

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	22 OCTOBER 2020	AGENDA ITEM:	18
TITLE:	SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES - STRATEGIC UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR PEARCE	PORTFOLIO:	EDUCATION
SERVICE:	BFFC	WARDS:	ALL
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report updates ACE on progress on implementing our SEND strategy and the timetable for the development of the next strategy. In particular, it highlights the significant work in hand to develop our revenue and capital approaches in a way which embeds our strategic intent to provide high quality, local provision for Reading children.
- 1.2 Appendix 1: Performance against Key Performance Indicators (up to September 2021)
Appendix 2: SEND strategy 2017-2022
Appendix 3: Action plan for development of SEND strategy 2022-2027

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That all the work completed to date on implementing the SEND strategy be noted;
- 2.2 That the action plan for the development of the SEND strategy 2022-2027 (attached as Appendix 3) be agreed and a report on progress submitted to the Committee in Autumn 2021.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Our SEND Strategy was approved in July 2017. We have co-developed a SEND Data report to support identification of our priorities and actions. The data is provided annually and used by all key partners to support the refresh of priorities and actions required to deliver improvements. The full data report was last updated in the autumn of 2019. It is in the process of being updated for 2020.

3.2 The SEND Strategy has been refreshed in the light of the feedback received, and the co-produced SEND self-evaluation.

It is expected that the needs of the vast majority of children and young people will be identified early and their needs met locally, with most in the context of inclusive universal services.

We are developing a graduated approach to meeting needs across the local area, providing support and guidance of what is expected to be delivered by universal services; and at what point more specialist services might be required to provide further assessment, advice and support, and/or more specialist provision.

Our strategy sets out the key strands of work which will provide a focus for delivery. The strategy and action plans that prescribe its delivery will, as a minimum, set out the actions we are taking to ensure all duties under relevant legislation, statutory guidance and regulations are carried out, and the principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2015) set out below are delivered consistently through transparent systems and procedures for:

- the **participation** of children, their parents and young people in decision making;
- the **early identification** of children and young people's needs and joined up early intervention across education, health (universal and specialist) early help and social care services as appropriate to need to support them
- **greater choice and control for young people and parents** over support;
- **collaboration** between education, health and social care services to provide support, including development of jointly commissioned services;
- **high quality provision** to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN;
- a focus on **inclusive practice** and removing barriers to learning; and
- successful **preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.**

(SEND Code of Practice, 2015, sections 1.1 and 1.2)

Our Strategy's vision:

- ✓ SEND is everybody's business
- ✓ Right support / right time
- ✓ Local provision that meets local needs
- ✓ Making best practice common practice
- ✓ Co-production at the heart of what we do: changing the way in which we work together with families operationally and strategically; doing with families, not doing to
- ✓ Parents / carers and young people are confident in local provision

To achieve these priorities there are 6 Strands (working groups) of the SEND Strategy which produce regularly updated action plans which are overseen by the Reading multi-agency SEND Strategy Board which includes parents and other stakeholders in its membership. These strands are:

Workstreams:

- Strand 1: Improving communication
- Strand 2: Early intervention through to specialist provision
- Strand 3: Consistent approaches to emotional wellbeing
- Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood
- Strand 5: Support for families / short breaks
- Strand 6: Preparing for Inspection

The sixth strand 'preparing for inspection' was agreed in June 2020 and the workstream group has met twice since then to prepare and implement an action plan.

3.3 Current performance: Education and Health Care Plans

Performance against Key National Performance indicators is shown as Appendix 1. Performance against the KPI of plans issued within statutory deadlines has continued to improve since January 2020, with 100% of plans (without exceptions) issued within the deadline in September 2020. This is a significant improvement given the previous years' performance of 49%. This is significantly above the England average of 60.4% (for 2019, the last available year) and is likely to be some of the best performance in the country.

We are aware that we need to improve the timeliness of updating EHC plans following Annual Reviews and to audit the quality and impact of the updated plans.

3.4 Educational outcomes

The latest performance outcomes for children with SEND detail a mixed picture. At Key Stages 2 and 4, performance is in the top quartile of all performance in the country (ranked 6 at Key Stage 2 and 36 at Key Stage 4). However, at post-16 the performance is some of the worse in the country with 9.5% of children with SEND qualified to Level 2 with English and Maths. Our Elevate team are focused on improving outcomes for children with SEND at post-16.

4. Recent developments:

4.1 New leadership was put in place in the SEND team following the departure of the previous team manager. Since August 2020, the following new processes have been put in place:

- New service standards - including all emails to be acknowledged and then responded to within 5 working days
- High cost placements - sign off by Director of Education (DoE) following discussion at multi-agency panel which actively explores alternatives. Current placements being reviewed through SEND delivery review panel chaired by the Director of Children's Services.
- Weekly report on statutory aged unplaced pupils. At the time of writing, 4 statutory aged children with plans were unplaced. 2 of these are new to the authority, 1 is out of country, and the remainder has an alternative provision plan in place.

- From Elevate, weekly report on potential young people who could be NEET with EHC plans or looked after
- Local Offer landing page revamped to ensure it is user friendly
- The terms of reference and membership of SEND Strategy Board have been refreshed to encourage appropriate representation of health and other key partners
- All children with EHC plans risk assessed when schools partially closed - used as basis for reopening and reintegration

4.2 Capital programme

Following agreement from members in 2018, two 12 place units for children with social and communication difficulties will be established in state funded schools. The first, at Southcote Primary, will open from September 2020 with 4 places increasing to 12 places from September 2022. Discussions are in hand for the additional unit which will form part of the Council's capital programme (subject to member approval).

In addition, a new free special school will be opening from September 2022. The school, which is a joint partnership between Reading and Wokingham Councils, will provide 75 places for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Social and Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Maiden Erlegh Trust have been awarded sponsorship of the school.

4.3 Revenue funding

At its meeting on 15 October 2020, Reading Schools Forum will consider funding for the high needs budget and for the top up funding which mainstream schools receive to support children with EHC plans. The proposals being presented to the Forum request an overall increase for special schools and resource units of 5% per place and an increase of approximately 10% for the top up funding bands for mainstream schools.

We have also commenced a review of SEND provision across mainstream schools with a view to increasing provision at local schools and reviewing the banding formulae. We are working towards the introduction of a new funding system from September 2021.

4.4 Covid issues

In response to the pandemic, risk assessments were undertaken to support children with EHC plans in the context of the partial closure of schools. Over 2000 risk assessments were completed and these have formed the basis of supporting children in returning to school. In addition to the risk assessments the following have been in place:

- Family Information Support (FiS) available throughout the period
- Summer scheme focused on transitions from years 6 to 7, and vulnerable children
- Continuation of regular meetings with school SENCOs
- Statutory assessments - co-production still maintained with families - telephone/video conferencing

- Statutory assessments - cases where professional reports have been delayed, recorded and follow up assessments scheduled

The impact of these measures has been that over 88% of children with EHC plans are attending schools on a regular basis and on 21 September over 95% of children with EHC plans were in school.

4.5 **Conclusion**

This report outlines the progress that has been made to implementing the SEND strategy and the steps put in place to ensure that a new strategy is developed.

5. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 Our work on the SEND strategy contributes to RBC's strategic aim 3: to protect and enhance the lives of vulnerable adults and children and to promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

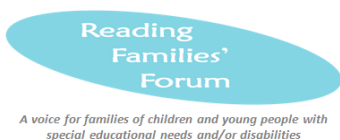
6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 Reports to Reading Schools Forum 15 October 2020 (papers held by BFFC)
Local Authority Interactive Tool:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-interactive-tool-lait>
The Local Authority Data Matrix August 2020

Internal data: Appendix 1

Summary KPIs	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
Number of Children and Young People (0-25) with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans	1391	1400	1408	1414	1424	1408	1394	1400	1410
Number of new EHCPs issued	12	10	11	11	15	21	17	10	18
Percentage of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (including exceptions)	75.0%	90.0%	90.9%	81.8%	80.0%	81.0%	93.8%	80.0%	94.40%
Percentage of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)	75.0%	90.0%	90.9%	81.8%	80.0%	81.0%	94.1%	88.9%	100%

Reading Local Area
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
Strategy
2017 – 2022
Draft Refreshed October 2019



1. Our Context

Our SEND Strategy was approved in July 2017. We have co-developed a SEND Data report to support identification of our priorities and actions. The data is updated annually and used by all key partners to support the refresh of priorities and actions required to deliver improvements.

The SEND Strategy has been refreshed in the light of the feedback received through this process, and the co-produced SEND self-evaluation.

It is expected that the needs of the vast majority of children and young people will be able to be met locally, with most in the context of universal services that are inclusive, and identify and meet needs as early as possible.

We are developing a graduated approach to meeting needs across the local area, providing support and guidance of what is expected to be delivered by universal services; and at what point more specialist services might be required to provide further assessment, advice and support, and/or more specialist provision.

This strategy sets out the key strands of work which will provide a focus for its delivery. The strategy and action plans that prescribe its delivery will, as a minimum, set out the actions we are taking to ensure all duties under relevant legislation, statutory guidance and regulations are carried out, and the principles of the SEND Code of Practice (2015) set out below are delivered consistently through transparent systems and procedures for:

- the **participation** of children, their parents and young people in decision making;
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(SEND Code of Practice, 2015, sections 1.1 and 1.2)

2. Our Shared Vision

SEND – everybody's business

Right support / right time

Local provision that meets local needs

Making best practice common practice

Co-production at the heart of what we do: changing the way in which we work together with families operationally and strategically; doing with families, not doing to

Parents / carers and young people are confident in local provision

3. Our Aims

We will work together to:

Collate and analyse SEND data and information from all agencies, including feedback from children, young people and their families, to help us understand local needs;

Use this information to drive change and improvement in services and local provision that meets current and future needs;

Have clear expectations of universal services that is accessible to families, including early year's settings, health visitors and health services, schools and colleges, and clear pathways to early help and early intervention support across services;

Provide clear information regarding all services' responsibilities and their role in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND (pathways);

Support multi-agency working, breaking down barriers and ensuring a joined-up approach for children, young people and families;

Have a range of provision in place that meets the range of needs of children and young people with SEND and their families and which is flexible to the changing profile of Reading;

Make sure resources are targeted effectively and support improved outcomes for children and young people;

Secure effective transition to the next stage in a child / young person's journey including transition into and between schools and into adulthood;

Keep services and provision under review to make sure we are meeting the needs of Reading families now and in the future.

4. Our Priorities

- **Making SEND Everybody's Business** – we will work together to embed the SEND Strategy into the practice of everybody who works with children, young people and families
- **Embedding co-production at every level** – we will work with all partners to ensure children, young people and their families participate fully in decisions at an individual level as well as in the development of services
- **We will work together to identify and assess needs early**, with a focus on developing preventative and early intervention approaches and a graduated approach to meeting needs
- **We will work together to deliver support in the right place at the right time** - being clear about our expectations of high quality universal and specialist provision and working together to support this being delivered, enabling the majority of individual needs to be met locally and achieving best possible outcomes
- Resources will be allocated fairly, transparently, and evidence that they support improving outcomes

5. Anticipated Outcomes

- a. All services 0 – 25 will be able to demonstrate how they are supporting delivery of the SEND Strategy

- b. We will know our key strengths, gaps and areas for improvement, and will ensure these are addressed strategically and operationally
- c. Children and young people's SEND will be identified and addressed early, enabling them to make progress and preventing escalation to more specialist services where possible
- d. Children and young people, and their parents / carers will feel engaged in the process of assessing their needs and informing decisions about their support
- e. Children and young people and their parents / carers will feel confident in what is provided through being involved from the start in the development of services
- f. Children and young people, and their parents / carers, will be clear about the identification and assessment processes and the guidance / criteria used to make decisions (pathways)
- g. All agencies will work together to collectively improve outcomes for children, young people and their families

6. Delivery

The SEND Strategy will be delivered through the six key strands set out in the strategic framework. Each workstream will set out specific actions to deliver the priorities identified through the Self Evaluation and data analysis and, includes timescales and intended outcomes. All workstreams will focus on work being coproduced and inform opportunities for joint commissioning. The delivery of the actions will be kept under regular review, reporting progress and recommendations to the SEND Strategy Board.

Services and partners, including settings and schools, will be asked to identify what actions they will take to support delivery of these priorities, helping SEND to become everybody's business.

The SEND Strategy delivery will be supported by an overarching communication plan that:

- communicates data and information to inform all partners actions
- provides a summary of feedback received from parent / carers and young people
- communicates progress of different strands of work and its impact

Workstreams:

- Strand 1: Improving communication
- Strand 2: Early intervention through to specialist provision
- Strand 3: Consistent approaches to emotional wellbeing
- Strand 4: Preparing for adulthood
- Strand 5: Support for families / short breaks

Workstream leads will be responsible for overseeing the action plan so that it supports the delivery of the SEND Strategy and strategic framework.

7. How will we recognise success?

- All professionals know the Local Offer, and the contribution of their service and other services, and can signpost families
- Parents / carers tell us that they are confident in local provision
- Feedback from parents / carers shows satisfaction with early identification by all agencies

- Practitioners report that they are confident and have the tools, resources and access to training they need to be effective
- The majority of children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan are educated in their local mainstream school that is meeting their needs (published data states that Reading is at least in line with national and statistical neighbour data)
- There is a reduction year on year in the number and days lost to fixed term exclusion of children and young people with SEND
- Parent/ carer forum surveys evidence increasing confidence in the local system, and where issues persist that there is clear follow up actions to address the issues
- Service development, provision and commissioning of services clearly reflect user feedback
- Number of complaints and Tribunals reduce, and compliments increase
- SEND audits evidence improving practice

8. Monitoring Delivery

The SEND Strategy Group, chaired by the Director of Education, provides oversight of the delivery of the SEND Strategy and includes membership from all key agencies including Reading Families Forum.

The overall approach to decision making regarding SEND Provision will be linked to the overarching strategy and approved through the SEND Strategy Board and Governance Structure

The SEND Strategy Group will secure engagement of all key partners and lead on the monitoring of the implementation of the strategy, providing a framework for reporting progress to key stakeholders and partners, including Members.

The SEND Strategy Board will oversee information on learning from service performance and ensure actions are taken to remedy issues, and that good practice is shared and becomes common practice.

The Joint Implementation Group (covering west of Berkshire) will support any required strategic regional commissioning.

Appendix 3: Action plan for development of SEND strategy 2022-2027

Action	Lead	Timescale
Develop key themes on basis of refreshed SEF and any inspection outcomes/survey results	DoE	January 2021
Consult with partners on key themes	DoE	Jan-March 2021
Examine financial options and present to schools forum	DoE	Summer 2021
Develop draft Strategy	DoE	July 2021
Present Strategy to Board	DoE	September 2021
Present new strategy to ACE for approval	DoE	November 2021