

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD**

**28 JUNE 2023**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF STOCKTON ON TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL AND INTEGRATED CARE BOARD**

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGY – PROGRESS AND NEXT STEPS for 2023/24**

**SUMMARY**

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced significant changes to the systems and approaches for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A new SEND strategy was developed by health, education and social care partners in 2021. A number of reports have been presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board providing oversight on the delivery of the strategy and against the previous local area inspection.

This report outlines the plans for 2023/24, including the proposed approach to strategy and the establishment of the Local Inclusion Partnership.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

1. Endorse the proposed action plan and priorities for 2023/24.
2. Agree to receive a further report in September 2023.

**DETAIL**

**Context and timescales**

1. The current SEND strategy is in place until July 2023.
2. As part of the Government's SEND and Alternative Provision Implementation Plan, it is envisaged that all local areas will have a new Local Inclusion Plan in place by December 2024. The exact details of and requirements for these plans is not yet clear – further advice and guidance is expected in the summer.
3. Therefore the approach we are proposing in terms of strategic priorities is:
  - a. Not to refresh the SEND Strategy, but to continue to adopt its key priorities in an Action Plan – as below, with the intention of this being in place until September 2024
  - b. To develop a new Local Inclusion Plan by September 2024, to meet the timescales as set out by Government.
4. The HWB is therefore being asked to endorse the basis of this plan at this meeting, and then to receive the detailed action plan at its meeting in September 2023. It is then proposed to develop new Local Inclusion Plan for completion and launch in Sep 2024

## **Aims / objectives**

5. Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities remains the same as for all children and young people: that Stockton-on-Tees is a great place to grow up, where children and young people are protected from harm and supported to be the best they can be in life.
6. We identified a number of key principles and priorities for our work, which remain in place:
  - a. Outcomes focused
  - b. Needs led
  - c. Emphasis on quality
  - d. Based on partnership and communication
  - e. Child centred
  - f. Innovative
  - g. Effective
  - h. Transformational

## **The key priorities and actions**

7. We have retained the 6 priorities in the 2021-23 plan, and added a further priority on inclusion.

## ***A partnership with families***

8. This priority is focused on retaining and enhancing our commitment to working with families and continuing to focus on co-production.
9. Key priority actions for 2023/24 are:
  - a. Ensure regular, consistent ongoing mechanisms in place for co-production
  - b. Develop regular ongoing input on experiences of young people
  - c. Research, develop and implement a better Local Offer

## ***Understand needs and strengths***

10. This priority recognises the importance of identifying needs early and also recognising the role of children, young people and parent carers as key assets in ensuring
  - a. Embed Valuing SEND mechanism as way of measuring needs and ability to meet needs
  - b. Integrate Person centred planning / family meetings
  - c. Review effectiveness of early years identification
  - d. Continue to refine and improve inputs to assessment
  - e. Review EP model and quality of advice for EHCP assessment

### ***Meeting needs, improving outcomes***

11. This priority remains at the heart of the overall approach as it includes the key principles and priorities around how we work as a partnership to meet needs and improve outcomes for children and young people.
12. The key priorities for 2023/24 are:
  - a. Refresh governance – establishing a new Local Inclusion Partnership to drive forward our work, and to meet the requirements of the new national standards. We have established a shadow Local Inclusion Partnership which meets in July, and will meet as a full partnership in September.
  - b. System wide self-evaluation and baseline in preparation for the new inspection framework
  - c. Strategic outcomes framework / dashboards – which support and guide our work, and are used to feedback on progress. This includes the strategic use of data – health and education metrics
  - d. QA and multi-agency audits as a means of overseeing the quality of the local systems and the support available
  - e. Social care support and disability – we have been working to redesign the support available to families of a child with a disability and will bring forward proposals in 2023 for change
  - f. Joint commissioning strategy and JSNA which will guide our work on priorities and services design. This includes an initial focus on:
    - i. Neuro pathway and reduce waiting times
    - ii. Speech and language therapy
    - iii. OT joint commissioning
    - iv. HI / VI commissioning
    - v. Equipment?

### ***Local, inclusive schools and settings***

13. This priority continues to emphasise the importance of inclusive practice in schools, and the increasing national emphasis on mainstream schools.
14. Key priorities for 2023/24 are:
  - a. Workforce development for SENCOs and support staff
  - b. Review and evaluate SEN Support approach and ability to meet needs
  - c. Improve EHCP review process to ensure
  - d. Review EMS provision to see meeting needs identified
  - e. ASD support (NEAS)
  - f. Test new approaches to school based anxiety (DBV)
  - g. More special / mainstream partnerships

### ***High quality specialist support and provision***

15. This priority recognises that not all needs can be met in mainstream provision, and there is a continued needs for specialist schools, placements and services, with the availability of special school places a particular challenge.
16. There are challenges with special school places and the availability of some key forms of support. It therefore focuses on plans and priorities to expand support and provision based on an analysis of needs.
17. Key priorities for 2023/24 are
  - a. Update and publish sufficiency plan and projection data, linked to the refreshed JSNA and commissioning strategy
  - b. Expand / develop new provision based on sufficiency plan
  - c. Special schools – funding and banding model to maximise the opportunities for Stockton children to be placed in Stockton-on-Tees schools
  - d. Expand King Edwin to increase places and vary provision
  - e. Review and commission specialist support services
  - f. Explore the development of new specialist provision linked to work on complex needs and high impact / low volume analysis
  - g. Palliative care models

### ***Independence and community inclusion***

18. This priority is focused on the need to ensure effective transitions for young people. The key priorities for 2023/24 are:
  - a. Expand post 16 provision in mainstream colleges – a key priority in our strategy to manage high needs funding
  - b. Developing new accommodation / lifelong living and learning proposals linked to wider regeneration programmes
  - c. Expand and further develop the Preparing for Adulthood prospectus
  - d. Improve transition process for young people not supported by Disabled Children's team
  - e. Expand options for experience and internships
  - f. Expand Project Choice models (supported internships in the NHS)

### ***Delivery***

19. Delivery of the action plan will be overseen by a new Local Inclusion Partnership. This will meet in Shadow Form in July and then in full from September. This Partnership will replace the current SEND Strategic Group and will continue to report into the Health and Wellbeing Board.
20. The terms of reference for the Local Inclusion Partnership are attached at Annex 1.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

21. There are no direct financial implications from the report. The bulk of provision for children and young people with SEND is funded with the Dedicated Schools Grant, and in particular the High Needs Block. The proposals in the strategy will be funded by this and by existing resources held by the key partners.
22. Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND is a shared responsibility across education budgets (mainly High Needs Funding, an element of Dedicated Schools Grant); social care via the Council's mainline resources and through the Integrated Care Board and NHS providers.
23. In recent years costs have increased, as the number of children and young people with EHCPs has increased. The SEND strategy recognises the need to secure value for money, and a medium term financial plan for High Needs Funding is currently being developed which sets out a series of proposals and actions to bring the budget into balance over the next 3 years.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

24. The strategy sits within the legal framework of the Children's Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) which set out the legal context for how we support children and young people with SEND and their families. The strategy also takes into account the requirements of the following:
  - Children Act 1989, 2004
  - Autism Act 2009
  - Autism Strategy 2010
  - Equality Act 2010
  - Care Act 2014

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