

Prosperous Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 06 July 2023

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Accelerated Progress Plan: Strategy for Special Provision

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Continue to endorse the actions set out in the Accelerated Progress Plan.
- b. Endorses the proposed Strategy for Special Provision and Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do- Review Pathway.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of Cabinet Member for Education (and SEND)

Summary

What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?

1. Explore and endorse the actions set out in the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (SEND APP).

Report

Background

2. The Staffordshire Local Area SEND revisit inspection took place between 18 and 20 January 2022.
3. The purpose of the re-visit inspection was to determine whether the local area had made sufficient progress in addressing the areas of significant weakness detailed in the Written Statement of Action (WSOA).
4. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission published the re-visit inspection report in March 2022 which detailed that sufficient progress had been made in 6 of the 8 areas of significant weakness. Two remaining areas, Quality of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) and the quality of coproduction were deemed to require accelerated progress. The Local

Authority were required to submit an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) to address these two remaining areas.

SEND Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)

5. On 20 April 2023, The Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England revisited Staffordshire for the 12 month progress review of the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan. On 9 May 2023, Jason Henderson Regional Lead, West Midlands Vulnerable Childrens Unit, DfE concluded that;

"The local area's collective determination to making sustainable improvements to SEND services and to the lives of children and young people continues to be clear. Evidence was also available to demonstrate that progress is being made to improve coproduction, the Education Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment pathway and special provision." (p.1)

6. The Strategy for Special Provision is one of the three key workstreams in the Accelerated Progress Plan. It sets out an ambitious and purposeful plan to address the special educational needs of children and young people with the most complex additional needs whilst holding to the aspiration that education in local mainstream schools is the right place to support most children. In order to achieve this aspiration, there is a recognition that whilst capacity in special schools needs to grow and readjust, it is our mainstream schools that require a significant an innovative strategy to support them to meet the needs of children and young people.

Overview of the Strategy for Special Provision

7. Our Vision is "all children and young people with SEND are given the opportunity to achieve everything that they can. They engage with the right support at the right time from their parents/carers, the community and the professionals that work with them to make this happen."
8. In 2018/19, only 16,300 pupils required SEN Support or an EHCP. As of 2023, 16% of children (21,000) in Staffordshire schools currently require SEN Support or have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The overall SEND population has therefore increased by almost 30% over the past five years. In total, Staffordshire currently maintains 6,977 EHCPs for children and young people aged between 0-25, and almost half (3,200) currently attend a special school.
9. When it comes to supporting children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities to learn and achieve, there are many

examples of excellent practice across the county, and we have and continue to learn from and build on these.

10. Not all children and young people who have a special educational need or disability require an EHCP or need to attend a special school. The level and type of support a child or young person needs to reach their full potential can vary hugely and many can be well supported in their local mainstream schools.
11. We currently see fewer children and young people with an EHCP attend mainstream schools in Staffordshire than elsewhere in the country, (currently 30% in Staffordshire and 40.5% nationally). Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities also do not achieve as well as other children in Staffordshire and parents and schools tell us they are frustrated with the lack of consistency of support across the county.
12. This has made us question what we can do with the resources we've got to improve the way children and young people with SEND are supported to learn and achieve in their local schools, and to have friends and live and grow in their home communities.
13. Achieving this aspiration is highly complex; children and young people have a wide range of different needs, the county is big and different areas face different challenges, the way schools and education works is changing and there are continuing financial pressures for all public sector partners.
14. That is why Staffordshire County Council has been working with our partners over the last 12 months to develop a Strategy for Special Provision that ensures equality of access to education which meets the individual needs of our children and young people in their local community to give them the best start in life and a chance to achieve their potential.
15. If we do nothing:
 - a. We will continue to have a limited binary choice between mainstream and special schools.
 - b. Children and young people will continue to be educated outside of their local communities.
 - c. Children and young people will continue to travel significant distances for education.

- d. We will continue to experience challenges in planning for placement decisions.
 - e. We will continue to encounter delays in placing children and young people.
 - f. Spending on independent provision will increase, which will have a detrimental impact on the High Needs Block (HNB).
16. The Strategy for Special Provision has been informed by the conclusions drawn from a detailed gap analysis of current need and existing provision and the views and ideas of representatives from Health, Social Care, educational settings including Pupil Referral Units, The Virtual School, and parents and carers.
17. The Strategy sets out the methodology by which Staffordshire County Council will ensure that all children and young people can access education which meets their individual needs in their local community to give them the best start in life and a chance to achieve their potential.
18. The Strategy comprises two major components:
- a. The creation of additional provision in Staffordshire special schools based on a detailed analysis of need.
 - b. A pre-statutory Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support Model (SEDIS) accessed via an Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do Review Pathway to provide mainstream educational settings with the resources and support to deliver the graduated response.

Component i: Creation of Additional Provision in Staffordshire Special Schools

19. As part of the Accelerated Progress Plan, Local Authority Officers conducted a Detailed Gap Analysis (DGA) of SEND in relation to special school provision. The DGA suggested key areas of unmet need were specifically found in relation to social emotional mental health needs (SEMH) and Autism. More specifically, the DGA highlighted the paucity of provision for females who experienced needs in both the aforementioned areas of SEND.
20. In order to address these gaps in provision, Local Authority Officers have worked closely with Staffordshire's special schools in order to explore where and how they might be supported to develop additional capacity and provision.

21. This work has resulted in 16 proposals from Staffordshire's special schools that are being considered in light of the DGA. It is proposed that those proposals which meet the demands of the DGA and are viable from a physical building's perspective are developed and progressed as individual projects.
22. Funding for these projects will be secured from existing capital funds that is specifically set aside for developments in our special schools. It is not expected that any additional capital funding will be required in this matter.

Component ii: Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support Model (SEDIS) and Enhanced Assess-Plan-Do-Review Pathway

23. The proposed Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support Model will build upon the current Staffordshire graduated response for special educational needs. It will also further develop the existing district model and locality working. This will ensure children and young people of Staffordshire can access high quality provision which meets their individual needs, when they need it, in their local mainstream educational setting without the need for a formal diagnosis or Educational Health and Care Plan.
24. At the heart of the SEDIS Model are five core principals.
 - a. Supporting inclusion in local mainstream schools
 - b. Earlier evidence based intervention
 - c. Removing barriers to accessing support
 - d. Equity of access to support across the county
 - e. Building restorative and relational educational settings
25. The aim of the proposed SEDIS Model is to:
 - a. Ensure timely, equitable and sustainable placements, which meet the individual needs of our children and young people
 - b. Enable children and young people to be educated in their local community, to give them the best start in life and a chance to achieve their potential
 - c. Prevent school exclusions and reduce the need for in year changes of placement

- d. Reduce the time our children and young people spend travelling to and from their educational setting
 - e. Improve outcomes for children and young people
 - f. Support, enhance and develop capacity to meet SEND in our mainstream settings
 - g. Support our special schools to utilise their places efficiently and effectively and enable them to plan proactively for transition
 - h. Enable the Local Authority and educational settings to manage continued pressure around funding.
26. The model proposes a district-based Enhanced Outreach and Enhanced In-Reach offer for mainstream educational settings based upon the presenting needs of the child/young person. Provision will be 'time limited' and will seek to address unmet SEND needs using an 'ecosystemic' approach drawing on expertise from across Health, Social Care and Education.
27. The provision is designed to be predominantly an Enhanced Outreach approach however, it is recognised some children and young people may require an 'Enhanced In-Reach' placement. Where this is the case, there is expectation that the referring mainstream setting will have engaged with the support offered from the SEDIS Outreach provision. The child or young person will remain dual registered with their home school who will retain responsibility for their academic progress and safeguarding.

Outreach Provision

28. Outreach entails the educational setting that is seeking support receiving additional and enhanced specialist support to develop their capacity to meet the needs of children and young people. This additional provision is provided in the child or young person's school. Outreach is also designed to develop the capacity of the educational setting that is seeking support to meet the needs of all children in their setting in the future.

In-reach Provision

29. In some circumstances, despite high quality Enhanced Outreach support, the child or young person may require specific support that is away from their educational setting. Where this is the case, they may require an Enhanced In-Reach placement with the SEDIS provider. If this level of provision is required, there is expectation that the child or young person's

educational setting will have engaged with the support offered from the SEDIS Outreach provision. SEDIS will be delivered on an individual basis or in small groups and in all circumstances, the child or young person will remain on the roll of their educational setting.

30. Following an 'Enhanced In-Reach' placement there is an expectation that the child or young person returns to their home school after the intervention has taken place. All 'Enhanced In-Reach' placements will be followed by a period of Enhanced Outreach support using a 'laddered' approach to reintegration by the SEDIS staff.
31. SEDIS provision is first and foremost a model of proactive early intervention for children and young people as well as a way of developing sustainable capacity in mainstream educational settings. SEDIS is not a process of 'last resort' prior to exclusion, placement breakdown or a primary method for creating evidence for a referral for an Education Health Care Needs Assessment.
32. SEDIS is for all children and young people (0-25) and is needs based rather than diagnosis led.
33. It is proposed that mainstream educational settings will request SEDIS via the District SEND and Inclusion Hubs where they are experiencing challenges in meeting the SEND needs of a child or young person.
34. The proposal is to implement SEDIS teams in each of the eight districts, although some larger districts may require additional teams. The Local Authority proposes to seek expressions of interest from educational settings to develop SEDIS teams across the 8. In some larger districts, additional teams may also be required.
35. It is hoped that proposals will be forthcoming from groups of educational settings that represent all key stages of education. Expressions of interest will be especially welcomed from groups of mainstream educational settings in collaboration with special schools and Pupil Referral Units.
36. SEDIS teams will be comprised of professionals from educational settings, Local Authority Officers (e.g., Educational Psychologists, Specialist Teachers), colleagues from Pupil Referral Units, Health and Social Care. Teams will require a base of operations with capacity to make provision for In Reach.

Funding the SEDIS Model

37. The Local Authority proposes to fund and support the development of the SEDIS Teams through the District SEND and Inclusion Hubs. Existing capital resources are available for projects to develop building spaces to provide bases for SEDIS teams and In-Reach provision.
38. Funding arrangements for schools seeking support from their local SEDIS team will be provided through existing resources that are held by the District Model. Funding will only be provided for children and young people who the District SEND and Inclusion Hubs and Local Management Groups have determined meet the criteria to enter the new Enhanced Assess Plan Do Review Pathway (EAPDR). Where this criteria is met, it is proposed that any provision that is required will be part and equally funded by the LMG and setting itself.
39. SEDIS Teams will have the capacity to meet the need of a broad range of children's needs. However, a specific model of service delivery has been set out in the Strategy in recognition of the importance of speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). An ambitious strategy to roll out a universal SLCN is set out in the strategy. This will be delivered in partnership with Health professionals. Further proposals are set out that include the development of four SLCN centres in recognition of the importance of this need for all children and young people.

Formal Consultation

40. Staffordshire County Council is inviting educational settings, Health and Social Care professionals, parent/carers and children and young people to share their views on the proposed Staffordshire Enhanced District Inclusion Support Model (SEDIS). The consultation will be over a seven-week period, opening on the **17 May 2023** and closing on the **5 July 2023**. We will consult through an electronic survey and consultation meetings with parents, carers, and professionals. The consultation meeting with professionals took place virtually on **Wednesday 14 June** at **4.00pm**. The consultation meetings with parents and carers will take place on **Wednesday 28 June** and there will be two sessions, **12.00pm** and **6.00pm**. These sessions will be face-to-face.
41. In accordance with the SEND Accelerated Progress Plan, The SEND & Inclusion Partnership Group continue to oversee the implementation of the APP and will provide regular updates to ensure that partners are kept fully aware and informed of actions and progress.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1: Twelve month progress review against the Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) Department for Education. 9 May 2023

Appendix 2: Proposed SEDIS Model Consultation V1.0

Appendix 3: Strategy for Special Provision Timeline

Appendix 4: SEDIS FAQs

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