**Public Consultation on the Warwickshire County Council SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019 - 2023**

12th November 2018 – 21st December 2018

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**Public Consultation on the Warwickshire County Council SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019 - 2023**

**What is this consultation about?**

It is time to update the Warwickshire County Council Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) & Inclusion Strategy so that it reflects current challenges. An overarching vision for education in Warwickshire has recently been set out in the Education Strategy, approved by the Council.

The strategy will have one uniting and overarching purpose: to improve educational outcomes, and thus the life chances, of learners with SEND in Warwickshire.

The aim of this strategy is to turn high aspirations for our learners with SEND into a reality. All children and young people grow up to become adults and need to be equipped to live in a diverse and challenging society. Whatever their ability, they need to have the opportunity of employment, to be able to take part in their local community, to assess and take appropriate risks, and to live as independently as possible.

Within the SEND & Inclusion Strategy there is a particular challenge to schools and academies in Warwickshire to ensure that they are promoting inclusive practice for learners with SEND, demonstrating their ‘best endeavours’ and meeting the needs of all learners.

Anyone who is interested can comment on the draft strategy. Responses are invited from a range of partners and stakeholders to include parents and learners, WCC colleagues, health and social care professionals, schools, colleges, early years providers and parent and carer groups.

The consultation will inform the final decision about the vision and key targets for the new SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019– 2023. If approved the strategy will be implemented from 1st April 2019.

**The consultation will run from 12th November to 21st December 2018.**

**Why is Warwickshire County Council consulting?**

Our Warwickshire Education Strategy identifies the following outcome:

*(2d) Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); will be able to succeed in schools and settings close to home, and they will be supported towards becoming independent and employable. We will continue to increase the number of high quality places in Warwickshire special and mainstream schools and settings. We will ensure that legal requirements for SEND assessments are met.*

The new SEND & Inclusion Strategy will replace the current document ‘Vulnerable Learners Strategy’ which has delivered over 250 more specialist places locally (with more on the way) for high needs learners with complex needs including the development of three new special academies.

**Challenges**

A great deal has changed in the last few years and we need to face up to difficult challenges. In particular, we have seen a rise in the number of learners attending specialist settings (rather than mainstream), a rise in the number of requests for Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, and a rise in the number of learners with SEND Support needs permanently excluded. All these trends mirror a national picture.

**National Context**

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 sets out expectations upon schools, local authorities and other agencies in supporting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The Government have reinforced their commitment to an inclusive education system; in a recent speech by Damian Hinds, the Education Secretary, he said:

*"We know there has been a steady movement of children with special educational needs out of mainstream schools and into specialist provision, alternative provision and home education. At the same time, rates of exclusion have begun to rise after a period of having calmed down. And I hear too many stories about off-rolling. I want to be clear right now: this is not okay. SEND pupils are not someone else's problem. Every school is a school for pupils with SEND; and every teacher is a teacher of SEND pupils."*

As part of its commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education.

**Key elements of the Strategy**

Warwickshire County Council will work effectively with colleagues in schools, and settings, with parents and carers, and with partner agencies to provide the best support for learners with SEND within our available resources.

Our proposed priorities for SEND & Inclusion are:

1. **Promoting Inclusion**. Wherever possible children and young people with SEND will be educated alongside their peers. We expect all providers to use their best endeavours to ensure high quality educational provision so that parents can be confident that this is in place for all learners at SEN Support and for those with EHC Plans in their existing setting.
2. **Delivering outcomes for school age learners with high needs**. Identification and assessment of need will be effective and joined up across agencies at SEN support, early help and through the statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan process
3. **Improving health and social care for learners with SEND,** working with our partners to see the holistic needs of the child and improving our local offer of services.
4. **Preparation for Adulthood.** We will promote with partners opportunities to develop resilience and learn to be as independent as possible and fulfil their potential as they transition to adulthood.  This will inform our joint commissioning activities. We believe that the overwhelming majority of young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are capable of sustainable paid employment, with the right preparation and support. With our partners, we want to embed this ‘presumption of employability’, by ensuring there are significantly increased opportunities for our learners with SEND as they enter adulthood
5. **Transport.** Ensuring that the local authority meets its statutory obligations, works within allocated resources and seeks to remove transport issues as a barrier to success.
6. **Workforce Development.** Building confidence in the system through staff able to assess, plan, do and review across the professions with an emphasis on meeting need locally.  Warwickshire will maintain good quality specialist provision locally through strong school to school support between mainstream and special. With our partners, we will strive to create a smooth education pathway from childhood to adulthood for children and young people with SEND. This will include an increased focus on effective transitions into and between education providers.

**How are we going to get there?**

Within the Education and Learning Business Unit, the SEND & Inclusion team lead on the strategy. The team work with a range of partners including:

* Schools, colleges and other settings
* WCC colleagues - in particular in education and learning, social care and transport
* NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and providers
* Warwickshire Parent Carer Forum
* Young people with SEND through our Warwickshire Working Together Network

Representatives of these agencies will work together through SEND & Inclusion workstreams on plans to deliver each priority.

**Resourcing our vision**

Funding for education services are reducing in real terms but leaner funding provides an opportunity to focus relentlessly on achieving the maximum impact with reducing resources.

* Firstly we will be efficient in our use of the High Needs Block (Dedicated Schools Grant) focussing limited resources on the interventions that are most effective
* Secondly we will provide choice for schools and settings through trading services on a full cost recovery basis.
* Thirdly, we will focus on bringing additional funding into Warwickshire through grants and funding bids.
* Finally, we will use this Strategy if we have to make difficult decisions about reducing some services in order to inject additional funding in our priority projects.

The draft strategy is available in full online at *[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)*

**Supporting Information**

The following documents are available on [*www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask*](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)

* Warwickshire County Council Draft SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2023
* Equality Impact Assessment
* Information leaflet
* FAQs
* Warwickshire Education Strategy 2018-2023
* SEND Code of Practice, DfE 2015

**How can I take part in the consultation?**

The main way to feedback is an online questionnaire that can be accessed from Warwickshire County Council’s online consultation hub [*www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask*](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)*.*

The questionnaire is anonymous and does not ask for any personal information.

If you require a paper copy of the questionnaire or an alternative format please contact us by phone or Email (see below for contact details).

A SEND & Inclusion Strategy leaflet will be circulated to all educational settings and they will be encouraged to make this leaflet available to parents and learners. This leaflet and all other supporting documents are also available online at [*www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask*](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask)*.*

Schools and other educational settings will be consulted through informal and formal meetings, conferences and events.

There will also be drop-in events at the following times:

* Friday 16th November 2018, 9.30am-12pm, Alveston C.Of E. Primary School, CV37 7BZ
* Monday 19th November 2018, 6pm-8pm, Exhall Grange School and Science College,  CV7 9HP
* Wednesday 21st November 2018, 1.30pm-4pm, The Queen Elizabeth Academy, CV9 1LZ
* Wednesday 28th November 2018,  9.30am-12pm, North Leamington School, CV32 6RD
* Tuesday 11th December 2018, 2.30pm-5pm, Higham Lane School, CV10 0BJ
* Friday 14th December 2018, 9.30am-12pm, Oakfield Primary School, CV22 6AU

If you would like to respond to this consultation in writing you can do this by Emailing educationstrategy@warwickshire.gov.uk or sending your written response to Warwickshire SEND & Inclusion Strategy, Education and Learning Saltisford Office Park Ansell Way Warwick CV34 4UL.

**Privacy statement.**

The questionnaire is anonymous and does not ask for any personal information.

Information you provide in any additional correspondence to the survey, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998. If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, including your contact details, please tell us why, but be aware that, under the Freedom of Information Act, Warwickshire County Council cannot always guarantee confidentiality.

**Contact Details**

For further information on this consultation please contact:

Email: educationstrategy@warwickshire.gov.uk

Tel:    01926 745105

**Closing date**

The consultation will close at 12 noon on Friday 21st December 2018.

**What will happen after the consultation**

Following the consultation all feedback will be analysed and will inform the final decision about the vision and key targets for the new SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019 – 2023.

If approved, the new SEND & Inclusion Strategy will be in place for 1st April 2019.