

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

14 February 2023

Local Area SEND Inspection Update

Recommendation

That the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the progress made to date to deliver the Written Statement of Action following the Ofsted and CQC local area SEND inspection in 2021.

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 outlined in the Children and Families Act 2014. The 'local area' includes Warwickshire County Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Public Health, NHS providers, early years settings, schools and further education providers. The inspectors also gathered views of parent carers, children and young people.
- 1.2 The [inspection report](#), published in September 2021, noted the commitment of leadership to improving outcomes for children and young people and that:
 - educational outcomes and attendance rates for children and young people with SEND were generally positive;
 - a high proportion of young people remained in education, training and employment; and
 - fixed term exclusions were below national averages.
- 1.3 However, the report also identified five areas for the local area to address:
 - 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 In response to the findings, the local area was required to co-produce an action plan called a 'Written Statement of Action' (WSoA) with partners and parent carers outlining how improvements would be made. The [WSoA](#) was published in January 2022, following approval by Ofsted and CQC. Delivery is

now well underway up to June 2023 before the local area is reinspected under a [new inspection framework](#) by Ofsted and CQC (date to be confirmed).

- 1.5 A communications plan is in place to ensure appropriate engagement in delivering the WSoA, including a [SEND newsletter](#), [regular webinars](#) and a SEND Local Offer [Facebook page](#) (with nearly 1000 followers).
- 1.6 Effective governance arrangements are established with working groups reporting to a joint SEND Steering Group; a SEND Member Panel; and regular monitoring meetings with DfE/NHSE up to June 2023. In addition, a [Self Evaluation Framework](#) document is being updated every six months. The local area will be reinspected to assess if sufficient progress has been made as part of the inspection under the [new inspection framework](#).
- 1.7 The first three monitoring meetings were held in January, May and October 2022, attended by senior leaders from across Education, Social Care and Health, Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice and advisers from DfE and NHSE. The final review meetings are due in February and June 2023.
- 1.8 DfE and NHSE have noted the pace of improvements to date and *'visible progress against all of the key concerns'*, underpinned by a *'shared aspirational vision for children and young people with SEND'* together with *'a strong and continually improving relationship with the Parent Carer Forum'*. They also noted that: *'Improvements in coproduction are leading to deep and sustainable culture change within the Local Authority and there is recognition that further improvements are needed within health to ensure this is consistent across the partnership. Collaboration between all partners involved in the work is evident and the local area is playing to its strengths to maintain pace and ensure ongoing improvement'*.
- 1.9 The next steps for the local area include ensuring the improvements are sustained and capturing the impact of the work on children, young people and parent carers. This evidence base will go beyond the completion of activities and start to articulate what is different for families in Warwickshire as a result of the work through the Written Statement of Action.
- 1.10 A summary of progress to date is below, with a full update in the appendix:

Area 1: Autism waiting times and support for families

- Increased capacity in the neurodevelopmental diagnostic service and pre and post diagnostic support, delivering more assessments than planned and reducing the longest wait from 242 weeks (January 2022) to an estimated 118 weeks (December 2022), against a milestone target of 167 weeks.
- Testing new models of assessment to reduce waiting times and improve client experience in a pilot from April 2022. Evaluation is underway, with positive feedback to date from families and professionals regarding speed and efficiency of resources.
- Improving information for families including a comprehensive [e-booklet](#) for neurodivergent people and their families, a second autism conference held

in Nuneaton in November 2022 (300 people attended) and ongoing delivery of a range of free workshops. Positive feedback received: *'Help and support seems more available'*.

- Recommissioning the community support service for neurodivergent people to provide improved pre and post diagnostic support is on track, with the new service due to start on time in April 2023.
- Capacity building in speech and language, occupational health, mental health and emotional wellbeing services so holistic support can be provided by a wide range of professionals.

Area 2: Relationships with Parent Carers and Coproduction

- Coproduction with Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice (parent carer forum) and young people (IMPACT), including the Coproduction and Engagement Hub, and involvement in strategic boards and workstreams, recruitment and commissioning activity.
- Continuing to promote the SEND [Local Offer Facebook page](#), [SEND newsletter](#) and a programme of events including parent carer webinars.
- Publishing 'You Said We Did' reports and recordings of events: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/get-involved-say>
- Training over 90% of staff in SEND in restorative approaches to create and maintain respectful and trusting relationships with families and schools.

Area 3 and 4: Inclusion and Workforce Development in Schools

- The Inclusion Framework for Schools project with 17 schools in Rugby is testing a new model of support, to enable early intervention and improve outcomes. It has included SEND audits, staff training and peer to peer support. Evaluation of the project is now underway.
- A workforce development working group including Head Teachers, parent carers and representatives from education, health, social care has delivered improvements, including appointing Change Champions within School Consortia and Area Networks; coproducing an [Inclusion Charter](#) to help embed inclusive practice in schools; and reviewing and [promoting training](#). All [SEND training](#) has been collated into one place to make it easier for schools to access. The uptake of training has now increased, notably autism training which has quadrupled.
- Targeted support and training has also been provided to schools including a pilot on [Collaborative and Proactive Solutions](#) with Dr Ross Greene from USA to help schools with behavioural challenges which can often lead to exclusions. Parental and school confidence in the implementation of this pilot has been positive to date.

Area 5: Local Offer webpages

- The [SEND local offer webpages](#) have continued to be promoted and improved, including presentations to schools, parent carers and GPs, circulating [leaflets](#) and a [local offer video](#). Visits to the webpages have increased by over 50%. Ongoing coproduction is now in place to ensure continuous improvement of the SEND Local Offer.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 Funding for the County Council's SEND and Inclusion Change Programme is in place, which includes the SEND Local Offer, launch of Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice, Inclusion Framework for Schools and Disagreement Resolution projects. £98,750 of one-off funding has also been provided to support delivery of the WSoA.
- 2.2 In 2022, the ICB provided significant 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). In 2023, in light of a significant increase in referrals, partners are considering the overall, long-term investment needed for autism to support the ambition to create a sustainable model that continues to deliver over the coming years.

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 are being undertaken for specific projects and workstreams.

Appendices

1. Appendix 1: Written Statement of Action Update

Background Papers

1. None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:
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Councillors Dahmash, Roodhouse and Brown

Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair and Party
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