

TITLE	SEND Strategy and Action Plan
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2020
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Director of Children's Services - Carol Cammiss

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

By having comprehensive arrangements in place to respond to the outcome of the 2019 SEND Inspection, it is anticipated that services for children with SEND and their families will be improved, and that performance in respect of timeliness, quality, outcomes and cost will improve in line with expectations.

RECOMMENDATION

To note and support the content of the report

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report updates members of Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the recent developments in respect of the arrangements to deliver against the Written Statement of Action within the SEND Improvement Board partnership and specifically references the SEND Strategy and Action Plan as a key outcome of the Board activity.

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years 2015 provides statutory guidance for organisations working with and supporting children and young people who have SEND and outlines duties, policies and procedures. The Code places responsibility on the Local Area to identify and meet the needs of children and young people who have SEND.

Wokingham's Local Area SEND Inspection took place 11th – 15th March 2019. This SEND Inspection identified six key areas of development for Wokingham which are contained within the Written Statement of Action (WSoA).

The six task and finish groups are responding to the areas of:

- SEND Strategy
- Timeliness and Quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Co-production
- Management Information
- Joined-up Working
- Transitions

Background

The Children's Act 2014 was designed to bring about significant change in the ways in which Local Areas Education, Social Care and Health Partners plan, design and deliver services and support to all children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and their families.

The SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years (2015), provides statutory guidance for organisations working with and supporting children and young people who have SEND and outlines duties, policies and procedures. The Code places responsibility on the Local Area to identify and meet the needs of children and young people who have SEND.

Following introduction of the new legislation and guidance Ofsted and CQC developed and implemented a SEND framework to inspect the effectiveness of Local Areas implementation of the new legislation and in fulfilling their new duties as defined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) with specific reference to measuring local effectiveness in:

- Identifying children and young people with SEND
- Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND
- Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND

For Wokingham the inspection and subsequent key timeline includes:

- 11-15 March 2019: Ofsted and CQC joint Local Area SEND Inspection
- 13th May 2019 : Inspection Report Published requiring Written Statement of Action
- 19th June 2019: Senior Officials and planning meeting with DfE/NHSE
- 12th August 2019: Submission of WSoA for Approval
- 3rd Sept 2019: Confirmation of Ofsted/CQC approval
- 4th Feb 2020: 4 month review meeting
- Tbc 8 month review meeting
- Tbc 12 month review meeting
- Tbc 15 month review meeting
- Approx May 2021: Revisit by Ofsted/CQC

As noted above Wokingham's Local Area SEND Inspection took place 11th – 15th March 2019. This SEND Inspection identified six key areas of development for Wokingham which are contained within the Written Statement of Action (WSoA).

1. The lack of a clearly communicated co-produced strategy and accompanying action plans that are shared and understood across education, health and care in the local area and sharply focused on improving the outcomes of children and young people with SEND
2. The timeliness and quality of EHC plans
3. The lack of co-production at a strategic level to inform effective co-production at all levels.
4. The quality of management information to inform accurate evaluation and energise service improvement across the local area

5. The lack of coherent partnership joint working, and over emphasis of Education within EHCP's indicating a lack of engagement of Health and Social Care agencies.
6. The underdeveloped pathway to enable young people with SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood.

The SEND Improvement Board (established in September 2019), is responsible for managing and monitoring actions as part of the WSoA, reflects and maintains strategic oversight. The Board is responsive to the key areas for improvement identified within the SEND Inspection Letter. The role of the Wokingham SEND Improvement Board is to ensure the delivery of improvements in relation to the six identified areas outlined within the WSoA.

Since September 2019, the SEND Improvement Board (SIB) has met on five occasions with the most recent meeting having taken place on 14th January 2020. As per the agreed Terms of Reference the SIB meetings take place on a monthly basis to monitor the progress of the six task and finish groups working on the Written Statement of Action (WSoA).

The task and finish groups have been established to address the six development areas identified by the SEND Local Area Inspection which took place in March 2019.

The Six Areas of the Written Statement of Action

Task and finish group 1 – SEND Strategy

This group is tasked with looking at the lack of a clearly communicated co-produced strategy and accompanying action plans that are shared and understood across education, health and care in the local area and sharply focused on improving the outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

Membership of the group comprises Wokingham Borough Council Children's Services, SEND Voices Wokingham, Berkshire West CCG, Addington Special School, Secondary Head Teachers Federation, Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

As part of the inspection concerns were raised by Ofsted and CQC that whilst there had been work undertaken in respect of developing a SEND Strategy for Wokingham, this had gone through numerous iterations, with no strategy being ratified, thus leaving Wokingham with no strategic drive in respect of its SEND arrangements.

Building on these previous iterations of the Wokingham SEND Strategy, the Task and Finish Group has drawn on current information and data, and feedback from partners in order to develop a working document that enables a coherent approach to the key priorities for SEND within the Borough (attached).

However, it is accepted by all parties that due to the time constraints to further develop the strategy to satisfy the publication requirements, the opportunity to co-produce the strategy as per the stated intention of the partnership has not been possible.

This working strategy document is intended to provide for the strategic approach to the key priorities, whilst a fully co-produced strategy is developed, building on these priorities and enabling a broader scope for the direction of improvement of provision and services for children with SEND and their families.

As such, an additional strategic action has been added to the plan, to ensure the co-development of its replacement with anticipated delivery in December 2020.

The current working strategy document was endorsed by the SIB at its meeting on the 13th January 2020.

Task and finish group 2 – Timeliness and Quality of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

This group is tasked with looking at the timeliness and quality of EHC plans.

The group has identified that a “process map” is needed from Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT), which sets out what happens operationally when the LA alerts them that a statutory request for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) request has been received by the LA. The same is required of Social Care.

Wokingham has been participating in the West Berkshire EHCP auditing process. All recommendations from the Berkshire West EHCP audit are being pulled together and brought to the task and finish group identify actions and inform improvements.

In February Wokingham shall host the multi-agency/ multi-authority audit session, whereby each local authority shall present 5 cases and collaboratively audit them together.

Another key area being explored, in relation to timeliness and quality is that of privately commissioned reports received from parents during a statutory assessment. SEND Voices Wokingham are working within their membership to identify the reasons why parents go to private reports for therapy given the steady increase in the number of private reports confirming diagnosis in being received.

The group has also considered multiagency decision making arrangements in other areas, as well as solutions to challenges identified at the previous meeting. During January it is proposed to commence developing recommendations in relation to multiagency decision making pathways.

Berkshire West CCG is hosting a planning workshop on how we can work collectively to support and work with Children/ Young People with ASD/ ADHD in January 2020. Representatives from the Wokingham local area have been identified and invitations will be sent out by the CCG.

Task and finish group 3 - Co-production

This group is tasked with looking at the lack of co-production at a strategic level to inform effective co-production at all levels

This group is chaired by chair of SEND Voices Wokingham (SVW) and have a Terms of Reference agreed especially for this specific group. It was agreed the Task and finish group will begin to develop a workable draft co production agreement and then involve young people and additional members to the group. The group has identified that at present there is no clear policy or process on how a consultation / coproduction should take place and relies heavily on individual knowledge.

A Co-Production Workshop (training) took place on 14th November with good multi-agency attendance and a number of representatives from WBC. This has informed the work of the sub-group and resulted in the formulation of a Co-production charter, which also takes reference from a “Ladder of Coproduction” developed by SEND Voices Wokingham.

The task and finish group has also proposed that Wokingham take part in and run events during the National Coproduction week which takes place in July 2020.

Task and finish group 4 – Management information

This group is tasked with looking at the quality of management information to inform accurate evaluation and energise service improvement across the local area

The group have agreed to use the Council for Disabled Children’s multi-agency dataset as a basis for Wokingham SEND dashboard. The task and finish group currently working on pulling together a dashboard proposal with an identified owner for each indicator and a RAG rating indicating how close they are to being able to report on this with reports to the SIB on progress.

It has been noted that without full representation of all health partners, questions around the availability and interpretation of some indicators will be difficult to get clarity on, therefore a key action going forward is to identify relevant Health reps from the CCG, BHFT & RBH to be part of task and finish group.

Task and finish group 5 – Joined up Working

This group is tasked with looking at the lack of well-coordinated and effectively joined-up work across Education, Health and Social Care.

Multiagency Quality Assurance audit of review EHCPs took place on 7 November 2019. This piece of work overlaps with work being carried out in Task and finish group 2 who are looking to take forward the recommendations that have come out of this pan West Berkshire EHCP audits and the Pan Berkshire Call to Action event that took place in Feb 2019.

The group has identified the need for a robust graduated response/ ordinarily available document and it including input for health and social care provision. WBC do have graduated response guidance however this has not been reviewed since 2016 and needs updating.

The task and finish group is considering multiagency decision making arrangements in other areas across the country and looking at examples of best practise.

Task and finish group 6 – Transitions

This group is tasked with looking at the underdeveloped pathway to enable young people with SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood.

All task and finish group members have had an opportunity to comment on the WBC Approaching Adulthood draft policy. Group members are developing an Approaching Adulthood pack, which provides information for young people, and parents / carers which will need to be co-produced.

The group is developing a professional checklist and aim to relaunch the Transitions Mapping Group in late January 2020. They have identified that they need to establish health representatives on group.

The group has also identified that work around reviews links in with work being carried out in task and finish groups 2 and 5 and therefore there needs to be more joined up working to avoid duplication.

Next Steps

The SIB Chairperson has met with DfE advisor for an informal meeting to discuss next steps. It has been agreed that:

1. Official review meetings to take place in February, May, September and December 2020. Meetings will coincide with SIB meetings as both DfE and NHSE will want to sit in and will be reviewing progress against the WSoA and actions.
2. Uptake of the offer of support from Portsmouth LA as brokered by the DfE. This offer to include:
 - Document sharing (Process maps, EHCP Templates, Panel ToR's, etc)
 - Wokingham Visit to observe Portsmouth panel arrangements
 - Collaborative case moderation exercise that builds on existing audit activity
 - Workforce development information and support
 - Wokingham visit to observe Portsmouth Co-production meeting process.
 - Data and System comparator session
 - Critical friend review of EHCP needs assessment arrangements

RECOMMENDATION

To note and support the content of the report and the actions identified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)			
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)
These changes and the outcomes from the task & finish groups will also have further beneficial impact on our SEND arrangements.

Public Sector Equality Duty
An Equalities Impact will be undertaken as part of the Task and Finish Group activity.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers
SEND Strategy SEND Strategy Action Plan

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