



FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

7TH JULY 2022

SEND Strategy Progress Report

Report of Audrey Kingham, Interim Director of Children's Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Guy Renner Thompson

Purpose of report

This report informs the committee of progress made against the four strategic priorities detailed within the Northumberland SEND Strategy 2021-2024.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Note the contents of the report;
- 2) Support next steps to be taken

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the 'We want you to achieve and realise your potential (Learning)' and 'We want you to feel safe, healthy, and cared for (Living)' priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

Context

Northumberland's SEND Strategy was launched in June 2021 following a period of consultation with families and practitioners across education, health and social care. The Strategy has 4 strategic priorities

1. '*Working Together*' focussing on developing Local Offer, participation and engagement and embedding co-production across the system
2. '*Delivering the right support at the right time*' focussing on joint commissioning arrangements and further developing multi-agency working.

3. '*Inclusive education and success for all learners*' focussing on embedding an inclusive ethos across settings, the graduated approach and promoting aspiration, ambition around educational achievement for children and young people with SEND
4. '*Effectively prepare children and young people for adulthood*' focussing on increasing the range of pathways into employment, providing guidance to young people about pathways and multi-agency working as young people move into adulthood.

Progress Update

This is a high summary overview of progress made, with further reports on different aspects of SEND due to be presented to FACS over the coming year.

Strategic Priority 1 : Working Together

Local Offer – funding has been identified to support the commissioning of a new stand alone website for the Local Offer. This follows a period of engagement with parents and carers to identify where changes need to be made and how to enhance accessibility to ensure that the new Local Offer is easy to navigate by parents and carers.

Following initial production of different layouts, sections of the Local Offer will be presented to members of the Parent Carer Forum in June where a plan to support wider engagement with parents and carers will be co-produced.

Co-production – Our SEND Strategy stated that as a local area we would work to embed co-production as a way of working across the system. Northumberland Parent Carer Forum (NPCF) are the DfE recognised strategic partner in Northumberland to represent the voice of children and families. In January 2022, the PCF presented a review of co-production to the SEND Board. Areas of strength identified were the PCF being an active and equal member of the strategic partnership and being involved at the beginning of a project. Areas for development included involving the PCF at the earliest opportunity and ensuring the changes made as a result of parent carer involvement were shared widely with all parents and carers. As a result of this feedback work on the Local Offer has been amended to ensure the new Local Offer is central to improving communication about strategic developments.

Strategic Priority 2 : Delivering the right support at the right time

Early identification of mental health needs in childrens social care – Northumberland CCG identified recurrent funding to

- help systems understand and meet the emotional and mental health needs of young people open to social work
- provide an integrated approach to supporting vulnerable young people and their families
- to promote stability, resilience and confidence in the system around young people
- and for young people with complex needs to thrive

Three Specialist Practitioners (one yet to be recruited), one Clinical Psychologist and one Assistant Psychologist have been recruited to Northumberland Emotional Wellbeing Support Team (NEWST). The team began accepting referrals in January 2022 and as of the end of April 2022 had provided system support to 94 children in 71 families. The team will develop a programme of training for all professionals in topics relating to mental health over the coming year. There is ongoing evaluation of the impact of NEWST which will be reported on in the future.

Graduated response for sensory processing needs – Northumberland CCG have commissioned additional Occupational Therapy provision within Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to increase provision and coordinate the support for children and young people with sensory needs in Northumberland. A graduated approach will be co-produced with families to enable a full range of support from a virtual free offer which parents can access for advice and support, a helpline, provision of training and coaching for families and parents to blocks of intervention for children who require a highly specialist interventions. Further work will commence on this pathway once recruitment has been completed.

Strategic Priority 3 : Inclusive education and success for all learners

Ordinarily Available Provision – Guidance on the expectations of schools and settings in supporting children and young people with SEND in mainstream settings has been co-produced with schools, parents and carers and is now in draft form. The guidance describes best practice in supporting children and young people with SEND and sets high aspirations about quality of support and teaching that is expected. This guidance is currently undergoing final consultation with school leaders before being launched at the SENCo conference in July 2022.



Support, training and challenge to schools

The Whole Education SEND Project is a DfE recommended programme of school support for SEND. launched in September 2021 with 47 schools completing an evaluation of their current SEND strategy, provision and practice. Schools were grouped into triads, with one SENCo identified as a coach per triad. Schools self evaluated themselves against seven broad areas of provision of intent, implementation, impact, identification, effective use of teaching assistants, provision mapping and working with learners and families. Each school produced an action plan and accessed training, peer support, coaching as part of the project. The project has been valued by participating schools as evidenced in feedback from SENCos

"The programme is raising awareness of SEND in school. As a SENDCo it has given me the opportunity to work with other SENDCos in the area to share best practice"

"Schools being able to connect with each other and create a working relationship that is built on positive attitudes and self-reflection to improve outcomes"

In September 2022, an additional 21 new schools will start the Whole School SEND programme, with 7 existing schools taking a coaching role.

Improving the quality of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

Decision making processes and communication with parents and carers have been reviewed within the SEN Team. Differing models of decision making around support have been piloted with the SEN Team, schools and settings and the process has been streamlined. The release of the SEND Green Paper on the 29th March 2022 proposed a national standardised way of decision making through a multi-agency panel, it is therefore important to understand what the national directive will be before any further changes are made to local systems.

Plans have been produced to establish a virtual Front Door to the SEN Team to ensure that parents and carers can contact the team easily and receive a timely response. This will start on the 1st September 2022 following recruitment to an admin post.

Strategic Priority 4 : Effectively prepare children and young people for adulthood

Janice Gerard has been appointed as Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Lead within Education and Skills and is leading and supporting different strands of the action plan across the system.

SEND Practice Week

The SEND partnership underwent a pilot of the new SEND inspection framework in March 2022. This opportunity involved schools, settings and key partners across education, health and social care undergoing a period of external scrutiny by Ofsted and CQC of our local SEND arrangements, with preparation for adulthood being an area of focus. This was a significant focus for all parts of the system and it was therefore decided to move the SEND Practice Week to September 2022.

Feedback from inspectors indicated that the local area

- understands the needs of children and young people
- understands its strengths and areas for development in relation to PfA
- has robust and achievable plans in place that are evidenced based from both system information and the voice of children and young people.

Northumberland Pathways for Employment

A pathway through learning towards employment has been developed with key stakeholders. It has six phases which set out potential curriculum approaches and focus in supporting young people into adulthood and employment.



A self evaluation framework has been developed and is currently being piloted with three special schools, one mainstream school and Northumberland College. This project will enable monitoring of schools and settings approaches towards preparation for adulthood and enable the provision of targeted support, collaborative development and sharing of good practice around curriculum that readies young people for their next steps toward sustainable employment. In addition, its intention is to work towards establishing a Northumberland pledge / commitment from schools and settings on the provision of quality curriculum and planning for employment in the future.

Project Choice

Project Choice is a specialist post-16 college providing person-centred, individually-tailored, supported internships to young adults with learning difficulties, disabilities and/or autism. Through the internship, 16-24 year olds gain work experience, develop independence skills and increase their employability.

At the beginning of the year, members of FACS committee were informed of the plans for Project Choice to increase its offer to learners with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). To note that during the academic year 21 – 22, ten young people with EHCPs were recruited to Project Choice in health settings and as from September 22 onwards, this will increase to ten supported internships in heath settings and ten across Northumberland County Council and partner organisations.

Conclusion

The recent Pilot SEND inspection confirmed our direction of travel and pace and the Strategic Partnership remains committed to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy	Developments detailed within the report outline steps being made towards strategic objectives.
Finance and value for money	Efficient systems and processes within SEND underpin the transparent and equitable allocation of SEND finances. Currently there is no need for additional funding. £30k funding has been allocated from Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to support the development of different elements of a new stand alone website for the Local Offer.
Legal	The SEND Code of Practice places a number of statutory requirements on Local Authorities and CCGs. These are detailed within the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulation 2014.
Procurement	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Property	Capacity planning for the provision of specialist educational placements may involve capital development.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	SEND promotes the inclusion of children and young people within their schools and communities.
Risk Assessment	There is a risk that services will not be effective or efficient if the governance and strategy is not robustly monitored.
Crime & Disorder	Youth Offending and SEND populations overlap.
Customer Consideration	The views of children, young people and their parents / carers are central to developments and improvements within SEND.
Carbon reduction	SEND school transport arrangements are linked.
Health and Wellbeing	Supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 is a core component of the SEND Code of Practice and associated legislation.
Wards	n/a

Report sign off

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Suki Binjal
Service Director Finance & Deputy S151 Officer	Alison Elsdon
Relevant Executive Director	Audrey Kingham, Senior Service Director and Director of Education and Skills and Joint Interim Director of Children's Services
Chief Executive	Rick O'Farrell
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