

SEND Futures Plan Update

1. Introduction

- a. Under the terms of Kingston's "[Safety Valve](#)" Agreement, the Council is required to report to the Department for Education on performance against conditions in the agreement on a quarterly basis. In January 2023, the Council will be reporting to the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to the Q3 payment, and the funding is expected to be received within the next few weeks. There is also confidence that local performance will be sufficient to receive the Q4 payment.
- b. The total number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans at the end of December in Kingston was 1,626. The Safety Valve Agreement's five-year financial model has the total number of EHCPs at the January 2023 census as 1640. At the time of writing, it is predicted that the total number of EHCPs at the School Census on 19th January 2023 will be very close to the number forecast in this financial model. There is a continued need to focus on the content and number of requests for EHC needs assessments given how much these have increased over the past year. This continues to be closely monitored alongside work to ensure all parties meet their statutory duties.
- c. This year, the total number of applications for EHC needs assessments has increased in comparison to 2021. This increase in need has come at a time when waiting times for some services are already high, and the capacity within many services is limited. From January to December 2022, Kingston received 291 requests for EHC needs assessments. This represents a 23% increase from January to December 2021. Requests from parents and carers reduced from 24% of total requests in 2021 to 21% of total requests in 2022.
- d. In June 2022 the DfE published the report "[High needs budgets: effective management in local authorities](#)" which included ten recommendations for all local authorities to consider. Kingston completed a self assessment against those recommendations and as a result commissioned one of the authors of the report, Peter Gray to conduct an assessment of local practice against two. Peter's report is attached at Annex A.
- e. Publication of school progress and attainment data has now resumed after Covid. This data relates to the academic year 2021/22.
 - i. Children registered as SEN Support in Kingston primary schools made on average stronger progress from Key Stage 1 (ages 5-7) to Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11) than the national average for pupils with SEN support in England in English and maths, and slightly worse progress in writing. Young people registered as SEN support in Kingston secondary schools made better progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 (14-16) than children on SEN support nationally.
 - ii. Children with an EHC plan in Kingston primary schools made slightly worse progress in English, writing and reading than the same cohort nationally. At secondary school those with an EHC plan made better progress than the same cohort nationally.

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

Impact and progress

- i. Huge thanks are due to [Kingston's Parent Carer Forum](#) for their ongoing work. They have recently reinforced their operating model by recruiting a part time administrator and members of their steering group attend monthly Parent Consortium meetings with senior officers from across the local area (representing education, health and social care). [Notes of these meetings are here](#), with key priorities

recently raised by parents and carers including the phase transfer process from primary to secondary school for those both with and without an EHC plan, the importance of communications between families and schools, and the use of the SENDIASS service.

- ii. The number of registrations with Kingston’s SEND Register exceeded 1000 for the first time in January, with an approximately 50:50 split between families with EHC plans and those without. The register is an excellent vehicle for partners to communicate with families and to raise awareness of the support that is available locally for them and their children. The regular newsletters sent to those registered also highlights opportunities for families to have their views heard about improvements they would like to see and ways they can become involved in future service design. [Families can sign up to Kingston’s SEND Register here.](#)
- iii. Part of the reason the SEND Register continues to grow is that our [SEND Parent Champions](#) and [SEND Parent Carer Engagement Officers](#) are raising awareness by attending events at schools and other community events. Please contact [Rob Harris](#) if you have any parents or carers who would like to become SEND Parent Champions or if you would like a member of the team to attend an event.

Areas of concern

- i. The post of Participation Officer for Children and Young People with SEND was vacant during Q3. The good news is that this post has now been filled with the new colleague starting in Q4.

3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning

a. SEND Placement Commissioning

- i. The reduction in expenditure target for the SEND Placement Commissioning Team (established in April 2022) for Kingston is £489,000, with performance at the end of 2022/23 Q3 £346,783 (71% of target).
- ii. Included in these reductions in forecast expenditure are agreements with colleges with whom cost agreements have been made for continuing learners. The commissioning team is currently meeting with other local colleges to discuss their proposed fee uplifts. In Kingston, the total reduction in fees for the 2022/23 financial year is £39,284.84 for continuing learners and £169,486 for new learners. This means that we are confidently predicting that we will have exceeded the Kingston Safety Valve target for SEND commissioning by the end of the financial year.
- iii. The following table demonstrates fee uplift requests and outcomes for independent schools, independent non-maintained special schools, further education, post-sixteen independent colleges and special academies, for 22/23 academic year:

		Requested fee uplift		Agreed fee uplift	
		Total requested cash value	Average requested fee uplift	Total agreed cash value	Average agreed fee uplift
Number of requests	31 providers fee uplift requests across 102 learners				
Range	1.9% - 3% (7 providers - 12 learners)	£18,791	2.60%	£9,676	1.43%
	3.1% - 4% (4 providers - 14 learners)	£11,518	3.67%	£8,906	3.37%
	4.1% - 11.89% (20 providers - 76 learners)	£70,487	5.95%	£36,063	4.43%

Average Requested	5.24%	4.03%
Total cash value	£100,796	£54,646

b. Improving processes within commissioning

- iv. As of January 2023, 80% of our contracts with independent providers have now been returned. Developing stronger relationships with schools has led to a school in a neighbouring local authority agreeing not to impose a fee lift without discussion, and also not to charge AfC for a student leaving mid-year.
- v. The commissioning team has developed a contact list for the use of SEND teams when consulting for high-cost providers. This contains all the information given to us by providers, which will then be added to with their OFSTED rating. This is currently in draft format and is being trialled this academic year.
- vi. The team has also developed a provider-based risk register that takes into account the following: legal status, contract status, feedback from SEND teams, fee increases, and Ofsted rating. This is used to prioritise meetings with providers. Negotiations are also completed at an early stage.
- vii. The commissioning team has worked on improving the transparency of commissioning costs by introducing forms that ask for a detailed cost breakdown as well as listing what is included in a placement cost to avoid unexpected/hidden costs in the future. This includes joint-funded placements with a focus on value for money and individual cost negotiation, cost comparison, benchmarking and a review of additional costs.

c. Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information Advice & Support Service (SENDIASS) Recommissioning

- i. The SENDIASS recommissioning is progressing on track and the new contract will start at the beginning of the next financial year.

Areas of concern

- i. The key concern is that the South London Commissioning Partnership is ending in January 2023. However, due to the work carried out during the summer we are ready to move to the [Commissioning Alliance](#). There may be a slight lag but as fee increase decisions are made over a period of three months, this should not have an impact.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision

Impact and progress

a. Therapies

- i. Providers have agreed on the list of Key Performance Indicators for each therapy service area that will be monitored from January 2023 onwards. These are currently being prepared with data teams and will be reported monthly where possible.
- ii. The list of outcome measures has also been agreed by providers, which will be monitored starting in 2023 and reported annually. The outcome measures have been developed with the Parent Carer Forums and will seek to capture the experience of children and young people and their families when they are accessing therapy services. The measures are for the most part consistent across all providers, but some minor amendments have been made to reflect the different deliveries of each of the types of therapy. The responses will either be captured via an annual survey, which will be launched in 2023, or via a link

to a survey that will be sent out when communications are sent between providers and parents. The results will then be collated and will be reported on in 2024.

- iii. A Therapies Oversight Group meeting was held on the 12th of December 2022 to discuss the approach to spot-commissioning. Analysis is currently being undertaken to better understand the cost of the therapy that is being spot-commissioned and to develop a new approach going forward. One potential option that is being considered is giving the spot-commissioning budget to the existing main providers to enable them to recruit more staff to deliver this provision instead of relying on other, more expensive providers. Further work will be undertaken in this area in early 2023.
- iv. A briefing paper has been prepared that is being discussed at a senior level within the ICB. The paper highlights current risks and issues about the lack of increase in provision to account for the increase in the number of children at special schools and Specialist Resource Provisions; the inconsistent provision post-16; and the need for investment to increase therapeutic intervention at an early stage by non-therapists to prevent needs escalating. The paper also proposes a new approach to spot-commissioning going forward.

b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health

- i. A final two Kingston schools have been engaged to join the [Mental Health Support Team](#).
- ii. Parents have continued to provide positive feedback about the Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) post-diagnosis programme delivered by the [Emotional Health Service](#).
- iii. The roll out of the [Quantitative Behavioural \(QB\) Test](#) for ADHD will begin in March 2023. This is a computer based test that combines attention and impulse control measurements with activity recordings collected by an infra-red camera. This test will help to improve our ADHD assessments.

c. Local Places

- i. Construction has now started on the new Spring School. The next steps will be to work with the Department for Education and Ambitious about Autism to amend the Spring School's admissions policy.
- ii. Permanent accommodation for Malden Oaks's post-16 provision is on course to be open by May/June 2023. In addition, the temporary use of the Star Centre was successfully managed.
- iii. Work on a new reception class at Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery has continued and is now close to completion. The goal is to ensure additional places are provided for September 2023.
- iv. Planning permission has been given for work to begin on adapting the road around Robin Hood School which will help to enable bespoke Specialist Resource Provision drop-off/collection.
- v. A feasibility report has been commissioned for the reconfiguration of an Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Specialist Resource Provision at Knollmead Primary School.
- vi. Next steps with expanding local specialist provision include commissioning a feasibility report for the Cullum Centre at The Kingston Academy. Future consideration will also need to be made around how best to reconfigure the Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust post-16 SEND campus proposal. In addition, progress will need to be made with St Philip's vocational centre in the next three months.
- vii. Achieving for Children (AfC) will also work with Kingston College within the next few months to secure space for Social Emotional and Mental Health provision to mirror Malden Oaks.

d. 16 to 25 Years

- i. There have been no significant changes in this area since November. Work on promoting the Local Offer across colleges and schools has continued in order to improve access to resources on transition.
- ii. Kingston Local Authority has continued working with the National Development Team for Inclusion to run the [Employment Forum](#), where young people with SEND can start exploring future employment opportunities. This has led to increased collaboration with the voluntary sector and parents of children and young people with SEND in order to broaden the reach of the forum. Trend data from [Next Steps](#) discussions with careers advisors has been analysed, and will also be used to inform the Employment Forum and to map out a sufficiency strategy.
- iii. Work has continued with schools and colleges around our Preparing for Adulthood provision.

Areas of concern

- i. Currently, there is an insufficient number of reception places available in Kingston Schools for the September 2023 cohort with EHCPs.
- ii. Progress on the establishment of the Cullum Centre at The Kingston Academy; St Philip's vocational centre; and the Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust post-16 SEND campus has not been as fast as we would have hoped.
- iii. AfC will be working with Ambitious about Autism to adapt the admissions policy for the new [Spring School](#) in Chessington.
- iv. There has been an increasing number of referrals for anxiety-based absences from school, this has had an impact on attendance in schools.
- v. There are growing risks for Health and the local authority / Achieving for Children due to difficulties in delivering therapies provision, particularly at a statutory level. Specific issues have been identified in relation to growth in Special Schools and Specialist Resource Provisions, such as inconsistent provision post-16; and lack of investment for early therapeutic intervention.
- vi. Difficulties in recruitment has meant there have been some staffing challenges in the Emotional Health Service team for children and young people with disabilities.

5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and transitions

a. First 1,001 Days and Early Help

- i. The Family Survey was sent out, and has now had over 300 responses from families (Kingston and Richmond). These responses will now begin to be collated and analysed and the findings shared with the relevant stakeholders and partners. It is hoped that these findings will result in better planning around the Early Help offer and the Family Hub model following this.
- ii. The Health Visiting service in Kingston has implemented the Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Nurse Home-visiting (MESCH), a parenting programme to support and help families through the transition to parenthood from pregnancy to child age 2 years.
- iii. Supporting Families consultants have been appointed to support the partnership early help offer.
- iv. The next steps will be to ensure there is stronger alignment with Kingston Council's corporate plans for Start Well/Best Start in Life.

Areas of concern

- i. Attendance at the Resilience Networks is not as high as we would like.
- ii. Families are currently experiencing a high level of need due to factors such as the cost of living crisis, the aftermath of the pandemic and mental health needs.

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

Impact and progress

- i. Work is currently underway to improve holistic outcomes on EHC needs assessments through streamlining paperwork and holding a core multi-agency meeting to discuss aspirations and shared outcomes.
- ii. A next step will be to develop some locality training on outcomes with a cluster of primary and secondary schools in Kingston.

Areas of concern

- i. Timeliness of advice as part of EHC needs assessments continue to fluctuate for a range of reasons including the capacity of various teams of practitioners. This has the potential to have an impact on the timeliness of the issuance of EHCPs.
- ii. Significant work remains to be done to improve the annual review process. This requires a whole system response across all of education, health and care and is the subject of the main agenda item at this meeting.

7. Financial update

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m	Previous Forum Variance £m
2022/23 DSG Outturn						
Schools Block	121.448	121.481	0.033	0.000	0.033	0.000
Central School Services Block	1.065	1.090	0.025	0.000	0.025	0.025
Early Years Block	13.058	12.472	(0.586)	0.000	(0.586)	(0.597)
High Needs Block	29.674	34.565	4.891	0.150	5.041	5.834
Sub-Total	165.245	169.608	4.362	0.150	4.512	5.262
2021/22 Carry forward	(9.820)	0.000	9.820	0.000	9.820	9.820
Safety Valve Funding	5.000	0.000	(5.000)	0.000	(5.000)	(5.000)
Council Funding	1.200	0.000	(1.200)	0.000	(1.200)	(1.200)
Total	161.625	169.608	7.982	0.150	8.132	8.882

Megan Francis-Falkner
SEND Policy & Project Coordinator
megan.francis-falkner@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Ashley Whittaker
Programme Director
ashley.whittaker@achievingforchildren.org.uk