

Schools Forum

Wednesday 9th March 2021

Subject: EHCP Timeliness and Performance	Confidential: No
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1. Purpose

This report is to provide an update to the forum on the current position regarding EHCP timeliness and performance, highlighting the mitigating actions taken to reduce backlogs and areas of improvement.

2. Recommendations

To note the contents and developments shown within this report.

3. Background

The Children and Families Act, (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015) present statutory guidance to Local Authorities, health services, early years settings, schools and further education providers about their obligation to identify and meet the needs of Children and Young People aged 0-25 years who have SEND.

Walsall Local Authority is subject to a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) as a result of the Walsall SEND Inspection on February 2019. The multi-agency SEND Local Area Improvement Board (LAIB) continue to meet on a monthly basis in order to monitor the progress of the SEND WSOA, EHCP timeliness and SEND Improvement.

4. Compliance Update Figures

4.1 The compliance rate on new plans is currently at **64.7%** as of January 31st.

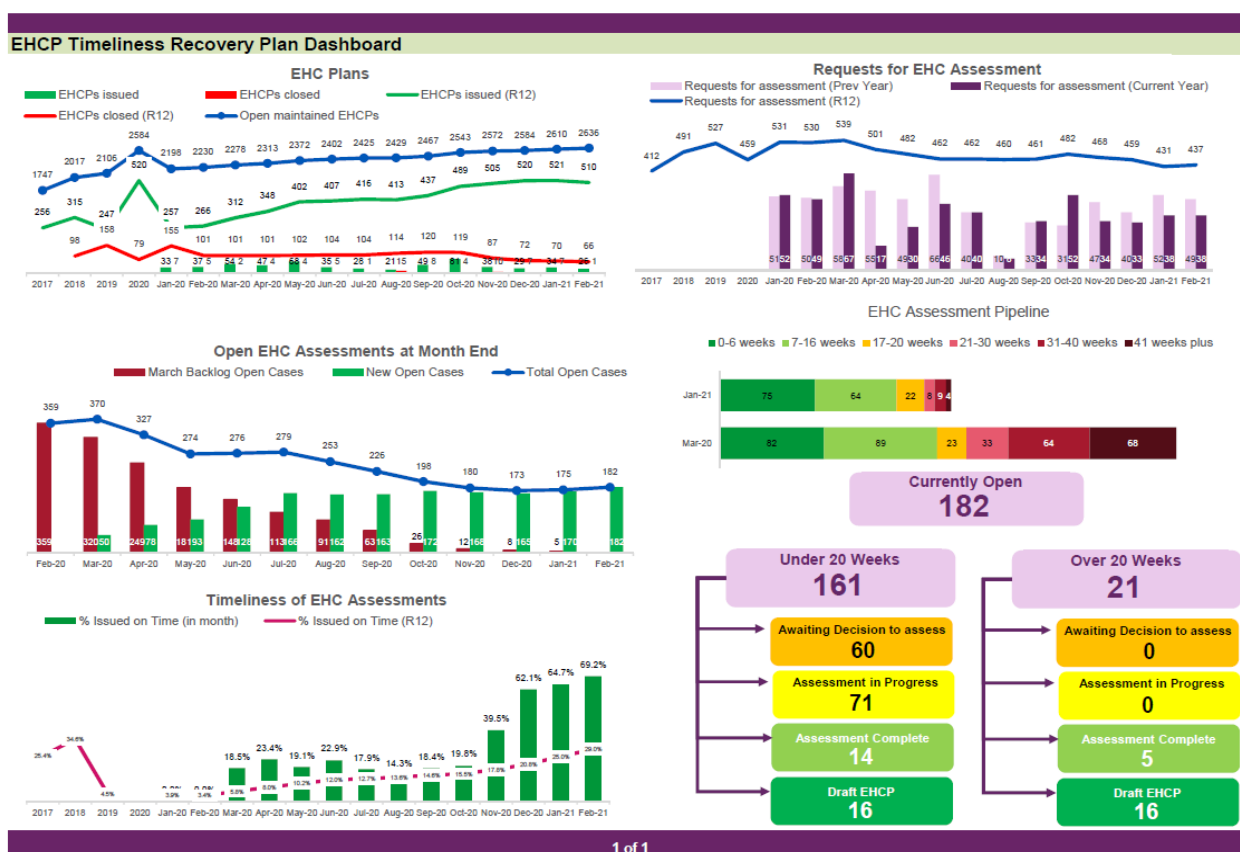
4.1 The **EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan** initiated to address the low EHCP 20 week compliance rates has continued to have a positive impact. EHCP performance figures are reported on a monthly basis to the DFE and are summarised in the table below:

Progress Report Re Completion Of EHCP Plans in 20 Weeks 2020 – LA Name Walsall

	Mar ch	April	May	June	July	Augu st	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
Number of EHCP Plans Issued, excluding exceptions	54	47	68	35	28	21	49	81	38	29	34
Number of these issued in 20 weeks	9	9	13	8	5	3	9	15	15	18	22
% in 20 weeks	16.7 %	19.1%	19.1%	22.9%	17.9%	14.3%	18.4%	18.8%	39.5%	62.1%	64.7%

4.2 The EHCP Timeliness Recovery Plan Dashboard demonstrates compliance and evidence towards clearing the backlog. Headlines as of January 2021 are as follows:

- The March backlog of 359 assessments is now complete. There are no open cases which are related to **timeliness and compliance**. The additional resources deployed to in the SEND Assessment and Educational Psychology team, proved effective in targeting the difficulties, and successful mitigated any difficulties.
- Timeliness over the rolling 12 month period continues to improve from 3.9% (Feb 2020) to 64.7% (Jan 2020).
- Since the 1st March 2020 370 new assessments have been opened.
 - 134 EHCPs have been issued, of which 78 (52%) were compliant and issued on time.
 - 69 were closed without an EHCP being issued (e.g. did not meet threshold or were withdrawn)
 - 182 are currently open and in progress



5 Local Area SEND Assurance visit

- 5.1** A local Area SEND Assurance visit was due to be scheduled for February 2021 and later March 2021, however these have been postponed due to additional COVID -19 pressures.
- 5.2** In preparation for these assurance visits, monthly meetings are scheduled which consist of Education, Social Care and Health agencies. Key agenda items are how well the LA supported schools, parents, children and young people amongst the additional pressures of COVID-19.

6 Risks and Further Actions

- 6.1** The number of children and young people with EHC plans has been gradually increasing since 2018; as of January 2021 this stands at **2,636**. This represents an increase of **0.42% increase** since January 2020, a **23.2%** increase since January 2019 and a **48.7%** increase since 2017.
- 6.2** As noted in previous reports, pressures to the service were recognised and were planned for accordingly, which included temporary capacity within the SEND Assessment Team and within the Educational Psychology Service. Both teams are working at full capacity. Developmental plans are in place to ensure appropriate capacity of both teams, which will enable the significant progress towards timeliness and performance to continue.
- 6.3** Caseloads and performance management processes are reviewed on a weekly basis to prioritise cases and maximise EHCP timeliness compliance, address any potential delays and moving along meetings actioned where appropriate. Cases which are deemed at risk of surpassing to 20week timescale are escalated to senior managers within a timely manner; thus enabling any barriers to progress to be identified and managed accordingly at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 6.4** The SEND Partnership group which consists of agencies from Education, Health and Social Care meet on a monthly basis to discuss SEND related developments. A key focus of the group is to continually monitor the quality and timeliness of EHCP advice submitted to the SEND Team during assessment stage.
- 6.5** The Open Objects EHC Hub is in full operation. Having an online system for the co-production of EHC plans is the right step forward for the young people of Walsall and the locality. Moving the system and process online improves the efficiency of the system as well as the quality of the plans that are produced. Timeliness of the advice submitted by agencies can also be monitored via the EHC Hub.

7 Conclusions and Recommendations

The Forum are asked to:

- 7.1 note the contents of this report.

Contact Officer: Name: Alexander Webley Email: alex.webley@walsall.gov.uk
