



Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

11 January 2023

Report title	Cross Party Scrutiny Review Group – SEND Written Statement of Action (WSOA)	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Chris Burden Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
Originating service	Governance	
Accountable employee(s)	Brenda Wile	Deputy Director of Education
	Tel	01902 55 2553
	Email	Brenda.wile@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	15 November 2022
	Families Leadership	1 December 2022
	Cllr Burden Briefing	6 December 2022
	Cross-Party Scrutiny Review Group	13 December 2022

Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to note:

1. The progress of the Written Statement of Action
2. The recommendations and actions raised within the Cross-Party Review Group for the SEND Written Statement of Action.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny Panel about the progress made on the WSOA, and actions recommended by the Cross-Party Scrutiny Review Group on behalf of the Scrutiny Panel on 13 December 2022.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 1 December 2021, the following motion was agreed:

“This Council notes the findings of the inspection of SEND services within Wolverhampton.

Council agrees to explore the formation of a Review Group, outside of the existing scrutiny process, to monitor progress, in consultation with the SEND Partnership Board and other partnership bodies and organisations, of SEND services, and provide regular, dedicated scrutiny and support to assist in both the embedding of the strengths that exist within the service and to improve where weaknesses have been identified.

Council delegates responsibility to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel for the selection of both Review Group numbers and membership.”

- 2.2 The required consultation was carried out and remit agreed for the Review Group at the meeting of Full Council on 6 April 2022 in that the areas identified for completion by the Local Authority in the WSoA are monitored by the Cross-Party Scrutiny Review Group which will provide updates to the Strong Families, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel every six months.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 The progress of the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) as highlighted within Appendix 1 and the Department of Education (DfE) and the Care & Quality Commission (CQC) monitoring visit held on 7th November (Appendix 2) shows that:

‘Wolverhampton have demonstrated that they have in place the effective governance, strategic leadership, partnership working and co-production to support the WSoA. A scrutiny sub-group is now meeting.

The area provided comprehensive information and links to evidence in preparation for the review meeting. They were able to do this because they are collecting and evaluating evidence as they go. The focus remains on driving the actions forward at pace while at the same time asking themselves “What is different?” as a result.

The SEND Adviser attended the Inclusion summit and had an opportunity to hear directly from young people, PCF and professionals of their experiences in Wolverhampton.

This review will not detail all of the extensive information provided which can be found in the presentation.

Participation of young people is emerging as a strength, with young people recently developing a “young person friendly” accessible version of the WSOA. The voice of young people could be purposefully engaged in future commissioning activity.

Progress on commissioning has been impacted by restructure delays and appointment of new team. Interim mitigations are in place.

3.2. The Cross Party Scrutiny Group have agreed that actions of the Local Authority are progressing in a timely way and acknowledged the following areas as highlights:

- *The National autism Strategy has been adopted and a local statement developed.*
- *Additional resources have been allocated to autism assessment in specialist CAMHS*
- *It is encouraging that plans are in place to engage with parents/carers and young people to undertake and capture the views within the annual report.*
- *Uptake of Health Passports continues to be a great success... and are now being used to “tell it Once” for CYP/families*
- *The PfA careers fair has taken place to support all our young people with an EHCP from Year 9 upwards*
- *Local Offer and communications Officer has been appointed to drive forward, refresh and migration of the Local Offer*
- *The Inclusion Summit in October was attended by Senior Leaders and SENCOs from Wolverhampton Schools*
- *Improved auditing provision/framework for EHCPs, namely a dedicated SEND QA Advanced Practitioner is being recruited to develop a QA framework and a digital EHCP Audit tool ‘Invision’ has been procured to assist quality assurance of EHCPs.*
- *Dedicated and specialist staffing provision being created both in mainstream education and to aid adult transitions namely - a Specialist School Nurse and 2x Public Health Associate Posts specifically to provide support for children with additional needs in mainstream schools and 2 SEND EET workers.*

Concerns raised by the group, for consideration by the SEND Partnership Board are outlined below:

- *Procurement, development and transition of the Capita One System*
 - *ensuring all staff and families have sufficient training and support to enable them to use and access the Capita One system and ensuring this is timely;*
 - *making sure it is fit for purpose, easily transitioned too and sufficient resource, support and training is in place to support staff and families again. Timing may be critical.*
- *Accessibility and digital exclusion*

- *ensuring all families can access and input in to their EHCP (co-produce) noting no all will be able to access or use the online IT systems and ensuring we can identify and support those families most at risk from this*
- *Framework for Quality Assurance of Alternative Provision*
- *The SEND commissioning resource and the point that “This includes the loss of the current lead for workstream A”.*
- *Identifying SEND when difficulties emerge in a timely manner for those at Primary and Secondary Schools - the process is too long due to the delay in assessments leaving those waiting longer for vital support.*
- *The continued delays in CAMHS assessments. We do need to express our concern to the SEND Partnership Board that it needs to be fully understood the number of referrals and where they originate. (A lot of referrals will be via schools and social workers). We now have the Graduated Approach Guidance, but that can only go so far if the health side is facing significant delays – which will then feed through to delays in identification of needs which ultimately places more pressure on all services/support.*

3.3 The SEND Partnership Board is to take place on 11.01.2023 where the outcome of the group will be noted by the wider partnership.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The Scrutiny Review Group will not be a decision-making body but may upon conclusion of its work, make recommendations to Full Council or any other appropriate body to consider. As such, at this stage there are no financial implications.
[JG/21122022/D]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 The scrutiny review group, will be a working group outside of the formal arrangements of the Local Government Act 1972, and will be set up to consider the Written Statement of Action, its progress, and any challenges that may occur.

5.2 The WSOA is necessary and in accordance with relevant legislation, under the Children’s Act 2014 and Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, following the recent SEND inspection.
[TC/19122022/A]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There is not a requirement for the Written Statement of Action or the scrutiny review group to have an Equality Impact Assessment. However, as the work of the review group progresses advice will be sought from the Equality & Diversity service within the local authority as and when required. This is particularly important since the purpose of the Written Statement of Action is to address weaknesses in provision in the local area for a vulnerable and protected group. These SEND children and young people are often disproportionately affected through exclusions and can also be considered as ‘hard to

place' in respect of school admissions and in other areas of school and wider life opportunities. For this reason, the Council places additional focus on the monitoring of performance data against all areas for development within the service areas ensuring that where there are gaps there are mitigations to address these.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications



8.0 Human Resources implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications

9.0 Corporate Landlord implications

9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications

10.0 Appendices

Appendix	Title	Attachment
1	WSOA Monitoring Meeting Nov 22	 WSOA%20monitorin g%20meeting%20No
2	Wolverhampton Advisor Monitoring Meeting	 Wolverhampton Advisor Monitoring R