

Agenda Item 12.

TITLE	Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Reforms -Framework for the Disability Strategy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 ^s July 2015
WARD	None Specific
DIRECTOR	Judith Ramsden, Director of Children's Services

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

That children with disabilities and additional needs and their families will be better supported.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report is noted.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The aim of this strategy is to identify and steer service development for children and young people with special education needs and disability within the Wokingham Borough over the next 3 years. The strategy covers a broad range of service areas that follow a path through SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) to fulltime residential care. It is part of a family of strategies setting out the way in which the Council will support children and young people in need and their families. It has a close affinity to the Early Help Strategy and the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy (with its particular focus on mental health).

The strategy marks a step in a journey towards placing the needs of children, young people and their families at the centre of our planning process, rather than approaching service planning as discrete responses to specific statutory imperatives. Services need to be shaped to ensure the seamless delivery of support that matches each family's needs.

It establishes a number of key priority areas and an approval and implementation timetable has also been established.

Background

This strategy is concerned with services to Children with disabilities. The definition is taken from the Equality Act 2010 and the Children Act 1989 and these define the children and young people that are affected by this strategy.

The Equality Act 2010 says:

“If you have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative (adverse) effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities (GOV.UK 2015).”

According to the Equality Act, 'substantial' means more than minor or trivial and 'long term' means 12 months or more. People with progressive conditions can be classed as disabled.

The Children Act 1989 defines disability in Section 17 (11) in this way:

“a child is disabled if he is blind, deaf or dumb or suffers from mental disorder of any kind or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity or such other disability as may be prescribed”.

Specific themes developed in the strategy include:

- SEND services, and in particular the implementation of the reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and in the guidance in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 sufficiency of provision for children with SEND (including Alternative Provision or AP and transport arrangements).
- Services for disabled children and their families including the development of the short breaks service.

These service areas are reviewed against statutory, anticipated new legislation and local policy requirements (hearing the voice of service users and service providers) to understand the service gap and propose service developments.

Use of multiple services

Many children and young people access more than one service area. There are a number of children who access at least two of these services:

- Services for disabled children and families
- Children's Social Care over last 12 months
- School

In total 150 children receive services under at least 2 of the service area criteria set out above. Around 50% of the 150 children (74 children) access all three of the criteria. Accessing multiple service areas is not a seamless process for the customer or WBC staff as there are multiple panels and funding streams for each of these service areas. Another service area involved in this is school transport. A number of children accessing the services identified will also be accessing transport services.

The largest group of children (37) accessing multiple services are those that have access to Bridges and a Special School (likely to be Addington) this represents a 25% of the total number of children receiving multiple services. As the groups reduce in size the number of services received by the group increases which shows that those with more complex needs receive more services groups of 4 or more receive on average 3 services where as those in groups of less than 4 receive on average 4 of the services identified.

The service that is most frequently combined with in multiple service use is Bridges followed by a completed single assessment.

SEND

The proportion of children with statements of Special Educational Needs among Wokingham Children in Need population, including Children in Care is higher than is seen nationally, whilst there are relatively fewer children eligible for free school meals in Wokingham than seen nationally (CTPP 2015).

The total numbers of children with SEN with a statement has reduced year on year, in fact there are 48 less children with a statement than there were in 2013 and 43 children less than there were in 2014.

The primary need with the greatest numbers is Autism Spectrum Disorder where there are 276 statements which represent 38% of the total numbers of children with statements. The next highest need is Social Emotional and Mental Health issues where there are 114 statements representing 20% of the total number of statements. Speech, Language or Communication Difficulties and Moderate Learning Difficulties come a close third and fourth where there are 76 and 72 children with statements representing 10% and 9.8% respectively.

There are very few increases in numbers of children with statements between 2014 and 2015. Medical, Multi-Sensory Impairment and Profound Multiple Learning Difficulties each increased by 1 statement. The amounts of decreases in statements are more significant. Moderate Learning Difficulties and Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties both reduced by 13, Hearing Impairment statements were reduced by 7 and Visual impairment reduced by 4.

Community view

Headliners (a research organisation) were commissioned in 2014 to consult children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families concerning their aspirations, the services they receive and their ideas for service change. They interviewed 21 young people who looked at issues involving:

- Education
- Health and Social Care
- Leisure
- The Local Offer
- Preparing for Adulthood

The recommendations can be summarised though as pointing to a need for:

- Better, more personalised support (including at points of transition).
- Better information and guidance (making it clear understandable and accessible).
- Better access to therapies and other support
- Better transport arrangements
- A greater range of age specific leisure activities (including family activities)
- Improved support for the transition to work.

Consultation with Local Practitioners

Consultation took place with local practitioners in 2014. The practitioners included: The SEND manager, Educational Psychologist, Alternative Provision Manager and Early Years professionals. They were asked to describe the current status of their service

areas the questions asked them to consider:

- Current need
- Future need
- What do children and parents say about the service?
- What services do we currently provide and what are the service gaps?
- What works well, and what doesn't work well?

All of the service areas responded to the questionnaire and a table of required actions devised (actions included in the next section headed "Analysis of Issues."

SEND, Child Psychology and Early Years Professionals Identified Service Needs	
Area of Need identified	Why is it needed
Extra Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist resourced provision for high functioning young people with ASD in Wokingham secondary schools. Our special school for Severe Learning Difficulties is full and has no capacity to meet increased demand.
Workforce development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for teacher on the new code of practice so that they understand what they need to do to implement the SEND Reform. • Service development in skills to assess and support young people (post 16) in college and apprenticeships • Service dev development in skills to assess and support 2 year olds • training to help the services understand the different systems and frameworks within: social care, health and education • Training to provide staff with more options to help children with disability.
Designing a more rounded Early years support team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity was highlighted to join up the Team Around the Family (TAF) and the Team Around the Child (TAC)
Medium Term Care services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is consensus across all practitioners that responded that there is a gap in services between short breaks and full time residential care. Specifically family centred (Foster care) care that can provide breaks for weekends and 1 or 2 weeks at a time.
Embed SEND reforms into everyday working practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and Family Act 2014 reform

Analysis of Issues

Having considered the issues identified above a number of key priority areas for future action were identified. These included:

- Access to Education

- Physical Disability
- Sensory Disability
- Children and Family Act/SEND reforms
- Improved continuum of provision: Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties
- Improved continuum of provision: Autistic Spectrum Conditions
- Short Breaks to Medium term support
- Personalisation & Person centred Planning
- Transitions

A number of issues were identified where a clear programme of activity arose from the inquiry:

- Develop SEND workforce to help Implement and support changes set out in the Children and Families Act 2014
- Design and construct an ASC Unit for high performing young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions in a mainstream school.
- Redesign early year’s services
- Create additional medium term provision for children with disability
- Personalisation, Charging for Short Break Services
- Design and implement a *Whole Service Design*” for Alternative Provision
- Develop with our Partner “FutureGov” a contemporary Home to School Transport scheme

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £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)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
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The financial implications of the strategy will emerge as individual components are developed.
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Cross-Council Implications (how does this decision impact on other Council services, including properties and priorities?)

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

List of Background Papers

Contact	Service
Telephone No	Email
Date	Version No.