

SEND (Special Education Needs and/or Disability) Data Independent Review

Response to recommendations

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SEND (Special Education Needs and/or Disability) Data Independent Review:

Introduction

The SEND Data Independent Review is welcomed beyond that of an objective review of the SEND data, systems and processes, because it is also a tool to enable remedy of the systems and processes which have created a lack of oversight and challenge to that system.

The review report effectively addressed the robust questions raised by the Independent Review Steering Group and provided solutions. This paper will address the shortfalls identified and includes a draft, remedial Action Plan.

1. Key points noted in the report.

The report places significant emphasis on the migration of data and the implications of the failure of this process, in facilitating high quality data for effective governance and oversight.

The report also refers to the absence of a Programme Board. The Programme Board - which led the Liquid Logic EYEs module implementation, had been stood down in May 2018. This was clearly an error; had the Programme Board been in situ prior to migration, it is highly likely that the creation of a migration plan would have taken place (as is standard practice in cases such as these).

Key action to date: A Programme Board has been reinstated and will meet in October 2019.

The creation of a migration plan would have underpinned the work to move from the Bright data system to the Liquid Logic Send Module. This is a module which is integrated with the EYEs education case record and LCS the social care record. The integration of these case record systems enables pulling through of data and the production of a high quality graphic dashboard of SEND key data, management and performance information.

Key action to date: A dashboard will enable management and governance oversight in real time when requested, or searched for, by a senior leader. Work on the dashboard has been developing since October 2018 and continues. The IPI officer referred to in paragraph 1.1 above is engaged in this work. A post migration plan will be developed through the reinstated Programme Board (paragraph 1.3).

The Interim Director of Education recognises that there had been a shortfall in the governance structure for SEND with regards to the data migration, data and performance. Having come into post full-time in November 2018, the interim Director of Education took stock of the challenges in the SEND system, informed by a rolling month indicator drawn from the Bright system which was, at the time, the only data system for SEND.

The concerns he identified led him to commission a formal Audit Commission Review¹. The interim Director outlined the basis of his concerns in detail to the then Head of Audit. The intention was to enable an objective overview of system, processes and structures within the service and therefore provide a basis to enact accountability. The aspiration was for the work to be concluded in the fourth quarter of 2018/19.

Key action to date: *The Audit Commission Review has been brought under governance of the Independent Review Steering Group and will be concluded in September 2019.*

The report refers to the 'performance culture' in Children and Families Services and notes that performance meetings did not exist in SEND. A lack of similar structural oversight masked the SEND team's actual performance; reliance was on the Bright system data. Without this, the Lead Member and Executive Director could not be sighted on accurate performance timeliness.

Key action to date: *The first SEND performance clinic was instituted in early June '19 which enabled questions to be asked which indicated problems with the timeliness data and the subsequent 'error' was discovered. A formal 'Performance Board' with Director Chair was instituted within weeks of the point the timeliness performance 'error' was noted. The Performance Board meets monthly and has reported to the Children's Improvement Board. This is now a regular and routine occurrence.*²

The report references senior leadership governance and oversight. This is with regards to Data and Performance. Governance and accountability for SEND *generally* was enacted through the Improvement Board (bi-monthly) the Local Area Place Strategic Action Group (LASPAG, fortnightly), the SEND Improvement Meeting (fortnightly) and latterly the Performance Board (from June 2019).

The report refers to a "disconnect" between the centralised IPI team engagement and the SEND migration work. The IPI team were central to the EYEs roll out which was complex and had oversight with the ability to raise concerns if they arise.

Key action to date: *The link between the SEND case record team and the IPI team post migration is now in place, with an officer from IPI engaged fully in SEND data / performance delivery.*

¹ Email to Head of Audit Commission 10.1.19

² The performance Clinic meets monthly; Performance Board and Children's Improvement Boards meet monthly on consecutive months ; dates outlined in action plan

Recommendations: Action Plan

| Report ref. | Issue | Outcomes | Lead | Timescale |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| 8.3 | Accept fully the Independent Review (IR) actions related to operational data/ performance as outlined in IR report / appendix 1 | Fully address <i>all</i> data, performance and reporting issues covered within the report | Dir of education / Independent Consultant | December 2019 |
| Q1 (3.1.1). | LGA Peer Review: <i>Poor performance has been tolerated and data quality has not been challenged by local area partners</i> | The recommendations of the LGA peer Review are met | Dir of education/ PM EYEs project / Independent Consultant | December 2019 |
| 8.1 (3.1.1.) | Council governance oversight and accountability: <i>performance data is not effectively used to inform, or measure, improvement priorities</i> | Performance board /SEND performance clinics are operational Availability of regular and routine reports available Clear line of sight for director of education / education leadership team Accountability transparent | Dir of education / senior leaders | 25 June 2019 PC 18 July 2019 PB 30 July 2019 PC 4 Sept PB Monthly |
| 8.1 (3.1.3) | Council governance oversight and accountability: Ensure Director and Senior Leadership accountability <i>performance data is not effectively used to inform, or measure improvement priorities</i> | Effective reporting to Children's Improvement Board (Independent Chair; Executive Director and Lead Member) High support and high challenge is present in system and system leaders are held to account | Executive Director, People | Report to board 4 April 2019 10 June 2019 1 August 2019 bi-monthly |
| 8.2 (3.1.3) | Partnership 'Place' governance: <i>An improving picture; high level data is being shared by all agencies/ services</i> | Council services data supports the holistic picture of 'Place' to enable LASPAG joint improvement activities. | LAPSAG | July 2019 and ongoing |
| 8.1 Questions 3; 6; 8; 9; 12; 13; (4.2) | Programme Board constituted to oversee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft / monitor post migration plan • Redress actions outlined in IR report appendix 1 • Move from Excel reliance at the earliest possible / ensure Excel accuracy until that point. • Ensure documentation / assurance from LL re SEND module as required by corporate technical experts. | Deliver the improvements required in reporting and post migration activity Drive improvement in data sources / data entry Provide assurance and raise alerts to barriers at the earliest possible point The service has moved from Excel tracker dependency to real time and dashboard reporting | Director of children and families / Director of Education | Board - September 2019 Actions - March 20 |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Question 7 | Disconnect between the corporate Information, Performance and Intelligence Team and SEND reporting activity | Disconnect is resolved. IPI officer has been engaged in developing the Dashboard SEND since October 2018. Head of IPI is engaged with Education DMT. | HOS IPI and HOS Accessible City | Complete |
| 8.1 Question 8 | Operational and management engagement and oversight of data / management information (4.1.3) | The dashboard is effective, enables real time analysis and reporting new case work from 1 st April 19. Real time activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management input on the dashboard content / lay out. • The data sources changed to the live feed and counts are live. • Undertake data validation which will end local 'trackers' /spreadsheets. • Develop lower level MI dashboards | HOS Accessible City and Service Manager SEND | October 18 – <i>start of work; Phase 1 - completed Final Completion</i> March 20 |
| 8.3 | Operational level reporting: Address all the detailed advice outlined in 8.3 | An action plan is developed to monitor delivery The team have fully addressed <i>all</i> data, performance and reporting issues as recommended within the report | Dir of education / data & performance officer | October 2019 March 20 |
| Supporting information: | | | | |
| | Director of Education governance oversight and accountability: <i>(Subsequently the steering group brought this work forward to coincide with the Independent Review of Data)</i> | Audit: Director of Education commissioned an Audit Commission review of SEND systems and processes <i>planned for AC work programme April 2019/20</i> | Subsequently the Steering Group Initially the Director of Education | Commissioned: 10 January 19 Report due: September 19 |
| | SEND system challenges are remedied: Resources were provided to increase capacity of SEND caseworkers and Education Psychologists. Action plan to support activity has been produced | SEND Casework team recruitment is complete | Service Manager SEND | July 2019 |
| | | Casework team – business processing has refined the system; reduced bureaucracy | Service Manager SEND | End September 2019 |
| | | Casework team delivers within timescale | Service Manager SEND | 80% in month by December 2019 |
| | | A tangible improvement in systems, processes improves parent and child experience | Service Manager SEND | December 2019 |

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SEND Data Independent Review – Appendix 1

Recommendations: operational data/ performance

- Complete a data cleansing exercise of records
- Review the Education, Health and Care Need Assessment / Plan annual review process from start to finish
- Detailed review of all Excel and Word documents in use with a plan to decommission these documents being used to bridge confidence gaps in data
- Review reporting needs of operational and management level to support day to day management information, performance data and KPIs
- Provide training to fill current system knowledge gaps
- Implement other modules of the IT system within BCC
- Connection to online customer portal
- Implement a SEND performance management framework to make systematic and continuous improvements to the SEND process and improving outcomes for children.

Requirements:

- Accurate and “real time” data sets
- Reporting can be managed locally by the team
- Use of alerts matched to statutory timeframes to enable effective monitoring
- Case management functionality to link detailed file information across internal system

Stakeholder analysis:

- Confidence in data and system performance is low but recognise the value in having a system that meets needs.
- Gaps regarding the system being used and so there is a need for focused training and to embed the skills for use in the team.

Reporting Needs:

- Wide range of operational and management reporting requirements
- Exception reporting
- Statutory reporting of the DfE special educational needs survey, commonly known as SEN2

Success criteria:

- System stability and performance
- Reduced effort to create and maintain records
- Accurate data
- Improved management information and ease of reporting
- Improved system performance
- Reduce the overall administration effort of the process
- Improved data sharing across systems
- Staff are well trained and competent users of the system
- Enable the service to work smarter and faster
- Better shared knowledge and skills across the team in the use of the system
- Improved management oversight