

Update report

1. Introduction

The updates provided to the SEND Partnership Boards in May and July were focused on the performance of SEND services during the COVID pandemic. With schools now open for all children and young people, and business as usual returning, this report describes progress with the wider SEND transformation agenda since March 2020, together with plans for the months ahead.

At its July 2020 meeting, the SEND Partnership Board considered a draft updated version of the SEND Transformation Plan (also referred to as the SEND Futures Plan) previously approved by the Council in February 2019. The draft can be accessed [here](#), where an easy read version is also available. The draft will be considered by Schools Forum in September 2020 and by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Council committees in the autumn. We welcome comments and feedback on the draft. Responses to date have included suggestions that the longer term impact of COVID should be given more profile, including an attempt at modelling the demand and cost implications.

Four pieces of work in the SEND Futures Plan have been identified as requiring particular focus during the autumn. These are:

- A. Implementing proposals to enhance therapy provision
- B. Delivering and putting into practice the new Joint Commissioning Strategy
- C. Developing the breadth of the local offer for those with SEND aged 16 to 25 years
- D. Improving the process for those young people with SEND transitioning to adult services

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



Kingston's new SEND Parent Carer Forum were unable to hold their planned launch event in April but have remained active throughout the past six months, including in regular virtual meetings with Achieving for Children and the Clinical Commissioning Group. They have a growing presence and membership and have been an invaluable source of family insight during the COVID pandemic. We have agreed a new schedule of monthly meetings between the Parent Carer Forum and senior members of staff from Achieving for Children and the Clinical Commissioning Group, with each meeting focused on a particular area of service improvement. In September the meeting will focus on emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The meeting will also discuss the new draft joint commissioning strategy and receive a presentation on the key findings of the Parent Carer Forum's online survey that they conducted in June and July. The Parent Carer Forum have also identified improving accessibility for different groups (e.g. Black, Asian and minority ethnic and wider socio economic groups) within our SEND communities as a priority piece of work, and this is being taken forward by a small working group of parents and AfC staff. Plans for the coming months include working with existing community and religious groups to improve the understanding amongst their families of the support that is available, greater use of film on the Local Offer and school websites, and more use of data (e.g. postcode and ethnicity) to target work aimed at improving awareness of and access to SEND services. There has been excellent feedback on the new language translation

functionality (Recite) on the Local Offer website and there will be an awareness campaign to raise awareness of this specific capability in the coming weeks.

3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning

This workstream is now led by AfC's Director of Commissioning and Partnerships, Jessica Thom, and Sue Lear, Deputy Director of Transformation at NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group. The new draft Joint Commissioning Strategy is being considered by this meeting under a specific agenda item. The strategy will also be considered by the Parent Carer Forum at their September meeting with Achieving for Children and the Clinical Commissioning Group. The five priorities identified in the strategy are:

- A. Service Development. Further development of our emotional health and wellbeing, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy services.
- B. Pathways. Improve and further develop joint seamless pathways between Health, Education and Social Care for children and young people and their families.
- C. Partnership Working. Ensure better partnership working and integrated approaches to improve outcomes for children and young people and ensure value in the services we provide.
- D. Response to Need. Ensure we continue to apply the views of children, young people, their families and carers to shape the services we deliver.
- E. Future Focus. Further developing and supporting the arrangements for Personal Budgets and Personal Health Budgets and Transitions from children's services.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision

Specialist school places

In July the Department for Education (DfE) announced that the education provider Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust will run the borough's new ASD special school. Ambitious about Autism Schools Trust was chosen following a rigorous and competitive application and interview process. Currently, they run one highly-regarded special free school, The Rise School in Hounslow, plus a non-maintained special school and a specialist post-16 college, all meeting the needs of children and/or young people with ASD. The free school for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) is expected to open in 2023 at the Moor Lane Centre site in Chessington, subject to the Council making a formal decision to lease part of the site for that purpose, and will eventually accommodate up to 90 pupils aged four to 19.

Following very significant increases in the number of places at specialist resource provisions in Kingston over the past two academic years, there are no significant changes in academic year 2020/21. In 2021/22 however, increases are planned at Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery, as are changes to the arrangements with Alexandra's enhanced support teaching arrangements, with some of their expertise proposed to be captured instead within a specialist resource provision.

Pathways for young people aged 16 to 25 years

Proposals for a Post 16 campus continue to be refined, and are increasingly integrated with the Council's all age transformation and Maximising Independence initiatives. Work includes the identification of a site and funding to support an ambitious plan to create a holistic centre of excellence to support the education, health and care needs of those aged 16 to 25 with SEND. The campus would allow the 6th forms at Kingston's three special schools to co-locate with Orchard Hill College, new vocational training hubs and supported living accommodation. As well as staff from Achieving for Children, this multi agency project involves adult social care and housing, Health, South West London St Georges NHS Trust and special school representatives. In addition to this, plans are developing to fill certain gaps in

provision through another smaller hub, possibly through a college specialist resource provision supporting social emotional and mental health needs. This could be delivered much quicker than the campus.

Therapy provision

Although COVID has delayed the implementation of the recommendations of the therapy review, progress has still been made over recent months. Schools Forum will be receiving an update on 22 September with proposals for next steps. This follows the increases in funding that were agreed in March by the Clinical Commissioning Group (an additional £250,000 in 2020/21 and an in principle agreement to increase this extra investment to £450,000 in 2021/22 and to £580,000 in 2022/23) and by Schools Forum for Early Years provision (£137,000). A gap remains in increased funding for the education element for 5 years and older.

Emotional wellbeing and mental health support

Emotional wellbeing and mental health are the focus of September's meeting with the Parent Carer Forum and Parent Consortium. It has been identified by them as an area of particular concern during and after lockdown and the emotional wellbeing of children and young people is a high priority area for professionals too. Evidence suggests that lockdown, home schooling and the return to the classroom may impact on some children's mental health, and waiting times for the Emotional Health Service and Tier 3 CAMHS have increased during the pandemic. On the positive side there are lots of very good self help and other resources available online and some children and young people with SEND and their families, plus the voluntary sector organisations, schools and other professionals that support them, are able to access them immediately. They are of course not suitable for everyone, but the more they are used by those in need and who are able to access them, the greater capacity professionals will have to support those who cannot.

With this in mind, the Emotional Health Service have launched a new online resource hub for professionals, families and young people to 'help families help themselves'. The resource hub contains links to online therapy, advice pages, information leaflets for young people, a brand new online video library for parents with presentations on a range of topics from helping with sleep to supporting your child's anxiety and being ready to start primary school. Everyone is asked to be proactive in signposting and suggesting these resources. The more they can be used by those who can, the more capacity staff will have to support those who cannot. Referral pathways for those in urgent and significant need of course remain unchanged. The link to the hub is [here](#).



5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and planning

First 1000 Days

This will be relaunched in the autumn having been deprioritised during the pandemic.

Early Years onwards

Key initiative this term include:

- A. Targeting therapy resources allocated to early identification and intervention to ensure maximum impact.
- B. Promoting use of the Early Advice and Intervention Panel so that it is able to provide early advice on concerns around children and young people at school to encourage a proactive rather than reactive response to need.
- C. Embedding of a consistent outreach approach across our teams following recommendations from the above panel.
- D. Collaborating across AfC and partners to create innovative ways (eg better use of data) to support schools to identify those who are likely to require support prior to needs escalating. (Some expensive interventions and placements could potentially be avoided by earlier identification and action).
- E. Launching our Emotionally Related School Avoidance [ERSA] school toolkit and parental guidance this term in order to better equip parents and schools with the confidence to identify those who are struggling and knowledge of how to best support them.
- F. Embedding our Nurture approach across our 3 pilot primary schools.

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston stood at 1381 at the end of August. This was an increase of 124 over the previous twelve months, or 9.9%. The latest national data for the increase in Education Health and Care plans is for calendar year 2019 during which period the number of plans increased by 10.2% in England and 10.3% across Outer London boroughs.

In the six months to August (inclusive), there were 149 requests for an assessment for an education health and care plan. This compares to previous periods as follows:

Period	Requests for assessment
Mar to Aug '20	149
Sep '19 to Feb '20	124
Mar to Aug '19	123
Sep '18 to Feb '19	87

In the six months to August (inclusive), there were 104 new education health and care plans issued. This compares to previous periods as follows:

Period	New plans issued
Mar to Aug '20	104

Sep '19 to Feb '20	101
Mar to Aug '19	82
Sep'18 to Feb '19	83

In August 83 Annual reviews Reviews took place, and 93% of these had both the meeting and decision delivered within the statutory 4 weeks. As at the end of August, 68% of children in Kingston have Annual Reviews up to date.

In August Kingston issued 19 new EHCPs with 18 being issued within 20 weeks. This takes the average performance for issuance within 20 weeks for this financial year to 95%. This compares to an equivalent performance across England of 61% in calendar year 2019.

The multi-agency EHC plan quality assurance process is now well established and is attended by a range of professionals. The voice of parents and carers has been being obtained via telephone interviews. The views of children and young people are to be incorporated by using the child or young person's comments from the survey conducted at their most recent annual review.

Following the presentation at the July Partnership Board on the Outcomes Framework, work continues with another workshop facilitated by the Council for Disabled Children on 16th September.

8. Finance update

The High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), is now (basis data at the end of August) forecast to overspend by £6.7 million in 20/21. This is a £0.5 million increase in the forecast at the end of June. This is forecast to take the in year DSG overspend to £6.0 million and the cumulative overspend in Kingston's DSG, including the £3 million advance received in 2018/9, to £25.2 million by the end of this financial year.

Discussions with the Department for Education about Kingston's financial situation continue. We are waiting for the arrival of the Department for Education's new Deficit Recovery Plan template. This is expected by the end of September when it will be populated as quickly as possible.

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