

<b>Title of Report:</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Improvement Update
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2019
<b>Written by:</b>	Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership
<b>Contact details:</b>	Jacky Forster (Chair of the Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership) Tracey Cole Executive Director of Strategy and Partnerships (NHS Eastern Cheshire, NHS South Cheshire, NHS Vale Royal, NHS West Cheshire CCGs)
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing Board Lead:</b>	Mark Palethorpe

## Executive Summary

<b>Is this report for:</b>	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Why is the report being brought to the board?</b>	It was agreed that regular updates on progress against Cheshire East's SEND Written Statement of Action would be brought to the Health and Wellbeing Board for scrutiny.		
<b>Please detail which, if any, of the Health &amp; Wellbeing Strategy priorities this report relates to?</b>	Starting and Developing Well <input type="checkbox"/> Living and Working Well <input type="checkbox"/> Ageing Well <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Please detail which, if any, of the Health &amp; Wellbeing Principles this report relates to?</b>	Equality and Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Accessibility <input type="checkbox"/> Integration <input type="checkbox"/> Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Safeguarding <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Key Actions for the Health &amp; Wellbeing Board to address. Please state recommendations for action.</b>	Members of Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to: a. Note the progress to date against the SEND Written Statement of Action. b. Recognise risks highlighted in this report and ensure capacity is secured and available to mitigate them. c. Commit to preparations for the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) re-visit.		
<b>Has the report been considered at any other committee meeting of the Council/meeting of the CCG board/stakeholders?</b>	Prior to this meeting, this report has been considered by the Council's People Departmental Management Team (DMT) and Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). Within the CCGs, this paper has been considered by the Executive Team and the Joint CCGs Clinical Commissioning Executive meeting.		
<b>Has public, service user, patient feedback/consultation informed the recommendations of this report?</b>	Feedback from a wide range of professionals across education, health and care and members of the public (including parent carers) contributed to the development of the SEND Written Statement of Action and the Action Plan within it.  We are continuing to use both data and feedback as a measure of the impact of our improvement actions.		

<p><b>If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit? Detail benefits and reasons why they will benefit.</b></p>	<p>The SEND Written Statement of Action aims to ensure that, where appropriate, children and young people with SEND, and their families, have access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ timely child and young person-centred EHC needs assessments and EHC Plans of high quality</li> <li>▪ efficient, consistent and timely pathways of assessment and support for Autism</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the 0-25 SEND Partnership is working to improve services and processes to ensure that children, young people and parent carers feel included in assessment processes and report high levels of satisfaction and positive experiences with EHC needs assessments, EHC Plans, Autism assessments, and wider SEND services across education, health and care.</p>
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## 1 Report Summary

- 1.1 Following the Ofsted and CQC Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection in March 2018, Cheshire East was asked to produce a Written Statement of Action which described the actions the area would take to improve identified significant weaknesses relating to Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans and Autism pathways. Our Written Statement of Action was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2018 and was subsequently deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted in October 2018. This report provides an update on the improvement actions carried out by the 0-25 SEND Partnership in line with the Written Statement of Action and the impact to date.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:
- a. Note the progress to date against the SEND Written Statement of Action.
  - b. Recognise risks highlighted in this report and ensure capacity is secured and available to mitigate them.
  - c. Commit to preparations for the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) re-visit.

## 3 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board is the overarching governance board for the 0-25 SEND Partnership. This report (and its recommendations) ensures that the members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are updated on SEND improvement work and have the opportunity to provide relevant support and challenge to the 0-25 SEND Partnership around improvements relating to SEND, in line with the SEND Written Statement of Action.

## 4 Impact on Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

- 4.1 This report focuses on improvements to services and assessments available to Cheshire East, children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND, and is linked to all of the Health and Wellbeing Board priority outcomes.

## **5 Background and Options**

### **5.1 Introduction and background**

- 5.1.1 In March 2018, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a joint local area inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Cheshire East. This inspection looked at how effectively partners in Cheshire East work together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND to improve their outcomes.
- 5.1.2 The inspection highlighted strengths, areas for development and significant weaknesses in the work carried out by all agencies in Cheshire East.
- 5.1.3 Highlighted strengths included well-established and strong relationships between leaders that facilitate joint working, and a shared vision to improve outcomes for children and young people in Cheshire East. The Cheshire East Toolkit for SEND and a number of local services, such as the Early Years Complex Care Team, the Children with Disabilities Team and the Cheshire East Autism Team, were also identified as strengths.
- 5.1.4 However, the inspection outcome letter stated that while there are significant strengths in Cheshire East, these are overshadowed by two areas of significant weakness. As a result, the area of Cheshire East was required to produce and submit a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to Ofsted that explains what the local area is doing to address the following areas of significant weakness:
- Area 1 - the timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans
  - Area 2 - the lack of an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times
- 5.1.5 Our Written Statement of Action was considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board in July 2018 and was subsequently deemed fit for purpose by Ofsted in October 2018. Members of the 0-25 SEND Partnership have since focused on delivery of the WSOA Action Plan through a number of focused workstreams.
- 5.1.6 Once the need for a WSOA has been determined, advisers from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) carry out a minimum of four support and challenge visits to the local area. Following an initial SEND inspection follow-up meeting with DfE/NHSE in May 2018, the Cheshire East local area has had four further monitoring visits in September 2018, December 2018, March 2019 and June 2019.
- 5.1.7 Updates on SEND developments arising from the 0-25 SEND Partnership are regularly provided through our 'SENDing you the news' webpage [www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/sendingyouthenews](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/sendingyouthenews)

5.2 The following sections describe the actions that have been taken to address each area of significant weakness, in line with the action plan from our Written Statement of Action, and the resulting impact on these areas.

### 5.3 **Area 1: The timeliness, process and quality of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans**

#### **What has gone well?**

- 5.2.1 To improve the significant weaknesses around timeliness, process and quality, we have:
- Finalised, and consulted on, a new structure for the SEND team and the Educational Psychology (EP) Service. As part of the new structure, the Council has committed an additional £500,000 to increase capacity across the SEND service. Implementation of the new structure started on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019 and is scheduled to be completed by end of September 2019. In the interim period, we are continuing to fund a high level of additional agency staff for EP assessments and EHCP writing, along with temporary Team Managers within the SEND Team.
  - Undertaken a review of the Educational Psychology Service offer and processes.
  - Created weekly reports (using data from comprehensive live trackers) which provide detailed information on the number and timeliness of EP advice requests and ongoing EHC needs assessment requests.
  - Established weekly operational meetings for SEND Team managers focused on timeliness of EHC needs assessments, which provides management oversight and challenge around timeliness of EP advice and EHC Plans using the EP and EHCP trackers described above.
  - Developed a health scorecard so that there is now consistent information gathered by both CCGs from all provider trusts in order to track performance.
  - Continued to work with partners on links between Care, Education and Treatment Reviews, the Dynamic Support Database and the EHC needs assessment process.
  - Provided 102 settings with access to share information from annual review meetings directly within the local authority's case management system (as of 23/07/2019).
  - Developed a set of 'non-negotiables' for EHC Plans to drive up quality and consistency of plans and provided training on these for officers within the SEND team. This information was also shared with professionals providing advice, all remote EHC Plan writers and the commissioned external company working with us on short term review processes for current EHC Plans.
  - Worked with services providing advice to agree quality standards and assurance processes.
  - Established a Multi-agency Quality Assurance Panel to identify quality issues in EHC Plans.
  - Contacted and worked with other local authorities for support and guidance around quality of EHC Plans and EP good practice, with one local authority acting as a critical friend to provide external quality oversight and contributions to staff development sessions.
  - Put in place an interim dedicated team to focus on timeliness and quality of annual reviews.

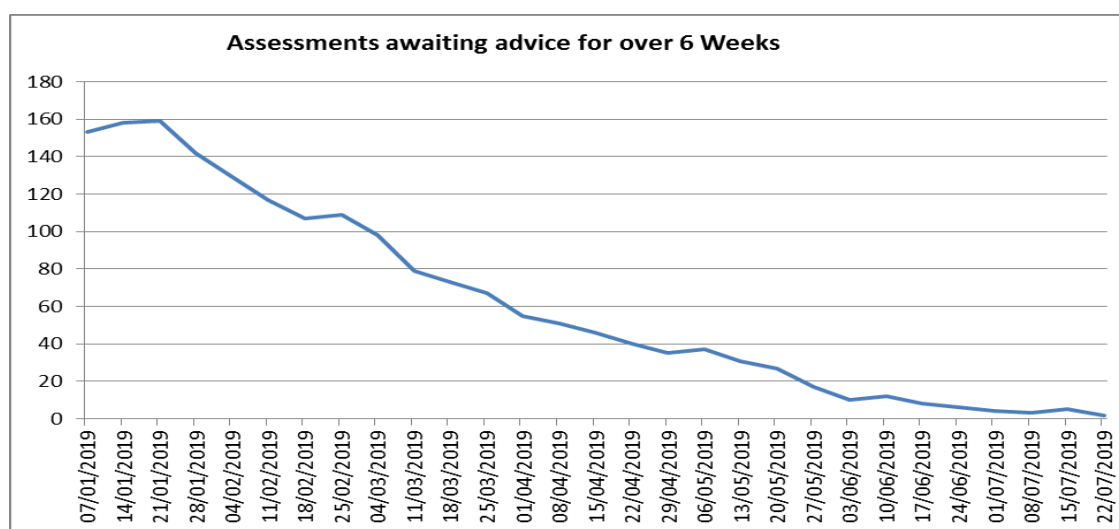
- Rolled out SEND training with a focus on early identification for Health Visitors (HVs), which reached over 100 staff over a series of locality-based training sessions during this year. Bespoke training on SEND has also been provided to Eastern Cheshire GP locality leads, therapy teams, acute nursing teams and school nurses.
- Put in place 2 seconded part-time Health Visitors (one for Eastern Cheshire and one for South Cheshire) to act as specialist HVs for SEND.
- Enabled health professionals in all provider trusts to access the local authority's case management system. This has been important in improving information sharing and helping families tell their story once. The extra capacity created by the use of this system has meant the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) now has more time to spend quality assuring health advice for needs assessments and providing feedback and training where needed

5.2.2 There has been a significant improvement (decrease) in the number of EHC needs assessments in our backlog (i.e. ongoing EHC needs assessments over 20 weeks) – **with a reduction from 155 assessments on 26/02/2019 to 5 cases on 22/07/2019.**

5.2.3 As a result of this reduction in the backlog, ongoing EHC needs assessments are now more timely and more in line with statutory timescales. As of 22/07/2019, nearly 98% of the 213 ongoing EHC needs assessments have been ongoing for less than the statutory 20 weeks.

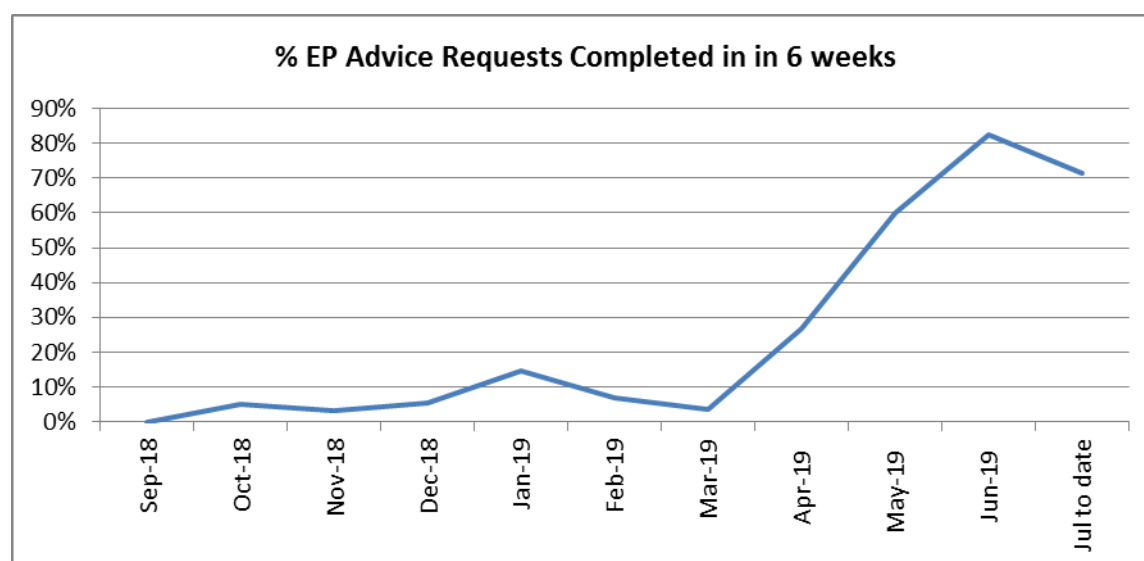
5.2.4 There has been an increase in the number of new EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks each month since January 2019 when timeliness was only 9% to 96% in June 2019.

5.2.5 Since January 2019, there has been a substantial decrease in the number of EHC needs assessments awaiting advice for more than 6 weeks – **with a reduction from the highest figure of 159 assessments on 21/01/2019 to 2 assessments on 22/07/2019.**



5.2.6 Previously, delays in advice from Educational Psychologists were a major contributing factor to issues with our overall timeliness of EHC needs assessments. Since January 2019, we have seen a significant decrease in the 'backlog' number of assessments waiting over 6 weeks for advice from the EP service – **with a reduction from 135 assessments on 28/01/2019 to 1 assessment on 22/07/2019.** More recently, we have also seen an

increase in the timeliness of EP advice – **from 4% of advice being completed within 6 weeks in March 2019 to 82% in June 2019** (as of 22/07/2019).



5.2.7 There has been considerable work undertaken to ensure improved timeliness of health advice which has been **consistently above 90% since November 2018**

5.2.8 There has been a decrease in the number of complaints received in relation to EHC needs assessments and EHC plans over 12 month rolling year periods – with a reduction from 107 in the 12 months up to 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 to 82 in the 12 months up to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019.

#### What could be better?

5.2.9 Quality assurance checks of new EHC Plans and amended EHC Plans have shown some improvements in EHC Plan quality since the inspection, in line with our agreed standards. However, despite these improvements, we recognise that additional action is required to further improve EHC Plan quality, and this is a priority for the SEND Partnership going forward.

5.2.10 Timeliness of Annual Reviews has improved but there continue to be a number of reviews that are out of timescale. Significant work is taking place and there is confidence that by the end of December 2019 sustainable arrangements for annual reviews will be in place and timeliness significantly improved.

5.2.11 Although complaint numbers have decreased over the rolling 12 month periods, we acknowledge that further work is needed to meet our targets in relation to both complaints and the numbers of appeals registered with the First-Tier Tribunal. A large majority of complaints relate to timeliness, and we therefore anticipate that our improved timeliness performance will begin to have a positive impact on further reducing the number of complaints going forward.

#### What needs to happen next?

5.2.12 Going forward, there will be a focus on actions to further improve the quality of EHC Plans. This will include a workshop in the Autumn to agree the vision, strategy and plans to enable us to have a shared view of excellence across SEND. Attendance from representatives

from education, health, care, parents, children and young people and education settings will be essential to ensure coproduction and shared ownership of the vision supported by a three year implementation plan.

- 5.2.13 A SEND Quality Assurance (QA) consultant has also been brought in to support the process of improving the quality of EHC Plans. There is an agreed recognition that the only way to ensure quality at the end of the needs assessment process is to ensure that the contribution from each stage is of high quality. The SEND QA Consultant is reviewing the stages that lead to the writing of an EHC Plan, in order to make recommendations for ensuring that each step is robust and delivers a quality outcome. This includes looking at how advice for the EHC assessment is written and quality assured and how plan writers use advice to compile the EHC Plan. Advice templates are also undergoing further review.
- 5.2.14 From September 2019, we will be re-establishing the two points of face to face coproduction during the EHC needs assessment process, as a means to improve parental satisfaction and ensure the production of a better quality EHC plan that will be agreed by all attendees of the coproduction meetings. Commitment will be needed from all partners to participate in these meetings where their service makes a significant contribution to the provision within an EHC plan.
- 5.2.15 Officers will work with families and educational settings to develop clear information and guidance on the Annual Review process, and develop robust tools for management oversight of Annual Review performance.
- 5.2.16 Officers are working with parent carers to finalise a Communication and Engagement Strategy in order to further strengthen ongoing communication with parent carers.
- 5.2.17 Multi-agency discussions have started regarding a Cheshire East Dynamic Support Database for children and there is further work to do to ensure this is introduced in a clear and joined up way which links in with the EHC needs assessment process and developments around autism. This is being progressed on a regional footprint in line with the Transforming Care programme.
- 5.2.18 Further development and integration of the health scorecard will be carried out in order to include more data and link in more closely with the Local Authority SEND scorecard. This needs to be available for future SEND partnership board meetings to scrutinise.
- 5.2.19 Whilst the Local Authority has commissioned additional Occupational Therapy (OT) support to develop skills within the school settings, a business case has been completed for CCGs to enhance the current Sensory OT resource.

### **5.3 Area 2: The lack of an effective Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) pathway and unreasonable waiting times**

#### **What has gone well?**

- 5.3.1 Over the past 12 months, work has been undertaken across the area to improve services so that waiting times are reduced as well as working collectively with partners, young



people and families to ensure a single equitable offer across Cheshire East. Some of those actions include:

- Recruitment completed for additional clinical staff to support the multidisciplinary assessment of Autism.
- Communications are being maintained through regular engagement with parents, families and adults with Autism through attendance and presentations at the Parent Carer Forum and representatives on all Workstreams and Working Groups.
- Additional resources secured to support the implementation of a Clinical Coordination function across the assessment pathway. This will provide support to reduce future waits.
- Resources secured across the CCGs to support Pre and Post Diagnosis Support for parents and families.
- The agreement and further development of a Future Model of Care - a redesigned model for autism assessment and integrated support for children and young people aged 0-25 years across Cheshire East.

### **Development an Effective Autism Pathway and Addressing Unreasonable Waiting Times:**

5.3.2 A key element of the Written Statement of Action was to develop a more consistent offer to families and their children. The work that has been taking place has culminated in a single Integrated Service Specification that has been written and agreed by all partners including feedback from young people and parents. The purpose of this specification is to provide a clear, single commissioning agreement and approach across four commissioning organisations and four statutory providers, to describe how health, education and care will work together to deliver a single, accessible, streamlined, consistent and cost effective autism assessment pathway, alongside evidence-based and innovative interventions and support.

5.3.3 The new pathways have been co-produced and designed to meet the holistic needs and vulnerabilities of children and young people locally. This approach is based on the child and family centred 'Thrive Multi-agency Framework'<sup>1</sup> comprising four connected pathways:

1. Getting Advice – 'First Concerns / Early Identification'
2. Getting Help – 'Local Offer/Specialist Autism Assessment'
3. Getting More Help – 'Post Diagnostic Support'
4. Getting Risk Support – 'Prevention of Crisis/Specialist Risk Support'

5.3.4 The CCGs held a Patient and Professional Senate back in January 2019 to share the draft Autism Assessment Pathway and the Draft Autism JSNA. Representatives from the SEND Youth Forum attended the event and made a valuable contribution to the discussions. The pathway was also part of a discussion at the Children's Trust enabling further wider engagement.

5.3.5 The adoption and implementation of a single assessment model/pathway will ensure that the Autism assessment process is aligned and consistent across the whole of the Cheshire

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<sup>1</sup> <http://implementingthrive.org/about-us/the-thrive-framework/>



East area, regardless of the providers used to deliver equality of assessment and consistent delivery of service.

- 5.3.6 In order to address the gap in provision across Cheshire East of a pre-school autism assessment pathway for children aged 0-4 years, a new pathway has been established and has been in place since January 2019, and is funded recurrently. This is a collaborative approach and enables children across Cheshire to be referred at an early age regardless of where they live.
- 5.3.7 Additional Speech and Language Therapy resource have been recruited into the multi-disciplinary team to assess children's needs to ensure we are NICE Compliant, as well as an additional business case currently being considered to enhance Sensory OT support.
- 5.3.8 There is now Autism specific provision in every Children's Centre, including access to sensory provision, peer support groups, training provided by the Autism Educational Trust, child-centred planning meetings, Play sessions and supported access to the Local Offer.
- 5.3.9 A key aspect of the Integrated Service Specification is pre and post diagnostic support for parents, carers and children/young people. As a result, a bespoke training and support programme has now been commissioned. Families are now being referred and places have been booked with 640 places available in year 1. This programme has been written and designed based on the feedback from local focus groups. The aim of the bespoke training and support programme is to provide information, advice and practical strategies to improve key health and quality of life outcomes, for example sensory advice, food/nutrition, positive behaviour management and improved sleep management techniques. The first places have been booked and questionnaires will be completed with participants both before and after completion of the courses to measure improvements in knowledge, confidence, impact and other key indicators.
- 5.3.10 This investment is also building capacity within a local peer-led third sector organisation, which is run by people directly affected by autism (including parents, adults and young people).
- 5.3.11 There has also been a re-commission of an existing local post-diagnostic support programme for parents of school age children with Autism. The course is built around practical activities, interaction and group work to equip parents of children with Autism to develop their communication skills, meet others and learn practical strategies to engage and support children with autism to maximise their potential.
- 5.3.12 Additional commissions are also being developed in order to ensure greater coverage across central Cheshire.
- 5.3.13 We are able to demonstrate positive outcomes for children, young people and their parents/families through the completion and monitoring of satisfaction questionnaires following the assessment process and diagnostic feedback. Quotes from these questionnaires were included in the latest SEND monitoring report.

5.3.14 In terms of addressing the unreasonable waiting times, there has been significant work to redesign and increase capacity across the 4-19 age pathway, including a new clinical triage process and MDT Panels being implemented, with Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers from CEAT working alongside the Consultant Psychiatrist, Specialist Nurses and Speech and Language Therapists to assess children's needs. As a result all children/young people waiting in March 2018 in Eastern Cheshire have now been seen and all those waiting in October 2018 will have been seen by November 2019.

5.3.15 Based on actual performance, within one year since the Inspection, it is predicted that over 750 children and young people will have been seen and assessed and more than 1,000 assessments will have been completed (compared with the 2018 baseline of 504 assessments per year). The new pathways and assessment process meet NICE Guidance, other than for waiting times, which we aim to be NICE compliant by April 2020. However the CCGs are working continuously to look at improving this target.

5.3.16 As a result a new provider has been selected to support the delivery of additional capacity from September 2019. This work is currently being mobilised.

#### **What could be better?**

5.3.17 A joint Health and Local Authority comprehensive communications plan is being agreed to ensure service improvements and waiting times are regularly shared with local stakeholders.

5.3.18 Improvements in the time between completion of assessment and feedback of a diagnosis are currently being looked into and a plan will be agreed to ensure hidden waits do not develop.

5.3.19 We estimate that by 31st October 2019 there will still be 108 children/young people waiting longer than 12-weeks for 'Autism only' and 'Dual Autism/ADHD assessment' and approximately 134 assessments will be required to reduce the waiting list to 12-weeks. The CCGs are working with providers to improve and reduce waits.

5.3.20 Further development and integration of a single performance dashboard.

#### **What needs to happen next?**

5.3.21 We will continue with the waiting list initiative for Autism diagnostic assessments.

5.3.22 The contingency plan to increase capacity from September 2019 will be implemented.

5.3.23 Increased joint working between health and education colleagues to triage and assess the waiting list.

5.3.24 Agreement and implementation of an integrated service specification across Cheshire East.

#### **5.4 Risks**

- 5.4.1 Current risks in relation to progress against the SEND Written Statement of Action are as follows:
- a. Although some improvement/progress has been delivered, further work is needed to increase parental satisfaction in relation to SEND, and particularly in relation to quality of EHC needs assessments, quality of EHC Plans and timeliness of Autism assessments (as shown by parental feedback, complaints and appeals). Improvements in parental satisfaction will be evidenced through decreased number of complaints and appeals registered with the First-tier Tribunal, and more positive feedback from parent carers. Parental satisfaction is likely to be positively influenced by further improvements to SEND services that are visible to parents through widespread communication and engagement activity.
  - b. Improvements in the reduction of waiting times for Autism diagnostic assessments have been slower than initially anticipated. This has been directly affected by the expedient increase in referrals over the last 9 months. The CCGs have worked in partnership with Cheshire East Council to complete an all-age Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Autism, which has helped to identify local prevalence rates alongside our current diagnosed prevalence. From this work we are assured that the increase in referrals is appropriate based on local population needs and ultimately will ensure that children and young people are identified earlier and appropriate support can be put into place. The CCGs are working with partners to ensure additional capacity is sought to bring down the waiting times; this includes exploring closer joint working around assessment and diagnostics in partnership with Cheshire East Council.

## **5.5 Progress in other SEND areas not included in WSOA**

- 5.5.1 There has been a significant amount of work to further involve and capture the voice of young people with SEND, for example:
- In April 2019, 3 young people from our SEND Youth Forum made their voice heard at a national level by attending a national 'Making Participation Work' Conference. Local young people with SEND also attended the regional 'Youthforia Residential' and worked with other Youth Councils to develop regional campaigns, have their say and influence decision makers. One Cheshire East young person with SEND was shortlisted for the 'Outstanding Achievement' award against candidates from 23 other LA Youth Councils.
  - Young people worked with local authority officers and parent carers to plan a 'Preparing for your future' event for young people and parent carers in July 2019.
  - A calendar of engagement events and feedback surveys on different topics has been created to ensure that young people and their parent carers have regular opportunities to contribute their feedback and ideas on different areas. Young people have worked with Participation Officers to develop the content and format of surveys.
  - The CCG recently met with a group of young people with Autism from a local High School to have a discussion about their experiences of services and how they feel supported by school and other professionals. Overall it was a very positive discussion and as a result one of the young people is now becoming involved in the SEND Youth Forum.

- 5.5.2 Officers have worked with parent carers, young people and other professionals to produce a shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East described as '[TOGETHER](#)', and a suite of materials has been produced to explain this concept.
- 5.5.3 Various developments have been made in relation to Preparing for Adulthood (PfA), including:
- the development of a PfA e-learning module that other local areas have expressed an interest in purchasing
  - the creation of a Transition Pack for young people from year 9. The pack can be tailored for each individual young person.
  - the introduction of a SEND Ignition programme, which is initially being used with pupils at Park Lane and Springfield Special Schools and has received excellent feedback (including from an attending DfE representative). We hope to roll out this model where it is appropriate with a Train the Trainer session taking place in Autumn 2019.
  - a significant increase in the number of Supported Internships across a range of local settings. The offer will have grown from 2 / 3 opportunities in 2017 to 46 placements by September 2019.
- 5.5.4 An extensive period of consultation is underway in relation to a proposed new set of principles and model for the allocation of high needs top-up funding associated with EHC Plans. The consultation has included a series of events for school staff, parent carers and partners, as well as online opportunities.
- 5.5.5 Cheshire East Council has led an LA engagement workshop for the 23 North West authorities that could potentially join a new NW Purchasing System for SEN school places, along with a market engagement workshop.
- 5.5.6 Capital projects to deliver additional local SEN places continue to progress well; this includes creating additional places at a variety of local settings and a new 40 place provision for 4-16 year olds with social, emotional and mental health needs due to open in September 2020.
- 5.5.7 Recommissioning activity for the 0-19 service (which currently includes Health Visiting, Schools Nursing and Breastfeeding Support) commenced in August 2018 with a series of service reviews. Engagement and consultation with various professionals from a wide range of services, parents, children and young people, has taken place via online surveys and themed focus groups. The focus groups discussed all aspects of the current 0-19 offer using a Signs of Safety approach, and school nursing has been highlighted across the board as an area for improvement as the current offer is largely unknown. We are currently finalising our commissioning intentions document; this will help us to write the service specification which is due to be advertised for tender in October 2019. This should allow for 6 months mobilisation with the successful provider(s) with the new contract starting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020.

5.5.8 Multi-agency work is taking place around a waiting list initiative and longer term plan to improve waiting times for ADHD diagnostic assessments for children and young people as well as adults. A business case is currently being finalised.

5.5.9 The inspection report highlighted variability in the completion of annual health checks for young people with learning disabilities. To improve this, there is now a dedicated lead across Cheshire and Merseyside whose role is focussed on ensuring consistency in the completion of annual health checks by GPs.

## **5.6 Preparation for Ofsted/CQC re-visit**

5.6.1 Ofsted and the CQC will carry out a re-visit to each local area where a Written Statement of Action was deemed to be required following a SEND Inspection. The sole purpose of the re-visit is to determine whether the local area has made sufficient progress in addressing the areas of significant weakness detailed by the WSOA (including an evaluation of the impact of the actions taken). The focus of each re-visit will be the areas identified in the WSOA. However, if any other serious weaknesses are identified during the re-visit, these will be referenced in the re-visit letter.

5.6.2 Ofsted and the CQC will usually re-visit a local area within 18 months of the WSOA being declared fit for purpose. Once the need for a WSOA has been determined, advisers from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) carry out a minimum of four support and challenge visits to the local area. Following an initial SEND inspection follow-up meeting with DfE/NHSE in May 2018, the Cheshire East local area has had four further monitoring visits to date.

5.6.3 The re-visit inspection team will always be led by an Inspectorate of Ofsted who will be accompanied by a CQC inspector. If possible, these will be the same inspectors who carried out the initial inspection.

5.6.4 The Inspectorate of Ofsted will notify the director of children's services, as the representative of the local area partners, 10 working days before the re-visit team arrives on site. The CQC will then notify leaders at the CCGs. The local area is responsible for informing all stakeholders of the dates of the re-visit.

5.6.5 Inspectors will ask to speak to a group of children and young people as part of the re-visit. Inspectors will also hold a meeting with parents on day 1 of the on-site activities of the re-visit, and will ask parents a number of questions through an online webinar prior to arriving on site.

5.6.6 The on-site activities will last two to four days depending on the extent of the serious weaknesses identified. The length of the re-visit will be communicated to the local area at the time of notification.

5.6.7 Following the re-visit, Ofsted and CQC will produce a letter that will include:

- the decision as to whether the local area has made sufficient progress in improving each of the serious weaknesses identified at the initial inspection
- a clear and brief summary of the effectiveness of leaders' actions against each serious weakness identified in the WSOA
- reference to any other serious concerns, with the underpinning evidence, identified during the re-visit, and clarification that these will be communicated to the DfE and NHS England and will be used to determine the timing of the next inspection (under any future LA SEND framework).

5.6.8 If a local area is considered to have made sufficient progress, the formal quarterly support and challenge visits from the DfE and NHS England will cease.

5.6.9 If a local area is making insufficient progress in any of the serious weaknesses identified, it is for the DfE and NHS England to determine the next steps. This may include the Secretary of State For Education using his powers of intervention. Ofsted and the CQC will not carry out any further re-visits unless directed to do so by the Secretary of State.

5.6.10 An action plan is being developed to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place for the re-visit, including learning from other areas. It is proposed that existing governance arrangements will be used to monitor and scrutinise this action plan. This includes the SEND improvement group, which currently coordinates information for the monitoring meetings. Arrangements will be overseen by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Executive Management Group and informed by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board. It is essential Individual agencies establish oversight of their own readiness, and ensure commit necessary resources to contribute to the multi-agency planning arrangements.

## **5.7 Longer term vision for sustainability with greater integration and collaboration across services**

5.7.1 The Local Authority and the CCGs will continue to work together on SEND improvements and, wherever possible, will explore opportunities to jointly commission or deliver services. Moving forward post the revisit strategic consideration needs to be given to how greater integration and collaboration can be achieved longer term to further improve efficiency of arrangements and outcomes for children and young people.

5.7.2 Across Cheshire the four current CCGs are putting forward a case to merge into one Cheshire CCG from April 2020. This will further support joined up working and the opportunity to ensure consistency of commissioned services and reduce variation. Irrespective of the outcome of the merger decision, the CCGs will continue to work across a Cheshire wide footprint.



## **6 Access to Information**

6.1 The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writers:

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