

REPORT TO: Richmond SEND Partnership Board

DATE: 30 September 2020

SUBJECT: SEND Transformation / Futures Plan Update

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To update the Board on the SEND Futures Plan

1. Introduction

Between March and August 2020 there has been some disruption to the SEND transformation programme due to the prioritisation of delivering SEND services differently during the COVID pandemic. That having been said, progress in a number of areas has continued and this is expected to become more widespread and accelerate in the coming weeks and months as business returns to normal.

An updated version of the SEND Futures Plan, previously approved by the Council's Education and Children's Services Committee in December 2019, will be drafted in the autumn and return to the Committee early in 2021. Whilst much remains to be done, this will reflect the considerable progress that has been made over the past twelve months in delivering improvements to the SEND system in Richmond. The update will also include learnings from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) report published in January 2020, and the action plan resulting from the subsequent independent audit of education, health and care plans.

In addition to work relating to the LGSCO report, 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



Richmond's SEND Parent Carer Forum were unable to hold their planned launch event in March 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 also participated in the SEND Partnership Boards. They 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. The Parent Carer Forum are also in the process of co-producing with AfC the action plan resulting from the independent audit of education, health and care plans following the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report. Work has been continuing to improve the accessibility of information about SEND services. There has been excellent feedback on the new language translation functionality (Recite) on the Local Offer website and there will be a campaign to raise awareness of this specific capability in the coming weeks.

The Council, Achieving for Children and the Clinical Commissioning Group are all very grateful for the time and energy that members of the Parent Carer Forum, and other organisations in the voluntary sector, are committing to work with statutory providers to deliver improvements in our local SEND system. This is of particular note given the additional

challenges that have been presented to families that include SEND children and young people during the COVID pandemic. Thank you.

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 the SEND Partnership Board as a specific agenda item in September. 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 The Beckmead Trust will run the borough's new special free school for children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Beckmead was chosen following a rigorous and competitive application and interview process. Currently, the Trust runs the Beckmead Family of Schools in Croydon, rated Outstanding by Ofsted, and has just taken on an alternative provision academy in Essex, Beckmead Moundwood Academy. Beckmead Family of Schools is made up of eight separate sites, including specialist resource provisions and a college for learners aged 14 to 19. All meet the needs of children and/or young people with SEMH. The new school is expected to open in 2023 at the Barnes Hospital site and will eventually accommodate up to 90 pupils aged seven to 19.

Following increases in the number of places at specialist resource provisions in Richmond over the past two academic years, there are no significant changes in academic year 2020/21. For 2021/22 however planned expansions and changes include preparation for a new secondary ASD specialist resource provision at Hampton High. Work is also underway for an additional site to allow expansion of Strathmore School and on changes to the way that the Gateway Centre, part of Clarendon School, operates.

Pathways for young people aged 16 to 25 years

This is an example of a piece of work that was disrupted by the COVID pandemic. Staff from Achieving for Children, the Council's adult services team, and the Clinical Commissioning Group had met with a group of parents to identify priorities in mid March and agreed several specific actions. The aim is to restart this work as soon as possible this term.

Therapy provision

Although COVID has delayed the implementation of the recommendations of the therapy review, progress has still been made over recent months. 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 £500,000 in 2021/22 and to £730,000 in 2022/23) and by Schools Forum for Early Years provision

(£240,000). A gap remains in increased funding for the education element for 5 years and older. A fuller update on the implementation of the recommendations of the therapy review is available [here](#) in the form of a report provided to Schools Forum on 24 September.

Emotional wellbeing and mental health support

Emotional wellbeing and mental health had been highlighted by families 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 has 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

Key initiatives 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 (across Kingston and Richmond)

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Richmond stood at 1513 at the end of August. This was an increase of 59 over the previous twelve months, or 4%. 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 116 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	116
Sep '19 to Feb '20	126
Mar to Aug '19	120
Sep '18 to Feb '19	101

In the six months to August (inclusive), there were 108 new education health and care plans issued. This compares to previous periods as follows:

Period	New plans issued
Mar to Aug '20	108
Sep '19 to Feb '20	79
Mar to Aug '19	107
Sep'18 to Feb '19	66

In August Richmond issued 36 new EHCPs with 31 being issued within 20 weeks. This takes the average performance for issuance within 20 weeks for this financial year to 89%. This compares to an equivalent performance across England of 61% in calendar year 2019. It is important to recognise the five Plans that were not issued within 20 weeks, and consideration of Plans delivered in excess of 20 weeks will be part of the work of November's Board meeting.

The multi-agency EHC plan quality assurance process is now well established (on an every two months basis) and is attended by a range of professionals. The voice of parents and carers has been being obtained via telephone interviews and a process to include the voice of parents in the multi agency panel is also being discussed. 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 taking place 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 £4.3 million in 20/21. This is forecast to take the in year DSG overspend to £3.3 million and the cumulative overspend in Richmond's DSG, to £18.1 million by the end of this financial year.

Discussions with the Department for Education about Richmond's financial situation continue. The Department for Education's new Deficit Management Plan template has recently been received and will be populated in October.

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