

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Barnet Special Places Plan

Introduction

The council consulted from 18th June to 30th July 2019 on its proposed Special Places Plan and proposals for allocating the Special Provision Fund to support the development of additional provision for children and young people with special educational needs.

Background to the consultation

Over the last two years, we have been working with families, schools and other professionals to plan what special educational needs provision we need in Barnet in the future. We currently have six special schools in Barnet, and 13 Additional Resource Provisions (ARPs). These provide a range of specialist provision for children and young people with different special educational needs, including physical disabilities, hearing impairment and autism. As part of the review of our provision, we have undertaken a Needs Analysis to help us to plan for our future provision in Barnet, so that we can ensure we have enough and the right type of provision to meet the needs of our children and young people with SEN in Barnet.

All local authorities are required to regularly review and update their plans about their SEN provision. This consultation sought the views on the proposals about what type of SEN provision we need in Barnet in the future.

What this consultation was seeking views on

There were a number of proposals that we were seeking views on through the consultation. The first set of proposals related to the expectations of the SEND Code of Practice 0 – 25 years that the majority of children and young people with special educational needs would have their needs met in a mainstream school in Barnet. We had assumed in our calculations for the Needs Analysis that the ratios of children and young people with SEN in the different types of provision (Special schools, Additional Resource Provisions and mainstream schools) would stay about the same in the future. This takes account of population growth and trends across Barnet.

The first set of proposals were:

- To have the same balance of provision for children and young people with SEN who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) across mainstream schools, ARPs and special schools.
- Children and young people with greater needs would have their needs met in an ARP;
- Children and young people with the most complex needs would have their needs met in a Special school.

The second set of proposals took account of the need for more specialist places in Barnet, in particular,

- a) Plans to expand existing provision so that we have more places in Additional Resource Provisions and Special schools in Barnet, and
- b) The additional specialist places we need to create or secure to meet any outstanding need, including extra specialist places we may need in the short-term pending the

establishment of the Windmill Special Free School in 2023 and/or in case that provision is delayed beyond 2023.

The questions we asked about these proposals were:

- Do you agree with our proposals for meeting the need for extra special SEN places in Barnet, as set out in Appendix 1 of the consultation document?
- Do you agree with our proposals for allocating the SEN Provision Fund to the projects that we had outlined in Appendix 2 of the consultation document?

We also asked for other suggestions about provision in Barnet to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN.

In our consultation, we sought views from parent carers and partners, including schools and other professionals, circulating the consultation document widely to all partners, holding two sessions for parent carers, and running the survey from 14th June – 27th July 2019.

We committed to publishing the final decision on the London Borough of Barnet's website and on the Local Offer website.

Feedback from the consultation

There were 45 responses to the survey, and two parents attended the open sessions.

Question 1

Question 1 was divided into three sub sections, and respondents were asked to give a response to the question "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following proposals?"

- a) We will aim to have the majority of children and young people with special educational needs, including those with EHCPs, in mainstream schools.

Tend to agree/strongly agree	62%
Tend to disagree/strongly disagree	33%
Neither agree/disagree	5%

- b) Some children and young people with greater needs will have their needs met in an Additional Resource Provision (ARP).

Tend to agree/strongly agree	87%
Tend to disagree/strongly disagree	11%
Neither agree/disagree	2%

- c) Some children and young people with the most complex special educational needs will have their needs met in special schools.

Tend to agree/strongly agree	96%
Tend to disagree/strongly disagree	4%
Neither agree/disagree	0%

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposal to offer more high quality specialist places (ARPs and special school places) locally in Barnet in order to reduce reliance on, and placements in, out of borough and independent schools?

Answer choices	Response
Strongly agree	63%
Tend to agree	22%
Strongly disagree	3%
Tend to disagree	7%
Neither agree or disagree	5%

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for meeting the need for extra specialist SEN places in Barnet, as set out in Appendix 1?

Answer choices	Response
Strongly agree	25%
Tend to agree	23%
Strongly disagree	25%
Tend to disagree	12%
Neither agree or disagree	15%

Question 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals for allocating the Special Provision Fund to the projects that we have outlined in Appendix 2 of the consultation document?

Answer choices	Response
Strongly agree	16%
Tend to agree	35%
Strongly disagree	16%
Tend to disagree	3%
Neither agree or disagree	27%
Don't know/not sure	3%

Comments and Responses

Question 1

The key theme was that although inclusion in mainstream schools is good in principle, some respondents did not think that the schools are adequately resourced, nor have the necessary training, skills and staff ratios to support children with special educational needs.

Our response:

The majority of children and young people with special educational needs will have their needs met at SEN Support which is funded from the school budget, which includes notional funding to cater for these children's needs. Schools and settings in Barnet can access a range of training to help them to support pupils with SEN and there are some excellent resources for schools on the Local Offer website. This includes the recently launched SENCo Zone. We will look at the training available for schools and settings when we undertake the work for a new 0 – 25 Autism Strategy. Children and young people with more complex and significant needs will have an Education, Health and Care Plan and the school will receive additional funding based on what provision is in the plan.

Question 2

Key themes were about (i) having more non-autism specific provision in Barnet; (ii) making sure that in-borough provision can provide what other schools out of borough provide and (iii) ensuring that specialist provision in Barnet is adequately resourced.

Our response:

We have differentiated between “Communication and Interaction needs” (this includes Autism) and “Other needs” in the consultation document, and these different areas of need have been included in the proposals set out in Appendix 1 and 2. Autism, does however, continue to be our greatest area of need, which is very similar to the national picture. We appreciate that SEMH is also an increasing area of need in Barnet and we are doing some work looking at our SEMH provision to make sure we have clear pathways and the right kind of support in place.

Barnet is fortunate to have a range of specialist provision which has been graded as ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’ by Ofsted.

We regularly review the funding of specialist provision, and support for children and young people with an EHCP is reviewed on a case by case basis.

Question 3

16 of the 45 respondents commented on this question. There were five key themes from the responses given. These were:

- Accuracy of the projected numbers from the Needs Analysis, with some respondents suggesting that there was an under-estimation of needs over time. This was linked to perceived difficulties in obtaining an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- Where the provisions were being planned for, with some respondents suggesting that new provision should be spread more evenly across the borough.
- An acknowledgement of a strong and necessary focus on autism, but questions around provision for other types of special educational needs, including SEMH.
- The lack of focus on post 16 provision.
- Existing specialist provision in Barnet having the necessary knowledge and expertise to meet complex needs of children and young people.

Our response:

The Needs Analysis has been calculated on the basis of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) from Public Health and SEN data from the DfE over the last three years, taking account of demographic growth to give a projection of expected special educational needs over the next three years. We are confident in our projections, but we will regularly review our data to make sure that we account for any unexpected changes in numbers of children and young people with special educational needs, including increases in those moving to Barnet. As expected, since the SEN Reforms were introduced in 2014

there has been an increase in the number of new EHCPs in Barnet, which mirrors the national picture. The rate of increase should decline as fewer new EHCPs are issued as children come through the system. Currently the percentage of children and young people in Barnet with an EHCP is 3.1% which is higher than the National figure of 2.9%.

We have looked at where we currently have provision, and the areas of growth to ensure a targeted approach to where new provision is developed. There are many areas of Barnet that already have sufficient provision.

Autism and communication needs continues to be the main type of special educational need in Barnet and projections indicate that this trend will continue. We currently do not have enough provision to meet this type of need in borough, hence the need to develop more provision for Autism. We recognise that SEMH is another area of focus, but is outside the scope of this consultation. Plans are underway to look at what SEMH provision we have in Barnet and what we need in the future. Once this is determined, we will look at having the right type and sufficient SEMH provision in Barnet.

We acknowledge the increasing need for post 16 provision. As a consequence of this we have increased the number of placements we have at Barnet and Southgate College. We are also developing our post 16 pathways so that there are more choices of provision for young people with SEN.

There is a lot of knowledge of, and expertise in, SEN in Barnet. All of our special schools are rated Outstanding by Ofsted and our ARPs are in schools rated as Good or Outstanding. We are committed to ensuring that children and young people with SEN in Barnet receive high quality provision and we work in close partnership with schools and other agencies to achieve this. Our outcomes for children and young people with SEN in Barnet are some of the best in the country.

Question 4

Respondents were asked to give other suggestions for how the SEN Provision Fund could be used. Suggestions were broadly related to one of the following: (i) expand existing ARPs, rather than build new ones; (ii) the focus on Autism and not enough on SEMH; (iii) provision for post 19 including residential provision.

Our response:

We are intending to expand the ARP at Claremont school to provide an additional 12 places (total of 24 places). The newly opened Whitefield ARP will provide the necessary places for secondary aged pupils. The ARPs at Chalgrove and Coppetts Wood will increase their numbers in line with agreed placement planning.

Autism is our primary area of need in Barnet, and we will require more provision for Autism to meet the increasing need. We are undertaking work to ensure that we have sufficient and the right type of provision for pupils with SEMH.

The SEN Provision Fund is specifically for Education based provision. We are working with Adult Services on an Autism Strategy, and this will be looking at what provision we need for young people over 19 years old.

Conclusions

There was support for the proposal for a graduated response to placement and provision where those with the majority of children and young people with SEN, including those with an EHCP, would have their needs met in mainstream schools, those with greater need having their needs met in ARPs and those with the most complex needs having their needs met in special schools. Although schools and settings can access training, we do need to ensure that staff in schools have the necessary skills to meet needs.

The second proposal, to have more high quality specialist provision in Barnet to reduce reliance on, and placements in out of borough and independent schools was strongly supported.

There was more divided opinion to the proposals about what to spend the SEN Provision on, outlined in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. 48% of respondents supported the proposals in Appendix 1 compared to 37% who disagreed, with 15% neither agreeing or disagreeing. The majority of respondents (51%) agreed with the proposal for allocating the SEN Provision Fund to the projects outlined in Appendix 2. Responses to this proposal had the greatest number of neither agreeing or disagreeing (27%) and don't know/not sure (3%).

Recommendations to the Executive Director, Children's Services

Having regard for the responses to the consultation, it is recommended that the Special Places Plan and use of the Special Places Fund, set out in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 are agreed, noting that the Special Places Plan includes:

- Continuing with existing plans to increase numbers of places at new and existing ARPs: Coppett's Wood, Chalgrove, Claremont and Whitefield.
- Increasing numbers of Early Years places at Oakleigh special school.
- Exploring and securing provision for an additional 25 special school places (12 Primary; 13 Secondary) by September 2020, rising to 52 special school places (25 Primary; 27 Secondary) by September 2021. The majority of additional Secondary school places will be provided by Kisharon special school.
- Continuing to plan for and develop a new all-through special school to cater for the needs of children and young people with autism ('The Windmill').
- Continuing to explore and develop pathways for post-16, including Supported Internships and Apprenticeships.
- Reviewing provision in Barnet for children and young people with SEMH, and develop clear pathways and support arrangements.
- Reducing placements in out of borough provisions as more specialist placements in Barnet come on stream.

Appendix 1

Barnet Special Places Plan: Proposals for meeting the need for additional specialist places

Type of provision	Need	Proposal
Early Years (0-4)	Need up to 6 extra special school places by 2021	To secure these at a Special School alongside existing SEND provision for 0-4 year olds.
Primary ARPs	Need 3 extra places by 2020, rising to 8 in 2021, 11 in 2022, 13 in 2023	Meet through the new ARP developments planned (Chalgrove Primary School in the 2018 plan and a proposed ARP at Claremont Primary in 2019).
Secondary ARPs	Need 5 extra places by 2020, rising to 10 in 2021, 13 in 2022, 15 in 2023, 17 in 2024	Meet through Whitefield ARP (planned capacity up to 28).
Primary Special School – ‘communication’ needs	Need 7 extra places in 2020, rising to 14 places by 2021, 20 in 2022, 24 in 2023 and 27 in 2024.	<p>Discussion with a Primary Special School about remodelling of the site in order to create up to an additional 12 places for communication and other needs in 2020.</p> <p>If the Windmill School is established and opened, it will be able to meet this need in due course.</p> <p>In the meantime, it is proposed to explore other possible sites for the development of an interim facility pending the opening of the Windmill or as a long-term alternative if plans for the Windmill School do not go ahead, and to allocate capital funding for any necessary adaptations.</p>
Secondary Special School – ‘communication’ needs.	Need 7 extra places by 2020, rising to 15 in 2021, 21 in 2022, 25 in 2023, 29 in 2024.	<p>If the Windmill School is established and opened, it will be able to meet this need in due course.</p> <p>In the meantime, it is proposed to explore other possible sites for the development of an interim facility pending the opening of the Windmill or as a long-term alternative if plans for the Windmill School do not go ahead, and to allocate capital funding for any necessary adaptations.</p>

Type of provision	Need	Proposal
Primary Special School - 'other' needs	Need 5 extra places in 2020, rising to 11 extra places by 2021, 15 in 2022, 18 in 2023 and 19 in 2024	<p>Discussion with a Primary Special School about remodelling of the site in order to create up to an additional 12 places for communication and other needs in 2020.</p> <p>Additional places will also be available as a result of the expansion of Kisharon Special Free School.</p> <p>If all the extra demand cannot be met through the extra places at the Primary Special School and Kisharon, it is proposed to use extra places provided at the Windmill School and the interim facility indicated above, for pupils whose needs can be met there.</p>
Secondary Special School – 'others' needs.	Need 6 extra places by 2020, rising to 12 in 2021, 17 in 2022, 21 in 2023, 24 in 2024.	<p>Additional places will be available as a result of the expansion of Kisharon Special Free School.</p> <p>If all the extra demand cannot be met through the extra places at Kisharon, it is proposed to use extra places provided at the Windmill School and the interim facility indicated above, for pupils whose needs can be met there.</p>
FE, apprenticeships and post-19	Need 4 additional 19+ special school places by 2021, 24 19+ and 2 16-19 places in FE or apprenticeships from 2020, with the 16-19 places rising to 6 by 2022; none of these rising further.	Meet the need through a mixture of supported internships and placements in the Kisharon sixth form and Barnet and Southgate College.

Appendix 2

Special Provision Plan: Proposals for allocating the SEN Provision Fund to projects

School	Category	2018 Planned use of the Special Provision fund	2019 Planned use of the Special Provision fund	Other investment planned (LBB)	Additional places
Coppetts Wood Primary School	Resourced provision (ASD)	£67,200	£69,844	0	10
Chalgrove Primary School	Resourced provision (ASD)	£560,000	£776,855	0	14
Whitefield Secondary Academy	Resourced provision (ASD)	£702,135	£1,280,381	£671,732	28
Oakleigh Special School	Special provision (SLD)	£1,680,000	£1,680,000	0	0
Claremont Primary School	Resourced provision (ASD)	N/A	£100,000	0	10
Early Years and Primary Special School places	Special provision (SLD)	N/A	£945,000	0	18
Special School places pending the opening of the Windmill Special Free School	Special provision (ASD)	N/A	£250,000	£250,000	40-50
Totals		£3,009,335	£5,102,080	£921,732	120-130

Notes:

1. The updated allocation is £5,102,080
2. The 2018 figures were the initial estimates at the time.
3. The work at Coppetts Wood and Chalgrove has been completed, so these are final figures. The total cost figure for Whitefield (£1,952,113) is the updated figure following detail scoping work. The figure will increase once the cost of furniture is added in and will be funded by LBB if all the SEN capital grant has been fully committed.
4. The costings for the new projects are initial estimates.
5. As the Special Provision Fund is capped at £5.1m the remaining cost of the interim provision pending the Windmill will need to be met by the council.