

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24 September 2019

SEND & Inclusion 0-25 in Warwickshire

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes and comments on the implementation of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy.

1. Background

1.1 In April 2019, Warwickshire County Council Cabinet approved the [SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023](#). This falls under the strategic framework of the Warwickshire Education Strategy (Priority WE2d) and replaces the Vulnerable Learners Strategy 2015-2018.

1.2 The strategy was co-produced and identifies six priority areas::

- Promoting inclusion
- Getting it right for learners with high needs (school age)
- Improving health and social care for learners with SEND
- Preparing for adulthood
- Transport
- Workforce development

1.3 The strategy is supported by a delivery plan and workstreams involving stakeholders (schools, social care, health, parents and carers). The strategy has been communicated via meetings and conferences, as well as the distribution of a [light blue leaflet](#). It is monitored by the SEND & Inclusion Board.

1.4 The [SEND Code of Practice 2015](#) sets the statutory framework and expectations for SEND, which includes expectation regarding Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. In July 2019, 4,090 children and young people had EHC plans in Warwickshire, up from 2,781 in 2014. Of this number, 2,709 are school age (Reception to Year 11), with 1,302 young people supported at ages 16-25. A further 10,300 children and young people receive SEN Support in schools.

2. Performance across the SEND system

2.1 The SEND & Inclusion Strategy included key activities and performance measures. A brief summary is below, with further information and data at Appendix A.

Promoting Inclusion

2.2 The Warwickshire Inclusion Kitemarking Scheme (WInCKS) is now in its third year. 54 settings and childminders have now received the award that recognises best practice in SEND provision in early years settings.

2.3 At school age, Warwickshire use the [SEND Provision Matrix](#) to set out how schools should deliver a graduated response to supporting learners with SEND. This is a key document in communicating expectations of provision. A review of the matrix began in 2018/19. Following feedback from headteachers and SENCOs, it has been agreed to expand the scope of the SEND Provision Matrix to be established as a web-based interactive tool, provide links through to resources, and include health and social care content. The Educational Psychology Service has been commissioned to lead on this, with piloting of the new matrix set for April 2020.

2.4 Warwickshire continues to create new SEND provision, through 'Resourced Provision' and 'Specialist Partnerships'. Through these models 92 places have been created since 2015 for learners to receive specialist provision in mainstream settings. At present only 56 places are being utilised. Barriers to placements are being investigated as a priority. A further 16 resourced provision places are planned for 2019/20, although start dates have been put back from September 2019 due to delays from capital projects.

Getting it right for learners with high needs (school age)

2.5 Of particular note is the improvement of performance in issuing EHC plans within 20 weeks (statutory expectation). In 2017/18 financial year, performance was at 29%. In 2018/19 this improved to 60%. Since then Warwickshire has had five consecutive months of performance above 80%.

2.6 In terms of the balance of mainstream/specialist provision, 52% of Warwickshire learners are in specialist provision (state and independent), with 45% in local mainstream schools. In the secondary phase, only 39% are in mainstream schools. Whilst there has been a national trend towards more children being educated in specialist provision, it remains a concern that more and more learners are unable to access provision at their local school. The strategic aim remains to increase the proportion of children with EHC plans in mainstream settings.

- 2.7 Of those in specialist provision, more learners should be placed in state-funded provision and fewer in independent provision. Warwickshire is expanding the number of places in state-funded special schools, for example an extra classroom at Oak Wood School should be available from November 2019. Members will also be aware of the purchase of site for the purpose of establishing a new special school. Warwickshire has reduced the number of children in independent specialist provision (ISP) to 198 in September 2019. However, this remains above national average and represents a significant area of spend (over £11m per year).

Improving health and social care for learners with SEND

- 2.8 The SEND agenda works across health and social care as well as education. Joint commissioning of services for children with SEND was previously identified as an issue. In March 2019, a plan was jointly agreed to address this, including services for occupational therapy and sensory assessment. No change in service provision has yet been approved. The Collaborative Commissioning Board is monitoring progress in this area.
- 2.9 Improvements regarding Rise and Early Help should be considered as separate reports by the Committee. Broadly speaking, the improved response times of the Core CAMHS are identified as a success of the new contract, whilst the waiting times for autism diagnosis remain a significant concern. The Early Help Strategy was approved by Council in December 2018, and the delivery plan is in development. A series of roadshows have been held in Summer 2019 to help develop this.

Preparing for adulthood

- 2.10 The number of post-16 learners with EHC plans now makes up a third of the overall cohort. There is a particular importance in ensuring that the Year 9 annual review focuses on preparing for adulthood, with new outcomes identified. In 2018/19, 50% of learners in Year 9 had an annual review fully processed by SENDAR (excluding August data).
- 2.11 The number of supported internships offered across the County is set to increase to 65 in September (32 in 2018, 12 in 2017). These placements help young people with SEND into employment. Warwickshire has an ambition for 100 supported internships to be offered by 2021. The County Council is hosting 3 interns from September 2019.
- 2.12 A '[Transitions Guide](#)' for parents was produced in 2019, in partnership with the Warwickshire Parent Carer Forum and is available on the SEND Local Offer website.
- 2.13 Transition into health and social care services has been highlighted as an area for improvement in self-evaluation.

Transport

- 2.14 Within the strategy, the implementation of risk assessment and independent travel training were identified as key activities. The team of risk assessors has now been increased from 1 to 4 (August 2019) to implement transport policy appropriately. The introduction of more systematic risk assessments has led to improved quality of provision, as well as some reduced spend by moving learners from single-occupancy taxis to multiple-occupancy taxis where appropriate.
- 2.15 The delivery of independent travel training is currently contracted to a third party. This contract has been extended for a third year. The delivery programme is accredited and recognized as best practice, however there is concern that number of learners receiving travel training is too low. A business case is being developed to look at alternative models of delivery.

Workforce development

- 2.16 Warwickshire offers a range of training for schools and stakeholders including autism awareness, 'Early Bird' (for parents on diagnosis of autism), and training on attachment issues. Further to this, the Council facilitate termly SENCO networks to share best practice and key messages. The review of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) provision, led by public health, is looking at how we can consolidate and share our a countywide approach. Building capacity within schools for autism and SEMH is a key part of promoting inclusion in mainstream settings.

3. Peer Review and Inspection

- 3.1 Warwickshire is one of four local authorities in the West Midlands yet to receive a [SEND Local Area inspection](#). The inspection must take place by March 2021. So far, 45 of 91 inspections have resulted in a 'Written Statement of Action', with 21 of those issued in the last year (64% of those inspected). Warwickshire has prepared for inspection through regular updates with Portfolio Holders, Strategic Directors and the SEND & Inclusion Board. The key document for inspection is the local Self Evaluation. This is reviewed on a termly basis by the SEND & Inclusion Board.
- 3.2 Warwickshire has invited a Peer Review to focus on our planning for EHC plans and our Preparation for Adulthood arrangements. This will take place on 19th - 20th September 2019, led by a local authority officer from another area.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 The implementation of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy is from within existing budgets across education, health and social care. The financial pressures on SEND are well documented nationally. A LGA report '[Have We Reached Tipping Point](#)' articulates well the challenges faced in meeting statutory

expectations within allocated resources, as the does the recent County Council Network briefing: '[SEND: The Challenge Facing County Authorities.](#)' Warwickshire is implementing recommended practice from the LGA report '[Developing and sustaining an effective local SEND system](#)'.

- 4.2 The current forecast, reported to [Schools Forum](#) in May, is that the High Needs Block will forecast overspend by £4.3m in 2019/20, with a medium term view that overspend will peak at £13.3m in 2021/22. This takes account of the £2.5m savings plan. A High Needs Task and Finish Group has been set up with school representatives which is due to report back to Schools forum in October with recommendations on addressing the overspend. Consistent with the SEND & Inclusion Strategy, there is likely to be significant focus on reducing placements in independent specialist provision and building capacity in mainstream schools to meet needs of learners with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- 4.3 In the Spending Review 2019 announced on 4 September a further £700m funding nationally for high needs in 2020/21 was announced. This will impact on the figures outlined in the paragraph above, although we do not yet know how much of the additional funding Warwickshire will receive. The Government is aiming to update authorities shortly, with allocations expected to be circulated in October 2019. At this stage we would not expect the additional funding to fully resolve the forecast overspend, especially over the medium term. As soon as more information is available this will be fed into the work of the High Needs Task and Finish Group as well as the development of the 2020-25 Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 4.4 The Committee should also be aware that the SEND Implementation Grant, with a current allocation of £261k over two years, is due to end in March 2020.
- 4.5 Following the tier 3 staffing restructure in Education Services, responsibility for mainstream and SEN transport has been separated. Forecast spend for SEN transport is over £9m. This is resourced from central Council funding (rather than Dedicated Schools Grant). A County Council Network briefing 'SEN: Home to School Transport' in 2018 showed that whilst spend had increased Warwickshire ranked 29th out of 36 County Councils for increased spend (ie. 8th lowest).
- 4.6 The levers for controlling spend in transport, which is demand led, are broadly controlled by the availability of local provision (reducing length of journeys and increasing shared transport), transport policy (setting the eligibility thresholds) and the procurement of transport (how much is paid for each journey). Activity continues to take place on expanding the local offer of provision (see above) and regular review of routes and procurement. The Committee should be aware that discussions are taking place about whether further revisions to the transport policy should be made including moving to a presumption of direct

travel payments, risk assessment prior to the agreement of a passenger assistant for a learner with an EHC plan, and further clarification on post-19 eligibility. If taken forward, this will be subject to public consultation.

5. Equality Impact and Diversity

- 5.1 The SEND & Inclusion Strategy was subject to an equality impact assessment. This report constitutes an update on activity within that strategy.

6. In Conclusion

- 6.1 Warwickshire has in place a strategy to improve and sustain an effective local SEND system. There remain significant challenges to deliver the expectations of the SEND Code of Practice within allocated resources. Education Services continue to work through these challenges with partner agencies and the Schools Forum.

Background Papers

- Report to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee: SEND Reforms & update on SEND Local Offer in Warwickshire (January 2018)
- Report to Cabinet: SEND & Inclusion Strategy (April 2019)

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

Local Member(s): None

Other members: Councillors Dahmash, Williams, Davies, Skinner, Chilvers, Morgan, Hayfield, Chattaway and Roodhouse

Appendix A: Performance against key activities in SEND & Inclusion Strategy

Activity	Measure	Expected change	Baseline January 2019	Latest September 2019	Rationale
To ensure we are identifying need and promoting inclusion from an early age, by working with our early years settings to achieve best practice	Number of early years settings awarded kitemark (WInCKS)	To increase	40	54	The more early settings meet best practice standards the better we will be at identifying support before school
To review and update the SEND Provision Matrix making it clear to schools and parent and carers what is expected as a graduated response to individual needs	SEND Provision Matrix reviewed and re-published	To complete	Engagement phase schools completed on changes to make to existing guidance (Summer 2019)	Updating content and identifying best practice resources with stakeholders (Autumn tem 2019)	The SEND Provision Matrix provides clear guidance on how needs should be met locally
To establish more resourced provisions and/or specialist partnerships in mainstream settings, providing a bridge between mainstream and specialist provision	Number of places at Resourced Provisions or Partnerships	To increase	92	92	A broader spectrum of educational provision is required to meet local needs
To improve the timeliness of issuing EHC plans (within 20 week statutory timeframe)	% of new EHC plans issued within 20 weeks, including exceptions	To increase	52% (Oct-Dec 2018)	89% (Apr-Jun 2019)	Improve the timeliness of issuing EHC plans
To expand state-funded specialist provision where possible (including specialist partnerships)	Number and % of learners with EHC plans in mainstream, specialist and independent specialist settings	To increase the number in mainstream and state-funded specialist settings, reducing the number of learners in independent specialist settings	School age (R-Yr11) 43% Mainstream 44% Special (state-funded) 7% Independent Specialist Provision 2% Other (January 2019)	School age (R-Yr11) 45% Mainstream 44% Special (state-funded) 8% Independent Specialist Provision 3% Other (eg. Elective Home Education, Alternative Provision) (July 2019)	If the local offer is meeting demand, the percentage of learners in mainstream and settings should increase. Whilst the number of state-funded specialist places will increase, the overall proportion of learners in specialist education should decrease, as a result of fewer learners in independent settings

To agree a Warwickshire joint commissioning plan for learners with SEND, setting out how local needs are to be met through the local offer services	Joint commissioning plan published	To complete	Joint Commissioning Plan agreed (March 2019)	Regular monitoring by Joint Commissioning Board	Joint working can only take place if the local offer of services meets local needs. A joint plan is needed to address current gaps in provision.
To develop further the joint processes for the delivery of support, particularly for those requiring support at Early Help	Early Help Strategy delivery plan published and monitored	To complete	Early Help Strategy approved by Council in December 2018	Early Help Delivery Plan in development (roadshows took place in Summer 2019)	Better support and joint working through early help should prevent children and their families escalating to crisis support
To deliver improved support for social, emotional and mental health through in-school support and the delivery of commissioned mental health services (eg. Rise)	% of referrals to Rise with a first appointment within 18 weeks	To increase	Average 35 days to from referral to first appointment for core team	Average 35 days	This is one of a collection of measures for the Rise service
Maximising the use of local specialist provision at post-16 and differentiating that provision	Number and % of post-16 learners with EHC plans in local and independent specialist settings	To increase the percentage in local settings, reducing the percentage of learners in independent specialist settings	5.9% (Jan 2019)	5.9% (July 2019)	If the local offer is meeting demand, the percentage of learners in local post-16 provision should increase with a reduction of learners in independent specialist settings
To improve transition planning from year 9 onwards for learners with an EHCP	Number of EHC plans amended following the Year 9 review	To increase	18% (January 2019)	50% (July 2019)	The more EHC plans are reviewed in Year 9 and amended, the more likely it is that planning has taken place for life after school.
To work with employers, schools and colleges to increase the offer of supported internships	Number of supported internships offered	To increase	32	65 planned (to be confirmed September 2019)	The more supported internships offered in the County, the better the opportunities for paid employment post-education for our learners with high needs

To improve the quality of specialist transport by undertaking risk assessments for learners with high need and for learners with newly issued EHC plans (as per the Home to School Transport Policy) and ensuring timeliness of decision-making	Number of transport risk assessments taken for learners with EHC plans	To increase	144 (2018/19 academic year)		The use of risk assessment will improve the quality of transport for our learners with high needs and ensure the implementation of the local home to school transport policy
To increase independent travel training to give young people the life skills to travel independently.	Number of young people successfully completing independent travel training	To increase	14 (2017/18 academic year)	19 (2018/19 academic year)	Using transport is a life skill, preparing young people for adulthood and reducing dependence on transport assistance
To work with schools to develop a 'whole school' approach to supporting learners with SEND, so that the workforce is suitably trained and confident.	Approach to workforce development agreed with schools.	To complete	Range of training offered, both traded and subsidised	New approach to be agreed as part of the outcomes of High Needs Block Task and Finish group	A more confident workforce will be better equipped to deliver a graduated response to needs