

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council SEND Peer Review Feedback

23 – 26 January 2018

The peer team

- **Lead peer** – Sharon Hubber, Assistant Director, Specialist Services, Salford City Council
 - **Social Care / SEND peer** – Richard Holland, associate peer (formerly Head of Disability, Cambridgeshire CC)
 - **Education peer** – Joanna Tarrant, Head Teacher, Elm Court School, Lambeth
 - **Health peer** – Linda Williams, associate peer (formerly Head of Safeguarding, Liverpool Community NHS Trust)
 - **Review Manager** – David Armin, LGA
 - **Shadow Review Manager** – John Rylance, LGA
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Peer Review

- Not an inspection – invited in as “critical friends”, review endorsed by the SEND Improvement Board as a positive process
 - Information is confidential and non-attributable
 - Visit has been well organised and everyone has been open and honest
 - People interviewed provided a wide range of information and issues
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The Process

- Self-evaluation
 - Document and data review
 - Review of EHCPs
 - Interviews, focus groups and visits
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Themes:

- **Leadership & Governance**
 - **Capacity & Resources**
 - **Identification** of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - **Assessing and meeting the needs** of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - **Improving outcomes** for children & young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
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Specific areas of focus for Dudley:

- Understanding of the SEND agenda across partners and significant stakeholders, and delivery within organisations
 - Understanding of the cultural shift required towards greater co-production with children and young people and their parents / carers
 - Understanding of the continuum of need and appropriate responses at different levels
 - The shift towards greater inclusion of children with SEND within mainstream provision
 - An assessment of the quality of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs)
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SEND review - Feedback format

- Presentation of findings
 - Following the five key themes
 - Strengths
 - Issues for consideration
 - Key messages
 - Recommendations
 - Opportunity for questions / discussion
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Leadership & Governance

Strengths:

- Well informed political leadership, committed to the SEND agenda
 - Recognition of inclusion agenda across the local area
 - Commitment across partners in the local area to improve services and outcomes for children and young people with SEND
 - Engaging partners in the SEND Development Plan, including the leadership of Sub-Groups (eg. review of EHCPs and parent / carer engagement)
 - Making progress in addressing the challenges for safeguarding children and young people arising from the Inadequate inspection judgement in 2016
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Leadership & Governance

Issues for consideration:

- Need to provide more visible leadership and greater clarity around who is leading the SEND agenda and is accountable for delivery across the partnership
 - High level of churn in senior staff and interim appointments at DMBC is causing uncertainty across a wide range of partners and believed to be holding back implementation of change
 - Perception that SEND is not high up the CCG agenda, due to pressure on resources for adult / acute services
 - Draft SEF is descriptive, not analytical or evaluative
 - Strategies are not evidence based
 - Strengthening performance management and using data / evidence to drive decision-making and strategy development
 - Too many plans that are not well linked, resulting in YOS, LAC, CIN, CP not being evident within draft SEND strategy
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Capacity and Resources

Strengths:

- Active and well engaged parent / carer forum
 - Many committed and capable staff across the local area
 - Well resourced Special School provision, with an intention to review effectiveness
 - Financial managers have good understanding of the resource pressures arising from supporting children and young people with SEND
 - Plans developed for an integrated approach to commissioning across DMBC adult and children's services
 - Dudley is ambitious in moving forward to implement the MCP model, bringing together community services into one place
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Capacity and Resources

Issues for consideration:

- Providing sufficient resources across the local area to deliver the SEND agenda, alongside other priorities
 - Rationale for the provision of SEND support in mainstream v. special schools
 - inclusion agenda and most appropriate response to needs / use of resources
 - addressing the number of children with high cost placements
 - Need to ensure that children and young people are sufficiently prioritised within the Whole Life Disability Service
 - Accelerating integrated commissioning across the local area
 - Training provision - keeping pace with staff turnover and focusing on how to do the job better
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Identification of children & young people with SEN and/or Disabilities

Strengths:

- People reported good processes to identify individual need across all key stages, post 16 and support via Meeting Around the Family
 - Good examples of transition planning and preparation for adulthood
 - Progress tracking of educational outcomes at school and operational level
 - Examples of development of specific offers
 - Increasing compliance with EHCP timescales and conversion
 - Emerging commissioning cycle approach to integrated commissioning
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Identification of children & young people with SEN and/or Disabilities

Issues for consideration:

- Commissioning is not driven nor evidenced through the use of data
 - No shared understanding around eligibility criteria and the purpose of an EHCP
 - Work together to implement the 2.5 year integrated developmental check
 - Need to ensure that EHCP conversion and annual review is an opportunity for re-assessment
 - Do you understand the reason why the number of statements converted to EHCPs is low?
 - Are you confident that all children and young people who need an EHCP have a plan?
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Assessing and Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN and/or Disabilities

Strengths

- A number of valued services
 - including Educational Psychologists, children looked after / SEND offer, Autism Outreach Service, Learning Support Service, Area SENCO and SENCO Forum, Nursery support, school nursing, Learning Disability liaison by Acute Trust
 - Recognised the need to increase Social Emotional Mental Health options
 - EHCPs – emerging individual audit activity, some instances of internal quality check before submission
 - You have identified that the CYP voice is an issue to address
 - Co-production e.g. Local Offer and design of web page
 - Parent Carer Forum is representative and active
 - Good feedback on SEND Independent Advisory Support Service, short break scheme positive views
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Assessing and Meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN and/or Disabilities

Issues for consideration:

- Lack of overarching vision re inclusion
 - Inconsistent understanding of processes and principles of Code of Practice
 - Need to ensure that all Local Offer documents are reviewed as planned
 - Bandings not universally understood
 - Need to simplify EHCP processes and paperwork
 - Perceived lack of understanding and inconsistency of EHCP panel decisions
 - Timeliness of assessment to report to implementation is poor
 - Personal budgets not well developed – described as ‘stalled’
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Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or Disabilities

Strengths:

- Some opportunities for children and young people which are inspirational
 - for example 100% of Dudley College leavers were in further education, training or employment
 - Well developed transition pathway for 16+
 - Partners listen and respond to concerns of parents and carers
 - Reported that outcomes are measured in quality review meetings held by the CCG (KPIs in provider contracts)
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Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEN and/or Disabilities

Issues for consideration:

- No strategic direction from SEND Improvement Board around identifying and measuring outcomes
 - Lack of SMART or long term outcomes in EHCPs
 - Need for greater partnership working across agencies to produce outcomes focused EHCPs and quantified provision
 - Lack of equity in access to services
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Education Health and Care Plans

- The views of the young person are often adult driven and bullet points only
 - Health and Social Care involvement limited and often unclear, currently predominantly Education documents
 - Outcomes and provision are confused
 - Timeframes for actions and review not present
 - 'How to do EHC Plans successfully' training required for stakeholders
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Key messages - 1

- Real appetite and desire by practitioners to ensure that SEND children and young people get fair and equitable life chances – ensure this is harnessed
 - Agree and establish clear leadership and accountability for the SEND agenda
 - Developing engagement across all partners to ensure shared commitment to SEND
 - Co-production - green shoots, but work still to be done on involvement in inner thinking and at times of discord
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Key messages - 2

- Understand and evidence need - use this to drive long term strategy development
 - Equality and diversity needs to be a golden thread throughout your SEND agenda
 - Need to reflect on the numbers and purpose of special schools alongside your inclusion agenda
 - Simplify and invigorate the EHCP process so that it really brings professionals together around better outcomes for the child
 - Ensure your commissioning approach supports the development of personal budgets
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Recommendations - 1

- Ensure golden thread to all improvement plans, and strategic simplification so understandable at operational level
 - Implement systematic, multi-agency audit learning from the approach from safeguarding
 - Ensure that the whole SEND workforce is competent to deliver the Code of Practice requirements and your aspirations for inclusion
 - Consider the benefits of joint local authority and health combined budgets and commissioning
 - Whole Life Disability Service – re-think governance, risk and planning phases
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Recommendations - 2

- Develop an effective and evaluative SEF, involving and understood by all stakeholders
 - Build on the progress made by practitioners to simplify the EHCP form and annual review process to deliver better outcomes
 - Develop a transparent process for EHCP decisions, using the Panel to identify themes and trends to support commissioning going forward
 - CCG to consider if the DMO has sufficient capacity to discharge responsibilities effectively
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What next ?

- There is now a chance to reflect on our conclusions
 - We will produce a draft report for the authority to comment on within 3 weeks
 - The final version will be agreed and issued
 - The council needs to provide feedback to people who contributed to the review
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Thank you
