

## 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 Q4 payment and funding has been received. Also in March the Council met with the DfE to discuss progress that has been made in relation to the Safety Valve Agreement this year. This included discussions about additional support the DfE could provide on matters that are relatively outside the Council's control, for example the opening of the new special free school, to help Kingston meet its objectives in future years.
- b. The total number of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) at the end of March in Kingston was 1,546 which was less than the end of year forecast of 1,558 in the Safety Valve Agreement. Despite this there is a continued need to focus on the content of requests for EHC needs assessments and this is to be closely monitored moving forward whilst continuing to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duties. Practitioners and school professionals continue to report an increase in level and complexity of need.
- c. On the 12th May, the government published [the national SEN2 data](#) on the number of children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) and EHC plans in England. The SEN2 survey is a statutory data collection that takes place every January. A table of data has been inserted as an appendix to this report and listed below are key comparisons made between Kingston and national data:
  - i. Between January 2020 and January 2021, the increase in the total number of EHC plans in Kingston was slightly less (8.9%) than it was across England (9.9%). However it was slightly higher than across London (8.3%).
  - ii. The number of initial requests for an EHC plan in 2021 (240) were similar to 2019 (242), before the pandemic. This is different to both London and England where requests were significantly higher
  - iii. Rates of EHC plans issued within 20 weeks in Kingston is lower (69%) than previous years but remains above national average (60%) for calendar year 2021.
  - iv. The number of new EHC plans issued in 2021 (180) was lower than in both the 2020 (210) and 2019 (186)
  - v. The number of requests for EHC needs assessments declined (21.7%) and the assessments where it was decided not to issue an EHC plan (5.8%) is broadly in line with the national average (22.3% and 5.9%)
- d. [The SEND Review](#) and the associated green paper was published by the government in March. The paper is extensive and proposes many significant changes to the current SEND system, some of which align with our SEND Futures Plan and current activity. An informed response to the 22 consultation questions will be provided by AfC on behalf of the Council and we are encouraging key partners in our local SEND system, including Schools Forum, to respond to the consultation separately.
- e. 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. Advisory and development meetings continue to be held with the Designated Social Care Officer, the SEND team, Adult Services, Physiotherapists, Emotional Health Service, Coram and EnhanceAble. These strategic meetings further develop participation and embed it across the SEND system.

- ii. Members of the Recruits Crews have been involved in staffing appointments across a number of services across AfC and their contributions to these staffing appointments is appreciated

#### **b. Parents and Carers**

- i. A forward plan is being developed with the Kingston Parent Carer Forum for the Parent Carer Consortium meetings that are held monthly to ensure that the meetings are informative and relevant. [Notes and actions of recent Parent and Carer consortium meetings](#). In recent meetings there have been updates provided, and feedback received, on the following items: the SEND Review, Post-16 transitions and the Emotional Health Service.
- i. Work continues with the [Coram SEND Parent Champions Scheme](#). 14 SEND Parent Champions are registered, across Kingston and Richmond, with further applicants being processed. This network of Parent Champions will provide peer support to parents and carers in the local area.

#### **Areas of concern**

- i. Recruitment of new members into the Participation Team is proving to be challenging. It would be beneficial for more children and young people to be involved in engagement and participation work due to the positive impact this is having on services

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

#### **Impact and progress**

- i. The Associate Director for Business Development and Strategic Commissioning, AfC, and The Head of Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and Children's Services, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), are now jointly leading Workstream 2. The governance and membership of the workstream has been reviewed and key priorities have been agreed. A refresh of the Joint Commissioning Strategy is underway to review current arrangements, including to take into consideration the implementation of the Integrated Care System in July.

#### **SEND Placement Commissioning**

- i. The permanent SEND commissioning team started in April and have been focussing on improving and refining key processes. A strategic system for monitoring spend, contracts and invoicing has been introduced and the team are currently establishing a shared commissioning approach to managing fee increases for education, health and social care providers.
- ii. As a result of commissioning activity during the 2021/22 financial year actual savings were £200k in Kingston and there have been savings gained already for the 2022/23 financial year

#### **Short Breaks Recommissioning**

- i. The re-tender went live in March with a clearer and simplified pricing schedule for providers. We are currently in the tender evaluation stage with the aim of issuing new contracts in June.

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

- i. [The consultation](#) with parents, carers and CYP was launched in April by AfC and is running until Monday 6th June. There are workshops running throughout May for parents and carers to attend, with the workshops including a short presentation on SENDIASS and an opportunity for questions to be asked to service leads. A [survey](#) has been jointly agreed and parents, carers and young people aged 16 years and over are invited to give their views on SENDIASS. These views will be used to develop the new service and what it will include. Thank you to all parents, carers and young people who have taken part in the consultation so far.

- ii. A decision has been made not to include direct payment recommissioning within SENDIASS recommission due to the different nature of service delivery. An alternative process will be run for this service with an update provided at the next meeting.

### **Concerns**

- i. There are concerns around the capacity of the commissioning team with regards to being able to effectively commission new and existing services effectively and inline with timelines and processes, this will be further evaluated in the coming months
- ii. Inflation has led to 40 education institutions advising of fee increases, ranging from 3-10%, from state funded and independent providers. The reasons stated for the increases are cost of living/ inflation, increase in teachers' pensions and increased health and social care levy. The post pandemic placement market continues to be complex, these increases continue to present budgetary pressures and a further impact analysis will be available for the next reporting period.

## **4. Workstream 3: Local provision**

### **Impact and progress**

#### **a. Therapies**

- i. Roundtable meetings are being set up for senior leaders to discuss therapy provision across the borough, the aim of the meetings is to have a solution focussed plan to help with the current challenges being faced by the service.
- ii. Meetings have been held with each of the providers to review outcome measures and finalise the proposed list of service related key performance indicators (KPIs). A further meeting will be held to complete a peer review of the proposed KPIs which will then be finalised and shared with the Therapies Oversight Group for sign off. Once the KPIs and outcome measures have been finalised, a monitoring framework will be established with regular reporting.

#### **b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health**

- i. A Lead Psychologist for children with disabilities will be starting in May and will begin to rebuild the team with the addition of [Positive Behaviour Support](#). There has also been a dedicated post confirmed for Leaving Care and Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children cohort
- ii. Improvements are being made to the process of referring through the Single Point of Access (SPA) and CAMHS SPA to ensure it is a better experience for parents and carers and children and young people
- iii. Development of the iThrive framework is continuing, there have been initial scoping and mapping sessions coupled with learning about the framework and how it can be applied conceptually. Leadership sessions have been held in March and April and Action Learning Sets are due to begin within the next month. These will allow key people within the system to begin discussions on how iThrive can be implemented throughout the borough
- iv. The children and young people Emotional Mental Health Transformation Plan has progressed including the introduction of the Electronic Referral System supported by an advice and guidance approach with a duty helpline in place. Recruitment to Single Point of Access and specialist pathways continues and additional funding identified to support waiting list initiative

#### **c. Local Places**

- i. The planning application has been submitted for the new special free school, at the Moor Lane site, and a decision is expected to be made at the end of May. There are concerns surrounding a September 2023 opening and any further delays with planning will make this unachievable however this does remain possible at present.

- ii. Other sites are being considered for the post-16 campus due to high planning risk with the identified site. LocatEd are currently negotiating with the owner of the central Kingston site that has been identified.
- iii. Phase 2 of the Malden Oaks post-16 specialist resource provision planning application is to be submitted in May.
- iv. Planning application has been submitted for a Specialist Resource Provision at Robin Hood Primary School.

**d. 16 to 25 Years**

- i. Key leads from adult services, including Social Care and Health, have been identified to ensure a collaborative approach to improve transitions and pathways. A Preparing for Adulthood audit is being undertaken in May with key colleagues from the Adult Social Care, CCG and AfC attending. Following the audit a task and finish group focussing on improving transitions will be established.
- ii. A transition protocol is being developed to support transitions between local schools and colleges. This has been co-produced with schools and colleges and we are piloting a transition form to ensure that the correct information is shared in the right way.
- iii. Young people that are going through transition are now tracked and those at highest risk of being not in employment, education or training are supported through transition as a priority. Those that need more support with transition are supported earlier in the school year, the impact of this will be evaluated in September.
- iv. A transition event is being planned for September with Adult Social Care, the voluntary sector, TAG Youth Club and vocational/employment partners. The event will provide information on vocational pathways, paid internships, pathways for post-16 and voluntary sector opportunities for young people

**Workstream 3 - Concerns**

- i. Timescales for opening new schools may be delayed causing there not to be sufficient local specialist places. Alongside the tight deadline for the September 2023 opening of the new ASC Special Free School there is increased building costs and difficulties with supply of labour and material are adding significant pressure on timescales. The financial impact of the school not opening in September 2023 will be significant.
- ii. Lack of therapy provision for newly created places across the borough alongside the need to meet current demand is a significant concern.
- iii. Recruitment issues continue to be an issue both locally and nationally across all therapy services. Pressure remains on the provision across the borough with regards to delivering statutory duties, ensuring health priorities are met whilst early intervention is also delivered. This is becoming a greater challenge with recruitment issues and the greater levels of need
- 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 also result in a reduction of costs in the system.
- v. Health transition pathways across settings for the 18-25 year old cohort are still not clearly established, and work is ongoing to identify a lead for this work within the wider workstream.
- vi. Schools and colleges have limited spare capacity for the additional work to implement the change

needed for transitions to improve. This is due to a number of factors including the impact of Covid, recruitment and staffing capacity issues.

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

### **Impact and progress**

#### **a. Early Years onwards**

- i. The Inclusion Charter and Toolkit launch materials are being explored including the use of video to help market the resource. Feedback from stakeholders will be sought throughout the summer term.
- ii. The Transition Framework is completed and has been shared with schools including the new process for completion and information sharing. Stakeholder views will be obtained once the framework has been embedded within schools.
- iii. Feasibility assessment is being completed for the use of an RBK former community centre to possibly be used as the base for the KS4 alternative curriculum pathway

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

- iv. Parent facilitators for Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities have completed their training and sessions called 'Being a Parent' are being delivered
- v. Family Coaches have been trained in Family Transitions (where there is parental conflict following separation) and will be delivering groups in the coming months
- vi. Youth Service strategy has been finalised and Children's Centre strategy is being developed by the Children Centre Partnership Group

#### **c. Areas of concern**

- i. There is limited capacity to deliver all of the universal parenting programs due to staffing pressures
- ii. The Emotionally Related School Avoidance + pilot continues to be delayed due to there not being a Tier 3 CAMHS representative involved with the trial due to workforce pressures
- iii. Variability remains in SEND practice across schools in the borough and AfC continues to work proactively with both maintained and academy schools where we believe improvements can be made.
- iv. A continued drop in attendance at Resilience Networks in Kingston

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

### **Impact and progress**

- i. Bimonthly quality assurance has continued with a change in focus to reflect on quality of advice contributing to the plan as well as the quality of the final plan. Bimonthly participants have reported this has been informative in appreciating the complexity of the task of developing an EHC Plan
- ii. The improvements we have made to the annual review process and the restructure of the Preparing for Adulthood team has had a positive impact on the number of young people transitioning into higher education and also into paid employment
- iii. Secondary SENCOs have participated in online sessions regarding the development of holistic outcomes based on the preparation for adulthood framework.
- iv. The Designated Social Care Officer has joined the quality assurance of activity to ensure that social care

outcomes are reflected in both development of EHCPs and annual review.

- v. Annual review quality assurance activity has been completed by professionals from across the system, this has involved a review of over 70 annual reviews. Learning from this activity has shown the positive impact of person centred reviews for young people and their families

#### **Areas of concern**

- i. The timeliness of annual reviews needs to be improved, the main blockages in the process are inconsistency of professional advice provided to schools and the timeliness of reports being submitted once completed
- ii. There is a significant challenge around provision of advice where children and young people are not known to local providers, this is leading to spot commissioning arrangements which require streamlining

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

- i. The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston on 16th May 2022 stood at 1,568. This is an increase of 121 plans over the previous 12 months, or 8.3%. The latest national data for the increase in Education Health and Care plans is for calendar year 2021 when the number of plans increased by 9.9% in England and 8.3% 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 the most 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 continue 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 regarding the funding split between Education, Social Care, Health and Adult Services brings future financial uncertainty and challenges to forward plan. This is due to funding arrangements not being transparent and longer term this may put further financial pressure on the DSG.

### **8. Finance update**

- i. The 2021/22 outturn for the borough was an overspend of £4.8m in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Including the £5m in "Safety Valve" funding, a contribution of £1.2m from the Council and an initial additional £1.1m agreed by the DfE for loss of income due to the new Health and Social Care levy, this resulted in a £9.9m cumulative DSG overspend at the end of this financial year. The £9.9m cumulative DSG overspend is £1.8m under the target for 2021/22 in the Safety Valve Agreement. 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).

<b>2021/22 DSG Outturn</b>	<b>Budget £m</b>	<b>Outturn £m</b>	<b>Variance £m</b>	<b>Future Demand £m</b>	<b>Variance incl Future Demand £m</b>
Schools Block	49.765	49.194	(0.571)	0.000	(0.571)
Central School Services Block	1.128	1.130	0.002	0.000	0.002
Early Years Block	12.709	12.351	(0.358)	0.000	(0.358)
High Needs Block	20.804	26.519	5.715	0.000	5.715
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>84.405</b>	<b>89.195</b>	<b>4.789</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>4.789</b>
2020/21 Carry forward	(12.401)	0.000	12.401	0.000	12.401
Safety Valve Funding	5.000	0.000	(5.000)	0.000	(5.000)
Health & Social Care Levy Uplift	0.000	(1.100)	(1.100)	0.000	(1.100)
Council Funding	1.200	0.000	(1.200)	0.000	(1.200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>78.204</b>	<b>88.095</b>	<b>9.890</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>9.890</b>

Nicola Moore  
SEND Policy & Project Officer  
[nicola.moore@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:nicola.moore@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

**Appendix A - Table of data from SEN2 survey showing data for England, London and Richmond between 2019 - 2021**

<b>Total EHCPs</b>				
	<b>Jan 2021</b>	<b>Jan 2022</b>	<b>Change year on year (yoy)</b>	
England	430697	473255	9.88%	
London	72193	78203	8.32%	
Kingston	1424	1550	8.85%	
<b>Initial requests for EHC Plan</b>				
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2019 vs 2021</b>
England	82329	75951	93302	
Change yoy		-7.75%	22.84%	13.33%
London	13336	10274	14342	
Change yoy		-22.96%	39.60%	7.54%
Kingston	242	229	240	
Change yoy		-5.37%	4.80%	-0.83%
<b>Rate of EHC plans excluding exceptions issued within 20 weeks</b>				
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	
England	60.4	58	59.9	
London	64.6	61.8	63.9	
Kingston	96.2	87.5	68.7	
<b>Number of new EHC plans</b>				
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	
England	53899	60097	62180	
Change yoy		11.50%	3.47%	
London	9000	9963	9604	
Change yoy		10.70%	-3.60%	
Kingston	186	210	180	
Change yoy		12.90%	-14.29%	
<b>Requests for EHC Needs Assessments declined</b>				
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	
England	22.8	21.6	22.3	
London	13336	12074	14342	
Change yoy	20.6	20.4	21.7	
Kingston	242	229	240	
Change yoy	15.7	19.2	21.7	
<b>Assessments where it was decided not to issue an EHC plan</b>				
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	
England	5.9	4.9	5.9	
London	5.2	3	4	
Kingston	3.6	4.1	5.8	