

# Public Consultation on the Warwickshire County Council SEND & Inclusion Service Offer

5th December 2022 – 26th February 2023

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## Introduction

Warwickshire County Council is working to provide children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) the best service experience they can. As part of the wider consideration of service we are looking at proposed changes to the SEND & Inclusion Service Offer.

We need views from as wide a range of people as possible including those who have experience of using the service.

Please read this document all the way through before sharing your views.

## What is this consultation about?

This consultation seeks to clarify what the County Council offer of services is for children and young people with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). The consultation focusses only on education services.

Our vision for learners with SEND is: *that all our children and young people have the right to lead a fulfilling life and to be part of their community. We want our learners with SEND to feel fully included in their local schools, wherever appropriate, by giving schools the resources and skills to meet their special educational needs.*

What Warwickshire County Council provides through its own staff is an important part of ensuring that Warwickshire can deliver this vision. The Council is proposing changes to its current 'core offer' of services.

In most circumstances, the County Council provides training and advice to enable early years settings, schools and colleges on how to support children and young people with SEND.

In some circumstances, the County Council is responsible for the direct delivery of the service.

There are some things that the Council **must** do. These are statutory and legal requirements. This will be referred to as the **Statutory Offer**.

There are some things that the Council **should** do. These are not legally required but are worthwhile activities to ensure the system of support for children and young people with SEND works well. This will be referred to as the **Core Offer**.

In providing a Core Offer the County Council is seeking to:

- Ensure that County Council services are placing the child and their family at the centre of our approach (as set out in the Children and Families Strategy)
- Provide a contribution to the 'graduated response' from schools and settings to deliver early intervention for children without EHC plans to build capacity
- Ensure the best outcomes are achieved from the resources we currently have
- Ensure that our services operate across all ages 0-25

Finally, there are things that the Council **could** provide if other agencies (such as schools) wish to pay for them. This will be referred to as the **Traded Offer**.

The County Council is not seeking to stop or reduce any current SEND & Inclusion Services.

We would like you to help us shape our service offer by providing your views on the County Council's proposals. Responses are invited from a range of partners and stakeholders to include parents and learners, Warwickshire County Council colleagues, health and social care professionals, schools, colleges, early years providers and parent and carer groups.

Please note that an Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared and is available for you to review.

We would like to know whether you think the proposals will create any inequalities or other impacts, and if so, what these might be and how you think they will affect you or other people. We would also like you to tell us if you have any ideas on how we could overcome or reduce these impacts.

The Equalities Impact Assessment will be updated after the consultation taking account of the feedback we receive.

The consultation will inform the final decision about the service offer for children and young people with SEND. If approved the new service offer will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.

**The consultation will run from 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023.**

## Why is Warwickshire County Council consulting?

The Council is consulting for three reasons:

- To seek views on the proposals prior to a decision being made on any changes to current services.
- To provide clarity on what the local service offer of the Council is for children and young people with SEND
- To ensure transparency to any proposed changes to the local service offer

The Council carried out external service reviews and has engaged with a range of partners prior to this consultation including education leaders, Councillors, Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice, Impact (young people's group) and its own staff.

The County Council is not seeking to stop or reduce any current SEND & Inclusion Services.

## What is not included in this consultation?

It is important to be clear about the scope of this consultation. The following matters are **not** part of the consultation:

- *Changes on transport arrangements for children and young people with SEND* – this forms part of a separate consultation which is running at the same time
- *The service offer of social care and health services* – social care and health services are managed separately
- *Funding for SEND & Inclusion Services* – There are separate processes for budgetary decisions. It should be made clear that the Council is not seeking to reduce funding for SEND & Inclusion Services at this time but make better use of what the funding that is allocated
- *The structure of SEND & Inclusion Service* – The Council will use internal processes to ensure the appropriate structures and workforce are in place to support the Service Offer. This consultation focusses on 'what' the Council will do rather than 'how' the Council will deliver it (although information will be shared for context)
- *The SEND & Inclusion Strategy* – The Council has been working to the Warwickshire SEND & Inclusion Strategy which went out to public consultation in 2018 and agreed for the period 2019-2023. This will be reviewed and updated through public consultation at a later date

## **The Service Offer**

The following pages will set out the proposed and existing County Council SEND and Inclusion Service Offer made up of the statutory offer, the core offer and the traded offer.

## **The Statutory Offer**

The Council SEND & Inclusion Services provide the following services as part of the statutory obligations required by law and is not seeking to make any changes to these services:

1. Securing sufficient childcare for families who are responsible for children with SEND
2. Administration of the process of assessment, issuing and reviewing of Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
3. An assessment by an educational psychologist for every EHC needs assessment
4. Delivery of education for children unable to attend school due to medical needs
5. Specialist assessment and advice for sensory impairment (Teachers of the Deaf and Qualified Teachers for Visual Impairment and Qualified Teachers of Multi-Sensory Impairment)
6. Responsibilities for children who are electively home educated with SEND
7. Responsibilities for children missing in education
8. Responsibilities for ensuring provision and support for children permanently excluded from school (including provision from the 6<sup>th</sup> day)
9. The commissioning of an independent, advice and guidance service (SENDIAS)
10. The commissioning of mediation services

These obligations are imposed on the County Council by virtue of the Education Act 1996, Education Act 2002, Childcare Act 2006 and Children and Families Act 2014, and associated regulations.

Please note, as the statutory offer are statutory obligations on the County Council we are not consulting on these services.

## The Core Offer

Warwickshire County Council SEND & Inclusion Services proposes to provide the following services as part of the core offer to ensure best practice in the local system supporting children and young people with SEND. These are ‘paid-for’ services that education settings will not be charged for. Education settings are expected to deliver a ‘graduated approach’ in identifying and responding to special educational needs and disabilities. The core offer is, in effect, a County Council contribution to delivering the graduated approach in education settings. The core offer is set out below, with proposals for new activity as well as clarification of existing activity. The County Council is not seeking to stop or reduce any current SEND & Inclusion Services.

For more information on the graduated approach please visit

<https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/send-inclusion-guidance/introduction-send-inclusion-guidance/3>

### New proposals

Activity	Why is this important?
<p><b>1. Increased educational psychologists' sessions paid for by the County Council to early years settings, schools and colleges* to ensure we provide the right support at the right time</b></p> <p><small>*All maintained schools, academies and free schools in Warwickshire as well as early years PVI settings and all further education colleges in Warwickshire</small></p>	<p>The involvement of an educational psychologist (EP) at the right time is key to early identification and intervention. Usually, this works well, but sometimes an EP is not involved at the right time either because the school has used its funding or because the capacity of the EP is already committed. By ensuring that every school and college has paid-for time from a Warwickshire EP to complement time bought in by the school or college, we can overcome these barriers.</p>
<p><b>2. An Annual Planning Conversation with each school and college offered in the autumn term led by the educational psychologist to plan SEND priorities for the year, with a review in the summer term</b></p>	<p>We need to make sure that the priorities of our schools, colleges and our services are aligned. By planning together for the academic year ahead, schools, colleges and County Council services will be able to work collaboratively to make the best use of their combined resources to support children and young people with SEND.</p>
<p><b>3. A SEND Audit of each school and college's SEND provision offered at least every three years to identify particular areas of good practice and areas for</b></p>	<p>This will help ensure our children and young people, particularly at SEN Support level, are supported appropriately with the resources allocated to every school and college. Many schools and colleges have benefitted from SEND Audits which focus on the use of</p>

<p><b>improvement through a combination of self and external evaluation</b></p>	<p>resources and best practice. However, currently these are only used when a school or college goes into financial deficit. Collectively, schools have £57m of SEN notional funding in Warwickshire. A rolling programme of audit and recommendations, as part of self-evaluation, should reinforce best of resources and best practice before significant financial or practice issues emerge.</p>
<p><b>4. Extend the offer of paid-for services for young people up to 25* for those with active EHC plans (specifically sensory services for Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Multi-Sensory Impairment and Physical Disability)</b> *This includes the full academic year in which the young person turns 25 years of age</p>	<p>Currently our paid-for services stop when the child stops attending school. In establishing a 0-25 service offer, we will broaden the scope of the paid-for services to include support for those with EHC plans attending our colleges.</p>
<p><b>5. Transition support into Reception Year for those with SEND</b></p>	<p>The transition into school is important to families of children with SEND. To ensure children with SEND get the best start the County Council will support early years settings and schools with transition through guidance and advice.</p>
<p><b>6. Training in SEND &amp; Inclusion for Early Career Teachers (ECT)</b></p>	<p>Quality First Teaching is the foundation of supporting children with SEND, yet we know there is very little training on SEND and Inclusion for new teachers. By providing this training for new teachers the Council can improve awareness of SEND and signpost to future training opportunities.</p>
<p><b>7. Provide Developmental Language Disorder Training</b></p>	<p>Developmental Language Disorder is a hidden but common disability that affects 1 in 14 learners, causing lifelong difficulties understanding and using language. It is proposed that the Core STS Offer includes reception screening of identified children and training for all schools.</p>

**Existing and proposed to continue**

Activity	Why is this important?
<p><b>8. Coordination of support to</b></p>	<p>Prevention is better than cure. The County</p>

<b>schools to prevent exclusion and manage behaviour (e.g. Significant Adults)</b>	Council will continue to invest in working with schools to prevent permanent exclusions and to better understand the needs of children and young people.
<b>9. Developing and commissioning alternative education provision for children in exceptional circumstances or as part of a plan to reintegrate to school</b>	In some circumstances an alternative form of education is of benefit to the child or young person. Government guidance sets out that this should be short term, planned and appropriately monitored. The County Council will continue to work with alternative education providers to ensure a robust and appropriate offer is available.
<b>10. Support for children and families when a critical incident is declared</b>	Sadly, there are times when events occur that require emergency measures. Our educational psychologists provide emergency support for these critical incidents.
<b>11. A core offer of training and capacity building available to all early years settings, schools and colleges (currently Autism Education Trust training, Mental Health First Aid, Youth Mental Health Awareness, Restorative Practice) to be reviewed each year</b>	Training the education workforce in SEND is one of the best ways to ensure a child with SEN is supported. Significant work is taking place on the training offer for schools. Whilst most will be traded, the County Council is committed to a core offer of training to skill up the education workforce on best practice in SEND and Inclusion. The current offer is listed. But this will be reviewed annually. Expansion of this training programme is being considered.
<b>12. Support to prevent a child's 'placement breakdown' in a school and planned reintegration into school</b>	The County Council deploy 'mentors' to support children who have been out of school for a significant time due to their medical needs back into school to ensure a successful and planned transition.
<b>13. Delivery of a 'Portage' service to support families with children with SEND in early years</b>	Portage is a home-visiting educational service for pre-school children with SEND and their families.
<b>14. Paid-for observation, assessment, review and advice for children with physical disabilities in early years settings and mainstream school by a specialist teacher</b>	The County Council currently provides paid-for specialist teacher support for high needs affecting a relatively small number of children attending mainstream schools with complex needs, hearing impairment, visual impairment and multi-sensory impairment. The feedback on this existing part of the core offer is positive.
<b>15. Coordination of SENCO networks</b>	Every school has a SEND Coordinator (SENCO). The facilitation of networks allows SENCOs to share best practice with each other.
<b>16. Deployment of Inclusion Mentors to build capacity in schools to support individual</b>	The Council deploy 'inclusion mentors' to build capacity in mainstream schools where schools have identified that they need

<p><b>children and transitions</b></p>	<p>urgent support. This has proved effective in building capacity in schools to support children with SEND.</p>
<p><b>17. Support for schools to meet the needs of children from Gypsy &amp; Roma Traveller families and for children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)</b></p>	<p>The Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) provides support to schools for children from Gypsy &amp; Roma Traveller communities or who require support due to English being an additional language.</p>

## The Traded Offer

The Council SEND & Inclusion Services propose to provide the following services as part of the traded offer to assist schools and other agencies in delivering their responsibilities:

Activity	Why is this important?
<b>1. Observation, assessment, review and advice from educational psychologists and specialist teachers to support a graduated approach to meeting needs</b>	Schools and colleges are expected to deliver a 'graduated response' through the assess plan do review cycle (APDR) using SEND notional funding. The County Council can support schools to deliver this by providing high-quality educational psychology and specialist teacher support through a traded model.
<b>2. Training courses not included within the core offer</b>	Whilst the County Council proposes to provide a paid-for offer of training, education settings are likely to identify other training needs particular to their own school, which can be bought from the County Council.
<b>3. Pre-Ofsted checks and post-Ofsted action planning for schools and other education settings</b>	The County Council can support education settings before and after inspection to ensure best practice is in place.
<b>4. Interim SENCO Support</b>	If a school is unable to recruit a SENCO, the County Council can provide interim support for a school.
<b>5. Any other bespoke offer developed in response to the needs of schools and other stakeholders</b>	The County Council will continue to work with schools, colleges and other stakeholders to offer traded services to deliver their responsibilities in relation to SEND & Inclusion.

## How will this be paid for?

Funding for the SEND & Inclusion service is set from three sources:

- Central government through the Dedicated Schools Grant. One part of that grant, the High Needs Block, is managed by the local authority for the purpose of educating children and young people with SEND.
- Some functions, such as the administration of Education, Health and Care (EHC), plans, can only be funded directly by local Councils (eg. through Council tax).
- Traded services are bought in by other agencies, primarily schools, using funding allocated to them (eg. Approximately £57m is allocated directly to schools in Warwickshire through SEN notional funding).

The Service Offer proposed above is based upon use of existing funding allocations from central government and the local authority and assumptions regarding the viability of traded services. In particular, it should be noted that some services have been carrying a number of vacancies which are now to be filled to deliver the full Service Offer.

In addition to this, the County Council plans to restructure services so the right skill mix of staff is in place to deliver the service offer described above, providing value for money.

## For information only: Service structures and organisation

The County Council will deliver change to its service structures through internal, rather than public, processes. This is only right and proper as it will affect our staff. However, it is helpful for the public to know current thinking regarding how the Council would like SEND and Inclusion Services to operate in the future.

The Warwickshire Children and Families Strategy sets out a principle that services should be organised with the child and family at the centre (see graphic) and universal services such as schools as the first point of contact. SEND services are located in the outer circle.



The Council is exploring changing the current organisation of services into:

- One SEND & Inclusion service including the different specialisms of educational psychology, specialist teachers and other SEND practitioners
- Organised into area managements and teams which will allow for closer working with schools
- Promoting collaborative working as the standard way of operating

Any changes to the staffing structure and organisation of SEND & Inclusion services in the County Council will only take place once the service offer is confirmed after this public consultation. It is intended that any structural changes should be in place by September 2023.

## Supporting Information

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

- Easy-read version of consultation
- Equality Impact Assessment
- FAQs
- Warwickshire SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023
- 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).

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

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

- 5 January (4pm - 6pm) - Coleshill Primary School
- 6 January (11am - 1pm) - Warwickshire Academy, Ash Green
- 10 January (1pm - 4pm) - Benn Hall, Rugby
- 11 January (4pm - 6pm) - Evergreen School, Warwick
- 16 January (10am - 12pm) - CHESS Centre, Nuneaton
- 16 January (1pm - 3pm) - The Old Court Room, Coleshill
- 18 January (4pm - 6pm) - North Leamington School
- 24 January (1pm - 4pm) - Stratford Sports Club, Swans Nest Lane
- Stratford Upon Avon

## **Contact Details**

For further information on this consultation please contact:

Email: [sendchange@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:sendchange@warwickshire.gov.uk)

Tel: 01926 745105

## **Closing date**

The consultation will close at 5pm on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

## **What will happen after the consultation?**

Following the consultation all feedback will be analysed and will inform the final decision about the service offer, to be made by Warwickshire County Council Cabinet.

If approved, the SEND & Inclusion Service Offer will be in place for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.