

SEND structure update

Purpose

- To share with the People and Families Scrutiny Committee an update on the implementation of the SEND redesign;
- To inform the Committee of the impact of Covid 19 on the ability to undertake an early review of the new structure with schools, settings and parents.

Background

The final structure for SEND services was discussed with the People and Families Scrutiny Committee on 14th November 2019. The committee requested that:

- An update be provided to the committee in summer 2020 once an implementation review with schools had been completed;
- Further information would be provided on the final service structure and individual roles;
- A briefing and discussion session in each quadrant would be arranged specifically for school governors and feedback on this would be provided to the Committee.

Implementation of the new structure and the impact of Covid 19

The new structure was launched at the beginning of January 2020 (attached as a background paper). The ability of the Education senior leadership team to work with schools and settings to assess the success of the launch of the new service has been significantly impacted by Covid 19. Since the lockdown began the new posts designed to support schools and settings have been restricted in their ability to work as was intended due to restrictions. Any review of the service at this stage would be limited. However, the new SEND structure has been instrumental in meeting the challenges of Covid 19 in a way which the previous structure could not have supported. The support for schools and settings has included:

- The design and completion of individual risk assessments to determine whether it was safer for vulnerable children and young people to be in school or at home. This has enabled a multi-agency approach to risk assessment across schools, education, social care and health. The involvement of the new SEND teams has enabled a focus on the parental and pupil voice informing the risk assessment and, where attendance is not possible, supporting the school to develop a wider offer.
- Working with schools, settings and colleges to deliver the 'reasonable endeavours' element of temporary legislation introduced to ease the statutory

responsibilities on local authorities for children and young people with SEND. The duty required engagement with all children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan; in Essex this amounts to over 9,300 plans. A comprehensive response plan was designed with input from the Essex Family Forum which has seen schools work with families and other agencies to look at which elements of a plan could not be met and, where there are gaps, put in place reasonable endeavours by providing other forms of support such as outreach work or a virtual learning platform. Feedback from parents has been very positive.

- Supporting schools and settings throughout the last four months to increase the number of vulnerable children and young people attending school and helping them to develop their provision for September to ensure as smooth a return to school as possible. This has included the design and delivery of virtual training and advice and support for the likely traumatic impact of the crisis on many children and young people.

We will continue to support schools and settings in September and begin to design a more formal review of the service to take place in the Spring term of 2021 when, hopefully, the situation will have begun to normalise.