

SEND Futures: Our vision and priorities for 2020

Introduction

We have been working with local families and professionals to establish a new vision and priorities for local provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Over the last four years, we have worked together to implement the reforms to special educational needs provision in line with the Children and Families Act 2014. We have developed an approach to better align partners to meet the needs of children, creating a framework for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). We have been working hard on the transfer of Statements of Special Educational Needs and Learning Disability Assessments to EHCPs. We have developed new pathways and provision for young adults, and, co-produced our Local Offer, complete with Golden Binder, with our local Parent Carer Forum.

We are looking to the future and focussed on how we make it work better to support children and young people to have the best possible educational experience and outcomes. Following sustained overspends, we must deliver this all within a balanced budget.

We are grateful for the input of the local community to this work, and for the leadership of our SEND Action Group and six workstreams established after the 2017 Review of Education Provision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs Provision. Families; school, nursery and college staff; and partner professionals attended our consultation events. We received over 500 responses to online consultations from families and partners.

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Creating a system that can truly work for all children and young people who rely on it needs everybody to continue to work together. We hope our vision reflects the things that children, young people, their families and professionals care most about, and is something that everyone can sign up to and contribute to realising.

Our vision for 2020

Our vision is that every child and young person is supported to engage in learning and has an educational experience that inspires them, unlocks and nurtures their talents and provides a solid foundation for a happy and fulfilling life. We will work to ensure that:

- Children and young people's views are always listened and responded to in the design and delivery of strategies and support for them

¹ Details of our consultations and summaries of the feedback we received is published on our Consultation Hub on our Local Offer at <https://www.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/send-consultation-hub-and-resource-bank>

- Parents and carers are an integral part of the team around the child and their views and unique knowledge about their child are always listened and responded to
- All provision is focussed on supporting the best possible outcomes and maximising independence for children and young people both with statutory plans and with identified needs (SEN Support)
- The whole system, with education, social care and health services at the core, works together and with families to understand and respond to children and young people's needs in a coherent way, with each partner contributing to robust assessments, funding and delivering support and monitoring its impact. We will particularly focus on working better together for learners with special educational needs who are also vulnerable in other ways, including children and young people who are looked after, missing education, excluded from school, or known to youth offending services
- Our provision is high quality with highly trained staff who work effectively together and use evidence to inform what they do to ensure the greatest possible impact. We will decommission services that cannot demonstrate positive impact
- There is robust support for every adult working with children with special educational needs and disabilities
- The community can meet the needs of all children and young people and embraces diversity and inclusion so that all children and young people have the opportunity to learn and develop together.

Our priorities for 2020

To realise this vision, our priorities for 2020 are:

1. Support mainstream schools to be at the heart of provision for children with special educational needs

We recognise that for some children and young people, the best possible educational experience and achieving the best possible outcomes will be achieved in a place at a special school or specialist resource provision. But increasing need and increasing complexity of needs mean that the whole system must adapt and respond.

We know that local mainstream schools already play a part - as a whole, they already educate more children and young people with EHCPs within their cohorts than the average in our neighbouring and statistically comparable areas. But there is considerable variation across schools on the quantity and quality of places available to children with special educational needs. We want to equip all schools to be inclusive and able to support children and young people with both identified special educational needs and EHCPs to have the best possible educational experiences and outcomes.

To do this, we will:

- Continue to work in partnership to find opportunities to grow the role of parents (many of whom have expressed an interest in being more involved in training either directly or through the Parent Carer Forum); and to increase access to the expertise and resource available in the voluntary sector
- Continue to work with leadership teams across Kingston and Richmond schools to support them to take ownership for understanding and meeting the needs of this growing cohort of learners, and to adopt the incentives and practice that they feel are necessary to do so within the income provided by government
- Increase the support available to schools and education providers and help them to better navigate the support available to them by:
 - Establishing an inclusion “one stop shop” from September 2018 for primary and secondary support, available to all schools via telephone 9am to 4pm providing expert advice and signposting to additional support
 - Publish and maintain a support map, setting out the resources and services available to education providers to support them in meeting needs and how they can be accessed
 - Establishing a multi-agency early years panel to target resources at an early stage so that children are effectively supported
- Support schools to make sure that the finite income available is targeted on interventions that are proven to have the greatest “return on investment”, growing initiatives like our SPARK-ed work with schools using research and evidence to review and refresh their deployment of teaching assistants to best effect
- Develop our training offer and support schools to take ownership of increasing all the knowledge and understanding of all school staff on special educational needs. School INSET days will need to have a special educational needs focus on an even more frequent basis; the promotion of Quality First Teaching principles needs to become even more widespread; and our local networks of sharing specialist best practice and providing outreach support will need to become more established and more active than they currently are. We will promote and help to develop this work at Headteacher Partnership, School Improvement and SENCO Forum meetings.

2. Support the whole system to identify need earlier and intervene more quickly

We want to focus the whole system on identifying need earlier and mobilising to intervene so that children’s needs are understood earlier, responded to more quickly and and escalate less. We have a renewed focus on systemic support for education providers so that they feel competent and confident to identify and meet the needs of children with special educational needs.

We will redeploy existing resources and invest in new additional resource so that we have the capacity to effectively support providers to do this, including:

- Establishing our inclusion one stop shop telephone helpline and making it easier for schools to access support by maintaining and publishing our support map
- Develop support networks on social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, with training provided by AfC's Inclusion Service, the Educational Psychology Service and the Emotional Health Service (clinical psychology)
- Expand the Inclusion Service to include secondary behaviour specialists in addition to the current primary expertise, offering advice, training, coaching and the coordination of multi agency networks
- Convene three early intervention panels (one each for Early Years, Primary and Secondary) to consider individual cases where class teacher, SENCO, SEN Threshold Guidance and other interventions have been tried without sufficient success, and an escalation of support is seen as required. The panels will be able to assign a range of additional interventions to support the school and young person, without the need for a Statutory Assessment or EHCP. Possible interventions will include support from specialist inclusion, educational psychology, clinical psychology, and therapy staff. Resources funded by the Early Years Inclusion Fund may be considered, as will outreach support provided by specialist resource provisions and special schools.

3. Improve our annual review process for learners with statutory plans

We want to focus on our annual review process so that, in line with legislative requirements, all EHCPs are subject to a formal review process. Looking at and evidencing progress towards outcomes and checking back in with the learner, family, and professionals on current needs during annual reviews is a crucial opportunity to make sure children and young people have the support they need to have a brilliant educational experience and outcomes. Effective annual reviews will help ensure that the support provided each year is evidence based and responding to the evolving needs of the learner.

To improve our annual review process we will:

- Make sure that our annual review process has the views of children and young people and their families at its heart
- Develop mechanisms to collate the evidence captured in annual reviews to identify and learn from any apparent trends.
- Develop the role of Annual Review Officers alongside our EHC coordinators, so that we can evaluate impact of EHCP resources and support to ensure that children's needs are being met and they are making progress.

4. Transitions and planning pathways

Families and professionals have given us a clear message that a focus on improving support for learners in transitions is crucial to achieving better experiences and outcomes. Thinking about the next step at an earlier point will enable us to better plan and establish the provision that we need to best meet the needs of learners, creating placements that respond to their individual needs and effectively supporting them through times of change.

We will:

- Focus more resource on Key Stage 2/3 transition. The improved and more timely visibility of demand progressing through the primary system will allow us to plan secondary provision better and give more opportunity to improve the quality and breadth of the local offer so it can respond to need. A new post will support this priority and get to know all Y5 children who have EHCPs to help families and children plan their transition to secondary school
- Improve post 16- pathways. We are establishing a new approach to planning and establishing provision for young adults, centred on interviews with all young people and developing personalised learning pathways into adulthood. These are currently taking place with all Year 11 students with an EHCP and going forward will happen during Year 9 or 10. The interviews will allow placements to be more aligned to the longer term objectives of each young person, including to support their journey to independence as they transition into adulthood. This will enable more informed and proactive pathway planning not only into schools and colleges but also into other more vocational pathways such as apprenticeships and supported apprenticeships. It will also allow a more coordinated and planned transitioning of young people into adult and other relevant services such as supported housing. We have been trialling this approach with success since earlier in this academic year. We continue to work with providers to develop the range of options available for Richmond and Kingston learners with an EHCP who are 16 years and over.

5. More places

We recognise that for some children and young people, the best possible educational experience and achieving the best possible outcomes will be achieved in a place at a special school or special resource provision. We want to make sure that, wherever possible, there is a local place that can meet the needs of every learner. Families have given a clear message that they would like more high quality local places throughout our consultations. We also want to grow the specialist expertise available to support local mainstream schools and providers:

- In March 2018, we consulted on plans to increase the number of specialist places at both specialist resource provisions at mainstream schools and special schools

- We are changing the way we resource and contract specialist research provisions so that they have the capacity and clear expectation to deliver outreach support to local colleagues, growing the effective model already in place in some parts of our area.

6. Secure value for money at every opportunity

We are working hard to better control placement costs and make sure that every placement offers value for money and can evidence that it is supporting brilliant educational experiences and outcomes. We are focusing on:

- Improving how we commission places, including reviewing contracts and negotiating prices
- Reviewing the services that we contract from external providers to ensure that we are providing the best support possible, including our speech and language and occupational therapy provision
- Supporting our staff and all providers to draw on evidence to inform their work so that resources are deployed where they will have the greatest possible impact
- Making sure we regularly and robustly review arrangements, listen to the views of learners and their families and professionals to understand and respond to what's working and what the worries are.

Next steps

Making sure our provision for children and young people with special educational needs listens to, understand and responds to learners needs within the budget available is a top organisational priority. We look forward to continuing to work with learners, families, providers and professionals in our partner agencies so that all local learners are supported to have excellent educational experiences and outcomes.