

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 June the Council [reported to the Department for Education \(DfE\) in relation to Q1](#) and this payment has now been received. A letter was also sent with the Q1 submission to follow up with the DfE on the additional support that was requested in the meeting in March, and to highlight some of the growing challenges that Kingston, in common with many / most other local authorities are facing with regard to High Needs Block expenditure.
- b. The total number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans at the end of June in Kingston was 1,596. It is important to note that in the six months to the end of June, there has been a 26% increase in the number of EHC needs assessment requests compared to the same period in the previous year. If these requests convert to actual plans as per the previous 6 months conversion rates, and without a significant change in the level of need being seen across early years providers schools and colleges, the total number of EHC plans is expected to exceed the forecast in the Safety Valve Agreement for the January 2023 census (1640). There continues to be a need to focus on the content and number of requests for EHC needs assessments and this is to be closely monitored whilst continuing to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duties.
- c. Clinical Commissioning Groups were dissolved on the 30th June and 42 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) were established across England on a statutory basis on 1st July 2022. ICSs are partnerships that bring together providers and commissioners of NHS services with local authorities to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their population. Kingston is one of six local areas within the [South West London ICS](#).
- d. [The SEND Futures Conference](#) will take place on 12th October 2022 at The Stoop in Twickenham. Two key players in the national SEND system will be in attendance - Dame Christine Lenehan, Director of the Council for Disabled Children at the National Children's Bureau and Dr André Imich OBE, SEN and Disability Professional Adviser, Department for Education. Please book your places as soon as possible via the above link as places are limited and we are already approaching capacity.
- e. The Ofsted / CQC revisit following the original Local Area SEND Inspection of September 2018 has not yet materialised, and is now expected in the next academic year.

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

Impact and progress

a. Children and Young People (CYP)

- i. There has been input from CYP with the following work: the Mental Health Support Teams in schools evaluation, Access All Areas event planning, Participation Leads meetings and the Neurodevelopmental Pathway review. Easy information sessions continue to run and help ensure that information that is provided to CYP is accessible.
- ii. 47 young people took part in focus groups or individual meetings for the SENDIASS recommissioning consultation. Their views will help shape the service in the future to help ensure that CYP and their families can access the right support, advice and information.
- iii. 106 young people have been involved in participation work this quarter. Thank you to those children and young people who have been involved in the above work for their valuable contributions

b. Parents and Carers

- i. The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) organised and ran a very successful Fun Day on the 3rd July at Chessington World of Adventures for families in the borough to provide information on the PCF, Achieving for Children (AfC), voluntary sector organisations and other services available in the local area.
- ii. Work continues with the [Coram SEND Parent Champions Scheme](#), 10 SEND Parent Champions have been recruited, across Kingston and Richmond, and have received their initial training. Work is currently being undertaken on creating the tools to make the scheme successful.
- iii. [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 new special free school at Moor Lane, the review of the banding system and the implementation of the Integrated Care System (ICS).

Areas of concern

- i. Capacity of the current CYP Participation Team is proving to be a challenge with the amount of participation work that is currently happening. It would be beneficial for more CYP to be involved in engagement and participation work due to the positive impact this is having on services

3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning

- i. Work continues to improve joint commissioning across health, education and social care with the priority at present being establishing and clarifying the new arrangements for joint commissioning with the new ICS.

SEND Placement Commissioning

- i. An action plan has been developed for the key commissioning priorities in 2022/23 for SEND placements. Activity within this plan includes further developing a sufficiency framework, a benchmarking exercise to analyse value for money and further developing an audit system on fee increases. This action plan will help develop a more strategic approach to SEND placement commissioning for the future.
- ii. A joint funded review panel has been established between social care and education to assess and agree joint funded fee increase requests to ensure accurate budgetary forecasting for future years.
- iii. As a result of commissioning activity so far during the 2022/23 financial year actual savings are £97k with a further £41k of further mitigated savings.

Short Breaks Recommissioning

- i. An options paper has been submitted to the short breaks service from the commissioning team from the tender that closed in April 2022. The contract will be awarded and finalised in the coming weeks with a view to issuing contracts ahead of 1st September start date.

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

- i. Feedback sessions on the findings of the consultation were held in June and were attended by parents, carers and young people. In the sessions a summary of the consultation findings was provided and it was explained how it may affect future plans with the service.
- ii. A service specification sub group has been created, separately from the main project group, and the first meeting has been held. The aim of the subgroup is to shape the service specification and ensure it is fit for purpose.

- iii. Market engagement events were held in July to ensure the providers have the information that they need and they can effectively contribute to a service specification.
- iv. An alternative process will be run for the brokerage service, work is still on-going and an update provided at the next meeting.

Concerns

- ii. Joint commissioning arrangements with the new ICS remain in development. Clear governance in the new landscape needs to be quickly identified to ensure that joint commissioning can continue.
- iii. There are concerns around the capacity of the commissioning team with regards to being able to effectively commission new and existing services and ensuring it is done so inline with timelines and processes, this will be further evaluated in the coming months.
- iv. Inflation continues to lead to education institutions increasing their fees, especially amongst independent providers at post 16. The post pandemic specialist placement market continues to be in high demand, and these increases continue to present budgetary pressures.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision

Impact and progress

a. Therapies

- i. The Therapies Oversight Group (TOG) met in June. The TOG was presented with the latest version of the outcome measures that have been developed with input from the providers and the Parent carer Forum. The next step will be for providers to meet with project management support to identify a number of measures to focus on over the next 12 months as a pilot. As part of this providers will liaise with their IT and systems teams to identify means of capturing the information needed.
- ii. A post is being scoped out to lead on reviewing and streamlining spot-commissioning activity.

b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health

- i. There have been new posts created in the Emotional Health Service including a Lead Psychologist within the Disabled Children's Team and a new dedicated post for Care Leavers and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. A [Positive Behaviour Support](#) consultant is also actively working with cases.
- ii. South West London St George's Mental Health Trust have identified a trained clinician to support a pilot to work with AfC to help coordinate support for those CYP who are in danger of exclusion or missing school due to their social, emotional and mental health needs. This will initially be for six months and will begin next term at the start of the new school year.
- iii. In May more focused sessions were held for senior leaders where the current provision was compared to the iThrive framework. Areas of development were identified and good practice was highlighted. Further sessions to begin a more formal mobilisation plan will be held in the coming months.

c. Local Places

- i. The planning permission for the new special free school, at the Moor Lane site, was granted in June. However there are still concerns surrounding a September 2023 opening and any further delays will make this unachievable.
- 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 is due to open in September 2022, with accommodation scheduled to be provided in October; pupils can be accommodated in the existing space from September until it opens.
- iv. Planning application has been submitted for a Specialist Resource Provision at Robin Hood Primary School and we are awaiting a decision for the highways work.

d. 16 to 25 Years

- i. A resource request was submitted to the Council earlier in the month for additional posts to support the work on transforming the services provided for young people aged 16 to 25. The request has been successful and provides an additional 6.5 FTE posts including an Education Placements Commissioning Officer, Vocational Pathway Commissioning Officer and Transitions to Employment Support Officers. The main aims of these post will be to:
 - Improve contract management and value for money of placements specifically in the 16 to 25 years cohort in Kingston, thereby improving the delivery of [Preparing for Adulthood outcomes](#) and minimising the average cost of EHCPs.
 - Build a much broader secondary school curriculum and expanded vocational pathway offer in Kingston for young people in this age group, and in schools, to increase the number of mainstream placements and reduce the average cost of EHCPs.
- ii. A Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) audit has been completed with key colleagues from Adult Social Care, ICS and AfC attending. A meeting to formalise the task and finish group is scheduled this month and following the meeting there will be an action plan for improving transitions in the borough with key priorities identified.
- iii. Further on line training on the development of holistic outcomes has taken place with local best practice included regarding person centred conversations. An outcome of this training is further development of bespoke sessions for those with more complex needs and PfA cohort.
- iv. Year 10 next steps interviews are underway and a process is in place to capture data on young people's preferred post 16 options. This will assist the PfA team to identify trends in need and those whose plans need reviewing at an earlier stage.
- v. [Post 16 transition event 'Access All Areas'](#) has over 600 attendees interested in attending with 54 confirmed exhibitors across Post 16 education, Health, Social care and employment support and the voluntary sector. 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 and is being modelled.
- ii. Lack of therapy provision for newly created places across the borough alongside the need to meet current demand is a significant concern.
- iii. Lack of specialist SEN places in both boroughs, neighbouring boroughs and the independent sectors, and therefore difficulty in securing appropriate provision for a number of children and young people with more complex needs.

- iv. 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
- v. Schools and colleges have limited spare capacity so some of the longer term system change and engagement work with improving transitions is taking longer than expected. This is due to a number of factors including the impact of COVID and recruitment and staffing issues.
- vi. Joint commissioning arrangements to ensure comprehensive services for children and young people once they transition into adult services requires further development. There are further concerns with the introduction of the ICS and what the commissioning landscape looks like.

5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and transitions

Impact and progress

a. Early Years onwards

- i. The Inclusion Charter document in terms of content is ready and now with branding so that it can be uploaded onto the SENDCo zone on the Local Offer
- ii. Emotionally Related School Avoidance + (ERSA+) support in primary education has commenced
- iii. A possible solution for space at Malden Oaks to better cater for the increase in referrals at Key Stage 3 is being explored.

b. First 1,001 Days and Early Help

- iv. The Supporting Families self-assessment has been completed and next steps have been identified which includes plans for the parenting strategy and collecting better feedback from families
- v. Job profiles for Supporting Families consultants are being evaluated, these posts will enable the delivery of parenting support of a specialist nature and supporting partners with Early Help Assessments. The aim is for the post to be filled before September.

c. Areas of concern

- i. Capacity is stretched for practitioners to deliver the wide range of parenting programmes alongside their normal duties, options are being explored to widen the range of practitioners that can deliver training
- ii. ERSA+ still has no active commitment from Tier 3 CAMHS

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

Impact and progress

- i. Further workforce development has taken place on holistic outcomes and The Children and Families Act 2014. Feedback has been positive and has reinforced the value of multi-agency training opportunities for cross system learning.
- ii. Initial steps of workshops with Special Schools regarding holistic outcomes has begun with a visit to Dysart School to support planning of the workshops, this work will span across both Kingston and

Richmond. The initial workshop has been postponed until September related to school timetabling.

- iii. Bi monthly quality assurance continues with improvements noted in terms of outcomes and specification and quantification of provision.
- iv. The issuance of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within the 20 week statutory deadline has improved in Kingston with 92% being within 20 weeks in May, 95% in June and 93% in July.

Areas of concern

- i. Timeliness of advice for Education, Health and Care needs assessments has dropped for Occupational Therapists and Educational Psychologists which is delaying the time in which requests are being reviewed. A task and finish group continue to analyse this data for health advice and a number of process actions are being implemented to address this
- ii. There are challenges with the timeliness of annual reviews and meeting statutory deadlines, work continues to address this
- iii. There continues to be an increasing level of need for CYP with mental health needs. Ensuring appropriateness and timeliness of cross system support for these CYP continues to be a challenge

a. Number of education, health and care plans

- i. The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston on 30th June stood at 1,596. This is an increase of 134 plans over the previous 12 months, or 9.2%. 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. There is significant price inflation across SEND placements locally, regionally and nationally this is partly due to inflationary increases, the increase in health and social care levy but also lack of specialist places. The post pandemic placement market is complex and 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 significant budgetary pressures.
- iii. The uncertainty of the impact of implementation of the ICS on the SEND system especially for what this means for children and young people with SEND. As previously mentioned there is also uncertainty around joint commissioning moving forward. There is an item on the Strategic leadership of SEND under the new ICS arrangements on this month's agenda to further clarify these arrangements and we will continue to work with the ICS to ensure that these arrangements are in place moving 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 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.
- vi. 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.

8. Finance update

- i. Based on Q1 information, the 2022/23 position for the borough is projected to be an overspend of £5.3m in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Including the £5m in “Safety Valve” funding and a contribution of £1.2m from the Council, the cumulative DSG overspend at the end of this financial year is projected at £9.0m. This position is summarised below (note the budgets in this table exclude the £74.1m Schools Block and £5.7m High Needs Block Academy Recoupments).

2022/23 DSG Outturn	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m
Schools Block	47.359	47.359	0.000	0.000	0.000
Central School Services Block	1.065	1.090	0.025	0.000	0.025
Early Years Block	13.119	12.496	(0.623)	0.000	(0.623)
High Needs Block	23.903	28.888	4.984	0.950	5.934
Sub-Total	85.446	89.832	4.386	0.950	5.336
2021/22 Carry forward	(9.821)	0.000	9.821	0.000	9.821
Safety Valve Funding	5.000	0.000	(5.000)	0.000	(5.000)
Council Funding	1.200	0.000	(1.200)	0.000	(1.200)
Total	81.824	89.832	8.008	0.950	8.958

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