

SEND Update – Oct 2019

20 PLEDGES FOR 2020

"We are setting out a plan to bring about real change - not just about what can be achieved, but in the manner in which we will deliver it."

Phil Davies

Cllr Phil Davies, Leader of W

Children achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

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SEND Reforms 2014 - 2019

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Cllr Phil Davies, Leader of Wirral Council

- The local area has experienced significant changes in leadership and staffing since the implementation of the 2014 SEND reforms.
- There have been three interim Heads of SEND. A permanent Head of SEND took up post in September 2019.
- Changes in staffing due to posts being paid for from fixed term grants rather than core budget

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Budget

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- There is a projected budget overspend (£2.7 million) for the financial year 2019/20, which will be offset by reserves from the High Needs Budget.
- There is a projected deficit of £7 million in 2022.
- Recently there was an announcements of £700 million being allocated across England to support SEND

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SEND Population

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- In 2018 Wirral had 3.2% of pupils with Education, Health and Care(EHC) plans, compared to the national average of 3.1%.
- In Wirral 17.8% of pupils have a have an EHC plan, or are receiving SEN support. This compares to an average of 15.2%% across all local authorities in United Kingdom.
- 16.5% of looked after children in Wirral have a statement an EHCP, which is less than the national average of 27.7%.

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- There are fewer Wirral children with EHCPs educated within mainstream schools than average for the North-West of England, particularly at the primary phase.
- Wirral has 14.5% SEN support, which is above the national average(12.0%).
- Wirral has a higher percentage of looked after children with SEN support (32.2%), compared to the national average of 28.5%.

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- An emerging concern is the number of pupils in primary school who exhibit challenging behaviour associated with social, emotional and mental health issues.
- Consultation has started to determine how schools can best meet the needs of these pupils.

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- Some children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities are having to attend costly independent provision because their needs cannot be met within the Borough.
- Consultation is planned to look at ways in which the places can either be provided in borough or commissioned in a more cost effective way.

SEND Inspection of the Local Area

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The effectiveness of the local area in:-

- **identifying** children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities
- **meeting the needs** of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- **improving outcomes** for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

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Identifying Needs

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- Due to issues around staffing, leaders in the local area struggled in their duty to meet the statutory deadline for the conversion of statements of special educational needs to EHC plans.
- However the great majority of statements were converted by the April 2018 deadline. Additional budget has ensured that grant funded EHCP coordinator posts have become permanent.
- Additional posts in the form of review officers and plan writers are creating additional capacity which is much needed.

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- The timeliness of the local area in producing EHC plans has been problematic. Too many EHC plan assessments have not been completed within the statutory timescale. However this is improving
- Satisfaction questionnaires about the EHCP process indicate that the majority of parents and young people are pleased with their EHC plan.

Strengths

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- Children in the early years benefit from joint working practices across the multi-agency workforce.
- Joint working supports the 'tell it once' approach as well as ensuring that the 'right early years service is provided at the right time for the right child'.
- Parents report that the support they receive from early years partners is strong and positive.
- A data system exists enables health services to alert the LA about children with significant needs who will need specific education provision.
- The developing role of 'specialist childminders' is leading to a more confident and varied choice of skilled providers for families with pre-school children.

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- A local area SEND Strategic Board has been in operation since 2017. The governance and membership have recently been reviewed and consulted on. Key strategic decision makers from education, health and care are members of the Board.
- The SEND Operational Group was set up on 2015. Membership includes representation from a broad range of services from the local area as well as representatives from Parent Carer Partnership Wirral(PCPW).
- Professionals are working more collaboratively to support children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities in the early identification of need.

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Areas for Development

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- Ensure statutory duties are met by:-
 - a. Reviewing the whole EHCP assessment process
 - b. Improving the overall quality of and timeliness of advices
 - c. All EHC plans produced within 20 weeks
 - d. Evidencing the voice/aspirations of the young person to ensure there is a reflection of the education, health and care needs
 - e. Ensuring plans are written in a way that can be understood by young people and parents/carers

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- Review the Pupil funding agreement process to ensure that there is a relentless focus on the impact on children and young people
- Ensure referral pathways are clear and easily understood
- Review the graduated approach – in particular revise and relaunch the Threshold Toolkit
- Improve communication between the EHCP coordinators and parents/carers

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Meeting Needs

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- Information gathered by SEND officers in the Early Years signposts professionals and parents effectively to appropriate services, identifies future health, education and care provision and provides support to access additional funding.
- As a result, the needs of those children, especially those who have more complex needs and/or disabilities, are met more quickly and more appropriately.

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- There is considerable expertise within the 10 special schools which needs to be shared further with mainstream schools through a training and development programme.
- Some school leaders have established and driven innovative projects and provision in their schools which have increased their ability to meet the needs of children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities.

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- Work with special school and mainstream headteachers to develop a strategic approach to pupil place planning
- To further develop a management information system which enables partners to plan and deliver services more effectively
- To work with local area partners and parents to further develop preparation for adulthood
- Co-produce the new SEND strategy
- Ensuring learning from complaints is captured as part of the quality assurance process and the Partnership's "plan, do, review cycle"

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Improving Outcomes

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- Children, young people and their parents are involved in working with leaders to develop and shape services through coproduction opportunities.
- At the end of Key Stage 1 & 2 more SEN pupils met the standard for RWM, so the gap narrowed.
- More SEN support pupils met the standard.
- In 2018 Attainment 8 for Wirral pupils with SEN support was above the national average and ranked 23/152
- Pupils with EHCPs ranked 32/152 was above the national average.

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English & Mathematics Grade 4 +

- In 2018 the percentage of Wirral SEN support pupils attaining grade 4+ in English and mathematics was above the national average.
- In 2018 Wirral pupils with EHCPs' outcomes were above the national average

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- Innovative approaches to the delivery of provision in some schools and colleges, for example Wirral Metropolitan College & Birkenhead Sixth Form College, are supporting improved outcomes.
- Bespoke and personalised learning programmes offered ensure that young people access appropriate courses to meet their aspirations.
- The proportion of children and young people across the local area who are not in education, training or employment post-16 is below the national average.

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Areas for Development

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- Review the health, social care and aspiration outcomes in EHCPs through the annual review process
- Review the process for the authorisation of resources identified in the EHC plan and ensure Health & Social Care colleagues sign off completed plans
- Develop new partnership SEND commissioning strategy to enable co-production of core services including speech and language therapy, child and adolescent mental health, advocacy and mediation

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- Ensure commissioning process sets clear standards to be met and holds schools and FE providers to account in providing robust and fit for purpose skills for young people
- Ensure partnership groups operate with a culture of positive challenge to enable all partners to be held to account for the quality and timeliness of their inputs to individual children's assessment and support
- Evaluate the broader EHCP outcomes through the annual review process

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Risks

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- Lack of capacity within the local area to invest in intervention and support for “preventative work” /early intervention
- The variability of EHC plans, including the variable contributions from health and social care, and the processes to check and review the quality of EHC plans
- The underdeveloped arrangements for joint commissioning/pooled budgets
- Lack of engagement in the strategic direction and planning by some local area senior leaders to implement the SEND reforms

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Key Areas of work

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- Ensuring statutory duties related to SEND are met
- Joint commissioning of services and provision
- Performance management & intelligence
- Graduated approach
- Preparation for Adulthood
- Engagement with parents and carers
- SEND Strategy review

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