

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14th June 2022

Local Area SEND Inspection Update

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the outcomes from the Ofsted and CQC local area SEND inspection and endorse the progress made to date to deliver the Written Statement of Action.

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' 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 views of parent 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](#) was published in September 2021. It noted the positive action and commitment of leadership to improving outcomes for children and young people. It also recognised that:
 - educational outcomes and attendance rates for children and young people with SEND are generally positive;
 - a high proportion of young people remain in education, training and employment; and
 - fixed term exclusions are now below national averages.
- 1.3 However, the report also identified five areas that the local area needs to address. These are known as 'significant areas of weakness' in the terminology of such reports. The areas were:
 - waiting times for autism assessments, and weaknesses in the support for children and young people awaiting assessment and following diagnosis;
 - fractured relationships with parents and carers and lack of clear communication and co-production at a strategic level;
 - 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;
 - 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 was required to co-produce a Written Statement of Action (WSoA) with partners, parents and carers outlining how improvements would be made. The draft WSoA was reviewed by the County Council's Cabinet on 7th December 2021 and the final [WSoA](#) was published on the WCC website on 21st January 2022, following approval by Ofsted and CQC. It includes an action plan for each of area of weakness detailing how the concerns will be addressed, by when and which organisation is leading on each action. Delivery is now underway up to June 2023 before the local area is reinspected under a new inspection framework by Ofsted and CQC from June 2023.
- 1.5 A communications plan is in place to ensure appropriate engagement in delivering the WSoA with stakeholders across the local area, including schools, parent carers and children and young people. This includes the introduction of a monthly [SEND newsletter](#), the development of a programme of events to inform stakeholders of progress including regular webinars and the launch of a new local offer [Facebook page](#).
- 1.6 Effective governance arrangements are in place with working groups reporting to a joint Steering Group; a new SEND Member Panel; and monitoring meetings with DfE/NHSE taking place up to June 2023. Section 6 of the WSoA sets out the monitoring arrangements, summarised below:

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

Reports on progress of actions within plan

Update to SEND and Inclusion Change Programme Board, SEND Member Panel, NHSE and DfE

6-monthly

Political oversight

Update to Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1.7 In addition to the monitoring arrangements, the Self Evaluation Framework document will be updated on a six-monthly basis. The local area will be reinspected from June 2023 to assess if sufficient progress has been made.
- 1.8 The first two monitoring meetings were held on 28th January 2022 and 17th May, attended by senior leaders from across Education, Social Care and Health, Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice and advisers from DfE and NHSE. This includes presenting update reports to evidence 'sufficient progress' against the milestones, as shown in the appendix. DfE and NHSE have noted the positive progress, the pace of change, the evidence of impact and the

significant involvement of parent carers to date. It was recommended that partners develop a clear understanding of each other's challenges and how they can be overcome at a joint and strategic level, in line with Chapter 3 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015. They also highlighted the need for changing behaviours and culture, working with schools, and ensuring continued progress on autism waiting times with pre and post diagnostic support. There is commitment to strengthening collaboration through the SEND Steering Group and the working groups through joint delivery activities and robust governance arrangements moving forward.

1.9 Progress to date is outlined in Appendix A and summarised below:

Area 1: Autism waiting times and support for families

- Increase capacity in the neurodevelopmental diagnostic service and pre and post diagnostic support with additional funding (£2.56m recurring and £5.4m non-recurring funding for two years). Recruitment is underway.
- Developing a new model of assessment to reduce waiting times, to be piloted from April and implemented from December 2022.
- Improving the self-help offer and information for families including an autism conference in April 2022, and an e-booklet.
- Redesigning community support services to provide better support.
- Holding workshops on speech and language services and carrying out a skills audit of children and young people's mental health services.

Area 2: Communication and Engagement with Parent Carers

- Launching the new parent carer forum (Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice) and publishing a [Partnership Agreement](#)
- Strengthening coproduction with support from the Council of Disabled Children, setting up a Coproduction and Engagement Hub with parent carers and a SEND Young People's Forum for young people.
- Launching a new SEND [Local Offer Facebook page](#), [SEND newsletter](#) and a programme of events including parent carer webinars.
- Developing a new section on the local offer with 'You Said We Did' and recordings of events: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/get-involved-say>
- Training over 100 staff in SEND in Restorative Practice to help create and maintain respectful and trusting relationships with families and schools.

Area 3 & 4: Inclusion and Workforce Development in Schools

- Delivering the Inclusion Framework for Schools project with 17 schools in Rugby to test a new model of support, to enable early intervention and improve outcomes. Staff have received training and are carrying out whole school SEND audits to identify areas for development.
- Forming a workforce development working group including Head Teachers and appointing Change Champions within School Consortia and Area Networks to develop an Inclusion Charter and embed inclusive practice.
- Baselining and promoting current training including autism awareness and National Association for Special Educational (NASEN) resources: <https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/>

- Providing support and training as part of a phased pilot on [Collaborative and Proactive Solutions](#) with Dr Ross Greene from USA, to support schools with behavioural challenges which can often lead to exclusions. Parental and school confidence in the implementation of this pilot has been extremely positive to date.

Area 5: Local Offer webpages

- Launching and promoting the refreshed local offer webpages, with visits to the site up by 50% and positive feedback received, including presentations to schools, parent carers and GPs, circulating [leaflets](#) and producing a short [local offer video](#).
- Further developing and maintaining the local offer to ensure information is fit for purpose.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Funding for Phase 1 projects in the County Council's SEND and Inclusion Change Programme is in place, which includes the local offer, launch of Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice and Inclusion Framework for Schools. Phase 2 costs form part of the Council's 2022-23 Budget and 2022-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy. One-off funding of £98,750 has also been provided to support delivery of the WSoA.
- 2.2 The CCG has secured additional investment to increase capacity in the neurodevelopmental diagnostic service and pre and post diagnostic support (£2.56m recurring and £5.4m non-recurring over two years).
- 2.3 Due to the unallocated capacity in the Dedicated School Grant being less than anticipated after the National Funding Formula was applied, the request for a one-off payment through the lump sum factor for schools for £250,000 could not take place. This funding was to support delivery of the WSoA outcomes, particularly for workforce development in mainstream schools by financing the backfilling of staff to attend training. Alternative options for support will be considered by the SEND Steering Group as part of delivering the WSoA.

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 deliver the WSoA and address the significant areas of weakness before the reinspection by Ofsted and CQC in 2023. The SEND and Inclusion Steering Group will hold the accountability for delivering the improvements.

- 4.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken for specific projects and workstreams as part of the WSoA in due course.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Written Statement of Action Update Reports

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