

Cabinet

7th December 2021

Local Area SEND Inspection

Recommendations

That Cabinet

1. Notes and comments on the outcomes from the Ofsted and CQC local area SEND inspection.
2. Endorses the progress made to date to deliver the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and delegates to the Strategic Director for People, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education, authority to make any changes necessary to finalise the WSOA for submission to Ofsted and the CQC by 24th December 2021.
3. Approves the request for additional one-off funding of £98,750 over the remainder of 2021/22 and into 2022/23 to support delivery of the Written Statement of Action, to be met from the 2021/22 underspend in Corporate Services and Resourcing.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In July 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection in Warwickshire to judge the effectiveness of the local area in implementing the SEND reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The local area covered by the inspection includes not just Warwickshire County Council as the local authority, but also the clinical commissioning group (CCG), public health, NHS providers, early years' settings, schools and further education providers. The inspectors also gather the views of parents, carers, children and young people. The report looks at the effectiveness of the local area holistically in delivering the desired outcomes.
- 1.2 The [inspection report](#) noted some positive action and acknowledged the commitment of leadership across the local area to improving outcomes for children and young people, including the adoption of the ambitious SEND and Inclusion Change Programme approved in July 2020. It also noted that area leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses of the local area and found that the self-evaluation undertaken was accurate, well-informed and detailed. The report also recognises that:
 - children and young people with SEND generally achieve positive educational outcomes;
 - a high proportion of young people remain in education, training and employment;
 - attendance rates for children and young people with SEND are very positive; and

- fixed term exclusions are now well below national averages.
- 1.3 However, the report identified five significant areas of weakness which the local area needs to address. These are:
- the waiting times for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessments, and weaknesses in the support for children and young people awaiting assessment and following diagnosis of ASD;
 - the fractured relationships with parents and carers and lack of clear communication and co-production at a strategic level;
 - the incorrect placement of some children and young people with EHC plans in specialist settings, and mainstream school leaders' understanding of why this needs to be addressed;
 - the lack of uptake of staff training for mainstream primary and secondary school staff to help them understand and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND; and
 - the quality of the online local offer.
- 1.4 The local area is required to co-produce with partners, parents and carers a WSoA within 70 working days of receiving the inspection report (by 24th December 2021) that outlines how improvements will be made. Progress will then be monitored over the next 18 months by the Department of Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE). Each of the areas of weakness is dealt with in the WSoA with an action plan detailing how the concerns will be addressed, by when and which organisation will lead on each action. These plans can be seen in draft at Section 4 in Appendix 2.
- 1.5 A Steering Group comprising partners from across Education, Health, Social Care and Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice (WPCV) has been established to oversee development and delivery of the WSoA and the future actions needed to bring about the change in practice. Progress will also be reported to the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme Board. The governance of the SEND and Inclusion Board has also been strengthened with CCG and WPCV representation in response to the findings of the report. The detailed governance and engagement arrangements are set out in Section 3 of the WSoA in Appendix 2.
- 1.6 A communications plan is also in place to ensure that we engage appropriately in developing the WSoA with stakeholders across the local area, including schools, parent carers and children and young people. This includes the introduction of a monthly newsletter and the development of a further programme of events to inform stakeholders of progress.
- 1.7 Several areas identified in the inspection are addressed and in progress as part of the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme. These include the following areas:
- establishing the new Parent Carer Forum, Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice, which commenced in April 2021;

- a refresh of the local offer webpages which brings together information about local services and support for families with children and young people ages 0 to 25 (launched on 13th October 2021);
- introducing an inclusive framework in schools, with a trial of a different model of support to schools to enable early intervention and peer support to improve outcomes (commenced in October 2021); and
- workforce development to improve the knowledge, skills and understanding of staff in mainstream schools in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND (commenced in October 2021).

1.8 Some areas addressed in the WSoA sit outside the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme such as ASD pathways and strengthening communication and coproduction approaches. Progress of these areas will be overseen by the SEND and Inclusion Steering Group.

1.9 Section 6 of the WSoA sets out the monitoring arrangements for the planned activity:

Monthly	
KPI's	Discussions and challenge held at Education & SEND Senior Management Team and CCG SMT meetings
6-weekly	
Interim reports on Progress	Targeted updates to SEND and Inclusion Steering Group (exception reporting of issues)
Quarterly	
Formal reports on progress of actions within plan	Full update to SEND and Inclusion Change Programme Board, NHSE and DfE
6-monthly	
Political oversight	Full update to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1.10 As seen above, quarterly reports will be sent to DfE and NHSE to enable monitoring of progress against the WSoA. Reports will also be brought to Overview and Scrutiny on a six-monthly basis. In addition, the Self Evaluation Framework document will be updated on a six-monthly basis. The local area will be reinspected from June 2023 (date to be confirmed) to assess if sufficient progress has been made. This will be under a new Ofsted/CQC inspection framework.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 Funding for Phase 1 projects in the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme (including the local offer, launch of Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice and Inclusive Framework for Schools) is in place. Phase 2 costs form part of the

‘2022/23 Budget and 2022-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy’ report also on the agenda for Cabinet on 7th December. This will bring the total funding for the SEND and Inclusion Change Programme to £4.798m over four years (from 2020 to 2024).

- 2.2 An additional £1.5m has recently been committed to address the autism waiting list (with £1m from CCG and £500,000 from NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust) on top of £1.6m from partners to support the transformation of pre-assessment and post diagnostic support.
- 2.3 One-off funding of £98,750 is required to support delivery of the WSoA (as outlined in Table 1). It is proposed that the cost is met from the underspend in the 2021/22 Corporate Services budget. A virement of the £57,750 resources from Corporate Services to Education Services needed in 2021/22 will be done to action this, subject to Cabinet’s approval of the recommendations. The £41,000 to be spent in 2022/23 will be reflected in the use of reserves supporting the 2022/23 budget. However, in doing so Cabinet should note that this will reduce the funding available to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy and/or the Council’s Investment Funds.

Area	2021/22	2022/23
Communications and engagement	£27,750	£26,000
Co-production strategy and training	£10,000	£10,000
Consultation support	£10,000	
Workforce development	£5000	£5000
Engagement with schools	£3000	
ICT costs	£2000	
TOTAL	£57,750	£41,000

Table 1: Funding required for Delivery of the WSoA

- 2.4 In addition, £250,000 has been approved from the headroom within the Schools Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant to support delivery of the outcomes in the WSoA. In particular, this will support workforce development in all mainstream schools by financing the backfilling of staff to attend training.

3. Environmental Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

4. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 4.1 Work will continue with partners to develop the WSoA for submitting to Ofsted and CQC by 24th December 2021. The SEND and Inclusion Steering Group will receive a final draft report for consideration on 13th December, with final sign off, delegated to the Strategic Director for People in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education, by 24th December.
- 4.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for specific projects and

workstreams contributing to the WSoA in due course.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Ofsted and CQC local area SEND inspection outcomes
2. Appendix 2: Draft Written Statement of Action

Background Papers

1. None

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The report was circulated to the following other members prior to publication:

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
Councillors Dahmash, Roodhouse and Brown

Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
Councillors Golby, Holland, Rolfe and Drew