

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP SERVICES

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION (ACE) COMMITTEE		
DATE:	31 JANUARY 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	10
TITLE:	PROGRESS ON THE DELIVERY OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY 2017 - 2022		
SERVICE:	CHILDREN'S	WARD:	BOROUGHWIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress being made to deliver the SEND Strategy for Reading Borough 2017 - 2022 which was approved by ACE Committee in July 2017.
- 1.2 It also provides an update on the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) and the SEND Service performance.
- 1.3 Appendix 1: SEND Strategy Board Terms of Reference
Appendix 2: Department for Education (DfE) Note of Visit December 2017

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 To note and comment on the progress made on delivering the SEND Strategy.
- 2.2 To note the Department for Education (DfE) note of visit regarding progress in SEND in Reading
- 2.3 To note the developments within the IASS Service

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1 The involvement of parents/carers from the start in developing and then implementing plans and strategies that may impact on children and young people with additional needs is at the heart of the Children and Families Act.
- 3.2 The Children and Families Act (2014) requires local authorities to keep the provision for children and young people with SEND under review (including its sufficiency), working with parents, young people and providers. Reading Families Forum (RFF) which is Reading's Parent Carer Forum and Special United (the young people's forum) have an important role in this process.

3.3 The Act is clear that when considering any reorganisation of provision, decision makers must be clear that they are satisfied that the proposed alternative arrangements will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEND.

4. PROGRESS TO DATE

4.1 Reading's SEND Strategy has been communicated to a range of partners and a communication plan is being developed to ensure all partners have regular information on it. It has been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and members of that board committed to supporting its delivery.

4.2 A SEND Strategy Board which is chaired by the Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services has been set up and has met 3 times to date. It has membership from all key partners, including RFF, which is important to successful delivery of the Strategy. The Board is monitoring the implementation of the strategy, and will ensure progress is made. Each strand lead provides a summary of progress at each board meeting through a highlight report. Terms of Reference for the Strategy Board are attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 Reading Borough Council has been working closely with RFF at both an operational and strategic level and the impact has been very positive to date. They bring a valuable perspective and constructive challenge to the future planning of services.

4.3 RFF has been involved in:

- every Strand Group linked to the Strategy;
- reviewing the local offer on a regular basis and the feedback resulting in recommended changes being made;
- reciprocal peer review activity of the Local Offer of other Local Authorities in the region;
- SEND team away day contributing to the self-evaluation and plans of the service in relation to co-production;
- Joint meetings with the Department for Education (DfE) regarding SEND in Reading;
- Considering options for future delivery models for IASS

4.4 'Special United', the young people's forum is now established and have a page on the 'Local Offer' (SEND Services Guide). They have been involved in reviewing the Local Offer and Short Breaks.

4.5 Multi agency strand groups have been established with Terms of Reference for each, and meetings have been held for 3 of the 4 strands.

4.6 A comprehensive SEND data report has been developed to support strategic planning and commissioning decisions, including any changes in provision that may be required. This will be updated on an annual basis to support prioritisation of actions and evidenced based decision making.

4.7 In line with national trends, there has been an increase the numbers of children with additional needs, and in a change in the profile of needs, in particular those diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and those identified with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). A needs gap analysis is being undertaken to identify the support required by schools in relation to children with ASC

and SEMH. This analysis will be used to develop proposals to improve outcomes for children building upon existing good practice.

- 4.8 A detailed graduated response guide is being co-produced to support early years professionals and settings, schools and colleges and partner agencies in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people as early as possible, as well as mapping of provision and services available to support early intervention. There will be 4 Graduated Response documents (Pre-school, 5-11 years, secondary and post 16), with the 5-11years guidance due to be piloted this term.
 - 4.9 The range of services and provision, including support for universal services to identify and meet the needs of children at the earliest stage, are being reviewed to ensure that the majority of current and future children can have their needs met within the local area. This includes targeting outreach support from settings/schools with best practice in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.
 - 4.10 Audits are being carried out in the following areas:
 - (i) the Exceptional Needs Funding Panels for pre-school children to identify types of need that pre-school settings are requesting additional support for, outcomes, and numbers that go onto have an EHCP;
 - (ii) Portage Home Visiting Service to identify the types of need, outcomes, and numbers that have an EHCP as a pre-schooler and those that go onto have an EHCP at primary school;
 - (iii) the Sensory Integration Massage Service to identify the needs of the children that access this service and their outcomes.
 - 4.11 An Early Years audit and training programme for pre-school settings will be evaluated.
 - 4.12 There has historically been a significant overspend in the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). A detailed report on HNB spend has been presented to and discussed at Schools Forum and next steps agreed to ensure that allocation is appropriate and based on evidenced need, is targeted where it needs to be, and is supporting improving outcomes for children and young people. Steps have been taken to reduce costs where possible in the short term while actions are agreed to ensure the budget is focussed on statutory requirements and against priority areas of need.
 - 4.13 Progress has been made with converting the previous statements of SEND to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and additional capacity has been put in place to meet the March 2018 deadline for the conversion of all statements to EHCPs.
 - 4.14 The service has maintained good performance against the measure of completing EHCPs within 20 weeks (90%) and aims to improve this further. The service priority in the next 12 months is to ensure consistency in the quality of plans being produced.
 - 4.15 The DfE SEND Adviser meets with every Local Authority SEND lead on a termly basis to monitor the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014. This is in addition to a survey that is returned separately by Local Authorities and Parent Carer Forums each term. We invite Reading Families Forum to these meetings so that they can contribute to the update on progress. The note of visit is attached as Appendix 2.
- 5. UPDATE ON INFORMATION ADVICE AND SUPPORT SERVICE (IASS)**
- 5.1 The manager of IASS has been working with the SEND Improvement Adviser and RFF to investigate and trial models of delivery used in other areas, and ensure capacity is

built within universal services to support families. Part of this work has been to consider how the planned efficiency saving could be met.

- 5.2 Detailed financial analysis has been carried out. The service has been receiving a government grant via the National Children's Bureau which ends in March 2018. Due to the length of time it took to recruit staff to the roles required to implement the activities required by the terms of the grant, there has been a carry forward of this grant each year. There will be some carry forward into 2018/2019. The service has also carried forward an element of the SEND Reform Grant which had not been used. This has not been required for any other element of the SEND Implementation work, and will be carried forward into 2018/2019. IASS will be able to meet a proportion of the agreed efficiency saving, and the balance has been identified as a compensatory saving from core budget not required elsewhere and a manageable increase in an income target in bought back services.
- 5.3 This will allow time for the new models of delivery to be trialled and evaluated, as well as to build the required capacity. The government has recently announced a new contract in 2018-19 and 2019-20 to ensure that, in every local authority area, children and young people with SEND and their families have access to impartial information, advice and support covering SEND issues - including through a dedicated Freephone service. The closing date is 5th February 2018, so it is likely that we will receive further information by the end of March. Once the information is known regarding the focus and terms of this grant this will be incorporated into the development of a new delivery model.
- 5.4 The service is trialling a new helpline model which operates on Mondays and Fridays from 9.30am - 1pm and on Wednesdays from 10am - 6pm, term time only. Messages can be left and are checked regularly. Any urgent message left during non-helpline hours is responded to as quickly as possible. Feedback to date has been positive. Consideration is being given to where the line management of the service best sits in the future that ensures it is arms-length from the local authority. It is expected that a decision will be reached shortly.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The proposals contained in this report support the following Corporate Plan priorities:
1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
 2. Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;
 6. Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.
- 6.2 The decision contributes to the following Council strategic aims:
- To establish Reading as a learning city and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit
 - To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all
- 6.3 The SEND Strategy supports Reading's 2017-20 Health and Wellbeing Strategy by:
- Focussing on children and young people with special educational needs and disability and identifying actions which will lead to improved provision and outcomes for them and their families.
 - Working alongside parents/carers and young people to develop and implement the strategy, listening to their views and feedback and using this to inform next steps.

- Ensuring that the Local Offer is of high quality and information is coordinated and clear and supports knowledge and understanding of the services available to support families.

6.4 The SEND Strategy involves a range of partners including health partners, and its delivery will support improving health outcomes for children and young people.

6.5 Once the element of work on deeper interrogation and analysis of the range of data and information on the range and profile of needs and forecast future needs is complete, the Action Plan will be further developed to ensure sustainability of provision.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".

7.2 Co-production with parents / carers and young people is at the heart of the Children and Families Act (2014) and SEND Code of Practice (2015).

7.3 Co-production is not the same as consultation, although consultation can form a part of an overall co-production process. Co-production happens when service providers and service users recognise the benefits of working in true partnership with each other. This process is adopted 'from the start', when planning, developing, implementing or reviewing a service. It means that all the right people are around the table right from the beginning of an idea, and that they are involved equally to:

- shape, design, develop, implement, and review services
- make recommendations, plans, actions, and develop materials
- work together right from the start of the process, through to the end.

7.4 As set out in paragraph 3.4, any reorganisation of provision will require an impact assessment that satisfies decision makers that the proposed alternative arrangements will lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of educational provision for children with SEND. Statutory processes are required for any significant change in designated specialist provision in schools which include a full process of formal consultation with all interested parties.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 All elements of the work involved in delivery of the strategy will support improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

8.3 Involving children, young people and their families in the development of services and support is key to the delivery of our equalities duty.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The following Acts are central to the delivery of the SEND Strategy.

9.2 The Children and Families Act, 2014

9.2.1 The Children and Families Act placed a duty on local authorities to ensure integration between education, training and health and social care provision.

9.2.2 Local authorities and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) must make joint commissioning arrangements for education, health and care provision for children and young people with SEND, both with and without education, health and care plans.

9.2.3 In carrying out the functions in the Children and Families Act, all agencies must have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of children, their parents and young people;
- the importance of the child or young person and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions; and
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child and young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational, health and broader outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

9.3 The Care Act, 2014

9.3.1 The Care Act requires local authorities to ensure co-operation between children and adult services to plan for meeting the future needs of young people as they move into adulthood and become more independent, along with achieving continuity of support between services to enable young people to access timely and appropriate support.

9.4 The Equalities Act, 2010

9.4.1 This defines the equality duties and includes SEN and disability. These duties are the statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This proposal will ensure that there is clear information on spend and forecast spend and that high needs budgets are targeted appropriately. It will also seek alternative forms of income where possible. Once detailed analysis of need has been completed, any statutory consultation required to change provision or any requirement to consider capital development would be subject to a further committee report.

10.2 The Council has received grant from the Department for Education (DfE) in 2017 to support review of SEND and an additional grant to support a small amount of capital

development. The grants can support implementation of the strategy. Once firm proposals of options for change are established that require capital investment these will be fully costed to inform decision making.

11 BACKGROUND PAPERS

SEND Strategy 2017 - 2022

https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/reading/enterprise/files/approved_send_strategy_august_2017.pdf

SEND Strategy Group
Terms of Reference
July 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 The SEND Strategy was approved by ACE Committee on 12th July 2017

2. Role of Strategy Group

2.1 The role of the SEND Strategy Group is to:

- be the key mechanism by which partners come together to oversee the implementation of the SEND Strategy in Reading;
- secure engagement of all key partners;
- be responsible for the delivery of the strategic and operational functions of the SEND Strategy and associated strands of work;
- lead on the monitoring of the implementation of the strategy, providing a framework for reporting progress to key stakeholders and partners.
- work in association with the Health and Wellbeing Board governance arrangements and report regularly to the ACE Committee on progress and provide reports to other Boards on request e.g. LSCB, Schools Forum.
- agree the communication from the group to partners.
- consider how the work can be integrated within the broader area in economies of scale
- improve outcomes for children and families

3. Aims

3.1 To provide strategic leadership and direction in the development, implementation and monitoring of the SEND Strategy 2017 - 2022 and take corrective actions required to keep delivery on track.

3.2 To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of the planned work and to recommend actions as appropriate.

3.3 To ensure all agencies work together in order to successfully deliver the SEND Strategy.

- 3.4 To oversee the effectiveness of Reading Local Area in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 3.5 To ensure the SEND Strategy aligns strategic and operational priorities in the Council's existing plans /strategies and with other agencies as necessary:
- Reading's Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy 2017 - 2019 (amend once updated and approved)
 - Reading's Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2015-2018
 - Reading Local Safeguarding Children's Board Business Plan 2017 - 2019
 - Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019
 - Children and Young People's Plan 2015-2018
 - Joint Implementation Group (JIG) and Area SEND Group
 - Transforming care board
 - Future in mind (sub group together with children for autism group)
- 3.6 To provide challenge and support to work strand leads to support delivery of action plans.
- 3.7 To receive regular reports from strand leads detailing progress and highlighting risks and issues. (Appendix 1 is the proposed Highlight Report format).

4. Membership

- 4.1 The SEND Strategy Group will be chaired by the Director of Children's Services or her nominated representative.
- 4.2 The SEND Strategy Group has a core membership but there will be times when the Group may co-opt other agencies to participate as appropriate.
- 4.3 Core Members can nominate a representative from their agency/service area who will attend on their behalf. If the nominated representative cannot attend a meeting they should identify another person to represent their sector. The nominated person must be able to make key decisions and take responsibility for communicating with the sector they represent.
- Reading Families Forum x 2
 - Special United Representative (or key person who is able to liaise with them regularly)
 - Primary School Representative
 - Secondary School Representative
 - Special School Representative
 - FE Representative
 - Voluntary Sector Representative

- Head of Education
- CCG Designated Clinical Officer
- Head of Wellbeing, Commissioning and Improvement
- Children's Social Care
- Adults Social Care
- Early Help Services
- Health - Provider
- RBC Commissioning
- Continuing Care
- Other?

5. **Meetings**

- 5.1 The Strategy Group will meet on a quarterly/termly basis. Dates have been set until July 2018
- 5.2 Meetings will always take place at a time between 10am and 2pm to support attendance of Reading Families Forum.
- 5.3 Agendas and papers for meetings will be circulated at least 1 week prior to the meeting.
- 5.4 Minutes and action log from each meeting will be circulated within 2 weeks of the meeting and will be resent with the agenda and papers for the following meeting.
- 5.5 Strand Leads will be responsible for arranging strand meetings and any task and finish groups.

6. **Work Strands**

- 6.1 A lead agency and officer will be appointed and accountable for each Work strand. Work strands identified below:
- Strand 1 - analysis of data and information to inform future provision and joint commissioning;
 - Strand 2 - early identification of needs and early intervention;
 - Strand 3 - using specialist services and identified best practice to increase local capacity; and
 - Strand 4 - transition to adulthood
- 6.2 Work strand leads will identify key membership of their groups and develop an action plan that delivers the priorities in each area. They will ensure there is connectivity between areas of work.

Note of visit to discuss progress with SEND reforms

Date of visit: 13.12..17

LA: Reading

DfE SEND Adviser: Steve Huggett

Present at meeting: Helen Redding, Simon McKenzie, Ramona Bridgman (PCF Chair), and Steve Huggett

Background

Officers provided an update on the LA context. Simon was now the permanent SEND Service Manager. Helen's interim post of SEND improvement adviser was due to terminate on April 1st. An AD for Education had been recruited and would start in January. This would allow at least a 6 week overlap with Helen.

The SEND strategy for 2017/22 had been finalised. Work had started on 3 of the 4 strands of development and each strand has representatives from key partners:

1. The first strand on data/information collection and analysis was led by Helen. A common set of data parameters had been established with Wokingham and West Berkshire. This enabled more coordinated work at the three Directors regular SEND meetings. This group has representatives from Schools Forum on it as well as other partners
2. The PEP leads the second strand which focusses on early identification. Major elements include the development of a graduated response and shared expectations for schools. Work on shared expectations for early years and post 16 provision would follow.
3. Simon leads on the third strand which focusses on specialist services and provision. Within this strand Helen is reviewing the SLAs for resourced provision. A review of SEMH and ASD provision will be a priority. This strand will also cover school to school support including the use of Reading's Teaching School.
4. The fourth covers PFA and the first strand meeting will take place shortly. This strand will be led by the Head of Adult Social Care. The development of an agreed PFA pathway will be a priority.

Work on all four strands will be ongoing during the 3-year lifespan of the strategy and will be overseen by a strategic group led by the DCS. The PCF is actively involved in all strands.

Parents and PCF

Ramona provided a helpful update on the PCF. There were 170 members of the PCF with 5 trustees who were the most active and coordinated the work of the PCF. Current major issues included:

- Concern by some parents that EHCPs were still to be received after all the processes were complete.
- Exclusions of children and young people with SEND- a PCF coffee morning for parents would focus on this issue.
- The provision of OT and SALT for those on SEN Support.

There had been good progress on:

- The Youth Forum which had reviewed the Local Offer and Short Breaks. It had its own page on the Local Offer.
- The PCF work with officers monitoring SEND performance data. This was part of a general engagement with officers which had been positive and had built confidence all round.

EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks

Following solid performance in 2016 current performance (including exclusions) was running at 90%. Simon was confident that this could improve and that a target of 95% was not unrealistic.

The focus next year will be on consistency of quality and in particular increasing co-production as set out in the Code of Practice. There was also an audit of multi-agency advice for EHCPs to be carried out using a Windsor and Maidenhead audit tool. Officers recognized that there was a need for ongoing training of all staff involved and were currently working to include training on SEND as part of the induction of all new social workers.

Transfers to EHC Plans from Statements and LDAs

Officers reported that there were 202 Statements remaining to be transferred as of December 1st. Recent progress was at about 50 per month so meeting the deadline would be tight but achievable. Simon had provided Steve with a very helpful breakdown of progress which illustrated the steady progress being made.

Schools and the High Needs Block

This was a major element of the Data and Information strand of the strategy. A detailed analysis of the High Needs Block spend had been carried out and shared with the representatives of the the strand working group and Schools Forum. Additionally, each meeting of the Schools Forum has an update on the progress of the actions agreed regarding High Needs Block funded activity. Officers regard this dialogue as essential to ensure ownership by schools and a genuine partnership developing the strategy.

Local Offer

Steve re-sampled the Local Offer. It was comprehensive, very accessible and full of informative and interesting content. Two peer reviews had recently been carried out and regular reviews of the offer were routinely carried out. A Local Offer newsletter is produced every month or so.

Post 16

Officers highlighted the good and improving SEND provision offered by Reading College. This had led to a steadily increasing number of SEND placements. Officers believed that

Appendix 3 – ACE Committee Report January 2018

there was a decreasing need for out of LA post 16 placements because of this. Local post 16 provision was a major focus of the PFA strand of the SEND strategy.

Development of joint commissioning

The Reading, Wokingham and West Berks SEND Directors group meetings included a CCG representative in order to develop a coordinated approach to commissioning. The development of a common data set for the three LAs is very helpful for this. The development of a joint commissioning strategy for SALT services was a current priority.

AOB: Peer review in Portsmouth

Simon briefly gave feedback on a peer review which he had participated in of Portsmouth SEND. The CCG, PEP and a Reading Head teacher were involved and officers from both LAs felt the exercise had been very worthwhile. Portsmouth would pay a reciprocal visit to Reading next year.

Conclusion and next meeting

There continues to be impressive progress on most key areas. This is supported by good leadership which is being consolidated with permanent appointments. The active involvement of the PCF in operations and strategy is particularly impressive. The local offer is accessible and comprehensive and increasingly central to development. Progress on transfers of statements to EHCPs is steadily building momentum and 20-week assessment compliance is solid.

Steve will contact officers in the New Year about a date for the next visit.