



**Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
Safety Valve Agreement
Quarter Four 2022/23 & Quarter One 2023/24 Summary Update Report**

Date Submitted	19th May 2023
Data Date	30th April 2023
Signed off by S151 Officer	Rachel Howard
Signed off by Director of Children's Services	Ian Dodds
Background documents	Safety Valve Agreement SEND Futures Plan

Since the last monitoring report submission on 20th January 2023, progress has been generally positive. Most Safety Valve agreement (SVA) terms and conditions for 2022/23 were met and there is a good level of confidence that the work being implemented in Kingston is supporting the achievement of conditions for future years also. Local scrutiny of performance remains considerable, including since the last report by the council's People Committee, Schools Forum, and twice at the SEND Partnership Board.

Since the last monitoring report in January, the DfE has made two requests for additional information to be included, one relating to information about any delays to capital projects such as new free schools and the impact these are having on implementing the Safety Valve agreement, and the other being a request for a case study to demonstrate the positive impact on the experiences of children and young people arising from the improvements being implemented as part of the agreement. The former is included within the established section of Kingston's monitoring report structure called "*Capital: Progress on capital investment and associated local infrastructure growth*" below, and the latter is added as a new section at the very end of the report.

Of note is the receipt by Kingston of Safety Valve funding in the financial year 2022/23 originally scheduled for payment in following financial years. The Department for Education informed the council that this was "partly in recognition of Kingston's achievements with regards to the targets in your Safety Valve Agreement".

A summary update on each of the safety valve conditions is included in the table below with further detail on each area in the appendix. There are no changes to the levels of assurance since the previous report in January.

Level of assurance	Condition
Good	2, 3.6, 3.8
Medium	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.7, capital investment
Low	3.4, 3.5

It is important to note that whilst many aspects of performance have been very positive, the future financial position remains very challenging for reasons explained within this report and within the risk register at Annex D.

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level			
Condition 2: Maximum Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at year	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1

end £31.46m				22/23
	Low	Low	Good	Good

Kingston met this condition for financial year 2022/23 with an actual cumulative deficit before Safety Valve funding of £29.815m compared to a target of £31.465m, i.e. £1.650m better than the maximum stipulated. Kingston is also on track to meet this condition for 2023/24 with a full year forecast at the end of April of £31.779m compared to a maximum DSG deficit stipulated of £32.233m. It is worth noting however that Kingston has received additional grant to compensate for lower grant increase assumptions in future years relative to what was built into the original model and therefore the 'contingency' is actually £1m lower. In- year expenditure also remains significantly above in year income, and this needs to be resolved to deliver longer term financial sustainability.

The two major determinants of the size of this deficit are the total number of EHC plans and the average placement costs. The actual number of EHC plans is slightly below that in the original Safety Valve financial model of March 2021 (January 2023 census actual 1630 vs 1640 in the financial model). More information on how this has been achieved can be found in information relating to conditions 3.1 and 3.3 below.

Countering this is the impact of rising placement costs, driven by real increases in utility, food, and staffing costs plus the impact of a shortage of specialist placements in a provider market where organisations often have a strong position in price negotiations. We continue to be pleased with the impact of our placement commissioning team, operational since the start of last financial year (April 2022). Without them the financial position would be significantly worse. More information on their impact is available in the section relating to condition 3.4 below.

A multi-agency approach continues to be taken to both manage the need for EHCPs to be in place for the needs of children and young people to be met, and to agree placements and the allocation of placement costs (through the Joint Agency Panel) to ensure all parties pay their fair share according to statutory duties. The forecast for the total number of EHCPs at the end of this financial year is based on a pro rata extrapolation of a net increase of 15 EHC plans in April and give the increase in requests for needs assessments and number of EHC plans currently in the process of being written this is believed to be a reasonable estimate.

The key indicators to note are:

KPI	SVA Target '22/23	Q2 (Aug)	Q3 (Dec)	Q4 Actual	SVA Target '23/24	Q1 (Apr)
Max cumulative deficit before safety valve funding	£31.465m	£30.926m	£30.134m	£29.815m	£32.233m	£31.779m
Forecast number of EHCPs @ Jan '23 or '24 census	1,640	1,684	1,633	1,630	1,746	1,774
Forecast increase in EHCPs over census period (projected)	+103	+134	+83	+80	+116	+144
Actual EHCP at reporting date, target pro rata		1,622	1,626	1630	1,640	1,647

*we are in the process of looking at the EHCP forecasting and will include a more informed new year projection at Q2

Condition 3.1: Improve support available in schools to manage demand more effectively and reduce escalation of need.	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
	Good	Good	Medium	Medium

The number of requests for EHC needs assessments during financial year 2022/23 and how this compares to the previous year is shown below.

Kingston, requests for EHC needs assessments													
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Ttl
'22/3	23	32	26	50	11	14	17	17	25	19	24	35	293
'21/2	17	28	28	35	16	12	14	14	16	21	29	26	256

The year on year increase in requests over the whole financial year of 14% is considerably lower than the increase reported in Q3 for the first nine months of the financial year (when the increase for the April to December periods was 19%). Whilst this is good news, we have kept this condition as medium assurance due to the significant number of EHC plans that are likely to result from this significant number of requests.

We have previously reported on the improvements we have made to the support available to schools to help them identify and meet need without the need for an EHC plan and the changes we have made to the multi agency panel that decides if a request for EHC needs assessments will be agreed or refused. Intelligence gained from the panels is used to target specialist outreach services to assess and support local practice. It could be that these improvements and changes have contributed to the lower number of requests for assessment seen in Q4 2022/23 compared to Q4 2021/22 but we will need to wait for additional months to pass to understand if this reduction is a trend of a short term difference. The "deep dive" into Kingston's early intervention practice with our DfE SEND Advisor due to take place in March 2023 had to be postponed and it will now take place on 12th June, by when we will have data for April and May to use in the assessment of the contribution of these improvements and changes to local processes.

We continue to work to ensure that all partners are fulfilling their statutory duties under the SEND Code of Practice, and to promote our key local protocols and specialist outreach teams such as the [Threshold Guidance](#), [Early Advice and Intervention Panel](#) and [Education Inclusion Support Service](#). Building on the publication of the [Ordinarily Available](#) provision document on the Local Offer, the [Inclusion Charter and Toolkit](#) have now also been published. The School Improvement Team continue to include SEND at the core of their work in schools, including consideration of the impact of the toolkit on school practice.

The task and finish group considering alternative models of funding for SEND in mainstream schools in Kingston has now met three times, and is being led by a Senior Deputy Head Teacher. The last meeting included a presentation from another local authority who has been using a similar (but different) approach for the past three years. The next meeting in June will decide whether or not to proceed with a pilot in Kingston involving a limited number of schools. The Parent Carer Forum are briefed between each meeting to feedback on discussion and to collect their views.

Condition 3.2: Expand specialist provision to avoid placements in more expensive Non Maintained Special Schools and independent special schools.	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
<p>i. The installation of the four demountable classrooms at 6Oaks, a Specialist Resource Provision at the Duke's Centre, is on course to happen in August.</p> <p>ii. The People Committee will meet on the 13th of June to consider the 14-19 vocational centre at St Philip's. Before then, detailed clarification of the likely cost of the centre needs to be provided and agreed.</p> <p>iii. A site for the new post 16 SEND campus, funded by the £3.6m capital grant associated with the Safety Valve Agreement plus a substantial portion of the borough's HNC allocation, has not yet been identified.</p>				

The aim remains to provide up to 80 additional post- and pre-16 places in the borough and LocatEd, AfC and RBK continue to work to identify a potential site.

- iv. Coombe Academy Trust is commissioning a feasibility for reconfiguration of the Specialist Resource Provision areas at Knollmead to address condition issues.
- v. Some progress has been made with The Kingston Academy to provide additional space for young people with special educational needs, which will free up more space for pupils with SEND within the main building. No substantial progress has been made regarding the establishment of a Cullum Centre Specialist Resource Provision.
- vi. The Spring School remains on schedule to open in September in the Norbiton Primary School building, subject to resolution of planning matters to do with drop-off/collection and parking more generally.

Condition 3.3: Manage demand for EHC Plans by scrutinising provision at each annual review and continuing to work with consultants Mastodon C to forecast and manage EHCP growth during 2022/23	Q3 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
	Low	Low	Medium	Medium

At the end of March 2023, Kingston maintained a total of 1630 EHC plans. This is an increase of 75 since the start of the financial year at the start of April when the total was 1555. The total number of EHC plans reduced between December 2022 and March 2023 due to the relative numbers of EHC plans being issued and ceased during this period (including those transferring to other boroughs).

Kingston, total EHC plans maintained (end of month)												
'22/3	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Total	1569	1584	1596	1606	1622	1593	1596	1611	1626	1633	1630	1630

The forecast total number of EHC plans in the five year financial model when the Safety Valve Agreement was originally finalised in March 2021 for the January 2023 census was 1640. The actual total number of EHC plans at the time of the January 2023 census was 1630 which is 10 EHC plans less than in the original five year financial model. However, due to the large number of recent requests of EHC needs assessments, a significant proportion of which will result in a new EHC plan being issued, progress with this condition is considered to remain medium.

The number of new plans issued each month during the past financial year, and how it compares to the previous year, is shown below.

Kingston, new EHC plans issued													
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
'22/3	12	22	15	22	22	26	18	26	30	14	10	15	232
'21/2	16	16	16	16	12	10	18	31	28	14	14	13	204

When interpreting this data, and the 14% year on year increase in new plans issued during this period, factors to consider include that for 2021/22 the issuance of new EHC plans was impacted by the relative absence of children and young people from schools resulting from periods of lockdown, and the availability and ability of professionals, particularly health professionals, to complete the required assessments.

Over the past twelve months the proportion of requests for EHC needs assessments that have been declined is

17% and the proportion of assessments that took place where an EHC plan was refused was 3%. This compares to the latest national data on these proportions of 22% and 5.9% for calendar year 2021.

The number of EHC plans ceased each month since the start of this financial year, and how it compares to the same period the previous year, is shown below.

Kingston, EHC plans ceased (including transfers to other LAs)													
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
'22/3	3	6	7	11	4	7	20	13	15	14	15	17	132
'21/2	4	4	6	9	6	4	6	7	3	2	6	43	100

In the past financial year, the most significant reasons for an EHC plan to be ceased were (in descending order of prevalence) transfer to another local authority, departure from education, moved on to higher education, and moved into paid employment (excluding apprenticeships). 10 EHC plans were ceased for the reason that the young person reached the maximum age for an EHC plan of 25 years.

For 2023/24, the forecast for the total number of EHCPs at the end of this financial year is based on a pro rata extrapolation of a net increase of 15 EHC plans in April and given the increase in requests for needs assessments and number of EHC plans currently in the process of being written this is believed to be a reasonable estimate. This suggests the total number of EHC plans being about 30 over that in the Safety Valve model as at the January 2024 census.

Condition 3.4: Improve efficiency of commissioning services to drive down cost.	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

The SEND Commissioning Team has continued to deliver significant value, having reduced the actual expenditure in 2022/23 by £430k compared with that forecast for the financial year. This can be broken down as follows:

- i. The team reduced the expenditure on placements for 2022/23 financial year by £168k. These savings stem from e.g. negotiations with placement providers for discounts, credit notes or a reduction in fees.
- ii. The team also successfully achieved reductions in forecast expenditure by for example negotiating a step down in support or residential costs, early payment discounts or agreeing to a lower cost provider when a higher cost provider was in scope. These totalled £214k.
- iii. Mitigated savings on fee uplifts were also achieved for the financial year 2022/23 in the amount of £49k. This was due to the Commissioning Team negotiating lower fee increases when receiving requests from providers for fee uplifts.

This work will continue in 2023/24 but inflationary pressures have already had a lasting impact and may continue to push costs higher. Placement costs in certain sectors e.g. independent special post 16, continue to increase, exacerbated by a shortage in specialist places.

Condition 3.5: Increase contributions from health and social care.	Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
	Medium	Medium	Low	Low

In 2022/23 partner contributions grew to £2.465m, a small increase of £28k from the previous financial year. Health contributions grew by £125k, adult social care was the same year on year, and children's social care decreased by £97k. Contributions can vary considerably depending on the needs of the child or young person and we are confident that our Joint Agency Panel arrangements bring robust transparency to the local decision making process to ensure that all partners pay their fair share according to statutory responsibilities. However, given the significant and growing number of joint placements involving mental health needs, we are working with the local mental health trust to ensure that representation in decision making and funding is appropriate as we believe there is more work to do in this area.

For 2023/24 little has changed due to the lack of new placements during the first month of the financial year.

	RBK 23/24	RBK 22/23	Change
	£	£	£
Education	2,638,865	2,638,865	0
Childrens Social Care	1,537,155	1,537,155	0
Adults Social Care	433,054	433,054	0
Health	494,602	494,602	0
Total partner contributions - known EHCPs	2,464,811	2,464,811	0
Expected contributions to future EHCPs	72,442		72,442
Total partner contributions - projected EHCPs	2,537,253	2,464,811	72,442

Condition 3.6: Commission a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review and implement any recommendations arising from it which drive sustainability in their high needs system.

Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
Good	Good	Good	Good

The Schools Forum High Needs Block Subgroup met in February with agenda items including agenda items scrutinising performance against Safety Valve conditions; an update on the new bandings system (the system went live on the 31st of January 2023 for special schools with the next stage of the process being to develop bands for Early Years and Post-16); the currently uneven distribution of EHC plans across schools; alternative models for funding of SEND in mainstream; targeted high needs funding proposals

In terms of working more effectively with parents and carers, and building on the new role for parent engagement, progress continues. We continue to work with Coram to grow the Coram SEND Parent Champions scheme with the Parent Carer Engagement Officer acting as the Parent Champions Coordinator. The first cohort of SEND Parent Champions is active in school settings and in the community with additional recruits undergoing training. In conjunction with the Parent Champions, we continue to develop better methods of communication with SEND parents/ carers to ensure that parents and carers are better informed of local provision. The SEND Register now has more than 1000 families registered, allowing us to communicate directly with them on a regular basis through newsletters and other communications.

We are very grateful to our Parent Carer Forum who continue to do excellent work to support families of children with SEND. Of particular note is the work the PCF are leading on during the summer term to collect voices to inform the local areas self evaluation of performance against the new Ofsted and CQC local area send inspection framework. For example, eight face to face workshops are being held during May and June on topics such as neurodiversity, early years, and equality, diversity and inclusion in SEND in Kingston.

The Kingston Parent Carer Consortium continues to meet monthly with deep dive topics / agenda items set by participants.

Condition 3.7: Reforming of the authority's post-16 offer, including but not limited to development of new

Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4/Q1 22/23
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provision.	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	
<p>i. The Transitions Board, co-chaired by the Director of Children’s Services and the Associate Director for Adult Social Care, continues to lead and oversee improvements to Kingston’s post-16 offer. The SEND Partnership Board is also scrutinising progress during a “deep dive” session into this area at its June meeting.</p> <p>ii. The Employment Forum, which is made up of voluntary sector groups, schools, local providers, and including the South London Partnership continues to look at the ways we can improve employment and education opportunities for young people within our local area. Sub-groups have now been developed as part of the Employment Forum, each taking lead on key activities, such as looking at how we can start planning for young people at Key Stages 4. For example, one scheme being piloted is ‘passports to work’, which is about thinking critically about how we can deliver the curriculum to young people in alternative ways, which better caters to their needs and interests. This work on curriculum planning would also allow us to gather data which can be used to better understand the needs coming through the system, and what action we will need to take locally to react to these needs. Employment Forum funding has been used to fund staff to carry out the scoping and project planning. This funding has also gone towards developing and improving the Local Offer, in particular the Young People Zone, which is now more targeted around employment opportunities and available traineeships. In addition, this funding has gone towards staff support in setting up other employment schemes, such as through the Way to Work team. This financial year, the DfE is giving £20,000 in funding , which will be used partly to fund an Employment Engagement Officer. This will also be used to fund activity within the Way to Work Team, and will continue to fund an element of business support for the Employment Forum. In addition, the Employment Forum has begun working with Ambitious About Autism in developing 24 new supported internship opportunities across Kingston and Richmond. Work has also begun with Chessington World of Adventures on a new social value project, looking at developing employment opportunities for September 2024. The Local Area is also working with South London Careers Partnership, as well as the Education Careers Enterprise Group, through setting up meetings across South London and looking at which larger employers we can target.</p> <p>iii. In addition to improving outcomes for young people, the actions contained within the WSOA relating to DSG funded placements are positive. This is because the promotion of employment pathways such as supported internships and apprenticeships will result not only in improved longer term outcomes and independence for the young people involved, but it will also result in reduced average placement costs and a reduction in the total number of EHC plans.</p> <p>iv. Within Kingston there are three Maximising Independence posts currently going through evaluation. A key focus of these roles will be targeting small businesses for employment/internship opportunities. Work within Maximising Independence has also focused on getting therapists into commissioning placement posts. Another example is getting Autism Spectrum Condition Teacher and Support Worker posts filled, in order to have them target young people at risk of missing education.</p> <p>v. There is also considerable joint work between the Virtual School & College and SEND colleagues on the agenda of improving employment pathways where there is a significant shared agenda with regard to the Care Leavers Covenant and supporting young people into employment and long term independence.</p>					
Placement Setting	SVA Target 2022/23	2022/23 Q4	SVA Target 2023/24	2023/4 Q1	Difference 2023/24 Q1
>16 - Average cost of all settings	£11,521	£12,918	£12,724	£12,953	£229
Independent Special School >16	£33,029	£41,491	£40,869	£40,435	(-£434)

Independent Specialist provider >16	£28,326	£30,928	£30,464	£35,110	£4,646
Further Education Colleges	£2,630	£2,489	£2,452	£2,895	£443
In borough Special Schools >16	£25,198	£29,363	£30,244	£31,682	£1,438
Condition 3.8: Contribute to the reduction of the cumulative deficit via alternative council funding sources in each financial year covered by this agreement.			Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23
			Good	Good	Good
					Q4/Q1 22/23
					Medium
<p>2022/23 budget transfers were agreed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £1.2m general fund contribution agreed for 2022/23. - £656k in block transfers agreed as part of the DSG budget setting process (£502k from the Schools Block; £19k from the Central School Services Block and £135k from the Early Years Block). <p>The financial model builds in an anticipated annual underspend of £750k per year on the Early Years Block. This compares to an actual underspend in the Early Years Block of £463k. This gap of £287k is partly offset by the block transfers of £656k being £194k greater than in the model and underspends in the Schools and Central Services Blocks of £16k.</p> <p>For 2023/24, budget transfers have been agreed as follow:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £2.4m general fund contribution agreed for 2023/24 (note this has increased from previous years) - DSG block transfers agreed as part of the DSG budget setting process totalled slightly less than in the original financial model (£457k actual v £462k model) £350k from the Schools Block; £35k from the Central School Services Block and £72k from the Early Years Block). 					
Capital: Progress on capital investment and associated local infrastructure growth			Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23
			Medium	Medium	Medium
					Q4/Q1 22/23
					Medium
<p>A site for the new post 16 SEND campus, funded by the £3.6m capital grant associated with the Safety Valve Agreement plus a substantial portion of the borough's HNC allocation, has not yet been identified. The aim remains to provide up to 80 additional post- and pre-16 places in the borough and LocatEd, AfC and RBK continue to work to identify a potential site. An update on the progress with the construction of the Spring School, a specialist autism school run by Ambitious About Autism at the site of the Moor Lane centre in Chessington, is below.</p> <p>Comment re. DfE's request: <i>We are aware that in some LAs, delays to capital projects such as new free schools are causing difficulties in implementing the agreement. If this applies to you, we ask that you provide us with a clear account of the reasons for the delay and the impact of this in your next monitoring report:</i></p> <p>Achieving for Children, on behalf of Kingston Council, applied in October 2018 for a special free school for 90 children and young people with autism to be established. That school, to be known as Spring School, will open in September 2023. However, it will not open on its permanent site in Chessington, because the Department's contractor recently went into administration, leaving the school half-built; and it will instead open and spend its first year in a temporary home, a newly-built but otherwise empty primary school building in another part of the borough, subject to resolution of planning issues and successful re-procurement of a contractor for the permanent</p>					

site. The principal reason for the delay to the school's opening has been the challenge of planning for and building the school on a complex, mixed-use site.

Risks are monitored by the Director of Children's Services and the senior team and where needed, associated mitigating actions are identified and implemented. Appendix D provides the SEND Futures Plan risk register for information. It is important that the following risks continue to be carefully monitored:

- The increase in needs amongst children and young people, exemplified by the increase in requests for EHC needs assessments. This is particularly noticeable in a growing cohort of young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health needs who are not attending school (emotionally related school avoidance / ERSA).
- Availability of specialist places at special schools and in specialist resource provisions, and increasingly in relation to the growing number of ERSA related cases referred to above.
- Real increases in costs of placements driven by inflation in a number of sectors
- Staff retention and recruitment issues, for example amongst schools support staff - teaching assistants and HLTAs. Of particular recent concern have been the changes in the continuing healthcare team.
- The impact of changes in local Health arrangements arising from the establishment of the ICB at the same time as wider Health services are experiencing considerable pressures, both financial and relating to staffing. In addition, the ICS budget setting process does not include any ring fenced SEND funding and funding for SEND services is therefore dependent on allocations being agreed against a large number of other competing priorities. We are informed by ICS colleagues that additional restructuring / staff changes may take place during the current financial year and we are uncertain at this stage of the impact, if any, on SEND services.

We request the following support to successfully deliver the Safety Valve Agreement:

- Clarification from the DfE about responsibilities to fund placement costs for children who are looked after by one local authority and who are placed in a different local authority. (i.e. 1996 Belonging Regulations and Inter-authority recoupment regulations (2013) vs February 2022 High Needs Operation Guide which states that recoupment is 'not normally appropriate')
- That the DfE ensures the new special free schools in Richmond and Kingston are opened as soon as possible. Delays to opening will have a significant negative financial impact.
- A number of local academy special schools have approached AfC asking for increases to their funding due to rising operational costs and inflationary pressures. The DfE benchmarking shows that the level of funding provided is in line with other similar schools. It would be helpful if the DfE could support these schools to find solutions given they are academies.
- We continue to hear of cases where health professionals (e.g. psychiatrists and GPs) have discussed EHC needs assessments, plans and/or particular school placements with families in a way that is not always in line with the statutory process and the SEND Code of Practice. We ask that the DfE works with NHS England colleagues to ensure such conversations are conducted in line with formal processes so as to make the experience of families as joined up and understandable as possible.

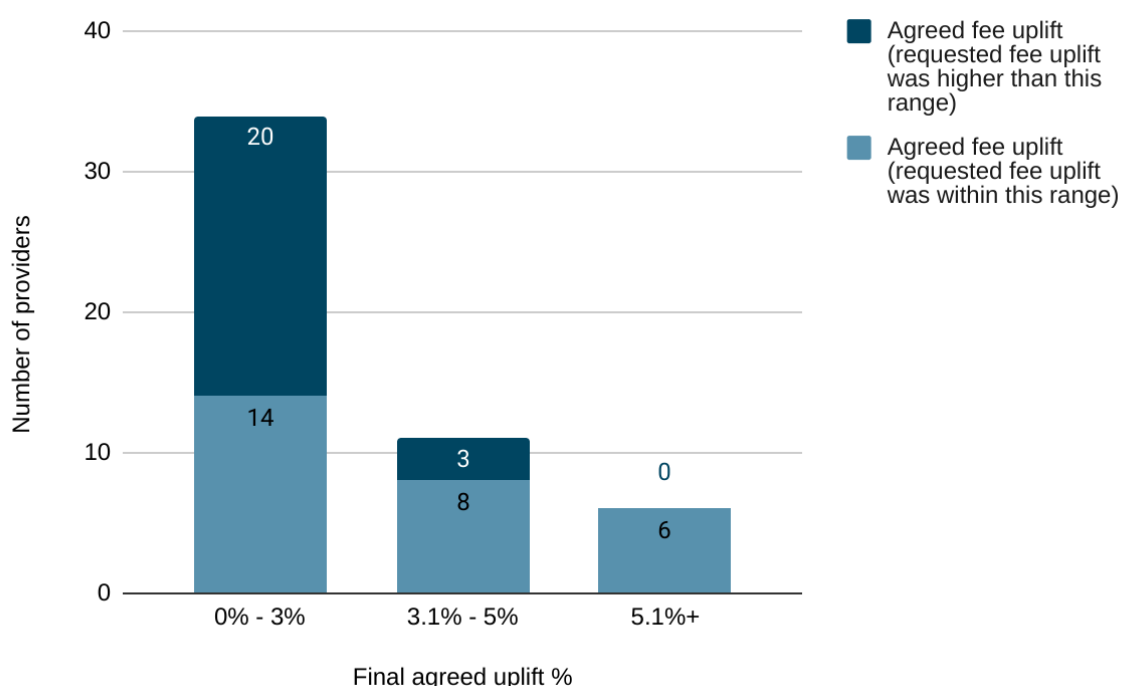
Case study study to demonstrate the positive impact on the experiences of children and young people arising from the improvements being implemented as part of the agreement

One of the conditions in Kingston's Safety Valve agreement is "*Improve efficiency of commissioning services to drive down cost*". This case study relates to **improvements in the value for money of Kingston's placements** for children and young people with SEND in the independent and non maintained sector and in the Further Education sector

After Kingston's Safety Valve agreement was finalised in March 2021 and the recommendations of the Local Government Peer Review of summer 2021 considered, it was decided to establish a bespoke SEND Placement Commissioning team within Kingston's children's services provider, Achieving for Children (AfC). Initially two experienced SEND commissioners were recruited on a six month basis from September 2021 to test the concept and scope out how a permanent team would be structured and focused. The permanent team of four staff (shared across a neighbouring local authority for economy of scale benefits) was subsequently established, operational from April 2022.

Key aspects of the team's work includes to take central responsibility for managing requests for fee uplifts, individual fee negotiations, contract management and shared commissioning responsibilities between all joint funded placements. The team reports to the SEND Associate Director, and collaborates closely with SEND delivery teams. Improving Value for Money has been defined as enabling learners to be able to meet their outcomes whilst at the same time finding ways to agree to drive down provider costs. After work to identify areas of greatest opportunity and therefore priority was concluded, it was decided that the team would initially focus on working with the special independent and mainstream further education sectors. Within these, independent special schools have been prioritised on the number of Kingston resident attendees and combined expenditure.

For example, based on insights on independent schools, we introduced the National Schools and Colleges Contract to all of our independent providers. The reason for this is that it is a high status contract amongst all providers and has clauses relating to areas such as agreement of fees, early exit discounts and notice periods. Due to inflation 48 of our providers (nearly 40%) requested or imposed fee increases during 2022/23. As a result of the contract, we were able to challenge all of these increases and were able to reach a compromise position in 90% of the cases. This rigorous control of fee uplifts is represented in the following table:



Children and young people will have had the same educational experience whilst AfC was able to keep costs down.

The team also identified that Further education Colleges can increase fees without systematic analysis based on need. We instigated a multi-agency panel where fees were analysed against learners' course level and needs on the EHC plan. Our main local college worked closely with us on this and were able to provide justification where fees were unexpected. As a result of this challenge, some fees were re-negotiated with no impact on the

learners' programmes.

Summary of appendices

Appendix A1 - Kingston Demand and Finance Dashboard 2022/23

Appendix A2 - Kingston Demand and Finance Dashboard 2023/24

Appendix B1 - Kingston Financial Model Monitoring 2022/23

Appendix B2 - Kingston Financial Model Monitoring 2023/24

Appendix C - SEND Futures Plan Update, May 2023

Appendix D - SEND Futures Plan Risk Register

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Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline 31st March 2022	Target 22/23	Q1 (MAY)	Q2 (AUG)	Q3 (DEC)	Q4 (MAR)	RAG	Comment	Target Derivation	KPI Category
1	Actual EHCPs	1566	1656	1584	1622	1626	1630	G	86 increase over 12 months	Pro rata	Demand Management
2	% increase in EHCPs	9.36%	5.75%	1.15%	3.58%	3.83%	4.09%	G	6% full year - rephased due to changed start point	Pro rata	Demand Management
3	Net EHCPs @ Jan Projected	1550	1640	1703	1684	1633	1630	G	Target rebased to reflect revised opening position - now net 95 increase	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
4	% increase	n/a	5.81%	9.87%	8.65%	5.35%	5.16%	G		Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
5	New EHCPs	220	176	46	59	74	39	G		Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
6	Ceased EHCPs	-107	-81	-10	-24	-48	-46	G		Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
6a	Movers	21	n/a	-18	21	34	71	G		Annual	Demand Management
7	% of EHCP per head of population	2.90%	3.07%	2.94%	3.01%	3.02%	3.29%	A		Annual	Demand management
8	% of pupils with SEN Support	9.90%	9.90%	9.90%	9.04%	9.04%	9.90%	G	New published data 16 June 2022	Annual	Demand management
9	HNB Surplus / Deficit	£5,715,000	£4,809,000	£5,960,000	£5,902,979	£5,040,787	£4,742,318	G	Excludes £1.2m GF contribution	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
10	HNB Spend	£32,068,010	£33,240,000	£35,556,411	£35,595,114	£34,714,922	£34,416,453	R		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
11	HNB Spend - direct (includes recoupment and future demand)	£30,242,796	£29,913,412	£33,747,673	£33,738,708	£32,982,201	£32,536,223	R		Annual	Financial Control
12	HNB Spend - central	£1,825,214	£3,326,588	£1,808,738	£1,856,406	£1,732,721	£1,880,231	G		Annual	Financial Control
13	In Year DSG Surplus/Deficit	£3,519,000	£2,859,000	£4,318,000	£4,105,000	£3,313,000	£2,993,000	A	Includes £1.2m Gf contribution	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
14a	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - before safety valve funding and grant received in advance	£27,921,000	£31,465,000	£32,239,000	£32,026,000	£31,234,000	£30,915,000	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
14b	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - before safety valve funding	£27,921,000	£31,465,000	£31,139,000	£30,926,000	£30,134,000	£29,815,000	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
15	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - after safety valve funding	£9,821,000	£6,465,000	£9,139,000	£8,926,000	£8,134,000	£4,814,000	G	Target adjusted for £3m SV rephasing	Annual	Financial Control
16	Funding gap as % of HNB allocation	-24.83%	-18.85%	-22.86%	-22.59%	-19.63%	-18.60%	G		Annual	Financial Control
17	Early Years outturn	£-358,000	£-750,000	£-467,000	£-623,000	£-586,000	£-463,000	R		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
18	HNB DSG allocation	£25,689,881	£27,969,000	£28,940,089	£29,036,089	£29,018,089	£29,018,089	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
19	Block transfers	£662,800	£462,000	£656,000	£656,000	£656,000	£656,000	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
20	General Fund	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,270,000	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
21	Savings / mitigation < 16 HNB only	£879,000	£495,500	£316,960	£455,500	£390,000	£410,131	A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
22	Savings / mitigation > 16 HNB only	£26,000	£490,500	£196,627	£311,500	£294,000	£322,925	R		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
23	Average cost - all HNB 2 - 18	£848	£873	£934	£935	£912	£904	R		Annual	Value for Money
24	Savings / mitigation - HNB only	£905,000	£986,000	£513,587	£767,000	£684,000	£733,056	R		Annual - In Plan	Value for Money
25	Average placement cost < 16s	£16,510	£15,989	£16,171	£16,162	£16,900	£16,535	R		Annual	Value for Money
26	Average placement cost > 16s	£13,838	£11,521	£13,687	£13,393	£12,829	£12,918	R		Annual	Value for Money
27	Average cost of an independent < 16	£33,873	£32,314	£34,959	£32,955	£33,855	£30,758	G		Annual	Value for Money
28	Average cost of maintained / academy special school - in borough	£30,413	£28,937	£28,709	£30,505	£29,008	£29,371	A		Annual	Value for Money
29	Average cost of maintained / academy special school - out borough	£31,102	£27,748	£29,901	£30,482	£31,192	£29,241	R		Annual	Value for Money
30	Average cost of an independent > 16	£38,079	£33,029	£39,206	£38,276	£39,306	£41,491	R		Annual	Value for Money
31	Average cost of FE colleges > 16	£2,459	£2,630	£4,342	£3,698	£2,839	£2,489	A		Annual	Value for Money
32	Average cost of ISP > 16	£38,699	£28,326	£31,026	£31,355	£32,227	£30,928	R		Annual	Value for Money
33	Average cost of in borough special school > 16	£28,737	£25,198	£22,826	£25,120	£28,721	£29,363	R		Annual	Value for Money
34	Average placement cost - alternative provision	£16,768	£17,343	£16,526	£16,526	£16,579	£16,579	G		Annual	Value for Money
35	Average cost of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	£20,837	£20,274	£20,765	£20,643	£20,783	£21,114	A		Annual - In Plan	Value for Money
36	% of spend in: the independent, non-maintained special school and independent college sector	28.42%	29.04%	27.72%	26.84%	27.09%	25.55%	G		Annual	Value for Money

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline (end of March 2023)	Target 23/24	Q1 (April)	Q2 (Aug)	Q3 (Nov)	Q4 (Mar)	RAG	Comment	Target Derivation	KPI Category
1	Actual EHCPs	1,630	1,640	1,647				G	116 increase over 12 months - pro rata over 1 months	Pro rata	Demand Management
2	% increase in EHCPs	4.09%	0.59%	1.04%				G	6% full year - rephased due to changed start point	Pro rata	Demand Management
3	Net EHCPs @ Jan Projected	1,630	1,746	1,774				R	116 increase over 12 months	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
4	% increase	5.16%	7.12%	8.83%				G	Target rebased to reflect revised opening position - now net 95 increase	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
5	New EHCPs	232	18	20				G	Adjusted to allow for larger movement to reflect actual starting position. Target presented pro rata (change from 22/23 presentation)	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
6	Ceased EHCPs	-132	-8	-9				G	Target presented pro rata (change from 22/23 presentation)	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
6a	Movers	-7		6				G	Q1 2023: 4 moved in, 2 transferred out	Annual	Demand Management
7	% of EHCP per head of population	3.29%	4.00%	3.33%				G	If we used the DfE School population (31,351) - 5.25%	Annual	Demand management
8	% of pupils with SEN Support	9.90%	12.60%	9.90%				G		Annual	Demand management
9	HNB Surplus / Deficit	4,742,318	3,917,000	4,559,776				R	Excludes £2.4m GF contribution	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
10	HNB Spend	34,416,453	34,585,000	36,723,211				R		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
11	HNB Spend - direct (includes recoupment and future demand)	32,536,223	32,696,659	34,859,797				R		Annual	Financial Control
12	HNB Spend - central	1,880,231	1,888,341	1,863,414				A		Annual	Financial Control
13	In Year DSG Surplus/Deficit	2,993,000	767,000	1,964,000				R	Includes £2.4m Gf contribution	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
14a	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - before safety valve funding and grant received in advance	30,915,000	32,233,000	32,879,000				A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
14b	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - before safety valve funding	29,815,000	32,233,000	31,779,000				G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
15	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - after safety valve funding	4,814,000	4,733,000	4,279,000				G	Target does not include the £3m forward funding	Annual	Financial Control
16	Funding gap as % of HNB allocation	-18.60%	-14.50%	-15.82%				R		Annual	Financial Control
17	Early Years outturn	-463,000	-750,000	-235,000				R		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
18	HNB DSG allocation	29,018,089	30,206,000	31,706,538				G	Including new grant for 3.4% special school and AP increase	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
19	Block transfers	656,000	462,000	456,900				A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
20	General Fund	1,270,000	2,400,000	2,400,000				G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
21	Savings / mitigation < 16 HNB only	410,131	555,500	451,474				A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
22	Savings / mitigation > 16 HNB only	322,925	512,500	348,013				A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
23	Average cost - all HNB 2 - 18	904	907	963				R		Annual	Value for Money
24	Savings / mitigation - HNB only	733,056	1,068,000	799,488				A		Annual - In Plan	Value for Money
25	Average placement cost < 16s	16,535	16,287	16,091				G	including future demand - 92.33 EHCPs staggered throughout year; target based on 1.5% decrease	Annual	Value for Money
26	Average placement cost > 16s	12,918	12,724	12,953				A		Annual	Value for Money
27	Average cost of an independent < 16	30,758	30,297	31,501				R	including future demand - £414,386 - 13 staggered throughout year	Annual	Value for Money
28	Average cost of maintained / academy special school - in borough	29,371	30,252	28,460				G	including future demand - £205,435 (includes place funding) - 8.33 estimated new September starters; and including 3% MFG estimate	Annual	Value for Money
29	Average cost of maintained / academy special school - out borough	29,241	28,802	29,362				A	including future demand - £78,667 (includes place funding) - 9 EHCPs staggered throughout year	Annual	Value for Money
30	Average cost of an independent > 16	41,491	40,869	40,435				G		Annual	Value for Money
31	Average cost of FE colleges > 16	2,489	2,452	2,895				R		Annual	Value for Money
32	Average cost of ISP > 16	30,928	30,464	35,110				R		Annual	Value for Money
33	Average cost of in borough special school > 16	29,363	30,244	31,682				R		Annual	Value for Money
34	Average placement cost - alternative provision	16,579	17,076	17,266				R	30 full year; increased estimated EHCP places -11 pre 16; 10 post 16	Annual	Value for Money
35	Average cost of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	£21,114	£19,809	£22,297				R		Annual - In Plan	Value for Money
36	% of spend in: the independent, non-maintained special school and independent college sector	25.55%	24.05%	26.77%				R	including future demand - £414,386 - 13 staggered throughout year	Annual	Value for Money

		2023/24							
KINGSTON FINANCIAL MODEL	Baseline (end of March 2023)	Financial Model	Q1 (April)	Q2 (Aug)	Q3 (Nov)	Q4 (Mar)	Variance	RAG	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m		
HNB allocation	29.018	30.206	31.707				1.501	G	
Budget additions (transfers)	0.656	0.462	0.457				-0.005	G	
Total budget	29.674	30.668	32.163				1.495	G	
HNB expenditure before savings	35.150	35.653	37.523				1.870	R	
Increased places in Specialist Resource Provisions (SRP)	-0.136	-0.010	-0.115				-0.105	G	
Review of SRP vacant place funding	0.000	0.000	0.000				0.000	G	
Increased special school places	-0.045	-0.154	-0.034				0.120	A	
Development of post 16 offer	-0.094	-0.121	-0.045				0.076	G	
Improved commissioning practice including annual reviews	-0.430	-0.533	-0.533				0.000	G	
Contributions from other partners (health & social care)	-0.028	-0.250	-0.072				0.178	A	
HNB expenditure after savings	34.416	34.585	36.723				2.138	R	
Net HNB deficit	4.742	3.917	4.560				0.643	R	
Variance in other DSG blocks	-0.479	-0.750	-0.196				0.554	R	
General Fund Contribution	-1.270	-2.400	-2.400				0.000	G	
Net HNB Deficit	2.993	0.767	1.964				1.197	R	
Net DSG deficit - cumulative before safety valve and additional grant RIA	30.915	32.233	32.879				0.646	R	
Net DSG deficit - cumulative before safety valve	29.815	32.233	31.779				-0.454	G	
Net DSG deficit - cumulative after max safety valve and DSG Received in advance	4.815	4.733	4.279				-0.454	G	

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 three times per year. The Council was judged by the Department for Education (DfE) to have made sufficient progress with the implementation of actions in the SEND Futures Plan to receive all payments for the most recent financial year. The DfE has changed the timings of some of the payments in the original agreement and some of the funding originally scheduled for 2023/24 was also paid in 2022/23. The Council is now about to submit its first Safety Valve report for financial year 2023/24 and is confident funds available under the agreement for the next payment will be received.
- b. At the end of April 2023, Kingston maintained a total of 1647 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This is an increase of 78 since the start of May when the total was 1569.
- c. The forecast total number of EHCPs in the five year financial model when the Safety Valve Agreement was originally finalised in March 2021 for the January 2023 census was 1640. The actual total number of EHCPs at the time of the January 2023 census was 1630 which is 10 EHCPs less than in the original five year financial model.
- d. A task and finish group comprised of headteachers, school senior leaders, SENCOs and local authority officers have continued to meet to discuss the next steps after the report commissioned to consider alternative mechanisms to fund SEND in mainstream schools. [The report can be found here](#) with an [executive summary here](#). The group has met three times and will meet for a total of five times this year to look at alternatives, with the aim of making a recommendation for future arrangements before the end of the summer term.

2. Workstream 1: Co-production, engagement and participation**Impact and progress****a. Children and Young People (CYP)**

- i. The new Participation Officer for Children and Young People with SEND has started work on engaging with children and young people to ensure their views are heard and reflected in ongoing improvements to our services. Amongst other things she will be conducting focus groups with children and young people with SEND in Kingston mainstream and special schools to collect their views and ideas.

b. Parents and Carers

- i. The number of registrations with [Kingston's SEND Register](#) stood at 1066 at the start of May, with an approximately 50:50 split between families with Education Health and Care plans (EHCPs) 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](#).
- ii. This workstream has continued to work on planning and undertaking engagement with children, young people and parents and carers, in order to ensure their voices will feed into an updated version of the SEND Futures Plan. The feedback from consultations such as these will not only be used to feed into updating the SEND Futures Plan, but will also help to inform the Local Area's new self-evaluation framework.

- iii. As part of this engagement work, Kingston Parent Carer Forum are working with Achieving for Children to host seven in-person focus groups for parents and carers in Kingston. These focus groups will span the following topics: early years, primary school aged children, secondary school aged children, post-16, ethnic diversity, neurodiversity and complex needs. There is now a [page on the Local Offer](#) which gives more detailed information about the focus groups, and includes frequently asked questions and the registration form.

3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning

Impact and progress

a. SEND Placement Commissioning

- i. The SEND Commissioning Team has continued to make savings, having reduced the actual expenditure by £429,827 compared with the forecast for the current financial year, which accounts for 87.9% of their savings target for the 2022/23 financial year.
- ii. The team reduced the expenditure on placements for 2022/23 financial year by £167,831.14. These cash savings that are made mid-year are due to negotiations with placement providers for discounts, credit notes or a reduction in fees.
- iii. The team also successfully achieved reductions in forecast expenditure based on increases to placement costs that were mitigated against in the amount of 213,082.33. This was done through negotiating a step down in support or residential costs, early payment discounts or agreeing to a lower cost provider when a higher cost provider was in scope.
- iv. Mitigated savings on fee uplifts were also achieved for the financial year 2022/23 in the amount of £48,913.28. This was due to Achieving for Children negotiating lower fee increases when receiving requests from providers for fee uplifts.

b. Short Breaks Recommissioning

- i. Short Breaks activities ran throughout the Easter holidays, and Achieving for Children have received positive feedback from the agencies used for Short Breaks.

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

- i. Polaris, the new provider of SENDIASS is in the process of ensuring their IT systems and information and guidance is up to date and readily available. Information about SENDIASS is available [here](#).

Areas of concern

- i. The saving target for Kingston was unfortunately not met in part due to the difficulty over the course of the year in driving down inflationary fee increase requests. In addition, there are fewer Kingston residents attending high cost placements than in Richmond, which means there are less providers with which to negotiate reduced costs, thus the impact of this is seen disproportionately in Kingston.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision

Impact and progress

a. Therapies

- i. A new spot commissioning process is now in place to ensure all young people requiring therapy are documented, and the cost of those packages are in place and awaiting procurement.
- ii. There have been further discussions over the prospect of purchasing therapy for cohorts of young people from local providers rather than at an individual, case by case basis.
- iii. A gap analysis of Speech and Language and Occupational Therapy is currently underway which will inform Kingston Place, and the Integrated Care Board in regards to the resources that will be required to deliver statutory provision.
- iv. Future milestones include revising the Therapies Oversight Group (TOG) terms of reference in addition to reviewing the pre and post-service which is being re-commissioned through Your Healthcare.
- v. Another key goal for the next three months will be to agree on an approach to how EHC needs assessment advice is given, to ensure all young people who require therapy assessments can access these from commissioned providers in the area.

b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health

- i. The next steps in the coming months will be to develop a local strategy for social, emotional and mental health difficulties and the provision needed. In addition, to consider the local provision available for young people who fall into the category of Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA) and respond to increasing need.

c. Local Places

- i. The installation of the four demountable classrooms at 6Oaks, a Specialist Resource Provision at the Duke's Centre, is on course to happen in August.
- ii. The People Committee will meet on the 13th of June to consider the 14-19 vocational centre at St Philip's. Before then, detailed clarification of the likely cost of the centre needs to be provided and agreed.
- iii. Coombe Academy Trust is commissioning a feasibility for reconfiguration of the Specialist Resource Provision areas at Knollmead to address condition issues.
- iv. Some progress has been made with The Kingston Academy to provide additional space for young people with special educational needs, which will free up more space for pupils with SEND within the main building. No substantial progress has been made regarding the establishment of a Cullum Centre Specialist Resource Provision.
- v. The Spring School remains on schedule to open in September in the Norbiton Primary School building, subject to resolution of planning matters to do with drop-off/collection and parking more generally.

d. 16 to 25 Years

- i. The Transitions Board, co-chaired by the Director of Children's Services and the Associate Director for Adult Social Care, continues to lead and oversee improvements to Kingston's post-16 offer. The SEND Partnership Board is also scrutinising progress during a "deep dive" session into this area at its June meeting.
- ii. The Employment Forum, which is made up of voluntary sector groups, schools, local providers, and South London Partnership continues to look at the ways we can improve employment and education opportunities for young people within our local area.

- iii. Sub-groups have now been developed as part of the Employment Forum, each taking lead on key activities, such as looking at how we can start planning for young people at Key Stages 4. For example, one scheme being piloted is 'passports to work', which is about thinking critically about how we can deliver the curriculum to young people in alternative ways, which better caters to their needs and interests. This work on curriculum planning would also allow us to gather data which can be used to better understand the demand coming through the system, and what action we will need to take locally to react to this demand.
- iv. During the previous financial year, 2022/23, the Department for Education (DfE), gave the employment forum £10,000 to carry out their work. This has been used to fund staff to carry out the scoping and project planning. This funding has also gone towards developing and improving the Local Offer, in particular the Young People Zone, which is now more targeted around employment opportunities and available traineeships. In addition, this funding has gone towards staff support in setting up other employment schemes, such as through the Way to Work team.
- v. This financial year, the DfE is giving £20,000 in funding to Kingston borough, which will be used partly to fund an Employment Engagement Officer. This will also be used to fund activity within the Way to Work Team, and will continue to fund an element of business support for the Employment Forum.
- vi. A key outcome to come out of the Employment Forum is the successful creation of 8 supported internships in Kingston, 6 for young people from Kingston, and 2 for young people from Richmond, which will be starting in September. In addition, the Employment Forum has begun working with Ambitious About Autism in developing 24 new supported internship opportunities across Kingston and Richmond.
- vii. Work has also begun with Chessington World of Adventures on a new social value project, looking at developing employment opportunities for September 2024.
- viii. The Local Area is also working with South London Careers Partnership, as well as the Education Careers Enterprise Group, through setting up meetings across South London and looking at which larger employers we can target.
- ix. Within Kingston there are three Maximising Independence posts currently going through evaluation. A key focus of these roles will be targeting small businesses for employment/internship opportunities. Work within Maximising Independence has also focused on getting therapists into commissioning placement posts. Another example is getting Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) Teacher and Support Worker posts filled, in order to have them target young people at risk of missing education.
- x. There is also considerable joint work between the Virtual School & College and SEND colleagues on the agenda of improving employment pathways where there is a significant shared agenda with regard to the Care Leavers Covenant and supporting young people into employment and long term independence.

Areas of concern

- i. The expansion of specialist places and the need to ensure that there is capacity to provide therapy in each new provision.
- ii. The submission of private assessments as part of an EHC needs assessment for young people who have not been referred to local commissioned providers.
- iii. More training is needed for colleagues making mental health contributions to education health and care needs assessments, in particular given that this is an area of increasing need.

- iv. There is an increasing number of young people who fit into the category of ERSA, meaning there is a need to invest in better provision to meet this need, through using early intervention.
- v. The waiting times for ADHD and ASC assessments continue to be a concern and are proving difficult to reduce despite increased staffing.
- vi. Currently, there are no parent/carers representatives within the Employment Forum, however there are named parent/carers that are being directly updated on a regular basis. There is still work that needs to be done in terms of structure and governance of the Employment Forum. For example, the Forum is currently chaired only by a Local Authority representative, therefore there is a need to find a Co-Chair, ideally someone who can represent local businesses/industry.
 - i. There has been a lack of clarity over how much of the uncommitted Education Capital Funding remains.
 - ii. The DfE are yet to determine how and when they will procure a new contractor to finish the permanent accommodation for Spring School so there is a small risk that this project will not be completed by September 2024.

5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and transitions

Impact and progress

a. First 1,001 Days and Early Help

- i. A workshop for Early Years settings took place in May in response to increasing levels of need within this sector, in particular an increase in need for speech and language and health visitors at both private and voluntary sector nurseries. Two of the most significant issues raised were the increase amongst families in need for speech and language and health visitors at both private and voluntary sector nurseries. There is a need for a multi-agency response to ensure these issues are addressed at the source.
- ii. Supporting Families Consultants are now in-post and six schools have been identified to pilot their work. The aim of this work is to increase partners confidence in completing early help assessments and 'team around the child' plans.
- iii. Resilience Networks are seeing an increase in attendance from partners and of families being presented.
- iv. A wide range of parenting programs are now on offer and the [Parent Champion Network](#) funding has been extended and expanded, allowing an ongoing rolling program of training for practitioners and an increase in parent volunteers to deliver support to other parents.
- v. A longer term future project is the implementation of a Supporting Families module in our recording system to support better information sharing across the partnership and for the needs of families to be understood at the front door. The first phase of this project will be to ensure the IT project team is in place.
- vi. Another upcoming project will look at scoping for a Family Hubs model to support an integrated and multidisciplinary offer across the ages. This will be similar to children's centres but for children from 0 - 18 years and retaining activities for young people, as well as having an increased offer for family support in these centres.

b. Early Years onwards

- i. The Workstream 4 action plan has been updated with greater input from workstream members, leading to new areas of focus being identified. In addition, the meeting format has changed to enable a 'deep dive' focus on elements of the action plan in need of attention, in order to provide a better platform to support/challenge colleagues.
- ii. Good progress has been made with the Ordinarily Available provision, with the document now on the [Local Offer](#). Work is ongoing to raise awareness around this resource.
- iii. The School Improvement Team is increasingly focused on including SEND within their wider improvement work.
- iv. The new Alternative Provision and Attendance Strategy documents are currently being developed, and will be available at a universal level. The next stage will be to scope out the key strategy for both projects.

Areas of concern

- i. Lack of capacity across a number of services impacting opportunities for creative and robust service planning.
- ii. Early Help assessment, while covering the essentials, may still be too big an area for partners to cover. Working Together guidance focuses on information sharing and multi-agency working, therefore it is important that this is kept as a key focus, in order to ensure families get support from staff they already work with.
- iii. There are a high number of families referred to Early Help that were not aware of the referral. Given that Child in Need and Early Help are consent based services, consent has to be sought prior to the referral so the family are on board from the start about what they need.
- iv. Schools' ability to support parental resilience, particularly around attendance at school, continues to be a challenge.

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

Impact and progress

- i. As a result of the feedback from the Secondary SENCO Collaborative, there is a draft multi-agency meeting template currently being developed subject to feedback from Workstream 5 members. The workstream is also working on developing better outcomes and guidance around the key stages of Preparing for Adulthood.
- ii. The all-age plan is being re-designed, explicitly linking Preparing for Adulthood headings with the remaining headings. This will likely be piloted in September 2023.
- iii. Workstream 5 members have agreed to complete regular quality assurance checks of annual reviews, which will increase the resilience of the annual review process.
- iv. Work has started on drafting guidance for advice givers to give them more clarity when writing their advice for EHCPs or annual reviews, ensuring that this links in with the development of holistic outcomes and the quality of provision.
- v. A more long term project for Workstream 5 will be on the digitisation of our forms, however further co-production/participation is required across the Partnership to further this work.

Areas of concern

- vi. The timeliness of annual reviews continues to be a concern, meaning that this is being monitored as a risk.

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RBK - SEND FUTURES PLAN RISK REGISTER - May 2023

Risks	Impact	Strategy	Actions	Risk Score
Partnership Board				
Lack of partner engagement and shared ownership of the plan with resultant lack of investment	There is no or limited traction in delivering the system change and behaviours that are necessary to transform services and achieve better outcomes for children and young people with SEND within the financial resources available.	Mitigate	Provide strong leadership of the SEND Partnership Board. Maintain current engagement from all key partner agencies to the vision, shared values and key activities. Obtain support from the Health and Wellbeing Board. Maintain the current schedule of regular meetings and reporting to share progress and achievements and escalate through formal channels as needed to ICB.	High
Ineffective governance of the SEND Partnership Board and workstreams.	There is a lack of focus and pace in delivering activities, and drift and delay in decision making. There is duplication and mixed messaging from partnership boards and other organisations working in this arena, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, SEND Partnership Board and Schools Forum.	Mitigate	Strengthen governance structures that are all clearly understood and adhered to by all stakeholders, and supported by additional project management capacity. Ensure there is effective stakeholder representation on the SEND Partnership Board and six workstreams. Deliver a detailed communications plan.	Moderate
Lack of capacity and capability to drive and deliver transformation.	Key activities in the plan cannot be delivered within the timescales necessary. Partner organisations, parents and carers lose faith in their ability to achieve system change.	Mitigate	Sufficient resources from all partner organisations are allocated to deliver the activities in the plan. There is strong senior leadership of the workstreams. There is a programme to upskill the workforce to deliver the plan. Additional resources and expertise are sourced externally where this is required.	High
Lack of agreement on how DSG funding is shared between different blocks.	There is a significant financial gap in the plan which will need to be met from other activities.	Mitigate	Build consensus across the whole system for how DSG funding should be shared. Continue discussions with the Department for Education on the national DSG funding formula. Contingency plans are established to allocate the funding shortfall to other actions within the plan.	High

The impact of the COVID pandemic on the needs of children and young people	The pandemic has had a significant impact on increased levels and complexity of need.	Mitigate	Frequent communications between agencies, providers and families to identify and respond to related matters as quickly as possible. For those with an EHC plan, the annual review process will provide more information, as will the volume and content of EHC needs assessments requests	High
SEND Futures Plan: All workstreams				
Increased level and complexity of need	As previously reported we are continuing to see increased levels in need, in both volume and complexity, across the borough.	Mitigate	All workstreams are playing a role e.g Workstream 2 is leading the improvement of therapy provision, Workstream 3 is working to expand local specialist provision, early identification and intervention practice is promoted by Workstream 4, and Workstream 5 is strengthening the processes relating to EHC needs assessments	High
Inability to recruit professionals into certain roles across the service. Specific examples of this in certain services are: Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech &	<p>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. This may also impact other service areas and delivery on the SEND Futures Plan as they will have reduced capacity to deliver.</p> <p>There is a risk that shortage of staff will lead to a lack of available / appropriate staff, causing 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.</p>	Mitigate	<p>The following actions are being taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job profiles, salary levels, adjustment to T&Cs and salary/ contract alignment with other providers and the recruitment process attract good candidates with relevant expertise and experience. - There is an effective induction, development and support package available to all professionals involved. - We are working with all providers and the AfC Workforce Board to combat recruitment and retention issues within the services. Creative solutions are being sought across the service to combat current recruitment issues. - Flexible working arrangements are available including secondments from schools. 	High

Language Therapists and SEND Case Workers.				
Implementation of the Integrated Care System (ICS) and the impact on the SEND system	There remains some uncertainty about future arrangements for health provision and SEND services and what this means for children and young people. This includes staffing efficiencies to be delivered in the current financial year. There may be an impact on delivery and health provision in the borough moving forward.	Mitigate	Ensure SEND receives sufficient profile and prioritisation at local ICB and regional ICS level. Escalate to ICB Executive as necessary.	High
Uncertainty regarding the funding split between Education, Social Care, Health and Adult Services	Future financial uncertainty and inability to forward plan due to funding arrangements not being transparent. Longer term putting financial pressure on the DSG.	Mitigate	Continue to improve joint commissioning arrangements and funding panels, especially at 16 to 25 years so that all partners meet their statutory duties	High
Workstream 1: Participation , Engagement and Co-production				
Inability to secure an effective and engaged parent-carer forum (PCF) that is able to work collaboratively in the SEND partnership.	The voices and opinions of parents and carers do not inform strategic decision-making. Implementation of the plan is not successful as parents are not informed, aware or signed up to the system change required.	Mitigate	Build and maintain strong relationships between the PCF Chair and steering group and senior officers in the local area. PCF membership of the SEND Partnership Forum and workstreams. Use the new investment / SEND Parent Carer Engagement Officer to support the PCF. Implement and embed the new partnership working agreement across the partnership.	Moderate
Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning				
Commercial	Placement costs are not reduced, meaning that additional	Mitigate	The strategic approach to commissioning is strengthened	High

negotiations with SEND providers are unproductive. Costs of placements continue to increase through provider costs, inflationary pressures and supply/demand pressures.	savings have to be found from other areas of the plan. Additional pressure of inflationary increases are impacting the cost of placements and making further negotiations challenging. Due to the demand for specialist places and lack of available spaces, in-borough and regionally, costs are increasing.		through improved commissioning practice and processes including through the new (April 2022) SEND Placement Commissioning Team and the wider work of this workstream.	
Future uncertainty around joint commissioning once ICS is implemented.	There remains some uncertainty around processes in the workstream and also for the services that are being provided to children, young people and their families.	Mitigate	Joint working between the ICS, AfC and the council's Adult Social Care team needs to be strengthened. Clarity to be provided by the ICS on future arrangements. The joint commissioning strategy has been reviewed under workstream 2 to ensure that the changes to the ICS are considered alongside our strategy.	High
Workstream 3: Local Provision				
Support from schools for the local SEND provision plan is not consistent or sufficient to create the additional school places required.	There are insufficient local special school places to meet the needs identified in the SEND provision plan, making the Council more reliant on maintained and special schools outside the borough and on non-maintained and independent school provision	Mitigate	There is effective engagement and communication with schools through existing networks to agree to the local provision plan. Proposals are based on a detailed analysis of local needs. Good consultation with schools and other stakeholders leads to strong proposals and well managed plans to develop new provision.	Low
Parents and carers do not feel	There is an increase in the number of disputed EHCPs and appeals to the First-Tier SEND Tribunal on the basis of	Mitigate	There is a clear strategy to promote the resources and facilities available in local provision and the outcomes	Moderate

confident that local mainstream schools, specialist resource provisions and special schools are able to meet their child's assessed needs.	parental preference. The workload for SEND professionals is increased and there is a potential for the tribunal to direct that the local authority makes alternative and higher cost provision.		they achieve for children and young people with SEND. The quality of local provision is actively promoted by all practitioners in their relationships with parents and through their professional networks.	
Lack of available specialist places	That there are not sufficient specialist places within the borough, or out of borough and children and young people may be left without appropriate provision. Lack of specialist places is also increasing the price of placements and therefore increasing overall spend.	Mitigate	Ensure that the development of new specialist placements including the new special free school open as soon as possible. This will need collaborative work from multiple partners and looking for alternative solutions wherever possible. Continue to ensure mapping of appropriate provision. Escalate matters relating to free school delivery with DfE through Safety Valve process.	High
Local therapy provision is unable to be delivered to meet the identified needs of children with disabilities.	Children's therapeutic needs cannot be met locally leading to placements in more specialist school provision and at a higher cost. Strain on the therapies service means that there is less support/ provision for early intervention and SEN support.	Mitigate	The recommendations of the therapy review are implemented asap, updated for the increase in need since then, and sufficient funding and resources secured. Continue to escalate to ICB executive as required.	High
Emotional wellbeing and mental health needs amongst children and young people with and without SEND increase	Expenditure from the High Needs Block increases to meet their needs.	Mitigate	Develop the universal early intervention offer, recruit and redeploy staff to meet needs as quickly as possible and prevent escalation where possible, develop iThrive model asap. Implement the CAMHS Transformation Plan.	High

Increased waiting times for CAMHS, EHS and therapies.	Waiting times are increasing and therefore children and young people are not getting the support they need early or quick enough.	Mitigate	As per two previous risks.	High
Workstream 4: Early Interventions and Transitions				
School professionals do not support inclusion and early intervention, or there is inconsistent support across schools.	Children and young people with SEND cannot be supported within mainstream schools or specialist resource provisions, meaning that they have to be transferred to special schools or non-maintained and independent schools at a higher cost.	Mitigate	There is effective engagement and communication with professionals through the SENCO and headteacher networks. There is an effective learning, development and support offer to schools to support inclusive practice. The shape of the offer is informed by learning from EHCP assessments, tribunals and other feedback.	Moderate
Phase transfer for children and young people is not planned early enough and is not as effective as it could be	Young people and adults with SEND do not receive the support they need in a timely way from the appropriate services during phase transfer. Ineffective transition between phases not being planned early enough may impact the new placement setting not being properly equipped and also the child/ young person not receiving the support they need. Poorly planned transitions between phases of education may see escalating level and complexity of need.	Mitigate	Review transition practice (pathway planning, information sharing, staff briefing / training etc) at all early years, schools and colleges, for both SEN Support and EHCPs, to identify best practice and share widely to support improvements where gaps exist. Transition framework being developed and has been produced in collaboration with school partners, AfC colleagues, parents and carers and children and young people	Moderate
Schools having limited capacity, funding and resources to deliver on inclusivity and deliver change on SEND practice.	The quality of support inclusion and early intervention does not improve at the required pace and therefore children and young people are not supported at the earliest opportunity. There is inconsistent support across the schools in the borough. 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. Schools are	Mitigate	The Inclusion Charter to be embedded throughout the school system and adopted by schools across the borough. Regional School Commissioner to be made aware of this risk and what impact this has with academy schools. SENDCO network to be aware of the graduated response triangle and the options of early intervention that are available to them, this will assist with schools being more	Moderate

	experiencing lots of different pressures which are impacting their ability to deliver on the SEND agenda.		inclusive. Deliver recommendations of Peter Gray's January 2023 report being considered by Schools Forum in the same month.	
Workstream 5: Assessment and Planning				
Annual EHCP reviews and updates to plans following quality assurance require substantial changes to plans.	There is insufficient capacity within the SEND service to make required changes to EHCPs. Proposed changes to plans result in parental challenge, disputed EHCPs and appeals to the SEND tribunal, which may result in higher cost provision.	Mitigate	The management structure and staffing of the SEND service is regularly reviewed to ensure sufficient capacity. There is a priority programme for annual EHCP reviews and quality assurance and this is well coordinated and managed by specific senior staff. There is engagement with parents and carers. Assessments and plans are well evidenced by all contributing professionals.	High
Annual EHCP reviews do not reduce the costs of individual plans to an affordable funding level that meets the child's or young person's needs.	Proposed changes to plans result in increased parental challenge, disputed EHCPs and appeals to the SEND tribunal, which may result in higher cost provision	Mitigate	Annual EHCP reviews and quality assurance are well coordinated and managed. There is engagement with parents and carers. Assessments and plans are well evidenced by all contributing professionals.	High
The SEND service does not have the systems, processes and support it needs to drive up the quality of EHCP assessments and plans.	The quality of EHCP assessments and plans does not improve at the required pace. EHCPs do not robustly and sufficiently evidence how and where children's and young people's education, health and care needs can be met. This may result in increased parental challenge, disputed EHCPs and appeals to the SEND tribunal, which may result in higher cost provision.	Mitigate	There is a priority programme for annual EHCP reviews and quality assurance.	High
Annual review	Schools not completing Annual Reviews on time impacts	Mitigate	Providing relevant training to schools through various	High

process being late and lack of capacity for SENDCOs to complete in line with person centred approach	timeliness therefore meaning that reviews will not be delivered within statutory timeframes. Annual Reviews not being person centred will affect independence of the child/ young person and may not see their aspirations or needs met whilst they are at school.		forums including Headteacher meetings and SENDCO forums to inform them of the process, statutory duties and the impact of late annual reviews. Whole system holistic outcome training is being delivered to embed the person centred approach and ensure that SENDCOs are trained to the appropriate level to deliver.	
Advice required from health and social care professionals not being timely or of the required quality	This is one of the biggest factors in the delay of an EHC Plan/ Annual Review beyond the statutory deadlines and is having a detrimental impact on that statistic.	Mitigate	Joint working with the ICS to find solutions to the shortage of health professionals across the service is being undertaken and creative solutions are being adopted where possible. The timeliness of advice is mainly due to inability to recruit and retain staff; there are actions listed under the "Inability to recruit and retain professionals" risk earlier in the risk register.	High
Workstream 6: Transitions and pathway planning (NB: this workstream is in the process of being established in Kingston)				
Transition arrangements between children's services and adult social care services are not always consistent.	Young adults with SEND do not receive the support they need in a timely way from the appropriate services. Ineffective transition and working arrangements between children's services and adult social care lead to fragmentation and build higher costs into the system.	Mitigate	The preparation for adulthood strategy and transitions protocol facilitates early consideration and planning for young people's transition. Funding responsibilities are made clear within the protocol and are agreed in each individual case.	High
Lack of awareness of transition pathways across the system	Transitions for CYP will not be clear, defined or identified early enough. Pathways will not be successful for CYP in supporting them into adulthood and providers will not be able to support as needs will not be identified early enough by relevant partners.	Mitigate	Continuation of multi agency workstream meeting; with a clear focus and collaborative approach to improving pathways for CYP, to ensure that there is a joint understanding of the different transition pathways. To ensure that pathways, where possible, are aligned and that they are developed to ensure that the transitions pathway is as clear and defined as it can be for CYP.	High
Lack of	That health transitions for this cohort will not improve due	Mitigate	Ensure ICB Executive is aware of statutory duties and	High

engagement from health partners for the 18-25 year old cohort	to lack of representation (including through vacant posts) from individuals that can affect change		that vacant posts filled as matter of urgency. Ensure that Health staff are participating and engaged in the work that is happening in the Transitions Board and the workstream so that transitions for this cohort can be improved in health	
Lack of engagement from key partners in improving the transitions process	Actions cannot be completed as partners not engaged and contributing	Mitigate	Workstream 6 Group being established to lead the work - this will be used to hold partners to account and ensure they are fully engaged.	Moderate