



To: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 5th February 2025

Title: Update: Special Educational Needs, Disability and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board

1 Purpose of the Note

At its meeting of the 13th December 2023, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to hold governance oversight of the Special Educational Needs and Alternative Provision (SEND and AP) Strategic Partnership Board and confirmed its reporting frequency.

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s58887/SEND%20report.pdf>

This report provides an overview of the activity and focus of the SEND and AP Partnership Board during 2024. It highlights the strength of cross agency partnership working in Coventry, sets out partnership priorities and provides examples of Coventry's partnership response to the nationally recognised systemic challenges that all local areas face.

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 Note the progress made so far and advise on any further work required.**
- 2.2 Consider and endorse the priorities identified by the SEND and AP Strategic.**

3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The SEND and AP Board is a high-level system leadership board which scrutinises the strategic impact of the partnership, against the local area SEND and AP inspection framework. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook/area-send-inspections-framework-and-handbook>
- 3.2 The purpose of the SEND and AP Strategic Partnership board is to:
 - Improve outcomes and tackle inequalities for children and young people with SEND in Coventry
 - Ensure that co-production is embedded culturally across the local area and that the voice of children, young people and their families is heard and informs all we do
 - Provide strategic oversight of the SEND & AP JSNA (joint strategic needs assessment), the joint self-evaluation assessment, the SEND and AP action plan

the SEND & AP Strategy

- Model and promote shared responsibility and accountability across all partnership services, and where it improves outcomes for children and young people promote integrated working
- Build system capacity and expertise across the local area, endorsing and monitoring innovative practice
- Oversee the effectiveness of the local offer for SEND across all services and intervene in a timely and effective manner where appropriate
- Identify opportunities for joint commissioning and integrated working, where there is evidence that it would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the identification, assessment and provision pathways
- Champion the entitlement to an ordinary life for children and young people with additional needs with a focus on transition to adulthood, employment and independent living 'lifting the cloud of limitation'
- Have oversight of sufficiency issues including workforce challenges and the sufficiency of specialist placements, provision including therapies, short-breaks, supported internships and employment and training opportunities
- Agree the cross agency key performance indicators and monitor progress against improvement targets
- Hold partners to account when required.

3.3 The partnership has agreed the following success measures:

- Children and young people with additional needs are identified at the earliest opportunity and receive the 'right help, right time, right place'.
- Co-production is culturally embedded, it is evident that children sit at the heart of all we do including service design, service review and commissioning.
- Children and young people with SEND secure increasingly improved outcomes and the disproportionate impact of the pandemic is mitigated.
- Children, young people, and their parents/carers are increasingly satisfied with the service they experience, feel that the services are designed with and for them and that they have some choice and control.

3.4 The partnership ordinarily meets on a six weekly basis. The Board includes senior representatives from across the wider partnership including parents, schools and colleges. It is chaired by the Director Children and Education Services. The vice chair is the Chief Nurse.

3.5 Key areas of work include the incorporation of the JSNA as an evidence base, within the revised self-evaluation framework (SEF). The SEF was well received by OfSTED and the CQC as part of the annual conversation (as set out in the SEND and AP Local Area Inspection Framework) which was held in June 2024 and was subsequently finalised by the Board, for the 2024/25 academic year. The SEF confirms the strength of partnership working across Coventry and exemplifies the local areas response to systemic challenges, specifically the impact of demand growth on both the sufficiency of specialist practitioners (across all services) and placements, specifically capacity within the special school sector.

3.6 A strong focus has been placed on developing a workforce strategy, to support the capacity of mainstream schools to meet a growing level of special educational needs. A review of the support available for speech and language development is informing innovative practice delivered through a new approach to joint commissioning. Data

sharing has been strengthened with the intent of securing an integrated cross agency dashboard.

- 3.7 Next steps include the completion of a 'dry run' in gathering the information that will be required by Ofsted and the CQC at the point Coventry Local Area is informed that they will be inspected. The current SEND and AP strategy is under review, its development which will focus on coproduction, will be overseen by the Board alongside the finalisation of the supporting action plan and progress.

4 National Context

- 4.1 The current SEND statutory system was enacted in 2014. In 2019 an All Party parliamentary committee published its report, concluding that the system was not fit for purpose. In response the Government committed to a major review. Consultation on reform to the system began in March 2022, "SEND Review: right support, right place, right time" and a SEND and alternative provision improvement plan was published in March 2023.
- 4.2 In December 2024, the current Education Committee launched a new enquiry, focused on "finding solutions to the crisis in special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) provision." <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/203/education-committee/news/204487/solving-the-send-crisis-education-committee-launches-https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201919/cmselect/cmeduc/20/20.pdfmajor-inquiry/>
- 4.3 It is evident that system reform will take time. Within this context demand for support across the system, but particularly for children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan has surged year on year nationally. Consequently, the system has become financially unsustainable.

5 Local Context

- 5.1 The SEND and AP Partnership Board retains strategic oversight of demand growth across the City. Agencies continue to work together to secure the best possible services for children and families, by maximising the impact of finite resources. This has demanded creativity and innovation, examples include an integrated speech and language offer working with Speech and Language UK, the implementation of an integrated workforce strategy that targets training for school-based staff (including both teaching assistants and teachers) and the development of specialist bases within mainstream schools (enhanced resource centres) supported by outreach from special schools.
- 5.2 It is noted that Coventry's strategic response reflects the Government's direction of travel.

6 How does this work contribute to the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?

- 6.1 Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, provides a framework to support children and young people from birth to up to 25 who have additional education, health and care needs as set out in the Act. From an educational perspective, this covers circa 20% of the population nationally at any point in time,

6.2 The intent of the Act and its supporting statutory framework aligns with all of Coventry's health and wellbeing strategy intentions and priorities of:

- Children and young people fulfil their potential - (removing barriers to learning and 'lifting the cloud of limitation')
- People are healthier and independent for longer - (promoting an 'ordinary life' and enabling independent living and meaningful employment)
- People live in connected, safe and sustainable communities - (inclusive places to go, positive accessible activities and meaningful employment)

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