



Working Together

Improving the lives of children and young people

in Worcestershire

Progress Against the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2020



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INTRODUCTION

Since our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy was published in 2017, much has changed in Worcestershire. In March 2018 our support for children and young people with SEND across the local area was inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The experience of this inspection greatly increased our understanding of our strengths and areas for improvement. Our work to address these areas for improvement has been monitored closely both by Ofsted and CQC and internally by our leaders across education, health and social care. We were required to produce a written statement of action following the inspection focused on 12 key concerns. The statement can be found online at (http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20546/local_offer_news_and_updates/1614/send_inspection_and_peer_review/1). Many of the actions included in the plan focused on the five priorities in our SEND strategy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

These priorities are:

1. **A Person-Centred Approach** – putting children and young people at the centre of planning and decision making about their own care and support
2. **Integration and Operational Delivery** – coordinating services across education, health and care to improve the Education Health and Care Plan process
3. **Early Intervention** - allowing families to be able to access information and support that can be helpful at an early stage as soon as problems or concerns arise
4. **Preparation for Adulthood** – creating a whole life approach to improve the personal transition experience and journey to adulthood
5. **Workforce Development** – developing a multi-agency workforce that understand SEND and works together to achieve good outcomes

Some of the work we have been doing through the written statement of action and beyond to address these priorities is described below.

1. A Person-Centred approach: You are at the centre of your support

Our SEND Local Offer has been redesigned, replacing the Your Life Your Choice website. It has been co-produced with parents and carers through engagement and has been promoted to parent/carers and professionals working with families.

- Use of the Local Offer has increased significantly since 2017. There were 3,253-page views between February 2017 and September 2018. This increased to 123,095 views between February 2019 and September 2019.
- The SEND Local Offer continues to be improved through co-production with parent carers, partners and professionals. We regularly ask for and act on feedback about how useful and accessible the information provided is. The feedback we have received demonstrates

improved confidence that the SEND Local Offer is helpful and up to date.

- Recently we have focused on improving the Early Years section of the SEND Local Offer with the updated webpages published in January 2020.
- Commissioned partners Speakeasy and Ourway work directly with children and young people to ensure we are getting their feedback about the SEND Local Offer.

We have enhanced the skills of our workforce to enable more children and young people to access mainstream provision through the development of the Graduated Response¹ document.

- The Graduated Response document is a guidance for schools, settings and partner agencies, as well as parents, carers and young people, about the education of children and young people with SEND. The document was coproduced with stakeholders, parents and young people and is available on the SEND Local Offer website.
- The Graduated Response document includes information about a whole school approach; how to support an individual child/young person; early years and school provision; the roles and responsibilities of partner agencies; how to involve students and their parents/carers; financial guidance on resources available at all levels; how the graduated response relates to the Equality Act 2010 and how to support children and young people through transitions between phases of education.
- Feedback from SENCOs shows they find the Graduated Response document very helpful. An accessible guide to the Graduated Response is being coproduced with Families in Partnership and professionals and will be published in April 2020.

We have increased user choice through use of direct payments and personalised budgets:

- The number of direct payment packages to families was 70 at the beginning of 2017 and had increased to 180 at the start of this year. The annual cost for all direct payments is approximately £700,000.
- The SEND casework service is supporting families by providing Personal Education Budgets to support the delivery of highly personalised bespoke programmes of education for a small group of children.

We ensure children, young people, and their parents/carers are engaged with our strategy with our practice of coproduction, through:

- Coproduction training to embed it as a value and behaviour for Worcestershire Children's First workforce
- Skills audit for staff working with CYP with SEND
- End-to-end meetings to promote coproduction
- Mandatory eLearning package for Worcestershire Children's First staff, launching during co-production week in July.

We have implemented a communications and engagement plan to widen awareness of our person-centred approach, through a number of campaigns, such as:

- Anxiety and Autism Workshops – promoting the workshops to parents/carers/professionals
- Achievement for All Quality Mark – promoting the quality mark to stakeholders
- Local Offer Website – promoting the website to parents/carers

¹ http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/11603/send_graduated_response.pdf

- Meet the Team – promoting key roles of professionals working with SEND
- Graduated response – promoting the parent/carer version of the document
- Parent Survey – encouraging parents/carers to complete the survey
- Ofsted re-inspection – communicating this to stakeholders and staff
- Disability register – encouraging parents/carers to register their child

2. Integration and Operational Delivery: Services work together to meet your needs

The Local Authority now has a multi-agency panel to consider all requests for Education Health and Care Needs Assessment with representation from Education, Health and Social Care. The panel provides strategic leadership relating to statutory decisions and act to ensure any relevant assessments are conducted during these processes.

Health colleagues have embedded the Education Health and Care needs assessment process into their work and have issued clear guidelines to staff. Colleagues from Social Care have created a practice standards document alongside a flowchart to embed their input into the process.

We are currently reviewing the way we carry out Education Health and Care Needs Assessments to increase our involvement of parent/carers, children and young people. We have set up a working group made of multi-agency professionals, SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) and Families in Partnership to achieve this.

The Council for Disabled Children will be presenting training to a multi-agency audience including families in March. One of the aims of the session is to consider how the process is working and where changes could be made to streamline the process for all who contribute, to ensure a focus on outcomes.

Importantly there has been a significant improvement in timeliness of issuing Education Health and Care Plans. For the last three months 100% of plans due for issue have been issued within the 20 week deadline.

We have also jointly developed an Annual Review process for Education Health and Care Plans that partners understand and are committed to, by:

- Auditing annual review paperwork and internal procedures
- Establishing recording procedures to ensure we know how quickly we respond to annual reviews and setting ourselves targets to improve on this.
- Training staff to ensure they know how to respond to requests from changes arising from annual reviews.
- Identifying a need to increase multi-agency involvement in annual reviews in the future.

We know that what we are doing is starting to make a difference because our outcomes are improving. As well as Education Health and Care Plans being issued more quickly, our attainment of children with SEND is improving overall. We still have improvements to make but we are on the right journey to achieve these.

3. Early Intervention: We give you help as soon as we can

We have improved accessibility to our pre-school forum which considers the needs of our youngest children with SEND. Early Years Settings are now able to refer into the forum and we have put in place a new process ensuring that settings are notified when a child is referred by a different professional group, asking them for their views.

The Early Help strategy 2020-2024 outlines how Early Help integrates with SEND through the Early Help pathway and specifically, the Graduated Response. The Early Help pathway, which links to the graduated response, is a way for us to identify, assess and plan, and provide support for children, young people and their families. This pathway began in March 2019 and has been embedded across the Early Help System through Designated Safeguarding Lead events with schools, Early Help Forums, our Early Help partnership and three Early Help in Your Community Events.

Autism West Midlands were commissioned to run a pilot programme for training for parents and carers of children and young people with autism. Between May 2019 and March 2020, 23 sessions were held across the county. 379 parent carers attended with overwhelmingly positive feedback from parent and carers:

- 'In 20 years of being a parent of an autistic child, this has been the only training session that has been of help.'
- 'The trainer made me have a better understanding of autism from the perspective of someone who has it'
- 'You may not know how much it means to us as a family who struggle with autism, but both of us going to this training will help us move forward with communicating with our son.'

4. Preparation for Adulthood: You can prepare for being an adult

Worcestershire's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2017-21 identified Preparing for Adulthood as one of five priority areas. Following engagement with young people, families, professionals and wider stakeholders an action plan was co-produced by the Preparing for Adulthood Stakeholder Group, based on five areas:

GETTING THE RIGHT INFORMATION – Preparing for Adulthood pages have been set up on the Local Offer website. Further actions identified include updating the Local Offer website, mapping out pathways into adulthood for young people and developing a Preparing for Adulthood guide for family carers.

GETTING THE RIGHT SERVICES – Work is ongoing with local colleges to develop courses and offers of support for SEND learners in Worcestershire. A post-16 provision review and commissioning plan is being developed which will include updating the needs analysis, developing education provision and developing parallel health and social care offers. There is also a detailed plan in place to develop the post-16 Graduated Response by September 2020.

A GOOD EXPERIENCE – Young Adults Team social workers are running a programme of school drop-ins for 2020. Further engagement workshops are planned with families and a programme of engagement through colleges is being run with young people. Work is ongoing to improve the timeliness, quality and co-production of transition reviews for Education, Health and Care Plans from Year 9 onwards.



WORKING TOGETHER – Joint working between Education, Health and Social Care teams is taking place to ensure effective health and care input into transition reviews for EHCPs. Work is underway, via the Autism Partnership Board, to ensure the alignment of the SEND Preparing for Adulthood Strategy and the Autism Strategy.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE – Performance indicators for post-16 are being reviewed as part of the set of indicators governed by the SEND Improvement Board; these will be further developed to ensure outcomes for young people becoming adults can be more effectively monitored via robust monitoring arrangements with providers, and a renewed focus on Preparing for Adulthood outcomes in EHCP transition reviews.

5. Workforce Development: Staff who work with you are well trained and supported in their jobs

We have worked hard to achieve this by:

- Setting up a SEND Training & Development Network
- Carrying out an 'Understanding the Workforce' exercise through the Training & Development Network looking at different roles
- Agreeing a training plan for our SEN casework officers
- Holding SENCO seminars and networks and agreeing how we will coordinate this in future
- Developing practice guides and resources
- Training activity taking place in different organisations
- Developing E-Learning modules in the Training & Development Network which will be ready for use by summer 2020
- Sharing a presentation about co-production with stakeholders

Developing Holistic Outcomes in EHC Plans training is planned for March 2020. This will involve SEN team managers, EHC plan coordinators, educational psychologists, school representatives, health and social care practitioners and parent carer forum representatives. The session will focus on outcomes in plans, considering where the process is working and where improvements can be made to improve outcomes.