

**Report to OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE AND
VALUE FOR MONEY SELECT COMMITTEE**

SEND Performance Report

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to brief the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value For Money Select Committee on the recent SEND Inspection in Oldham and the actions that the Council and Partners have undertaken to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Recommendations

To note the contents of the Report

SEND Performance Report

1 Background

- 1.1 Between 2 - 6 October 2017 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected the arrangements within Oldham to meet the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). The Inspection letter containing the findings of the inspection was published on the Ofsted website on 28 November 2017 and required the Council and the CCG to develop with key stakeholders a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) within 70 working days. The statement should be co-produced with parents/carers, children and young people and be submitted to Ofsted by 2 March 2018.
- 1.2 This report details the Inspection outcome, the immediate measures taken by the Council and its partners to address the issues raised, the WSOA (attached as Appendix 1) and identifies the current performance in delivering a sustainable, high quality SEND offer in Oldham.
- 1.3 Following the Ofsted feedback meeting on 6 October 2017 a number of immediate actions took place;
- Establishment of a SEND Transformation Assurance Board and associated supporting mechanisms chaired by the Executive Director for Economy, Skills and Neighbourhoods with senior representation from Oldham CCG; education and social care officers, and parental representation through the Oldham Parent Carer Forum POINT;
 - Interim management arrangements in place for the post of Head of Access and Inclusion following the previous post holder leaving the Council employ;
 - Clarification sought from Ofsted on all 'illegal' practice issues;
 - Review of the EHCP process involving key stakeholders;
 - Additional SEN educational and health care (EHCP) writing capacity brought in to address the shortfall in conversions of all remaining Statements of Educational Need into EHC Plans by the due date of 31 March 2018;
 - Interim arrangements in place within the CCG to provide increased strategic capacity on SEND;
 - Additional capacity commissioned by the CCG from NHS providers to support work on conversions. Revised Quality assurance processes put in place to ensure that plans reflect appropriate outcomes which are owned and understood by the plan holder and parents/carer's;
 - Transport policy and decisions reviewed to ensure they meet the national guidance;
 - Additional capacity sourced by the CCG to support the implementation of the SEND reforms within the local NHS;
 - All schools written to by the Director of Education & Early Years reminding them of the exclusions policy and requesting they confirm adherence to all legal requirements. All schools responded affirmatively to this letter;
 - Quarterly Joint Monitoring and Support Meeting held with DfE and NHS England officials. At the first meeting a report was provided identifying actions already taken since the Inspection against the 5 areas identified as the key themes for the WSOA;
 - Inspection findings and feedback sessions held with parents and carers on 7th and 12th December 2017.
 - Co-production of the WSOA was launched on 25th January 2018 with a co-production workshop involving over 65 professional staff and twenty parents/carer's. The Executive Director of Economy Skills and Neighbourhoods; the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the CCG and a senior representative of POINT fronted the session;
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1.4 The co-produced WSOA was submitted to Ofsted on 2 March 2018. It explained how the local area would be tackling the following areas of significant weakness;

- Any illegal practice that maybe happening in the local area.
- The lack of effective leadership and joint partnership in leading, developing and evaluating the SEND reforms.
- The dysfunctional EHC process and inadequate quality of plans.
- The defective transport arrangements for children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The significant underachievement of children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities, including the high rates of fixed-term exclusions and persistent absenteeism.

1.5 The WSOA is by necessity a high level plan and consists of a number of priorities identified against each area of significant weakness. Each priority is 'owned' by a senior officer of the Local Authority, CCG or NHS Health Provider organisations with a date by which it should be achieved.

Governance

1.6 A key challenge posed by the Inspection Report was how to improve effective leadership and joint partnership. To meet this challenge revised governance processes were put in place to;

- Ensure strong strategic and operational oversight from a multi-agency perspective.
- Ensure that the voice and influence of the child/young person and parents/carers are heard and acted upon at the highest level by their direct involvement.
- Ensure that the SEND reform process is firmly cemented within the overall children's strategy and that of the Integrated Care Organisation.

The revised governance arrangements are illustrated in the WSOA.

1.7 It was recognised that a Board structure as described above would not be the most appropriate vehicle for ensuring effective co-production with children and young people. Consequently, local children and young people's expertise was sought by involving existing groups such as 'Barrier Breakers' and the Children in Care Council.

Increasing Staff Capacity

1.8 As part of the recovery programme for the SEN Assessment Service significant additional permanent revenue funding of £500,000 was agreed to secure sufficient capacity at an appropriate level and with the requisite skill set in order to complete all legal requirements within mandated timeframes and to the appropriate quality standard.

1.9 A recruitment process was undertaken during the summer of 2018 and a fully staffed SEN Assessment Service is presently almost in place. The revised EHC team consists of the following;

- 1.0 fte Assistant Director
 - 1.0 fte Service Manager
 - 1.0 fte Team Manager
 - 3.0 fte Senior EHC officers
 - 8.0 fte EHC Officers
 - 1.0 fte EHC Officer (12 month contract)
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This equates to an 80% increase in EHC officer capacity in the short term

In addition, there is some time limited external plan writing provision in place to support the Team in meeting quality and timeliness requirements. This additional resource will cease by the end of September 2018 once the new team is established.

- 1.9 Further capacity is being recruited to deliver an enhanced quality assurance process, better commissioning and additional support staff to manage the increased workload.

2. Current situation

- 2.1 The most recent bi-monthly monitoring visit by DfE and NHS England occurred on 13 July 2018. (Next meeting taking place on 25 September) At the conclusion of the July meeting it was agreed that since the previous monitoring visit a step change had been seen in the progress of key tasks. These include;

- Critical areas where it can be seen that Oldham partners are now working together effectively to drive forward change;
- The appointment of key staff across the partners and the recruitment strategies, including the Open Day, leading to a new staff dynamic which provides greater capacity to drive the cultural change forward;
- Examination of EHC plans which have been judged to be significantly better than those seen previously.

As a result of this latest meeting, the areas of concern noted by Ofsted and CQC in October 2017 have been rag rated as follows;

- Area 1: Illegal Practice **GREEN**
- Area 2 Leadership **GREEN**
- Area 3 Process and Quality **AMBER**
- Area 4 Transport **GREEN**
- Area 5 Attainment and absenteeism **AMBER/GREEN**

Further detail on specific areas which remain amber are noted below.

Area 3 Process and quality

- 2.2 In September 2017 the Service is dealing with the following numbers of children and young people with SEND in Oldham

Numbers with EHC plans (aged 0-25): 1961
Number of new assessment requests: 265

- 2.3 A key requirement of the 2014 SEND reforms was to reduce the time taken to complete the assessment process (timeliness). The legal expectation is that the process from referral to finalising of EHC plan (if required) should take no more than 20 weeks. The Local Authority Interactive Tool which collects data on a number of children's indicators allows comparison between Oldham and its statistical neighbours in the North West and England. The validated data for 2015, 2016 and 2017 is shown below;

Percentage of EHC plans completed in the	2015	2016	2017
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timescale of 20 weeks			
Oldham	8.3	15.6	66.2
Statistical neighbours	34.8	49.4	59.8
North West	55.7	59.3	74.3
England	55.5	55.7	61.3

- 2.4 Since the publication of the Inspection outcome there has been an increased focus on the quality as well as timeliness of finalised plans. This has slowed down the timeliness as the Team has taken additional time, prior to the increased staffing capacity being in place, to ensure the quality of each plan is high before issue. .

From 18 June 2018 questionnaires were sent out to a total of 50 EHC plan recipients. To date a total of nine have been returned equating to an 18% return rate. The responses revealed that;

- 100% of respondents stated that the assessment process was explained in a manner which was easy to understand;
- The majority (88%) of respondents indicated that the EHCP assessment process was explained to them by the school;
- 100% of respondents stated that they felt listened to and supported throughout the EHCP assessment process;
- 89% of respondents stated the outcomes in the EHCP assessment are clear and easy to understand;
- 78% of respondents indicated that the content of the EHCP assessment is what they expected;
- Respondents indicated that the EHCP assessment met their child's needs in the following areas;
 - 33% Health
 - 78% Education
 - 22% Local Authority Social Care
 - 89% of questionnaires were completed by the Parent / Carer
 - 11% of questionnaires were completed by the child / young person

The questionnaires will continue to be sent out with final plans and further analysis will be undertaken and shared with the SEND Management Board in due course.

Area 5 Attainment and absenteeism

- 2.5 A number of actions have been undertaken since the Inspection. These include;
- A review of alternative provision commissioned through the Opportunity Area funding.
 - Primary and Secondary Behaviour & Attendance Groups established with specific working groups focused on Improving Attendance, Understanding and Managing Behaviour as well as Local Partnerships and how they work together to support inclusion.
 - A pilot is running between May to July 2018 to test a systemic approach to measuring pupil wellbeing, mental health and resilience across Oldham with the aim of improving the wellbeing of pupils through Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) interventions. This is being led by the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORG).
 - An outline Whole School / College approach to SEMH has been completed. This work is a key strand in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) transformation plan and is led by the Integrated Care Organisation (ICO).

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- Opportunity Area funding has provided additional funding to appoint a coordinator to lead and further develop the Whole School Approach to emotional health and mental wellbeing programme
 - Two Mental Health and Wellbeing Advisors have been appointed and will be employed to build capacity and up skill teaching and support staff to deliver robust social, emotional and mental wellbeing class room based interventions, peer support, low level interventions and develop supportive networks across all schools and colleges.
 - Oldham Council and Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) were successful in delivering the nationally funded Mental Health Services and Schools Link Programme, run by the Anna Freud National Centre for Child and Families.
 - Graduated response training has been delivered by the educational psychologist service. Further training is planned once the MH Advisors are in post.
 - Whole School Approach training has been delivered to schools / college across Oldham by Tameside, Oldham and Glossop (TOG) MIND. An evaluation of the programme is currently being written and will be available in September.
 - Local intelligence from SENDIASS and POINT is being used to triangulate with the LA/CCG data sources to inform performance and identify areas of concern.
 - The investment in data modeller capacity has resulted in the development of a comprehensive SEND Dashboard together with a deeper analysis of trend information. This will allow Senior Managers to understand the landscape more, be more targeted in challenging poor performance and to consider investment decisions with greater confidence.
 - Oldham is beginning to see a reduction in Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE). Overall SEND FTE have reduced by 2.7% which is at a faster rate than non-SEND (0.7%). The gap between SEND and non-SEND is further closing with a reduction of 2% in 2018 compared to the same period last year. The most significant decline within the SEND cohort has been with EHCP pupils in primary which reduced from 26.3% to 8.9%, with the number of FTE exclusions reducing from 91 in 2017 to 35 in 2018. However it is not possible to estimate the rates against national because national predictions are not available, however we are continuing to monitor and interrogate local predictions to inform local planning and interventions.

2.6 National attainment data is published once a year and is therefore currently unavailable, however based on un-validated data shows an improvement for children and young people with SEND as indicated below;

- Analysis of un-validated data for Year 11 students indicates that this year:
- There has been an increase in the percentage of pupils with SEN achieving Levels 9 to 4 in GCSE English and Maths in Oldham from 13.6% in 2016 to 19.2% in 2018.
- The SEN attainment gap between pupils without SEN and pupils with SEN achieving Levels 9 to 4 in GCSE English and Maths in Oldham are significantly narrowing as they were 49% in 2016 and have declined to 42.3% in 2018.
- There are now in place more targeted and tailored intervention packages to support the needs of pupils with SEND
- Analysis of un-validated data for Year 6 students indicates that this year:
- The percentage of pupils with SEN meeting the expected standard or better in Key Stage 2 Reading, Writing and Maths in Oldham, has increased from 11% in 2016 to 20% in 2018.
- There are now in place more targeted and tailored intervention packages to support the needs of pupils with SEND

3. Conclusion

3.1 Following the SEND Inspection of October 2017 and the publication of the requirement for a WSOA Oldham Council and partners have worked hard to improve the system and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. This hard work is being recognised by positive feedback from DfE and NHS England officials, parents and young people. The performance figures on key metrics whilst challenging are demonstrating improvements and whilst there is a considerable journey still ahead a way forward has been developed which is showing progress.

4. Key Issues for Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value For Money Select Committee to Discuss

4.1 How can the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value For Money Select Committee support the work of the SEND Partnership Board and SEND Management Group in improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Oldham?

5. Key Questions for Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value For Money Select Committee to Consider

5.1 How have partner agencies, parents, carers, children and young people supported the Council in the Improvement Journey?

5.2 What has been the impact on Council finances of the Inspection outcome? What lessons could be learnt?

5.3 What has been the effect on Oldham Schools of the Inspection outcome and improvement journey?

5.4 What is the wider SEND action plan?

5.4 What other lessons could the Council and partners learn from the SEND Inspection experience?

5. Links to Corporate Outcomes

5.1 The SEND agenda fits with all of the corporate outcomes;

- An Inclusive Economy where people and enterprise thrive;
- Thriving Communities where everyone is empowered to do their bit;
- Co-operative Services with people and social value at their heart.

6. Additional Supporting Information

6.1 Not applicable

7 Consultation

7.1 N/A

8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 Oldham Written Statement of Action
Appendix 2 Oldham SEND Performance Dashboard
