

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE Overview and Scrutiny (Children's Services and Safeguarding)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
Diane Roscoe	Cabinet Member Children, Schools and Families	September 2024

Education Update

1. DBV Inclusion

- The recent Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV) Department for Education (DfE) DFE progress report and review has been successful and the DFE feedback has been extremely positive. Overall, the programme continues to be on track with the proposed adjustments made to some activities within the workstreams and timescales following the last progress report and meeting.
- The appointment of two Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) from local schools has been successful and they have focused solely on the Graduated Approach and Toolkit. This has allowed the workstream to move with momentum. There has been significant benefit for having two well established practicing Senco's supporting this area of work.
- The first phase of the Graduated Approach document will be completed by Autumn term. This consists of provision maps for each area of need; SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health), Communication and Interaction, Cognition and Learning and Autism and Complex needs. This document will be a holistic representation for all areas of need across the partnership. The Graduated Approach launch will be held on the 17th of October with an initial briefing for Sefton head teachers. The launch will be with health colleagues as they launch their Speech and Language therapy (SALT) primary toolkit and give insight into the secondary toolkit available later in the Autumn term. A hard copy of the SALT toolkit for all primary schools will be available on the day. The launch will also include the Inclusion web page launch supported by Comms. In addition, there will be a parental section available with resources, training, and support for children with SEND.
- Work has continued with Warrington Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Gary Cunningham to support an social emotional mental health (SEMH) outreach model connected to a provision in Sefton. In July, Gary presented Warrington's SEMH Outreach Hub approach with positive feedback from head teachers. A further date was provided in September for schools unable to attend. From this, an expression of interest will be sent to schools and settings who feel they are able to provide this service from their setting which will be financially funded through the DBV for 12 months and consist of a specialist SEMH teacher, (High Level Teaching Assistant) HLTA and business support. The outreach support will provide advice, guidance, and targeted support for SEMH children and children who are at risk of exclusion. Gary will provide 5 days of additional consultancy support to the school that supports this service.

Workforce Training Package

- The workforce training workstream has been developed for the next 12 months and a training booklet is being developed to be provided in September. This includes training for parents/carers, professional partners and schools on the graduated approach and key areas identified for SEND. The first professional partner graduated approach training session was held on the 18th of July with positive feedback. From this, there is a plan in place to roll this out over the next academic year. This includes Team Around the School (TAS) partners over the next 12 months and delivery to Sefton Family Hubs working in partnership with Early Help.
- Due to recent events in Southport, the Inclusion Conference date has been postponed from the 25th of October and will be delivered on the 14th of February 2025. All key speakers can deliver on this date. There will also be additional workshops based on recent events, including Anna Freud, to deliver appropriate sessions including anxiety and attendance.

SEND

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

- Compliance with the 20-week timeframe for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) currently sits at 43.3% for the year. June was 57%, July 45% and August is currently at 60%.
- Service Manager and Senior SEND Casework Officers meet weekly to prioritise cases to increase compliance and reduce the backlog.
- The improvement plan for this year is to be at 60% compliance consistently by the end of the year.
- Compliance for Health and Educational Psychology advice being returned continues to be over 90%, with Social Care advice being returned within 6 weeks, is consistently over 70% since September 2023.
- The current number of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) which are out of time, i.e., have exceeded the 20-week statutory timescale is 49. This is a decrease of 71 since last reported. The team are working on clearing the backlog while also ensuring compliance remains a priority. The backlog has significantly reduced, at its highest it was over 200 cases.
- **Presfield School:** The Local Authority converted a storage area within the school to a classroom for another 4 pupils. This has prevented 4 tribunals and enabled the LA to name to the school of parent's choice. The building work is completed. work is progressing well and is due to be completed in time for the new academic year.
- **Freshfield Primary:** The addition of a double unit modular classroom to the site will allow us to increase the SEN Unit provision from 20 places to 28. The modular classroom is due to be onsite during the Autumn term and has allowed the LA to support 4 pupils which had been named to their mainstream reception class to move across to the SEN Unit. Their needs would not have been met within the mainstream class and would have most likely ended up in independent special schools at some point in the future, at considerable cost to the Local Authority. A further 3 pupils have also been agreed for the SEN Unit who are going through the Tribunal process.
- **Bishop David Shepperd:** Building work has commenced on site to develop a new SEN Unit. Unfortunately, due to a building supply issue, this will not be open for September. It has been postponed until October. The Local Authority is currently working with the school to develop a contingency plan for the pupils due to start in September.

- **Post 16:** -Work is being undertaken currently to agree the new lease for the Thornton College site with Hugh Baird College. As part of this, a review of the curriculum offer will be undertaken to ensure it provides progression for Post 16 learners predominantly from Rowan Park, Merefield and Crosby High settings.
- **Systems Development:** Work is progressing with developing the Capita One system in line with the best value review. The SEN team now use this system to record communications and new EHC assessments. The Timeline functionality has been delayed due to an issue with a recent upgrade, but Capita have provided a workaround solution until a hot fix can be provided. Work has also started to develop the system for the other SENIS teams to enable them to record their interventions with pupils. This will bring us closer to having one system recording across education teams. Further work remains to record Finance information within the system, but this needs to follow the Funding Review to ensure that this goes hand in hand and is fit for purpose.

Post 16 SEND

New Programmes

For 2024/25 we have developed 2 pilot programmes in partnership with local Providers:

- Hugh Baird Engage Programme aimed at those young people who requested online educational provision. While starting with online teaching, the aim is to encourage learners to attend College in person over the academic year.
- SWRAC Routes Programme has been designed to increase educational options for those young people that have historic poor attendance records in Secondary School due to reasons such as anxiety.
Both cohorts have seen a significant increase in numbers following Covid.
- **New Provision-** We have helped to broker a partnership between Phoenix and SWRAC which will increase Post 16 educational options in Southport.
- **Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) /Transition** We continue to work with local Providers to improve the existing Transition process. As an example, Partners meet on a termly basis to identify and address potential issues for the Crosby High cohort. As a result, we produced updated College videos which can be shared at EHCP Reviews and added to the Sefton Local Offer pages. We have also updated the Sefton PFA Transition Guide in conjunction with Health and Social Care Partners.
- We have worked with the Sefton Parent Carer Forum to organise a Preparation for Adulthood event on 9th October 2024
- **Supported Internships** Our current projection is that numbers participating in the Supported Internships programme will increase from 21 in 2023/24, to 30 in 2024/25. We plan to hold another Supported Internship event for potential Interns and their parents/carers in early 2025 following the successful event in January 2024.
- We continue to work closely with Liverpool City Region partners to increase the breadth and quality of Supported Internship opportunities across the City Region.

Performance

Sefton 16-17 SEND

- Sefton in learning performance is 85.3%. This is 2.4% better than the statistical neighbour average of 82.9%.

- Sefton combined not in education, employment or training (NEET) & Not known (NK) is 12.3% and this is 1% better than the statistical neighbour average of 13.3%.
- Sefton is ranked 5th highest for In Learning / 6th lowest for combined NEET & NK

Sefton 16-24 SEND

- Sefton in learning performance is 76.7%. This is 11.1% better than the statistical neighbour average of 65.6%.
- Sefton combined NEET & NK is 18.9%. This is 11.1% better than the statistical neighbour average of 30%.
- 16-24 SEND – Sefton is ranked 5th highest for In Learning and 4th lowest for combined NEET & NK

Local/National Comparison

- Sefton In learning for 16-17 is 85.3% - the best Performance in the Liverpool City Region
- SEND NEET for 16-24 has increased by 3.7% year on year to 17.4%. This is 3.7% above the Northwest average at 13.7%. Sefton Not Known for SEND 16-24 is 1.6%, this figure is 20.6% below the NW average at 22.2%.
- A low Not Known figure is key to validating true NEET data, as many of those young people classed as Not Known will be NEET. The Combined NEET/Not Known data is a more accurate performance measure and the Sefton 16-24 figure is 17.6% compared to the Northwest combined measure of 35.9%.

SEND September Guarantee

- Year 11 figure is 96.5%. This means that there are currently 7 young people with no offer of learning for September.
- Year 12 figure is 85%. There are currently 26 young people with no offer of learning for September.
- This is common at this time of year, and Career Connect continues to work with this cohort to identify a suitable destination before the reporting deadline to the Dept. for Education at the end of September.

School Attendance

Sefton has been preparing to implement the new guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance which will become Statutory from September 2024.

In summary the guidance has been updated to:

- Be clear on the link between improving attendance and wider school culture, including the importance of working in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance.
- Reflect changes to the law on keeping school attendance and admission registers including a revised set of codes, granting leave of absence, and sharing of attendance data.
- Information introduced through the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Set out the new National Framework for issuing penalty notices and reflect changes to the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.
- Change 'parenting contracts' to 'attendance contracts' to better reflect the agreement between parents, schools, and/or local authorities.
- Strengthen responsibilities of schools and how they respond to absence and work in partnership with families and the Local Authority.

- Respond to children who are experiencing physical or mental ill health.
- Provide further clarity on the role of the Local Authority in supporting schools to meet the requirements of the guidance.

The expectations of Local Authorities in the revised national guidance are as follows:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance.
- That prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools, and unblocks area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools:
- Communication and advice to schools and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- Targeted Support Meetings: hold regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
- Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed, to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
- Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with. Legal intervention should always be a last resort when all other avenues of support have been exhausted.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.

Sefton response to the changes

- All schools should be sighted and understand the changes to the new guidance, which is now a mandatory requirement from September 2024, so they are clear on the process.
- Piloted targeted support meetings in primary school. This will be fully rolled out to secondary schools (September 2024)
- All schools in Sefton are actively utilising the government's WONDE education attendance reporting system.
- A new co-created policy for responding to pupils with health needs has been written and promoted to ensure that schools and partners are intervening in line with the new guidance.
- The current local attendance strategy and associated guidance is being updated to ensure that it encompasses the recent changes to statutory guidance and includes a graduated response.
- A clear communication and marketing plan to also raise awareness amongst professionals, parents, and carers across the borough.
- Sefton Council have written to all parents and carers about the outlining important changes to Penalty Notices for unauthorised absences from school.
- Meetings with Children's Social care in relation to the new guidance delivered by Deputy Virtual School Headteacher (Children with a Social Worker)
- Meetings with SEND caseworkers.
- System will be set up by September 2024 to receive data from independent and out of borough SEND places.
- Education Working Party set up with Sefton Youth Justice Team

- First day response for children with a social worker
- Schools will also have access to the termly attendance network meetings facilitated by the Local Authority attendance team. The networks include representatives of other partners and services in these sessions such as health, youth justice and children's services to promote a multi-disciplinary approach.
- Implement a system for 'illness' reporting for schools. In line with the new guidance, schools will be expected to report a child or young person absent due to illness after a continuous or cumulative period of 15 days.
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance co-produced guidance has been shared with schools and there have been training sessions with staff and parents.
- The overall absence figures comparing academic years 22/23 (8.2%) and 23/24 (7.7%) has decreased by 0.5%, which is an improvement. Absence figures for children with an EHCP (12.7%), Cared for Children (8.7%) have remained the same. There has been an improvement in absence for Primary school aged children by 0.4%. There has been an improvement in absence for Secondary school aged children by 0.3%. There has been an improvement in absence for children attending SEND schools by 0.7%. Persistent absence figures have improved right across the board. The main improvement has been with children in receipt of SEN Support by 5.8%. Overall, persistent absence figures have improved by 1.1%.

Early Years

- Several of our private nurseries and childminders have been supported to move from inadequate or requires improvement to 'Good'. The LA staff working with them have provided support and challenge to ensure they were all prepared for inspection and that the children who attend are receiving good support. 98% of private providers in Sefton are either rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- The Early Years Service has been chosen by the DFE to be part of a pilot for 'Early Years workforce incentives. Early Years Providers who meet criteria for the incentives have received their information sharing agreement and the terms and conditions document to be signed and returned. The pilot is now live and to date we have 14 practitioners eligible for the incentive.
- Sefton are currently working with the Liverpool City Region on a key piece of work with Young People – They have been invited to complete a questionnaire with a focus on a career in Early Years together with Early Years training routes. Sefton are keen to understand what the barriers to a career in Early Years are and how they can support as an LA to address and overcome any barriers. We are also asking for input from Secondary schools to identify the training opportunities and experience on offer to young people to support them in a career path for Early Years.
- As part of the expansion of wrap around provision we have completed our delivery plan for the allocation of funding and creation of places – This has been agreed by the DFE and we have had 100% of our funding allocated. We have received and reviewed expressions of interest for Capital funding and Program funding. Contracts for those who have been successful are being finalised with the Sefton Legal team.
- Sefton Early Years remains in the 1st position compared to our statistical neighbours for uptake of 2-year-old disadvantaged offer. 96% of disadvantaged 2-year-olds are accessing their entitlement.
- Sefton Early Years service has above national average for our validation of codes for the expansion of childcare:

Validation code rate

- Under 1's - 67.4% validation
- 1-year olds - 76.9% validation
- 2-year-olds - 68.8% validation

- Following the tragic incident in Southport, the Early Years Team have been proactively supporting settings and providers. Initially targeted support to those closest to the incident with a package of resources brought and delivered to settings to support children most affected. The Early Years Service have also commissioned Jenny Nock to deliver 10 bite sized training sessions for managers and practitioners based on supporting children through this challenging time. Some of the topics discussed are 'difficult conversations', 'regression' and 'appropriate language and terminology to use when talking to children'. The Early Years Service has developed their own recovery plan that is closely linked to the Education recovery plan to ensure that support is offered across the education and childcare sector.

School Improvement

2024 provisional results (unvalidated)

Phonics

- 80.3% of Year 1 pupils passed the check; this result is in line with the Northwest average (79.8%) and national (80.2%). This is also an improvement on 2023 outcomes by 0.5ppts.
- Outcomes for Pupil Premium pupils were below national and NW results; pupils with SEN performed slightly below national but above NW.

KS2

- 73% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading; this is slightly lower than national (74.2%) and in line with NW results (73.3%).
- In writing, 69.6% of pupils achieved the expected standard; this is slightly below the NW average (70.4%) and national (71.7%).
- 70.6% of pupils achieved the expected standard in maths; this is below both national (73%) and Northwest (72.4%) outcomes.
- In grammar, punctuation and spelling, 71.4% achieved the expected standard, slightly lower than national and Northwest results (72%).
- In combined RWM outcomes, 33 schools were below the Sefton average of 57%.
- Boys performed lower than girls in all subjects except maths.
- PP and SEN pupils performed below their non-FSM/non-SEN peers in all subjects.
- EAL pupils performed below in reading and writing.
- Summer born pupils performed below in all subjects.

GCSE (NB 3 schools are LA maintained)

- English - 69.4% achieved a Grade 9 – 4; this is a decrease of 5.8% from 75.2% in 2022/23. 53.7% achieved Grade 9 – 5, also a decrease of 2.3ppts on 2022/23
- Maths - 62.4% achieved a Grade 9 – 4; this is a decrease of 4.8% from 67.1% in 2022/23.
- 43.4% achieved a Grade 9 – 5; this is an increase of 0.2% from 43.2% in 2022/23.
- Ebacc - 17.3% achieved a Grade 9 – 4; this is a decrease of 0.1% from 38.2% in 2022/23. 10.6% achieved a Grade 9 – 5; this is an increase of 0.8% from 9.8% in 2022/23.

Post – 16 results

- In total, 574 children completed a Level 3 qualification at a Sefton secondary school with Sixth Form provision.

A level (566 students):

- The average grade for 2024 is a C; this is the same as 2023.
- 15 students achieved 3 A* - A grades

Applied General Qualifications (366 students):

- The average grade for 2024 is a Distinction-. The average grade for 2023 was a Merit+.

Tech Level Qualifications (36 students):

- The average grade for 2024 is a Distinction. The average grade for 2023 was a Dist-.

Ofsted:

- As of 1^{3th} June 2024, 94% of maintained primary schools are rated good or better, with 12% outstanding; 100% of the maintained nurseries (3) and 100% maintained secondary schools (3) are good or better.

Support for schools:

- Schools are currently being risk assessed according to the criteria contained within the School Improvement Strategy. The final categorisation decision will be made early September following intelligence sharing from across the EE teams. Schools will then be notified and allocated a professional partner or wider support.
- There are six schools currently on the 'Schools Causing Concern' protocol: three primaries, one secondary, one special and one PRU. Three of these have an academy order with two converting by the end of the autumn term.
- Nine new Headteachers start in the LA in September and will receive a broad range of support through our HT induction programme.
- A full CPD programme of support for primary statutory assessment is in place; recruitment of KS2 moderators will begin in September in readiness for the mandatory moderation exercise in January.

Academisation:

- Eleven schools have converted to academy status for the start of the academic year. Another eight schools are in the process of converting to academy status or have declared an intention to do so.
- There continues to be weekly meetings with the DfE, and with LA officers involved in conversions.

14-19 Participation:

Statutory Duty to Participate in Learning post 16

- Sefton is still ranked first in the LCR and Northwest with 91.2% of young people moving into full time education. Currently the year 11 and 12 leavers cohort are being tracked and supported to ensure we meet our statutory requirements in relation to the September Guarantee and a suitable offer of further learning. Data will be available at the end of September for this year's leavers. Advice is also being provided during A Level and GCSE results days.

NEET (Not in education, employment, or training)

- Sefton continues to have the lowest NEET and the best tracking performance for young people in the City Region currently at 3.5% and lower than our statistical neighbour which is Wirral. However there has been an increase in NEET for June compared to the same period (June 2023). This has been a trend locally, across the city region and nationally. Our vulnerable groups now make up 70% of the NEET cohort in particular young people with SEND needs. Additional provision has been commissioned to improve the availability of opportunities and we are increasing the number of Supported Internships. Early interventions with young people both pre and post 16 at risk of NEET are key strands of our strategy to improve participation.

Post 16 Provision

- Through our 14-19 partnerships, we have commissioned Hugh Baird, Southport College and The Learning Foundry again for 2024/2025. This will provide additional places to support the NEET cohort and help our most vulnerable young people move into suitable employment, education or training. This was a result of additional funding we were able to secure from the D for E. We also had detailed discussions with Ofsted regarding our concerns about suitable provision at our recent "Annual Conversation".
- **Gatsby Benchmarks** Schools are still making steady progress in relation to standards for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) and Careers Leaders recently completed their Compass self-assessments against the standards. All secondary schools apart from 1 who have been inspected in 2023/2024 have been judged to be meeting their statutory requirements for CEIAG. An Action Plan has been agreed to address the concerns raised in relation to the school that needs to make improvements. We continue to roll out pilots in relation to Careers Education in Primary settings with a focus on raising aspirations.

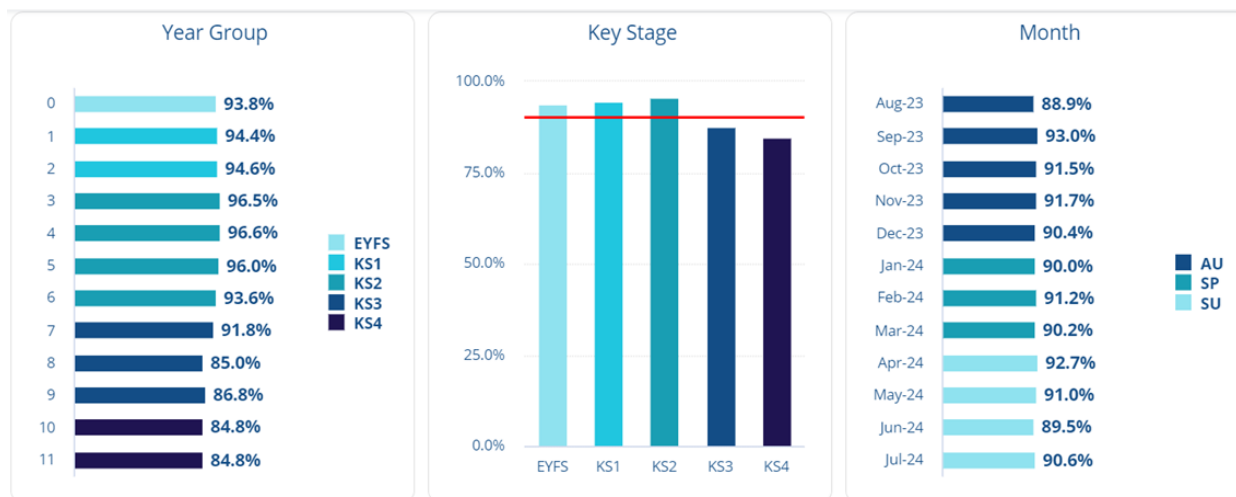
Virtual School

Attendance Analysis - Summer Term

All figures based on Cared for Children of statutory school age (403 children)

- Academic year 2023/2024 = 91.03% (National data for all children 92.8%)
- Years 0-6 remain above the national average figures.
- EHCP attendance 88.9%
- SEN attendance (K codes) 88.8%
- Persistent absence 23.82% (96 children)
- Severe absence 3.23% (13 children)

- 20 pupils had 100% attendance for the full academic year
- 300 pupils had 90%+ attendance for the full academic year



Actions:

- Detailed scrutiny of all children who are SA or PA. All children and their schools will be visited in the first half term and the plan for attendance reviewed. Pupil voice will be a priority. All will have an attendance plan included in their PEP.
- Elevate will be commissioned for Years 9-11 to provide a bespoke package for children who will be at risk of becoming NEET
- Closer collaboration with other teams/ agencies (e.g. EPs, children’s services and school attendance) to ensure that we understand the reasons for absenteeism and ensure that there are appropriate interventions.
- Continue rewards for over 95% attendance

PEPs

- The completion rate of PEPs has remained over 93% throughout this academic year. PEPs graded good or better fell slightly from 73% to 62% in the summer term, but this followed a dip sampling programme that resulted in a more rigorous approach to the target setting and pupil voice elements of the plans. Additional training sessions on SMART target setting and capturing the voice of the child will be offered to Designated teachers in the autumn term.

Post 16

- Our Year 13 pupils have achieved excellent results. All 7 of our HE applicants have been accepted at their chosen university. We also have our first entrant to Cambridge University.
- The national average of care experienced young people **at 18** going onto Higher Education is 6%. Sefton this year achieved 10%.
- In 2022, 1 student went to university at 18 years old
- In 2023, 4 students went to university at 18 years old
- In 2024, with 7 students going to university at 18 years old is a year to celebrate.

ESOL summer school

- 10 young people (one who had only been in the country for days) attended a summer school at Hugh Baird college in July. This was the second year in which Sefton Virtual School has collaborated with Hugh Baird college to offer a bespoke programme.
- They received a warm welcome and enjoyed activities that helped them to get to know Sefton and Liverpool, with cooking, meals out, sightseeing and ESOL lessons. All attendees have college places for September to study a range of subjects, including maths, cookery, computer science and engineering