

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 17 July 2019

Staffordshire Response to the Local Area Review – Written Statement of Action



Cllr Mark Sutton, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said,

“The last five years have seen the number of children with a special educational need or disability in Staffordshire increase by a third to more than 15,800.

This rise reflects what is happening elsewhere in the country and while we have made progress in keeping up with the demands of this increase, without a corresponding increase in government funding, we are one of many authorities now asked to advance the rate of improvement.

Now we must focus on working with health services, schools and parents to do more so that all children and young people with special educational needs are able to reach their full potential.

Our detailed, practical plan on how we can achieve this has been endorsed by Ofsted and the CQC and we are determined to deliver its objectives.”

Report Summary:

In November 2018 Staffordshire was inspected by OFSTED and CQC to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. Whilst identifying some strengths, the inspection outcome, like that in many other geographical areas inspected, was that a Written Statement of Action was required to address the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter.

Recommendations

I recommend that:

- a. Cabinet notes the content of the Local Area Written Statement of Action.
- b. Cabinet provides comment and responses to the approach detailed within the Written Statement of Action.

Local Members Interest
N/A

Cabinet – Wednesday 17 July 2019

Staffordshire Response to the Local Area Review – Written Statement of Action

Recommendations of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

I recommend that:

- a. Cabinet notes the content of the Local Area Written Statement of Action.
- b. Cabinet provides comment and responses to the approach detailed within the Written Statement of Action.

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. The Written Statement of Action submitted to Ofsted in April 2019 sets out how Staffordshire County Council and NHS Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups will work together with partners, parents/carers and young people and with school leaders, to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The statement of action is being used to support the collective drive for improvement.
2. The Written Statement of Action has been co-produced with all partners and stakeholders as a strategic response to establish a united vision and strategic plan, organise roles and responsibilities, and to enable effective communication which drives improvement and to share what works well
3. The draft of the Written Statement of Action was presented to the select committee working group. The select committee working group had representatives from the Safe and Strong Communities, Healthy Staffordshire and Prosperous Select committees on 29 March 2019. Committee members made the following comments:
 - a. there needs to be high aspirations and expectations which are regularly reviewed and evaluated.
 - b. clear governance structures need to be in place
 - c. the sub groups of the SEND Partnership Group need to have a broad representation of all stakeholders.
 - d. education providers are crucial in the delivery of the improvements
 - e. the action plan should be informed by learning from other local areas
4. These comments were incorporated into the final statement of action submitted to Ofsted. The final Written Statement of Action was taken to the select committee

working group on 21st June 2019 when there was a recommendation to present the final report and associated documents to Cabinet.

5. Ofsted and CQC deemed the statement of action to be fit for purpose in setting out how the local area will tackle the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter. However, some minor improvements are required.
6. Duties on local areas regarding provision of support for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are contained in the Children and Families Act 2014. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have been tasked with inspecting the effectiveness of local areas in fulfilling these duties.
7. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early year's settings, schools and further education providers.
8. In November 2018 Staffordshire was inspected to provide an independent external evaluation of how well the local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to the SEND Code of Practice.
9. The inspection reported on the following key aspects about the effectiveness of Staffordshire:
 - a. the effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - b. the effectiveness of the local area in assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - c. the effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
10. Whilst identifying some strengths, the Inspectors determined that a Written Statement of Action was required for Staffordshire to address the significant areas of weakness. The Written Statement of Action was co-produced with partners and stakeholders in Staffordshire to detail how the local area will tackle the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter.
11. The select committee working group met to review the content of the draft statement of action and the discussions incorporated into the final document.
12. The Written Statement of Action was published on local websites, sent to Ofsted, CQC and the Secretary of State in April 2019. Ofsted and CQC assessed whether the statement was fit for purpose and the Ofsted Regional Director wrote to the local area to communicate that the statement was assessed as fit for purpose with some minor amendments. The amendments required have been made including the column that identifies who will 'lead' the actions.
13. The SEND Partnership Group has established the sub groups as set out in the Written Statement of Action and these are now developing more detailed plans to support each priority area.

14. To support the delivery of the Written Statement of Action, the local authority is working with CEOs/ Head Teachers/ education leaders/ health representatives /children's social care to develop the strategic plan to roll out the SEND system within a locality district model.
15. The final Written Statement of Action was taken to the select committee working group on 21st June 2019 when there was a recommendation to present the final report and associated documents to Cabinet.
16. Cabinet should note that the local authority is providing additional resource to stabilise the workforce to deal with the significant increase in demand for Education, Health and Care plans along with amending and updating the plans maintained.
17. A further report will be presented to Cabinet in the Autumn which will detail further changes which are required to transform the SEND system and align it to the direction of travel for the Children's system as a whole.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Joint Local Area SEND Inspection in Staffordshire
- Appendix 2 – Staffordshire Local Area Written Statement of Action (WSoA)
- Appendix 3 – Ofsted / CQC WSoA Fit for Purpose Correspondence
- Appendix 4 – Staffordshire SEND Locality District Model

Contact Details

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