

LBR SEND Transformation Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22

Update report

1. Introduction

An update on Richmond's SEND Transformation Plan was provided to the Council's Education and Children's Services Committee on 17 December. An updated version of the plan, including the learning and recommendations from the LGA SEND Peer Challenge (also presented at the same committee) will return to the Committee in the summer. Discussions with the DfE regarding Richmond's situation continue, with the next meeting taking place on 31st January 2020 with representatives from the DfE's Funding and Special Educational Needs teams. The aim of the meeting is to provide further support for the development of the DSG deficit recovery plan.

A task and finish group, chaired by Ian Dodds, Director of Children's Services, has been established to consider the whole system SEND workforce challenges and agree an action plan to address. The action plan is expected to be finalised by the end of March 2020, with implementation thereafter. This is in addition to the considerable workforce initiatives already underway.

2. Workstream 1: Co-production, engagement and participation (previously Strategy and Governance)

The Parent Carer Forum is planning a launch in the second half of March. The Parent Consortium met again at the start of January and will have one more meeting in the first half of March. Notes of all Consortium meetings are available here:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/send-consultation-hub-and-resource-bank/send-futures-richmond/richmond-send-parent-panel>

The workstream now meets every half term with parents, carers and young people represented. January's meeting focused on proposals to relaunch the Disability Register in Q2 2020, and agree plans for an Engagement and Participation Annual Report to be published in April 2020.

Children and young people with SEND and their families are currently involved in a range of participation and engagement activities. These include providing feedback on the EHCP annual review process, updating the Golden Binder¹, reviewing the Local Offer website (with a view to relaunching in Q2 2020), contributing to the borough's ASD Strategy, and working to co-produce a set of information to support the transition to Adults Services (nick-named "The Navigator"). Digital initiatives include the launch of a "chatbot" on the Local Offer website, an investigation (and proposal) into how the EHCP process could be moved to an online system (to improve information sharing and efficiency of process), and an exploration into how digital / app technology could be used to widen engagement out to a much larger range of children, young people and their families, including at SEN Support.

Other relevant activities include:

- Schools and Colleges have piloted the use of surveys to get feedback from children and young people on EHCPs and Annual Review process. The pilot revealed that we need to gain this feedback through face-to-face consultations and not via surveys

¹ A resource launched in 2016 by the previous Parent Carer Forum working with Achieving for Children (AfC) and representatives from Health, Social Care, Schools, Early Years and Post 16 to create a complete set of guidance documents relating to "Support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)".

- Formal reporting on engagement now occurs quarterly and an action planner to track all agreed actions and decisions is established. Engagement/co-production activities with children, young people and parents/carers are now fully mapped in one place
- Feedback that requires follow up is shared on a weekly basis with SEND QA, who follows up with parents where there are concerns and they are dissatisfied with the process. A tracker has been set up to track the status of these cases.
- Agreement has been reached with Health on the process of how feedback (related to health) will be shared with them and how they will follow up and plan improvements based on this.
- Regarding Early Years parental engagement and early intervention, AfC have been working with Children's Centres to host parent drop in sessions, led by children's centre practitioners and professionals from areas of SEND (e.g. OT & Physio, SaLT, Portage, EP, Sensory impairment). The first term of delivery is complete - resulting in 100% (22) parents feeling confident in their ability to support their child's needs (up from 72%).
- Sessions are now planned to hold face to face consultations with children and young people receiving SEN Support, to hear their feedback and plan into improvements
- A pre-14 coffee morning took place on 6 December, with a focus on annual reviews
- Conversations about developing an online EHC Hub (which provides transparency for all involved in the process) is ongoing in AfC and is currently dependent on receiving funding to purchase the Firmstep Platform. We have discussed the EHC Hub with Stoke, who have implemented this in their borough. They say the biggest improvement was parental satisfaction with the process.
- We have been successfully awarded money from the LGA digital fund, to develop a Chatbot on Local Offer website. Plans are in place to consult with CYP and parents on how to develop this to meet their needs.

3. Workstream 2: Commercial thinking

AfC's new Director of Commissioning and Partnerships was appointed in November and will start in March. She will work closely with the CCG's Director of Commissioning, Public Health and other partners across the SEND system / Local Area. A key priority in this workstream, and particularly for these two new roles, is the agreement of a Joint Commissioning Framework.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision

The review of speech and language, occupational and physiotherapy undertaken by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Achieving for Children (AfC) on behalf of Richmond and Kingston councils has now concluded and will inform the recommissioning of services from April 2020. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with families with this concluding on the 5th of November. Schools Forum considered some of the financial implications of the growth in need at its November meeting, and did so again in January. The link below provides an executive summary of the review. A full public report will be published in Q1 2020, however, this document sets out the key findings of the review.

https://5f2fe3253cd1dfa0d089-bf8b2cdb6a1dc2999fecbc372702016c.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/uploads/ckeditor/attachments/5743/Public_Report_Therapies_December_2019.pdf

The approach to Alternative Provision (AP) is currently being considered by a working party including headteachers, with any changes due to be implemented from September 2020.

Several initiatives relating to Post 16 provision are also ongoing. In addition to the "Transitions Navigator" and work relating to the spotlight session at January's Partnership Board, a meeting is being arranged for Q1 2020 between a group of parents and carers and representatives of both children's and adult's services. This will include the Directors of both children's and adult services as well as frontline staff.

5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and planning

Total EHCPs at 30/12/19 stood at 1492. This represents a 9% increase in total EHCPs over twelve months (previously 1369) . Many recent requests for assessment are for cases with considerable complexity requiring significant social care intervention. Some include needs arising from factors associated with wider family challenges, and demonstrate the need to mobilise a true multi agency approach, much wider than purely education, to provide the support required.

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

Over 97% of all Richmond's EHCPs issued since April have been within the 20 week statutory period. This compares favourably to performance in 2018/19 and to the England average of 60.1%. The team continue to deliver this strong performance in the context of considerable increase in total EHCPs, and a more rigorous and higher quality approach to the annual review process. Since the end of August the quality of EHCPs is being audited via a sampling QA process in a systematic fashion. The Local Government Association SEND Peer Challenge that took place in October included some pleasing feedback on the quality of EHCPs.

During Q3 (Oct / Nov / Dec), Richmond issued 45 EHCPs. 18% of parents / carers responded to the now standard post issuance survey, with the following results:

Measure	% this Q
Feedback from Parents and carers that the EHC assessment process has been positive	100%
Feedback from Parents and carers indicates confidence in the quality of final EHC plans	100%
% who felt that they were fully engaged in the assessment and writing of the plan	100%
% who felt that the plan would help their child make progress towards the outcomes	100%

The appointment of a Designated Clinical Officer by the CCG is a significant and welcome development. Alison Stewart began work in September and is already having a significant impact. Alison is working closely with the interim SEND QA Lead. Observations on current EHCP quality include an over prevalence of education orientated outcomes (and a need therefore to raise the profile of health and social care outcomes), and the fact that personal budgets, healthcare plans and short break provision feature too seldom in plans where there is evidence of their need or of parents' desire to explore options. IT systems do not currently permit multi-agency access to information to complete QA activities and so consideration of how processes can be changed to encourage collaborative working is ongoing.

Next steps for the SEND QA process include:

- A continued focus on high quality training for AfC teams around EHC plans, outcomes, the golden thread and holistic plans that address individual needs and aspirations across education, health and social care
- Analysis of joint commissioning processes to explore barriers to delivering health services identified in EHCPs
- Continued joint work to elicit best practice exemplars for health and social care contributions to EHCPs
- Case studies and exemplars of good practice in personal budgets, short break provision and health outcomes to drive improvements
- Securing collective ownership and responsibility from across education, health and social care for actions arising from multi-agency QA activity

For the CCG priorities now include:

- Multiagency QA process for EHCPs with health representation at each meeting.
- Development of QA process for health advice through Health SEND Clinical Reference group (inaugural meeting Dec 10th)

- Deep dives of sample of EHCPs by DCO and Service Manager SEND to look at thread from advice to plan, in particular considering sections C and G.
- Review of local service guidelines for provision of health advice
- Working with CCG to review mechanisms for reporting on timeliness of advice

8. Finance update

The High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), is now forecast to overspend by £5.8 million in 2019/20. This will take the cumulative overspend in Richmond's DSG to £15.85million by the end of this financial year.

Savings of £2.5m are planned for 2019/20 of which £2.2m have already been achieved (as at month eight) and built in to the projection above. If fully achieved the net position will improve by approximately £0.3m.