

CHESHIRE EAST HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
Reports Cover Sheet

Title of Report:	Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Update
Date of meeting:	25 January 2022
Written by:	Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership
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Health & Wellbeing Board Lead:	Deborah Woodcock, Director of Children's Services, Cheshire East Council

Executive Summary

Is this report for:	Information <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Decision <input type="checkbox"/>
Why is the report being brought to the board?	To keep the Board updated on progress with the work of the Cheshire East 0-25 SEND Partnership and the development of the SEND Strategy, 2021-24.		
Please detail which, if any, of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities this report relates to?	Creating a place that supports health and wellbeing for everyone living in Cheshire East <input type="checkbox"/> Improving the mental health and wellbeing of people living and working in Cheshire East <input type="checkbox"/> Enable more people to live well for longer <input type="checkbox"/> All of the above <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Please detail which, if any, of the Health & Wellbeing Principles this report relates to?	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"/>		
Key Actions for the Health & Wellbeing Board to address. Please state recommendations for action.	Members of Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to: a. Note the update relating to the SEND Strategy, 2021-24 and associated action plan at Appendix 1 b. Determine whether it wishes to receive an annual report on the progress being made against the vision, values and actions contained in the SEND Strategy.		
Has the report been considered at any other committee meeting of the Council/meeting of the CCG board/stakeholders?	The strategy has been considered by all key stakeholders, including senior managers within the council and Cheshire CCG and the council's Children and Families Committee.		

Has public, service user, patient feedback/consultation informed the recommendations of this report?	The strategy and action plan has been informed by feedback from a wide range of professionals across education, health and care and members of the public (including parent carers).
If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit? Detail benefits and reasons why they will benefit.	All improvements relating to SEND are focused on improving experiences and outcomes for Cheshire East children and young people with SEND, and their families.

1. Report Summary

- 1.1. This report updates the Health and Wellbeing Board on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy, 2021-24 and associated action plan.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members of Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:
- Note the update relating to the SEND Strategy, 2021-24 and associated action plan at Appendix 1.
 - Determine whether it wishes to receive an annual report on the progress being made against the vision, values and actions contained in the SEND Strategy.

3. Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1. The Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board is the overarching governance board for the 0-25 SEND Partnership. This report ensures that the members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are updated on the development of the SEND Strategy, 2021- 24 and has the opportunity to provide relevant support and challenge to the 0-25 SEND Partnership around the implementation of the strategy.

4. Impact on Health and Wellbeing Priorities

- 4.1. This report focuses on the development of the SEND Strategy for the next three years for 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. Our vision for children and young people with SEND is the same as for all children and young people - that they achieve well in all aspects of their lives and are happy, fulfilled and play an active role in their communities. For children and young people and their parents and carers, this means that their experiences will be of a system which is supportive of everyone and we ensure our resources and energy are applied efficiently. Their special educational needs and disabilities will be picked up at the earliest point with support routinely put in place quickly, and their parents and carers will know what services they can reasonably expect to be provided. Children and young people and their

parents and carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve.

- 5.2. We have drafted a SEND Strategy as we come out of unprecedented times due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Children with disabilities and their families have experienced significant pressures from the impact of COVID on them and their support services. There are significant pressures on resources across the SEND system (including a high needs funding block under extreme pressure) and children and young people and their parents/carers expectations quite rightly remain high. This strategy will support us to ensure that we are well placed to meet this changing landscape.
- 5.3. Due to the energy, commitment and dedication of all parties involved in this work, we have already moved a long way towards achieving our aims, but we still have more to do to ensure that children and young people achieve their best possible outcomes.
- 5.4. Our SEND revisit in May 2021 by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission scrutinised whether we had made sufficient progress in addressing the two areas of significant weaknesses identified at a previous inspection in 2018, which were:
 - The timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans; and
 - Establishing an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and in reducing waiting times.
- 5.5. Inspectors found that, since their last visit, the timeliness, process and quality of EHC plans have been transformed, saying that by early 2020, almost every needs assessment was completed within the 20-week deadline, compared to less than one in six in 2018.
- 5.6. Regarding support for children and young people with autism, inspectors found that more children are starting nursery and school with their needs understood and met. Families have also been offered support and training, so they can better understand and support their child. In terms of waiting times, in 2018 more than 200 children and young people were waiting more than 12 weeks for their first assessment, but by March 2020, this had reduced to two weeks.
- 5.7. The improvements identified in our revisit and the feedback from inspectors to improve our communication with parents and carers surrounding our improvement journey is captured within this strategy. This will be monitored and scrutinised on a bi-monthly basis by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board to ensure we achieve what we have set out in this strategy. Our Communications and Engagement strategy is also being updated to reflect the need to be a listening and proactive partnership.
- 5.8. It is important that the delivery of the priority actions from the previous SEND Strategy, and the momentum that has been achieved, is not lost as we move to a new SEND Strategy. A significant amount of improvement has been achieved over the last three years and as you would expect across SEND, many of the improvements require further ongoing attention to ensure they are fully embedded and monitored to ensure their positive impact is a reality for children, young people and their families. The SEND Partnership Board structures will continue to focus on the following areas:
 - Improving the quality of EHC Plans. Ensure a clear focus on SEND outcomes, and on what impact support is having for children and young people and how this is supporting them to achieve their aspirations.

- Sufficiency of local, good quality SEN school places.
- Improvements in the timeliness and transparency of the autism assessment pathways from referral, first appointment, assessment to receiving an outcome. Ensuring a continued focus on the support provided pre and post diagnosis.
- Ensuring co-production is at the heart of all we do.

5.9. Taking account of the continued work described above, and the detailed actions contained in our all-age strategies for Autism, Mental Health and Learning Disability, the priorities for 2021 – 2024 have been split into three years to ensure that the workload is spread and everyone driving the improvements is clear on achieving positive impact for children and young people. The following five areas will be our main focus for action over the next three years:

1. Improving communication and coproduction with families
2. Access to provision and support
3. Improve timeliness and quality of annual reviews of EHC plans
4. Effective and supported workforce
5. COVID-19 recovery

5.10. It is important to recognise everyone who has made, and is continuing to make, this Strategy a reality, including:

- all the children, young people, parents and carers who gave their time and energy, and honestly told us how it is
- our Education professionals, including SEND and specialist support teams, and staff within educational settings
- early help and social care professionals in Children and Adults' Services
- health professionals within the Clinical Commissioning Group and provider services
- All members of the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board and workstreams.
- A special thanks to the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum for their engagement and detailed feedback on the drafting of the strategy.

6 Access to Information

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

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