



**Walsall Council**

# **Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting to be held on: **28 March 2023 at 6.00 P.M.**

Meeting to be held via: **Council Chamber, Walsall and Microsoft Teams**

Public access to meeting via: <https://www.walsallcouncilwebcasts.com>

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Chair

Councillor S. Ditta  
Councillor B. Bains  
Councillor R. Burley  
Councillor S. Cheema  
Councillor I. Hussain  
Councillor S.B. Hussain  
Councillor A. Hussain  
Councillor E. Lee  
Councillor P. Kaur  
Councillor L. Rattigan  
Councillor C. Towe

## **NON-ELECTED VOTING MEMBERS**

Lichfield Diocesan  
Representative  
Archbishop of  
Birmingham's  
Representative  
Parent Governors

Vacancy

Vacancy

Mrs Heena Pathan  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

## **NON-ELECTED NON-VOTING MEMBERS**

Primary Teacher  
Representative  
Secondary Teacher  
Representative

Ms Sharon Guy

Ms Wendy Duffus

**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** Councillor Mark Statham – Education and Skills

Democratic Services, Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall, WS1 1TW  
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[www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

## ITEMS FOR BUSINESS

1.	<b>Apologies</b> To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.	
2.	<b>Substitutions</b> To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.	
3.	<b>Declarations of interest and party whip</b> To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.	
4.	<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)</b> To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda (if applicable).	
5.	<b>Minutes</b> To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2023.	Enclosed
6.	<b>Ofsted Local Area SEND Accelerated Progress Plan Update</b> To provide an overview of the results of the recent SEND Inspection, its outcome and the next steps and to provide assurance about the work that is in progress and planned in relation to improving the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP's) and improving the quality of the Local Offer.	Enclosed
7.	<b>New SEND Inspection Framework</b> To provide an overview of the new Ofsted and CQC SEND Inspection Framework and how the Local Area is preparing for it.	Enclosed
8.	<b>SEN forecasting and modelling</b> To provide an update on SEN forecasting and modelling of future demands for specialist school places.	Enclosed
9.	<b>Recommendation Tracker</b> To review progress with recommendations from previous meetings.	Enclosed
10	<b>Areas of Focus</b> To review the Committees Work Programme and the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee.	Enclosed
11.	<b>Date of next meeting</b> The date of the next meeting will be agreed at Annual Council.	

## The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

### Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

## **Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)**

### **Access to information: Exempt information**

#### **Part 1**

#### **Descriptions of exempt information: England**

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
  - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee when considering flood risk management functions which:
  - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
  - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
  - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

**MINUTES OF THE EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALSALL COUNCIL HOUSE.**

**Thursday 16 February 2023 at 6.00 P.M.**

**Committee Members present:**

Councillor S. Ditta (Chair)  
Councillor B. Bains  
Councillor R. Burley  
Councillor S. Cheema  
Councillor P. Kaur  
Councillor I. Hussain  
Councillor A. Hussain  
Councillor S.B. Hussain  
Councillor E. Lee  
Councillor C. Towe

**Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor Mark Statham – Education and Skills

**Officers Present:**

Sharon Kelly - Director Access and Inclusion  
Rob Thomas - Head of Access  
Lorraine Thompson - Virtual School & Vulnerable Groups Lead  
Jack Thompson – Democratic Services Officer  
Helena Kucharczyk – Head of Service for Quality Assurance and Performance Information

Welcome and introductions were made.

**55/22 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors: L. Rattigan, R. Burley and B. Bains.

**56/22 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions of this meeting.

**57/22 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip/

**58/22 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

## **59/22 Minutes**

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12 January 2023 was submitted [annexed].

### **Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 a copy having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.**

## **60/22 Children Not in School Report: Attendance and Exclusions, Children missing education, elective home education and Fair Access (FAP).**

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills introduced the item. He informed the Committee that it was the aim of the Council to continue to identify characteristics of good practice to help reduce inequalities and provide a good education for all children with particular focus on vulnerable children. In addition, the Council was aiming to work towards a position where the needs of children are met either in school or through alternative provision. Moreover, that when parents were taking the decision to home education their children that this was a positive decision and not a negative decision made due to a breakdown in the relationships between parents and schools.

The Head of Access explained that the Council understood that there was still an issue with attendance within the Borough. The Council had appointed a special advisor to help address this issue and a special working group had been set up with schools to help tackle attendance. This working group had already helped schools to manage attendance issues. In addition, the Council was running meetings to both advise parents and schools on Elective Home Education (EHE), when requests were made. These meetings had helped to reduce the number of pupils leaving school.

The Head of Service for Quality Assurance and Performance Information took the Committee through the presentation [annexed].

A discussion took place around school attendance and the work the Council was doing to improve attendance. Some of the responses to Members questions included:

- Schools did record absences, but they were often not coded correctly with the reason why, so it was difficult to draw a picture of the main causes for absences. There needed to be a national and local understanding of why absence rates were at a high level to be to help tackle them effectively;

- New legislation on attendance was included as part of the Schools Bill but this bill had been withdrawn from Parliament;
- Many Authorities, including Walsall, were embracing the proposed changes within the Schools Bill and the Department for Education (DfE) were supportive of the need to improve school attendance within the Borough;
- The attendance working group meetings the Council was having with schools helped schools to understand the data on attendance;
- The DfE had launched a national school attendance portal which the Council was encouraging all schools within the Borough to use;
- The Council was the admissions authority for maintained schools only;
- Secondary Schools controlled their own in year applications and that may be why it took longer for children to get a place in a secondary school during the school year;
- Parents had the option of going through the Fair Access Panel (FAP) which met every month to get their child a school place;
- There was evidence of a correlation between the amount of pupils receiving free school meals and the levels of attendance;
- Deprivation did have an effect on the levels of school attendance;
- There was an expectation issue with both parents and schools around attendance;
- Schools needed to develop a whole school approach to attendance;
- The Council was working on creating a partnership approach to attendance to help both pupils and parents;
- The Council had oversight on school attendance.

In response to a Member question on EHE the Committee was informed that a consultation on EHE register did take place as part of the government's preparation for the Schools Bill but the Bill had been withdrawn from Parliament. However, the Secretary of State for the DfE was supportive of introducing a register. The Council had an EHE team who contacted parents who home educated or wanted to home educate, and home visits were carried out. Parents did not have to accept a home visit, but the law required that parents provide an assessment of the education they were providing to their children each year, but the Council went above this requirement and contacted parents termly. If the Council determined that the education of a child being home education was not sufficient it could refer the child to the FAP and if they did not attend the assigned school, legal action could be taken. It was important to note that the Council had a safeguarding duty as well and would refer children to the Multi Agency Safeguarding HUB (MASH) if concerns were raised, however, the data did not suggest that safeguarding was a disproportionate issue for EHE children.

In a follow up question on EHE, Officers informed the Committee that the majority of the EHE was right for children. In addition, that EHE children did not have to follow the national curriculum however neither did academies. There was no barrier for EHE children to take standardised tests.

In response to Members questions on how absences may have affected the attainment level of pupils within the Borough. Officers informed the Committee that there were still issues in early years attainment and pupils then caught up with the national average as they progressed through their education. In addition, despite national attainment dropping, due to the effects of Covid-19, the Borough was closing the gap in attainment. It would help attainment if less children were absence from school especially now that there had been an improvement in the quality of the provision provided. The Council was continuing to work on making sure there were enough school places, however, it remained the parents' legal responsibility to make sure their child attended school.

Members praised the relationship that the Education Team had built with schools within the Borough.

In response to question from a Member on the government funded National Tutoring Programme and Recovery Premium Funding, officers informed the Committee that funding for the Programme was sent directly to schools and was not monitored by the Council. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills added that he was involved in the National Tutoring Programme and that schools decided where to spend this additional funding.

**Resolved:**

**That the Committee considered the content of the report.**

## **61/22 Vulnerable Learners Hub**

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills introduced the item and informed the Committee that the work that had been carried out by the Vulnerable Learners Hub had been recognised by the team winning the Walsall Council Proud to be One award and they had been nominated the 'better outcome category' at the MJ awards [annexed].

The Virtual School & Vulnerable Groups Lead explained to the Committee that the VLH had two strands; to promote the education of children with a social worker and to reduce the number of exclusions for children with an Education Healthcare Plan (EHCP). The VLH was set up in September 2021 and the number of referrals had increased significantly. The VLH offered tailored training packages for schools to help them raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and 40 schools had already signed up to the training. The funding for the VLH team was provide through a DfE grant and this ended at the end of the academic year, but the Council was hopeful that the funding would continue. Additionally, the VLH team would be putting funding case together if DfE funding was not continued.

The Committee conveyed its congratulations to the VLH team for their award and results of their work.



In response to a Members question on staff recruitment and funding for the VLH. Officers informed the Committee that more staff had been recruited to meet the demand for referrals and this included the recruitment of a data manager. Furthermore, if the level of funding for the VLH increased the Council would be seeking to recruit more staff. Additionally, the Council currently funded the VLH on top of the funding received from the DfE and was hoping to extend the support offered from pupils with EHCPs to those with Special Educational Needs (SEND).

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills offered his congratulations to the VLH team and praised them for their success in delivering for children across the Borough.

**Resolved**

**That the Committee noted the impact of the work carried out by the Venerable Learners Hub.**

**62/22 Recommendation Tracker**

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Officer to update the Committee on the recommendation tracker. The Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee that the item on childcare sufficiency assessment should be labelled as complete and not in progress.

**Resolved**

**That the Committee noted the Recommendation Tracked.**

**63/22 Areas of Focus**

The Chair invited the Democratic Services Officer to update the Committee on the Areas of Focus. The Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee of the items for the next meeting were: Accelerated Progress Plan Update, New SEND Inspection Framework and the Special School Provision Plan Update including SEND modelling process.

**Resolved**

**That the areas of focus be noted.**

**64/22 Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for the 28 March 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 19:03.

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**Ofsted Local Area SEND Accelerated Progress Plan Update**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Mark Statham – Education and Skills

**1. Aim**

The aim of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the results of the recent SEND Inspection, its outcome and the next steps and to provide assurance about the work that is in progress and planned in relation to improving the timeliness and quality of Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP's) and improving the quality of the Local Offer.

**2. Recommendations**

1. That the Committee recognise the development of SEND in Walsall
2. That the Committee confirm they are assured that there are robust plans in place to achieve improvement in the two areas of concern that were found not to have made sufficient progress at the SEND inspection.
3. That the Committee confirm that are satisfied with the robustness of the governance arrangements for the ongoing monitoring of SEND Improvement and the identification of impact
4. That the Committee confirm that they are assured by the plans to develop a wider robust SEND improvement plan by the end of this year

**3. Report detail – know**

**Inspection Result**

- 3.1. In June 2019, Walsall SEND Local Area was inspection by Ofsted and CQC. The inspection found that there were a number of significant concerns about the quality of SEND services in Walsall and the Local Area was directed to develop and implement a Written Statement of Action outlining how services in the specified areas of concern would be improved. The nine areas of concern were:

- The lack of a meaningful partnership and co-production with children and young people, parents, carers, schools and services, which has meant that the code of practice has not been effectively implemented over time.
- Poor-quality EHC plans, which do not accurately reflect children's and young people's special educational needs, and do not adhere to the statutory timescales for completion – Ofsted noted that EHC plan assessments, annual reviews and updates to EHC plans are delayed and that EHC plans do not routinely capture the child or young person's voice.
- Poor outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- A lack of post-diagnostic support for children and young people with an autism spectrum disorder

- A high and disproportionate number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND
  - A lack of appropriate provision and support, which has led to significant numbers of children and young people missing from education
  - A failure to ensure an impartial information, advice and support (IASS) service for parents in the local area
  - The poor quality of the local offer, which does not meet the requirements of the code of practice
  - Weak arrangements for joint commissioning, which do not consider information about the local area well enough
- 3.2. In June 2022, Ofsted announced that Walsall's re-inspection would take place. Inspectors requested a suite of documentary evidence prior to inspection, including the Local Area's self-assessment of their current position in relation to the quality of SEND services, the progress against the nine areas of concern and where improvements were still required. Inspectors were then on site for four days over which they held several focus groups with parents, carers, children and young people, education staff and local authority and health staff.
- 3.3. Following the re-inspection, Walsall was found to have made sufficient progress against seven of the nine areas of concern. The two areas where sufficient progress was deemed not to have been made were:
- Poor-quality EHC plans, which do not accurately reflect children's and young people's special educational needs, and do not adhere to the statutory timescales for completion – Ofsted noted that EHC plan assessments, annual reviews and updates to EHC plans are delayed and that EHC plans do not routinely capture the child or young person's voice.
  - The poor quality of the local offer, which does not meet the requirements of the code of practice - Too many parents, carers and other stakeholders do not know that the local offer exists. Those who know of its existence have found it to be of little or no use.
- 3.4. The [inspection result](#) was published on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2022. A communication plan was developed around the publication, including a press release ([Ofsted re-inspection finds positive improvements in Walsall's SEND offer](#)) and an interview with Councillor Statham. This resulted in a number of positive news stories:
- **BBC:** [Improvements made for Walsall SEND pupils, watchdog says](#)
  - **Express and Star:** [Education services for vulnerable youngsters 'on the road to recovery' in Walsall](#)
  - **Birmingham Mail:** ["Parents say they feel involved" - inspectors hail improvements in services for vulnerable children in Walsall](#)
- 3.5. The result has also been published on the [Local Offer web pages](#)

### **Accelerated Action Plan (APP)**

- 3.6. The Local Area submitted an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) to the Department for Education (DfE) on 6<sup>th</sup> October for the two areas of concern against which sufficient progress was not made outlining how improvements will be made over the next 12 months:
- 3.7. As part of the submission we were required to demonstrate:
- The governance and accountability structures and processes that will support our next phase of improvement.

- The actions the Local Area is now taking (and have taken since the inspectors' revisit) to respond to their outstanding concerns.
  - The impact measures and milestones to which you are working, being clear on the improvements you will have delivered in the next 3, 6 and 12 months.
- 3.8. Guidance from our DfE and NHS England advisors was sought on how best to present the APP and [Staffordshire's](#) was recommended as an example of good practice, and we adopted that format for Walsall's APP. The actions within the APP were developed with input from partners, parents and carers and LAIB members were asked to comment on the plan and sign off via email prior to submission.
- 3.9. The APP was signed off as fit for purpose by the DfE on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the version that was signed off has been published on our [SEND Local Offer](#). An updated version of the plan is attached at Annex A and this will be uploaded onto the Local Offer to demonstrate progress.
- 3.10. Informal monthly meetings have been held with our DfE and NHSE advisors to monitor our progress against the plan and a formal six-month review is due to take place on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023.
- 3.11. In addition to oversight and support from the DfE and NHSE advisors we have the opportunity to access support through the DfE's Sector Led Improvement (SLIP) programme. Our identified SLIP partner is the Bi-Borough of Westminster and Royal Kensington and Chelsea.
- 3.12. The SLIP support offer includes consultancy and training to help improve practice across key areas including EHCP processes, staff training, co-production and engagement and supported internships. We are currently working with our SLIP partners to identify which parts of the offer we would most benefit from in Walsall with the support being delivered over the next six months.
- 3.13. There will not be another re-inspection in relation to the original nine areas of concern or the remaining two areas of concern. The inspection framework has been redeveloped by Ofsted and CQC and was launched in April 2023 with LAs across the country starting to be inspected under the new framework.

#### **4. Progress so far – Quality of EHC Plans and Local Offer**

- 4.1. The APP covers the two remaining areas of concern that were deemed not to have achieved significant progress with 32 improvements being split across six projects.

**Poor-quality EHC plans, which do not accurately reflect children's and young people's special educational needs, and do not adhere to the statutory timescales for completion.**

- Ensure there is sufficient capacity and skill within services to complete statutory tasks
- Improve the timeliness of EHC Plans and Reviews
- Improve the quality of EHC assessments, plans and annual reviews
- Improve communication with parents, young people, and professionals

**The poor quality of the local offer, which does not meet the requirements of the code of practice**

- Increase Co-production with parents, carers, children, and young people in relation to the Local Offer
- Improve the look, content, and navigation of the Local Offer website.

4.2. We are already seeing evidence of impact in relation to the actions taken, and, improvements in timeliness within the EHC Assessment process, despite ongoing challenges relation to demand:

- Demand for EHC assessments has increased rapidly in Walsall over the past three years and is now almost double what it was in 2019 following increases of 42% between 2020 and 2021 and a further 42% between 2021 and 2022. The 42% increase between 2020 and 2021 is far higher than the regional and national increases in the same period of 19.2% and 22.8% respectively.
- Due to the increasing numbers of requests for assessments the numbers of EHC plans issued and open are also increasing. Between 2019 and the end of 2022, the number of open EHC plans in Walsall increased by 61.2% and is significantly higher than regional and national comparators.
- The work that is being done around training staff and improving processes within the EHC Team is having a significant impact on the timeliness of EHC Plans. While this is not yet filtering through to significant increases in the percentage of plans issued within 20 weeks due to the backlog of already overdue assessments, there is clear evidence that timeliness is improving.
- As well as improved processes and staff training, one of the main factors in the progress that has been seen in respect of timeliness is due to a consistent improvement to the timeliness of decision making at key decision points, supported and enabled by timely receipt of advice and improved processes within health and within the EHC Team. This is a significant turnaround which will begin to demonstrate real impact in the 20-week timeliness of issuing EHC plans in the coming weeks.
- Walsall has an overall lower mediation and appeal rate than comparators. Where mediations do take place they are generally successful in preventing further appeal. The main reason for mediation is disagreements about decision to assess, issue or continue a plan following review.

4.3. Below is a summary of the key actions and improvements that have been implemented so far in relation to the APP. See Appendix A for the full plan and updates against individual actions.

**Poor-quality EHC plans, which do not accurately reflect children's and young people's special educational needs, and do not adhere to the statutory timescales for completion.**

**Ensure there is sufficient capacity and skill within services to complete statutory tasks**

4.4. The council EHC team has now been restructured to work on a locality basis with permanent locality leads in place. Each locality is led by a Senior Officer who has responsibility and oversight of allocations, rising needs, KPIs, complex families and responsible challenge and support to schools.

4.5. All families and schools now have a named link officer with the work of the team becoming more family focussed. The team is being supported clearly defined processes and procedures.

4.6. The EHC team is now 90% staffed with permanent staff with a permanent team manager due to start imminently. Further recruitment is underway for three remaining EHC officer vacancies and four new posts which have been established to increase the capacity to support families. An induction area has been established to hold induction and training materials to support the induction of new staff.

4.7. A training plan for the EHC team has been implemented with staff completing Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) training. This will be repeated for new staff

and as a refresh for existing staff. Senior staff have begun the National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) Casework officer award (12 months) and other training is ongoing.

- 4.8. A strategic development and coproduction day was held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. Over 40 people attended from across the partnership including officers from the council, staff from health and parents and families. The day consisted of four sessions which explored SEND and inclusion, the parent journey, the local offer and the health gateway. The day involved participants developing pledges for the provision of SEND services in Walsall and an opportunity for early self-assessment against the new inspection criteria.
- 4.9. Work is taking place within health to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the workforce and to implement SEND specific training.

#### **Improve the timeliness of EHC Plans and Reviews**

- 4.10. Significant work has been undertaken to improve the timeliness of EHC plans. Triage mechanisms have been implemented for Educational Psychologists to speed up assessment and decision-making times including ensuring that there is protected time for decision making.
- 4.11. A new triage process has been implemented by health colleagues which enables requests for advice go to a single place to be reviewed by a weekly panel to ensure that they are sent to the correct departments and teams to support timely provision of advices and ensure that they are of suitable quality. Work is ongoing with social care to implement similar process improvements.
- 4.12. Significant work has been undertaken in analysing the data around EHCP assessments, looking in detail at each of the key decision points within the process – decision to assess, decision to issue and the issue of the final plan, to identify bottlenecks within the process. Improvements have been implemented, including reduced paperwork for SENCOs and we have created a sleeker pathway and created self-imposed deadlines lines which add in valuable extra weeks against the statutory time frame. While the percentage of plans issued within 20 weeks remains below target due to the backlog, there have been significant improvements in the timeliness of decision making earlier in the process. This will begin to feed through to the issuing of plans as the backlog is cleared.
- 4.13. Work has been taking place with SENCOs within schools to improve the quality of requests for initial assessments and the timeliness of reviews. This includes the development of a SENCO pathway booklet and guidance which has been issued to schools and re-iterated through various communication routes. Additional guidance has also been issued about the use of the EHC Hub and key messages will continue to be shared through SENCO networks as well as further development of guidance and support tools for SENCOs.
- 4.14. We have significantly changed our annual review process to ensure that these meetings are more purposeful, families feel informed throughout, decisions can be made in a timely and appropriate manner. We have reduced our paperwork to the basic statutory requirements which mean schools are not burdened with duplicated paperwork. Time can be spent with children rather than unnecessary paperwork. Schools and parent are able to make amendments to their own EHC plans which should result in annual reviews being made in a timelier manner. This involves a triaging of amendments required, with schools being more able to secure attendance from EHC Team members who can make decisions in meeting, as well as being able to make pre-approved amendments. Annual reviews and assessments are being split into localities and tracked through daily scrutiny groups making it easier to track issues and resolve quickly.

- 4.15. A new online portal has been created for parents to apply for places 12 months in advance of transition with further work being done with SENCOs to improve processes.

#### **Improve the quality of EHC assessments, plans and annual reviews**

- 4.16. We have coproduced a new EHC Plan template which allows for greater personalisation according to age of the child and we are focussing on developing early years and post 16 pathways. A competition was held for children to design the front cover.
- 4.17. Training guides have been written for staff, supported by training and regular team meetings to ensure that they fully understand how to develop good quality plans. Guidance has also been written and distributed to health and social care staff to support the provision of good quality advices and this is backed up by regular development sessions. More formal training is being implemented.
- 4.18. This has been supported with by time spent exploring ways of maximising the EHC Hub (the online case management system) and clear instructions have been sent to schools and parents to ensure consistency. An annotated template has been given to all the team and schools to ensure best practice and maintain consistency of language and approach when drafting. This has already started to impact on the quality within EHC Plans.
- 4.19. The Quality Assurance Framework is being developed which will include theories of good practice, examples of what good looks like, themes for development and reflection upon changes. Quality assurance is being sought through a number of routes including a group which involves SENCOs working with the LA around decision making to foster understanding of why some applications are refused. SENCOs will take this learning back into SENCO groups and schools. A parent group is also being developed to reference and co-produced development. EHC plans are also quality assured by senior team members.

#### **Improve communication with parents, young people, and professionals**

- 4.20. Significant work has been undertaken to improve direct communication with parents, carers and young people including developing closer ties with FACE, the local parent-carer forum and other parent groups and developing new plans and training guides in co-production with them. Regular newsletters are produced from the SEND service. A children's and young people's group has also been established.
- 4.21. A communication and engagement strategy and plan is being developed to ensure that there is a robust and consistent approach to communication and engagement which will ensure that parents, carers, children and young people know what to expect and can hold the local area to account.

#### **The poor quality of the local offer, which does not meet the requirements of the code of practice**

##### **Increase Co-production with parents, carers, children, and young people in relation to the Local Offer**

- 4.22. A Local Offer Co-ordinator has been recruited and has established a Local Offer Steering Group with representation from key partners across the local area, including parents and carers, to oversee the development of the Local Offer. This group meets monthly. The Local Offer co-ordinator has established a Parent Working Group which meets every four weeks and wider 'In Your Hands' engagement sessions were held in October, with follow up sessions held in February. Further sessions will be held throughout the year.



- 4.23. A Children and Young People's Group has been established and have met twice. The young people on the group are choosing the name for their group and will determine the terms of reference and how it is run.
- 4.24. To ensure that the Local Offer is accessible to people from diverse, multi-cultural backgrounds and hard to reach groups, connections have been made across the borough within diverse areas to promote conversations about the Local Offer and we are actively seeking to recruit parents from multi-cultural backgrounds to the working groups. A 'Translate' button has been added to the Local Offer to make it more accessible to parent whose first language is not English.

### **Improve the look, content, and navigation of the Local Offer website**

- 4.25. Work has been taking place to update the information currently on the Local Offer and out of date information has been removed. A full redesign of the site is underway, with a workplan in place to address each of the key sections across the site.
- 4.26. A replacement for the directory of services is being commissioned and developed in partnership with Walsall Together. This will bring together information about services, including statutory services, professional services, voluntary services and community groups that are available to people and families across Walsall in one place. Parents, carers of children with SEND and children and young people will be able to filter services based on age and whether the service is specific to or suitable for children and young people with SEND. This is due to go live in the summer.
- 4.27. As part of the ongoing work, mechanisms are being established with partners to maintain the content on the Local Offer on an ongoing basis to ensure that it is kept up to date and relevant. Feedback will be continually sought from users of the Local Offer so that it can continue to be improved.

### **Next Steps – Ongoing SEND Improvement**

- 4.28. In addition to the two areas of concern against which sufficient progress was not made, it is recognised that although sufficient progress was made against the other areas, this does not mean that there is not still room for improvements. In addition to this, there are other areas within the delivery of SEND services which need to be developed and improved, particularly in light of national changes including the new inspection framework and the legislative changes outlined in the SEND Green Paper.
- 4.29. In order to ensure that Walsall is prepared for these changes and delivering high quality SEND services to children, young people and families in Walsall which meet their needs and improve outcomes, the Local Area is beginning to develop a longer-term improvement plan outlining the ambitions for SEND services in Walsall. Using available tools and undertaking an in-depth audit against the Code of Practice, the improvement plan will be developed in co-production with children, young people, parents, carers, education providers and employers, as well as staff from across the Local Authority and Health. LAIB members will be asked to be part of the development of this plan. The aim is to have a finalised, signed off plan by the end of the calendar year.

### **Governance, review and ongoing monitoring**

- 4.30. The ongoing development and implementation of SEND improvement plans, including the APP, will be led and overseen by the Local Area Improvement Board (LAIB). The LAIB has direct accountability to the Health and Wellbeing Board and 'dotted line' accountability to the Walsall Learning Alliance. The LAIB will seek assurance that improvement plans are progressing and that milestones and deadlines are being

achieved. Where there is slippage or risk, the LAIB will provide appropriate challenge and support.

- 4.31. The success and impact of the improvement plans on improving outcomes for children will be monitored through the use of data from across the partnership and a partnership SEND dashboard will be developed to support this.
- 4.32. Oversight will also be held for individual elements of SEND Improvement plan within individual organisations where responsibility for service delivery lies including Children's Services DMT and the ICB SEND Assurance Group.
- 4.33. In addition, the implementation and progress of the APP is monitored by the DfE on a regular basis both informally and formally.

## **5. Financial**

- 5.1. High Needs funding supports the funding for children and young people with EHCP and complex needs. This funding stream will be reported through the financial reports to scrutiny during the year. We are currently modelling the impact of growing needs in Walsall against our high needs funding allocation to determine any ongoing pressures over the coming years. These too will be reported through the finance reports and will form part of the annual budget setting process.

## **6. Reducing Inequalities**

- 6.1. The improvement measures taken to increase the quality of EHC Plans supports our aim to reduce inequalities and support young people with SEND to meet their outcomes into early adulthood by ensuring that all young people with an EHC plan are supported and represented by a document that is robust, forward looking, high quality and considers their views throughout.
- 6.2. It also supports our key area of focus that our children should:
  - have the best possible start
  - be safe from harm
  - be happy, healthy, and learning well.
- 6.3. The improvement of the Local Offer also supports our aim to reduce inequalities by ensuring that all families have access to relevant and clear information, including that of which services are available in their immediate community.

## **7. Decide**

- 7.1. The Committee may decide to request further information or assurance in respect of implementation of these changes and success criteria.

## **8. Respond**

- 8.1. Walsall Local Area will continually seek feedback from families, settings and statutory partners to co-produce ongoing improvements and assess progress.

## **9. Review**

- 9.1. Improved outcomes for children and young people and the progress and implementation of SEND improvement will be monitored the LAIB, organisational governance and the DfE as outlined in paragraph 3.31 – 3.34 above.

## **Background papers**

Local Area SEND APP Update – Appendix A

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Key	Not Yet started	In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded					
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
Poor-quality EHC plans, which do not accurately reflect children’s and young people’s special educational needs, and do not adhere to the statutory timescales for completion.											
	APP 1.1.1	Develop and embed the new structure within the Local Authority EHC Assessment team which operates on a locality basis and provides named Family Link Officers for families and named Senior Link Officers for schools	Have a named link officer who they can contact and who knows their family well and be able to contact the service and receive a same day call-back at a time that is convenient to them.	Head of SEND	Established the locality model and communicated directly to all parents and schools who their link officer is. All vacancies will have been advertised and recruitment processes will be underway.	Jun-23	Complete	All families have a named Link officer for assessments. Team working on locality basis Permanent Locality leads now in place and leading areas. Localities are developing a focuses approach to assessment and reviews		Structure chart	
	APP 1.1.2	Review and implement a staff recruitment and retention strategy for staff within the EHC Team and EP Service.	Receive support from a stable and experienced workforce.	Head of SEND	Review current recruitment and retention strategy to incorporate feedback from staff health check workforce survey.	Jun-23	In Progress	The team now functioning at 90% permanent. EHC team manager to start in February. Service manager is good with data and reporting which is adding in additional skills. EHC team manager permanent starting in February 2023. Recruitment starting in February for 7 new EHC officers ( 3 vacant and 4 new). An induction area has been started on Teams for new officers and central places for all induction materials and training.	Workforce recruitment and retention strategy	Structure Chart 2023, teams induction area	
	APP 1.1.3	Offer NASEN and IPSY training to all staff in the EHC team	Receive good quality support from well trained staff who have professional, nationally recognised qualifications.	Head of SEND	Plan training programme that is required.	Nov-23	In Progress	EHC team completed IPSEA training. Senior staff completing the NASEN Casework officer award (12 months) Other training ongoing such as capita and the Hub. IPSEA training to be repeated		Annual training schedule, induction plan, Induction and Training Area on teams	

Key	Not Yet started	In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded					
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
Ensure there is sufficient capacity and skill within services to complete statutory tasks	APP 1.1.4	Ensure that there is sufficient capacity within Health and Mental Health services (including the Community Paediatrics and Therapies teams) to meet the demand in the assessment and delivery of EHC plans.	Receive good quality assessments within statutory timescales and support in a timely manner without having to wait excessive amounts of time due to long waiting lists.	ICB Commissioning Lead	Undertaken work to understand the gaps and begun to address capacity issues by developing the relevant business cases and identifying new and innovative ways of working to address the gaps.	Sep-23	In Progress	Comm. Paeds. WLI's for EHCP's to address the backlog which we are now on top of. We currently have a business case to address the staffing gap which will provide long term plan for being able to maintain compliance with EHCP timeframe  Apprentice EHCP administrator in post for Comm. Paeds  Therapies. Job planning completed in therapies to allow priority tasks has been done (EHCP priority)  DCO has met with CAMHS to discuss pathway	We have a further meeting with him on 7th to discuss the service specs and capacity of the teams.	Pathway documents  Improved evidence of timeliness and quality of health advices	
	APP 1.1.5	Hold a cross remit development day with key EHC Assessment Team staff, EPs, and Health operational staff to embed good practice.	Benefit from a local area SEND workforce that understand each other's role in delivering SEND services and is committed to working together to deliver high quality services that improve outcomes.	Head of SEND	Held the first cross remit development day	Dec-22	Complete	Full Strategic Development and Coproduction Day held on 3rd March. Attendance from all areas in council and also parents and families. Four sessions explored SEND and inclusion, the parent journey, the local offer and the health gateway (an example of successful joint working). The final activity looked at the new inspection core statements and all participants scored themselves to create a baseline	steps completed and date arranged- all stakeholders informed and in diaries	Diary Invite, email invites. Notes of meeting. Meeting agenda, feedback from event, baseline statements	

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Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
	APP 1.1.6	Implement the national framework pilot which sets out minimum training standards for health professionals working with children with SEND within Walsall Health Trust (WHT)	Receive good quality support from well trained staff who are delivering care and support to recognised national standards.	Designated Clinical Officer	Begun the implementation of the pilot or explored alternative forms of training if there is any delay in the national roll-out.	Mar-23	In Progress	National pilot out delayed however training framework to be discussed at local level in the interim.  Meeting has taken place with E. Wharton LD and Autism lead nurse. Mandatory Oliver McGowan training (Phase 1) to be rolled out for all staff from March 1st.	Phase 2 delivery to be confirmed with discussion between WHT and ICB.	Training records, annual training plan,	
	APP 1.1.7	Take advantage of Sector Led Improvement Partners Support.	Detail to be determined following first SLIP meeting in October								
	APP 1.2.1	Clear outstanding EHC assessments that are over 20 weeks by triaging those that require new Ed Psych assessments and those that do not.	Receive the outcome of their EHC assessments and plans. They will be able to follow the progress of their assessments and contribute directly to their assessments and plans via the EHC Hub.	Head of SEND	Triaged all assessments that do not require an Ed Psych assessment and be making progress in completing the backlog of those that do.	Mar-23	In Progress	EP triage now operational and working. Decisions to assess made by week 2 and decisions to issue made by week 14. Some delays over placements. Backlog of assessments reducing. Protected time for Decision Making	Protected time for decision making time. Schools have EP reports in graduated approach.	Decision Making TOR, Quality Assurance Framework, EP timeliness data	
	APP 1.2.2	Refine and improve processes for request for advices from health, including the implementation of a ‘triage’ process to ensure that requests are going to the right person first time and the development of a standard operating protocol (SOP)	have their assessments completed within statutory timescales, with input from relevant professionals. They will be able to follow the progress of their assessments and contribute directly to their assessments and plans via the EHC Hub.	Designated Clinical Officer	Implemented the revised processes and established monitoring to track improvements.	Dec-22	Complete	Triage process partially embedded and working well, All providers engaged.	SOP in production awaiting one health advice document for completion then to be circulated and agreed as business as usual and auditing to be looked at to assess impact.	Process documents, SOP  Improved timeliness and quality of advices	

Key	Not Yet started		In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded				
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
Improve the timelines of EHC Plans and Reviews	APP 1.2.3	Refine and improve processes request for advices from social care to ensure that requests are going to the right person first time and the development of a standard operating protocol (SOP)	have their assessments completed within statutory timescales, with input from relevant professionals. They will be able to follow the progress of their assessments and contribute directly to their assessments and plans via the EHC Hub.	Head of Help, Protection and Support	Agreed the new processes and begun to implement them	Mar-23	In Progress	Work is ongoing with social care to refine and develop processes	Meeting to take place in February to discuss processes	Process documents, SOP  Improved timeliness and quality of advices	
	APP 1.2.4	Review data and existing processes within the EHC team to identify bottlenecks.	have their assessments completed within statutory timescales, with input from relevant professionals. They will be able to follow the progress of their assessments and contribute directly to their assessments and plans via the EHC Hub.	Performance Team and Head of SEND	Have comprehensively identified where all bottle necks exist and have begun to identify solutions to streamline processes.	Jan-23	Complete	Initial analysis has been completed and bottlenecks identified.  This analysis is being used in the refinement and development of improved processes and will be updated on an ongoing basis.	To refresh analysis to identify improvements	Analysis document	
	APP 1.2.5	Re-establish the Partnership Operational Group to oversee operational processes, unblock issues that impact on timeliness and monitor quality of plans.	Have their assessments completed and EHC plans finalised within statutory timescales to ensure that children and young people can receive timely provision based on their needs.	Designated Clinical Officer	Have re-established the partnership group and agreed membership, terms of reference and priorities for the first 12 months.	Mar-23	In Progress	Dates for partnership operation group and invite list circulated.	TOR and priorities to be agreed.		
	APP 1.2.6	Develop and implement clear guidance which outlines thresholds and expectations for SENCOs who are requesting assessments.	receive all appropriate support from their SENCO with appropriately managed expectations and be assured that any request for an EHC assessment is appropriate and contains the relevant information for the assessment to progress.	Head of SEND	Written and shared the guidance with SENCOs and supported its implementation through training and communication.	Dec-22	Complete	SENCO pathway booklet and guidance has been written and sent to schools. Communication of guidance through schools bulletin, SENCO mail and virtual head teachers session. Guidance also sent out about how to use the Hub for assessments and reviews. Planned to discuss and support implementation through SENCo networks during the year.	oversee training plan and ensure covered as planned through senco networks	SENCo EHC Pathways booklets and guidance. Using the Hub guidance booklet . Training Plan.	



Key	Not Yet started	In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded					
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
	APP 1.2.7	Develop and strengthen planning and review arrangements for children and young people who are moving towards transition points (including transitions into area)	Receive appropriate support and planning for when they are moving towards key transition points.	Head of SEND	Have fully reviewed and identified gaps in current transition processes and begun to develop redefined pathways.	Aug-23	In Progress	New online portal created for parents to apply for placed 12 months in advance of transition. SENCOs working group looking at F4 process and how to improve	Working group for F4s March 2023	Transition Pathway	
	APP 1.2.8	Develop, strengthen, and embed new annual review processes to ensure that all children receive their reviews in a timely manner and that all EHCPs are on the new plan template.	Have up to date EHCPs which are reviewed in statutory timescales and meet changing needs as children and young people grow.	Head of SEND	Published guidance on the revised processes, delivered training and awareness to SENCOs and implemented monitoring at school level.	Aug-23	In Progress	Working group of SENCOs now meeting regularly. Themes are looking at paperwork and ease of systems. Whole area SENCO event planned for May. Interim inclusion officer starting in March 2023 to develop offer to schools.	Training for schools on AR processes	Annual review paperwork, guide to using Hub for annual reviews, new plan template, EHC plan training guides,	
	APP 1.3.1	Develop plan templates that reflect personalisation and capture the voice of children, young people, and parents. Parents have been involved in designing new templates.	Have high quality plans that accurately reflect the needs of individual children and young people, capturing their voice and clearly set out what support the children and young people will receive.	Head of SEND	Designed and implemented new plan templates in co-production with parents and carers.	Dec-22	Complete	New EHC plan template been codesigned with parents. Training guides completed and used within team.  Front cover now designed by children from Walsall from a competition		new plan template, EHC plan training guides,	
	APP 1.3.2	Implement regular and ongoing training for staff and robust guides and manuals to ensure that staff understand what a good quality EHC plan looks like and how they should involve children, young people, and parents in the development of their plans.	Tell us that they have been listened to, included in the assessment process, and receive consistently high-quality plans which meet set standards and the needs of children and young people.	Head of SEND	Written guidance and disseminated it to all staff. Established a regular schedule of training through team meetings and dedicated training sessions.	Apr-23	Complete	Training and induction area set up on teams. Induction Plan and training agenda completed for 2023. Schedule of weekly meetings and training set up across all team.	Completed - BAU ongoing training now	Training records, annual training plan, induction plan, IPSEA and NASEN training agreed for all staff, Designated area on Teams for induction and trianing support and resources	



Key	Not Yet started	In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded					
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
Improve the quality of EHC assessments, plans and annual reviews	APP 1.3.3	Implement regular and ongoing training for staff and robust guides and manuals to ensure that staff understand what good quality advices look like.	Tell us that they have been listened to, included in the assessment process, and receive consistently high-quality plans which meet set standards and the needs of children and young people.	Head of SEND Designated Clinical Officer  Head of Help, Protection and Support  With EPs and Therapy Leads	Written guidance and disseminated it to all staff. Established a regular schedule of training and awareness sessions.	Apr-23	In Progress	Contributions guidance completed and disseminated to social care and health. Development days building on this. Health have set up robust pathway to ensure quality advices and sent. Training plan being developed for all colleagues. Looking at possible online modules to buy into council.  Health team completing CDC EHCP training.	DCO to delivery training on writing health advice and legalities at Paediatric clinical operational group on 21st March	Health Care gateway Overview , trainign plan, Advices guidance booklet	
	APP 1.3.4	Implement a robust quality assurance framework including regular multi-agency dip sampling and single agency audits for plans, advice quality and reviews.	Be assured through published learning and the receipt of high-quality plans and reviews that we are continually improving the quality of assessments and plans that meet the needs of children and young people.	Head of SEND Designated Clinical Officer  Head of Help, Protection and Support  With input from SENCOs, EPs and Therapy Leads	Have an agreed quality assurance framework with partners and begun to implement regular dip samples and audits.	Apr-23	In Progress	EHC quality assurance framework in development of four areas Once completed groups can start. Parent quality group to give feedback to plans.	Completion of QA Framework. Protected time for QA groups to meet	QA Framework , audit reports	
	APP 1.3.5	Establish a panel which includes SENCOs to review requests for assessments that are refused, to inform further training around requesting EHC assessments.	be better supported by SENCOs to understand the EHC assessment process and whether any request for an EHC assessment is appropriate.	Head of SEND	Identified SENCOs to be part of the panel, developed a terms of reference and booked in a regular programme of panel meetings and begun to meet.	Dec-22	Some delay but In Progress	SENCOs now working with LA to explore decision making and training to be part of decision making group commenced in February 2023. Panel to be operational by April 2023.	Meeting to proceed 24th January	Decision making TOR , notes of meeting	

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Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
	APP 1.3.6	Establish a multi-agency panel to meet prior to plan issue to agree funding and support levels and how this should be reflected in the EHC plan.	Receive EHC plans which clearly outline support which will meet their needs and have agreed funding in place.	Head of SEND Designated Clinical Officer  Head of Help, Protection and Support	Identified professionals to be part of the panel, have an agreed terms of reference and booked in a regular programme of panel meetings.	Mar-23	In Progress	Health have developed very strong pathway - Health Gateway group meets weekly for referrals to professionals and triaging advice. Health QA all reports and are working towards using a One Health Form known as an APP C. This can be copied straight to plan as already QAd.	Work with Social care to develop similar response to requests and decisions and possible use of weekly group to achieve this	Health Care gateway Overview, APP C	
Improve communication with parents, young people, and professionals	APP 1.4.1	Develop, implement, and establish a robust communication and engagement plan including updates on the Local Offer and half termly newsletters for parents, SENCOs, and other professionals.	Report that they feel informed about the SEND offer in Walsall and are aware of changes, developments, and available services.	Head of Performance, Improvement and Quality  With comms leads from each organisation.	A communication and engagement plan that has been drafted with parents, carers and partners and have begun to develop an action plan to implement it.	Apr-23	In Progress	Research underway to identify good practice and successful comms strategies in other LAs	Draft plans for comms strategy to be circulated and co-production meeting to discuss with parents and carers to be arranged	Comms strategy	
	APP 1.4.2	Work with the local Parent Carer Forum and other parent groups to enable parents to feedback and be involved in the co-production of plan template and guides.	Report they have had their voices heard and been given the opportunity to be involved in co-producing service improvements.	Head of SEND Designated Clinical Officer  Head of Help, Protection and Support	Have involved parents and carers in the development of new templates and guides and established mechanisms and processes for this to happen routinely.	Dec-22	Complete	New plan and training guides completed for schools and EHC team and co produced with parents		EHC Schools guide, EHC Training Guides and online induction area , new templates	
	APP 1.4.3	Develop links with children and young people's groups to enable them to feedback and be involved in the co-production of guides and templates.	Report they have had their voices heard and been given the opportunity to be involved in co-producing service improvements.	Local Offer Co-ordinator	Have involved children and young people in the development of new templates and guides and established mechanisms and processes for this to happen routinely.	Apr-23	In Progress	4 children and young people attended the first young Persons Voice Group on 30/01/23.	Next YP session organised for 01/03/23	TOR, Minutes / Actions from meeting, You Said, We Did	
The poor quality of the local offer, which does not meet the requirements of the code of practice											

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Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
	APP 2.1.1	Establish a Local Offer steering group with representation from the five key partners across the Local Area (PCF, SENDIASS, Schools, Health, Local Authority), to drive the development of the Local Offer.	Report that they feel that the local offer is easy to use and contains relevant and up to date information and is meeting their needs.	Local Offer Co-ordinator	Have identified people to members of the steering group, met at least once and have an agreed terms of reference.	Dec-22	Complete	Members have been identified, terms of reference written.  First Local Offer steering group held on 07/021/22. Action plan created and distributed to all attendees.  Second Steering Group meeting held on 01/02/23. Action Plan updated.	Next Steering Group meeting 17/03/23	Terms of reference Minutes /action log from meeting You Said / We Did	
	APP 2.1.2	Increase the opportunities for parents and carers to co-produce improvements and developments to SEND processes and services through engagement at parent carer group meetings and co-production events.	Report that they feel that their voices have been heard and that they have had the opportunity to influence and be involved in service development.	Local Offer Co-ordinator	Begun to regularly attend parents' groups and other events which provide an opportunity to engage. Planned and delivered a series of engagement events.	Apr-23	In Progress	4 Coproduction /consultation events held in October for parent carers to bring ideas for the Local Offer. Feedback sent to parents and follow up sessions planned for February 23.  Parent working Group established and meeting every 4 weeks. Session to discuss LO landing page on 13/01/23.  Second round of coproduction events held w/c 13/02/23. Over 20 parents attended.	Feedback from coproduction events to be collated and distributed to attendees and added to the Local Offer..	Write up from events Feedback from attendees You Said, We Did	

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Increase Co-producti on with parents, carers, children, and young people in relation to the Local Offer	APP 2.1.3	Establish a children and young people’s group to extend their opportunities to share their views and engage in co-production.	Report that they feel that their voices have been heard and that they have had the opportunity to influence and be involved in service development.	Local Offer Co-ordinator	Established a group (or groups) for children and young people to provide feedback and enable opportunities to be involved in co-production.		Apr-23	In Progress	4 children and young people attended the first young Persons Voice Group on 30/01/23. Discussions around name of group - will be agreed with a vote.	Second YP session planned for 01/03/23 at My Place Youth centre. Flyers to be created for further promotions.	TOR, Minutes / Actions from meeting, You Said, We Did
	APP 2.1.4	Develop and implement a robust communication and engagement strategy to ensure that parents, carers, children, young people, and professionals are aware of the local offer and can access feedback about improvements including ‘You Said, We Did’ and other survey results.	Report that they know where to go for information about SEND services in Walsall and that they are informed about changes and developments.	Head of Performance, Improvement and Quality  With comms leads from each organisation.	A communication and engagement strategy that has been drafted with parents, carers and partners and have begun to implement it.		Apr-23	In Progress	Research underway to identify good practice and successful comms strategies in other LAs	Draft plans for comms strategy to be circulated and co-production meeting to discuss with parents and carers to be arranged	Comms strategy

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	APP 2.1.5	Ensure the Local Offer is accessible to people from diverse, multi-cultural backgrounds and hard to reach groups, including those that do not have access to digital means.	Report that they know where to go for information about SEND services and can access the information that is published on the local offer.	Local Offer Co-ordinator	Have begun to identify how the local offer can be made accessible for people from multi-cultural backgrounds and hard to reach groups, including those that do not have access to digital means, through conversations with parents from different communities and research of other local offers.	Sep-23	In Progress	Connections made within partners (schools, voluntary community sector) within Diverse areas of Walsall with conversations around access to the Local Offer.  There is now a 'Translate' button at the top of the Local Offer which allows users to select the language that they wish to change the text into.  Connections made within South Locality settings - recruitment of parent from multi-cultural background for parent working group to help build relationships.	Continue to build on relationships within different communities including attending mosque to discuss the Local Offer and coproduction. Promotion of the Local Offer within libraries Digital Inequalities/Black Country Connected Programme (BCCP) promotions Discussion with corporate comms team around Local Offer social media	Local Offer is up to date Improved hit rates Feedback from parents and carers	
	APP 2.2.1	Redevelop the webpages for the Local Offer, in co-production with parents and carers, to ensure that they are user friendly and easy to navigate and that all links work correctly.	Report that they can find and access the information they need in relation to SEND support and services in an easy to navigate and understand format.	Head of Performance, Improvement and Quality  With corporate web team	Identified resources for developing the webpages and begun to implement a robust and accelerated project plan.	Aug-23	In Progress	Discussions are ongoing to confirm where the web pages for the Local Offer will sit.  It is likely to be part of the web development for the Family Hubs and work is ongoing with the lead for FH website to ensure SEND LO requirements are included	Confirm route through which web platform will be developed.	Local Offer is up to date Improved hit rates Feedback from parents and carers	

Key	Not Yet started	In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded					
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
Improve the look, content, and navigation of the Local Offer website	APP 2.2.2	Update current information on the Local Offer to ensure that information is correct and that it meets the requirements set out in the code of practice including information about key therapeutic services such as OT and SALT	Report that they can find and access current and correct information about SEND Services in Walsall	Local Offer Co-ordinator  with identified leads from partner organisations	Removed any out-of-date information and checked and updated existing information to ensure that it is accurate. Updated our gap analysis of required local offer information as per the code of practice.	Dec-22	In Progress	Out of date information has been removed from the Local Offer. New and updated information continues to be added, with an expectation that the Steering Group members will identify roles.  Rewrite of Local Offer webpages agreed with corporate web team in connection with the SEND code of practice. RACI completed and focus group members identified. First focus group to be held on 03/03/23 around EHCP. Communication around this sent to members including parents and partners.	Ongoing development and updating taking place via the Local Offer Steering Group.  Next focus group to be held on 08/03/23 around Education and Learning. Invite sent to group members including parents and partners.	Local Offer is up to date Improved hit rates Feedback from parents and carers	



Key		Not Yet started	In Progress	Delayed / at risk	Overdue	Complete	Embedded				
Project Title	Ref	During the next 12 months we will....	Our children, young people and families will.....	Lead	After 3 months we will have....	By When	RAG	Update	Next Actions	Evidence of Impact	
	APP 2.2.3	Establish mechanisms for maintaining the Local Offer and keeping relevant information up to date and rationalise information sources, with clear expectations in place for local partners about their role in maintaining information.	Report that they can find and access current and correct information about SEND Services in Walsall	Local Offer Co-ordinator  with identified leads from partner organisations	Established a list of contacts who are responsible for updating information on the Local Offer and begun to develop processes to ensure information is maintained.	Apr-23	In Progress	Connections made within health, education and the voluntary sector including parent carer support groups.  The steering group actions established initial discussions around the expectations for partner responsibilities including working with SENDIASS around keeping information up to date collaboratively.  Steering group roles responsibilities identified. Members agreed to use steering group meetings as tool for feedback and changes with a responsibility for members to update Local Offer coordinator of any changes.	Work to continue to progress through the Local Offer Steering Group  Next steering group 17/03/23  Contact list of leads to be updated following focus groups  Development of tool for monitoring changes	Local Offer is up to date Improved hit rates Feedback from parents and carers Steering Group minutes and actions	

**28<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**New SEND Inspection Framework**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr Mark Statham – Education and Skills

**1. Aim**

The aim of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of the new Ofsted and CQC SEND Inspection Framework and how the Local Area is preparing for it.

**2. Recommendations**

1. That the Committee acknowledge the requirements of the new SEND Local Area Framework.
2. That the Committee confirm they are assured that the Local Area is sighted on the requirements of the new inspection framework and are satisfied with the plans to develop the Local Area Improvement Plan aligned to the framework.
3. That the Committee confirm that they are happy with the proposed governance and oversight for the development and implementation of the improvement plan and inspection preparation.

**3. Report detail – Know**

**SEND Inspections – History**

- 3.1. In May 2016, the two inspectorates, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), started a new type of joint inspection. The aim is to hold local areas to account and champion the rights of children and young people and assess Local Areas against key components of the SEND Code of Practice. There was no judgement associated with the inspections and initially there was no subsequent actions required for Local Areas that were not deemed to be meeting required standards.
- 3.2. In 2017, additional requirements were added to the framework which meant that if Local Areas were deemed to have areas of significant weakness in relation to their SEND practice and offer, they could be directed to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA). Under the WSoA, Local Areas had 18 months in which to design and implement an improvement plan to address the areas of concern, following which a re-inspection would take place to assess whether 'sufficient progress' had been made.

**New Inspection Framework**

- 3.3. On 13 June 2022, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) opened a consultation on proposed changes to the way they jointly inspect local area partnerships, including a children and young people's version of the consultation. Alongside this, they published a draft inspection framework and handbook.



3.4. On 29th November, the [results of the consultation were published along with the final version of the framework](#). Inspections under the new framework have now begun.

3.5. The evaluation within the new framework is split into two distinct categories:

**The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, including the extent to which:**

- children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way
- children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support
- children and young people receive the right help at the right time
- children and young people are well prepared for their next steps, and achieve strong outcomes
- children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

**How the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system, including the extent to which:**

- leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND
- leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families
- leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area
- leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including commissioning arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision
- leaders evaluate services and make improvements
- leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

3.6. Under the new framework there are three possible inspection outcomes:

1. The local area partnership's arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.
  - The next full area SEND inspection will be within 5 years.
  - Ofsted and the CQC ask the local area partnership to update and publish its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.
2. The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.
  - The next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately 3 years.
  - Ofsted and the CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.
3. There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently.
  - A monitoring inspection will be carried out within approximately 18 months. The next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately 3 years.

- HMCI requires the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the identified areas for priority action.
- 3.7. A detailed presentation at Appendix A contains the full details of the inspection criteria that Local Areas will be assessed against.

### **Preparation, governance, review and ongoing monitoring**

- 3.8. Alongside the work to implement the improvements outlined as part of the Accelerated Progress Plan, senior leads within the Local Area are currently working together to develop a wider SEND improvement plan which will identify the priorities and actions for improvement over the next two years.
- 3.9. To ensure that this work is in line with the new framework, the improvement plan will be developed against the evaluation criteria within the framework. This will be done in co-production with parents, carers, children and young people and professionals across the Local Area.
- 3.10. The priorities identified within the improvement plan will then inform the LAIB agenda and progress against the plan will be monitored via the LAIB and the Walsall Learning Alliance and will form part of the regular LAIB updates to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **4. Financial**

- 4.1. There are no direct financial implications around the new inspection framework, however, investment in and appropriate use of specified funding streams for children with SEND will contribute to the level and quality of the services provided. For example, this includes high needs funding for children and young people with EHCP and complex needs which are reported through the finance reports and will form part of the annual budget setting process.

## **5. Reducing Inequalities**

- 5.1. The inspection framework focusses on ensuring that inequalities for children with SEND are minimised through the provision of high-quality services. This aligns with our local to reduce inequalities and support young people with SEND to meet their outcomes into early adulthood by ensuring that all young people with an EHC plan are supported and represented across the Local Area.
- 5.2. It also supports our key area of focus that our children should:
  - have the best possible start
  - be safe from harm
  - be happy, healthy, and learning well.

## **6. Decide**

- 6.1. The Committee may decide to request further information or assurance in respect of the Local Areas preparation for inspection under the new framework.

## **7. Respond**

- 7.1. Walsall Local Area will work closely with and continually seek feedback from families, settings and statutory partners to co-produce improvement plans and ensure that the area is prepared for inspection under the new framework.

## **8. Review**

- 8.1. Our preparation for inspection and the development and implementation of our action plan will be monitored the LAIB and organisational governance as outlined in 3.10 above.

### **Background papers**

#### **Appendix A - New SEND Inspection Framework**

##### **Authors**

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# New SEND Inspection Framework

Education Scrutiny Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023



# Background

- In May 2016, the two inspectorates, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), started a new type of joint inspection. The aim is to hold local areas to account and champion the rights of children and young people.
- Under the Local area special educational needs and disabilities inspection framework, inspectors review how local areas meet their responsibilities to children and young people (from birth to age 25) who have special educational needs or disabilities (or both).
- On 13 June 2022, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) opened a consultation on proposed changes to the way they jointly inspect local area partnerships, including a children and young people's version of the consultation. Alongside this, they published a draft inspection framework and handbook.
- On 29<sup>th</sup> November, the results of the consultation were published along with the final version of the framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-new-approach-to-area-send-inspections/outcome/a-new-approach-to-area-send-inspections-a-report-on-the-response-to-the-consultation>
- Inspections under the new framework have now begun.

# About the new framework

The evaluation within the new framework is split into two distinct categories:

**The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, including the extent to which:**

- children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way
- children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support
- children and young people receive the right help at the right time
- children and young people are well prepared for their next steps, and achieve strong outcomes
- children and young people are valued, visible and included in their communities

**How the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system, including the extent to which:**

- leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND
- leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families
- leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area
- leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people, including commissioning arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision
- leaders evaluate services and make improvements
- leaders create an environment in which effective practice and multi-agency working can flourish

# About the new framework

Under the new framework there are three possible inspection outcomes:

<p>The local area partnership's arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.</p> <p>The next full area SEND inspection will be within 5 years.</p> <p>Ofsted and the CQC ask the local area partnership to update and publish its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.</p>	<p>Inspectors will typically make this judgement if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children and young people are typically achieving strong outcomes, and</li> <li>• children and young people's experiences of their education, health and care are typically positive, and</li> <li>• the local area partnership has identified any areas for improvement and is taking effective action to address them, and</li> <li>• there are no areas for priority action</li> </ul>
<p>The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.</p> <p>The next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately 3 years.</p> <p>Ofsted and the CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.</p>	<p>Inspectors will make this judgement if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either the two points about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people are not met (e.g. children and young people are not typically achieving strong outcomes and / or children and young people's experiences of their education, health and care are not typically positive), and</li> <li>• there are no areas for priority action</li> </ul>
<p>There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently.</p> <p>A monitoring inspection will be carried out within approximately 18 months. The next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately 3 years.</p> <p>HMCI requires the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the identified areas for priority action.</p>	<p>Inspectors will typically make this judgement if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they have identified one or more areas for priority action; this will happen when there are significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people, because of particular systemic or widespread failings that have a significant negative impact on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people.</li> </ul>



# How inspections will work

All Local Areas will have a full inspection at least once within a 5-year period. Inspections will usually take place during term time.

The inspection team will be led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, and will include Children's Services Inspectors from the CQC, and education and social care inspectors from Ofsted.

## Activities in week 1

- Inspectors notify the local leaders of the inspection 10 working days before the fieldwork begins. This will usually be on a Monday, but may be in the previous week if there is a bank holiday in week 1 or 2 of the inspection.
- Inspectors request information to support the inspection Inspectors and local leaders hold a set-up discussion (this is carried out virtually).
- The local area partnership distributes surveys for children and young people with SEND, parents and carers, and practitioners
- The local area partnership shares information to support the inspection.
- Inspectors select individual children and young people, and ask the local area partnership to set up tracking meetings.
- Inspectors carry out planning and pre-inspection analysis.

## Activities in week 2

- Inspectors work with the local area partnership to agree an inspection timetable.
- Inspectors hold tracking meetings.
- Inspectors carry out pre-inspection analysis and review the information set out in Annex A.
- Inspectors may meet virtually with local leaders, staff, representative groups and stakeholders.

## Activities in week 3

- On-site evidence gathering.
- Inspection findings fed back to the local area partnership.



# **Evaluation Criteria - The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND**

## **Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way**

- children and young people are accurately identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities
- children and young people's needs are identified in a timely way, so as to prevent needs from escalating
- practitioners assess the strengths and determine the aspirations of the child or young person alongside their individual needs
- the criteria for carrying out assessments of need and for accessing services and support are understood, and the application of these criteria improves outcomes
- timely referrals are made to other services and agencies, where necessary

## **Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support**

- children and young people access impartial information, advice and support that enable them to make informed choices about their future
- children, young people and families are supported to understand their rights, make choices and contribute to decision-making about their plans and support
- children and young people understand their plans and support, including intended outcomes, and why some changes are not possible

# Evaluation Criteria - The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

## Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time

- plans are developed and support is provided in a timely way, and meets children and young people's needs
- children and young people receive support based on their identified needs when they are awaiting assessment
- plans and support are coordinated within and, where necessary, across providers and services, and are based on a shared understanding of the child or young person.
- plans and support are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in children and young people's skills, independence, understanding and other factors in their lives, including reduced support in line with reduced need where appropriate
- the wider needs of the child or young person's family are considered, and barriers to learning and participation are addressed

## Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

- the outcomes that are the most important to children, young people and their parents and carers are understood and planned for
- support and plans reflect children and young people's ambitions, and extend beyond required levels of support (such as the number of hours of support from a particular service) to focus on the planned outcome
- children and young people are supported before and during any point of transition, including when they will no longer be eligible for a service
- from an early age, children and young people develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to prepare for greater independence and adulthood, including in the areas of further and higher education, employment, more independent living, good health, positive relationships and participation in society

# Evaluation Criteria - The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

## Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities

- children and young people and parents and carers understand what community activities are available
- children and young people are supported to participate, where appropriate, in activities, and to make friends and develop positive relationships
- children and young people are supported to develop their confidence, resilience and knowledge, so that they can participate in universal and specialist activities as appropriate

# Evaluation Criteria - How the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system

## Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

- leaders have an ambitious strategy that defines the shared outcomes they will work collectively to achieve for all children and young people with SEND, and they embed an aspirational culture of high expectations and quality across services and provision.
- leaders understand their responsibilities and accountabilities, including their statutory duties and their individual responsibilities in the wider area strategy
- responsibilities are delegated in line with leaders' legal duties and there is strong oversight of these resulting activities
- processes for making decisions are structured so that the leaders responsible can swiftly agree to the changes that are required to improve services
- leaders challenge themselves and each other to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND

## Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families

- leaders consider the specific needs of groups of children and young people with SEND, and how best to engage them in co-production
- leaders ensure that decisions relating to services are appropriately shaped by children and young people's needs, experiences, ambitions and outcomes
- leaders give feedback to children, young people and parents on changes they have made to their area's services, and explain where change is not possible and why

# Evaluation Criteria - How the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system

## **Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area**

- leaders gather accurate, timely information about children and young people with SEND in their local area and monitor the changing needs of the population, including using the perspectives of children, young people and families
- leaders understand the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in their area; their backgrounds and identities, including any barriers to them accessing support; and their needs and strengths
- leaders share information across education, care and health services so they can learn from different perspectives and approaches

## **Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people**

- services and systems have been designed around the needs of children and young people, and are informed by evidence of what works in achieving good outcomes
- joint commissioning arrangements enable partners to make best use of all the resources available to improve outcomes for children and young people in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way
- joint commissioning arrangements meet the local area's statutory responsibilities for identifying, assessing and meeting needs
- leaders understand that children and young people with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse, and ensure that this is carefully considered when commissioning and evaluating services
- the local authority identifies children and young people's needs accurately and arranges suitable full-time educational provision to meet the needs of children or young people who require alternative provision as early as possible, for example, ensuring that full-time education for children and young people who have been excluded begins no later than the sixth day of the exclusion
- the local authority ensures that there are intervention plans for each child and young person in alternative provision, including clear objectives and plans for their next steps, such as returning to mainstream education

# Evaluation Criteria - How the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system

## Leaders evaluate services and make improvements

- leaders jointly evaluate whether their services and provision are improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, not only whether children and young people have received the services
- leaders monitor whether there are sufficient services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of the children and young people in their area and take appropriate action as a result
- leaders use information from a range of sources in their evaluation, including feedback from representative groups, children and young people using services and data relating to outcomes to improve their services and provision
- leaders have established clear processes to enable services and providers to evaluate and improve their provision regularly
- the local authority evaluates how well the alternative provision it commissions is improving outcomes for children and young people, and takes action if needed
- the local authority maintains strong oversight arrangements for alternative provision it commissions, including oversight of each alternative provision's safety and suitability, and in particular of alternative providers that are not registered as school

## Leaders create an environment for effective practice and multi-agency working to flourish

- processes and systems are set up to support practitioners to work together and share appropriate information in a timely manner, including strong systems for identifying and responding to risks to children and young people with SEND
- leaders ensure that practitioners are clear on their individual roles and how they can best work together to improve outcomes for children and young people
- leaders ensure that practitioners have the appropriate skills to understand children and young people's needs and aspirations, and to create an inclusive environment
- leaders encourage practitioners working together to focus on the child or young person, identifying alternative solutions when existing options do not meet needs and aspirations effectively
- leaders ensure that practitioners working with children and young people with SEND have the right knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harm, and understand that children and young people with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation

## Evaluation Criteria – Alternative Provision and other areas of focus

Inspectors will also evaluate the local authority's commissioning and oversight of alternative provision for children and young people in placements directly commissioned by the LA. When evaluating the local authority's commissioning and oversight of alternative provision, inspectors will:

- meet local authority leaders to understand their strategy for alternative provision commissioning and oversight
- review information provided to Ofsted by the authority about its alternative provision arrangements
- have discussions with senior leaders and special educational needs coordinators to understand the authority's processes and decision-making
- review the fair access protocols
- carry out sampling in one or more alternative provision settings

Inspectors may also gather evidence in relation to:

- Children and young people with SEND who are not attending school or who are in alternative provision, including those who are not on a school roll or are home educated.
- The Local Area Partnership's approach to improving attendance for children with SEND.
- Oversight and commissioning for children and young people who are placed in residential special schools including how the children are being safeguarded, having positive experiences and achieving strong outcomes.

# How Walsall will prepare for the new framework

Following the development of the APP senior leads within the Local Area are currently working together to develop a wider SEND improvement plan which will identify the priorities and actions for improvement over the next two years.

To ensure that this work is in line with the new framework, the improvement plan will be developed against the evaluation criteria within the framework.

This will be done in co-production with parents, carers, children and young people and professionals across the Local Area.

The priorities identified within the improvement plan will then inform the LAIB agenda.





**SEN forecasting and modelling**

**Wards** All

**Service:** Access Service

**Portfolio:** Councillor Statham

**1. Aim**

The aim of this report is to provide the Education Scrutiny and Overview Committee with an update on:

- SEN forecasting and modelling of future demands for specialist school places

**2. Recommendations**

That the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the contents of this report and decides whether any further information or updates are required

**3. Report detail**

At its meeting on 28 November 2022, the Education Overview and Scrutiny meeting discussed an overview of school place planning on early years, primary, secondary, post 16 and SEN and how the Council meets its statutory responsibilities to ensure that there are available, in its area, sufficient schools 'in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education'

The report outlined that a detailed analysis had been undertaken for SEN modelling and as part of this commission's workplan, an update on the modelling had been programmed for this meeting.

**The forecasting model:**

In order to predict the number of SEN Specialist places that would be required over the next five years, a model needed to be developed which could assess demand and determine the current gaps in provision. Traditionally, SEN place planning is undertaken on a similar basis to mainstream school place planning using a combination of population data and school census data. However there are a number of issues with this when it comes to planning for placements in relation to SEND Need including:

- Changes in population do not align with changes to SEND demand. In Walsall overall, the predicted child population is set to remain relatively stable or even

decline slightly over the coming years, whereas the number of children with identified SEND is increasing.

- School census data does not address specific needs within the local area. It does not sufficiently account for children who are placed in Walsall schools but live out of borough, or the number and proportion of Walsall children who require a specialist place but need to be placed out of borough due to there not being enough of or the right type of placements to meet their needs.
- Equally school census data is not robust or sufficiently detailed enough to account for the changing needs of children with SEND who require specialist places.

With these challenges in mind, we set out to develop a new SEND model using local EHCP data which could be used to develop the detail around placement requirements and also take into account local developments and priorities for SEND including ensuring that there were sufficient placements to meet changing needs and reducing the amount of children needing to be placed out of borough and taking account of the plans to ensure that the needs of more children could be met within mainstream settings with the right additional support.

The model was built on the following basis:

It took requests for EHCP assessments over the previous five years and analysed:

- What proportion of these resulted in an EHC plan being issued
- What proportion of children with an EHC plan required a special school place either as a first placement or a subsequent placement
- What types of needs children with EHC plans who required special school places had

Using this data, a number of different scenarios were modelled which enabled a prediction to be made about the number of new places that would be required over the next five years. This included:

- By 2025, 1,069 special school places would be required
- The majority of these places (60%) would be needed for children with primary needs of Communication and Interaction or Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- There was likely to be a shift to more places initially being required at the Early Years and primary stages as identification of SEND was happening earlier.

This was caveated on the basis that the model would need to be refined after year one, following an assessment of its accuracy. Other factors which could potentially have an impact on the model included the ongoing impact on demand for SEND support and EHCPs post-Covid and how local development of SEND services to provide the right support earlier and implement a graduated response to need was impacting on demand for higher level services and specialist places.

While there have been differences in changing demand around requests for EHCPs that were not predicted (with numbers increasing faster than was initially thought), the predictions around the number of specialist placements required have been surprisingly accurate in the first year. However, the increased demand will have an impact on the required specialist school places, meaning that the

predicted number for 2025 is likely to increase as the model is re-worked to take this into account.

We have demonstrated and talked about the model we have developed in a number of forums, including regional education groups and in meetings with the DfE. Our approach has been deemed to be robust and innovative and a number of LAs and the DfE have asked to have further conversations to understand the work. We have also been asked to present the model at a national education conference in June.

### **Next steps**

- The model is currently in the process of being refined based on the actual numbers of EHCPs and children who required specialist places in 2022 and the increase in demand for EHC assessments.
- The updated results will be used to assess and assure the plans currently in place to address SEND Placement Sufficiency.
- We are continuing to talk to other LAs about the model and share the development and lessons learned from our development
- We will present the model at the national education conference in June

### **Update on additional places**

At its meeting on 14 December 2022, Cabinet approved capital funding for additional SEN places as follows:

- £2,480,000 for the creation of 124 places at Specialist Resourced Provisions (SRPs) at mainstream schools
- £1,140,000 for the creation of 140 additional places with the Education Development Centre (EDC) as part of Oakwood School by creating a satellite provision
- £500,000 for the development of feasibilities for permanent expansions of our existing special schools across the borough

A number of mainstream schools have already started to provide provision for EHCP pupils in SRPs including New Invention Infant School, Christchurch Primary School and Short Heath Junior School. Additional schools are planning to offer SRPs from September 2023.

The first part of the development at the EDC is at design and procurement stage and is scheduled to be complete in time for September 2023.

The feasibilities for permanent expansions at our special schools is in progress and the outcome and options the feasibilities present will be subject to a further Cabinet report.

## **4. *Financial information***

Any capital costs arising from works required will be funded from DfE grant funding – either Basic Need for mainstream schools or High Needs Provision Capital Allocation for special schools.

**5. *Reducing Inequalities***

It is of crucial importance to the Council's strategic objectives that the young People of Walsall can access the right provision to meet their need to achieve the appropriate qualifications, progressing to employment and / or training and to make a positive contribution within the Borough in the future.

**6. *Decide***

The Committee may decide to note the current position and request further information or assurance if necessary.

**7. *Respond***

Any recommendations made by the Committee will be assessed against the Access and Inclusion planned work and performance board programmes.

**8. *Review***

The work of the Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team is subject to constant monitoring and assessment via the Children's Services Performance Board process.

**Contact Officer(s)**

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## Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommendation Tracker (22/23)

30 June 2022	Areas of Focus	A work program for the municipal year be produced and be circulated to members of the Committee.	Jack Thompson	Complete	6 September 2022	Sent to members of the Committee with agenda for the meeting on the 6 September 2022.
		The suggested items of 'teenage pregnancy' and 'overweight children' be referred to the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Jack Thompson	Complete	14 July 2022	Members of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to put these items on the Committee work program.
06 September 2022	Areas of Focus	Items suggested; young people's homelessness and the finance Funding formula to be added to the areas of focus for future meetings.	Reena Farmah	Complete	30 September 2022	Areas of Focus updated to include items.
	School Attendance Bill and Children Not in School Bill	To share the SEND inspection report with Members.	Reena Farmah	Complete	30 September 2022	Circulated to Members via email.
11 October 2022	Areas of Focus	That young people's homelessness be referred to the Children's Services OSC and removed from this Committee's Areas of Focus.	Edward Cook	Complete	17 November 2022	Areas of focus updated.
	Ofsted Local Area SEND Revisit Inspection	To share with Members, data on the number of EHCP applications in Walsall which have gone to tribunals.	Edward Cook	Complete	28 November 2022	Circulated to Members via email.

	Outcome and Actions	To share the Accelerated Access Plan document with Members, once available.	Edward Cook	Complete	28 November 2022	Circulated to Members via email.
28 November 2022	School Place Planning: Capital strategy for schools	To share with Members, data on the amount of pupils from out of the Borough now attending Walsall schools.	Jack Thompson	In progress		
		That a report on internships would be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.	Jack Thompson	Complete	12 January 2023	The HR team taking lead on internships offered by the Council and an update would be provided in the future reports.
		That a report on the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.	Jack Thompson	In progress	9 January 2023	An update of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment was sent to all Councillors on the 9 January 2023.
	Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Position for 2022/23	That a report on future spending of the capital budget be presented to the Committee at a future meeting.	Jack Thompson	Complete	12 January 2023	Future capital spending was presented to the Committee as part of the proposed budget papers.

	Areas of Focus	To merge the first two items on the work programme for January's meeting: 'Attainment and improving Educational Outcome' and 'Increasing the Number of Good and Outstanding Schools' and to reflect this change in the Committees Work Programme.	Jack Thompson	Complete	4 January 2022	Changes reflected in the agenda published on completed date.
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## Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work programme 2022/23

Main agenda items	06/09/22	11/10/22	22/11/22	12/01/23	16/02/23	28/03/23
<b>Theme: Children not in School</b>						
School Attendance Bill and Children Not in School Bill	X					
Children not in school (attendance, exclusions, elective home education and children missing education)	X					
Fair access and FAP	X					
Vulnerable Learners Hub	X					
<b>Theme: SEND</b>						
OFSTED Inspection Outcome and actions inc EHCP		X				
Transitions		X				
SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper		X				
Special School Provision Plan		X				
<b>Theme: School Place and Capital Strategy</b>						
School Place Planning: Capital strategy for schools inc Early Years sufficiency, Primary, Secondary, Post 16 and Special Schools (inc Black Country plan impact and Free School development)			X			
Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring			X			
<b>Theme: Outcomes and improvements</b>						
Attainment and Improving Educational Outcomes				X		
Increasing the Number of Good and Outstanding Schools				X		
Schools White Paper and Education Improvement Area				X		
Childrens Strategic partnership and Walsall Learning Alliance (WR4C)				X		
Budget Setting 2023/24				X		
<b>Theme: Children not in School (Revisited)</b>						
Children Not in School Report: Attendance and Exclusions, Children missing education, elective home education and Fair Access (FAP).					X	



Vulnerable Learners Hub					X	
<b>Theme: SEND (Revisited)</b>						
Accelerated Progress Plan Update						X
New Area SEND Inspection Framework						X
Special School Provision Plan Update inc SEND modelling process						X

**NB: The Outturn, Q1 and Q3 Finance reports to be by email circulation to the Committee.**



## **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

**Council House,  
Lichfield Street,  
Walsall, WS1 1TW**  
[www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

**6 March 2023**

## FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW [craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk) and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk). The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services ([craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk)).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

- (1) A key decision is:
  - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
  - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.
- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS  
APRIL 2023 TO JULY 2023 (06.03.23)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
152/22 (7.11.22)	<b>Renewal of the Council's Oracle Cloud Licenses:</b>  To renew the Council's Oracle cloud Licenses required for the operation of the Council's One Source system for HR, Payroll, Finance and Procurement from May 2023	Cabinet  Key Decision	Ian Tuft  <a href="mailto:Ian.Tuft@walsall.gov.uk">Ian.Tuft@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Bird  Cllr Ferguson	22 March 2023
162/22 (5.12.22)	<b>Approval of the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement:</b>  Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation to enter into legal agreements with WMCA relating to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Legacy funds.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Kelly Valente  <a href="mailto:Kelly.Valente@walsall.gov.uk">Kelly.Valente@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Bird	22 March 2023
10/23 (6.2.23)	<b>LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan:</b>  To approve the Action Plan produced in response to the report by the Local Government Association following the January 2023 Corporate Peer Challenge.	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Karen Griffiths  ( <a href="mailto:Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk">Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk</a> )  Elizabeth Connolly  ( <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk">Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk</a> )	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	22 March 2023

145/22 (7.11.22)	<b>Town Centre Theatre Project:</b>  To agree next steps for the Town Deal Theatre project, setting out funding implications and options.  <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet  Key Decision	Philippa Venables  <a href="mailto:Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk">Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
4/23 (9.1.23)	<b>West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24:</b>  To approve West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Matt Crowton  <a href="mailto:Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk">Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
5/23 (9.1.23)	<b>Sandwell Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation:</b>  To approve Walsall's response to the Sandwell Local Plan consultation.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Neville Ball  <a href="mailto:neville.ball@walsall.gov.uk">neville.ball@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
153/22 (7.11.22)	<b>Walsall's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027:</b>  To approve Walsall's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2022 to 2027.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Neil Hollyhead  <a href="mailto:Neil.HollyHead@walsall.gov.uk">Neil.HollyHead@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services, service users, external stakeholders	Cllr Ali	22 March 2023
11/23 (6.2.23)	<b>Walsall Civic Centre and Council House improvement works</b>  To approve Council House improvement works including heating and ventilation replacement; fire alarm replacement;	Cabinet  Key Decision	Ian Lister  <a href="mailto:Ian.Lister@walsall.gov.uk">Ian.Lister@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Ferguson	22 March 2023

	Civic Centre window replacement; Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment.					
12/23 (6.2.23)	<b>Street Scene Strategy:</b>  To approve the councils 5-year plan for residential streets	Cabinet  Key decision	Kathryn Moreton  <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@Walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@Walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Murphy	22 March 2023
13/23 (6.2.23)	<b>Trading Standards Letting Agents Enforcement Policy</b>  To approve Walsall Council's Trading Standards policy on the enforcement and determination of financial penalties in circumstances where persons engaged in letting agency work and property management business fail to comply with legislative requirements.	Cabinet  Key decision	David Elrington  <a href="mailto:David.Elrlington@walsall.gov.uk">David.Elrlington@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	22 March 2023
140/22 (10.10.22)	<b>High Needs Funding Formula:</b>  To approve changes to the High Needs Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block to schools in Walsall for the 2023/24 financial year	Cabinet  Key Decision	Richard Walley  <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	22 March 2023
154/22 (7.11.22)	<b>Early Years Funding Formula:</b>  That Cabinet approves the Early Years Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of funding to early years providers in Walsall	Cabinet  Key Decision	Richard Walley  <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Schools Forum  Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	22 March 2023

14/23 (6.2.23)	<b>Growth Funding for Schools:</b>  To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Alex Groom  <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr Statham	22 March 2023
155/22 (7.11.22)	<b>Council Plan: Review of Achievements 2021/22:</b>  To note the Review of Achievements for 2021/22, highlighting successes and progress towards achieving our Council priorities.	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Karen Griffiths  <a href="mailto:Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk">Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 April 2023
15/23 (6.3.23)	<b>Council Plan Markers of Success Q3:</b>  To note the Quarter 3 2022/23 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Karen Griffiths  <a href="mailto:Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk">Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 April 2023
6/23 (9.1.23)	<b>Borough Playing Pitch Strategy:</b>  To adopt and publish the Walsall Playing pitches strategy and the Black Country strategic framework	Cabinet  Key Decision	Liz Stuffins  <a href="mailto:Liz.Stuffins@walsall.gov.uk">Liz.Stuffins@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	19 April 2023
129/22 (5.9.22)	<b>Update on Resilient Communities Safer Streets Programme:</b>  To report back on Safer Streets activity and recommend any adjustments/additions to the programme.	Cabinet  Non-key Decision	Paul Gordon  <a href="mailto:Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk">Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	19 April 2023

**Black Country Executive Joint Committee**  
**Forward Plan of Key Decisions Published up to July 2023**

<b>Date Created</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Main consultee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>
	<b>Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance</b>			
05/12/2022	<b>Approval of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement</b>  Approval of the revised Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement, attached as Appendix A.	Simon Neilson <a href="mailto:Simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk">Simon.neilson@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Walsall Council	19/04/2023
06/03/2023	<b>Constitution and Timetable of meetings</b>  Approve the timetable of meetings for 2023/24.  Approve the amendments to the BCJC Constitution and Terms of Reference.  Approve the amendments to the BCJC Working Protocols.	Deborah Hindson <a href="mailto:ChiefExecutive@walsall.gov.uk">ChiefExecutive@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Dudley Council Sandwell Council Walsall Council City of Wolverhampton Council	26/07/2023



