



Doncaster
Council

An Update on the Special Educational Needs Strategy

Children and Young People Overview and
Scrutiny Panel
Thursday 17th March

Background - Local Area SEND report July 2019

- The 'big picture' in Doncaster is one of steady improvement.
- The voice of children and young people with SEND is given high priority in Doncaster.
- Local area leaders have a history of working together to improve services and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Support for children in the local area aged 0 to 5 years is cohesive and coherent.
- Leaders know what is working well and where improvements are needed.... the development plans that are in place are strong.
- Access to services for HI, complex needs, 0-5 & within YOS are good

Highlighted Areas for Development

- Some children and young people do not receive high-quality support at key transition points- improving but not impacted.
- Joint commissioning arrangements across the local area have been slow to develop.
- The emerging needs of children and young people with SEND are not consistently identified well by schools.
- Some children and young people with ASD and ADHD wait for too long for a formal diagnostic assessment of their needs, despite improvements because of the GDA pathway.
- There is too much variation in the quality of EHC plans.
- There is variation in the quality of support provided by some schools for children and young people with SEND. The SEN education team is working to tackle inconsistencies in the effectiveness of 'SEN support' for children and young people in schools where this is an issue.
- Exclusions for SEND are too high.

Context and Response to SEND Inspection

- The SEND Strategy was initially drafted in 2019 and Key areas of strategy were approved by OFSTED during this visit.
- Premiere Advisory Group consulted on SEND and High needs strategy and self-evaluation to ensure that there was a 'fit' with the wider system. Report was produced summarising the outcomes of this process (April 2020)
- A SEND/Inclusion Board was implemented with 6 working groups which met Jan- April 2020.
- Progress on the strategy was held up due to Covid related pressures but focus retained on creating and building the Local Graduated Approach.
- Directorate sign off to re-start process in June, creating a new SEND board.

SEND Strategy - Vision and Principles

- Developing our partnership leadership capacity, efficiency and effectiveness including with Health and Social Care partners. Creating a uniformed approach to meeting need across the partnership, clarifying roles and responsibilities of all.
- Ensuring children and young people are educated as close to home as possible.
- Moving the resource closer to schools and locality management and quality assuring the impact of this. Reinforcing the principles of early intervention.
- Improving capacity and sufficiency of provision in schools and specialist settings
- Ensuring alignment and reference to key strategies such as Education and Skills 2030 and All Age LD and Autism.

Progress during 2020-2021

- Graduated approach- 99% of schools and a large range of other practitioners have accessed training on this. Further training and support is provided through SEND Networks.
- Despite the challenges of the last two years our performance for EHCP's completed in 20 weeks has remained above the national average against national average.
- Focus on ensuring provision and timely response around pressure areas- - mental health, Alternative Provision, Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education.
- Over 600 school practitioners trained in trauma informed approaches. Overall reductions in Elective Home Educated & Children Missing Education cohort.

Key Challenges

- Covid has impacted on local partnership, as all partners have needed to focus on the response and recovery.
- Pressure on Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block has been growing. There has been a need to respond in the interim to the and reduce it in the longer term.
- Increase in demand for statutory assessment
- Effectiveness of SEND processes and building capacity locally.
- Delayed publication of government SEND review until mid 2022.

The “Demand” Challenge

- Between 2017 and 2021 pupils with special educational needs in Doncaster increased by **18.4%** from 6264 to 7418. This includes those at SEN Support as well as those with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Demand for statutory assessments for EHCPs has continued to increase. In the year 2016/17 there were 238 referrals for statutory assessment, by 2020/21 this had increased to 440, an **84%** increase. Whilst not all requests progress to an (EHCPs), around 60% do each year.
- Increase in the number of EHCP’s maintained by Doncaster:
 - 2018/19 financial year - 1898 EHCPs
 - 2020/21 financial year – 2282 EHCPs increase of **20%**
 - January 2022 – 2397 EHCPs with a further 160 in the assessment process.
 - Forecast for end of 2021/22 2500 a further increase of **10%**

The SEND Strategy – refresh

- The SEND Strategy is currently being reviewed and refreshed through a “COVID” lense to ensure the priorities are still the right ones
- Wider consultation and engagement is planned to ensure full partnership buy in, providing clarity and responsibility and accountability.
- Ensure services in the council have the capacity to support the transformation programme needed to undertake the work detailed in the SEND Strategy and its 6 priorities.

Priority One

To ensure that the graduated response to meeting special educational and disability needs is delivered coherently and consistently.

We know this is important because most parents and carers of children and young people with SEND would prefer their children to be educated in their local area, provided that the provision is of a suitable, high quality and meets their child's needs.

This will be done by:

- Ensuring the child or young person with SEND and their family is at the centre of the planning process, that their views and feelings form the basis of provision by communicating and listening to the views of children and young people with SEND and their families and acting on them wherever possible
- Embedding a new graduated response for children and young people with SEND, ensuring that all school leaders and service providers have a strong understanding of this.
- Working with children, families, schools, settings, health and care services to strengthen the effective person-centred process
- To develop a local sufficiency plan which will ensure that Doncaster has sufficient places to meet rising need and to prevent the use of 'out of borough' placements.
- To review the effectiveness of notional SEND funding in our mainstream schools , alongside the review of specialist provision and Element 3 funding in order to secure consistently early intervention and to reinforce the school role in this.
- Developing a clear and effective process for securing timely information sharing and assessment from health services.

Priority Two

Ensuring that there is a clear and partnership wide response to young people's mental health needs. This includes a commitment to making sure that children and young people (CYP) with SEND with social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs have their needs identified and met effectively in a timely manner so they can engage and make good progress, particularly in mainstream settings.

We know this is important because parents and carers have told us it is their most important priority that their children get the support they need at the earliest opportunity.

This will be done by:

- Ensuring a consistently clear understanding in the area of the role key education, health and care professionals should play in identifying and meeting the needs of this cohort of young people, by embedding the local graduated approach to meeting needs.
- Ensuring there is a clear understanding of the current impact of work in schools to meet the needs of CYP with SEMH needs, including the quality of the curriculum and interventions, support provided by CAMHs, locality workers, school nursing services and developing a coherent strategy for improvement which is owned by all key stakeholders. Applying the principles of a graduated approach to support and ensuring the further impact of the Trauma Informed Schools approach.
- Commission new provisions for those with SEMH needs which will be based in localities and focussed upon reinforcing mainstream provision and practice.

Priority Three

Ensuring that children and young people on the autism, attention deficit disorder and other neurodevelopmental pathways have their needs identified and met in a consistently timely manner and post diagnosis support is a focus for the future.

We know this is important because parents and carers of children and young people on these pathways tell us that the range of provision in Doncaster to meet the needs of their children needs to be reviewed and expanded with an emphasis on early diagnosis and whole family, multi-agency support.

This will be done by:

- Recruitment of additional consultant capacity to work towards continued reduction of the autism waiting list.
- Continue to look for innovative solutions to assessment that allow for more timely assessments.
- Continue to review the current commissioned pathway for attention deficit disorder in recognition of the increasing waiting list as a direct result of the changes made to the GDA pathway
- Allocate new funding for post diagnostic support for ASD and seek to match fund with NHS England funding. The aspiration being to provide more holistic support to children and families. In particular, for children and young people with more complex needs.
- Strategic oversight of the review and developments to ensure clear synergies between partner agencies. This will sit within the community paediatric strategy group.
- Ensuring that schools are supported to identify assess and meet the needs of this cohort at SEND support level.

Priority Four

Ensuring that Doncaster's secondary schools provide curricula and teaching that effectively meet the needs of students who have SEND so that they make good progress and are well prepared for their next stage in education and future employment.

We know this is important because children and young people say that they need a good basic educational grounding so they can progress into independent post 16 training and/or learning.

This will be done by:

- Involving school leaders in the development, implementation and review of this SEND strategy thereby creating improved joint accountability for SEND outcomes.
- Continuing to develop a transition strategy which builds greater continuity of planning, assessment and curriculum for young people with additional needs at transition points.
- Pooling information held by local authority, care and health services to provide the area leaders with a clear understanding of the effectiveness of provision for SEND in each school.
- Developing a coherent framework for high quality CPD for schools in Doncaster including that provided by the teaching school alliance and the local authority.
- Further improving our support and challenge continuum so that all school leaders will receive the challenge and support needed to secure effective provision involving the Regional Schools Commissioner if and when needed to ensure that the local area's multi-academy trusts (MATs) are fully on board.
- Develop the local authority's school effectiveness strategy so that there is a clear inclusive focus on improving provision and outcomes for all children and young people including those with SEND.
- Ensuring that targeted support provided to schools by the local authority's participation team enables effective partnership work to secure successful transition and pathways in to employment.

Priority Five

Improve positive transitions for young people with SEND so transitions are planned, young people are prepared for adulthood and they are able to independently access suitable sustainable employment or supported employment.

We know this is important because progress has been made in a number of areas of the post 16 curriculum in recent years, both professionals and parents recognise that post 16 SEND provision can be fragmented, lacking in coherence and does not prepare young people with SEND for work or independence as well as it should.

This will be done by:

- Establishing a 'pathways into employment SEND sub group' which includes all key stakeholders (training providers, college, transition workers, participation team, DWP rep, ESF providers and rep from the post-16 group).
- Listening to the voice of young people with SEND who are NEET (who achieved level 2 and those at entry level and level 1) and developing case studies to ascertain the barriers to employment and inform future strategy.
- Using the information gained from the strategic analysis and case studies to identify good practice and gaps in provision.
- Creating a mechanism for sharing good practice between post-16 providers.
- Working with local providers to fill gaps in provision and, if needed work with the Regional Schools Commissioner Education Funding Agency to bring in new providers.
- Developing increased opportunities for young people with SEND to engage in work-based learning.

Priority Six

Improving the use of information to inform strategic planning and joint commissioning.

We know this is important because parents and carers of children and young people in Doncaster agree that having a shared professional direction can only benefit individual children

This will be done by:

- Building on current intelligence to develop a SEND specific Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which projects future SEND specific education, health and care needs. This will underpin future commissioning decisions and resource allocation across the Borough and partnership. This includes finances from all funding streams, including dedicated schools grant and the high needs block.
- Ensure there are clear routes for children, young people, parents and carers to shape future commissioning decisions, building on existing links and processes, in particular the young commissioners/ young advisors and the work with Doncaster Parents Voice.
- Understanding of current local provision and how this overlays to identified needs. This will underpin future market shaping linked to agree commissioning principles. This is across education, health and social care..
- Further embed functionally and structurally the move towards integrated commissioning to maintain the rate of progress already evidenced.

Questions or Comments