

Trafford Council Remote SEND Peer Diagnostic

25th – 28th May 2021

SEND Remote Peer Diagnostic Programme for today

Presentation of findings

- Strengths
 - Areas for further consideration
 - Recommendations
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The Peer Team

- **Lead Peer** – Rose Durban, LGA Associate
 - **Education Peer** – George Gilmore, LGA Associate
 - **Health Peer** – Linda Williams, LGA Associate
 - **Local Authority Peer** – Jackie Lown, LGA Associate
 - **Peer Challenge Manager** – Jill Scarr, LGA Programme Manager, Children's Services
 - **EHCP Reviewer** – Richard Holland, LGA Associate
 - **EHCP Reviewer** – Tracey Newcomb, LGA Associate
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Peer Diagnostic

- Not an inspection – invited in as “critical friends”
 - Information is confidential and non-attributable
 - 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 and focus groups
 - Feedback presentation
 - Report
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Themes

- Leadership and Governance
 - Capacity and Managing 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 and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
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Key Lines of Enquiry identified by Trafford

- Impact of COVID – 19
 - Quality of the SEND experience for children, young people, parents and carers
 - Transitions phases, particularly around Preparing for Adulthood
 - Voice of the Child
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Leadership and Governance

Strengths (1)

- Children are a priority for Trafford Council and political leadership is strong in this area
 - Sense of strategic ambition - proud of where you have come from and where you are going
 - Professionals are reflective and aware that there are still things to do to improve provision for children and young people with SEND but there is a real willingness to do so
 - There is an evidence and research base towards improvement and the JSNA can now inform strategic planning
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Leadership and Governance

Strengths (2)

- Impressed with the motivation, positivity, optimism and commitment across the system and at all levels – it can be described as ‘thoughtful positivity’.
 - The Lead Members we saw were knowledgeable about SEND and the implications for their portfolios – Children’s Social Care, Education, Adults and Health
 - Scrutiny is sighted on SEND and has initiated a number of task and finish groups
 - Partnership working is increasingly productive with strong relationships evident across the system
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Leadership and Governance

Areas for Consideration (1)

- There are numerous boards, committees, task and finish groups with an over emphasis on process
 - Ambition and strategy needs to be increasingly translated into consistent practice and provision development which leads to improved outcomes for children
 - There is a dissonance and disconnect between ambition, expectation and achievement from a parental perspective
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Leadership and Governance

Areas for Consideration (2)

- The proposed Integrated Care System (ICS) will provide new structures in health and social care. Is there sufficient focus on the potential risks associated with this organisational change?
 - Consistent strategic oversight of the implementation of the SEND action plan was not evident. Is there collective clarity and assurance about milestones, review points, resources, outcomes and impact?
 - Health data is not reported to the SEND Partnership Board
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Capacity and Managing Resources

Strengths (1)

- Funding for SEND has been positive and responsive; schools and college have appreciated this
 - Succession planning is recognised as an issue
 - Co-location of services is seen as a real benefit as conversations can take place between partners around SEND issues
 - Joint commissioning arrangements currently working well
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Capacity and Managing Resources

Strengths (2)

- Successful Educational Psychology service has full 'buy-in' from schools with strong leadership, enabling expansion of an impactful service
 - Investment in services, for example sensory services and early years is having a positive impact for children and families
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Capacity and Managing Resources

Areas for Consideration

- Lack of connectivity between the utilisation of JSNA intelligence, the Medium Term Financial Plan and longer term strategic planning – how will you identify and allocate resources to meet projected future needs?
 - Financial Resources – growing numbers of EHCPs and 0-25 provision creating pressures ahead
 - How do you currently deploy resources, develop capacity and commission cost effective services to meet all needs?
 - Is the Schools Forum on board and sighted on long-term pressures?
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Capacity and Managing Resources

Areas for Consideration (2)

There are a number of risks associated with the successful delivery of the SEND Action Plan:

- Ensuring the right allocation for Trafford in the proposed ICS arrangements
 - Single specialist posts across health and the local authority can be seen as both a single point of success but also a risk. Can you look across the system at other opportunities to meet the need?
 - School Nursing team is understaffed and there are recruitment issues
 - Is there capacity to support all the different boards, committees and task and finish groups?
 - There is an opportunity for the DCO purpose and function to reflect the spirit of the SEND Code of Practice as a navigator / orchestrator
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Identification of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- Timeliness in meeting statutory timescales for EHCPs has improved
 - SENCOs were well regarded across all settings including the college
 - Comprehensive training offer to practitioners and partners which is valued
 - The PVI sector including childminders are complimentary of the support they get from SENAS
 - Graduated approach is understood, was co-produced and is starting to embed. The 0-5 version was well understood in the Early years sector.
 - 2 Year developmental assessments back up to 80% (pre-COVID-19 90% with a drop to under 50% during COVID-19)
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Identification of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Consideration

- Updating of some plans is not timely and can lapse to become significantly inaccurate
 - Access to some services is a complicated process – it is not always clear who parents can contact
 - Is the single agency referral route to the TASC pathway creating an unnecessary bottleneck for children and families?
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Assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- Teaching school is a key part of the SEND system
 - The Sensory Services team is highly regarded by parents and for those who accessed these services, transition was positive
 - Parent/Carer Forum provides mutual support
 - Early years services and provision for children with SEND and their families is positive
 - Improved access to information and support for parents e.g. Local Offer, SENDIASS, training and workshops
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Assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Consideration (1)

- Social workers and the wider partnership needs to take more account of the needs of children with SEND in their assessments and plans
 - Some training was delivered to strategic social care leads prior to COVID-19 and should be resumed for the wider social care workforce
 - Some children have a range of plans – these need to be aligned and integrated
 - Partnership colleagues contribute to plans but don't always see the draft or final EHCP
 - Access to view and use Liquid Logic is an issue for some professionals
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Assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Consideration (2)

- Concern that the CAMHS service has not returned to face to face contact
 - Secondary provision is not seen as being as inclusive as primary by parents
 - Trafford Autism and Social Communication (TASC) pathway is not working on a number of levels
 - Lengthy waiting times for access to Speech and Language therapy, support from CAMHS and Autism diagnosis
 - Co-production of the Inclusion Charter is a start and gives Trafford a vehicle to look at cultural competence and outline the entitlement of children, young people and their families
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Assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Consideration (3)

- Quality assurance processes need to be improved across the partnership. This should include both single and multi-agency audits.
 - Personal Budgets and Personal Health Budgets are not widely used – how well do parents know about this option for funding?
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Improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- EYFS outcomes have improved by 10 percentage points for SEND children
 - Strong outcomes across KS1 and KS2 for children with SEND
 - Some positive examples of co-production were evident, for example Short Breaks statement, Inclusion Charter
 - Young people met during the peer challenge reported feeling well prepared for transition into education, employment and training
 - Work by the Council for Disabled Children and partners to develop a multi-agency outcomes framework provides a strong foundation for agreeing and using outcome measures consistently across the partnership
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Improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Consideration

- Does the Inclusion Charter sufficiently promote a shared culture and practice across the partnership?
 - Focus is often on the actual plan production rather than the desired outcomes
 - Outcomes for children with SEND at KS4 are weaker than primary – some feedback questioned the inclusivity of the selective system
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Impact of COVID - 19

Strengths

- There is much to learn, be proud of and build on in response to COVID-19.
 - Services accelerated changes to meet the needs of children and families with SEND. Examples included:
 - on-line training for SENCOs
 - daily telephone calls to vulnerable families
 - multi-agency meetings to allow families to remain in contact with services
 - agencies attending more key meetings than pre-COVID-19
 - co-produced Q & A sessions for parents
 - Strategic and operational nimbleness to sustain services and keep individual children and families in view
 - Agile response to ensuring future viability of local health and care providers
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Impact of COVID - 19

Areas for Consideration

- Potential for COVID-19 to impact on the wider determinants of health
 - Digital poverty
 - Impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities
 - Children's emerging and unmet needs
 - Parental health and wellbeing
 - Increased referrals
 - Practitioners want to keep different ways of delivering services post-COVID-19 – do children, young people and parents agree?
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Quality of the SEND experience for children, young people, parents and carers

Strengths

- Young people seen were really positive about the support and challenge they received in school to do their best
 - Parents of children with sensory needs reported high levels of satisfaction around support for both their child and their family
 - Meetings are arranged after a decision is made not to assess or issue an EHCP, in order to explain the outcome, agree next steps and ensure that the SEN Support Plan is effective in meeting needs
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Quality of the SEND experience for children, young people, parents and carers

Areas for consideration

- Hearing and responding to the lived experiences of children and their families - examples of good and bad experiences
 - Some parents and carers are not experiencing the impact and difference on the ground from SEND improvements particularly in SEMH and Autism.
 - Contribution of social care to planning, assessing and meeting need is under-developed
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Transitions phases particularly Preparing for Adulthood

Strengths

- Emerging improvements around Preparing for Adulthood:
 - Young people we saw were confident about their transition and had good support from their schools, college and Sensory Services
 - Educational Psychology service and SENCOs use PFA outcomes as basis for their reports and reviews
 - Commitment to learning from practice and responsive to young people's changing needs
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Transitions phases particularly Preparing for Adulthood

Areas for consideration (1)

- Is there sufficient focus on the voice, views and lived experience of children and families at key transition points from 0-25?
 - Young people with less obvious needs (both SEN Support and EHCP) and who may have ASD or SEMH may not be getting appropriate support when compared to those with a more clearly defined need
 - This gap may be exacerbated by post-COVID-19 emerging or unassessed needs
 - Real concerns about transition from primary to secondary and from 14+ - words used by parents included 'frightened', 'fearful', 'terrified'
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Transitions phases particularly Preparing for Adulthood

Areas for consideration (2)

- Some families would benefit from support with transitions, particularly around preparing for adulthood and the changing relationship with their child
 - Supported internships may not be appropriate for those with less obvious needs and those with high functioning ASC as a pathway to employability
 - Inconsistent picture of adult health and care services involvement in supporting young people preparing for independence
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Voice of the child

Strengths

- Educational Psychologists reports are written in a child-centred way
 - ‘Let’s Talk about SEND’ – agenda for second conference was co-created with children
 - Intentions captured through the multi-agency work on an outcomes framework provide a springboard for a consistent approach to hearing children's voices
 - Children supported by the Sensory Service are seen and heard, particularly during COVID-19
 - Involvement of children in their reviews has increased during COVID-19
 - Ambitions and strategies developed to assess the impact of interventions for children with complex needs
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Voice of the child

Areas for consideration

Despite some individual pockets of good practice, the voice of the child is not consistently apparent or evidenced in practice

Summary Strengths

- Passion and commitment at all levels across the partnership to improve the outcomes for children with SEND
 - Openness to learning from each other and external review
 - Maintaining a sharp focus on the needs of individual children during COVID-19
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Summary areas for consideration

- Listen to and act upon the views of children
 - Learning from families lived experience is not yet consistently embedded across the system
 - Systems are not sufficiently developed to enable you to demonstrate the quality, consistency and impact for children and families
 - Take a longer term view on capacity and resourcing informed by the JSNA
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Recommendations (1)

- Galvanise the SEND Partnership Board to oversee the prompt translation of current ambitions and action plans into tangible impacts which make a difference for children and families
 - Use the JSNA to ensure the medium and long term revenue and capital programmes are directly responsive to changing and emerging needs to achieve the ambition of children with SEND living, learning and growing up closer to home
 - Seize the opportunity for the DCO and DSCO to work together to provide a system overview of quality, effectiveness and impact to strategic leaders
 - Sharpen your focus on the risks and opportunities associated with organisational change relating to ICS
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Recommendations (2)

Involve children and families at all stages:

- Accelerate the review of ASC Pathway to ensure that less obvious needs are recognised and met
 - Agree and implement a system of capturing good practice and ensuring the 'child is in the room' across all agencies
 - Involve parents in the decisions about post-COVID-19 service design and delivery
 - Establish a key worker/single point of contact and support for parents to navigate the SEND system on behalf of their child
 - Communicate clearly with children and families the provision and transition support available to them 0-25+
 - Develop an employability pathway for those with less obvious needs and those with high functioning ASC where traditional supported internships are not appropriate
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Recommendations (3)

- Use the findings of the EHCP review as a starting point to establish and embed single and multi-agency audits to improve the quality of EHCPs
 - Ensure that social care needs are recorded in EHCPs including Short Breaks provision
 - Identify and overcome barriers in IT systems to enable effective information sharing between professionals at both a strategic and operational level
 - A data dashboard highlighting key health metrics should be regularly reported to the SEND Partnership Board
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What next ?

- There is now a chance to reflect on our conclusions
 - We will produce a draft short 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 challenge
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Questions?

Thank you
