

## SEND Futures Plan Update

### 1. Introduction

- a. Under the terms of Kingston's "[Safety Valve](#)" Agreement, the Council is required to report on performance against conditions in the agreement on a quarterly basis. In March the Council reported to the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to the potential Q4 payment and these detailed financial reports will be shared with the Board at the meeting in May. We are meeting with the DfE to discuss progress in more detail at the end of March.
- b. The total number of Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) is slightly in excess of the number that was forecast in the Safety Valve Agreement at the point of the January census and we are also expecting to exceed the end of year target for EHCPs. Demand management needs to be closely monitored moving forward whilst continuing to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duties. Schools also continue to report an increase in level and complexity of need that will need to be closely monitored moving forward. It is also important to note alongside the increase in need that there is significant price inflation for placements across SEND education settings regionally, particularly in post-16 provision and also in out of borough placements, partly due to the lack of specialist places. The number of specialist places within the borough is another critical factor and although there has been good progress on the new Special Free School for autism it is still a concern that opening in September 2023 is a very tight deadline. The opening of this school is critical alongside the expansion of other specialist places to ensure that we can effectively meet the needs of children and young people in Kingston.
- c. The Ofsted / CQC revisit following the original Local Area SEND Inspection of September 2018 has not yet materialised, and is expected sometime in this academic year.

### 2. Workstream 1: Co-production, engagement and participation

#### Impact and progress

#### a. Children and Young People (CYP)

- i. Members of the Recruits Crews have been involved in staffing appointments in Short Breaks, Emotional Health Service (EHS), Educational Psychology, SEND commissioning and Occupational Therapy.
- ii. Young people co-delivered 'Personalisation & Participation' training to staff and a workshop for the National Development Team for Inclusion's National SEND Leadership Programme
- iii. There has been ongoing work around the procurement and reinstatement of Boardmaker software

#### b. Parents and Carers

- i. [Notes and actions of recent Parent and Carer consortium meetings](#). Parent Consortium meetings continue to be held monthly, there have been updates provided, and feedback received, on the following items: SENDIASS and Brokerage Service recommissioning and quality assurance of EHC Plans.
- ii. The Parent Carer Engagement Officer has been developing closer working relationships with families across the borough and has been attending local events to raise the profile of their role and ensuring parents and carers are aware of the newly created post. This is helping to ensure that parents and carers of CYP with SEND are involved in the SEND Futures Plan.
- iii. The Parent Carer Engagement Officer is leading on the implementation of the [Coram SEND Parent Champions Scheme](#) and is acting as the Parent Champions Coordinator. Nationwide planning meetings have been attended and this information will be shared at a local level to ensure that the implementation of the scheme can be as effective as possible.

## **Areas of concern**

- i. There is currently restricted access to Boardmaker symbol software and work is ongoing to widen access and deliver training. This software is required to improve the accessibility of information provided by professionals and to support production of Easy Read materials.
- ii. There is increased demand for CYP to be involved in engagement and participation work due to the positive impact this is having on services, this is proving challenging with the current number of members. Recruitment of new members into the team would be beneficial to improve engagement and participation to ensure that CYP views are heard.
- iii. There is inconsistency with co-producing services with parents and carers and young people. Improvements are to be made to ensure the process to ensure that co production can be as inclusive and effective as possible.

### **3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning**

#### **Impact and progress**

- i. The Associate Director for Business Development and Strategic Commissioning started in March 2022 and their post will focus on strategic commissioning across AfC including SEND. Their main focus will include improving commissioning practice and process and maximising capacity and expertise within the team. They will be working with the Head of Strategic Commissioning who started in December.

#### **SEND Placement Commissioning**

- i. The recruitment process for the permanent roles within the SEND Placement Commissioning team has been completed, the new structure includes 1 x SEND Commissioning Manager and 1 x SEND Commissioning Operations Manager and 1 x SEND Placement Co-ordinator. This new structure will allow for a more structured and strategic approach to SEND Placement Commissioning and with the introduction of the new post there will be more capacity in the team to work with providers to improve quality of SEND Placements and minimise costs. The new structure will commence in April and the SEND Placement Co-ordinator will be in post in May.
- ii. The trial of the new referral system, which refers individual CYP to commissioners when in-year fees appear too high, the CYP has not attended the placement or the placement has not been able to provide full range of delivery within EHCP, has proved to be beneficial. It has improved analysing requests to gain thematic understanding of need, this trial has mainly focused on the post 16 cohort to date.

#### **Short Breaks Recommissioning**

- i. [Following the need to repeat the Short Breaks tender](#), the re-tender is due to go live in March with a clearer and simplified pricing schedule for providers. The current providers will continue to deliver this contract until new formal contracts are issued, there is a view to issue new contracts in June.

#### **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) and Brokerage Service Recommissioning**

- i. Both of these contracts are going to be recommissioned in partnership with parents and carers, CYP and the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) to ensure that we create a service that meets the needs of the local SEND community. Meetings have been held with the Kingston PCF with regards to co-designing the parent, carer and young person consultation and the recommissioning process. The consultation is due to go live at the end of March for 9 weeks.

## Concerns

- i. There is future uncertainty around joint commissioning once [Integrated Care System \(ICS\)](#) is implemented and work needs to be carried out to ensure that services/ joint commissioning will not be disrupted in the transition period between the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and ICS. Clarity is to be provided by the CCG/ICS on future arrangements and joint working between the ICS/CCG and AfC
- ii. We have received fee increase notifications from 18 national providers where we currently place young people for the next academic/financial year. This already has a projected impact on current places to Kingston of +£120K. One of our local colleges that provides education for 43 Kingston CYP is proposing a 7% uplift, the impact of this will not be known until all placements are finalised. Given we are in phase deadlines, this increase in fees is likely to have a greater impact than currently stated
- iii. There are some concerns around the capacity of the commissioning team and engagement team to ensure that recommissioning is effectively co produced and the commissioning timeline can be kept on time
- iv. The post pandemic placement market is complex. There are difficulties in negotiating price on current placements and the ongoing fee increase requests that exceed normal levels of inflation. These increases continue to present budgetary pressures.

## 4. Workstream 3: Local provision

### Impact and progress

#### a. Therapies

- i. Year 3 investment priorities have been agreed and service specifications have been reviewed. We are now entering the third year of increased investment which has occurred during a time of significant increase in the number of children and young people requiring support.
- ii. The balanced model is being utilised where possible and is having a positive impact.

#### b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health

- i. A pilot service was launched in December 2021 to provide an open access, [drop-in hub in Kingston town centre](#) with a key feature promoting a self-referral option for young people with emotional health and well-being needs. A range of services will be co-located in the hub offering support such as: psychological therapies and youth services.
- ii. Further workshops have been held in January and February, regarding the implementation of the iThrive model, which involved mapping the current service and partnership offer, understanding current service pressures and service gaps; this will ensure that a priority list across all key stakeholders is agreed and the model can be implemented to improve service delivery.
- iii. An additional [Mental Health Support Teams in Schools](#) cluster has been established, ensuring that all schools are supported under this programme.

#### c. Local Places

- i. Good progress has been made with regards to opening the new special free school, at the Moor Lane site. It is anticipated that the ESFA will submit the planning application in March, with a view of a decision being taken at the Council's Planning Committee in May. A September 2023 opening therefore remains achievable, but is very tight. The school is to be named Spring School.

- ii. Phase 2 of the Malden Oaks post-16 SRP is on schedule for opening in September 2022 and will enable an expansion from 16 to 24 places.

**d. 16 to 25 Years**

- i. SEND transitions framework developed and process of agreeing priority transition commitments with providers is under way. Subgroup leads have been identified for governance, transition and curriculum.
- ii. Intensive training with DfE and [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) has been attended by professionals, from AfC, social care and health teams, on improving transitions for the Learning Disability cohort.

**Workstream 3 - Concerns**

- i. The tight deadline for the September 2023 opening of the new ASC Special Free School and the financial impact if it is not opened
- ii. Waiting times for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), occupational therapy, physiotherapy and also for the Emotional Health Service and CAMHS continue to be significant, this combined with the increased level of demand and level of need this is presenting significant pressures on the services.
- iii. It is becoming increasingly difficult to meet demand for therapies across the borough. There are also challenges around direct funding/ spot commissioning arrangements.
- iv. Transition arrangements between children's services and adult social care services are not always consistent. This leads to young adults with SEND not receiving the support they need in a timely way from the appropriate services. There are improvements that can be made with working arrangements between children's services and adult social care which would result in a reduction of costs into the system.
- v. Health transition pathways for the 18-25 year old cohort is not clearly established.

**5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and transitions**

**Impact and progress**

**a. Early Years onwards**

- i. The Inclusion Charter resource continues to be developing well. The Inclusion Charter itself is complete, alongside the school audit, systemic and operational guides. The next steps of implementing this resource is to promote the work that has been completed to professional partners at the beginning of the summer term.
- ii. Transition framework has been finalised and is due to be circulated to primary and secondary schools in March; this has been produced in collaboration with school partners, AfC colleagues and other key partners. A number of resources have been developed including a Google form, checklist, timeline and FAQs which will improve the transitions process at key transition points.
- iii. Work continues around the consistency of the Local Offer in terms of Quality First Teaching.

**b. First 1,001 Days and Early Help**

- iv. Progress continues with the parenting program training for parental conflict and child to parent violence

- v. Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) training continues and parent-led parenting groups and courses for parents who experience a range of difficulties with their children are being delivered.
- vi. Options are being explored for supporting primary age boys at risk of exclusion.

**c. Areas of concern**

- i. The Emotionally Related School Avoidance + pilot has been delayed due to there not being a Tier 3 CAMHS representative involved with the trial due to workforce pressures
- ii. Schools having limited capacity, funding and resources to deliver on inclusivity and deliver change on SEND practice. Variability remains across schools in the borough and the influence that AfC can have with academy schools on inclusion is limited which creates barriers to improving this across the borough as a whole.
- iii. Attendance at Resilience Networks continues to drop as a result of services returning to more face-to-face work.

**6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning**

**Impact and progress**

- i. Bespoke workshop sessions have been held on developing multi agency holistic outcomes in EHCPs with several more sessions planned to be delivered. There has been representation from across the system including foster care, school professionals and social care.
- ii. The work that has been progressing around holistic outcomes is becoming more evident in CYP's EHCPs and there have been noted improvements through quality assurance of advice and bimonthly quality assurance of EHCPs.
- iii. SENDCO training has been delivered on EHC Needs Assessments through SENDCo Forum to ensure that there is an understanding of the process.
- iv. Quality assurance tool has been developed and is being used by teams across the SEND system and with wider teams.
- v. Children and Families Act refresher training is being rolled out to Social Care to ensure that statutory obligations are understood across the service.

**Areas of concern**

- i. The CAMHS services need to provide more advice for the EHC needs assessment process to ensure plans are more reflective of needs and provision required for the cohort with mental health needs.
- ii. Timescales for amendments to EHCPs and annual review templates are challenging in the context of team capacity and the potential implications of SEND review.
- iii. Further work required to improve CYP involvement in the development of their EHCPs.

**a. Number of education, health and care plans**

- i. The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston on 7th March 2022 stood at 1559. This is an increase of 127 plans over the previous 12 months, or 8.8%. The latest national data for the increase in Education Health and Care plans is for calendar year 2020 when the number of plans increased by 10.4% in England and 9.6% across London boroughs.

## 7. Areas of concerns for the SEND Futures Plan

- ii. The lack of available specialist places within the borough is resulting in higher cost out of borough placements being selected as appropriate provision for CYP. The lack of specialist places in surrounding boroughs is increasing the price of placements, this combined with real increases in costs such as energy and inflation, is increasing overall spend. Joint working with the DfE and new providers for capital schemes for specialist places will make a significant difference in this area.
- iii. There continues to be challenges with recruiting professionals into certain roles across the service. Specific examples of this in certain services are: Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech & Language Therapists and SEND Case Workers. There is a risk that shortage of staff will cause a struggle to deliver statutory duties in a timely manner and insufficient capacity, skill and expertise within the service to drive up the quality of work and maximise the benefits. This will impact the progress of the SEND Futures Plan as there may be insufficient capacity or skill in certain areas to drive the agenda forward.
- iv. The continuation of significant increases in need, complexity of need and the number of requests for EHC needs assessments with a view to receiving a EHC plan from schools and parents. Workstream 4 and 5 action plans will cover all the key actions that need to be taken to ensure that we are closely monitoring the level of needs and issuance of EHC Plans.
- v. The uncertainty of the impact of implementation of the ICS on the SEND system. There is uncertainty around the potential impact of the implementation on the health provision with SEND services and what this means for CYP. There may be an impact on delivery and health provision in the borough moving forward.
- vi. The uncertainty regarding the funding split between Education, Social Care, Health and Adult Services brings future financial uncertainty and inability to forward plan. This is due to funding arrangements not being transparent and longer term this will put further financial pressure on the DSG.

## 8. Finance update

- i. The Borough is currently projecting a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overspend of £5.0m. Assuming the Council is successful in claiming £5m in "Safety Valve" funding this year, and including a contribution of £1.2m from the Council, this would result in a £11.2m cumulative DSG overspend at the end of this financial year. This position is summarised below (note the budgets in this table exclude the £67.1m Schools Block and £5.55m High Needs Block Academy Recoupments).

2021/22 DSG Outturn	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m	Last month £m	Reported last forum £m
Schools Block	49.765	49.294	(0.471)	0.000	(0.471)	(0.361)	(0.215)
Central School Services Block	1.128	1.128	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Early Years Block	12.709	12.349	(0.361)	0.000	(0.361)	(0.470)	(0.470)
High Needs Block	20.804	26.626	5.822	0.000	5.822	5.971	5.848
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>84.405</b>	<b>89.396</b>	<b>4.991</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>4.991</b>	<b>5.139</b>	<b>5.162</b>
2020/21 Carry forward	(12.401)	0.000	12.401	0.000	12.401	12.401	12.401
Safety Valve Funding	5.000	0.000	(5.000)	0.000	(5.000)	(5.000)	(5.000)
Council Funding	1.200	0.000	(1.200)	0.000	(1.200)	(1.200)	(1.200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.204</b>	<b>89.396</b>	<b>11.192</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>11.192</b>	<b>11.340</b>	<b>11.363</b>

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