

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE		
Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services and Safeguarding)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Diane Roscoe	Education	August 2023

Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme

Module 3 has been completed and the final application for grant funding has been submitted to the DfE. This has passed the first stage of quality assurance with positive feedback on the quality of the application. A further stage of work is required for submission before 8th September before final grant decisions are made in the middle of September by the DfE. Further discussions are taking place with DfE and other national bodies in relation to the wider national issue that exists around the High Needs Funding Budgets for Councils.

OFSTED Local Area Inspection preparation

The SEND Improvement Consultant has led developments of the contingency planning for the pending SEND Local Area Ofsted Inspection over the past few months. The self-assessment audit has been completed and a short-term improvement plan created alongside a longer-term continuous improvement plan. A multi-agency joint vision day is being held 4th September to ensure consistency across the local area partnerships. Governance arrangements have been reviewed and refreshed and a new SEND Dashboard is to be presented to the SEND Continuous Improvement Board in September.

SEND

Compliance with the 20-week timeframe for EHC Assessments currently sits at 34.6% for the year. August monthly figures increased to 50% from 39.4% in July. The current backlog of cases is at 100. Agreement has been given to increase capacity within the SEND Team to respond to the recent performance levels and quantity of EHC Plans in the system. Interviews took place in August and 9 new SEN Casework Officers have been appointed. They will start during the Autumn Term at various stages depending on their notice periods at current employers. Agreement has also been given for an initially interim Head of Service role across the SEND and Inclusion areas to ensure greater co-ordination and strategic management.

Inclusion

By the end of the Summer Term the Inclusion Consultants were involved in completing SEND Nutshells and Health Care checks across Sefton. To help schools understand their profile of SEND needs, their strengths, and developments linked to the new OFSTED framework. This work has been recognised within recent Ofsted inspections.

Initial meeting to discuss Inclusion Strategy with key partners have been held. Priorities and next steps identified with a 'roadmap' developed for the Autumn Term.

Joint meetings with the Early Years SEND team to meet with school regarding the new reception cohort for Sept 2023. The focus was to prepare schools for the high levels of children entering in September and consider group funding and alternative support packages rather than individual funding.

All secondary school were involved in a roll out of behaviour training offered commissioned by the Inclusion team from Tor View behaviour hub.

Transition events held for Primary/Secondary to share information and support the high schools understand the cohorts for September 2023.

Schools have been audited by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) for their views on Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) within their settings. EBSA guidance is being developed by the EPS. Meetings are due to take place in the autumn term with a number of partners to look at the contents of this guidance and to plan further actions to address this area of need, including the development of training for schools.

School Improvement

Primary statutory assessment (testing and moderation) successfully took place across the summer term. The processes in all schools were thorough and there were no concerns reported to Standards and Testing Agency (STA).

Initial analysis of primary school data has taken place and has been used to allocate school support; further analysis and response will take place once validated in October.

We have 14 Professional Partners dedicated to supporting our school improvement offer, including a secondary phase specialist to support our 3 maintained secondary schools and Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).

Our brokered CPD offer for the next academic year, funded by school improvement, has been finalised and is now available to schools. In addition, an extensive programme of training is in place to support primary statutory assessment provided by our newly appointed school improvement officer.

In response to discussions during our Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) meetings, school improvement has brokered subject knowledge and pedagogy training on religious education for each Key Stage at primary. Sefton SACRE are facilitating the Jewish Living Exhibition in October at the Formby PDC. Following the launch attended by local councillors and community representatives, schools have been invited over a 2-week period to a range of workshops.

We welcome 12 new Headteachers to the LA; all have been allocated a mentor and have been invited to a welcome briefing in October.

Early Years

The Early Years Transition event was well attended and feedback was positive from both PVI settings and Schools.

We have continued to support both PVIs and Schools in terms of quality improvement. Schools in the OFSTED window receive a Health Check from the Early Years Team leader and PVIs are supported to review the Quality of provision using the Quality

improvement tool on an annual basis – this then identifies the level of support required from QIOs and Early Years Quality Improvement.

In order to promote careers in childcare we have attended a number of Liverpool City region events to share best practice and ideas for promoting a career in Early Years. The Early Years Partnership and Projects Co-ordinator is working in collaboration with other professionals across sefton on promotion materials and ways in which Sefton can support those who are looking to working in childcare and to entice those who may not yet have considered a career to enter the profession.

Our SEND caseload continues to increase and we now have 600 children across the Early Years SEND service with 172 Early Years Children accessing high needs funding (HNF). We will be launching the Graduated Approach Tool Kit for providers and Schools on 20th September.

The Early Years team work closely with the inclusion service on delivering better values. The action plan has been created collaboratively with the inclusion team to ensure that it has the most impact on the service.

Virtual School

The summer school for UASC at Hugh Baird was a success, and we have agreed a new ESOL course will start in September, enabling young asylum seekers in Year 11 to go to college.

Pleasing Year 13 results, with 2 young people going on to do degrees, one doing a high-level apprenticeship and one doing a degree access course. Still analysing Year 11 results.

Regular surgeries are held in Magdalen House by Tabby Walker Simmonds for Social Workers to offer advice, guidance and support with education. The take up is slow. However, Tabby is receiving email and phone enquires and is in contact with schools.

Electronic PEPs have improved. This year, all young people from 16-18 (or Year 13 if in education) will have a PEP. There is an adapted PEP for those who are NEET.

Attendance

We have 3 early help workers now attached to the team. They will be focussing on identifying wider factors preventing attendance from a whole family perspective. They will be supporting team around the school, however, this only involves 25% of schools so they will be a supporting member rather than a core member.

Attendance has dipped and during the summer break we have undertaken over 200 visits to children and their families. There have been some complaints as addressing attendance can be a challenging role. All schools have received feedback.

We are still continuing with a first day response team for children with a social worker.

Sefton Council will be undertaking a community messaging campaign using a variety of social media platforms to reinforce the message of the importance of school

attendance. This will be to emphasise the connection between strong attendance and children achieving their full potential.

We will be addressing the issue of children being taking out on holidays during term time.

Community-wide messaging campaigns will make it easier for schools and partners to share this important information with families and for families to hear reinforcing messages everywhere they go.

Our message will also be if you are struggling to get your child into school contact the school.

The campaign will begin at the beginning of the school year and then continue throughout the year. They include strategies to address predictable attendance dips, for example, before and after the holidays, during rainy or snowy weather, or at the end of the year.

Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)

One primary school and one secondary academy have been identified with possible issues with RAAC. Both schools are having detailed surveys conducted and the primary school has no issues with RAAC. We still wait the outcome for the secondary academy.