



Health and Wellbeing Board

24 January 2024

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

SEND Update

Summary

1. This report provides the members of the Health and Wellbeing board with an update on the implementation of the SEND Strategy and SEND Operational Plan following the Local Area SEND Inspection revisit in November 2023.

Background and main points

2. The work on special educational needs and/or disabilities in the local area is complex and requires a partnership response across education, health and care. Examining the effectiveness of the way that this partnership works together to improve the lived experience of children young people with SEND is the focus of the Area SEND Inspection framework run by Ofsted and CQC. In York our SEND Strategy and SEND Operational Plan takes account of all children with SEND and aims to ensure a shared vision with our partners.
3. Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act in 2014 York, in common with local authorities nationally, has seen increasing pressure for services and a growth in the number of children and young people (0-25) supported by an Education, Health and Care plan. In York this has increased from 500 in 2015 to 1366 at the present time. Since the covid pandemic there has been an increase in requests for statutory assessment, particularly in the early years. There has also been an increase in more complex presentations of layered need which has led to an increase in children and young people struggling to school regularly or being unable to attend school. Numbers of children and young people with a primary need of social emotional mental

health needs or/and autism have increased significantly, also in line with the national picture.

4. The SEND inspection revisit took place in November 2022 and assessed the impact of the actions taken to address the four areas of weakness identified in the 2019 local area SEND inspection. The re visit was not a full re inspection and focused on assessing the evidence of the impact of actions taken to improve on the four areas of weakness. Inspectors judged that sufficient progress had been made in all four areas of weakness.
5. Inspectors found that there had been improvements in the governance of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in the local area. They highlighted the improvements that have been made by health partners since 2019, which has included investment in additional capacity to drive SEND improvement at a strategic level. The development of the SEND Strategy has been increasingly well informed by the development and use of the integrated data dashboard. However, leaders across education, health and care recognised that there was more work to do and this has informed the development of the operational plans to underpin the delivery of the SEND Strategy. This work is being overseen by the SEND Partnership Board. The role of social care in the partnership is being developed as the next phase of the SEND improvement journey.
6. Since 2019 the local area SEND partnership has developed a co-produced outcomes framework which underpins the Joint Commissioning Strategy. The strategy has been used to commission Early Talk for York and the All About Autism provision which launched in August 2022. The local area SEND partnership now has an effective framework in place to support joint commissioning across the local authority and health. Work has started on reviewing the joint commissioning framework and this is being aligned to the work on the SEND JSNA. The refreshed SEND JSNA will inform the priorities for joint- commissioning and this will be an important element of our on-going preparation for the next Area SEND Inspection. A particular focus on that inspection will be the effectiveness of commissioning to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in the local area.
7. Significant work to improve co-production with children, young people and families has taken place since 2019. The inspectors found that co-production is now a strength in York. Whilst

recognising that there is still work to do, co-production is now core to the values and practice standards across the local area SEND partnership. This is central to the way that the operational delivery of the SEND strategy is being overseen by local authority and health leaders.

8. The quality of Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) has improved since 2019. The processes and format of EHCPs has been reviewed and re-designed through co-production with children and young people, parents and carers and professionals across education and health. The improvements have focused on ensuring that the voice of the child is central to the plans. There is more work to do to improve the consistency and quality of EHCPs but inspectors recognised the impact of the improvements that have taken place since the previous inspection. There is further work to do to improve the timeliness and quality of EHCPs. This includes a focus on the quality of advice from professionals across education, health and social care to improve the overall quality and consistency of EHCPs.
9. The local area SEND partnership is operating in a challenging financial environment with all partners across education, health and care experiencing increased demand and complexity of need. Ensuring sufficiency of in-city provision across education, health and care is an important issue for the local area SEND partnership and this has to be a priority for the work of the Place Board.

Strategic/Operational Plans

10. In order to build on and embed the progress evidenced by the inspection revisit the local area operational plan has been developed which links to the delivery of the SEND Strategy 2021-25 priorities and the delivery of the Department for Education Safety Valve agreement. The local area operational plan focuses on the four priorities of the SEND Strategy, 2021-25 which are:
 1. **VOICE:** The voice of children and young people and families is visible in all that we do
 2. **SUFFICIENCY:** Ensure sufficiency of support through joint working across the local area partnership, adopting evidence based commissioning using the JSNA
 3. **EARLY IDENTIFICATION:** All children and young people identified as having special educational needs have their

needs identified early, are supported in the local area and are able to access a range of provision that results in success and achievement

4. **TRANSITION:** All children and young people are able to experience a smooth transition at key points throughout their education and into adulthood
11. The development of the local area operational plan (Annex A) has been influenced by the need to demonstrate the actions being taken to implement the priorities in the SEND Strategy, but has also responded to learning from the pandemic and the challenges, both locally and nationally, created by increased demand and increased complexity of need, sufficiency of specialist provision (in education and health) and the challenging financial context in which all public sector partners are operating. In York the specific challenges relate to waiting times for some therapies, in particular speech and language therapy and the sufficiency of places in the primary special school, due to an increase in prevalence of complex SEND in the early years.
12. There is a statutory requirement for all local authorities to have a local offer which provides parents and carers, children and young people and professionals with information about the support available in the local area. As part of our SEND operational plan we have fully redeveloped York's SEND local offer website (www.yorksendl.org). The new website has been co-produced with parents and carers, children and young people and professionals and feedback has been very positive about the new website feeling much cleaner and easier to navigate.
13. The publication of the Ordinarily available provision guidance in November 2023 has been an important development driven by the Operational Plan. The term 'ordinarily available provision' comes from the SEND Code of Practice and refers to the support that mainstream schools or settings are expected to provide for a child or young person through their agreed funding and resource arrangements. The ordinarily available provision guidance (Annex B) was developed in coproduction with schools and parents and carers and provides guidance about how mainstream schools can support children and young people with SEND. This is central to the work we are doing with early years settings and schools to

support inclusive practice and to re-establish parental confidence in mainstream provision.

14. The introduction of the Area SEND inspection framework in January 2023 has reinforced the importance of having clear governance structures which demonstrate the joint responsibility for SEND at Place across education, health and care. As a local area SEND partnership it is important to learn from the inspections that have taken place. The following priority areas for improvement have been identified from the recent round of Area SEND inspections:
 - Health commissioning
 - Information sharing and communication
 - Joint commissioning/joint working arrangements
 - Leadership of SEND in the local area – joint planning and oversight
 - EHCP process – assessment and review processes
 - Annual Reviews
 - The quality of EHC plans
 - Transition – preparation for adulthood
 - Waiting lists
15. These are all areas which will be used in the review of the current SEND Strategy and the further development of the SEND Operational Plan over the next 12 months.

Implications

16. As this report is to provide an update for the health and wellbeing board there are no specific implications.

Recommendations

17. The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to note the contents of this report and the implications for further development of the local area SEND partnership:

Reason: To provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with an understanding of the work taking place to implement the SEND Strategy and the SEND Operational Plan.

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Annexes

Annex A – SEND Operational Plan
Annex B – Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance

Glossary

SEND – special educational needs and/or disabilities.
EHCP – Education, health and care plan