

Report to:	EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Date:	16 January 2024
Reporting Officer:	Jane Sowerby, Assistant Director for Education
Subject:	SEND UPDATE
Report Summary:	This report provides a SEND update to Education Attainment Improvement Board on progress in addressing Tameside's areas of weakness, as identified in the Ofsted inspection in 2021, and explains a recent reset to ensure that progress is delivered at pace through a single prioritised Local Areas SEND Improvement Plan.
Recommendations:	That the Board note and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summary of progress; 2. That work streams currently detailed in the WSOA action plan are now included in the SEND Self Evaluation Framework and SEND Improvement Plan. Going forward, progress will be reported to the Education Attainment Board against the Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation Framework (SEF).
Corporate Plan:	The recommendations support the Council's SEND Strategy and starting well priority. Furthermore, they will ensure the Council is better able to meet its statutory obligations.
Policy Implications:	There are no policy implications in this report.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>The report provides an update on progress against the Written Statement of Actions (WSOA). There are no direct financial implications arising from this update report with any spend referred to in this report, being subject to separate governance process for approval.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that there is a significant and increasing deficit on the High Needs block, as reported to Schools Forum, which is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Implementing the WSOA is vital to improving practices and to support managing the deficit on the DSG.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	There are no legal issues arising from the report. The report describes the Improvement Plan to address weaknesses identified by Ofsted in 2021 and which demonstrates that the Council is addressing the issues raised and to ensure compliance with its statutory obligations.
Risk Management:	<p>Failure to meet statutory obligations in relation to SEND could result in poor outcomes for children and young people and significantly increase the risk of poor inspection outcomes for the Borough.</p> <p>To mitigate this risk, a refreshed improvement approach has been developed to strengthen oversight and delivery.</p> <p>The SEND Improvement Group has been reset as the SEND Local Area Partnership Board and will continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the Written Statement of Action within the SEND</p>

Improvement Plan and SEF. In addition, formal oversight is provided by the Education Attainment and Improvement Board (EAIB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Background Information: The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting



Telephone: 0161 342 3247



e-mail: phil.macartney@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 18 and 22 October 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Tameside to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The outcome of the inspection was that a [Written Statement of Action](#) (WSOA) was required because of 10 significant areas of weakness in the area's practice. The WSOA was signed off by Ofsted on 1 July 2022.
- 1.2 Progress in implementing the WSOA was previously overseen by the SEND Improvement Group which has been reset as the SEND Local Area Partnership Board, and is chaired by an independent chair, with updates provided to this committee. The Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England's SEND Advisors meet monthly with Council and Health Officers to monitor progress and agree priority actions. So far, five formal monitoring meetings have been held (September and December 2022; March, June and September 2023).

2. UPDATE ON THE WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION PROGRESS

- 2.1 To provide an update on progress, two documents are attached as appendices to this report:
- The SEND Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) (**Appendix 1**).
 - The presentation that was given to Ofsted Advisors at the SEND Ofsted Engagement Meeting in November 2023 (**Appendix 2**).
- 2.2 A diagnostic review of the SEND service has been completed and this work directly informed our SEND SEF. Recommendations have been reported to the DCS and actions to address these recommendations and the impact they will make are included in the SEND Improvement Plan.
- 2.3 Since our last update to the EAIB the following actions have been completed:

Communication

- The new Local Offer website will launch in January 2024 after extensive consultation with parents, carers, children, young people, partner agencies and stakeholders. The Local Offer website will provide clear, detailed, accessible, and up-to-date information about the provision available and how it can be accessed.
- The SEND system newsletter, 'SENDing You News', was published in December 2023 and will be sent out every term.

Quality Assurance

- To reduce the backlog of annual reviews, an interim backlog team has been recruited and is implementing the Annual review recovery plan. This will address the annual review backlog and establish rigor, accountability, transparency and moderation of decision-making in-house including a more consistent approach to casework.
- A new multi-agency placement, provision and transport panel has been established to ensure a transparent, multi-agency approach to placement, provision and transport decisions and panel meetings commenced in November 2023.
- A review of Statutory Assessment Panel commenced in October 2023. This panel will give greater scrutiny and autonomy of statutory assessments.
- EHC Quality Assurance Protocol has been completed in. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Protocol is to improve the experiences of children, young people and families, and to ensure high quality plans which have impact on outcomes of children and young people. This protocol was presented at the SEND Local Area Partnership Board meeting in December 2023 for comment and approval.
- Post-16 Multi-Agency Panel has been established and held the first meeting in December 2023. This panel will give a greater understanding of what parents, carers

and young people feel about their final EHC plan, and their experiences in the process. This will be crucial feedback on our quality improvement journey.

- Monthly Quality Assurance sessions of EHC Plans commenced in October 2023 and will ensure that all staff are responsible for the plans they produce.

Improved focus and self-evaluation

- After constructive discussions a new reporting method has been agreed for the WSOA. New workstreams are being developed to support this new way of working. This new approach will focus on the impact that improvements are having on children, young people, parents and carers.
- The SEND SEF has been presented to Ofsted in November 2023. The SEF focuses on the ten areas of weakness identified by Ofsted in the WSOA and will form the basis of the SEND Improvement Plan.
- A new SEND Improvement Plan and SEND Scorecard is being developed to support and drive the improvements identified in the SEF and ensure that we have a robust plan to provide the best outcomes for the children and families.
- The SEND Improvement Group has been refreshed and the SEND Local Area Partnership Board has been established and includes an independent Chair and Multi-Agency representation. The first meeting was on 6 December 2023. Terms of Reference and Improvement planning were discussed and agreed. The Board will meet bi-monthly as will an Executive Board meeting. DfE and CQC representatives attend Board and meet with key Area leads in between meetings to offer support and challenge.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The SEND Improvement plan and Performance Scorecard will be completed in January 2024 implementation on actions identified in the SEF is already underway.
- 3.2 Practice and resource will be focused on getting the basics right for children and adopting the Children's Services 'Brilliant at the Basics' principles. A cycle of learning and continuous improvement will be embedded through the implementation of our Performance Management Framework, due to be finalised in January 24.
- 3.3 This will see the implementation of a detailed delivery plan, overseen by the Directorate Management Team (DMT) via a set of performance management and quality meetings. These centre around a monthly Brilliant at the Basics (BAB) Meeting and Performance and Accountability Meeting (PAM) linked to our scorecard and SEND Local Area Partnership Board bi-monthly. The monthly performance cycle of meetings and actions will create a methodology of ensuring a shared focus and accountability regarding performance management to ensure children's best outcomes from all levels across the Service. The cycle operates as a 4-weekly cycle, informed by key performance data for each service area. This will support a high standard of service delivery and performance, via a review, analysis, learn, plan and action methodology.
- 3.4 The SEND Local Area Partnership Board will continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the SEND Improvement Plan.
- 3.5 Advanced multi-agency preparation for any upcoming Ofsted visit has already commenced. This will incorporate reflection and learning from the recent Children's Social Care Inspection. Annex A information is being finalised and completion prioritised.
- 3.6 The next formal DfE Monitoring Meeting will take place in January 2024.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The creation of the SEND Area Partnership SEF has allowed us to refocus on the ten identified areas of weakness. The Improvement Plan will allow us to continue our improvements at pace ensuring that we are better able to evidence the impact our changes are making to children and young people and their families and carers.
- 4.2 The SEND Local Area Partnership Board and EAIB will focus on rapid improvement of outcomes and experiences for children and their families and evidence and evaluate quality and impact.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.