

NHS DORSET CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

GOVERNING BODY

CCG COMPLIANCE WITH MEETING THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) REFORMS – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014 UPDATE

Date of the meeting	17/03/2021
Author	S Clarke, Designated Clinical Officer SEND
Lead Director	S Sandcraft, Director of Primary and Community Care
Clinical Lead	Dr D Broadley, Clinical Lead
Purpose of Report	To update the Governing Body on NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group's compliance with meeting the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Reforms Children and Families Act 2014
Recommendation	The Governing Body is asked to note the report.

Monitoring and Assurance Summary

Conflicts of Interest	N/A
Involvement and Consultation	Ongoing work with local authority partners and parent carer forums.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	N/A
Financial and Resource Implications	N/A
Legal/governance	N/A
Risk description/rating	<p>Risk PCC005- If the CCG fails to achieve its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) updated action plan against the ongoing Written Statement of Action for Dorset Council following inspection revisit, as well as the imminent OFSTED/CQC joint SEND inspection of BCP Unitary Authority, then the CCG's statutory responsibilities, in relation to SEND, will not be met.</p> <p>Currently AMBER – The review of Dorset (11th Jan 2021) was extremely positive, but we expect BCP inspection summer 2021.</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Reforms (Children and Families Act 2014) for Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body.
- 1.2 The report highlights the statutory responsibilities of Dorset NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and areas of progress for the year 2020/2021 and areas for improvement and progress in 2021/2022. The report also includes the views of parents and carers.

2. Report

- 2.1 The Children and Young Peoples' Team work in partnership to ensure that services commissioned for SEND meet the statutory requirements and are meeting the identified health needs of the local area and population to deliver an effective, high quality integrated pathway.
- 2.2 As a CCG we commit to:
 - Commissioning services in partnership with our local authorities for children and young people aged 0-25 years old with SEND
 - Working with the local authorities and NHS health organisations to contribute to the Local Offer to include information about health care services
 - Working in partnership with Parent Carer Forums, support groups representing young people with SEND, Health Watch, the voluntary sector and community groups
 - Ensuring there is health care provision as specified in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) as part of their commissioning role
 - Contributing to Annual and Emergency Reviews of children and young people with EHC plans
- 2.3 Our NHS health organisations commit to:
 - Supporting the identification of children and young people requiring SEND provision
 - Respond to requests for advice for EHC plans within the required time frame (when a Local Authority decides to make an EHC plan, it must complete it within 20 weeks of the request) and to review EHC plans when invited to.
 - Work with the local authorities to contribute to the local offer of services available
 - Work closely with Parent Carer Forums, support groups representing young people with SEND, Health Watch, the voluntary sector and community groups
 - Contribute to regular reviews of children and young people with EHC plans

Areas of progress for the year 2020/2021 include:

Joint Commissioning of Services

- 2.4 Dorset NHS CCG continues to work in partnership with Dorset and Bournemouth Christchurch Poole (BCP) local authorities, providers, and parent carer forums to develop a shared vision and strategy to progress the development of integrated, person centred services for SEND children and young people in line with the NHS long term plan. One example is the commitment by Dorset CCG to provide funding into both Dorset and BCP Special educational Needs/Disability Information Advice & Support Services. (SENDIASS) services from 2021 onwards. This is in line with the SEND code of practice (2014) which states that information and advice must be provided for Children and Young People with SEN or disabilities and their parents/carers including matters relating to health and social care as well as relating to their SEN.
- 2.5 The CCG has committed to provide funding into these services from 2021 onwards as recurrent funding.
- BCP - £54k pa
 - Dorset - £54k pa
- 2.6 This investment will enable expansion of the existing service in both areas. The objectives are to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people with SEND. There are targeted priorities that include supporting the participation of children young people and their parents/carers in decisions that affect them and to express their views, wishes and feelings. Dorset CCG will continue to actively promote the SENDIASS service both to health providers and service users to increase the reach of the service.

Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

- 2.7 The Speech, Language, and Communication Project is an ongoing system level project led by the Children and Young Peoples team. Partners include Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authorities working with Dorset Healthcare and an external partner providing expertise to facilitate change and provide the framework with which to design the new pathway. The project team had their first co-production design events in 2020/2021 which was attended virtually by over 49 people from across stakeholder groups and 60 plus early years settings. More are planned 2021/2022. Work is ongoing to develop the commissioning strategy.

Workforce Development.

- 2.8 Dorset NHS CCG has led, the development of a tiered learning and training offer in relation to the SEND reforms, in close partnership with Dorset and BCP Local Authorities. The parent carer Forum and provider services This training is open to all agencies and is Pan-Dorset. The Tier 1 training has been successfully implemented and embedded in organisations as mandatory training and has been well received.. Tier 2 Training is nearing completion with a planned rollout for May 2021, this training package is aimed at professionals that will regularly work with young people with SEND to help them understand their responsibilities within their roles. This interactive training has been co-produced with young people, Parent Carers, Providers and Local Authorities, it contains direct experiences of Parents and

Professionals and many real-life experiences. Work has commenced on the Tier 3 Training package which will be aimed at Service Leads.

- 2.9 The Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) has worked closely with other Directorates within the CCG to deliver specific training regarding SEND. A training session on Learning Disability has been delivered and another on Autistic Spectrum Conditions is booked for March 2021. In addition to this there has been work with the Local Authorities to promote relevant training opportunities to Health providers, such as training to support partners to strengthen and progress their work around Education, Health and Care Plans.
- 2.10 Following the Local Government Area Peer Review of BCP SEND provision in early 2020 it was identified that Dorset CCG lacked capacity to meet the SEND statutory responsibilities, specifically in relation to the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) role. The DCO needs to provide assurance to Dorset CCG that the health needs of children with SEND are being met, subsequently we appointed an Associate Designated Clinical Officer for SEND at 0.8wte in November 2020. This has enabled regular attendance at SEND panels pan Dorset and responsive communication between Parent Carer Forums and Dorset CCG. It has also enabled increased time for the DCO to address the more strategic needs of the role.

Engagement with Parent/Carer Groups.

- 2.11 There continues to be improved communication and a strengthening of partnership working between NHS Dorset CCG and the parent carer forums. During COVID-19 in 2020 we have improved communication, information sharing and co-production. Weekly co-produced newsletters were published in response to families concerns as well as useful self-help information. This self-help information included topics around sleep, anxieties and managing behaviours. This engagement work has been recognised as good practice by NHSE and was a significant factor in the ceasing of the Written Statement of Action in Dorset. (please see 2.7)
- 2.12 In addition to the ongoing work during COVID-19, Dorset CCG, at a strategic level are co-producing partnership agreements with Dorset Parent Carer Council (DPCC) and BCP Parent Carers Together (PCT). The aim of a Partnership Agreement is to bring together our strategy for children and young people with SEND using co production as a golden thread as well as an opportunity to focus on collective aims, vision, and communication. For Dorset this partnership agreement will be between DPCC, Dorset Council and Dorset CCG, for BCP the agreement will be between Dorset CCG and PCT as there is an existing partnership agreement in place with PCT and BCP. In addition to this we are also engaging with other local patient representative groups representing young people with SEND and disabilities and other local voluntary organisations and community groups such as Parent Carers Foundation.

Local Offer

- 2.13 Collaborative work is being carried out to update and improve the health information for the Local Offer (the Local Offer provides information, advice and support for children and their families with special educational needs and/or disability). When completed, the health service information will be consistent across both Local Authorities with a Pan Dorset Approach. This work is being carried out in partnership between Dorset CCG, BCP and Dorset Local Authorities and Parent Carer Forums. Information should be clear, comprehensive, and accessible with update information about local provision and how to access it, being much more than a directory of services. The Local Offer also provides a platform to identify potential

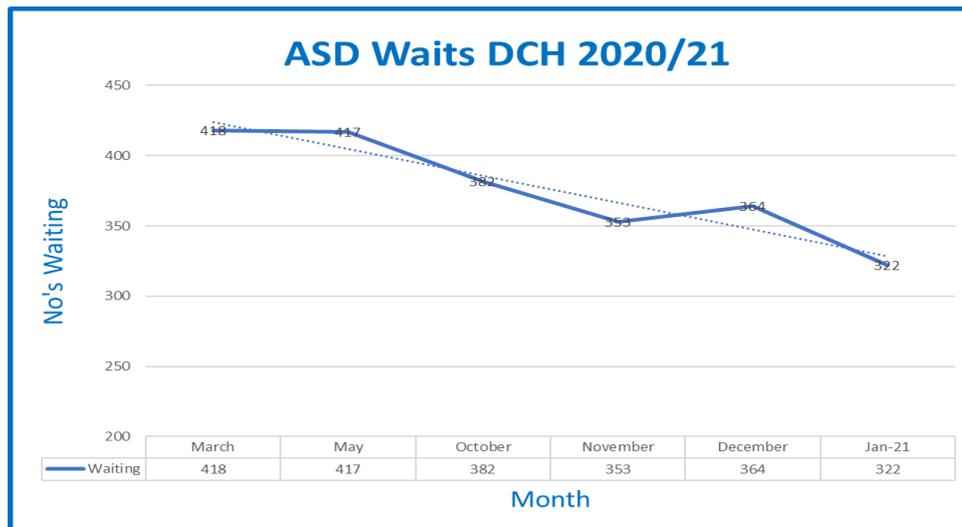
gaps in service provision and feedback from users of the Local Offer is invited. During the COVID 19 pandemic and subsequent increased use of online platforms and appointments, some services have created quality online information (which was circulated to service users) and this information can also be incorporated into the local offer work.

Dorset Ofsted/CQC support visit and Written Statement of Action Update

- 2.14 Local area partners from across Dorset local authority, the CCG, schools, health providers and the voluntary sector came together to consider the experiences of children with Special Education Needs or Disabilities during the COVID period in an Ofsted/CQC support visit in October 2020. The inspectors recognised that multi-agency working has been significantly strengthened during this period.
- 2.15 Inspectors recognised that the greater focus on co-production and personalisation delivered improvements for families, however it was also recognised that some children and young people with SEND had experienced real difficulties in lockdown and that the local area needs to pay particular attention to reviewing and understanding the needs of those children.
- 2.16 In addition to the support visit in October 2020, Dorset also had a review of their Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) by the Department of Education and NHS England on the 11th of January 2021. It was found that the local area had made clear and sustained progress against the activity in the APP and that there was evidence of a positive impact on the quality-of-service delivery in Dorset.

Neuro developmental Pathways

- 2.17 Dorset NHS CCG has continued to work across the system to improve children, young people, families'/carers experiences of health services within specific diagnostic pathways such as the neurodevelopmental pathway. There has been improvement in waiting times for neurodevelopment assessment for Dorset County Hospital. The Paediatric Service at Dorset County Hospital has recruited to additional posts and has shown a recovery trajectory over 2020 despite the impact of COVID upon their services. We still await a full recovery trajectory which has, unfortunately been delayed due to staff absence. There continues to be additional improvement work needed and application across this pathway.
- 2.18 Currently all referrals for neurodevelopmental concerns follow the development and behaviour pathway and this pathway is led and reviewed by the Pathway Strategy Group. This is represented by the Local Authority, Providers and Parent groups. This group meets quarterly although progress has been impacted in 2020 by the COVID 19 pandemic and the All Age Autism Review (AAA). In 2021 the frequency of meetings is to increase in partnership with the AAA review focusing on 0-18 age group. Specialist ASD workers have been employed into all three providers that offer assessment and their role is to support families as they go through the diagnosis process.



Covid-19

- 2.19 The impact of Covid-19 upon direct face to face appointments affected service delivery and had a subsequent impact on Children and Young People. The greatest impact was on direct hands-on interventions such as Speech & Language, Occupational and Physical Therapies. Some families with young people with SEND found virtual appointments easier than managing their young person within a clinic setting. Health providers have focussed on reset and recovery, with the Speech and Language Therapy Service commencing trajectory modelling to understand the immediate and long-term capacity required to advance assessments and interventions that have been delayed by COVID whilst managing the demand of new referrals.
- 2.20 All Special Schools remained open through lockdown, where possible, as young people with SEND were identified as a vulnerable cohort. Pupils with SEND accessing mainstream schools were also prioritised and were offered, at least part time, attendance at school. Only young people identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable were asked to shield (e.g., Immuno-compromised).
- 2.21 Research is underway regarding COVID-19 vaccinations for young people under the age of 16yrs but as, yet the vaccine is not licensed for this age group. Young people have therefore not been prioritised for vaccination, however on the 24th of February the Government announced that people with a Learning Disability will now be considered for priority vaccination. Parents/Carers delivering care to their young person have been identified as a priority and offered vaccination. Initially school staff were not prioritised but most Special School staff have been offered a vaccination now due to the care element of their role, young people with SEND are often less able to socially distance and may have behaviours that increased risk towards staff supporting them
- 3. Key priorities for 2021/22**
- 3.1 Dorset NHS CCG and partners have key priorities for 21/22 to ensure that there is a focus on:
- Working together to improve the understanding of the needs of children and young people with learning disabilities and autism. We have commenced an All-Age Autism

Review that seeks to bring in the work already underway within the Development & Behaviour Pathway (Neuro-Developmental assessment) to bring about rapid

- improvement within the whole system. This includes transitions and post-diagnosis support. This is an intensive work programme with an end date of October 2021.
- Investment in expanding access to community based mental health services. View seeking work on mental health services for children and young people has been completed with stakeholders, including service users and parents/carers. In BCP there is a pilot scheme **Gateway** that is being trialled for a Single Point of Access into CAMHS with a goal to reduce waiting times to a maximum of 4 weeks. Even with an increase in referrals over recent months, evaluation of this pilot provision is encouraging and is expected to be rolled out across Dorset in the longer term.
- Developing age-appropriate services to create comprehensive offers for 0-25-year-olds.
- Developing integrated care pathways for children with long term conditions, complex and multiple needs.
- Embedding an agreed minimum data set for SEND key performance indicators to ensure a clear line of reporting into the organisation. One key performance indicator is the timeliness of health information for EHCP assessments. We are working with BCP to create a Single Point of Access to Health teams to reduce waiting times for health information and ensure that the 20-week deadline from commencement of assessment is met. Dorset CCG is also participating in BCP audit of EHCPs to quality assure of the content of plans and work is continuing to address auditing of health contributions to EHCP plans. Data is also being captured for new EHCP requests by the Designated and Associate Designated Clinical Officer to better understand the health needs of children and young people with SEND and future commissioning intentions.
- Continuing to have a shared understanding across the CCG in relation to SEND statutory responsibilities and the code of practice, the Designated Clinical Officer meets regularly with the CCG leads for Children in Care and Children and Young Peoples Continuing Care.
- Refocussing the SEND Health Forum in 2021 to ensure that health commissioners, providers and parent carer forums effectively implement SEND reforms in relation to statutory legislation and the population health needs for Dorset. This redirection provides an opportunity to provide leadership and coordination, monitor progress, work collaboratively and monitor quality of health provision through audit, key performance indicators and data sharing.
- Supporting our partners - the Designated Clinical Officer and Associate will support our partners in BCP as they prepare for their imminent Department of Education/ NHS England SEND inspection. This was due in 2020 but was put on hold due to COVID and is anticipated in 2021.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Whilst there has been a significant level of work around the SEND reforms with partners, Dorset NHS CCG will continue to ensure that there is a systematic understanding of the statutory responsibilities, this will ensure that there is delivery of the full requirements of the SEND Code of Practice internally and externally with partners.
- 4.2 An agreed mechanism for reporting both quantitative and qualitative data into Dorset NHS CCG, regarding SEND, and a clear connection to commissioning intentions for the future needs to be strengthened.
- 4.3 Collaborative work on joint commissioning with partner agencies needs to continue at pace.

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