

Report to:	Health and Wellbeing Board	Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 9 September 2020
Subject:	SEND Continuous Improvement Plan Update		
Report of:	Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Adult Social Care (Chair of SEND Continuous Improvement Board) Cabinet Member Children, Schools and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	N	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	N		

Summary:

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

Recommendation(s):

Members of the Health & Wellbeing Board are asked to

- (1) consider the progress being made
- (2) confirm that risk is being effectively managed

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.

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

NA

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The CCGs have invested a recurring £35k in SENDIASS and a recurring £100K+ in Speech and Language Therapy. The CCGs have also seconded a senior nurse- Deputy Chief Nurse (SEND) to focus on the health aspects of the plan. The CCGs have also seconded a senior nurse- Associate Chief Nurse (SEND) up to end September 2020, to focus on the health aspects of the plan.

The CCG's in Sefton prioritised additional investment in the ASD / ADHD pathway.

The Council has invested some additional temporary resources (£0.400m in 2020/21) into the SENDCIB team in order to deliver the changes required.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None
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.

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: 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 has been developed in the context of the

<p>Children and Young People’s Plan “My Sefton: heard, happy, healthy, achieving,’.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: The Council will work 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.</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: The Council will work with partners, in particular Health, to make change happen so as to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment:</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener</p>

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD6102/20) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD4294/20) 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 and Sefton Parent Carer Forum on this matter.

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

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.

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:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

COVID-19 Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidanceonvulnerable-children-and-young-people#children-with-education-health-and-careehcplans>

Coronavirus Act 2020 Modification of section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 (England) Notice 2020
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882290/CV19_Act_modification_notice_SEND.pdf

House of Commons Education Committee (Special educational needs and disabilities) issued its First Report of Session 2019–20 is available at
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201920/cmselect/cmeduc/20/20.pdf>

Published version of the SEND Improvement Plan
https://search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/sefton/fsd/files/sefton_send_improvement_plan.pdf

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 This report informs Health and Wellbeing Board 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 Board 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 (SENDICB) continue to receive support and challenge from the NHS England and DfE advisors.

2. Delivering the Improvement Plan

- 2.1 As previously reported the SENDICB 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.
- 2.2 On 7th July 2020 the SENDICB met and considered progress against the Improvement Plan. Good progress continues to be made and the completion of Education, Health and Care Plans within the 20 week timescales has improved to 60% completion (SEN2 data return) within the 20 week timescales, this was below 10% a year ago. The current timescale on plans is 70%.
- 2.3 At this meeting the SENDICB considered progress regarding the implementation of National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE) compliant assessment and diagnostic pathways for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) within Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

The investment received from Sefton CCGs to support the implementation of a new ASD assessment and diagnostic pathway will enable **720** assessments to be completed within the agreed 30 week indicator on an annual basis. This figure will be monitored by Alder Hey and reported to Sefton CCGs. Flexibility has been built into the new ASD assessment and diagnostic pathway to take into account normal referral patterns and fluctuations so as to ensure children and young people are seen within the 30 week total pathway measurement.

The introduction of the Care Coordination role ensures oversight for each case and improved communication with families. The new pathway meets all national standards including DSM-5 diagnosis criteria and NICE guidance.

At the time of considering the progress made and due to the ongoing impact of Covid 19 all appointments with children and young people will be virtual with face to face appointments only being offered if clinically indicated. The ongoing impact of Covid 19 on the delivery of the new ASD assessment and diagnostic pathway will be monitored monthly and escalated to Sefton CCGs should the ability to deliver on the agreed 30 week target be impacted.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, community services were required to rapidly change the way interventions were delivered to ensure the safety of staff and children and young people. In order to be able to continue to support children in the community, staff embraced digital ways of working and moved a significant amount of their interventions to be delivered via telephone or video. There are still aspects of services which cannot easily be delivered in this way and, capacity is not yet back to pre-Covid-19 levels which have impacted on waiting times, but the adoption of digital technologies across community based teams has been received well by children and their families.

Feedback has been positive from families where virtual consultations have taken place. For those families where technology may not be available Alder Hey charity has supported appropriate equipment to be given to families for the duration of assessments and/or treatment.

- 2.4 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. Board members will recall from June's update that the completion of reviews remained a risk, and that the remedial action being taken was supported by the DfE Advisor. In July SENDCIB received a further update on this and the actions planned that will deliver sustainable improvement. SENDCIB agreed the recruitment of two temporary caseworkers to support this work. This recruitment is on track and with a planned start date of September 2020.
- 2.5 July 2020 SENDCIB also agreed to invest in the redesign of the Local Offer which will be co-produced with parents.
- 2.6 Since the last Board update, and the move to phase 2 of the NHS response to COVID-19, there has been a significant increase in the levels of community therapy service provision by Alder Hey resulting in a positive reduction in average waiting times, in line with service COVID-19 recovery plans and the SEND Business Continuity Plan. Throughout this period services have continued to carry out local risk assessments and prioritise caseloads and new referrals in accordance with risk and needs of the child/young person. Whilst observing Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) measures, services have also continued to develop and innovate their digital and face to face working practices to facilitate an increase in the number of clinic appointments and improve how services are delivered. For example, to support an increase in face to face appointments, particularly for those services such as Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) which pose a heightened COVID-19 risk, Alder Hey is exploring the availability clear visors.

The community therapy service waiting times for 18 - 25 age cohort are now reported through the SEND dashboard. Although this data is not yet specific to the SEND cohort, work is underway with the provider - Mersey Care - to disaggregate this information. There have been increases in the average number of referrals for all therapy disciplines in this age category, as general practice resumes to business as usual, and there continues to be high number of visits declined for housebound patients. Whilst this has had a negative impact on waiting times, notably for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), the higher priority patients are being seen and triage is being completed in a timely fashion. The provider is

providing assurances on how clinical care is being managed and developing plans to recover its position.

In response to the increasing demand for mental health services and the impact on waiting times, Alder Hey's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is undertaking a collective recovery and restoration plan as part of the Cheshire & Merseyside out of Hospital Cell (Mental Health sub-cell) and has also developed its own service recovery plan which is currently being considered by the CCGs. This work will also take into account the national mandate for the establishment of a 24/7 Crisis Care Service, the redirection of resource to support this and the anticipated increase in referrals.

An integral consideration of all the service recovery plans, and one which has become an increasing area of focus, is the potential increase in referrals once children and young people return to school and as the full impact of the pandemic becomes evident. Whilst the impact of the return to school is yet to be realised, services have taken positive steps to factor in an anticipated increase in referrals and activity from September through to December 2020, specifically for SALT and CAMHS services. Over the coming months activity in these areas will be closely monitored through the CCGs contractual arrangements with the service providers and the SEND dashboard.

- 2.7 Since April 2019 we have been holding a young persons' meeting on a Wednesday via Zoom. This has been hosted by Sefton CVS Buddy Up group. The group also supported us to host a secondary school youth conference for young people with SEND which was held in July 2020.
- 2.8 It was agreed that the SEND parent and carer survey will be conducted annually, however, following the March SEND Continuous Improvement Board meeting it was suggested that the partnership would conduct a short follow-up survey in June 2020 as a way to test whether our improvements internally were having the desired impact on parents and carers and young people. Due to Covid-19 this has been put back to September. Questions for the short follow up survey have been coproduced with Sefton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) representatives. The SPCF agreed that the survey will start on the 14th September 2020 and will be live for three weeks. The survey link will be shared by schools, SPCF social media forums and council & CCG forums.
- 2.9 Improvements made to date include
- Casework Officers now share mobile phone numbers when they first contact families which has improved communication
 - Parents and carers are now invited to joint outcome meetings
 - Access to Kooth has been extended up to the age of 25 proving more young people with access to on line support
 - Recite Me software has been added to the Local Offer and Council website which has improved accessibility
 - Understanding of the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) role has been shared more widely and a dedicated e-mail address means that families are now able to contact the DCO directly

- the implementation of a new appointment system at Alder Hey which is more user friendly and has led to fewer cancellations
- and improvements to the prescribing system at Alder Hey make it easier for families to re-order medications

3. Risk

- 3.1 Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that the required change will put solid foundations in place, the Local Area remains vulnerable to a range of issues that can impact upon its financial sustainability and which impact upon the decisions that each member of the system must make. These include pressures across the system nationally such as the impact of demand pressures and most significantly central government policy.
- 3.2 The System Leadership and Governance Sub Group, jointly chaired by the Council Chief Executive and the Chief Officer of the CCGs in Sefton, monitors risk on a regular basis and provide the risk log to the SENDCIB on a regularly. The SENDCIB will continue to monitor risks, putting in place mitigation where possible and escalating risks as required.
- 3.3 It is important to note that the SENDCIB has and will continue to meet virtually during the pandemic, as have all of the sub groups. The Local Area recognises the stress and concern that the COVID 19 pandemic has and continues to cause families and local services remain accessible to provide support. All partners have put business continuity plans in place and are working together to ensure that robust plans and effective communication is in place during this time of uncertainty. This work has included communications confirming that the local area are still available to support families. Despite the enormous pressure across the local area, work to deliver the Improvement Plan has continued and required changes have happened at pace.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Local Area continues to make good progress in delivering the Improvement Plan with partners responding to the challenges including the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Local Area recognises the significant challenges that continue to be faced by Sefton families of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) especially at this time. The system is confident that the actions being taken are having a demonstrable positive impact in 2020.

- 4.2 As previously reported in the main the Local Area is meeting action plan targets and commitments. In its visit in January 2020 the DfE asked that partnership improve pace and following the investment from the CCG and the additional staff now in place within the Council, all areas identified in DfE have now been actioned. The partnership has continued to prioritise SEND during the Covid 19 pandemic by meeting remotely and continuing to focus our attention on this important area. The Local Area recognises the need to maintain focus, continuing to work at pace and achieve demonstrable positive impact and all joint sub groups and the SENDIB continue to meet remotely to maintain focus and oversight on the

Improvement Plan objectives. The COVID 19 pandemic has meant that we deliver in different ways but the focus and the priority remain on delivering the improvements required.

- 4.3 All partners remain committed to delivering the required actions that will improve the lives of Sefton's children and young people with SEND, to enable them to reach their potential. The impact of COVID 19 on the Improvement Plan will continue to be assessed and partners are continuing to work together to minimise impact.