



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 28 January 2021

REPORT TITLE:	UPDATE ON SEND IMPROVEMENT PLAN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The report provides members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an update on the Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan.

The Improvement Plan underpins the SEND Strategy 2020-2024, agreed by the Committee in December 2020.

It provides the detailed activity to be undertaken to support delivery of the Strategy and is focussed around the four main local area strategic priorities:

1. Provide high quality provision and support focussed on achieving outcomes
2. Ensure early identification of special education needs and high-quality intervention particularly for children and young people exhibiting social, emotional, and mental health issues
3. Further develop effective transition from one education phase/setting including preparing for adulthood pathway
4. To further develop participation, engagement and coproduction with children, young people, parents, and carers

Appendix 1 to this report is the detailed SEND Improvement Plan with progress updates identified.

The aim of the improvement plan is to ensure that the local area works collaboratively to identify and support children with SEND and improve their outcomes. This will mean reducing inequalities and helping to achieve the Council's priorities, specifically provide:

- Brighter futures for our young people and families – regardless of their background or where they live
- Services which help people live happy, healthy, independent, and active lifestyles, with public services there to support them when they need it

This matter affects all wards.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Endorse the progress made to date on achieving the actions set out within the SEND Improvement Plan at appendix 1; and,
- (b) Agree to receive a further update on progress towards achievement and evidence of impact in six months.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Children, Young People and Education Committee has a role to play in ensuring that the local authority and partners are working collectively to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The Improvement Plan, attached at appendix 1, provides an opportunity to update the Committee on progress made to date and to seek endorsement for the activity undertaken.
- 1.2 Members of the Committee may wish to continue to play a role in monitoring progress towards SEND improvement by receiving a further update within six months or at a future convenient time.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 It is important that the SEND Strategy has a core delivery element which provides direction and accountability for improvement. The need for an action plan is therefore important in this context.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At its meeting of the 1st December, the Children, Young People and Education Committee agreed the SEND Strategy 2020-2024. The Strategy sets out the local area's priorities over the next four years for improving services, support and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The Strategy is aligned to the Wirral Plan 2025 which aims to secure brighter futures for young people and families and deliver services which help people live happy, healthy, independent lives.
- 3.2 Underpinning the Strategy, the SEND Improvement Plan provides a detailed action plan for delivery of the priorities and commitments made. The plan is aligned to the four strategic priorities agreed by the local area and the Children's Committee in December. The Committee agreed to receive an update on the Improvement Plan at its meeting of 28 January 2021.
- 3.3 The update presented at Appendix 1 is based on a review of the current action plan and target dates. The original improvement plan set challenging timescales, particularly in the context of delivery within the COVID-19 pandemic. The refreshed Improvement Plan reflects a more realistic picture in terms of key milestones and timescale. Equally, some previous actions have been amalgamated to one to avoid duplication of activity and to support a more streamlined and coherent plan. Continued review of the plan will ensure that it remains relevant and focussed to achieve the objectives of the Strategy.
- 3.4 A summary of the progress update includes:
- 3.5 **Priority 1: Provide high quality provision and support focussed on achieving outcomes**

- Extensive training has been carried out with core teams involved in Education, Health and Care assessment and planning. This has included the development of a competency training for recording on the local authority information system, training on assessment and planning with specific focus on capturing the views and aspirations of children, young people, and families. This has resulted in better skilled officers and improved capacity within the service and improvements in the timeliness of assessments.
- A dedicated SEND Commissioning Team is being established with officers expected to be in post by the end of January. The priorities for the team will be focussing on reviewing individual commissioning arrangements to give children, young people, and parents/carers greater choice.

3.6 Priority 2: Ensure early identification of special education needs and high-quality intervention particularly for children and young people exhibiting social, emotional, and mental health issues.

- A communication plan has been developed which sets out ways of improving communication across the partnership (health, education, local authority) and which focusses on early identification of need.
- Initiatives underpinning the developing Inclusion Strategy will help to improve support for social, emotional, and mental health issues, particularly in education. This includes successful support from University of Chester to support training and development around trauma informed practice. Schools have now been identified for pilot programme and key members of staff identified for a Postgraduate Certificate in attachment, trauma, and mental health. Online training will be available for 5000 staff from January. This will help provide a sustainable model moving forward by creating a hub of expertise.

3.7 Priority 3: Further develop effective transition from one education phase/setting including preparing for adulthood pathway.

- The Wirral Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Targeted Support initiative launched on 18th September 2020 to enable the local area to test the implementation of the SEND reforms in relation to young people with SEND transitioning to adulthood. There are four pathways of focus: employment, independent living, community, inclusion, and health. A dip sample of up to 80 EHC Plans was embarked upon to gain a coherent understanding of what was working well and what are the areas for development. This resulted in a co-designed training offer that targeted the development needs in Wirral.
- In 2021, a post-training dip sample will be undertaken to measure impact and identify whether children and young people are any better off because of the SEND Strategy being implemented with a particular focus on the process of preparing for adulthood, a key transition.

3.8 Priority 4: To further develop participation, engagement and coproduction with children, young people, parents, and carers

An accessibility audit of the Local Offer was carried out in October 2020 and rated the website as 86% accessible which is 26th out of 152 local authorities. During the pandemic, the Local Offer website was the 'go to' website to support parents of young people with SEND. The number of twitter followers for the site has risen from 285 to 460 from 1st March to date which was a 62% increase. 32 new contributors have been identified to help provide key information about health and adult services.

In partnership with the Parent Carer Partnership Wirral an action plan has been developed to improve participation around the four cornerstones of co-production. This resulted in a proposed action plan being created around collaborative projects. These will be taken forward as key priorities for coproduction.

- 3.9 There has been positive progress made on the actions within the SEND Improvement Plan. Work will continue to review the action plan to ensure that it appropriately reflects the key activity needed to deliver the priorities within the Strategy.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications arising out of the report. However, delivery the actions may result in there being financial implications for the Council and/or wider financial implications in relation to the Dedicated Schools Grant. Members of the Committee will be informed in the next update on the financial monitoring against the Improvement Plan.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report recognises and responds to the requirements set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the statutory responsibilities on local authorities regarding how services and support are delivered for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising out of the report. Delivery of the action plan is carried out using existing resources. The Committee will be informed should there be any resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The local authority and partners are committed to driving improvements across the local area to support improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Failure to do so will mean that children and young people may not be provided with the right support and intervention to enable them to achieve their aspirations both now and in the longer-term.

7.2 The local authority and partners are inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in relation to how the local area effectively identifies, meets the need, and improves outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Improvement which is aligned to statutory requirements and responds to the needs of the local area, is essential to demonstrate to regulators that Wirral has effectively delivered on the SEND Reforms as set out in 2014 Children and Families Act.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Two SEND Summits have been held with over 150 professionals and stakeholders engaged in the development of the SEND Strategy and the actions which underpin it. Over 250 young people have also been engaged in its development and will continue to help shape and deliver activity moving forward.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

(c) No because the quality impact assessment has already been completed for the SEND Strategy and can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments> The EIA has been reviewed since its completion three months ago and remains valid.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of CO2.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: SEND Improvement Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SEND Strategy 2020-2024

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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