

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 15 December 2020

Report Title

SEND Peer Challenge Outcomes and Progress Update

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Suzanne Joyner, Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Jenny Lingrell

Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion, Children and Young People's Services

jenny.lingrell@rotherham.gov.uk

Mary Jarrett

Head of Service, Inclusion

mary.jarrett@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Peer Challenge process was developed for Children's Services across Yorkshire and the Humber; it builds on the peer review model that was developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). The process is designed to help local areas prepare for a Local Area SEND Inspection which is a joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection of local areas to see how well they fulfil their responsibilities for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The SEND Peer Challenge took place in Rotherham between 28 February and 3 March 2020. The findings of the Peer Challenge were summarised in a letter which was structured to identify headline strengths and areas of consideration.

Recommendations

Improving Lives is asked to note the findings of the SEND Peer Challenge and note the activity to address all areas for consideration, and the progress made since March.

Improving Lives is further asked to note the governance arrangements in place to oversee the SEND agenda.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 SEND Performance Summary Outcome Measures Indicators August 2020

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

N/A

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

SEND Peer Challenge Outcomes and Progress Update

1. Background

- 1.1 The Peer Challenge process was developed for Children's Services across Yorkshire and the Humber, it builds on the peer review model that was developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). The SEND Peer Challenge took place in Rotherham between 28 February and 3 March 2020.
- 1.2 A SEND inspection reviews how local areas support these children and young people to achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, such as being able to live independently, secure meaningful employment and be well prepared for their adult lives. The inspection process is designed to hold local areas to account, but also to assist local areas in improving and developing their processes and support systems in order that local areas become more effective and deliver better outcomes for children and young people. It is important to note that a SEND inspection will evaluate how effectively the local area meets its responsibilities, and not just the local authority. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early year's settings, schools and further education providers.
- 1.3 Rotherham invited the peer challenge to help assess its readiness for a SEND inspection, particularly in the context of the following areas:
 - Voice
 - Joint commissioning and the engagement of health, including a focus on Autism
 - Strategy and governance
 - Outcomes
- 1.4 The Peer Challenge in Rotherham was provided by a team led by John Macilwraith, Executive Director of People Services, Sheffield City Council, Bernie Dawson, Strategic Lead for Children, Young People (CYP) and Maternity, NHS Hull Clinical Commissioning Group and Clare Linfitt, SEND Services Manager, North East Lincolnshire Council. The Challenge was managed and coordinated by Rob Mayall, (Sector Led Improvement Manager, Yorkshire and the Humber). The Peer Challenge process involved desk-based analysis of documentation provided, together with a wide range of on-site and some off-site activities, including discussions with over 70 people.
- 1.5 The findings of the Peer Challenge were summarised in a letter which was structured to identify headline strengths and areas for consideration.

2. Key Issues

2.1 The Peer Challenge Team noted the following headline strengths in the feedback letter:

- Children and young people are at the heart of what you do. There is a collective ownership of the Rotherham child. This was evidenced across the system in conversations with leaders and managers in the Council, CCG, school leaders and parents.
- There is a long-standing and collective ownership of the SEND agenda, evidenced in part by commitments to jointly funded posts from 2015.
- Senior leaders, from across the system, know their services well. They understand strengths, areas for improvement and what needs to be done to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people.
- There is an ambition to continuously improve, evidenced in part by an openness to scrutiny, by the commissioning of external organisations to support improvement activity and by internal and system strategies and plans, which demonstrate a commitment and drive for better services.

2.2 The following areas were highlighted for consideration and further improvement:

- Further consider SEND and the broader system, notably public health, early help, adult services and social care.
- Further consider autism and its place in the broader system; whilst there is an appropriate focus on addressing lengthy waits for autism diagnosis, this needs to be set in the context of ensuring that children's needs are met appropriately without the necessity for diagnosis, as well as providing support for those who are diagnosed, reducing waiting times and ensuring that post diagnostic services are able to address need
- Develop a clear exposition of the impact of activity and capture this more systematically; this will help to remind and reassure you and others of the value of what you are doing, but also provide a platform on which further work could be built, or might inform the broadening and replication of activity.

2.3 The more detailed findings and activity to address the findings are identified in Appendix 1. The Council's Strategic Leadership Team and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group's Operational Executive have both received a report and have approved the identified actions.

- 2.4 The Terms of Reference for the SEND Strategic Board have been refreshed; this Board will oversee development on all key actions. The SEND Strategic Board meets bi-monthly. SEND is a key priority identified through the Place Board who receive spotlight updates and provide whole system oversight, support and challenge.
- 2.5 Health Select Committee receive an annual update focused on Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health. The next update will be presented on 10 December 2020; the Deputy Leader and Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission have been invited to attend.
- 2.6 Health Select Commission have also provided scrutiny to the All-Age Autism Strategy and its implementation.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Improving Lives is asked to note the findings of the SEND Peer Challenge and note the activity to address all areas for consideration, and the progress made since March.
- 3.2 Improving Lives is further asked to note the governance arrangements in place to oversee the SEND agenda.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 N/A

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 The activity required to address the findings of the peer challenge are set out in three key action plans:
 - Neuro-Developmental Pathway Action Plan
 - SEND Service Plan
 - Social, Emotional and Mental Health Strategy Action Plan

Each plan includes a clear action plan with timescales and action owners so a decision was taken that it would not be helpful to create a stand-alone action plan in response to the Peer Challenge. The SEND Strategic Board will keep progress under continuous review with a focus on the impact on children and young people using the SEND outcomes scorecard.

- 5.2 The feedback letter identified areas for immediate action and these have all been addressed, as identified in Appendix 1.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)

6.1 There are no financial implications

7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)

7.1 There are no Legal implications.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications.

9. Accountable Officer(s)

Jenny Lingrell

Joint Assistant Director, Commissioning, Performance & Inclusion, CYPS

Mary Jarrett

Head

of

Service,

Inclusion

Appendix 1

	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
	Headlines			
1.1	There is a long-standing and collective ownership of the SEND agenda	More links to the broader system including public health, early help, adult service and social care are required.	Ensure that commissioning arrangements & operational service plans identify opportunities to support SEND agenda.	<p>The terms of reference and attendees for the SEND Board have been reviewed.</p> <p>There is a proposal to created a Designated Social Care Officer for SEND (from January 2020).</p>
1.2	Senior leaders, from across the system, know their services well. They understand strengths, areas for improvement and what needs to be done to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people	There is a need to ensure that the needs of children with neuro-developmental difficulties are met.	Implement the re-designed neuro-developmental pathway and ensure it is well understood across the system.	<p>Rotherham CCG has invested an additional £500k in the pathway (£250k recurring) and a new pathway has been designed. Implementation has commenced. Rotherham Place Board received an update at their November meeting; a presentation is also scheduled at Health Select Committee on 10th December 2020.</p>
1.3	There is ambition to continuously improve	There is a need to develop a clearer exposition of the impact of activity	Ensure the SEND outcomes are evidenced through robust data and performance	The new SEND Strategy focuses on outcomes. A scorecard has been

			information and that this is owned by SEND Strategic Board.	developed and the SEND Strategic Board will continue to develop this to ensure there is appropriate visibility of impact. The Board will review performance indicators and outcomes quarterly.
Strategy & governance				
	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
2.2	Political leadership of the SEND agenda is strong. There is robust governance of SEND. From the Health and Well Being Board through to the Place Board, Children's Partnership, SEND Strategy Board and through groups such as RESP, there is consistent support for this agenda, with different groups owning their own part in continuously improving services and outcomes.	There is a need to ensure that governance arrangements meet current need and context; they may be 'over-engineered' in some areas.	Review Terms of Reference for SEND Strategic Board, Preparation for Adulthood Board, (All-Age) Autism Partnership Board.	Terms of Reference have been reviewed and proposals are in place to merge the SEND Strategic Board and Preparation for Adulthood Board, whilst retaining pace and accountability for the preparation for adulthood agenda through a dedicated task and finish group. The membership of SEND Strategic Board, SEMH Strategy Delivery Group have been reviewed.
2.3	A wide range of well-connected services, actively improving outcomes for children with SEND (Early Years, Youth	There is a need to provide assurance that the resources of the Designated Clinical Officer are sufficient to meet	Ensure that commissioning arrangements & operational service plans identify opportunities to support	The Designated Clinical Officer arrangements have been benchmarked with other areas and against national

	<p>Offending, Visual Impairment and Hearing Impairment Teams all noted)</p>	<p>the needs of Rotherham and comply with national expectations.</p> <p>There is a need to ensure that strategies are operationally understood.</p>	<p>SEND agenda.</p>	<p>expectations; this was reported to the Clinical Commissioning Group's Operational Executive.</p> <p>The Designated Clinical Officer now has two days a week allocated to the role (an increase of 100%).</p> <p>There is a new monthly joint resourcing panel to consider shared arrangements, funding and planning for children and young people with multiple complex needs. This is now well attended by health, inclusion, social care, commissioning and finance colleagues and provides an opportunity to further embed best practice.</p>
2.4		<p>There is a need to ensure that the broader system (Early Help, social care and public health) is engaged in the SEND agenda - it might meet needs earlier, prevent escalation and address pressures in other parts of the SEND system</p>	<p>Review Local Offer website</p>	<p>Local Offer website is under continuous review and has been updated in response to Covid.</p> <p>The vulnerabilities of the SEND cohort have been brought into sharp focus during the Covid pandemic,</p>

				and there have been opportunities for the system to work together to meet the needs of children with complex needs (for example, supporting the return to school). This whole system engagement will be an ongoing area for development.
Joint Commissioning Arrangements and Health				
	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
3.2	There is evidence of co-production in the commissioning cycle. Work with parents is very strong and they are genuinely involved in co-production.	Ensure that strategic plans are sufficiently informed by appropriate data; data related to length of waits for ASD diagnosis need to be available; including waits beyond 52 weeks.	Specify data requirements in all contracting arrangements.	A trajectory for the neuro-developmental pathway has been agreed.
3.3	There is a long-standing commitment to joint commissioning and there are well established, mature partnerships which are helping to make a difference.	There is a need to develop stronger joint commissioning arrangements in relation to transitions to adulthood. Ensure that there is appropriate representation at Joint Commissioning Resource Panel.	Review ToR for Preparation for Adulthood Board; consider establishing joint commissioning task and finish group. Review ToR and Membership for Joint Commissioning Resource Panel.	A panel to focus on transitions to adulthood has been established and will feed into Joint Resourcing Panel.

Autism				
	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
4.2	Funding has been allocated by the CCG to address challenges in relation to ASD waiting lists. Parents have been part of the development of these plans.	Provide assurance that all children waiting for diagnosis have their needs met through appropriate services. You might also want to ensure that there is regular contact with those on waiting lists	Communicate new pathway across the system Share trajectories for improvement and monitor progress	Communication plan has commenced and will continue throughout this term. The new multi-agency team is meeting weekly to review children and young people who are on the waiting list. Further work has been identified to provide a differentiated approach to children who are waiting for a diagnosis of ADHD.
Education, Health & Care Plans				
	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
5.2	Health contribution to EHCPs is evidenced as improving; the appointment of an EHCP Nurse and input of the DCO are positive.	There is a need to explore the links between early help assessments and EHCP processes. There would be value in reflecting on how EHAs are contributing to EHCPs to reduce duplication and inform thinking.	Continue to deliver training to workforce. Consider joint task and finish group reporting to SEND Strategic Board and Early Help Steering Group.	Workforce development Action Plan now drafted to go to SEND Board in November 2020 for approvals and next steps.
5.3	Workforce development on EHCPs is planned and is already being delivered.	Monitor engagement from partners in annual review process	Implement IDOX case management system and use this to drive improvement in quality and understanding of impact.	IDOX case management system launched September 2020 with full 'go live' for Annual reviews from January 2021 with all cases on and
5.4	CLA reviews and Annual reviews	Ensure that social care and		

	of EHCPs are undertaken together where possible,	health information is included in EHC when children are known to these services.		Annual reviews held by January 2022. The IDOX system will also look at progress towards individual child-led outcomes as part of the Annual Review process.
5.5	The EHCP team have a strong relationship with schools and there are good relationships between mainstream schools and special schools	Consider the accessibility and personalisation of EHCPs (particularly use of professional language)		
Voice				
	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
6.2	The reach of the Parent Carer Forum, to just over 2000 parents through its social media presence is to be recognised and celebrated. The voice of the PCF is valued and is strong and constructive.	Despite the reach of the PCF there are still families whose voice is not being captured.	Ensure commissioning arrangements for PCF and Genuine Partnerships address the need to engage harder to reach families and develop parent voice in a sustainable way.	Genuine Partnerships are undertaking innovative work with Clifton learning partnership to develop inclusion services for eastern European families in Eastwood. BAME parents group continues to meet and is supported by EPS.
6.3	The SENDIASS service provide a wide range of services is valued and has impact			
Outcomes				
	Strengths	Areas for Consideration	Identified Actions	Progress Update
7.2	The annual POET survey provides valuable data, including trend data, which can inform intelligent conversations.			Annual POET survey was suspended due to need to respond to Covid and will be undertaken in February 2021

7.3	<p>Young people at KS4 who receive SEND support have seen improved Progress 8 scores, which are now above the national average.</p>	<p>Focus on raising the attainment of children with EHCPs in line with the national average, supported through the effective use of data to inform your current position (beyond attainment data) and audit. This remains a challenge for Rotherham.</p> <p>Further develop support for young people in transition to support better outcomes.</p>	<p>Ensure that all commissioning and contracting arrangements specify clear performance reporting requirements.</p>	<p>Commissioning arrangements will specify that performance information provides outcome data as well as activity data.</p>
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