

Update report

1. Introduction

The draft updated SEND Futures Plan was considered by Schools Forum and the Health and Wellbeing Board in September and October respectively. Comments received at these meetings were combined with feedback provided by a wide range of stakeholders since the middle of July to produce a final updated version. Many thanks to everyone who took the time to read the draft updated plan and provide feedback. Members will vote on endorsing this updated version at the Council's Children's and Adults' Care and Education Committee in November. The final updated version is available [here](#) and the Easy read version [here](#).

Some key differences between this updated plan and the original plan approved by the Council early in 2019 are:

a. considerable progress has been made with improving several aspects of Kingston's SEND system, and in more fully implementing the SEND Reforms contained within the Children's and Families Act 2014. The updated plan takes these changes into account. Of particular note are:

- i. The robust governance arrangements now in place, including the effectiveness of the SEND Partnership Board, and the strong leadership and partnership working being demonstrated across Kingston's SEND system.
- ii. 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 of £250,000 in 2020/21, £450,000 in 2021/22 and £580,000 in 2022/23 (in principle agreement for 2021/3).
- iii. The establishment of a Parent Carer Forum which is working with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Achieving for Children and the Council on a regular basis, and the strong contributions from children and young people in informing service improvements.
- iv. The very significant expansion in the number of specialist local education places, in both special schools and specialist resource provisions in mainstream schools, and the leadership that many schools have shown in "stepping forward" to make this happen. This has facilitated the continued reduction in the percentage of Kingston 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, including frequent co-location (pre COVID), 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, and the proposals for a specialist Post 16 campus.

b. Recommendations made by Kingston's Education Commission were accepted by the Council in May 2019, and an action plan implemented. Those actions relating to SEND and not completed when an update was provided to the Children's and Adults Care and Education Committee in January 2020 are now incorporated in this plan. Similarly, actions relating to the Written Statement of Action following Kingston's Local Area SEND

inspection of September 2018 and approved in February 2019, are also included within this plan. The plan represents therefore a single point of reference for what were previously three strands of work.

d. The original plan responded to the Department for Education's stipulation that Kingston should submit a plan to bring its spending from the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to a level that matches spending on SEND within three years. Since then, and informed by findings including from Parliament's Education Committee's Special educational needs and disabilities inquiry and the National Audit Office's report on Support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities in England there is consensus that the changes required will take a longer time to implement. For this reason the updated plan adopts a five year horizon rather than the previous three.

e. The original plan included a sixth workstream focusing on home to school travel. This work is now included within the Joint Commissioning workstream.

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



Kingston'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. Since the September SEND Partnership Board meeting the key developments have been:

- a. The Parent Carer Forum has very helpfully allocated between one and four named parent representatives to each of the identified priorities for co-production. These are:
 - i. Participation and engagement strategy
 - ii. Local Offer website and provision of information
 - iii. The Golden Binder (information about the statutory EHC plan process)
 - iv. Parent Champions (more information available [here](#))
 - v. SEND Joint Commissioning

- vi. Short breaks
 - vii. Therapy provision
 - viii. 16 to 25 pathways and transition
 - ix. The new ASD free school special school due to open at Moor Lane
 - x. ASD Strategy
 - xi. Emotional wellbeing and mental health
 - xii. EHC plan outcomes framework
 - xiii. Health advice templates
- b. At the September meeting of the PCF, Parent Carer Consortium, the CCG and AfC, and after discussing the findings of the recent PCF surveys and the SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy, the majority of the meeting was spent focusing on emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and young people with SEND. Enno Kuettner (Children’s Commissioner South West London CCG), Alison Stewart (Designated Clinical Officer for SEND), Jessica Thom (Director for Commissioning and Partnerships, Achieving for Children), Dr Jo Steer (Associate Director for Emotional Health Services, Achieving for Children), Nigel Evason (Head of Children and Young People's Mental Health and Learning Disabilities, Clinical Commissioning Group) and Peter Maasdorp (Service Manager for Child and Adolescent South West London & St George’s NHS Trust) updated parents and carers on service developments and received considerable feedback on family perspectives. More detail, together with the actions agreed can be found [here](#)
- c. At the October meeting, the equivalent “deep dive” topic was “SEND and Social Care”. Alison Twynam, Director of Children’s Social Care, Georgina Andrews, Head of Practice Learning, Children’s Social Care, Sara Doyle, Associate Director for Identification & Assessment, and Sophie Jones, Head of Service Children With Disabilities Social Care and Family Support shared information about social care developments and again received very helpful feedback from parents and carers. More detail can be found [here](#).
- d. Progress is being made with a campaign to significantly increase the number and diversity of parents and carers whose voices are being heard and included in the improvement of SEND services in Kingston. Working with the PCF, the aim is to directly contact all families with children and young people with SEND early in 2021, particularly including those without an EHC plan (using the information in the autumn school census), to relaunch a rebranded disability register and promote the PCF to all these families. In addition, there will be a targeted approach for underrepresented groups, including through the use of community groups and working alongside the Council’s community engagement teams.

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

Proposals are being developed for a second Dysart satellite provision located at the site of North Kingston Children's Centre by Latchmere School. If successful this would provide a local education placement for up to 15 primary aged children with severe and complex learning difficulties who otherwise would need to be placed outside the borough. Dysart's first satellite provision, also for primary aged children, opened in September 2019 alongside Tolworth School. These satellite provisions reflect not just the lack of space for expansion on Dysart's main site, but also the realisation of opportunities for the children involved to benefit from mainstream inclusion activities with their mainstream peers.

The other planned changes to local specialist places are as previously advertised the increase in places at Surbiton Children's Centre Nursery, changes to provision at Alexandra to include a specialist resource provision, and the new ASD special free school planned for Moor Lane.

Kingston's School Place Planning Strategy has been updated and is being considered at the Children's and Adults' Care and Education Committee this month. The strategy includes a specific section on special schools, specialist resource provisions and the methodology for forecasting the need for specialist places. It can be viewed [here](#).

Pathways for young people aged 16 to 25 years

Proposals for a Post 16 campus continue and are integrated with the Council's all age transformation and Maximising Independence initiatives. The Council has welcomed its new Executive Director of Social Care and Health, Sharon Holden, and we look forward to Sharon's involvement in this important and innovative multi-agency initiative.

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 will be provided at November's Schools Forum meeting

Emotional wellbeing and mental health support

Considerable information is provided in the materials used at September's meeting with the Parent Carer Forum and available [here](#). A number of actions were agreed including looking at the support available for parents and carers.

In addition the Emotional Health Service are very involved in the roll out of resources and training to schools and partners of Emotionally Related School Avoidance and the national "Emotional Wellbeing in the Return to School" programmes.

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. Of the 176 children and young people the service worked with in 2019/20, at the time of writing only 22 had moved from being supported at SEN Support level to needing an EHC plan for their needs to be met. 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 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 Kingston stood at 1412 at the end of October. This was an increase of 134 over the previous twelve months, or 10.5%. 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.

An audit of the quality of EHC plans is currently being undertaken and will be used in conjunction with the other now established quality assurance mechanisms to inform the improvement agenda.

8. Finance update

The High Needs Block overspend in 2020/21 is forecast to be approaching £7m, which will take the accumulated overspend in the DSG to £25.4m at the start of the next financial year. Without significant changes to the local system of providing education for children and young people with SEND, the accumulated overspend is forecast to be £38m by the end of financial year 2022/3.

The Deficit Management Plan template has been received from the DfE and officers are in the process of completing this.

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. This meeting is expected to take place in December. The DfE is also meeting with a number of other local authorities who also have significant overspends.

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