

## SEND Futures Plan Update

### 1. Introduction

- a. Kingston has not yet received the Ofsted and CQC revisit to assess performance against the Written Statement of Action. This is still expected in the near future.
- b. Under the terms of the [Council's "Safety Valve" Agreement](#), the Council is required to report quarterly to the Department for Education (DfE) on performance against terms in the agreement. On 18th June the Council submitted its first quarterly reporting, and as a result of the performance described in that report was successful in receiving the first quarterly payment under the terms of the agreement for 2021/22. The Council reported to the DfE again in September in relation to the potential second quarterly payment and these detailed financial reports are included with the papers for this meeting. There is confidence that the second quarterly payment will be forthcoming.
- c. It is important to note that the number of requests for education health and care needs assessments in Kingston has increased in recent months, and in addition to the volume of work this is producing for all services, the total number of education health and care plans is very close to exceeding that forecast in the Safety Valve Agreement. To some extent it is unclear how the pandemic has impacted the timing of these requests, and how much reflects an actual increase in need. Significant price inflation is also being experienced in many placements. As a result of the increase in the number of children and young people requiring an education health and care plan for their needs to be met, and the costs of meeting these needs, a number of parameters included in the Safety Valve Agreement are very close to being exceeded. This board has a key role to play in maximising the multi agency response to this increase in need across all age groups up to 25 years, and maximising the value for money achieved. Payments scheduled under the Safety Valve agreement are subject to review if, amongst other things *"insufficient progress (is) being made towards the authority reaching and sustaining an in-year balance on its DSG account as set out in the plan"*.
- d. Richmond received its first Local Area SEND inspection in the middle of June. This is relevant because whilst Kingston has many differences to Richmond, some services are delivered by the same organisations as Kingston. The letter from Ofsted and the CQC regarding findings was published in August ([letter available here](#)).
- e. The High Needs Block Subgroup of the Schools Forum has been formed and will meet for the first time on 4th October. Huge thanks to those headteachers and school governors who have volunteered to commit the time to this important new initiative.

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

#### a. Children and Young People

- i. Impact and progress
  - 18 Recruits Crew panels held in this period (across Richmond and Kingston), with 14 different young people involved: (Jobs: Short Breaks Sessional Workers, Designated Social Care Officer for SEND, Home & Community Support Adviser, Disabled Children's Team Family Support Worker, Inclusion Development Officer, Speech and Language Therapist (Your Healthcare), Health Care Assistant (Specialist Nursing), Preparing for Adulthood EHC Plan Coordinator, Assistant Psychologist, Education Wellbeing Practitioner, Mental Health Clinician)
  - Young people co-delivered a workshop on 'Identity' at the Whole Service Social Care Event

- Participation Members Group Drop-ins continued: These have continued with a core group of young people, but attendance has reduced significantly since things have opened up more. We will be moving towards reducing these and reinstating our more formal monthly meetings which were stopped during lockdown
  - Face to face members' catch-up planned in August: had to be moved online due to staff contact with positive Covid case
  - Consultation: members are currently reviewing the Quality First Inclusion Charter and sharing their views about language (in particular around Autism) and transition to adulthood.
- ii. Areas of concern
- Capacity continues to be severely stretched (demand is high, a good thing!)
  - Appropriate venue for young people's meetings (in Kingston)
  - Unsure how return to 'offline' activities will affect young people's availability
  - Boardmaker communication software - currently no access to symbol software for practitioners
- iii. Priorities and milestones for coming months
- Increase membership (young people).
  - Moving towards face to face meetings and activities
  - Agree how young people will be involved in workstream 1 processes / meetings
  - Post-16 Campus consultation with young people in years 9 & 10 in Kingston special schools

#### **b. Parents and Carers**

- i. A new role of "Parent Carer Engagement Officer" (18 hours per week) has been advertised with interviews scheduled for mid October. This new role will provide additional capacity to deliver on the activities specified within the workstream action plan. All are requested to circulate the advert and job description, [both available here](#), to their networks. Many thanks to the Parent Carer Forum for their very valuable input and participation in this process.
- ii. The Parent Carer Forum is holding a launch event on Sunday 28th November in Chessington (this was originally planned for March 2020 but was delayed due to the pandemic). Services supporting SEND in Kingston will be present. An advert for this will be forthcoming in the coming weeks.
- iii. [Notes and actions of recent meetings of the Parent Consortium are available here.](#)

#### **3. Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning**

- a. Matters relating to therapy provision and emotional wellbeing and mental health are included under Workstream 3, with the latter subject to a separate agenda item at this meeting.
- b. The consultation relating to the recommissioning of certain aspects of the short breaks provision has concluded and a market engagement event has taken place this month. There is optimism that new players will be attracted to the Kingston market to support improvement in the local offer.
- c. A new Head of Strategic Commissioning has been appointed in AfC. Although having a remit wider than just SEND, this is positive news for the SEND Futures Plan following the departure of the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships in April. The recruitment of two SEN Placement Commissioning Managers (spanning Richmond and Kingston) has been more problematic with adverts for permanent positions in June and July attracting no applications. The decision was taken to appoint in an interim capacity and two interim commissioners were appointed in August to start at the beginning of October. Both have considerable experience in other local authorities and in addition to working with education providers to maximise the quality and value for money of placements they will also support

the creation of a permanent team that is planned for early in 2022. A number of price increases over and above the current rate of inflation have been submitted by providers and whilst not unusual, this does present budgetary pressure and will require strong negotiation as well as use of the South London Commissioning Partnership (SLCP).

#### **4. Workstream 3: Local provision**

##### **a. Therapies**

- Work continues on finalising the service specifications for physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services. Next steps are for commissioners and providers to agree on the key performance indicators in collaboration with parents and CYP. Recruitment has continued and challenges remain particularly in recruitment of speech and language therapy staff. There is a nationally recognised gap. There continue to be challenges to deliver all assessments and provision generally across OT and SaLT due to levels of need and service capacity issues.
- Whilst the paediatric physiotherapy specification was signed off at the June Therapies Oversight Group, the expectation is that the speech and language and occupational therapy specification will be signed off at the next meeting on the 21st September.
- The specialist manual handling training has now been completed by one of the senior AfC physiotherapists, which means all necessary manual handling assessments across Kingston and Richmond schools can be undertaken.

##### **b. Emotional wellbeing and mental health**

- We are working on an 'as-is' document that sets out the current state of play with the provision of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) across the Kingston and Richmond boroughs. It reviews current provision at each tier including a description, analysis of available data, and funding information; and uses the Signs of Safety model to assess what's going well, what are we worried about, and what needs to happen.
- We have developed a matrix that sets out mental health provision across the six South West London boroughs for the CCG led Kingston and Richmond Task & Finish Group. The aim is to draw out similarities and differences across the boroughs and learn from those.
- These pieces of work will inform the local response to significant levels of need in this area and significant waiting times for treatment.

##### **c. Local Places**

- In September 2021 the number of local specialist places in Kingston increased again. These included the new primary specialist resource provision at Alexandra (up to 8 places), Dysart's primary satellite at the former North Kingston Children's Centre (up to 15 places) and the post-16 social emotional and mental health provision at Malden Oaks (up to 16). Thank you to all schools who have been involved in these critically important new specialist places.
- Work is ongoing to deliver the new special free school at the Moor Lane Centre site (with a speciality in autism) planned for September 2023 opening, the post-16 campus planned for 2023 or 2024, phase 2 of the post-16 social emotional and mental health provision at Malden Oaks (2022), and a specialist resource provision for up to 20 boys with speech, language and communication needs (including hearing loss and/or social communication) at Coombe Boys' (2022).

##### **d. 16 to 25 Years**

- **Next Steps:** At the end of Quarter 1 (Apr-June 2021), 20 interviews were carried out with SEND learners representing 10.5% of the baseline cohorts. 17 have been carried out from 1 July to date. The focus for this academic year will be on improving transitions and defining post 16 pathways. We

will integrate Next Steps into EHC plan reviews in Years 9 and 11 (along with one to one interviews in Year 10, including SEN Support learners). To date, four Kingston schools have signed up for this year. We are also expecting schools to start 'growing their own' capacity to deliver careers advice to SEND learners, in line with compliance with Gatsby Benchmarks and recently updated DfE careers guidance for schools.

- **Vocational pathways:** Delivery on AfC engagement and employability programmes are ongoing. SEND-specific Able2 and YES programmes have now also commenced. Positive Directions and Head2Work schemes are prioritising young people with SEND. Across the programmes to date 49 young people (across Richmond and Kingston) have a declared SEND, 30 of whom have an EHC plan.
- AfC has appointed 3 young people with EHCPs in internal Kickstart roles. 2 of these have commenced employment with us with the third due to start shortly. Mencap has provided new provision for our learners through its supported internship programmes with 18 young people due to enrol in September. Not only are these excellent opportunities for the young people involved to develop their longer term independence and employability, they replace previous education placements that in some cases cost in the region of £75k per year.
- A Preparing for Adulthood Coordinator specialising in supporting young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and seeking vocational routes is now in post.

#### **e. Concerns**

- Therapies - capacity and recruitment to appoint new / additional staff
- Delay in finalising the contract specifications for speech and language and occupational therapy
- Timescales for opening new schools with delays in some cases
- The complexity of the iThrive plans and the time they will take to deliver
- Rising rates of youth unemployment and the resultant increased competition for apprenticeships and paid employment. AfC and LA apprenticeship vacancy levels remain low
- Lack of understanding from independent training providers as to how to meet the needs of young people with SEND.
- Numbers of young people with EHCPs in Traineeships is currently low, many Traineeships are now delivered online which may be less appropriate for SEND learners

#### **f. Priorities and milestones for next three months**

- Develop iThrive activity with South West London St George's as quickly as possible
- Complete and share interim overview of all emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- Conclude therapy contracts with providers
- Ensure statutory functions are delivered whilst immediate capacity challenges are addressed

### **5. Workstream 4: Early intervention and transitions**

#### **a. Recent impact and progress**

Since the last Board in July the summer holidays have impacted the rate of change in practice. Activities and priorities remain similar to then. The key initiatives are:

- Quality First Teaching Inclusion Charter
- Transition process and protocol improvements at both primary to secondary school and secondary to post 16.
- Early intervention initiatives such as nurture provision and Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA) (with a multi agency approach to cases where ERSA toolkit is insufficient)
- Interventions from the Education Inclusion Support Service with a focus on entrenched ERSA cases, an alternative curriculum offer for the small numbers of young people for whom a mainstream curriculum is not suitable to aid progress and an offer to better support families who are experiencing challenges but do not meet the threshold for Early Help support.

- Early Help Resilience Networks
- First 1001 Days (practitioners have been trained in Video Interactive Guidance and will be working with families open to social care where there is a baby under 1 year old to enhance attachment and attunement).
- Reintroduction of the Children’s Centre partnership with a focus on a partnership approach to the early years offer.

**b. Areas of concern**

- Again similar to the Board in July
- Entrenched ERSA cases - social anxiety has been on the rise for some time and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Schools appear to have a rising number of YP unable to access school and in some cases leave the home - hence our work with health to better align our energies.
- Increase in adolescent referrals in the Early Help Service, presenting with challenging behaviour and mental health concerns. Data for June 2021 (RBK and LBR): 26 cases open in the 0 - 4 age group, 62 cases in the 5 – 10 age group and 125 cases open in the 11 - 19 age group. Challenging behaviour remains the highest referral reason at 33% with four in the 0 - 4 age group, 26 in the 5 – 10 age group and 41 in the 11 - 19 age group. Child mental health is the second highest referral reason at 14% with three in the 5 – 10 age group and 26 in the 11 - 19 age group. Family dysfunction rose to the third highest referral reason at 10% with 22 overall.

**c. Priorities and Milestones**

- Have a Y7-8 alternative curriculum up and running
- Consult with Heads on the provisional QFT Inclusion Charter document
- Establish a clear strategy [with health] for supporting entrenched ERSA cases
- Adolescent Safeguarding restructure now concluded, to be borough focused and have an additional worker for young people presenting with contextual needs and mental health. Next step is to look at links and secondment opportunities with Early Help - to increase knowledge and skills for the Early Help service and support early intervention wherever possible.

**6. Workstream 5: Assessment and planning**

**a. Recent impact and progress**

- Joint working across the system has continued to embed quality assurance processes within individual services and ensure learning from bimonthly quality assurances are taken on by individual services for both education, health and care plans and annual reviews. Membership of the quality assurance team has been reviewed to ensure cascading of learning points to advice givers and plan writers. Schools are now joining the multiagency quality assurance team and participating in training to support this. Our new Designated Social Care Officer will also be joining the QA team .
- There is recognition of improvement within plans through the bimonthly quality assurance process. The quality of EHC Plans judged to be good or better in the year 2020/2021 is 84% (395/473 plans audited, across Kingston and Richmond)

Rating (new plans)	Baseline (pre-2019/2020)	2019/2020	2020/2021
There is evidence of the child/young person’s voice, wishes and feelings	90% 9/10	85% 124/146	94% 93/102
Provision in the EHCP is specific & quantifiable	30% 3/10	54% 81/149	79% 81/102

Health, education and social care provision of the child/young person been clearly identified	85% 17/20	79% 117/148	90% 92/102
Health, education and social care needs of the child/young person been clearly identified	85% 17/20	79% 117/148	90% 92/102
Quality of needs in the plan are judged to be 'good' or better	no data	no data	93% 66/71
Quality of EHCP Plans are judged to be 'good' or better	no data	no data	93% 66/71
The health, education and social care outcomes of the child/young person been clearly identified as SMART	50% 5/10	74% 110/149	79% 81/102
The plan is child focused and jargon free	60% 6/10	78% 114/147	93% 95/102
There is evidence of joint working with professionals	80% 8/10	85% 123/144	81% 81/100
There is evidence of co-production with parents	70% 7/10	71% 105/147	90% 91/101

- Revisions to advice templates are being introduced across the system to support advice givers and plan writers. A revised health advice template for education, health and care needs assessments is being piloted by health advice givers and we have examples of emerging use of this template to support development of joint outcomes for children who are known to all three services.
- School representatives are developing a school based quality assurance tool for Annual Review.
- An education, health and care needs assessment panel to support robustness of decision making is being introduced September 2021.
- Timeliness of advice continues to be monitored and triangulated with providers in order to address discrepancies between Synergy recording and individual provider records.

#### **b. Areas of concern**

- Quality work around plans in transition and linking to Preparation for Adulthood outcomes.
- Ensuring shared understanding of holistic outcomes and responsibilities of individual services/ settings to support this.
- Number of plans being reviewed through the multiagency process.

#### **c. Priorities and milestones for next three months**

- Implementation of use of QA tool for advice writers across all services.
- Support for all parties involved in multi-agency QA to improve quality and ensure consistency of advice across advice givers.
- Further multi agency workshops on developing outcomes.
- Core QA team working together to ensure cascade of learning from bimonthly activity. This will include developing consistent representation from across the system. The core group will conduct a deep dive of quality assurance for purposes of moderation and to increase numbers of plans reviewed through this process.
- Increased school involvement in quality assurance of EHCP activities.
- School representatives to present their work on the annual review process October 21.

#### **d. Number of education, health and care plans**

- The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston on 20th September stood at 1469. This was an increase of 83 over the previous twelve months, or 6.0%. The latest

national data for the increase in Education Health and Care plans is for calendar year 2020 when the number of plans increased by 10.4% in England and 9.6% across London boroughs.

- The number of requests for an EHC needs assessment has increased since schools returned more fully after Easter, though the impact of the pandemic on the usual seasonal fluctuations in requests is unclear. Actual numbers are shown below. This term AfC will continue to work with schools making the most requests to understand this growth in need in more detail and identify any early intervention support that may be appropriate.

Number of requests for EHC needs assessment in Kingston							
2019/20		2020/21				2021/22	
Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Jul & Aug
67	76	62	70	47	56	73	51

## 7. Finance update

The Borough is currently projecting a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overspend of £5.0m, including £0.6m spend relating to EHC plans that have not yet been approved but are expected to be approved before the end of the financial year. Assuming the Council is successful in claiming £5m in “Safety Valve” funding this year, and including a contribution of £1.2m from the Council, this would result in a £11.2m cumulative DSG overspend at the end of this financial year. This position is summarised below (note the budgets in this table exclude the £67.1m Schools Block and £5.55m High Needs Block Academy Recoupments). Note this forecast cumulative DSG overspend is higher than was forecast in June.

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m	Previous Forum £m
2021/22 DSG Outturn						
Schools Block	50.403	50.193	(0.210)	0.000	(0.210)	0.000
Central School Services Block	1.128	1.128	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	(0.000)
Early Years Block	13.651	13.215	(0.436)	0.000	(0.436)	(0.436)
High Needs Block	20.804	25.891	5.088	0.600	5.688	5.120
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>85.986</b>	<b>90.427</b>	<b>4.442</b>	<b>0.600</b>	<b>5.042</b>	<b>4.685</b>
2020/21 Carry forward	(12.401)	0.000	12.401	0.000	12.401	12.401
Safety Valve Funding	5.000	0.000	(5.000)	0.000	(5.000)	(5.000)
Council Funding	1.200	0.000	(1.200)	0.000	(1.200)	(1.200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>79.785</b>	<b>90.427</b>	<b>10.643</b>	<b>0.600</b>	<b>11.243</b>	<b>10.886</b>

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