

Division(s): N/A

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9 JULY 2020

REPORT ON EDUCATION HEALTH & CARE PLANS

Report by Head of SEND

RECOMMENDATION

1. The committee is **RECOMMENDED** to note the information and advise on what further work will be required to inform future scrutiny meetings.

Executive Summary

2. A short bullet point structure is offered below for issues posed by Cllr Brighouse potentially for a discussion at Performance Committee on 9 July 2020 in the first instance leading to a formal report to both Performance Committee on 10 September and Education Scrutiny on 23 September 2020

Introduction

A number of questions were posed from Cllr Brighouse and Cllr Waine and answers are provided below:

1. Where are referrals for EHCPs coming from and how has this changed?

- Majority of requests for assessment are still coming directly from schools, with a smaller percentage from parents and other professionals (e.g. April 2020, 74 requests received, 73% schools, 18% parents, 8% Early Years Special Educational Needs. Inclusion Team (**SENIT**), 1 self-referral from a Year 12 pupil

2. How often were we aware of solicitors working with or on behalf of parents in relation to EHCPs?

- We are seeing an increase in some parents engaging solicitors when applying for an EHC needs assessment, but this is relatively low.
- Most engagement of solicitors comes from appeals lodged with the Tribunal service, (SENDIST) normally when a parent is requesting an expensive Independent placement.

3. Level of engagement of Health and Social Care at the time of referral

PSC9

- This varies, many children do not have or will not need input from Children's Social Care.
- Extent of health involvement is variable and often reflects if there has been referral for therapy prior to an application for an EHC needs assessment
- Often a request for assessment can also be a request for both health and social care involvement, so SEN would begin the process.

4. Where EHCPs were delayed which agency was holding up the process?

- Delays in meeting timelines can be variable and we have had the following issues:
 - Demand – There have been many requests to be dealt with in timescales. This has been high and posed challenges for the Education Psychology service since the beginning of the year.
 - The Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMH) service had challenges in responding in late 2019, but these have been addressed and responses are much better.
 - Schools do not always respond in the 6 weeks, as they feel they have already done so by submitting the request in the first place.
 - High demand across the service and case officers have not been able to draft a plan in time.
 - Parental request to have more time to consider the draft EHC plan, and a wish to delay finalising the plan can affect the timeliness.
- Management actions taken.

5. How often were the parents' wishes to have their child sent to an independent provider the main reason for getting an EHCP put in place. See 2 above.

- This is hard to say for definite how many parents do this, but we are aware that as children move from primary to the secondary sector, and schools become much larger, there is a concern that their child will not be able to cope, and a smaller independent school would be better for them.

6. We know from National Data where Oxfordshire stands in relation to the timeliness of EHCPs. Has this changed over the years?

- Oxfordshire is currently below the national average for issuing EHC plans in 20 weeks. We are around 50%, with national figures at just over 60%
- At the time of the SEND inspection in 2017 we were issuing around 35% of EHC plans in 20 weeks, so our performance has increased.

7. How many requests for EHCPs were refused?

- In 2019 we received 1028 requests for assessment and 281 were refused.

PSC9

- By the end of April 2020 366 assessments had been received and 41 so far have been refused.

8. Exclusions/Elective Home Education/Part time timetables

September 2019 to April 2020

		EHCP	SEN Support	
Permanent exclusion		7 (10%)	32 (46%)	
Pupils with 1+ FEX	Primary	67	197	
	Secondary	78	554	
	Special	7	0	
		Children missing education	Elective Home Education	Re-integration timetables
EHCP		2	45	73
SEN Support		12	166	136

9. Early Intervention Service

- Agreement has been given by the Cabinet to provide an Early Intervention Service to support schools and reduce the growth on demand for EHCPs. This has been resourced within base budget.
- Directorate Leadership Team (DLT) has agreed the structure and nature of the new service.
- Job Descriptions are with the Job Evaluation team and recruitment process to proceed once agreed.
- The service to be fully operational from 1 September 2020.

Jayne Howarth
Head of SEND
July 2020