

July 2018

SEND : A Progress Report on Local Area Developments since the start of the Academic Year, September 2017

Introduction

This report has been produced to inform partners of the work and developments that have been completed in the local area since the start of the academic year in September 2017. It reflects the activity of partners within children's and adult services who support those aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities across Education, Health and Social Care Services.

This time period has seen significant progress and developments in key areas of work within SEND which have been supported through strong leadership and a clear commitment that meeting the needs of children and young people is a shared priority across all partner organisations. All areas have received support and input from partners within education, health and social care.

Quality Assurance Arrangements

Work within SEND is led by the SEND Strategic Partnership Board which meets monthly to support the implementation of the SEND Strategy, the delivery of the SEND Action Plan and to monitor outcomes and provision for children and young people with SEND. The SEND Strategic Board is accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board and maintains clear communication with the Families and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Operationally, the SEND Action Plan is delivered and monitored through the SEND Improvement Group that meets twice termly to plan, implement and deliver development work identified within the SEND Strategy and Action Plan.

SEND Strategy

Northumberland's draft SEND Strategy was developed with key strategic leads from Northumberland County Council and Northumberland CCG and was shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2017. Following this, the draft strategy went out to consultation through a series of five roadshows and online and paper feedback. A total of 206 responses were received and collated and led to the production of the final SEND Strategy which was presented to the FACS Committee on 15th March 2018.

During the consultation, contributions were received from parents/carers, schools, other settings, professionals who work in SEND services and school governors. The two largest groups of respondents were parents or carers (39%) and schools (30%).

Overall, there was broad agreement that the key strategic objectives within the draft strategy were suitable to drive the improvements necessary to ensure that the SEND Code of Practice was fully implemented.

Co-Production

While co-production at the level of an individual child or young person on how to best support their needs is strong, the involvement of children, young people and their families in SEND developments has not been as consistent over the years. Northumberland is committed to ensuring that children, young people and parent/carers are involved in discussions and decisions, not just about their own individual support but also in county-wide SEND strategic planning, decision making and commissioning. As a result, you will note throughout this report the involvement of *In It Together* (Parent Carer Forum) in many of the developments described.

In particular, I would like to highlight the input from *In It Together* in contributing towards the review of the systems and paperwork required for a SEND statutory assessment. This has enabled the voice of the child and young person and their family to be strengthened and more centrally placed within the assessment process.

The Local Offer

The Local Offer is a Local Authority's publication of all the provision that "*they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.*" It is a statutory responsibility stated within the The SEN Code of Practice (DfE, DoH 2014).

Parents and carers have highlighted that they cannot always find the information they are looking for in the Local Offer and that it can be difficult to navigate. An audit of the Local Offer has been completed and highlighted where there is a need for improvements to be made. This work is being coordinated through the Communications Team and is being carried out in consultation with the Parent Carer Forum. Engagement work will begin in the Autumn Term 2018 and will complete early in 2019.

Developing Effective Inclusive Practice

The consultation responses received during the development of the SEND Strategy highlighted that there was inconsistent practice within mainstream schools and settings in supporting children and young people with SEND.

The SEN Code of Practice (DfE, DoH 2014) describes how schools and settings should follow a process known as the Graduated Approach from the earliest point at which a child or young person is identified as having additional learning needs. This is a staged approach within a school, overseen by a SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator), whereby children and young people with additional needs progress through a number of stages, including class based support and/or additional support from within their school, to potentially seeking additional support or a change to a specialist educational placement from the Local Authority.

Northumberland County Council worked with SENCo forums to develop clear guidance that would support the consistent application of a Graduated Approach for children and young people in our settings and schools. This has been a significant piece of work that has involved both the development and trialling of standardised systems and paperwork to support the process and which was launched at the 'Spotlight on SEND' conference for all schools on 6th July 2018.

In addition to the work on systems and processes, a 'Mainstream Local Offer' has been co-produced through working with school staff, parents, carers and learners. The Mainstream Local Offer identifies what any child or young person with SEND and their family can expect from their school and sets out a commitment in ethos around inclusive practice.

For the Autumn Term 2018, School SENCos have identified the support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs as their development focus area. This will be a multi-agency piece of work involving schools and the Parent Carer Forum and will tie in with the work associated with the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Council SEND Support Services provide quality advice and assessment to schools on supporting children and young people with SEND. Support Services for Speech Language & Communication, ASD and Behaviour and Literacy are bought by schools via a Service Level Agreement. The take-up of these services through the SLA has been inconsistent and a review is to be held with schools in September to increase the consistency of support available to children and young people across the county.

A commitment by SEND Support Services to build capacity within the school workforce has seen the delivery of large, planned training opportunities such as Talk Boost (Speech & Language) Management of Actual & Potential Aggression (Behaviour Support), Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (Psychological Services) Resilience Training (ASD and Behaviour teams alongside colleagues from CYPS) and an ASD Awareness Course (ASD Team). SEND Support Services have continued to work collaboratively with multi agency partners through attendance at the Early Help Hubs across county and have acted as facilitators of the SENCo Network Partnerships groups.

Early Years

Northumberland County Council Early Years service works with childminders, private voluntary & independent settings and schools to provide advice support and guidance. The team promote high quality practice and work with a range of professionals to align practice throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The *Graduated Approach Guidance for Early Years (2016)* has been reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the *Graduated Approach Guidance for Schools and Settings 2018*. Arrangements to monitor the impact of evaluations within early years have been strengthened through the development of a system to evaluate the outcomes and impact of support that has been requested by a setting.

Over the course of this year there have been a number of developments, including an Inclusion Campaign to launch the '6 Key Principles*' that providers could use to review their mission statements that are shared on the LA Local Offer Childcare Providers page.

Following a need identified by Early Years practitioners for support around points of transition between early years settings and schools, a School Readiness Passport was launched to promote the early identification and provision of support for children not at the development stage for their age. In addition, as all funded 2,3 and 4 years olds are entitled to additional support through an Inclusion Fund, changes have been made to systems to monitor the support required and to ensure that it is promptly and transparently put in place.

Statutory Assessment

Most children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will have their needs met in local mainstream settings; however, for a small number, there may be a need to carry out an assessment to determine whether there is a need to make additional provision through an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The EHCP used to be called a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Following the implementation of the SEN Code of Practice in 2014, the DfE required all Local Authorities to issue Education Health and Care Plans and convert existing Statements of SEND to EHCPs. The deadline for this was 31st March 2018 and I am pleased to report that Northumberland transferred all Statements to EHCPs within this timeframe. This is a significant achievement which many Local Authorities were unable to meet and I would like to thank the SEN Team for all their hard work in meeting this requirement.

The application process and decision making panel through which schools apply for additional funding from the Council to meet special educational needs over and above their resources has been reviewed with schools and SENCos. The SEND Commissioning Panel exists to advise the Council on how best to consistently and fairly allocate additional resources to pupils. It consists of representatives from schools, SEND Support Services, and health and social care professionals who provide professional challenge and scrutiny to applications for support. The panel has undergone a multi-agency review, has new membership and Terms of Reference and has an established training programme to guide its decision making. Working with schools, the application form has been redesigned and now enables the Commissioning Panel to have clearer and more consistent information on which to make decisions about resource allocation.

Education Health and Care Plans

An Education Health and Care Plan is a statutory document that contains key information about a child or young person's aspirations, their areas of need and the provision that is required in order to be able to meet their needs. The statutory timescale to complete an EHCP is 20 weeks and I am pleased to report that Northumberland produces 98% of it's EHCPs within this timescale.

A multi-agency Quality Assurance Framework has been produced to ensure that EHCPs are of the expected quality. In addition, training has been delivered to education, health and social care teams to ensure that they provide high quality advice and guidance. As part of this framework, a multi-agency EHCP audit group has been established which meets monthly to review the quality of plans against a national standard. This group includes representatives from the Parent Carer Forum, In It Together, SEND Support Services and Education, Health and Social Care colleagues. While the professional representation

remains from the same areas, individual staff change from session to session to enable different professionals to access the work as continuing professional development and share any learning with their teams.

The numbers of EHCPs has continued to rise, which matches the national trend. The national average for EHCPs for children and young people is 2.9%; Northumberland currently stands at 3.1% with a rising trend. Particular growth is noted within Post 16 and for those aged 20-25.

Understanding ourselves

Northumberland's Local Area SEND Self assessment was brought before the Health and Wellbeing Board in November 2017. A SEND specific Joint Strategic Needs Assessment has been completed and was shared with the Health and Wellbeing Board in January 2018. Scrutiny of data is routine within SEND to monitor trends and to support strategy development through the analysis of national data sets, including Local Government SEND Reports, SEN 2 and internal data from the Council's Electronic Management System (EMS).

Additional scrutiny and reporting has been established through the monitoring of the activity of the SEND Commissioning Panel which has enabled current practice across education, health and social care in the county to be captured. This has contextualised the data and helps us understand better the current trends e.g. approx 50% of the children and young people with EHCPs issued since September 2017 have a diagnosis of ASD. It has also enabled us to develop a clearer picture of practice across our schools and to highlight the small number of schools who are over or under referring for additional support from the council. These schools will be visited at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2018 to identify if support around SEN systems and processes is required. In addition, the visits will identify those schools who are providing high quality inclusive educational practice from within their own resources. These schools will be encouraged to share this best practice across the county.

A series of briefings on the SEND information and current provision has been provided for Governors, Head Teachers and Health and Social Care Teams to help support more accurate understanding of trends and how this has influenced strategy and future developments.

The SEND Self Assessment will be reviewed and updated over the summer and will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board in the Autumn Term 2018.

Capacity Planning and Special Education

Some children and young people with SEND have a level of need that is best met in a Special School. Northumberland has a higher than average number of pupils with EHCPs whose needs are met in specialist provision than most other Local Authorities. This is due to a number of reasons including inconsistent mainstream educational practice, a current preference from many parents and carers for specialist provision and the unique geography

of Northumberland. There are currently high levels of requests for children and young people to attend specialist provision.

The consultation in November 2017 on our future SEND Strategy also included consultation on proposals for increasing specialist provision. This was presented to FACS on 15th March 2018 and highlighted that need is increasing, which, alongside greater financial constraints within our schools, has resulted in an increased demand for specialist educational places that has outstripped capacity. FACS approved a more detailed consultation on options to expand capacity for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities throughout Northumberland.

In order to plan for next steps in consultation, a strategy has been developed to identify those children coming through the system from birth and those who are within the system who may go on to need specialist educational provision. As part of the consultation, parents and carers identified a need for greater additionally resourced provisions (ARPs) within mainstream school. This is currently being explored. There have been 21 expressions of interest from schools who would be interested in hosting an ARP and this is currently being matched against need. Data indicates that there is a high level of need within the south east of the county, with lower levels of need in the North and West. The challenge will be to provide a solution that meets the needs of all pupils across Northumberland.

The next round of consultation on specific options will go ahead in September 2018 with a view that any new provision will start to be available from September 2019.

Health and SEND

Health refers to a variety of different organisations who work in Northumberland. Across all areas there has been a focus on supporting the implementation of the SEND reforms in partnership with the County Council.

Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group strategically lead the SEND workstream and work with Primary Care, Northumbria Healthcare and NTW to support this work. They have strategic plans and an action plan that complements the Council's plans. The role of the Designated Clinical Officer for SEND and the Council's Head of SEND Strategy is a combined post that enables the integration of work streams across education, health and social care.

Whilst health leads and services have been involved in all of the developments listed in this report, there are specific areas that have been developed around health input alone.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust have both completed audits to review the SEND systems, training and quality assurance processes within their organisations. This has identified much good practice and, in areas where development and training is required, action plans are in place. This is a unique piece of work within the area of SEND and has been shared regionally as an example of best practice via NHS England North SEND Group.

Improving the quality of advice provided by health colleagues has been the focus of work for the SEND Health Improvement Group which meets termly across the year. This group

consists of Service Managers from different areas, such as Occupational Therapy, CYPS and Paediatrics and looks at the operational interface of health services with schools. The current focus of work has been the development of quality health outcomes as part of the assessment process, which is an issue that health services are struggling with nationally. Action groups are planned over the summer to devise a best practice guide to health outcomes.

The Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy (EHWBS) and the 2018/19 refreshed Local Transformation Plan (LTP) came before the Health and Wellbeing Board in May 2018. This highlighted the work that has been completed, the actions being taken and the challenges facing the implementation of the strategy.

A jointly produced action plan has been produced between NTW and the CCG following an increase in wait times for secondary children and young people's services (CYPS), particularly in relation to the neurodevelopmental pathway. This plan has resulted in an improvement in overall performance but further system-wide work is required. There remain particular issues in Northumberland in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce for both the early intervention and specialty services. More details can be found within the EHWBS.

The Local Authority commissions NHFT 0-19 Public Health Service which consists of Health Visiting and Public Health School Nursing across the county. Working to the Healthy Child Programme ensures that the early identification of potential SEND need is met with over 96% of 2.5 year olds having the mandated screening check.. Health Visitors work collaboratively with Early Years settings to ensure the health assessment check is effective in mobilising support when required through a newly developed health passport.

In 2017 the Public Health team commissioned a Health and Wellbeing questionnaire consultation across the county with 6000 pupils between Yr4 and Yr10 across the county. It included questions such as when they were offered additional support in school alongside generic health questions. 32% (773) of primary aged pupils & 11% (370) of secondary aged pupils said they got extra help to learn.

Social Care and SEND

Social care staff are fully involved in the delivery of all of the developments listed above and those listed below detail work happening solely within social care in relation to SEND.

In order to strengthen the contribution of social care within the SEND agenda, the role of a social care SEND Champion has been created, with these staff receiving additional training and information on SEND and providing support to colleagues. Interest in being a SEND champion was high and there is now representation in social care teams across the county.

Following the implementation of the SEND champion role, work has been completed to further develop the request and provision of high quality social care advice as part of the SEN assessment process.

Councils must publish a Short Break Statement to inform parents of what services are available and how to access them. Northumberland's statement is in the process of being

reviewed and will be shared with the Parent Carer forum as part of its development in July 2018, before being placed on the Local Offer in September 2018.

Transition

Many of our young people have transitioned from education into adulthood well. Northumberland has a strong Adult Learning Service which has a variety of pathways for adult learning. Recent OFSTED and MATRIX inspections of the Service in June 2018 highlighted the following findings in relation to the provision:

- Managers successfully prioritise the recruitment of learners and apprentices who face significant barriers to learning. Managers have designed opportunities that support the most vulnerable, most often for learners that will not get educational opportunities elsewhere.
- Staff offer a useful coaching programmes to learners aged 16 to 19 who need extra help to prepare for full-time study. These learners benefit from one-to-one coaching that builds their confidence and motivation, and enables them to be successful when they join longer courses. The coaching "bridging programme" between NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and full time study / apprenticeship is invaluable to learners. The coaching process is effective and helps learners to set a direction and change direction if needed. There is an early identification of need and well planned further interventions through the programme.
- Support for those who require additional learning support is very good and is well focussed to develop learner confidence and helping them remain on programme. The measures successfully remove the barriers to educational success.
- The service is very effective in the re-engagement of young people, often those who have previous negative experience of school or other post 16 providers. Most learners are previously NEET. The work the service has done has significantly reduced NEET in the county.
- The quality of careers guidance for 16-18 year olds and adults up to 25 with an EHCP is good. The service has a well qualified team which undertake CPD within their specialisms regularly.
- The service works with a range of agencies to identify learners in need. They effectively source provision from a range of providers, not just the service, and this is ensuring good impartiality.
- The service provides effective end to end support. Services start at referral and continue until exit from study. This is strong and results in high retention and achievement. The bespoke SEND support for families, particularly those with young people with an ECHP, is providing appropriate options and support which stays with the family throughout. As a result of strong guidance and support, most young people are progressing into learning and work

The service is currently recruiting for a Supported Internships Coordinator to develop the offer in Northumberland further. In addition there is good development work ongoing to design and deliver a dedicated SEND post 16 study programme provision for the rural north of the county. It will be focussed on Berwick and Alnwick and environs and plans to start delivery in September 2018 are being developed.

While progress has been strong within this area, it is clear that for a small minority of young people the transition into adulthood has not worked well. We are meeting with families of

parents who have found this experience difficult to better understand how to improve the pathway and how our schools and other services can best prepare young people for adulthood. A Transition pathway will be co-produced with parents, carers and young people

Summary and Conclusion

There have been many developments within SEND this year, with only the key highlights being included within this summary report. My thanks go to the many partner agencies for their hard work, positivity and dedication in continuing to drive forward development work within SEND.