

## **SEND internal challenge day - 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018**

An internal challenge day on Special Educational Need and Disability was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018, to test some of the areas highlighted as strengths and areas for development in the self-evaluation document. This is the second internal challenge that has been held, and came a year after a Peer Review visit from colleagues in Reading.

The full set of interviewees is attached in appendix 1.

Summary messages from the focus groups are as follows:

### **SEN Support:**

The clear message from this focus group is that there are lots of initiatives taking place, and a huge amount of energy on this agenda, but that it is disappointing this is not yet reflected in the data.

There was a lot of discussion about the importance of the SENCo network, and the extent to which this is now a vibrant and empowered group. It would be helpful to illustrate the progress with this group in particular over the last 4 years, as this is clearly an area where there has been a great deal of positive change.

One of the impacts of the work with schools and the SENCo network has been to address over-identification of SEN, and this impact can be demonstrated through the data over time.

One of the areas where it was felt that this otherwise very strong session could have been stronger is in the join up with post-16 work and the transition to FE. Although there is a different group leading on Preparing for Adulthood, and this work is largely captured in that group, it would be helpful if this area could be illustrated as this would demonstrate the clear approach being taken across the full set of services.

### **SEMH:**

Again, a clear sense of breadth and depth of working came out of this group, although there was no health representation in this group. Data is used well to illustrate how areas for development are identified and how progress is tracked. There was a good balance struck in discussion between celebrating some successes, but also recognising the current issues that exist. The meeting covered a range of issues from attendance and exclusions, part-time timetables, alternative provision, and elective home education (which was consistent with issues raised at a political level).

One of the issues with this particular group was a slight disconnect between the professionals represented and the parent carers on the group. It became apparent that for some of the issues that professionals felt had been addressed, parents either hadn't recognised an impact or felt that work was not complete. This illustrates the

need to ensure that there is strong follow-up and evaluation of action to ensure that it is having the intended impact. A concern for parents is clearly inconsistency in schools and their approaches.

Two areas emerged as specific issues. Firstly, it was highlighted that not all GPS are clear on what is available to support children and their families and are not using the Local Offer website to signpost appropriately. The second is a clear gap around support for autism (this has been identified as a citywide issue and is reflected in the Autism workstream).

### **Co-production:**

This was a focus group with no professionals represented, to get a clear view from parent carers and young people on how successful this feels as an approach in the city.

There was a clear view expressed that, as service providers, Education and Health colleagues approach co-production better than social care (this was specifically around children's services). Even then, it was felt that co-production is stronger at a strategic level, than at the individual level. The group felt that often, activity is still participation and consultation rather than true co-production.

There are opportunities for parent voice, and areas where this was done regularly and well included the SENCo Network and the Portsmouth Education Partnership. However, overall there is a concern that there is some dependence on excellent individual professionals rather than systemic embedding of co-production, and that there is some slippage back towards old practices. This was noted to be in the context of capacity for both professionals and parents - noted that Portsmouth Parent Voice have 13 reps but can't meet the demands that are made of them.

Young People's pizza evenings and young inspector programmes were really interesting and exciting areas and it would be helpful for these to be explained in more depth and detail, as they are really strong areas for the city.

### **Autism:**

This was a new theme being explored as a separate area, and there was a good explanation of how this had come about, and why it was needed. Colleagues from school were very strong in explaining some of the impacts on service and how changes could be made to improve this situation.

The discussion could have been stronger in terms of the articulation of CAMHS commissioning around the area. There was little awareness demonstrated of the impact of wait times on children, parents and schools in particular, with the comment being "it's not as bad as regional", which may be true, but didn't demonstrate either empathy or a desire to improve the position further. There was no clear response to how commissioning would move away from being "setting-led" to "needs-led".

There was no clear explanation as to the rationale for the removal of the autism co-ordinator post (which parents had made clear was very valued) or plans for replacing the provision, other than a statement that "a consultant with 25 years experience didn't think it was necessary" which is an interesting challenge to an ethos of hearing parent voice and co-producing solutions. It was also not clear that any framework of joint commissioning had applied in this case.

There was some reference to elective home education, but it was clear that this is an area where the relationships could be more fully developed.

A particular area of interesting practice highlighted was the ethnic minorities' parent group, which reflected some of the cultural sensitivities around SEND and was about trying to ensure that children and families are still appropriately supported.

### **Preparing for Adulthood:**

This group was a bit slow to get into its narrative but once it did get going, there were some interesting issues highlighted. There was no representation from Health colleagues.

There is now one overall protocol for transition between services in place, although it was recognised that this has not been co-produced.

There were very positive areas highlighted in relation to employment and independent living, and very positive discussion about work with FE providers, for example, in developing supported internships, and redesigning EHCPs around the PfA outcomes. There was discussion of development of social enterprise to support this agenda, and this is a very positive discussion.

It was noted that there is now a Transition Planning meeting and process that has been established, and a tracker has been established to ensure that adult services are aware of all young people who they may need to be working with, rather than just those in Mary Rose Special school.

It was noted that young people at the SEN support level may not be as well planned for in preparing for adulthood, and that ensuring that this group are able to maintain positive progress made is a priority.

### **Joint Commissioning:**

This discussion was very positive, but suffered from a lack of health or social care input.

What was clear is that there is a strong strategic framework for joint commissioning and some strong relationships at the strategic level. This was the area where voice was given to the idea of a SEND Hub as a new way of working.

However, it also became apparent in the discussion that there are examples where joint commissioning is not as strong as it could be. The examples of multiple CAMHS contracts and the extent to which this is not supporting a strong needs led culture was highlighted, and it was clear that there has been no joint commissioning approach taken in relation to the Autism co-ordinator role. There was not clarity around the commissioning of the DCO role 19-25.

Consideration was given to the Performance Framework that underpins the work of the SEND Board and it was noted that at present this is not a fully joint framework.

## **Conclusions**

Compared to previous challenge sessions, the overall impression was that groups were much better at telling the story of where we have been and come to, and setting out the areas of particularly strong practice. The discipline of nominating a chair for groups to set out the initial position and ensure areas are referenced is an important one. It continues to be the case though that some of the earlier developments are overlooked (for example, the story of the development of the SENCo network) and these are really important parts of the jigsaw. Revisiting past actions and achievements is critical to explaining why we are at our current point.

There is a need to strengthen use of data to demonstrate outcomes and evaluating whether we have made the difference; and this means bringing into play parent and young person feedback, or school feedback, as well as quantitative data. There was not enough evidence that people knew what impact measures were having (or not) on the quality of life for children, young people and their families.

The lack of strong representation from health commissioners and providers on the challenge day meant that this is an area that has not been fully explored and may not be properly reflected in the discussion.

The sense from the discussion is that the city has achieved a great deal since the introduction of the reforms and developed some excellent processes and practice, but that the areas left to be tackled now are more challenging and are areas where there are competing policy frameworks and drivers to navigate (for example, a tougher curriculum in mainstream schools and more challenging examinations placing a strain on the inclusivity of schools for those with SEND; the challenge of trying to be needs-led rather than diagnosis or setting-led, when frameworks including the benefits framework demand diagnosis; the ongoing challenge of reducing resources, particularly in schools against increased and more complex demand). For the city, continuing to make a positive impact for children and young people will be challenging in the circumstances.

## **Actions**

- Share findings of the day with all represented, and with all the SEND sub-groups to ensure this can influence their thinking.

- Update the self-evaluation document to reflect the findings of the day.
- Book slots with management teams for children's social care, adult social care and the CCG to discuss the findings of the challenge day.
- Ensure that the quarterly performance report is more "joint" and enables triangulation with parental feedback
- Rerun the internal challenge session in 2019.

## **Appendix One - Attendees for challenge day**

Pippa Cook, SEND Strategic review manager

Tracy Maytas, SEND South East regional co-ordinator

Paddy May, Corporate Strategy Manager

Kelly Nash, Corporate Performance Manager

Cllr Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Education

Sarah Christopher, Portsmouth Education Partnership strategy manager

Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Children, Families and Education

Jo Peach, Director, Portsmouth Teaching School Alliance

Penny Farrelly, Children's Services strategic information manager

Neil Stevenson, Admissions, attendance, exclusion and reintegration manager

Ian Hunkin, Headteacher, Harbour School

Stuart McDowell, Commissioning Project Manager

Liz Robinson, Service Manager, Education Support and Principal Educational Psychologist

Cathy Seal, Inclusion Unit Lead, Trafalgar School

Ashley Oliver-Catt, Headteacher, Cliffdale School

Barbara McDougall, Co-ordinator, Portsmouth Parent Voice

Joe McLeish, Co-ordinator, Dynamite

Carly Blake, Dynamite intern

Julia Katherine, Head of Inclusion

Hayden Ginns, Commissioning and partnerships manager

Mark Stables, Service Manager, Integrated Learning Disability Service

Michael Henning-Pugh, Service Manager, Children with Disabilities

Amanda Percy, Post-16 commissioning manager

Liz Le Ray, Team Manager, North Locality Team