

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board – 08 January 2020

Special Educational Needs and Disability

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- a. Note the content of this report and status of the Local Area Written Statement of Action.
- b. Provide comment and responses in regard to the approach set out in the Written Statement of Action and the status of each priority area.
- c. Endorse the direction of travel to improve the SEND service as detailed in the Next Steps section.
- d. Recommend that the HWBB review and sign-off the SEND strategy in September 2020.

Background

1. 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. The inspection outcome was that a Written Statement of Action was required to address the significant areas of weakness identified in the published report letter (<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80561>).
2. The Written Statement of Action (see Appendix 1) was co-produced with all partners and stakeholders as a strategic response to organise roles and responsibilities, establish a united vision and strategic plan, communicate effectively to drive improvement and share what works well
3. 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.
4. The Written Statement of Action was published on local websites, sent to Ofsted, CQC and the Secretary of State in April 2019. HMI 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.

5. A key element of the WSoA is the formation of seven sub groups that would be in the format of task and finish groups; each group is responsible for leading on the focus areas within the eight identified priority areas as outlined in the WSoA.
6. The Chairs of each sub-group will meet monthly prior to the SEND Partnership Group (SPG) to highlight progress of their actions plans, associated risk and inter-dependencies.
7. Risks/issues identified at the Chairs meeting will be escalated directly to the SEND Partnership group who will escalate/report to the Families Strategic Partnership Board ensuring a robust governance process is in place. The seven sub groups are:
 - a. Leadership and Governance
 - b. Joint Commissioning
 - c. Early Years
 - d. Graduated Response
 - e. Assessment and Planning
 - f. Local Offer and Engagement Group
 - g. 8 x District Governing Body Groups
8. Appendix 1 provides the latest status report of the WSoA and each of the 8 priority areas.

Next Steps

9. The SEND Strategy will inform the future multi-agency direction of travel regarding SEND in Staffordshire. The SEND strategy will need to be co-produced with key stakeholders (including engagement with children, young people and families). It is proposed that informal stakeholder engagement takes place during the winter 2019/ 2020 and this engagement will inform the draft SEND strategy that will be formally consulted on during spring and early summer 2020. The strategy is intended to be launched in September 2020.
10. The SEND strategy will contain a set of principles that will underpin the way key partners, particularly, education, health and social care, will work with children, young people and families, communities and partners to meet the needs of people with special educational needs and disabilities.
11. The strategy:
 - a. aims to build on the strengths disabled citizens have by focusing on their skills and qualities, those of their family or carers, and those of their community. Helping people do things for themselves as far as possible, rather than routinely doing things for people is a core principle.
 - b. ensures appropriate support is available at the right time for those with a disability to maximise their independence, and prevents, reduces or delays additional needs.
12. Following the production of the SEND strategy, a range of activity will commence to ensure its effective delivery.

13. The proposed key elements of the SEND model are detailed below:

- a. SEND locality hubs will provide a mechanism to identify and support children experiencing difficulties early, reducing the need for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- b. Children with moderate learning difficulties will be educated within mainstream settings whenever possible.
- c. Special schools will be encouraged to provide outreach support to Mainstream settings.
- d. The special school strategy will ensure that special schools provide for those with the greatest need.

14. At a locality level, the SEND model will be aligned to other locality models, including: Place Based Approach, Harm Reduction Hubs and Supporting Communities. Work is also underway with schools to ensure there is aligned activity at a local level.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Written Statement of Action

Contact Details

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