

## 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 submitted [the latest safety valve report](#) which covered Q4 for the previous financial year and Q1 for the current financial year in May 2023. Based on this report, 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 have met the conditions of the safety valve report and have received the additional funding available.
- b. At the end of May 2023 Kingston maintained a total of 1656 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This is an increase in 72 plans since the end of May in 2022, equating to a percentage increase of 4.5%. Kingston received 293 requests for an EHC needs assessment from June 2022 to May 2023, which is a 10% increase from June 2021 to May 2022. Of the EHC needs assessment requests made in the past year, 27% were made by parents and carers.
- c. A meeting was held with over 80 headteachers, senior leaders and SENCOs in schools, in order to discuss the findings from the Kingston task and finish group. This meeting included presentations from members of the task and finish group, including Peter Gray, an independent SEND consultant, on the national and local context of SEND funding in schools. The focus of the meeting was on exploring the possibility of moving to an alternative approach to mainstream funding which focuses on a cluster based model, where predictable pupil needs are supported directly by school clusters.
- d. Organisations in the Local Area, including Achieving for Children (AfC), the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Kingston Council are currently working to prepare for the next local area SEND inspection by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Ofsted and the CQC have been inspecting under the [new SEND inspection criteria](#) since January 2023, and learning from this is being used to underpin the preparatory work being done, including preparing the necessary documentation, preparing the self-evaluation framework and ensuring the necessary business support is in place.
- e. The government has published [the national SEN2 data](#) on education, health and care plans (EHC plans) in England, and changes between calendar year 2021 and 2022. The SEN2 survey is a statutory data collection that takes place every January and is published in June. Headlines for England are that:
  - a. The total number of EHC plans rose by 9% in England
  - b. The requests for assessment for an EHC plan increased by 23%
  - c. The rate of EHC plans being issued within 20 weeks decreased from 60% to 51%

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

#### Impact and progress

- i. The primary focus of this workstream continues to be engaging with children and young people and parents and carers on their views of health, education and social care services, to ensure their voices are reflected in the update of the SEND Futures Plan and the evaluation of performance against the new inspection framework. The SEND Futures plan will then be updated in the autumn term to reflect the views we have collected from all stakeholders.
  - a. **Children and Young People (CYP)**
    - i. A survey, which can be accessed [here](#), has gone out to children and young people asking them to share

their thoughts on SEND services, including education, social care and health services. Please circulate these as widely as possible with your networks. Key themes are linked to those illustrated in the new SEND inspection framework.

- ii. AfC's Participation Officer for Children and Young People with SEND has been holding workshops in schools and colleges where she has been asking children and young people for their views.

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

- i. A survey for parents and carers, which can be found [here](#) was sent out through the Parent Carer Forum, School News and via other voluntary agencies, and asks parents and carers to share their thoughts on SEND services, including education, social care and health services. An additional survey was also sent out to gain the views of practitioners, this can be found [here](#).
- ii. The local area is grateful to the Kingston Parent Carer Forum, who have worked in partnership with AfC to host six workshops with parents and carers. The results from the survey have been written up and thematically analysed, and have been sent to the Kingston Parent Carer Forum who will use the results to inform the basis of a survey which will also go out to parents and carers. The results from this workshop will also be used to inform both the SEF and update the SEND Futures plan.

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

#### **Impact and progress**

- i. The Joint Commissioning Strategy has been updated to take account of the new Integrated Care System and the changes to commissioning.

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

- i. The SEND Placement Commissioning Team has continued to make significant reductions in expenditure in the new financial year. Their annual target to reduce actual expenditure compared to forecast expenditure is £533,000, and three months into this academic year, over 50% of this target has been achieved. So far the Kingston reductions in expenditure sit at £310,000 which represents 58% of our total target for this academic year.
- ii. There has been a new protocol established for submitting papers to the Joint Funded Agency Panel, further strengthening the processes relating to joint commissioning of placements.
- iii. A Fee Increase Protocol and Panel has been established, involving commissioners from the Integrated Care System (ICS), the SEND Team, the Placements Team and Adult Social Care. This aligns with our sovereign fee increase agreements, thus bringing in a number of shared decisions in a timely manner. In addition, the regional Commissioning Alliance for fee increases is established and is working efficiently.
- iv. Another future priority will be establishing a soft alliance between South London local authorities to share commissioning discussions and intentions with the further education sector.
- v. New roles have been created within the Commissioning Team using the Kingston Futures Fund which will give the team greater capacity to make further reductions in expenditure. Interviews have been planned in order to enable an October start.

#### **Areas of concern**

- i. Education providers have become more reluctant to offer credit notes for partial learner attendance, due to inflationary cost pressures.

- ii. There are concerns that there will be insufficient staff capacity to continue to drive down costs if recruitment for more staff is unsuccessful.

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

##### **Impact and progress**

##### **a. Therapies**

- i. Within therapies there has been a continued push to recruit staff in all areas to fill remaining posts, predominantly in Occupational Therapy.
- ii. A gap analysis of Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy is underway to inform Kingston Place and the wider Integrated Care Board regarding the required resources needed to deliver statutory provision.
- iii. The Therapies Oversight Group (TOG) terms of reference is to be revised to ensure it is up to date. Another upcoming priority will be the re-commissioning of the pre and post diagnosis service through Your HealthCare

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

- i. A new local strategy is being developed for the Social Emotional Mental Health strategy and provision.
- ii. There is a need to consider the local offer available for Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA), given that there is currently an increasing need amongst the cohort of young people this applies to.

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

- i. The installation of four demountable classrooms at the Duke's Centre for 6Oaks remains on course to happen in late August 2023.
- ii. At their 13th of June meeting, the People Committee approved the commitment of funding for a vocational centre at St Philip's for young people aged 14-19.
- iii. Coombe Academy Trust has commissioned a feasibility for the reconfiguration of the specialist resource provision areas at Knollmead to address condition issues.
- iv. Progress is ongoing 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. We are waiting for a response from the National Autistic Society regarding the resurrection of a proposal to build a 20-place Cullum Centre specialist resource provision at the school.
- v. The Spring School remains on schedule to open in September 2023 in the Norbiton primary school building, with a handover expected on the 3rd of July.

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

- i. There has been an agreement to develop eight new supported internships in Kingston from this September. In addition, Achieving for Children is currently working in partnership with Ambitious about Autism to develop an additional 24 supported internships for children and young people with SEND next year.

- ii. Next Steps careers guidance interventions were completed in April to June 2023. There were 21 learners in Kingston in Year 10 with an EHCP, and 11 Kingston learners who were at risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEET) who were referred from borough schools in years 10-13. All of the learners scored 7,8 or 9 out of 10 in feedback asking them to consider how useful their next steps meeting had been and some of the individual feedback was very positive, especially on advice given for vocational options.
- iii. As part of the Kingston Transitions Board, learning disability pathways have been developed, and a number of other sessions including workshops on Mental Health and Autism.
- iv. There are plans to hold a Transitions and Local Offer fair for children and young with SEND and their parents and carers on the 10th of October.

### **Areas of concern**

- i. The extent of the remaining uncommitted education capital funding is yet to be clarified. This is particularly prevalent in regards to school condition issues in Kingston.
- ii. The Department for Education has yet to procure a new contractor to finish the permanent accommodation for Spring School so there is a small risk that it will not be completed by September 2024, however progress has been made with this.
- iii. There is a need for further parental involvement in activity and planning related to young people's transition between educational settings and services in Kingston.
- iv. Young people who access SEN Support have been identified by both parents and young people during feedback sessions as needing more support at transition points than they currently get.
- v. The lack of capacity and inability to retain staff working in Continuing Healthcare Health continues to impact the quality and timeliness of health transitions for young people.
- vi. There is a concern around the increasing number of children and young people who fit into the category of Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA), leading to an increasing need to invest in further provision and early interventions to meet this need.
- vii. Further training is needed for colleagues in the Mental Health Team around making contributions to EHC needs assessments.
- viii. Waiting times for Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) assessments continue to be a concern and are proving difficult to reduce despite increased staffing.
- ix. Given the expansion of a number of specialist places, there is a need to ensure that there is enough capacity to provide therapy in new provisions.

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

### **Impact and progress**

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

- i. Supporting Families Consultants are working with schools to complete early help assessments and team around the child plans.

- ii. The Parent Champion Network has increased its pool of volunteers and is now running several activities across youth and children's centres.
- iii. Children's Centre data shows a return to pre-Covid numbers of individuals visiting the centres and engaging in the programs. Families report an appreciation for the routine, communication and play ideas they receive through the universal offer.
- iv. The next steps for this workstream will be to agree on the first Family Hub for Kingston and commence consultation with key stakeholders. There are also plans to establish working groups to support the development of the Family Hub model and ensure we have the service pathways and provision needed to provide an all-age offer.

**b. Early Years onwards**

- i. The SPARK Education inclusion toolkit project for September 2023 has now been launched, and the schools' usage of the toolkit is being regularly monitored.
- ii. Data from schools on pupil attendance is being shared half termly which will help build a better understanding on the work that needs to be done to tackle school attendance. In addition, the role the School Improvement Partner (SIP) team could play in supporting attendance is being explored as part of the wider strategy to improve school attendance.
- iii. Work is ongoing in developing a pathway of support for Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA), this is currently in draft form following developments.
- iv. The next steps will be to finalise and publish the alternative provision strategy, and the attendance strategy. There are also plans to finalise the social and emotional mental health (SEMH) action plan.

**Areas of concern**

- i. Further work is needed on better understanding the structure of health pathways and the impact of this support for young people with SEND experiencing ERSA.
- ii. With Family Hubs having an all age focus, there will need to be a continued targeted offer for early years and trauma informed practice to ensure the first 1001 days of a child's life are supported in regard to their physical, mental and emotional health and development.

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

**Impact and progress**

- i. There has been an investment in the provision of training and advice for health providers, in order to ensure health professionals have a clearer understanding of their statutory duties and access to e-learning in order to support this provision.
- ii. Drop-in sessions have been held for SEND staff to discuss key areas of concern relating to health. This has, for example, given the Designated Clinical Officer more accessibility to follow up any delays in assessment process.
- iii. Pathways have been developed for Mental Health Services around providing health advice within statutory timescales, the next step will be to review the impact of this work.
- iv. There has been a quality assurance deep dive to ensure that health information is clearly described and understood in EHCP's, with the impact of this work still to be reviewed.

- v. A key future priority will be analysing the data sharing process with all stakeholders to identify where processes could be streamlined to enable better information sharing across services.

### Areas of concern

- i. The waiting times for therapy assessments are still a concern, which relates to shortages in the workforce for therapy provision.
- ii. Further work and training is needed in order to improve the consistency in quality of EHCP health advice.
- iii. Currently, there is a lack of consistency in the data sharing process across teams and organisations which is causing delays in the delivery of timely advice.
- iv. There is currently no health representative on EHCP panels due to the lack of capacity of Designated Clinical Officer (DCO), given that they are in the role for two days a week (across both Richmond and Kingston). The good news is that an advert has now gone out for a permanent full time (across Richmond and Kingston) DCO with interviews due to take place before the end of July.

## 6. Finance update

- i. In the financial year 2022/23 the Borough's High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant overspent by over £4.5 million and an overspend is again forecast for financial year 2023/24. This will become even more of an issue when the Safety Valve agreement ends in March 2025 and so a solution needs to be found before then.

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m
2022/23 DSG Outturn					
Schools Block	121.448	121.441	(0.008)	0.000	(0.008)
Central School Services Block	1.065	1.056	(0.008)	0.000	(0.008)
Early Years Block	13.058	12.594	(0.463)	0.000	(0.463)
High Needs Block	29.674	34.416	4.742	0.000	4.742
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>165.245</b>	<b>169.508</b>	<b>4.263</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>4.263</b>
2021/22 Carry forward	(9.820)	0.000	9.820	0.000	9.820
Safety Valve Funding	8.000	0.000	(8.000)	0.000	(8.000)
Council Funding	1.270	0.000	(1.270)	0.000	(1.270)
<b>Total</b>	<b>164.695</b>	<b>169.508</b>	<b>4.813</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>4.813</b>

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