

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Tuesday 6 July 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	SEND Continuous Improvement Plan Update		
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care (Chair of SEND Continuous Improvement Board) Cabinet Member Education Cabinet Member Children's Social Care		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

### Summary:

The report updates Committee members on the progress made against the actions taken and progress made with regard to the SEND Continuous Improvement Plan.

### Recommendation(s):

Members are asked to

- (1) note the progress made and that activity has continued to be prioritised during the pandemic
- (2) to note the progress to date.

### Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Health & Wellbeing Board provides system leadership, keeps the Council's Cabinet informed of progress and if necessary, will escalate concerns.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) provides additional scrutiny.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:** (including any Risk Implications)  
NA

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs**

There are no direct costs associated with this report as it is to update progress made on the SEND continuous Improvement Plan.

**(B) Capital Costs**

N/A

**Implications of the Proposals:**

**Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):**

Both the Council and CCG have invested significantly in SEND services and support.

**Legal Implications:**

The Children and Families Act (2014) places a statutory duty on local authorities, education providers, CCGs and other NHS organisations to provide support for children and young people with SEN or disabilities aged 0-25. In doing these local authorities, NHS England and their partner CCGs must make arrangements for agreeing the education, health and social care provision reasonably required by local children and young people with SEN or disabilities.

**Equality Implications:**

The equality implications will be assessed as the Improvement Plan progresses. The SEND Continuous Improvement Board will be kept informed of all equality implications, risks and mitigations.

**Climate Emergency Implications:**

The recommendations within this report will

Have a positive impact	Y
Have a neutral impact	N
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y

The introduction of digital appointments and meetings has reduced the number of journeys.

**Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:**

Protect the most vulnerable: The delivery of the Improvement Plan will ensure a focused response on providing improved outcomes for the children and young people

with SEND and their families.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The delivery of the Improvement Plan responding to the revisit and the subsequent activity will need to build the trust and confidence of the community that the Council and its Health partners are delivering on their commitments
Commission, broker and provide core services: Commission, broker and provide core services: A key pillar of the Improvement Plan is the development of a Joint Commissioning Strategy. Through this strategy our ambition is to ensure adequate services that can respond when people need it most. The Joint Commissioning Strategy for SEND was developed in the context of the Children and Young People's Plan "My Sefton: heard, happy, healthy, achieving,'.
On 11th March 2020 the Health & Wellbeing Board agreed the SEND Commissioning Action Plan which has continued to be delivered during the COVID 19 pandemic.
The associated Action Plan will be reviewed in the next quarter
Place – leadership and influencer: The Council is working with partners, in particular commissioners and providers of Health Services, to work towards common goals in relation to the delivery of the Improvement Plan.
The Council has a key role in holding the whole system to account on this matter and will ensure an evidence-based plan is delivered against.
Drivers of change and reform: The Council is working with partners, in particular Health, to make change happen so as to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
Greater income for social investment:
Cleaner Greener

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6440/21) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.4661/21) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

The Council has and will continue to engage with the CCG, other Health partners, the voluntary, community and faith sector, schools and Sefton Parent Carer Forum on this matter.

Engagement with Sefton Parent Carer Forum continues on a regular basis, with new opportunities such as the use of Microsoft Teams being used in light of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The initial parent career survey closed on 18th December 2019. The feedback gathered has been analysed and shared with the SEND Continuous Improvement Board (SENDCIB) and Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services and Safeguarding) in January 2020.

In September 2020 a short survey was undertaken. The aim of this short survey was to take a snap-shot from parents and carers to understand whether you are seeing an improvement in the help and support you are receiving from health, education social care and the SEND casework team in Sefton.

In March this year parents and carers of children/young people with SEND had the opportunity to take part in a third survey on what is going well and what could be improved in our local area. This was a similar survey to that of November 2019 but with a couple of extra questions to understand the impact of COVID-19 and the pandemic and also how long parents and carers had been receiving SEND support for their child/young person.

In March 2020 many children and young people also took part in the Youth Conference. Schools are represented within the governance of the Improvement Plan and updated via the SEND Schools Forum.

### **Implementation Date for the Decision**

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

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### **Appendices:**

NA

### **Background Papers:**

[SEND Improvement Plan](#)

[Joint Commissioning Strategy](#)

[Joint Commissioning Action Plan](#)

[Children and Young People's Plan](#)

[Parent Carer Surveys](#)

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 This report informs Overview & Scrutiny members of the progress made and improvements planned in response to the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission in the joint local area special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) revisit that took place between 15th to 17th April 2019.
- 1.2 Members are aware that in response the partnership has developed and is continuing to make good progress in delivering the agreed Improvement Plan. The SEND Continuous Improvement Board (SENDCIB) continue to receive support and challenge from the NHS England and DfE advisors.
- 1.3 The SENDCIB and its sub groups have continued to meet remotely to monitor progress made and agreed any remedial action during the COVID 19 pandemic and all partners in the Local Area continue to prioritise the delivery of the required improvement.
- 1.4 The Local Area recognises the stress and concern that the COVID 19 pandemic has and continues to cause families and has remained accessible to provide support. All partners put business continuity plans in place and worked together to ensure that robust plans and effective communication was in place during this time of uncertainty. This work included communications confirming that the services in the Local Area are still available to support families.
- 1.5 There is a commitment to continue with SENDCIB on an ongoing basis to ensure continued improvement.

## **2. Delivering the Improvement Plan**

- 2.1 SENDCIB meet and consider progress against the Improvement Plan on a regular basis. The Department for Education has continued to monitor progress and at the time of writing this report another progress meeting was planned to take place. The information below provides an update against actions;

### Action 1

We are aware that national research identifies that most families are satisfied when the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is completed in 20 weeks. The changes made mean that new EHCP assessments are undertaken in a timely and professional manner with children, young people and their families having a named contact and the numbers receiving their plan in 20 weeks is in line with national averages.

Good progress continues to be made and the completion of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) within the 20 week timescales which improved in 2020 with Sefton's SEN2 (annual performance report to DfE)2020 performance 66.6% this was below 10% the previous year (the year of the revisit). At the end of May 2021 performance was running at 65% and 100% of EHCPs were completed in a maximum of six weeks by Health from the date of request.

- 2.2 At the beginning of this process it was agreed that the focus on reviews should be young people who are in transition and all resources have been committed to this

area and improving EHCPs. Good progress has been made in the completions of Years 6 and 11 reviews and additional resource secured to improve performance and at the end of May 2021

- 98% Year 6 reviews completed – 2 exceptions due to complexity.
- 64.5 % Year 11 reviews completed - outstanding reviews where pending ongoing Post 16 consultation on settings. The situation is monitored on a weekly basis. It is anticipated that all Yr 11 reviews will be complete by July 2021.

2.3 To improve the quality of EHCPs the improvement work has included

- Commissioning and delivering of National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) training for the SEN workforce
- SENDIASS (Information, Advice & Support Service) and SEN team delivering awareness training Social Care practitioners
- Putting in place a Multi-Agency co-produced Quality Assurance Framework
- Planning and delivering multi-agency moderation sessions including representatives of Sefton Parent Carer Forum
- Health providers developing internal QA processes and SOPs to review health advices ahead of submission deadlines
- Sharing good practice Escalation and progress reports to SEND Continuous Improvement Board

This has led to significant improvement, from 5th January 2021 to 20th April 2021

- 90 EHCPs written and quality assured
- 14 reviewed by the Multi-Agency Quality Assurance Group and
- 76 by the SEN Management Team
- 87.78% of Education sections of the EHC Plan rated as Good or Outstanding, 92.2% of Health Sections and 95.6% of Social Care Sections
- 92.2% of Health section good or outstanding

2.4 There has been an increase in the number of people accessing Personal Health Budgets (PHBs).

- April 2019 – CCGs reported 14 PHB's for Children with SEND
- March 2021 24 PHB's for Children and Young People with SEND.

#### Action 2

2.5 A documented and approved management and accountability framework is in place for the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) with an oversight framework that sits alongside.

#### Action 3

2.6 Significant training has been delivered to ensure that all relevant health professionals are aware of their responsibilities and contribution to EHCPs. This has led to increased staff confidence, knowledge and understanding of SEND and EHCP requirements. The partnership is keenly aware of the size of the health

economy and new entrants to the workforce and is investigating how to successfully embed this training into the mandatory training programme.

It important to note that all advices for Sefton EHCPs are now being completed by the health practitioners involved in the child or young person's care.

#### Action 4

- 2.7 Addressing the weakness of co-production with parents, and more generally in communications with parents has been a key activity in delivering the Improvement Plan. Parent and Carer Forum representatives now feel more engaged with local leaders and have the opportunity to drive improvement and change. The capacity of Sefton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) is a challenge. The System Leadership and Governance sub group has reviewed attendance at all meetings and SPCF has engaged additional people to support activity. The System and Leadership Sub Group will continue to monitor capacity and where possible address issues as they arise, reprioritising activity if required.

Engagement and communication with young people has remained a priority during the COVID 19 pandemic and has been conducted via telephone and video conferencing for example Schools Get Talking weekly meeting of children and young people with SEND facilitated by voluntary sector. Following the success of the young person's Transition event in February 2021, discussion with the Sefton Parent Carer Forum (PCF) identified the need for a similar event aimed at parents/carers. Two virtual events were held (morning and evening) with presentations from both local FE Colleges, Career Connect and Sefton Social Care Transitions Team. Both sessions were well-attended and positive feedback was received from Sefton PCF and parents.

The 2019 baseline survey was co-designed with representatives of the Sefton Parent and Carer Forum. This survey provided partners with a baseline for the SEND Improvement Plan to monitor experience, involvement and satisfaction around the key areas of Education, Health, Social Care, information provision and on how the system is working together.

Following this a mid-year shorter survey was planned to capture the parent and carer opinion of the local area provision and to track the perception of the impact of the reforms identified in the SEND Improvement Action Plan. Recognising the challenges of 2020, the SENDCIB agreed to postpone the survey from June 2020 until September 2020 and acknowledged that the responses may be influenced by the experiences of COVID/lockdown.

The spring 2021 survey was a duplicate survey to 2019, with a couple of extra questions that SENDCIB wanted to include to help understand the length of time parents and carers (and their child/young person) have been receiving SEND support and services and also to understand any impact COVID may have had during the past 12 months.

The feedback gathered through the three surveys is [published](#) on the Local Offer and a [You Said We Did approach has been adopted](#). In the latest survey a large proportion of respondents either did not answer or indicated that the Social Care related questions were not applicable to them. Of the 2,061 children/young people

with an EHC Plan 313 are known to Children's Social Care. Therefore, the lower response rate to Social Care related questions is not surprising. Examples of Social Care services include; Aiming High, Respite (Springbrook), the Children with Disabilities Team, Children's Social Care and Early Help. Members are asked to note the progress to date.

2.8 The partnership's commitment to co-production and collaboration remains strong and examples of activity include;

- Preparing for Adulthood Guide
- Schools Get Talking Forum
- Refreshed co-produced Local Offer website launched January 2021
- Graduated Approach Booklet coproduced with parents/carers
- The CAMHS 'one stop shop' on line information and referral platform <https://www.seftonliverpoolcamhs.com/>
- Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) information leaflet and statement
- Evaluation of the Alder Hey "Calm and Connected" virtual mental health support network
- Personal Health Budget (PHB) leaflet targeted at CYP with SEND
- A Parent Carer Forum Rep was part of interview Panel for Service Manager for SEND post and similarly will also be for the Senior SEN Casework Officer post

The work associated with Action 4 has led to improved parental trust and confidence. The parent carer survey in 2019 the level of feeling listened to 62% and this increased slightly to 64% in the short survey. In the parent carer survey April 2021 this level has now increased to 85%.

2.9 Investment has strengthened the SENDIASS offer leading to:

- All contacts are responded to within five working days
- Improved quality of offer
- Steering group continues to oversee the role and impact of Information Advice and Support Services (IASS)
- SENDIASS being part of the EHCP multi -agency audit group, attend the KIT meetings and the Coproduction sub group meetings.

#### Action 5

2.10 A SEND Needs Analysis has been developed, Joint Commissioning Strategy approved and associated Action Plan developed. Good progress is being made in the main and the Action Plan will be reviewed in Q2/3 this year in light of the pandemic and a refreshed needs analysis.

This work has included the co-produced enhancements to the Local Offer website although it is recognised that further work is still required to improve navigation and a review of Aiming High and respite services.

The Joint Commissioning Plans are also focusing on OT sensory, Speech, language and communication pathway in the early years utilising Public Health

England national developments. A project group has factored in training for the wider workforce and peer supporters. The pandemic has had an impact on this area of work.

- 2.11 Following investment a new diagnostic pathway was implemented in April 2020 including an agreed waiting list management plan to reduce the historic waiting list to zero. In October 2020, CCGs agreed additional investment for ASD pathway to be extended to 16-18 years, bridging the commissioning gap. The extended service commenced November 2020. There has been a significant increase in demand for the service since November 2020. A number of mitigation actions have been taken including the use of independent sector providers to support assessments for new ASD pathway & further revisions to referrals forms to ensure the process is as efficient as possible. This has improved the timeliness to start the assessment process. Since the implementation of the new ASD pathway, waiting times targets have been achieved in the main. At the end of April 2021, 96% of assessments commenced within 12 weeks. The historic waiting list is on schedule to be zero by the end of June 2021, as planned. Since the additional investment of the 18 years plus ASD waiting list initiative and pathway, there have been improvements to the waiting times for those between 18 – 25 years, who have been prioritised. All assessments for this cohort are expected to be completed by the end of June 2021.

Since the implementation of the new pathway, there has been continued engagement with parent/carer forums and young people, specifically in the development of new ASD/ADHD referral forms and accessible service information, and in assessing the effectiveness of digital approaches in the assessment and diagnosis process.

- 2.12 Agreed improvement trajectories and milestones are being met for reduction in waiting times for Dietetics, Speech and Language, Occupational therapy and Physiotherapy. Throughout the pandemic services continued to carry out local risk assessments and prioritise therapy caseloads and new referrals in accordance with risk and needs of the child/young person. Services continue to accept referrals and offer home visits for any high clinical priority patients. All other face to face interventions are offered virtually, by telephone or Attend Anywhere.

The CCGs additional short-term mental health funding to Alder Hey and third sector providers has supported service resilience and an improvement in CAMHS waiting times. Alder Hey has submitted a business case outlining the additional resource required to match the current and projected 30% increase in demand for mental health services predicted over the next two years. Notably the increase in the demand for urgent and complex case appointments and treatment plans.

In response to the business case and national increase in mental health funding, the CCGs are working with local partners to agree the local CAMHS investment plans and the timely release of funds to enable Alder Hey and third sector providers to mobilise extra service capacity as soon as possible.

In response to COVID and increasing waiting times, Alder Hey set up the 'Calm and Collected' virtual support network and in February wrote to all the children and young people and their families open to CAMHS informing them of this support and other support available to them while they wait. A new 'one stop shop'

online mental health information and referral platform was launched in May 2021, to support children, young people, parents and professionals to access information and make referrals into partnership mental health services in Liverpool and Sefton: <https://www.seftonliverpoolcamhs.com/>

There is a continued development, expansion and promotion of the local mental health service offer, including the training and support to schools to bolster their skills and knowledge in supporting CYP's mental health. This includes the development and implementation of a 'Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Toolkit for Schools & Colleges'. As part of the national roll out of Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools, Sefton is currently mobilising two MHSTs and has been awarded further funding for a third team, to be implemented in 2022/23:

In response to the increase in demand for mental health support and in response to COVID, the capacity of the online counselling platform Kooth the Council further invested and the age range extended to include 18 -25-year olds. . The site is staffed by fully trained and qualified counsellors and is available until 10pm each night, 365 days per year. It is free, safe, confidential and provides a non-stigmatising way for young people to receive counselling, advice and support on-line. [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

The local CAMHS partnership has grown in strength, working collectively to raise awareness of the wider mental health offer and reduce pressure on specialist CAMHS services. This includes the development of a 'COVID-19 CAMHS Bulletin', a partnership led CYP Mental Health Awareness Week campaign in May, and engagement in the national LINK training programme for schools.

2.13 A progress meeting with the Department for Education took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021.

### **3. Conclusion**

3.1 Significant progress has been made in delivering the action plan. All actions are complete and where appropriate embedded into business as usual. The pandemic has impacted on some elements of the plan including collection of educational attainment data, however, governance arrangements and plan activity continued throughout the pandemic

3.2 The most important issue to address though is what impact has this had on the lived experience of children and young people with SEND and their families. Some of the changes made mean that they

- are clearer about the assessment process, quality assurance practices and involved in the production of EHCPs.
- are part of the review process and all children and young people accessing an appropriate educational placement
- (Parents and carers) have the opportunity to feedback through surveys and are involved in the co-production of the survey
- have improved access to and response from SENDIASS

- have access to a NICE compliant neurodevelopmental diagnostic pathway
- experience reduced waiting times for medical appointments
- experience fewer cancelled appointments
- have digital access to clinicians
- have improved access to mental health information and support, and option to self-refer to services.
- have access to Kooth - online support for children and young people in Sefton aged 10-25 years old
- have access to 24 hour crisis CAMHS helpline

### 3.3 The most recent parent carer survey in 2021 reports

- o 61% of respondents felt that their education needs were met quite well or very well and a further 20% felt their needs were being met.
- o On the monitoring and assessment satisfaction questions for education 71% of respondents gave positive responses compared to 29% negative. Satisfaction was highest for Early Years Providers, Nursery/School/College and the EHCP Review.
- o feeling listened to in a calm and respectful manner stood out as particularly positive, with education establishments receiving over 91% positive feedback and the SEND Team 85%.

### 3.4 As mentioned earlier in the report there is a commitment to continue with SENDCIB on an ongoing basis to ensure continued improvement.