

RBK SEND Partnership Board Sept 2019

RBK SEND Transformation Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22

Update report

1. Introduction

Kingston's SEND Transformation Plan is currently being amended from three to five years so that it is aligned with the Deficit Recovery Plan submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) in June. It will return to the Children's and Adults' Care and Education Committee and the Health and Wellbeing Board in November, and to Budget Council as part of the annual budget setting process.

2. Workstream 1: Strategy and Governance

The SEND Futures Conference 2019 took place on 27 June under the strapline "Listen, Learn, Lead", and was attended by over 300 delegates from across the SEND system in Kingston (and Richmond). Parents and carers were joined by representatives of early years providers, nurseries, schools, colleges, the voluntary sector, health providers, elected Members / Councillors, school governors, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Department for Education, and a range of professions such as education and clinical psychologists and social workers. Attendees enjoyed keynote presentations from parent / carer representatives, the Chief Executive of Kingston Council and Leader of Richmond Council, the Managing Director of Kingston and Richmond CCGs, and the DfE's Lead SEN and Disability Professional Advisor. Reflecting feedback received following the SEND Futures Conference 2018, the day included eight workshops with delegates being able to attend the two most aligned to their bespoke circumstances or development needs. These workshops included "Towards a culture of co-production" delivered jointly by the highly regarded Rotherham Parent Carer Forum and "Leading a whole school approach to SEN Support" by Natalie Packer, a well respected independent education consultant. The highest rated workshop based on participant feedback was "Supporting girls and women with ADHD" led by Dr Jo Steer, Head of Emotional Health Service and Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Achieving for Children. Further information and all the materials used during the day, including a film donated by a local production company to summarise the key themes of the day can be found at:

<https://kr.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/send-consultation-hub-and-resource-bank/send-futures-conference-2019>

The Kingston SEND Partnership Board met for the third time in July. The meeting included a particular focus on health provision, including the potential for pooled budgets, and specifically the ongoing review of therapy provision. Other items included updates on the performance dashboard the Board will be using, the Ofsted and CQC Written Statement of Action and the impact of actions within the Plan. On this latter point, the main areas of concern are the ongoing significant increases in the number of EHCPs plus the resultant growth in expenditure, and concerns relating to workforce recruitment and retention. "Workforce" will be the subject of September's "spotlight" session, and this item will be informed by the outputs of two workshops on 5 and 10 September involving staff from across the system. Minutes for the Board are published on the Council website:

<https://moderngov.kingston.gov.uk/documents/s84776/SEND%20Partnership%20Board%20Minutes%201%20July%202019.pdf>

Kingston's Parent Consortium met twice before the school summer holidays and agreed to progress discussions with the Department for Education's commissioned provider Contact to become the official Parent Carer Forum (PCF). Contact attended the first meeting of this academic year on 18th September, at which a group of four parents agreed to form a steering group to lead on the establishment of the PCF. The intention is for the PCF to be aligned with and supported by an existing voluntary sector group to provide administrative support to the parent and carer volunteers. Members of the Consortium are already working on a number of co-production initiatives for example on future therapy provision and the ASD Strategy. They will also be involved in a review of the Local Offer website during the autumn.

3. Workstream 2: Commercial thinking

A new role of Director of Commissioning and Partnerships is to be recruited by AfC in the autumn and will lead the development of a centralised approach to education placement commissioning. This will include a more coordinated and systematic process to agreeing placements with tighter ongoing contract management arrangements to give quality and financial benefits.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision.

The 10 year SEND places plan has been subsumed into the revised School Place Planning Strategy, which is being drafted. Mastodon C, the external organisation commissioning to assist with the modelling of likely future needs have completed their data baselining and are preparing to run the first scenario modelling. This will then be analysed to ensure that that provision gaps are identified, and plans put in place to fill these gaps as appropriate.

Regarding the new free school for ASD, engagement meetings have been held with potential education providers and initial meetings have been held with DfE and ESFA representatives regarding feasibility, design and procurement processes. Bids to run the school must be submitted by the end of September. These will be considered jointly by RBK / AfC and the DfE, with a decision on the provider expected early in 2020.

The review of speech and language, occupational and physiotherapy provision in Kingston (and Richmond) continues. A number of consultation events have taken place to support the needs analysis due in the autumn. This will inform the commissioning of future services from April 2020.

5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and planning

A review of the Early Intervention Panel took place at the end of the summer term involving representatives of schools who have accessed this new process over the past 12 months, as well as providers of interventions. Positive feedback from schools included being referred to services that staff had previously been unaware of (e.g child welfare services and child welfare practitioners) and the benefit of rapid additional advice received from occupational and speech and language therapy. Areas of concern included a sense that on some occasions the resultant intervention was not that desired or indeed that it was declined. Suggestions for improvements included amendments to the application forms and additional clarity on thresholds for the panel. The development of a learning and development programme to upskill professionals working in schools and colleges is ongoing and forms part of the workforce strategy work referred to in Workstream 1.

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

An external SEND consultant has been commissioned 4 days per week to provide additional support and scrutiny for improvements being proposed and made within the SEN Team. She brings experience of practice in a number of other local authorities and has already made positive contributions to processes. Richmond have commissioned a "Peer Review" of SEND in the first week of October and it is expected that there will be insights provided from that that will also have relevance for Kingston. Performance as measured by issuance of EHCPs within 20 weeks remains very strong, being 98% since April (compared to the latest national figure of 60%).

The volume of casework within the team continues to grow significantly. The number of EHCPs amongst Kingston residents has increased from 1125 to 1257 in the 12 months to the start of September, an increase of 12% (this is in line with the national picture). A sample taken over recent months shows that 95% of requests for these EHCPs come from schools, with 65% relating to children between five and ten years, and the remainder split equally between zero to four years and eleven to fifteen years. Main primary needs have been speech, language and communication (35%), ASD (26%), and specific learning difficulty (13%).

7. Workstream 6: Home to school travel

The process of transferring staff from the previously commissioned provider (Skanska) to AfC was successfully completed by the 1st August. New collection points on some routes have been agreed and implemented for the start of this academic year. Families and children and young people are being supported in this transition and performance is being closely monitored.

8. Finance update

Significant cost pressures continue to arise in the High Needs Block (HNB) of Kingston's Dedicated Schools Grant, with the current position projecting spend of £30.95m against the budget allocation of £23.65m, representing an overspend of £7.3m. This includes consideration of the growth in the number of EHCPs, and assumes an increase in total EHCPs of 120 for the full financial year.

Earlier this month Government announced a significant increase in funding for SEND for financial year 2020/21 and beyond. Details are still pending but the annual HNB allocation is expected to grow by in excess of £2m.