



BOARD

Cambridgeshire strategic commissioning approach for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Agenda item: 7

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1. Purpose / recommendation

The purpose of the Special Educational Needs and Disability commissioning strategy is to understand and plan for the current and future needs of children and young people with SEND to enable them to achieve good outcomes.

The reason for bringing the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) commissioning draft strategy (Appendix 1) is to seek Children's Trust view on our commissioning approach and intentions, and the implications for future service provision and demand management.

In particular, we want to seek the view from the Children's Trust on managing the demand by refocusing resources towards early intervention and away from the increasing pressures on specialist high cost resources and provision. This will require the Local Authority to put forward the following recommendations:

- to have increased clarity about the expectations and thresholds for the identification of SEND;
- to have increased expectations on needs and outcomes being met by helping identify the strengths and support available from within the family and their local community and building on this;
- targeting evidence based interventions as part of our early help offer to prevent needs escalating;
- reducing out of county and independent specialist placements so as to recycle these resources to maintain children and young people being educated and cared for in their local community, wherever possible.

2. Background

The SEND commissioning strategy will provide a strategic framework for how we propose to address the increasing demand and financial pressures resulting from our current systems for identifying children and young people with SEND. We have a higher percentage of pupils with an identified SEND than nationally and compared with similar authorities. This level of identification needs to be examined as it places increasing financial pressures on schools as well as the Local Authority. These pressures are becoming unsustainable especially within the context of an increasing population of 0-19 year olds.



Through the new SEND reforms there are statutory protections for young adults up to the age of 25 in relation to supporting their preparation for adulthood and enabling them to access education, employment and training. The additional responsibility will place new financial demands on the Learning Disability Partnership in relation to the care provision as set out in the new Education, Health and Care plans. The new focus on earlier preparation for adulthood across children and adult's social care will identify the personal care arrangements that will be required to enable young people to participate in education, employment and training opportunities. This in the longer term will help young people to develop greater independence, opportunities for work, and have wider choices. This should in the longer term reduce their reliance on adult services.

We know we have ongoing financial restraints that increasingly require us to deliver more targeted services in terms of our direct work with young people and families. Therefore, we need to work with the universal providers, such as schools and settings, to strengthen their ability to provide early intervention, engaging their families and local community as a resource to support the learning and achievements for their young people.

There will be greater expectations on universal services to provide services for those with SEND, and to make the necessary adaptations and access arrangements; for example, providing evidence based interventions. We will make it clear to schools and settings the requirements of the new SEND Code of Practice (2014) on their responsibilities for making appropriate SEND provision. This will mean that there will be evidence of interventions and its impact on the child or young person before undertaking specialist SEND assessment and the provision of additional resources from the Local Authority.

3. Commissioning Approach

The focus of our commissioning approach will be for greater personalisation, improved integration and collaboration between services, and for service delivery to be as local as possible for the child and their family. Professionals across Children, Families and Adults will need to respond more flexibly and in a timely way to meet the needs of families when universal and targeted services highlight unmet needs that are escalating. A collaborative team around the family approach needs to work to address these needs utilising the strengths of the family.

Our commissioning intentions are based on a person-centred and strength based model with children, young people their families and carers at the centre. Their engagement and participation in determining the outcomes that are important to them and the services and supports they need to achieve these outcomes. We must work with all our partners to provide a coherent offer that strengthens family's and community's abilities to address the outcomes sought for the child or young person.

Our commissioning will require joint commitments of health, social care, educational



settings and the voluntary and community sector to work effectively together. This integrated approach not only supports better outcomes for young people but also is much more cost efficient.

4. Implications for partners

The SEND Commissioning strategy focuses on a different approach to commissioning based on personalisation, integration and local delivery. It looks to build a strong community focus that addresses needs as early as possible utilising the strengths within the family, the network of support and the community assets, including schools and educational settings. To ensure sustainability of this approach there needs to be plans to reduce expenditure for high cost provision and reduce the need for costly statutory plans through re-investing or recycling resources into earlier intervention and mainstream provision.

5. Questions / decisions required

We are asking partners across the Children's Trust to make comments and suggestions on the SEND Commissioning Strategy that is out for consultation with partners and stakeholders.

We need to have a joint commitment to preventative interventions so as to reduce escalation of need and referral to more specialist services. This requires us to jointly invest our resources to provide information, advice, and support to help families and universal providers meet needs locally. We welcome ideas and views on how we might achieve this at a time of financial constraint and increasing demand .

6. Source documents and where they are held

Appendix 1: *Our strategic commissioning approach for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability*
