

LBR SEND Futures Plan

Update report

1. Introduction

The SEND Futures Plan was agreed by Richmond's Education and Children's Services Committee in July 2019. Since then significant change has occurred and progress made. The Plan will therefore be amended in the coming months and an updated version submitted to the same committee for endorsement. This is currently scheduled for March 2021. Prior to that a draft updated version will be published and stakeholders given the opportunity to provide comment and feedback. Changes will include learning and actions arising from Richmond's report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Local Government Association Peer Challenge.

Changes will also incorporate the progress that has been made, including:

- I. The strong contributions from children and young people in informing service improvements, and the establishment of a Parent Carer Forum that is working with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Achieving for Children and the Council on a regular basis.
- II. The agreement of a new SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy.
- III. The Clinical Commissioning Group's growing investment in local SEND services for example the appointment of a Designated Clinical Officer for SEND in Kingston and the increased financial allocation to therapy services.
- IV. The significant expansion in the number of specialist local education places and the leadership that many schools have shown in making this happen. This has facilitated the continued reduction in the percentage of Richmond children and young people being placed in independent and non maintained special schools (most of which are located outside the borough) at a time when many authorities are experiencing increased placements in this more expensive sector.
- V. The strong teamwork of professionals from different agencies who are together supporting young people in their transition to adulthood, and the innovative work being undertaken to improve their available pathways and experiences, for example through supported apprenticeships.

It is proposed that the SEND Partnership Board Performance Dashboard is amended to align with the updated SEND Futures Plan.

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

Children and young people continue to be very involved in service development. During July, August and September:

- 20 young people were involved in 17 Recruits Crews interviewing 50 candidates as part of the process to appoint 28 new staff.
- A bi-monthly Young People's Health Focus Group was started by the CCG's Designated Clinical Officer for SEND and AfC's Participation Officer

- Young people have published a podcast and begun making a film about “aspirations”.
- Progress has been made in the development of pupil voice in relation to those receiving Social Communication Intensive Packages
- Many members of the Home to School Travel team have produced “About me” guides
- A plan has been agreed to improve accessibility and inclusion in the Youth Council



Richmond’s Parent Carer Forum (PCF) continues to provide invaluable insights into user experience of current services and we thank them for their time and energy. We now have nominated representatives for many of the priority areas of co-production.

3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning

After discussion in a number of forums, including this one, the new SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy is now agreed and is published [here](#) on the Local Offer. 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.

Implementation of the findings of the therapy review continue, and workshops with parents and carers for the recommissioning of some of the short breaks contracts will take place in November.

4. Workstream 3: Local provision

Specialist school places

Work continues regarding further expansion of Strathmore School (severe and complex learning difficulties) and on changes to the way that the Gateway Centre (secondary school students on the autistic spectrum), part of Clarendon School, operates. Hampton High is now consulting on establishing a specialist resource provision from September 2021, for up to 20 children with Social Communication Needs including Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Mild to Moderate Learning Difficulties. More information is available [here](#). The consultation closes on Tuesday 1st December.

Pathways for young people aged 16 to 25 years

Following a related item at the [Adult Social Care, Health and Housing Committee in September](#), the Education and Children's Services Committee received an update in November on the [Transition of Young People from Children's Services to Adult Social Care Services](#).

A Transitions Programme Board has been established to improve the transition pathway and deliver better outcomes for young people. Its purpose is to take responsibility for the overall direction and management of the programme and ensure that key stakeholders and team members work effectively together to deliver agreed activities within the agreed timeframes. The following desired outcomes for young people have been agreed:

- a. Early and effective identification and tracking of young people across all services to enable effective planning for resources, commissioning and budget management, including a five-year projection list and longer-term predictive and financial modelling of young people reaching transition age.
- b. Young adults and their parents are supported to have smooth and well planned transitions from children's services to adult social care services, resulting in improved experiences and outcomes for young people moving into adulthood, including an increase in the number of young adults in employment and in settled accommodation.
- c. Improved pathways and better coordination of services between children's services, adult social care services and health providers, ensuring young people and their families know what to expect from their transition journey, including developing a clear operating model and underpinning protocol that clarifies roles and responsibilities and enables joint decision-making.
- d. Shared learning and knowledge across children's services and adult social care services, ensuring a culture of reflection and continuous improvement and better understanding of and compliance with the legislative framework by all professionals, including the Children and Families Act 2014, the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Therapy provision

Schools Forum received an update report on therapy provision at their meeting in September. The report, available at [this link](#), provides a good summary of recent and imminent events. Recruitment for additional therapists is progressing well for both speech and language and occupational therapy roles. A further update is being provided at November's Schools Forum meeting, with a report available [here](#)

5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and planning

Key initiatives remain as they were previously, namely:

- 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.

During the ongoing COVID pandemic, considerable effort and resource is also being directed at maximising school attendance for vulnerable groups including those with an EHCP. The aim is to support as many children and young people as possible to be in school.

Recent data analysis has shown a very strong performance / very significant impact of the work of the Education Inclusion Support Service, a vital element of the early intervention work. This shows the impact that early intervention can have and without it a much higher number of children and young people would have been expected to move to an EHC plan.

6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning

The team is delighted to welcome Troy Hobbs to the role of SEND Service Manager following the retirement of Wendy Bolsover in the summer.

The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Richmond stood at 1527 at the end of October. This was an increase of 45 over the previous twelve months, or just over 3%. 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.

The action plan arising from the Report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is considered under a separate agenda item at this meeting.

8. Finance update

The High Needs Block overspend in 2020/21 is forecast to be approximately £4.3m, which will take the accumulated overspend in the DSG to £18.1m at the start of the next financial year.

Kingston continues to lobby government for an increase in financial support relating to SEND. This is directly through bilateral meetings with senior Education Ministers and DfE officers, via representative organisations such as London Councils and the Local Government Association, and through joint communications with neighbouring boroughs and their MPs. The Council has recently been invited to a further meeting on this matter with senior officials from the DfE. The DfE is also meeting with a number of other local authorities who also have significant overspends. These discussions include the Deficit Management Plan.

Ashley Whittaker
Programme Director
ashley.whittaker@achievingforchildren.org.uk