

Special Educational Needs Position Statement – June 2023

Leadership

We need to ensure that progress against the weaknesses identified in the local area inspection is increased rapidly and that partnership working becomes embedded. There has been a lot of action since the February monitoring visit but the impact is only just starting to appear.

- Written Statement of Action has been reviewed and new project reporting is in place to ensure that progress is accurately reflected and priorities are clearer.
- Strategic Inclusion Partnership Board is in place with agreed terms of reference and ensuring partnership working with health and social care.
- Self-Evaluation Framework drafted to inform the strategic objectives and priorities including a data dashboard and a SEND Service Operational KPI Tracker.
- Currently reviewing the audit and quality assurance framework to ensure that it is better aligned to wider childrens' service processes.
- Integrated Therapies project set up to review the current contract arrangements.
- SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024 being developed with partners alongside a School Effectiveness Strategy agreed with a focus on inclusive practice.
- A new Workforce Development Plan is being shared with partners and stakeholders.
- A SEND update will now be included at all Getting to Good meetings.
- Slough Schools Placing Strategy went to Cabinet in April and the Slough Multi-Agency Protocol has been agreed for the transition from Children to Adults.
- Regular Risks workshops now take place before every Partnership Board meeting.

The SEND Service

Since the Autumn of 2022, not enough EHC plans have been completed and rapid actions are needed to reverse this trend.

- An Head of SEND, two experienced managers, an Resolutions Officer and a transformation consultant have been recruited. Discussions about a Preparation for Adulthood officer.
- New teams have been created for assessments, annual reviews and a rapid response team.
- The new leadership team have already updated SEND processes and completed a review of all current cases to identify possible quick resolutions.
- A new live cases dashboard will improve decision making, communication and reporting.
- Each education setting will have a dedicated link officer to improve communication.
- Additional locum EPs have been sourced and discussions are taking place with two external companies to provide further capacity while a new recruitment and retention strategy is being devised to establish a permanent team to meet ongoing demand.
- A draft SEND handbook is being shared containing information about the Code of Practice and the LA systems for implementation including panel processes.
- All case officers will undertake a skills audit to identify CPD needs. Training on the Code of Practice took place in April with a further session in June. CAMHs training took place in May.
- A Capita Working Party will explore key features and future options such as the portal.

Engagement with Schools

- SEND Information Sharing sessions will keep settings updated of transformation actions and to ensure education partners are involved.
- A key focus of support and challenge visits in the Autumn will be the SEND support provided including the graduated offer, ordinarily available provision and interventions.
- Discussions have begun to plan an inclusion conference to share the best practice identified in the Autumn visits and from further afield.
- Primary and Secondary headteacher working groups will consider service improvements and inform a series of development and transformation sessions.
- Participation training with the local workforce in February considered best inclusive practices and a Neurodiversity Network has been launched.
- The Place Planning Board has been refreshed and will now focus on SEND sufficiency and capital projects to increase places in special and resource provision while a wider delivery plan is being developed with a number of settings.

Co-Production and Family Engagement

There is an established system of gathering the views of families through the PCF via online / paper surveys, meetings and planned events but this is not the case for young people.

- Co-production sessions / Special Voices events (including online and paper surveys) have gathered stakeholder views on inclusive practice and preparation for adulthood approaches.
- A Working Together Charter has been shared with the Partnership Board and all partners. This was informed by a young people's survey sent to all our schools.
- Communication Service standards will be included in the draft handbook.
- A Kids co-production event took place and a Youth Parliament event. Further events planned include Breakaway, Gems, CLA pupils, care leavers, short breaks users.
- Participation sessions have taken place, a SEND participation officer recruited and a Coproduction Charter agreed.

Data, Information Gathering and SEND Place Planning

The new data dashboard will embed change and enhance sub-sets of management information to measure the impact of changes. All internal data is being reviewed to ensure accuracy.

- The dashboard will include real data from an operational KPI tracker, to ensure officers are responding to children's and family's needs and tracking their performance.
- The dashboard has been mapped against Green Paper requirements to ensure that it is likely to remain relevant and that insights are in line with government priorities.
- The SEND2 return will populate the dashboard and provide insights into the EHCP cohort.
- The dashboard will be aligned with the Frimley ICS Data Dashboard to help support partnership working and the health dashboard will include Slough only data.
- A draft live cases dashboard will help triage the SEND process and identify barriers and blockages in the system to support good decision making.
- The next stage of data development is to ensure that the views of young people with SEND and their families influence local policy, service design and the ongoing review of services.
- A full review of SEND places is being carried out alongside trends in the EHC plan cohort.

Partnership Work with Social Care

Initial conversations have taken place to align the EHC plan audit and quality assurance processes into the wider childrens' services processes.

- Slough Council and Slough Childrens First have also initiated a working group to develop a joint participation strategy.
- Work is ongoing to ensure that SEND services work collaboratively with our social care partners to ensure a coordinated single plan approach to young people.
- A working party has been established to develop new multi-agency processes involving social work, early help, the Virtual School, health and other partners.
- An escalation policy has also been agreed with an agreed role for Virtual School staff where necessary including attendance at SEND panels.
- Staff from the Children with Disabilities team and an appropriately trained Virtual School representative will attend the SEND triage and panel meetings.
- Members of the SEND team are also being given read only access to Liquid Logica (social care ICS), to enable officers to access information to inform the SEND assessment process.

Health Support

The Frimley ICS SEND board has been launched which will oversee the progress on the Integrated Therapies Project and the Written Statement of Action.

- Commissioning work is ongoing with the other East Berkshire local authorities to agree a new contract for integrated therapies.
- Another workstream is considering the impact of therapies provided in our special school via termly check in meetings and drop-in clinics.
- Frimley ICT have maintained the reduction in the wait times in OT triage to a longest wait of no greater than four weeks.
- Although the delay in SALT assessments is still far too high, it is reducing and the Communications Passport is having a positive impact.
- A Special Voices workshop with a focus on CAMHS has been scheduled to better understand parent/carer concerns about support for social and emotional mental health.
- A contract has been agreed for a dysphagia service for mainstream schools.

The Local Offer

- Funding and procurement for a redesign for the Local Offer redesign has been agreed and a project officer is in place.
- The first iteration of the new website has been designed and is being consulted on with young people with SEND and their families as well as with partners.
- As well as improving the look of the website, functionality, accessibility and useability will be improved by the new framework.
- SENDIASS and Special Voices will feature prominently on the new Local Offer home page.