Generating improvements

The area continues to progress the actions identified in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) in addition to continuously developing to deliver good outcomes. Whilst the impact of the pandemic and delays in recruitment to key posts have slowed the progress that was noted earlier in the year, significant traction has been made in several significant areas.

Leadership and commissioning:

- The Designated Medical Officer post is embedded, with a first annual report in July 2020.
- Three priority commissioning areas which focus on system wide improvements are underway: Speech & Language Therapies, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, Education Health and Care Plans.
- Pilot of a multi-disciplinary decision-making panel between agencies for neurodevelopmental referrals through early help is progressing.

Engagement and co-production:

- POET survey highlighting parent and practitioner satisfaction with the support and care their young person receive was published in September 2020, indicating some areas of satisfaction higher than national averages and providing a wealth of learning.

Workforce Development:

- Local Offer and Co-Production Lead Officer and Assistant is in post and SEND service restructure is complete.
- Advisory SENCOs with clear roles, responsibilities, and protocols recruited.

- Policies to support medications in schools' guidance has been published on the CCG website.

Identification:

- Weekly monitoring of those SEN pupils recorded as missing education on the integrated SEN dashboard is taking place to ensure action to confirm welfare and safety following joint agreed protocol.
- The Inclusion Panel was introduced in Sept 19 and momentum of cases being referred for discussion was beginning to build with very positive feedback relating collaborative working. This will be further embedded from Sept 20, with the addition of a resource budget to support children and schools to maintain placements without the need to use alternative provisions or exclusion. The panel will also become the mechanism for deciding alternative provision prevention places at Victory Park (PRU) and managed moves to allow the monitoring of child movement across the town.

EHCPs:

- A quality assurance process for EHCPs has been established and implemented in SEND Service, work continues with partners to quality assure their contributions.
- A very high proportion of EHCPs continue to be issued within the statutory timescale of 20 weeks.
- A joint area SEND case management system has now been implemented following a successful pilot with schools and families. Activity continues to achieve full implementation.

Effectiveness and Outcomes:

- Quality assurance visits by the advisory SENCO team to monitor the impact of support and professional development on individual school data and ISP outcomes have been undertaken to selected schools during the Summer Term.
- Southend SEND Expectations providing guidance for schools has been co-produced and adopted a finance section has recently been added

There are some areas where progress has not been made as required and these are highlighted to the Board for challenge and risk notification purposes.

Leadership and commissioning:

- Dedicated full time Joint Commissioner role was agreed but attempts to engage someone to undertake this role have been unsuccessful.
- Agreed changes to SEND governance now need evidence impact at pace.
- Whole local area engagement is required to ensure that there is a robust self-evaluation which accurately identifies areas for improvement and priorities for the next three years, and that the new SEND Strategy is written without delay.

Engagement & Co-production:

- No group were successful in renewing their contract as the parent carer forum. Contact as the DfE Commissioner have been working with parent/carers to create a new parent carer forum. This has impacted on the representation of views of CYP and Parents and Carers on

several development sessions and new governance boards, although mitigation and dedicated sessions when the new PCF are established and ready to engage with the SEND Local Area are being planned.

- The action to create development opportunities for children and young people with SEND (for example, work experience, volunteering or a supported internship) to support co-production and the Local Offer role and engage with other children and young people with SEND to co-produce services and to set up SEND Student Forum was due to commence at the start of Covid. SEND Student engagement around service design and delivery needs to be increased.

Identification:

- Challenges remain to implement an agreement to a joint commitment to allow area staff to access appropriate shared information about children and young people with SEND who they are supporting. Similarly, there are 4 schools who have not signed an information sharing agreements, and a further 3 schools whose data sharing platforms are unstable and constantly require maintenance from school ICT teams.
- Cross Border Protocol has been completed and agreed with Essex CC but it is still with Essex information governance team for approval.

Education Health and Care Plans

- Whilst a joint area approach to statutory decision making has been agreed, there needs to be greater clarity and for processes to be less education-led. All statutory decision making is determined by the EHC multiagency panel which continues to have good representation from a wide variety of stakeholders. There is feedback from the previous Parent Carer Forum chair that the panel process is a fair and transparent multi-agency process. The panel has met virtually each week during lockdown.

Local Offer:

- The planned Local Offer Website and Provision Review groups have been delayed meeting due to Covid, although it is expected this will commence imminently.

5. Recommendations to HWBB

We would ask HWBB to:

1. Note progress on leadership and governance, self-evaluation and areas of significant improvement.
2. Acknowledge and challenge the risks identified where developments have not progressed as required.