



<b>People Overview Committee</b>	<u>Item</u>
<b>23 May 2022</b>	<u>Public</u>

## **SEND Written Statement of Action**

### **Responsible officer**

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### **1.0 Summary**

1.1 This paper provides the committee with an update on work to deliver the written statement of action following the joint Ofsted/CQC inspection of services for children with a special education need or disability (SEND). It also provides the committee with an update on preparations for a further inspection of the local authority and its partners.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 Committee members to:

- note the report and appendices
- seek assurance that the SEND Partnership is working towards the objectives of its written statement of action and
- identify any areas of concern for the portfolio holder.

### **3.0 Background**

3.1 In January 2020, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Shropshire to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. In particular the inspection sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the local area in

- identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities
- meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and
- improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

3.2 Following the inspection, Ofsted and the CQC raised significant concerns about the effectiveness of the local area to meet the needs of these children, in particular:

- Inconsistent strategic leadership and weak strategic planning across the area, most notably in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), including the ineffective use of data to accurately commission and plan services.
- The lack of inclusion of health services' input into the area's SEND action plan.
- Significant waiting times for large numbers of children and young people on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) diagnostic pathways.
- Significant waiting times for those needing assessment and treatment from the speech and language therapy service.
- Inconsistency in the quality of input from education, health and care into education, health and care (EHC) assessment and planning.
- The high rate of exclusions for children and young people with an EHC plan and the high rate of repeat fixed-term exclusions for those receiving SEND support.

The inspection report is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

3.2 Shropshire Council and its partners were therefore required to produce and submit a written statement of action (WSoA) to explain how they would tackle these areas of weakness. The completed statement is attached as Appendix 2.

3.3 The WSoA focuses on the six priority areas for change as listed in paragraph 3.2 above and provides an action plan to deliver the required improvements. The intended impact of these improvements is also included within each priority area. The statement also explains how the SEND partnership has strengthened its governance arrangements following the inspection.

3.4 The People Overview Committee considered a draft of the WSoA at its meeting in September 2020. It endorsed the statement of action, the new governance model and the priorities detailed in the plan. It asked the service to provide a further update in due course to the committee on its work to implement the plan.

#### **4. Delivering the action plan**

4.1 Progress in delivering the statement is overseen by the SEND Partnership Board and reviewed in a series of review meetings with the Department for Education and NHS England. The latest review report is attached as Appendix 3. In order to support delivering the action plan, Shropshire Council and its partners have carried out a number of actions according to the following priority areas.

**4.2 Inconsistent strategic leadership and weak strategic planning across the area, most notably in the CCG, including the ineffective use of data to accurately commission and plan services**

- The partnership has reorganised itself under a new governance structure as contained in the written statement of action. This includes joint oversight of SEND agenda from the CCG and health providers through strategic and partnership board. This is now being strengthened with the establishment of the Quality Assurance Group (QAG).
- Recruitment of a new Assistant Director for Education and SEND Service Manager. These officers started in February & March this year
- Production of a new SEND strategy in April 2021.
- Production of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) completed.

**4.3 The lack of inclusion of health services' input into the area's SEND action plan.**

- The appointment of a joint commissioner with Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin CCG is creating a market position statement to understand the provision available to people in Shropshire.
- CCG involvement in producing the written statement of action has resulted in greater health involvement in all workstreams.
- The CCG has contributed required data to the JSNA

**4.4 Significant waiting times for large numbers of children and young people on the ASD and ADHD diagnostic pathways.**

The service is developing a different model to support children, with intervention taking place while it is decided whether or not assessment and diagnosis would be best for the child. This model is based on an approach pioneered by Coventry SEND and is attached at Appendix 4.

- Work is also underway to recruit 2 higher learning teaching assistants and a senior educational psychologist.

**4.5 Significant waiting times for those needing assessment and treatment from the speech and language therapy service.**

- Workstream established to ensure consistency of approach and to support whole system including provider to secure improvement. Place- based consultations undertaken with staff, parents and young people.

- Speech and language therapy (SALT) advice line, handbook and Facebook page launched. Remote SALT service offer including parent/educator training.

#### 4.6 **Inconsistency in the quality of input from education, health and care into EHC assessment and planning.**

- DCO/DSCO and SEN lead working together on agreed quality assurance (QA) framework and data set, group established with plans to trial QA tools.
- Established process of feedback from the SEN2 panel directly to SEND leads within health providers (ShropComm).
- Developed EHCP standards
- Health specific CAMHS specific education, health and care needs assessment exemplar template in development. Training session delivered to 20 CAMHS practitioners. Social care delivering training to new staff
- 20 week performance remains at 71% despite staff changes.
- Challenges around annual review completion have been acknowledged and a recovery plan developed as part of the accelerated action plan to resolve this issue.

#### 4.7 **The high rate of exclusions for children and young people with an EHC plan and the high rate of repeat fixed -term exclusions for those receiving SEND support.**

- The draft Shropshire Community Inclusion Policy has been presented to the Schools' Central Policy Group on 10th June 2021 and was well received there and will be updated based on changes to recent government guidance on attendance and behaviour.
- A task force approach is in place so that professionals can respond quickly to support children and schools and provide hands on support. A weekly Safeguarding and Behaviour panel has been arranged where issues can be raised and a solution focused approach is applied to situations.
- A Peer Challenge took place in February 2021; one of the focus areas being permanent exclusions. An action plan has now been drafted based on the issues identified and reducing exclusions for children with SEN.
- Multi-agency collaborative meetings extended to include mainstream schools.
- TMBSS primary delivery model ratified and ready for implementation from September 2021 (this was delayed from January 2021 due to the pandemic and lockdowns).

**5. Next steps**

- 5.1 The service will be subject to a reinspection shortly. There is no date fixed for this, but officers expect it to happen imminently.
  
- 5.2 An accelerated action plan is in development following a comprehensive self-evaluation exercise in March/April 2022. The action plan will incorporate analysis of impact to date, feedback from families, schools and young people to enable the secure improvement to the key areas identified by Ofsted in January 2020 and the delivery of the SEND Strategy.

<b>List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</b>
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None
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<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)</b>
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All
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<b>Local Member</b>
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All
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<b>Appendices</b>
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Joint area SEND inspection in Shropshire
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Shropshire Local Area Written Statement of Action
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Draft Note of Standard WSoA Review Meeting
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Coventry's Neurodevelopmental Pathway: A Guide for Parents
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