

Children and Education Select Committee

16 November 2018



Children and Education Select Committee (2017-18) Special Educational Needs And Disabilities Task And Finish Group Conclusion Report

Purpose of report: To provide the Committee information regarding the work of the joint Task and Finish Group and ask the Committee to note the results of the group and make recommendations as required.

Introduction:

1. The Children and Education Select Committee identified SEND as a key area of focus for the Council following an area inspection of SEND services in Surrey by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), which found Surrey's services requiring improvement. Following this, the Council was required to produce a written statement of action (WSoA) to clarify next steps for improvement. It was suggested that the task and finish group could follow and monitor the required improvements for Surrey's SEND Services, in line with the conditions set out in the Written Statement of Action.
2. The Task and Finish Group consisted of Members of the Children and Education Select Committee.
3. The Terms of Reference and action plan are attached as **Annex A**. The notes and actions of the task group are attached as **Annex B**.

Findings

1. The first meeting of the Task and Finish Group in November 2017 focussed on Governance and oversight structures, performance data and the impact of actions taken. Following this, it was suggested that there should be further updates to monitor health and budget pooling discussions, a breakdown of outliers, reasons for delay and remedial action taken and an update on progress to meet March 2018 transfer deadline to demonstrate how the

service was working to the conditions of the WSoA.

4. Performance monitoring was highlighted as a key area of interest, and it was stressed by officers that performance was monitored robustly through performance inputs and the service held challenging conversations with providers that were not delivering as expected to drive improvement.
5. Members highlighted issues relating to data integrity that had affected the service previously. The service reassured Members of the Task and Finish Group that data recording had improved considerably and as a result the service had much better oversight of performance and areas of stronger and weaker practice.
6. Following on from recommendations of the Task Group, and work undertaken in the service, the Lead Cabinet Member and CCG Chairman wrote to the Children and Families Minister on 29 June 2018 to report on Surrey's progress in improving SEND services.
7. On the 13 September 2018, the Minister for Children and Families published a letter to Surrey detailing the response. This is attached as **Annex D**. The minister noted that he was pleased with progress in a number of areas, including:
 - a. Improved completion rates of Educational Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within 20 weeks
 - b. Reduction of numbers of fixed terms and permanent exclusions for children with SEND
 - c. 0-5 year olds with SEND making better progress than national average
8. The letter from the minister also noted that he was pleased with the direction of travel within the service management structure and that he was satisfied with the priority that SEND holds within the Council. It was stressed by the minister that the service needed to maintain this focus to ensure continued improvement.
9. The minister has requested that a follow up response be submitted in September 2019 to report on progress made and impact of work.
10. This must also be taken in the context of the SEND Transformation programme, which will be formally considered by full Council on 13 November 2018. Continued work on developing the SEND service will continue following consideration of this proposal and it is scheduled that the Children and Education Select Committee review the progress of SEND transformation at its meeting in early 2019.

Conclusions

11. It was noted that a positive level of progress had been reported, noting the positive response from the Minister for Children and Families regarding progress. Members noted that there had been good progress on the actions agreed in the WSoA.
12. This positive progress was corroborated in the response of the Minister for Children and Families, and that a follow up report will be submitted in September 2019.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee notes the work undertaken by the previous Task and Finish Group and makes recommendations as required.
 2. That the Committee agrees to evaluate progress of transformation of SEND services in 2019.
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Sources/background papers:

Annex A – SEND Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

Annex B – Notes and actions of the task group

Annex C – Written Statement of Action following SEND inspection

Annex D – Letter of response from the Minister

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