

## 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. The Council has been judged by the Department for Education to have made sufficient progress with the implementation of actions in the SEND Futures Plan to receive all payments for this financial year.
- b. The total number of Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans at the end of February 2023 in Kingston was 1,630. The Safety Valve Agreement's five-year financial model has the total number of EHCPs at the January 2023 School Census as 1640. The total number of EHCPs at the School Census is very close to this financial forecast, yet does not exceed this number. There is however 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. From March 2022 to February 2023 Kingston received 284 requests for EHC needs assessments, representing a 14% increase on the same period in the prior calendar year. The proportion of these requests that have been submitted by parents and carers has decreased from 28% from March 2021 to February 2022, to 23% from March 2022 to February 2023.
- d. Three new colleagues have joined the Integrated Care System (ICS) in key roles relating to SEND. Two of these are full time "transformation" (previously referred to as commissioning) roles, and one is a part time role as Designated Clinical Officer (with the outstanding part time element still to be recruited).
- e. The Department for Education's (DfE's) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) [Improvement Plan](#) was published in March 2023. This has set out the government's proposals to improve the outcomes for children and young people and deliver financial sustainability as well as considering specific issues within the alternative provision sector.
- f. The new local area SEND inspection framework went live at the beginning of the calendar year, with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission now actively using this new methodology nationally. The local area will be working to update its self evaluation of practice against this framework between now and the autumn. This will include engaging with children and young people as well as parents and carers.
- g. The SEND Futures Plan was last updated in May 2021 and requires updating. The self evaluation described above will help inform this update, as will broader engagement with children and young people, parents and carers. The aim is to produce an updated SEND Futures Plan also by the autumn.
- h. A task and finish group comprised of headteachers, school senior leaders, SENCOs and local authority officers met at the beginning of March to consider matters arising from 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 will meet about five times to look at alternatives and will make a recommendation for future arrangements before the end of the summer term.

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

- a. **Children and Young People (CYP)**
  - i. The new Participation Officer for Children and Young People with SEND joined Achieving for Children in February. This is good news as the post had been vacant since September. The new officer will work to ensure the views of children and young people are included in ongoing improvement work.

## **b. Parents and Carers**

- i. The SEND Parent Carer Consortium met in February and March, with deep dives into the support available for children and young people with SEND in mainstream education, and the support available to parents and carers to help them identify the different schools that may be appropriate for their child. [Notes of those meetings, with more information about the way that parents and carers are involved in local improvement work, are available here.](#)
- 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 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](#).
- iii. The main focus of this workstream in the coming months will be engaging with children, young people, parents and carers to include their voices in an update of the SEND Futures Plan and an evaluation of the local area's performance against the new Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection framework. This work will take place throughout the summer term to inform an updated plan and evaluation in the autumn. [The Parent Carer Forum](#), which continues to grow and now has a permanent part time administrator, will be supporting the local area with this. Statutory Partners are very grateful to the members of the Parent Carer Forum steering group for their ongoing work and support.

## **3. Workstream 2: Commissioning and Transformation**

### **Impact and progress**

- i. Workstream 2, now Commissioning and Transformation, has been refreshed, with a new thematic approach now agreed. Working group meetings focused around Section 75 have also been set up, which will feed into the workstream.
- ii. The paediatric service specification is currently being updated, which once completed will need to be reviewed as this may impact workstream 2 priorities.

### **a. SEND Placement Commissioning**

- i. The new SEND Placement Commissioning Team, established in April 2022, have successfully reduced actual expenditure compared with that forecast for the current financial year by more than £450,000.
- ii. Post-16 financial controls remain rigorous, with the next step being to develop a data-led approach to predicting future needs and strategic commissioning for Preparing for Adulthood with the post-16 sector.
- iii. As noted in the last SEND Partnership Board report, the South London Commissioning Partnership (SLCP) will close at the end of March 2023. A new contract will be signed with the Commissioning Alliance to manage uplift fee negotiations. Membership to the Commissioning Alliance will be £8,000 per annum compared to £30,000 per annum.
- iv. SEND Commissioning, Placements Commissioning, and Kingston Adult Social Care have jointly agreed on how to manage uplifts that cut across shared providers. Contact has been made with South West London Integrated Care Board (ICB) to agree the same format for Children's Health uplifts.

- v. Moving forward the Commissioning Team will focus on carrying out bulk negotiations with providers receiving more than one learner via pre and post-16 phase deadlines. The team will also be introducing standardised processes to SEND teams to bring in fee negotiations before a placement is agreed.

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

- i. The recommissioning of the contract to provide the SEND information advice and support service (SENDIASS) has now concluded. From the beginning of April 2023 the new provider will be Polaris.

**Areas of concern**

- i. Education providers are reporting an increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining support staff, which has led to more of a reliance on agency staff. This is more expensive for the providers and is adding inflationary pressures for them which they are expecting to pass in part to the Local Authority.
- ii. Commissioning Alliance, although the best option, is unlikely to keep the same level of tight control on fee increases as SLCP has done. However, the Commissioning Alliance works across 18 other local authorities, demonstrating that this is a reputable organisation, and that the Borough will be getting reliable service.

**4. Workstream 3: Local provision**

**Impact and progress**

**a. Therapies**

- i. Apprenticeships for Occupational Therapy have commenced, and additional therapy apprenticeships, such as for Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy, are due to start soon after.
- ii. The Social Communication Assessment Team / Autism Spectrum Condition Team will continue to conduct weekend assessments at Moor Lane. This has helped improve wait times for diagnosis, but has also kept maximum wait times stable.
- iii. A key future priority will be to conduct a gap analysis of unmet need / gaps in provision firstly for Speech and Language Therapy, and then with Occupational Therapy.
- iv. The key purpose/terms of reference of the Therapies Oversight Group is currently being reviewed

**b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health**

- i. All schools in Kingston have now been offered access to the Mental Health Support Team. The team are also looking at piloting some of this work within independent schools to ensure they can also access some of the Mental Health Support Team's resources.
- ii. The rollout of the [Quantitative Behavioural Test for ADHD](#) has now commenced for the Emotional Health Service Neurodevelopmental Training pathway. This is a computer-based, objective test which adds to the assessment for ADHD, thus improving clinician confidence and reducing the amount of time to diagnosis.
- iii. The Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA) work has continued to develop well. Funding has also been received for a one year pilot to support development work with parents and carers around the ERSA.

- iv. Overall there have been fewer vacancies within the Emotional Health Service, with some locum staff having recently been converted to permanent positions. There are however still pockets of challenge in recruitment within some areas of the services.

### **c. Local Places**

- i. A group has been convened to take forward a feasibility study for the Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust post-16 SEND campus proposal. The next steps will be to agree on the scope, and decide whether Orchard Hill College or Kingston Council will procure the architect for the feasibility study.
- ii. Permanent accommodation for Malden Oaks's post-16 provision is on course to be open by July 2023.
- iii. The contractor currently responsible for building the new Spring School in Chessington has gone into administration, meaning progress on the new permanent home for Spring School has come to a halt and the building will not open in September 2023. Until the Department for Education (DfE) re-tender the bid, no more work on the construction of the school will go ahead. A mitigation strategy for the children and young people who have been assigned spaces at the new school has been put in place. The DfE are currently building a primary school in Norbiton which is almost completed, however there are no plans to occupy the building until September 2026. Therefore, a contingency plan has been agreed by AfC, Ambitious about Autism and the DfE, for those children assigned to the Spring School to attend the primary school in Norbiton for the first year whilst the Spring School is being completed. After this year, they will then move to the Spring School in Chessington in September 2024 (assuming the building is finished by then).
- iv. A site visit to the Cullum Centre Specialist Resource Provision at the Kingston Academy is due to happen in March 2023 in order to agree scope, prior to the procurement of an architect.
- v. Work continues for St Philip's 14-19 vocational centre, with the next steps to agree on the building designs and funding.
- vi. The development of Knollmead Primary Specialist Resource Provision has continued, with the next steps to agree the scope of the feasibility study for a redesign and possible physical expansion.

### **d. 16 to 25 Years**

- i. There has recently been a large amount of investment in securing supported internships for young people in Kingston with SEND. This has resulted in the creation of 8-12 supported internships designed for young people with SEND.
- ii. Following on from the Transitions Board (co-chaired by the Director of Children's Services and the Associate Director for Adult Social Care) , there has been a specific session on mapping out learning and development pathways for young people with SEND. There will also be another three sessions around mapping pathways within Continuing Healthcare during April.

### **Areas of concern**

- i. The planning application for St Philip's 14-19 vocational centre is being withdrawn, and designs will need to be revisited and re-consulted upon with residents prior to re-submission of the application.
- ii. Waiting times in Kingston for psychology and art therapy treatment are growing, with the wait now at around 14-16 months from date of referral.

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

## **Impact and progress**

- i. Workstream 4 meetings have been restructured, with each meeting now focused around a deep dive on a specific topic, based on items highlighted within the project progress tracker.
- ii. The School Entry Health Survey 2022 published by YourHealthcare has found 5% of parents reported that their child helps to care for a family member with a physical or emotional health need. This compares to 2% in 2021 and 1% in 2020. The survey also found that 28% of parents reported difficulties with managing their child's behaviour, compared to 23% of parents in 2021, and 19% in 2020. This demonstrates a rise in both the numbers of young carers, and the numbers of young people demonstrating difficult behaviour, information which can be used to feed into Workstream 4's early intervention strategy.
- iii. An Alternative Provision strategy has now been established, with a working group set up and four subgroups consisting of primary phase one, secondary phase two, post-16 and funding and commissioning. Currently any gaps in provision are being mapped, and work is being done to identify how other key stakeholders will need to be involved, such as youth services, the Integrated Care System and parents and carers. The next stage will be to map out tangible short and long term actions. Steps are also being taken to develop a SEND specific Alternative Provision pathway. The governance and procedure for Alternative (medical) Provision has also been well established.
- iv. The Emotionally Related School Avoidance + (ERSA+) team are now operationally established and systemic work is underway.
- v. Work is currently underway to obtain stakeholder views, including those of parents and carers, on the Inclusion Charter and Toolkit.

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

### **Impact and progress**

- i. The SEND team met with the Kingston Parent Carer Forum and worked on mapping communication points within the annual review process in order to improve engagement and effective communication with families.
- ii. A draft multi-agency meeting advice and guidance document has been created following on from the Secondary SENCO Collaborative meeting. This has now gone out to practitioners for feedback and review and will be subsequently updated.
- iii. We have seen improvements in our phase transfer process for young people moving from primary to secondary school in years 6 and 7. This is due to greater communication with schools and an increased offer of placements for young people with EHCPs.
- iv. A working group has met and are in the process of creating a template and guidance which will help to standardise advice from professionals, this will work to drive quality and focus on SEND provision.
- v. A universal quality assurance tool has been developed and is now being used across service providers, highlighting more consistent themes/issues to be addressed.

### **Areas of concern**

- i. There continues to be challenges with the timeliness of annual review and meeting statutory deadlines. As a result of this senior leadership within AfC have written to all relevant headteachers/school leads to remind schools of their statutory duty.

- ii. Timeliness of advice as part of EHC needs assessment process continues to fluctuate, which then has the potential to impact on the timeliness of the issuance of EHCPs.
- iii. There have been challenges with recruitment and retention within certain teams including educational psychologists and social workers. This can have an impact on staff capacity within the system and contribute to delays in assessments and reporting. Work is being done to address these challenges, for example, a set of recruitment and retention incentives have been introduced for qualified social workers, including a market supplement and a welcome payment.

## 6. Finance update

The Borough is currently projecting spend of £169.608m on DSG funded education services in 2022/23 compared to a grant allocation of £165.245m (including recoupment), a reduction of £0.750m when compared to the projections reported at the previous forum. This represents a current projected overspend of £4.512m, including £0.150m for EHCPs that have not yet been approved but are expected to be finalised before the end of the financial year. The funding is forecast to be spent as follows:

2022/23 DSG Outturn	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m	Previous Forum Variance £m
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
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>165.245</b>	<b>169.608</b>	<b>4.362</b>	<b>0.150</b>	<b>4.512</b>	<b>5.262</b>
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)
<b>Total</b>	<b>161.625</b>	<b>169.608</b>	<b>7.982</b>	<b>0.150</b>	<b>8.132</b>	<b>8.882</b>

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