

Divisions Affected - All

EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18 January 2024

An update on the Special Education Needs and Disability Priority Action Plan

Report by Lisa Lyons, Corporate Director (DCS), Children,
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RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) **NOTE** the progress made to date on implementation of the Priority Action Plan (PAP).
 - b) **AGREE** to receive further updates on a quarterly basis, the next being in April 2024.

Executive Summary

2. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress against the Priority Action Plan (PAP).
3. The requirement for the PAP arose from the Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection report, dated 15 September 2023, to address the five areas of priority action and four areas of improvement.
4. Ofsted/CQC reviewed the draft plan and on 12th December confirmed that it met the criteria set out in paragraph 149 of the Area SEND inspections framework and handbook (14 April 2023). The PAP was subsequently published on the Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) and the Integrated Care Board's (ICB) respective websites.
5. The PAP focuses on the action and improvement needed by February 2025 against the five priority areas. It is likely that this will be followed by an Ofsted monitoring visit in the Spring of 2025. In the intervening period the Local Area Partnership (LAP) will receive scheduled stocktake visits and deep dive reviews every 3 months approximately.
6. The LAP comprises:
 - Oxfordshire County Council

- NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICB)
 - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
 - Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
 - Parent Carer Forum (PCF), the official body for the voice of parent carers
7. While the PAP is a key document, progress against which the LAP will be assessed, the overarching approach to improvement has been to implement a comprehensive transformation programme that addresses the ‘widespread and/or systemic failings’ identified in the Ofsted/CQC report¹. Co-production is being embedded within the programme workstreams with the support of the PCF.
 8. The programme governance arrangements have been established and include a SEND Improvement & Assurance Board (SAIB) that is independently chaired.
 9. The transformation programme is now being mobilised and resourced with a blend of service and programme professionals and support including Finance, Communications & Engagement, Data Analysts, and parent carers.

Priority Action Plan

10. An Improvement Notice was issued to Oxfordshire County Council by the DfE on 09 November 2023 following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Area SEND Inspection, published on 15 September 2023 and in response to the areas of priority action and improvement highlighted in the report.
11. The notice was given to address the five areas of priority action and four areas of improvement identified in the report of the Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection dated 15 September 2023.
12. In response, a PAP was co-produced by the LAP, which focused on addressing the five priority areas for action:
 - a) **PAP 1.** Systems to gather the **voice and views** of children and young people (CYP) with SEND effectively and use these views to inform their strategic planning for, and evaluation of, SEND services that improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families.
 - b) **PAP 2.** Develop **communication systems** across the LAP to improve the efficiency and quality of information-gathering processes to ensure that CYP’s needs are understood and met effectively through coordinated approaches.
 - c) **PAP 3.** Establish rigorous processes to help ensure the improved **timeliness and quality assurance of EHC plans** and use the learning to improve the quality of new and existing EHC plans.
 - d) **PAP 4.** Improve the **commissioning of services** to ensure that CYP and their families receive sufficient support to better meet their needs and improve parental confidence in the SEND system.

¹ [Oxfordshire Area SEND Full Inspection Report Jul 23](#)

- e) **PAP 5.** Identify the steps that will be taken to collectively monitor and measure the **impact of their strategy and actions**. These plans should be **co-produced** with and communicated clearly to CYP and their families so that their **experiences and outcomes improve**.
13. Under each of the five priority areas there are a total of 34 measurable objectives, along with statements on the expected impacts and measurement.
14. Additionally, the PAP addresses four Areas for Improvement (Afi):
- **Afi 1:** Evaluate the quality and impact of services and joint working more effectively to inform improvements that lead to better outcomes and experiences for CYP with SEND.
 - **Afi 2:** Improve their strategic approach to transition planning at all ages so that CYP receive the right help and support they need to lead successful lives.
 - **Afi 3:** Develop their oversight, strategy, and commissioning arrangements of suitable alternative provision so that there is sufficient suitable provision that meets the needs of CYP with SEND.
 - **Afi 4:** Address the long waiting times for CYP requesting support from health services. The LAP should ensure that support is in place from health services for children and young people who are awaiting assessments.

Progress to date

15. Programme delivery is at an early stage and much of the work being undertaken is the essential groundwork necessary to achieve sustainable change and improved outcomes.
16. Additionally, as integral part of the groundwork, the programme team is reviewing the milestone delivery dates within the PAP to ensure they are achievable. This work is being undertaken with the knowledge and support of the DfE advisors and as such it is expected that an updated PAP will be issued in due course.
17. Specific progress on the PAP (with references) is as follows:
- a) PAP5A:1. A clear and transparent leadership and governance framework has been established that includes wide stakeholder representation. The SIAB last met on 20th December 2024 and the independent chair's blog following the meeting can be read [here and is appended to this report: \(https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/special-educational-needs/20_December_2023_steve_blog_SEND_improvement.odt \)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/special-educational-needs/20_December_2023_steve_blog_SEND_improvement.odt)
 - b) PAP1:2. A definition of and framework for co-production, including monitoring and evaluation has been created, shared, and understood across the partners. Aim is to approve by end of January 2024.
 - c) PAP1:4. A framework and system for measuring outcomes and experiences of CYP and parents is being developed and is current due to be in place by April 2024.

- d) PAP2A:1. A co-produced inter-service/partnership communication and information sharing strategy is being developed and due to be in place by April 2024.
 - e) PAP3A:1. The workstream to map and improve the five core processes relating to statutory EHCPs is being mobilised with solutions currently expected to be identified by April 2024.
 - f) PAP3B:1. The work to review and embed an updated Multi-Agency Quality Assurance Framework is underway and it is expected to be in place by July 2024.
 - g) PAP3B:4. The workstream to implement effective monitoring of achievement of outcomes and delivery of provision through the annual review process, is being mobilised with solutions expected to be identified by April 2025.
 - h) PAP4A:1. The Local Offer of services for CYP with SEND has been undergoing a phased launch, starting with 0–4 year-olds and will include contact details, referral pathways and links that are easy to follow.
 - i) PAP4A:3. Work is being mobilised to map and consolidate existing LAP joint forums to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for joint working to build relationships.
18. It should be noted that alongside the PAP specific work, there are four workstreams related to the Delivering Better Value programme that are underway and are integral to the wider transformation programme.

Financial Implications

19. Work is in progress to understand the financial implications.

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Background papers:	Oxfordshire SEND LAP Priority Action Plan
Other Documents:	Nil
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