Integrated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2018/21

Getting the right services to the right children at the right time
This document sets out our joint strategic plans for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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Section 1: Foreword

Executive Member for Children and Young People

I am delighted to introduce Warrington’s first integrated strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The strategy has been informed by what we know about how the system works and the experiences of those families accessing help and support. It sets out what we have achieved since the introduction of the Children and Families Act and the areas which still require development.

This strategy is an important step for us in demonstrating our commitment to children and young people with SEND. Our ambition in Warrington is make sure that we deliver the right services to the right children at the right time so that they have every opportunity to reach their potential and achieve their aspirations. This is the main goal of the strategy – to put the child at the heart of everything we do so that children with additional needs have access to the help and support they need when they need it the most.

If we can do this, we will make a difference and create better futures for the children and young people with SEND living in Warrington.

Councillor Jean Carter

Chair of Warrington Parents and Carers Forum (WARRPAC)

The new legislation that came out in 2014 has given us the right to have a voice, but it is the willingness of everyone in Warrington to work together that will make our voices more powerful and actually make a difference.

Warrington Parents and Carers Forum are proud to have worked alongside Warrington Borough Council and their partners to make certain that the changes in this legislation are followed and the parent/carers voice is heard. Making sure Warrington families have access to the right services and support is of huge importance to us not just as parent carers ourselves but as the voice of Warrington families.

The priorities laid out in this strategy have been developed by listening to families. Previous strategies have involved professionals telling us what they think the priorities are. This strategy, however, has the parent carer voice embedded from the beginning. The views of parents/carers and young people were actively sought and every effort was made to ensure the consultation process was thorough. Parents/carers and young people’s contributions were made either as members of work-streams or as part of separate events facilitated by theParent Carer Forum, “Oi Listen” and Warrington Borough Council including, parent/carers surveys, “Ask Away” sessions, strategic work-streams and the Annual “Working Together Conference.” This event is facilitated jointly by Warrington Parents and Carers Forum (WARRPAC) and Warrington Borough Council and gives both parent/carers and professionals the opportunity to come together to celebrate the things that work well in Warrington, those areas that are still in need of some work as well as to recognise gaps in services. All the data from the workshops along with all previous information sessions was taken into account. From this a number of common themes came to the surface which highlighted the key priorities our families said were important to them. These key points would ultimately be embedded within the strategy in order to strengthen and improve the current arrangements for the children and young people across Warrington with SEND and their families.

We all recognise that better outcomes can be achieved for young people with additional needs and their families when there is strong engagement and strong partnerships between parent/carers, the local authority, schools and health services. There will always be more work we can do to ensure all young people with SEND get the opportunity to reach their potential.

However, the joint work to complete the SEND Strategy shows we do have a shared priority, to do what is right for our young people and their families.

Jean Fitzpatrick
Section 2: Introduction

Most children and young people in Warrington make good progress and reach their developmental and learning milestones as expected, but some need additional help so that they can do well at school, secure meaningful employment and be well prepared for their adult lives.

This strategy sets out Warrington’s plans for how all organisations will work together over the next three years to make a difference for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with a focus on areas and issues that need development.

What is SEND?

The Children and Families Act 2014 describes a child or young person as having special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which requires additional support to be made for them.

This means that a child or young person will have greater difficulty learning than their classmates; or a disability which holds them back from using facilities available to other children of the same age.

Many children who have special educational needs may also have a disability described in the Equality Act 2010 as a ‘physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’

In schools, pupils with special educational needs are currently categorised as follows:

SEN Support

Extra or different help is given from that provided as part of the school’s usual curriculum. The class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) may receive advice or support from outside specialists. The pupil does not have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

A pupil has an EHC plan when a formal assessment has been made of their education, health and care needs. After consultation with the relevant partner agencies if it is determined that an EHC Plan is necessary and a document is put in place that sets out the child's need and the extra help they should receive.

Our Vision

For children and young people with SEND to...

- do their best at nursery, school and college
- find employment
- lead happy and fulfilled lives
- have greater control over the support they receive
- feel valued.
This will be achieved by working together with children and young people with SEND and their families to ‘Make the Difference’ and improve their lives.

**Links to other strategies and legislation:**

This vision underpins the wider strategies for children and young people as set out in:

- **The Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015/18** and its vision to work together for stronger neighbourhoods, healthier people, a vibrant and resilient economy and greater equality across all our communities.

- **The Children and Young People’s Plan 2014/17** and its vision for every child and young person living in Warrington to reach their potential.

- **The Council Strategy 2015/18** and its vision to work together with residents, businesses and partners to make Warrington a place where everyone can thrive.

- The SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

- Warrington’s Coproduction Charter.

This strategy will also help us to fulfil our statutory duties under **Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014** to:

- a) Cooperate with each other to plan and commission services.

- b) Publish clear information, advice and guidance on what services and support parents can expect to be made available.

- c) Review local provision for children and young people with SEND on a regular basis.

- d) Convert existing Statements and Learning Disability Assessments to new EHC Plans for children and young people up to the age of 25 years.

- e) Provide education, health and care services as described in the EHC Plans.

- f) Take into consideration the preference of parents and carers for the school or further education setting they wish their child to attend.

- g) Give children and young people and parents and carers greater control over the way their support is provided by involving them in reviewing services and through the option of using personal budgets to commission their own support and services.

- h) Consider mediation as a way to resolve disagreements without the need for Tribunal appeals wherever possible.
## Section 3: Safeguarding children and young people with SEND

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone’s business and every organisation has a part to play in making this happen.

Warrington Safeguarding Children’s Board is responsible for ensuring that all organisations work and act together to help and protect children at risk of harm and keep them safe. The Board provides specific training on Safeguarding Disabled Children which is available to all staff working with children and young people in Warrington.

Warrington Borough Council and Warrington CCG (health commissioners), monitor services to make sure that they have robust processes in place for keeping children and young people safe and that they follow good practice which promotes the welfare of all children and young people. Examples of this include:

- Annual safeguarding statements completed by all providers of short break services
- Safeguarding Assurance Groups with health providers for the review of safeguarding practice.

The above mechanisms include reviews of areas such as: safe recruitment and selection; induction and training of staff; policies and procedures; listening to children and responding to comments/complaints.

Many families recruit and employ their own Personal Assistants to provide support for their disabled son/daughter. The Council has strengthened its policy in this area to require all Personal Assistants to have a DBS check.

If any professionals have concerns about the safety of a child or young person, they should follow the Warrington Safeguarding Children’s Board information, advice and policies for all professionals working with children in the Warrington area.

Concerns should be shared at the earliest opportunity with an appropriate manager or with the designated member of staff who has a responsibility for safeguarding. A referral should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub at childreferral@warrington.gcsx.gov.uk.

Further information is available from:


Disabled children and young people have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, to be protected from harm and to achieve the ‘Every Child Matters’ Outcomes as non-disabled children. Disabled Children do however require additional action. This is because they experience greater and created vulnerability as a result of negative attitudes about disabled children and unequal access to services and resources, and because they may have additional needs relating to physical, sensory, cognitive and/or communication impairments.

*Safeguarding Disabled Children Practice Guidance, 2009*
Section 4: Warrington - The story so far

2014
- June 12: Fox Wood School judged as “Good” by Ofsted
- September 1: Launch of Warrington’s Local Offer
- October 19: Woolston Brook School judged as “Good” by Ofsted
- June 12: “Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school as evidenced by their happy smiles as they greet staff on their arrival.” Ofsted Report 12 June 2017
- “You have some good examples of practice, particularly integrated working, the ‘Local Offer’ being an example.” ADCS North West – SEND/Health Peer Challenge
- “Students say they feel safe in school and their teachers and parents agree they are well cared for and well supported in improving their behaviour.” Ofsted Report 2014
- “You have some good examples of practice, particularly integrated working, the ‘Local Offer’ being an example.”
- “Together leaders constantly ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils achievement are outstanding and continue to improve.” Ofsted Report 2015

2015
- May 6: Green Lane School is judged as “Outstanding” by Ofsted
- April 6: £120k awarded to schools to improve support for early years education
- February 10: “Schools ‘Wise Up’ to stop bullying and hate crimes
- October 30: Warrington is 2nd best in primary performance and 5th best in secondary performance in the North West
- March 17: Coproduction Event 2016 Our 2020 Vision
- June 24: 100% of Warrington schools awarded the Inclusion Kitemark
- “What a fantastic opportunity to share ideas with parents, carers and professionals and work with them on our 2020 vision.”
- “The structures you have in place are supporting your desire to work together more effectively and you have seen significant benefits already from co-locating staff.” Department for Education
- “The structures you have in place are supporting your desire to work together more effectively and you have seen significant benefits already from co-locating staff.”

2016
- October 30: Warrington is 2nd best in primary performance and 5th best in secondary performance in the North West
- March 17: Coproduction Event 2016 Our 2020 Vision
- June 15: Engagement Event for children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing
- June 24: 100% of Warrington schools awarded the Inclusion Kitemark
- “What a fantastic opportunity to share ideas with parents, carers and professionals and work with them on our 2020 vision.”

2017
- January 26: Thrive Project launched
- November 13: Short Breaks Consultation launched
- October 28: Future in Mind initiative launched in Warrington schools
- September 2: Westland Drive (Respite facility) is judged as “Outstanding” by Ofsted
- “Staff ensure that children are given every opportunity to experience activities that may not otherwise be available to them. They are extremely dedicated to their role and show great commitment to ensuring that vulnerable children are enabled to live life to the full.” Ofsted Report 2016
- “This fantastic fun and informative day brought the combined voices and views of both our parents and professionals together which leads to better strategic planning of services for children and young people with additional needs and or disabilities. This is crucially important especially in the present climate where demand for services and support is so great but where resources are so limited.”

2018
- April 5: Coproduction Charter produced
- June 24: Review of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- September 30: SEND Strategy Developed
- “This fantastic fun and informative day brought the combined voices and views of both our parents and professionals together which leads to better strategic planning of services for children and young people with additional needs and or disabilities. This is crucially important especially in the present climate where demand for services and support is so great but where resources are so limited.” Jean Fitzpatrick, Chair of WarrPAC
Section 5: What we know...

About Warrington

Warrington stands on the banks of the river Mersey and is made up of small suburbs and villages, as well as larger areas located around the town centre covering 70 square miles across the north-west of England. The population has grown quickly over the past 30 years mainly because of the new town developments and this is expected to continue - by 2039 it is thought that there will be around 25,216 more people living in Warrington, with the number of children and young people 0 to 25 years rising from 62,911 to 65,900.

Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities in schools

In schools the number of pupils with special educational needs has fallen in Warrington from 5,910 in January 2011 to 3,947 in January 2017. This is a result of the decline in pupils identified as requiring lower levels of assistance and categorised as ‘SEN support’ which has reduced from 4,913 in 2011 to 2,806 in 2017.

In contrast the number and rate of children and young people with a Statement or EHC Plan attending a Warrington school has continued to increase - as of January 2017, 3.5% of Warrington pupils had a Statement or EHC Plan, which equates to 203 more pupils than the national average.

As of January 2017, the most common primary needs of all pupils with SEND (combined number of SEN support and those with a Statement/EHC Plan) were:

- Moderate Learning Difficulties (1,020)
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs (754)
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (641)
- Specific Learning Difficulties (522)
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder (301).

Since 2014, the biggest increases in need have been:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorder - this has increased by 26% from 239 to 301
- Visual impairment – this has increased by 47% from 49 to 72
- Speech, Language and Communication Needs – this has increased by 63% from 464 to 754
- Moderate Learning Difficulty – this has increased by 78% from 574 to 1,020
- Specific Learning Difficulty – this has increased by 78% from 75 to 208.

A much higher number of pupils with SEND are educated in mainstream schools compared to the national and regional averages - 52% compared to 40% across the North West and 43% in England as of January 2017.

Only 28% of pupils were educated in a special school in Warrington compared to 44% in the North West and 41% across England. This reflects the small number of specialist education places available locally which has resulted in significantly large increases in pupils being placed in expensive out of area placements.
Pupil progress and attainment

The attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs shows wide gaps compared to other learners.

At Key Stage 2 the most recent results (2016) show that 14.8% of pupils with SEND achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 70.1% of pupils without additional needs. However, the gap between these pupils has reduced compared to the previous year from 57% to 55.3%. For pupils with a Statement or EHC Plan achievement at Key Stage 2 is at 11% achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

At Key Stage 4 21.4% of pupils with SEND achieved five A*-C GCSEs including English and maths compared to 64.5% of their peers. This has narrowed the gap from 43.3 to 43.1 over the past two years. For pupils with a Statement or EHC Plan only 7.8% achieved five A*-C GCSEs including English and maths meaning that the gap between them and their peers has narrowed to 51.9%.

Attendance and Exclusions

The most recent information shows that there were 717 pupils with a Statement or EHC Plan who were persistent absentees in 2015/16 - approximately 17.6% of all pupils with a Statement or EHC Plan. Proportionally this is a reduction from the previous reporting period of 20.1% and is well below the national average of 22.6%.

In terms of exclusions in 2016/17 there were:
• 97 pupils with one or more fixed terms exclusions for pupils with EHC Plans
• 246 individual exclusion notices between them
• One permanent exclusion for a pupil with an EHC Plan.

Comparatively the most recent data (2015/16) shows that Warrington has a higher proportion of pupils with an EHC Plan with at least one fixed term exclusion - 8.4% compared to 6.4% nationally. Permanent exclusions for pupils with EHC Plan continue to remain lower - 0.09% compared to 0.15% nationally.

Implementation of the SEND reforms

Warrington has made good progress in implementing the reforms - as of January 2017 67.7% of existing Statements and 100% of Learning Difficulties Assessments had been converted to EHC Plans. In comparison to our statistical neighbours Warrington has transferred the highest proportion of Statements to Plans.

Of the new EHC Plans made during 2016, 88.8% were issued within the 20 week timeframe, an increase from 67.1% in 2015. Nationally there was a reduction in the number of new Plans being issued within the statutory timeframe in comparison to the previous year and only Bury in our statistical neighbour group managed to issue 100% of their Plans in 20 weeks.

One of the biggest areas of challenge for Warrington has been the increase in the number of Statements/EHC Plans maintained by the council which has risen 32% since the introduction of the reforms in 2014. The rise in demand, funded from the schools' High Needs budget of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), has resulted in an increase in spend of around £2 million in two years.

What you have told us

We have used the intelligence gathered from the Working in Partnership events in 2016 and 2017, the Short Breaks Survey and the Consultation on our Strategic Priorities in 2017 to inform the development of this strategy. The priorities identified for families in Warrington are to:
• **Reduce delays** in identifying and diagnosing children and young people's additional needs
• Improve information about **what is available and how to access support**
• Increase the availability of **local specialist childcare, holiday and education provision**
• Make sure that **support services are provided in a timely way**
• Fill the “gaps” when young people move from children's to adults' services in health, education and employment support.
All of this information has guided our strategic priorities to:

1. Continue to work together
2. Strengthen co-production arrangements
3. Identify children with additional needs at the earliest opportunity
4. Improve the experiences of assessment and support planning
5. Increase the numbers of school places in Warrington and improve inclusive practice
6. Develop the health offer
7. Improve the Short Breaks Offer
8. Improve transition planning across the key stages of children's lives.
Section 6: Our priorities

Priority 1: Continue to work together

When we get this right...

All organisations work together in a coordinated way to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, and their families.

Over the past three years Warrington has seen a big increase in the number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans maintained by the local authority and this is partly a result of the Children and Families Act 2014 which has extended support to children in the early years and young people up to the age of 25.

The take up of EHC Plans has been much greater in Warrington than in other local areas - 32% compared to 24% in the North West and 21% across England. In comparison to its statistical neighbours Warrington has had the joint third highest increase in EHC Plans since 2014.

The additional demand for support is both a national and local challenge and given the current financial limitations, all organisations are struggling to meet additional needs coming into the system. Warrington partners need to come and work together effectively as a partnership and make the best use of our resources. This means integrating our arrangements further to avoid duplication and making sure that education, health and social care professionals work collectively in the best interests of the child.

What we have achieved:

- The Health and Wellbeing Board, the SEND Strategy Group and Warrington Inclusion Hub, have played key role in identifying emerging needs and priorities for children and young people with SEND.
- Warrington Parent and Carers Forum has had an active role in these forums and make a valuable contribution to the work of partnership.
- Woolston Learning Village has resulted in the co-location of two Special Schools, SEND support services, some community health services and the children with disabilities team on the same site as a way to encourage integrated working.
- Multi-agency groups meet to approve EHC Plans, audit the quality of these Plans and make joint decisions about the allocation of resources around education and health services, therapies, family support/short breaks and continuing care needs.
- There are arrangements in place between Warrington Borough Council and Warrington CCG to jointly commission services. There is a Joint Commissioning Strategy for Integrated Delivery supported by a Joint Commissioning Plan, as well as pooled funding for Continuing Health Care and Short Breaks arrangements.

What we will do:

1. Look at what behaviours and practices may be driving avoidable demand for EHC Plans and put in place alternative support options for children and young people who do not meet the thresholds for an EHC Plan.
2. Make the most of opportunities to jointly commission services which supports the coordinated and personalised delivery of education, health and care support for children and young people with SEND.
3. Engage with Children’s Hearing Support Working Group (CHSWG) and secure their contribution to achieving integrated pathways for children and young people with a hearing impairment.
4. Re-establish effective contract monitoring arrangements of external providers of education, health and care services, including all overnight and residential provision with a view to seeking assurance that the provision delivers value for money and keeps children and young people safe.
Priority 2: Strengthen coproduction arrangements

When we get this right...

Children and young people with SEND, and their families are provided with opportunities to influence decision making and work in partnership with leaders to plan, review and evaluate service delivery.

Everyone who works with children and young people with SEND in Warrington is committed to working with families on an equal basis and involving families in all stages of the EHC assessment, planning and review processes so that they have a voice in the decisions made about service and treatment options.

“In Warrington, we are committed to making sure that no child is left behind and is given the support to reach his or her full potential. This means listening to children, parents and carers, finding out what services they need, taking on board their views and acting on them.”

Councillor Jean Carter, Working Together Conference 2017

Great strides have been made since 2014 around Warrington’s coproduction arrangements so that parents and carers have had more opportunities to work closely with senior leaders around development of its strategic plans. Warrington Borough Council and Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group have signed up to Warrington Parent’s and Carers Forum (WarrPAC) Coproduction Charter which defines the expectations of joint working with parents and carers so that their voice is included in service development and delivery.

What we have achieved:

- Warrington’s Local Offer ‘Ask Ollie’ has also been developed in collaboration with young people and their families, and professionals. It includes information on what to do about concerns around a child’s development, as well as what services are available to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- A new officer was recruited in 2017 to support the review and development of the AskOllie site so that families are clear about how to access services.
- The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) provides a full-time impartial information, advice, support and guidance to parents/carers of children with SEND and young people over the age of 16 who want information, support and guidance. Since April 2014, referrals to the service have increased significantly, particularly around pre-school referrals and EHC assessments. Work with young people accounts for 7% of the SENDIASS’s work at this present time and this is an area for development.
- Over the past two years Warrington has placed more of an emphasis on the early resolution of cases and agreements have been reached between the parents/carers prior to the Tribunal in five cases.
- Warrington Borough Council has funded an independent mediation and support service which is free of charge to families of children and young people with SEND and helps to settle disagreements between families and local authorities and/or schools or other providers.
- Warrington Speak Up are funded by the council to support Oi Listen – a group for disabled young people aged 16 to 24 years.
What we will do:

1. Establish an effective communication strategy which strengthens existing coproduction arrangements and develops links with other community groups as a way to include the voice of parents and carers and children and young people with SEND.

2. Reinforce the role of children and young people and parents and carers in the EHC assessment and planning processes so that they are able to influence decisions about how best to meet their/or their child's needs.

3. Review the AskOllie site so that young people and their families understand what is available and how to access support.

4. Review the SENDIASS Service so that there is capacity to meet the increased demand for support and reach out to more young people.

5. Promote the use of the Independent Mediation and Independent Support Advisers to families during the EHC assessment and planning processes.
Priority 3: Identify children with additional needs at the earliest opportunity

When we get this right...

Children and young people have access to the right services at the right time so that they achieve their full potential and are able to progress positively into adulthood.

Parents and carers have told us that it is their most important priority for their children to get the help and support they need at the earliest opportunity.

“It is extremely important to improve the training of early years educators to identify and refer young children, so that these issues are caught earlier and the process begins before formal education.”

Parent – SEND Strategy Consultation

Early help and support is essential to prevent underachievement at school and improve children's life chances. The SEND Code of Practice highlights the importance of preventing delays around identifying and assessing children with SEND so that every child is ‘school ready’ and the risks around disengagement in learning, loss of self-esteem and behavioural difficulties are reduced.

Warrington is committed to establishing an effective ‘early help’ strategy for children with additional needs so that:

- Professionals working with children have the right skills to identify emerging difficulties early in a child’s development
- Assessments are undertaken quickly and plans are revisited so that there is a growing understanding of the child’s needs and what support makes a difference to the child
- Education, health and care providers strengthen their arrangements to address the needs of the whole family in a timely manner and where possible prevent the need for more acute and specialist interventions.

What we have achieved:

- Integrated health checks are in place for two year olds in early years settings (health visitor and early years practitioner) to support the early identification of SEND.
- The number of children considered in reception class each year as being ‘school ready’, as assessed in Early Years Foundation Stage and achieving a good level of development has increased year on year. These children are better able to engage with the national curriculum and more likely to reach their full potential at school.
- A dedicated Education Psychologist has been appointed to increase the number of educational psychology assessments being undertaken for children in early years settings.
- In September 2017 the local authority consulted with nurseries, parents and professionals around the Inclusion Fund to support children in the early years access the right service at the right time as part of the graduated approach.
- Children are much more likely to have their EHC Plan issued by the time the finish reception class – 22% of the current cohort of children with an EHC Plan had their plan issued at the age of 4 years.
What we will do:

1. Increase the level notifications to the local authority about children with complex health needs and special educational needs to support service development and school place planning arrangements.
2. Review the 2 year integrated development check, looking to best practice gained from neighbouring local authorities, with the aim of increasing the number of checks being undertaken.
3. Improve training and development opportunities for early years practitioners so that they are better equipped to work with children with additional need.
4. Increase Educational Psychology involvement with children who appear to struggle with the social expectations, structures and routines in early years settings.
5. Review and refresh our EHC referral and assessment and resource allocation processes so that decision making is based on clear thresholds and supported by efficient pathways to services.
6. Effective help is provided to children and young people identified as requiring SEN support.
7. Increase the number of families accessing the early help offer.
Priority 4: Improve the experiences of assessment and support planning

When we get this right...

Children and young people and their parents and carers are actively involved in the assessment process and the production of their EHC Plans. They have co-ownership of both the process and the decisions taken about how their needs will be met.

In Warrington we know that people's experience of the new EHC assessment and planning system varies greatly.

“There's always open and honest communication with all concerned. I feel that my thoughts and opinions are included.”

Parent, Working Partnership Conference

“I feel we repeat our situation to every professional we come across.”

Parent, Working Partnership Conference

One of the key priorities over the next three years will be to improve the experiences of both parents and carers and children and young people going through the system so that there is a clear understanding of process and co-ownership of the plan and delivery of support.

In the recent consultation on the proposed SEND Strategy, respondents raised issues with the wording used in some EHC Plans and there was confusion about the level of support that should be put in place in schools.

“Please make the EHC Plans easy to understand - the wording is open to interpretation and conflict can easily rise about sharing teaching assistants and other resources.”

Respondent – SEND Strategy Consultation

At the Working Together Conference parents and carers also reported that there is not always sufficient time at the end of the process for them to review and challenge the content of the EHC Plans.

Professionals have also reported some confusion and the process for submitting referrals.

“As a new SENCO a better understanding of Warrington procedures for referrals and what support is available to families and young people.”

Respondent – SEND Strategy Consultation

What we have achieved:

• As part of the dedicated EHC Assessment Team a single worker (known as an EHC Coordinator) oversees the assessment process and planning stages. This provides all professionals and families with a central point of contact.
• Training has been commissioned from the Council for Disabled Children so that professionals contributing to the development of EHC Plans have the right skills in place to make sure that targets are outcome focussed.
• We have increased the number of EHC Plans being issued within the statutory timeframe of 20 weeks in 2016 to 88.8%.
• Multi-agency audits have been undertaken in relation to a small number of EHC Plans in 2017.

What we will do:

1. Review the EHC referral and assessment process and re-issue guidance to partner organisations and on Ask Ollie.

2. Establish meaningful participation with parents and carers and children and young people in the assessment and planning process and establish a more appropriate amount of time to review and approve the content of the EHC Plans.

3. Adopt an asset focused, person-centred thinking and planning approach to understand families’ skills and knowledge, resilience, finances, social networks and involvement in community activities.

4. Review the role of the EHC Coordinator in the process and strengthen their role as the families’ key worker.

5. Continue to audit EHC Plans and establish mechanisms for effective management oversight and for families to be involved in the process.
Priority 5: Increase the number of school places and improve inclusive practice

When we get this right...

There are enough local school places to meet the needs of most children and young people with SEND and children and young people receive the help and support they need to do their best at school.

Warrington Inclusion Hub (now known as the SEN Review Board) was established in 2015 with a vision to increase capacity within the special educational needs system so that where possible, children and young people from Warrington are able to access and have their needs met in a Warrington school. However, given the rise in the number of EHC Plan maintained by the local authority, there are not enough school places in Warrington to meet the needs of all children and young people with SEND. This has led to an increase in children placed in external education placements either in independent or other local authority maintained provision.

One of the key issues for Warrington as a small unitary authority is how to address the broad range of needs of children and young people with SEND locally.

“Any thought on making a deaf provision in Warrington, instead of making children do a 40 mile round trip to school?”

Respondent – SEND Strategy Consultation

“Please make a commitment that every child with a diagnosis of ASD will receive a school place that meets their needs and is within their local community as far as possible.”

Respondent – SEND Strategy Consultation

Where there is enough demand, Warrington is committed to working with education providers to establish specialist provision for children with certain needs. However, this is not going to be possible for all children.

Warrington has established the Committed to Inclusion Award to encourage schools to improve their inclusive practice with the aim of enabling more children and young people with SEND to successfully remain in a mainstream learning environment.

Quality First Teaching

High quality teaching is the first step in responding to pupils who have or may have some form of additional learning needs in Warrington schools. Teachers will regularly and carefully review the progress of all pupils, including those at risk of underachievement.

SEN Support

Where a pupil is identified as having special educational needs, schools will take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place. This will be tailored to the individual needs and targeted interventions will be provided up to a total value of £6,000.

EHC Plan

Where children and young people may require specialist support, a multi-agency EHC assessment will be undertaken to determine what additional support they need. If following assessment it is found that a child or young person will require provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age, an EHC Plan will be written. The EHC Plan sets out what support a child/young person needs the three areas of education, health and care.

What we have achieved:

• The School Improvement and Advisory Service have worked with schools to identify themes and trends and quality assure the effectiveness of education provision in the borough.
• A range of primary and special schools volunteered for a pilot quality assurance project of SEND for peer to peer review to evaluate the effectiveness of support and challenge for pupils with SEND.
• The Committed to Inclusion Award has been strengthened and schools are now required to attend 6 training events, provide evidence of participation in a peer review of either an EHC Plan Annual Review or an EHC Plan application before it goes to Panel to achieve the Award. In 2016/17 69 schools achieved the Award.
• Feedback has been given to Headteachers and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) Network, including challenge and support offered to schools to improve definitions and outcomes which help to distinguish between those pupils with SEND and lower attaining pupils.
• 95% of primary SENCos along with Headteachers attended a range of network meetings to consider strategic improvements and where this would impact upon data and outcomes for pupils. Secondary SENCos have has a similar offer which was delivered from November 2016.

What we will do:

1. Work in partnership with schools to support more children and young people to remain successfully in mainstream provision.

2. Review the level of school places to meet current and expected need within designated provision or special schools to reduce the number of pupils are being placed out of area for their education.

3. Work with a wide range of providers to further develop provision, pathways into adulthood, supported internships and employability skills across the 16-19/25 phase.
Priority 6: Develop the health offer

When we get this right...

Children and young people with medical conditions are diagnosed as early as possible and provided with the help and support they need in a timely way for their disability or illness which improves the quality of their life.

Warrington CCG and health providers have an important role to play in the early identification, assessment and diagnosis and treatment of children and young people with long-term conditions and disabilities.

Neonatal screening programmes and specialist health and developmental assessment support the early identification of children and providers are responsible for notifying Warrington Borough Council if they identify a child who may have a either a disability or some form of special educational need.

Paediatricians, therapists, clinical psychologists, dieticians and specialist nurses such as health visitors, school nurses and community children’s nursing teams, provide health care for these children, addressing the impact of their conditions, managing consequences for the families and preventing further complications.

Health professionals advise education services on managing health conditions such as epilepsy and diabetes, and health technologies such as tube feeding, tracheostomy care and ventilation in schools. Therapists have important and specific roles working directly with children and young people, advising and training education staff and parents and carers about treatment plans in the home and in school.

What we have achieved:

- There has been an increase in the identification and diagnoses of neuro-developmental conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyper-activity Disorder (ADHD). Between 2010 and 2016 referrals to Warrington Community Paediatrics for neuro-developmental assessment and treatment has increased year on year. The caseload of young people requiring assessment and repeat management has increased by 36% over the past 5 years. This has resulted in an increase in the specialist nursing input into community paediatrics.
- Intelligence from Newborn Screening Programmes and Integrated Health Checks are reported upon as part of contract monitoring arrangements.
- There is a well-established and effective Continuing Health Care framework and delivery system for children and young people with good transitional arrangements with adult services.
- There has been a focus on early support and a single health point of access for children with significant disabilities.
- There are multi-agency decision arrangements in place for assessment and support.
- There has been a high degree of focus on emotional health and wellbeing for children and their parents.

What we will do:

1. Embed the role of the Designated Clinical Officer.
2. Strengthen the GP register of children and young people with a diagnosed learning difficulty and/or disability.
3. Make sure that patients with a learning difficulty and/or disability have an annual health check.
4. Improve the early diagnosis of children and young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability.
5. Make sure that all health providers are engaged and participating in the implementation of the SEND reforms.
6. Improve the quality of information provided as part of the assessment and planning process by all health providers.
Priority 7: Develop the short breaks offer

When we get this right...

Children and young people with disabilities are able to spend time away from their main carers, and parents and carers are able to take a break from their caring responsibilities.

We know that for the majority of people accessing short breaks the services works really well. 70% of parents and carers who responded to our survey in December 2016 told us that the quality of the current offer was either good or outstanding.

“Everything in place works really well, but there isn’t enough provision. I can’t complain because I do actually get help. I just wish more families with similar children could access short breaks.”

Parent, Short Breaks Survey, December 2016

At the Ask Away sessions hosted by WarrPAC in November 2016 lots of families told us that they found the Short Breaks Service difficult to access. Parents and carers were asked to contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to make a self-referral and they felt that a place where child protection concerns were raised was not the right place to contact for a Short Break Service.

Parents and carers also reported that there was a lack of suitable before and after school, and holiday care provision for children and young people who have SEND in Warrington.

“It would be good to have something available for children to access after school and during holidays.”

Parent, Short Breaks Survey, December 2016

Respondents to the SEND Strategy Consultation highlighted that activities for children and young people with SEND as a gap in Warrington. A key issue raised was understanding what was available and suggests that further work is required around Ask Ollie and how we communicate parents about the local offer.

“There needs to be a better way of informing parents of services available for their children - maybe a mailing list?”

Respondent – SEND Strategy Consultation

What we have achieved:

• There have been series on consultation opportunities around Short Breaks and as a result additional capacity has been established to develop the short breaks offer, in particular outreach support for families.
• Consultation has taken place around holiday childcare for families of children and young people with SEND.
• The Short Breaks Strategy has been refreshed and published on Ask Ollie.

What we will do:

1. Review the use of the MASH as a referral route for Short Breaks.
2. Increase breakfast, after school and holiday club provision for pupils with SEND.
Priority 8: Improve transition planning across the key stages of children’s lives

When we get this right...

Children and young people and their parents and carers have access to the help and support they need so that they feel prepared when they move from one provider to another, or into adult services.

As children and young people approach a key transition point in their lives, their nursery, school or college should help to prepare children and their families for the next step in their development.

It is important that all providers work together and share information which will support the child/young person to move seamlessly to their new provision. It is the responsibility of the current provider to inform the new provider about the types of help and support the child/young person has been receiving. This will help the new provider to develop a suitable and appropriate offer to meet the child/young person’s needs.

What we have achieved:

- Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School hold an annual ‘Next Steps’ conference for all parents of pre-school children who have complex needs to inform parents of the SEND provision in Warrington to support their decision making in choosing appropriate SEND provision for their child.
- The SENDIASS facilitates primary and secondary transition conferences for parents and carers around transition to primary and secondary schools.
- There are governance arrangements in place to support the management of transitions between children’s and adult services. The Transition Strategic Group is responsible for setting the strategic commissioning direction for the transition process and development of a robust multi-agency transitions pathway, adopted by health, education and social care services to ensure adequate provision is in place for young people from the age of 14 onwards who are transitioning into adult services and whose needs span health, social care and education.

What we will do:

1. Adopt a system led approach which supports effective transition for children and young people in education settings.

2. Review the pathways, processes and support mechanisms for a managed transition to Adult Services, enabling young with SEND to access the support that meets their needs.

3. Ensure that EHC Plans are reviewed at the key transition points and that all partners participate in these reviews.
Section 7: Who is involved?

The key organisations involved in the development of this strategy are:

- Warrington Borough Council – Early Help & SEND Department, Education Services & Adult Services
- Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group (health commissioner)
- Bridgewater Community HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust (community health provider)
- North West Health NHS Trust (previously known as 5BP the mental health provider)
- Warrington Parent and Carers Form (WARRPAC).

Next Steps

A multi-agency SEND Improvement Board has been established to implement the changes detailed in this document and will be supported by a number of task and finish groups. Once the work has been completed these groups will disband.

They are responsible for monitoring the progress made against the priority actions and will report, at least annually, to the Health and Wellbeing Board and quarterly to Warrington Borough Council’s Families and Wellbeing Directorate Management Team.

Key principles

- We will have a bigger impact if we work together
- We will focus on prevention and early intervention
- We will align our resources to those in the greatest need
- We will review the effectiveness of our services on a regular basis.
## Section 8: Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic priority</th>
<th>Activity required</th>
<th>Measure of success</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Continue to work together</strong></td>
<td>a) Look at what behaviours and practices may be driving avoidable demand for EHC Plans and put in place alternative support options for children and young people who do not meet the thresholds for an EHC Plan.</td>
<td>Increase the quality of partners contribution to the EHC assessment and planning processes</td>
<td>January – December 2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Make the most of opportunities to jointly commission services which supports the coordinated and personalised delivery of education, health and care support for children and young people with SEND.</td>
<td>Increase the take-up of personalised budgets</td>
<td>January 2019 (annual monitoring)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Engage with Children’s Hearing Support Working Group (CHSWG) and secure their contribution to achieving integrated pathways for children and young people with a hearing impairment.</td>
<td>Integrated pathways are established</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Establish effective oversight of spend and manage resources within the budget available.</td>
<td>Spend on the high needs budget is within the allocation</td>
<td>April 2019 (monthly monitoring)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e) Re-establish effective contract monitoring arrangements of external providers of education, health and care services, including all overnight and residential provision with a view to seeking assurance that the provision delivers value for money and keeps children and young people safe.</td>
<td>100% of children/young people placed in external provision (independent and out of area provision) have at least one annual compliance visit as part of their annual review</td>
<td>April 2019 (monthly monitoring)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Strengthen co-production arrangements</strong></td>
<td>1. Establish an effective communication strategy which strengthens existing co-production arrangements and develops links with other community groups as a way to include the voice of parents and carers and children and young people with SEND</td>
<td>Increase opportunities for parents/carers, children/young people and local community groups to be involved in development and review of service provision</td>
<td>September 2018 (annual monitoring)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Reinforce the role of children and young people and parents and carers in the EHC Assessment and Planning processes so that they are able to influence decisions about how best to meet their/or their child’s needs.</td>
<td>Increase parents/carers satisfaction with the EHC process</td>
<td>January 2019 (quarterly monitoring)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Review the AskOllie site so that young people and their families understand what is available and how to access support.</td>
<td>Increase parents/carers satisfaction with AskOllie</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Review the SENDIASS Service so that there is capacity to meet the increased demand for support and reach out to more young people.</td>
<td>Review is undertaken and more young people access support from the service</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic priority</td>
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<td>3. Identify children with additional needs at the earliest opportunity</td>
<td>c) Promote the use of the Independent Mediation and Independent Support Advisers to families during the EHC assessment and planning processes.</td>
<td>Take-up of the service increases</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Increase the level notifications to the local authority about children with complex health needs and special educational needs to support commissioning and school place planning arrangements.</td>
<td>The number of notifications received increases</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Review the 2 year integrated development check, looking to best practice gained from neighbouring local authorities, with the aim of increasing the number of checks being undertaken.</td>
<td>The number of 2 year integrated development checks increases</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Improve training and development opportunities for early years practitioners which support the increased identification, assessment and planning for children with SEND.</td>
<td>The proportion of requests for EHC assessment for children in the early years increases</td>
<td>December 2019</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Increase Educational Psychology involvement with children who appear to struggle with the social expectations, structures and routines in early years settings.</td>
<td>More EP assessments are undertaken</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>e) Review and refresh our EHC referral and assessments and resource allocation processes so that decision making is based on clear thresholds and supported by efficient pathways to services.</td>
<td>Trial and evaluate new system for EHC assessment and resource allocation</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>f) Effective help is provided to children and young people identified as requiring SEN support.</td>
<td>The proportion of pupils on SEN support stabilises</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>g) Increase the number of families accessing the early help offer.</td>
<td>The number of early help assessments undertaken for pupils with SEN support needs increases</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Improve the experiences of assessment and support planning</td>
<td>a) Review the EHC referral and assessment process and re-issue guidance to partner organisations and on Ask Ollie.</td>
<td>Guidance is issued and published on AskOllie</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>b) Establish meaningful participation with parents and carers and children and young people in the assessment and planning process and establish a more appropriate amount of time to review and approve the content of the EHC Plans.</td>
<td>Parental satisfaction with the EHC assessment and planning process improves</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>5. Increase the number of school places and improve inclusive practice</strong></td>
<td>a) Work in partnership with schools to support more children and young people to remain successfully in mainstream provision.</td>
<td>Proportion of children educated in mainstream schools remains above the nation and regional averages</td>
<td>Annual review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Review the level of school places to meet current and expected need within designated provision or special schools to reduce the number of pupils being placed out of area for their education.</td>
<td>Number of children and young people placed in independent and other local authority provision outside Warrington reduces</td>
<td>September 2018 Annual review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Work with a wide range of providers to further develop provision, pathways into adulthood, supported internships and employability skills across the 16-19/25 phase.</td>
<td>The proportion of pupils post 16 placed in Warrington increases</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>d) Review the role of the EHC Coordinator in the process and strengthen their role as the families key worker.</td>
<td>Parental satisfaction with the EHC Coordinator role improves</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>e) Continue to audit EHC Plans and establish mechanisms for effective management oversight and for families to be involved in the process.</td>
<td>Quarterly reports are provided to senior managements teams on the results of the audit process</td>
<td>Quarterly review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>6. Develop the health offer</strong> | a) Embed the role of the Designated Clinical Officer. | DCO role is recruited to | April 2018 |
| | b) Strengthen the GP register of children and young people with a diagnosed learning difficulty and/or disability. | Increase the number of children and young people on the register | December 2019 |
| | c) Make sure that patients with a learning difficulty and/or disability have an annual health check. | The number of annual health checks for children with medical conditions increases | Annual review |
| | d) Improve the early diagnosis of children and young people with a learning difficulty and/or disability. | Increase the number of children identified in neonatal screenings | Monthly review |
| | e) Make sure that all health providers are engaged and participating in the implementation of the SEND reforms. | Participation in the SEND Improvement Board | Monthly review |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<td>7. Develop the short breaks offer</td>
<td>f) Improve the quality of information provided as part of the assessment and planning process by all health providers.</td>
<td>Audits</td>
<td>Monthly review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a) Review and redesign the short breaks offer based on feedback received from the parents and carers.</td>
<td>Short breaks statement is revised and published</td>
<td>April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Review the use of the MASH as a referral route for Short Breaks.</td>
<td>New front door to the service is established</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
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<td></td>
<td>c) Increase provision for breakfast, after school and holiday club provision) for pupils with SEND.</td>
<td>Parents and carers report that they have access to provision</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Improve transition planning across the key stages of children’s lives</td>
<td>a) Adopt a system led approach which supports effective transition for children and young people in education settings.</td>
<td>System led approach in place</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Review the pathways, processes and support mechanisms for a managed transition to Adult Services, enabling young with SEND to access the support that meets their needs.</td>
<td>Review complete</td>
<td>September 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Ensure that EHC Plans are reviewed at the key transition points and that all partners participate in these reviews.</td>
<td>Increase participation of all organisations in Annual Reviews</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Monthly review</td>
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