

DECISION-MAKER:	CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL		
SUBJECT:	EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE ASSESSMENT PERFORMANCE DATA		
DATE OF DECISION:	25 JULY 2019		
REPORT OF:	CABINET MEMBER FOR ASPIRATION, CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY	
N/A	
BRIEF SUMMARY	
<p>The published Department for Education (DfE) 2018 figures for the completion of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessments in the statutory 20 week timescales showed Southampton to be performing at a completion rate of 5.3% compared to 60% nationally.</p> <p>This is in the context of poor performance since demand for EHC Plans increased significantly following the introduction of the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms in September 2014. Since the reforms Southampton has seen an increase in the school age population with EHC Plans with figures rising from 2.1% in 2014 (2.7% national average) to 3.6% in 2019 (3.1% national average). This represents an increase of approximately 900 additional assessments and plans.</p> <p>The service now has 0 assessments out of timescales and predicts a 90% completion rate for the remainder of the calendar year.</p> <p>This report provides details of current EHC assessment performance; expectation of future performance and details the management and oversight in place to robustly manage processes.</p>	
RECOMMENDATION:	
	(i) That the Panel note the improved performance with regards to the timely completion of Education, Health and Care assessments in Southampton.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	This item has been requested by the Chair of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	Not applicable
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
	Background

3.	The most recent national data published by the DfE relating to the completion of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessments within the statutory 20 week timescales relates to 2018. The 2018 data showed Southampton to be performing at a completion rate of 5.3% compared to the national average of 60%.
4.	In 2019 the service has already issued 180 new EHC Plans which equals the total amount issued in 2018. The poor performance for 2018 was the result of a number of factors including significantly increased demand, competency issues, long term sickness within the SEN Management Team, and other dependencies outside of the SEN Team such as Educational Psychology capacity and the timeliness of responses from health colleagues.
	Management Oversight
5.	To improve timeliness new systems have been developed and are now in place. This includes a traffic light system which flags cases that are at risk of breaching timescales. Where risks are internal a reallocation of assessments now takes place. Where they are external this is raised at management level for addressing.
6.	The SEN Team Manager is carrying out daily monitoring of caseloads and is overseeing the progress of assessments with SEN Officers. This is monitored on a weekly basis by the Service Manager and any dependencies threatening timescales are raised at senior management level.
7.	The SEND Service Manager is reporting performance through her own supervision with the Service Lead for Education and also reports performance monthly at the DCS weekly business meeting.
	Current Performance
8.	In light of this much increased demand and the backlog that existed from the previous year, the first 5 months of this calendar year saw a 20% completion rate – this is 15% up on last year. June 2019 saw further improvements and the service successfully completed 50% of EHC Plans issued in this month within the 20 week statutory timescale.
9.	At 6 June meeting of the Children and Families Scrutiny Panel the SEN Team had reported that 25 EHC Assessments were out of timescales. As of 18 July 2019 this will be reduced to 0. This will be the first time since the September 2014 reforms that the service has been as “steady state” and given the increase in demand this improvement is significant.
	Forecasted Performance
10.	The forecast completion rate for the next 6 months is 90%, which is 30% above the national average and an 85% improvement on last year. This is the result of rigorous management.
11.	Whilst from a capacity and management perspective a 100% completion rate is achievable, we do need to be realistic and recognise that we are likely to come up against placement issues because all special schools are at full capacity, as well as complex cases where there is not agreement on the contents of the plan with parent carers, which may require additional time to resolve.
	Next Years Published Figures

12.	The 2019 figures will see a vast improvement on this year and although the latter 6 months will show significant improvement, we are not expecting to issue the volume of plans that we have in the first 6 months, which will mean that it's likely that the end of year performance will sit at approximately 45%. We anticipate that the 2020 data will be at least 90%, however, the biggest risk to this will be the sufficiency of special school places, as need and demand continues to increase for these types of placements. We are currently working on proposals to reconfigure existing special schools and to build new ones, so that we can negate this risk going forward. Permission to formally consult on these proposals will be sought in the autumn term once we have appropriate agreement and sign off from Council Capital Board.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	
13.	The vast majority of EHC Plans attract additional funding for pupils. This is a revenue cost and will continue to place pressure on the high needs budget.
<u>Property/Other</u>	
14.	N/A
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
15.	N/A
<u>Other Legal Implications:</u>	
16.	N/A
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
17.	N/A
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
18.	N/A

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	N/A
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	None

Documents In Members' Rooms

1.	None
Equality Impact Assessment	
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out?	No

Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out?		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)	Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)	
1.	None	