

Health and Wellbeing Board

24 May 2023

Local Area SEND Inspection Update

Recommendation

That the Health and Wellbeing Board endorses 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 partners in the local area in implementing the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The partners included Warwickshire County Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Public Health, NHS providers, early years settings, schools and further education providers. The inspectors also gathered the views of parent carers, children and young people.
- 1.2 The [inspection report](#), published in September 2021, noted the positive action and 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 identified five areas for partners in Warwickshire 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 Education Health and Care (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 partners were required to co-produce an action plan called the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) in consultation with

each other and parent carers outlining how improvements would be made. The [WSoA](#) was published on the Council's website in January 2022 following approval by Ofsted and the CQC. It includes an action plan for each of the areas of weakness detailing how and when the concerns will be addressed, and which organisation will lead on each action. Delivery of the WSoA is now underway before the local area is reinspected under a new inspection framework by Ofsted and the CQC (date to be confirmed).

- 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 a [SEND newsletter](#), [regular webinars](#) and a SEND Local Offer [Facebook page](#) (with over 1000 followers).
- 1.6 Effective governance arrangements are in place with working groups reporting to a joint SEND and Inclusion Steering Group which has partnership accountability for delivering the WSoA and comprises senior leaders from education, social care and health and the chair of Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice (the local parent carer forum); a SEND Member Panel; and regular monitoring meetings with the Department for Education (DfE)/NHS England (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 SEND inspection framework](#) (published January 2023).
- 1.7 Four monitoring meetings have been held between January 2022 and February 2023, attended by senior leaders from across Education, Social Care and Health, Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice and advisers from DfE and NHSE. The final monitoring meeting will take place on 19th June 2023.
- 1.8 DfE and NHSE have noted the pace of improvements to date, and that: *'Local area partners are working together effectively to ensure good progress with their Written Statement of Action. The partnership consistently demonstrates high aspirations for children and young people with SEND in their improvement work'*.
- 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, particularly around inclusive practice in schools. 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 Progress to date is outlined in Appendix A and summarised below:

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 (3600 delivered compared with 2850 planned from January 2022 to

February 2023) and reducing the longest wait from 242 weeks (January 2022) to an estimated 96 weeks (February 2023).

- Testing new models of assessment to reduce waiting times and improve client experience in a pilot (April to December 2022) which has received positive feedback from families and professionals regarding speed and efficiency of resources.
- Improving information for families including an [e-booklet](#) for neurodivergent people and their families, a second autism conference held in Nuneaton in November 2022 (300 people attended), a third conference in Coventry in January 2023 and ongoing delivery of a range of free workshops, webinars and toolkit sessions. 96% of attendees agreed they gained more knowledge about local services; positive feedback includes: *'Help and support seems more available'*. An online portal is now being developed, to go live in May 2023.
- Recommissioning the community support service for neurodivergent people to provide improved pre and post diagnostic support, with the new service starting in April 2023.
- Developing a [guide for schools](#) to support neurodivergent children and young people.
- 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: 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 and setting up a forum for young people with SEND ('IMPACT').
- Launching a 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.
- Coproducing a School Inclusion Charter, [guide for parent carers on exclusions](#), and a [Working Together Charter](#) - outlining the commitment to coproduction across education, health and social care.

Area 3 & 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 shows an increase in confidence levels in schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and a positive impact on at least 70 young people.
- 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 in one place to make it easier for schools to access. The uptake of training has now increased, notably a quadrupling of free autism training with 138 primary schools (70%) and 17 secondary schools (46%) having completed the training.

- Targeted support and training has been provided to schools including autism training and a pilot on [Collaborative and Proactive Solutions](#) with Dr Ross Greene from the USA to help schools with behavioural challenges which can lead to exclusions.

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 with parent carers is now in place to ensure continuous improvement, and a new role is being introduced to ensure ongoing maintenance, development and promotion 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 internal funding has also been provided to support delivery of the WSoA from 2022 to 2023 (internal funding agreed as outlined in the Cabinet report in December 2021 from the underspend in the 2021/22 Corporate Services budget and from reserves for 2022/23).
- 2.2 In 2022, the ICB has provided significant additional investment to increase capacity in the neurodevelopmental diagnostic service and improve pre and post diagnostic support (£2.56m recurring and £5.4m non-recurring over two years). In light of a significant increase in referrals, capacity in the local neurodevelopmental services has been increased on a recurrent basis. 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 the CQC from June 2023. The SEND and Inclusion Steering Group will hold the accountability for developing a delivery plan to address the improvements.
- 4.2 Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken for specific projects and workstreams.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Written Statement of Action Highlight Report.

Background Papers

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