

**Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames  
Safety Valve Agreement**

**Quarter Two 2021/22 Summary Update Report**

<b>Date Submitted</b>	17th September 2021
<b>Data Date</b>	31st August 2021
<b>Signed off by S151 Officer</b>	Sarah Ireland
<b>Signed off by Director of Children's Services</b>	Ian Dodds
<b>Background documents</b>	<a href="#">Safety Valve Agreement</a> <a href="#">SEND Futures Plan</a>

Kingston continues to make consistent progress on the SEND Futures Plan including the conditions associated with the Safety Valve Agreement. Since the last report in June a number of risks to implementation have increased (see below and Appendix D / the risk register) and because schools have been on their summer break there has been a pause to implementation of several actions within Workstream 4 relating to improving early intervention support at SEN Support level. There remains a good level of confidence that the financial envelope outlined in the Safety Valve Agreement Condition 2 will be met despite a reduction in the in year grant allocation due to an adjustment to allow for the latest exports / imports data.

A good level of confidence remains that the terms and conditions for 2021/22 will be fully met and that this work will support the achievement of conditions associated with future years.

The latest iteration of the SEND Futures Plan was endorsed by Kingston's People Committee in June 2021 and has been published on the [Local Offer website](#). The latest plan and progress update was also presented to Schools Forum on the 29th June 2021 and the papers published on the [Schools Forum meeting agenda](#) on the Council's website.

The SEND Partnership Board, which brings partners together to monitor the plan every two months, met in July 2021 and the papers have been published on the [Local Offer website](#). The SEND Partnership Board paper provides a detailed update on the five SEND Futures Plan workstreams including progress made, emerging issues and upcoming priorities. The report is attached as appendix C to this report. A summary update on each of the safety valve conditions is included in the table below with further detail on each area in the appendix. There is a good level of assurance given for all but three areas. It is too early in the year to provide absolute assurance that the conditions will be met for all areas but we are monitoring activity and are assured that this is moving forward in the right direction. There are no low assurance areas meaning **there are no areas where Kingston does not think it will meet the conditions set out in the agreement** at this stage.

A medium level of assurance has also been provided in relation to capital developments. Good progress has been made in the development of most schemes but there is a potential delay to the new Free School due to a requirement for the DfE to re-tender for a new provider.

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level
<b>Condition 2: Maximum Forecast DSG Deficit Profile at year end £28.6m</b>	<b>Good</b>

Progress update:

There is a Good level of assurance that this target will be met as evidenced within September [Schools Forum reports](#) and appendices A and B. The current projected deficit on the DSG Fund before safety valve funding is £28.3m compared to the max threshold set of £28.6m. The in year net deficit has worsened due to a reduction in the grant allocation (£207k) to allow for the latest high needs import/export adjustment. A focused financial review exercise will be undertaken in the autumn, once the new academic year placements are better known, to assess where this gap can be recouped to support future years spend levels. Based on historic trends the budget gap will also improve during the latter part of the year with projections being more prudent until the cost of the September cohort is better known.

A more certain picture of demand for EHCPs should emerge during the autumn term once children have settled into the new academic year but at this stage we expect the total number of EHCPs to be close to the estimated level in January 2022. The management of demand is an important part of bringing the DSG fund into a more sustainable position and the action being taken to manage demand for EHCPs whilst continuing to meet the needs of children and young people is explored further in the SEND Partnership Board update (app C) and summarised in 3.1 below. This will continue to be an area of focus for the workstreams and partners over the coming months.

The key indicators to note are:

KPI	SVA Target	Q1	Q2
Max cumulative deficit before safety valve funding	£28,607,000	£27,886,000	£28,260,000
Max number of EHCPs @Jan census (estimated)	1,537 (+101)	1,550 (+121)	1,537 (+101)
Increase in EHCPs @ 31 May, 31 Aug		1,447 (+18)	1,470 (+41)

<b>Condition 3.1: Improve support available in schools to manage demand more effectively and reduce escalation of need.</b>	<b>Good</b>
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Initiatives to upskill the school workforce continue. Examples are given below. Of note is that a greater focus on multi-agency working to meet the growth in needs around social emotional and mental health, with many of these children and young people needing support from some or all of education, health and social care professionals.

- i. 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.

- ii. The Head of Children, Youth and Partnership will be re-introducing the Children’s Centre partnership - four dates agreed and terms of reference drafted to ensure partnership approach to early years offer.
- iii. Early Help Resilience Networks started to be held in January 2021 and continue to be held across both boroughs for the three age groups (0-4, 5-10, 11+) every month and signposting to local services has been possible for each family. The Early Help Strategic Board has agreed a data set and KPIs to review impact on referrals into the Early Help service.
- iv. Quality First Teaching (QFT) Inclusion Charter - core group and sub groups continue to meet to refine the resource. Headteachers being consulted prior to the official launch. QFT reflective journal [related to the part about teaching in the classroom] has been shared to see what initial thoughts are. SPARK Ed action research project to be delivered by the SIP team once the programme has been launched so that schools who identify themselves as needing support [through a self evaluation audit] can receive additional help to embed the charter into their everyday working.
- v. Transitions - Post 16 transition communication sharing has formally started for the first time with AfC facilitating and initial feedback from colleges is strong [30 YP included so far]. A working group has been established to further refine transition at both KS2-3 and KS4-5 so that schools manage it themselves and we avoid duplication of forms - this new process will commence for the transition of 2022.
- vi. Early intervention initiatives - Nurture continues to go generally well although some staffing issues on one school are impacting delivery. Further work for 2021-22 will be about applying the Nurture principles across the whole school. Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA) - continues to be a priority area - meetings with health and education have been taking place to enable us to think reflectively about how to better collaborate on meeting the needs of the young people where their needs are too great for the ERSA toolkit to be used.
- vii. Interventions - Education Inclusion Support Service (EISS) has re-drafted their offer for secondary schools and will be presenting these to secondary heads to ensure they are in line with what secondary schools need ahead of 2021-22. These involve 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.

<b>Condition 3.2: Expand specialist provision to avoid placements in more expensive Non Maintained Special Schools and independent special schools.</b>	<b>Good</b>
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Progress Update:

- i. Joint working with the DfE and Ambitious About Autism for the opening of the new special free school at Moor Lane, with a target date September 2023 also continues, with a planning application likely in the autumn.

- ii. Several new / expanded specialist provisions opened in September 2021. They are at Malden Oaks (Post 16 SEMH), Alexandra Primary (Key Stage 2) and Coombe Boys' School who at this stage have increased their Enhanced Support Teaching Arrangement provision.

£139k of £191k in cost mitigations have been secured to date. All the anticipated places have been created but there is a shortfall in the savings target due to a reduction in the average cost of alternative independent placements - so the savings achieved per new place are lower. The savings target was calculated using the average cost differential of a special school place compared to the alternative independent provision. As average costs in independent placements have reduced through targeted commissioning and system changes, the in-year saving has subsequently reduced. The average cost reduction is positive and will lead to the achievement of more savings in other workstreams to compensate for this shortfall. Additional new places have been identified for future years than were built into the original plan and this will support the achievement of future years savings.

**Condition 3.3: Manage demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) by scrutinising provision at each annual review and continuing to work with consultants Mastodon C to forecast and manage EHCP growth during 2021-22.**

Good

Progress Update:

The total number of EHC plans stands at 1470 at the end of August, representing a 6.4% increase over the past twelve months.

Decision making regarding requests for an EHC Needs Assessment is being improved from September onwards via the agreement that has been reached over recent months to establish a new multi agency panel to assess and decide the outcome of these requests. This will provide greater objectivity and confidence that the decision making is in line with the statutory duty as consistently as possible, and will ultimately impact the number of EHC plans that are issued.

Regarding cessation of EHC plans, oversight of the process via the Annual Reviews, including forecasting of EHC plans likely to be ceased in future months, has been improved by the restructure of the Preparing for Adulthood team.

**Condition 3.4: Improve efficiency of commissioning services to drive down cost.**

Medium

Progress Update:

Discussions have been taking place with college providers about the charges being applied for the provision of teaching assistant support for young people with SEND, with a view to achieving a reduction in the hourly rate charged. Kingston is one of four boroughs working jointly with providers to deliver improved value for money. We expect a conclusion to these talks early in the new academic year.

An agreement to improve the value for money of speech and language therapy provision at a major college

provider has been achieved through a change to the delivery model.

The recruitment of permanent SEN place commissioners has been problematic and the posts remaining unfilled following a recruitment round in June due to a lack of applications. The decision was taken in July to appoint the posts on an interim basis of about 6 months so that progress with improving value for money can continue whilst the recruitment of permanent positions continues. Two interim appointments (total 1 FTE for Kingston) took place in August and both will start in September, with both staff experienced in this area having worked in a number of different local authorities. Their ability to bring best practice to Kingston was a key part of the selection criteria. Both will focus not only on delivering immediate improvements to value for money (and quality) of placements, but also shaping of the permanent roles targeted for filling early in 2022.

AfC's new Head of Strategic Commissioning was also appointed in August and although not exclusively a SEN role will support the existing team to drive improvements in day to day SEND commissioning.

£114k of commissioning savings have been achieved to date from proactive commissioning activity compared to a target of £351k. In addition a number of further savings have resulted from changes in the cohort of young people placed in the independent sector and subsequent placement cost agreements. The average cost of independent placements has reduced from the estimate of £33,313 to £30,443, yielding, once allowing for the commissioning savings of £114k above, further cost mitigations of £215k in 2021/22. The recruitment issues and also the pandemic context has made proactive commissioning negotiations difficult this year and it is hoped that once the pandemic eases those conversations will yield more savings.

A medium level of assurance has been given due to the capacity issues being experienced to drive this area forward following the recruitment difficulties.

**Condition 3.5: Increase contributions from health and social care. Medium**

**Progress Update:**

Contributions are projected to increase by £242k (compared to £599k built into the base plan) based on known EHCPs. The current actual increase is £32k and represents the funding agreements confirmed and made to date. The remaining £210k is the anticipated figure for future demand (the number of EHCPs expected between September 21 to March 22). Of note is that the process around how costs relating to placements including at least two of education, health and care are split has recently been reconsidered and improved via a review of the role and practice of the Joint Agency Panel, and there is confidence therefore that this mismatch between target and actual is a function of the needs of the individual children involved. The contributions to date have actually reduced in all areas except adult health, however, there will be significant placement changes and phase transitions confirmed in September 2021. This will be an area of focus over the coming months as placements and associated funding is agreed for the new academic year. A clearer framework and more proactive agreements have been introduced and we are confident that the actual achievement will improve before the year end.

Partner	Actual Increase in contribution relative to 2020/21	Actual Increase in contribution relative to 2020/21
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	Q1	Q2
Children's social care	-£111k	-£31k
Adult social care	-£75k	-£1k
Children's health	-£43k	-£11k
Adults health	+£69k	+£75k
<b>Total</b>	<b>-£160k</b>	<b>+£32k</b>

**Condition 3.6: Commission a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review and implement any recommendations arising from it which drive sustainability in their high needs system.** **Good**

Progress Update:

Having taken place in April, the final report has been received and was [published on the Local Offer Website here in July](#). The SEND Partnership Board considered the findings in July. Recommendations are accepted and are in the process of being implemented. An example of implementation is the delivery of a new Schools Forum High Needs Block Sub Group. This was advertised to the Schools Forum in June with the request for membership volunteers yielding ample representatives from across the phases and school type. The group will meet for the first time in October. Another example is the recruitment of a Parent Carer Engagement Officer to lead on parent carer engagement and co-production. This is currently being advertised with interviews in early October. Wider findings of the review will be incorporated in the next iteration of the SEND Futures Plan.

**Condition 3.7: Reforming of the authority's post-16 offer, including but not limited to development of new provision.** **Medium**

Progress Update:

This condition is being progressed as part of Workstream 3 'Local Provision'.

The restructure of and recruitment to the Preparing for Adulthood Team is complete. The team is now fully staffed and organised into placement type specialisms of mainstream schools, special school schools and college / vocational. This has already had an impact in terms of the post 16 Annual Review process.

The Education Business Partnerships and Vocational Pathways team have been successful in bids for two programmes to support employment for young people with physical disability and mental health needs and a number of Kickstart placements have been achieved resulting in paid employment.

The new post 16 provision at Malden Oaks has opened.

Work towards the new 16 to 25 years campus continues, with work including linking with current providers and their learners to forecast needs and include this insight into design plans. The major next steps are to consult with young people and parents/carers regarding the detailed specification for the campus and to work

with LocatEd to identify and agree the site which remains work in progress. Work has also begun in looking at what commissioning arrangements would be appropriate to support achievement of value for money.

£24k of the £120k savings target has been achieved to date and although the team are working hard to improve value for money the improvements made have not had a significant impact on post 16 costs to date. We will be able to project the position with more certainty later in the year as the placements for the new academic year are still not finalised and will review whether alternative action is needed at that point.

**Condition 3.8: Contribute to the reduction of the cumulative deficit via alternative council funding sources in each financial year covered by this agreement.**

Good

Progress Update:

All 2021/22 budget transfers that were built in to the financial modelling have been agreed as follows:

£1.2m general fund contribution agreed for 2021/22.

£462k in block transfers agreed as part of DSG budget setting process.

The Schools Forum will be meeting in September and again in November following an autumn consultation to consider the prioritisation of education funding for the 2022/23 budget.

**Capital: Progress on capital investment and associated local infrastructure growth**

Medium

Three new provisions have opened in September 2021 - a Key Stage 2 specialist resource provision at Alexandra School for eight children with MLD/PD; - another primary centre of Dysart School for children with complex needs; and the first phase of a post-16 provision at Malden Oaks for 16 young people with SEMH.

Good progress has been made towards establishing a new post-16 SEND centre in the borough which would provide, on one campus, a second site for the sixth forms of the three Orchard Hill special schools (Bedelsford, Dysart and St Philip's) plus the re-location of Orchard Hill College's local centre, currently based in New Malden. The granting of £3.6m to support this project, plus a substantial portion of the borough's HNC allocation, will make this deliverable, subject to formal Council sign-off and the securing of a suitable site.

The ESFA's progress towards delivering the special free school, to be run by Ambitious about Autism, in Chessington, has been delayed by their having to re-tender for a new contractor, which has put the proposed opening date of September 2023 at high risk of not being achievable.

The SEND Futures Plan update report identifies a number of emerging risks. Risks are monitored by the Director of Children's Services and his team and where needed associated mitigating actions are identified and implemented. Appendix D provides the SEND Futures Plan risk register for information. None of the risks are likely to compromise progress on the SEND Futures Plan in the short term. It is important that the following risks continue to be carefully monitored, noting also that the risk register contains an increase in the number of risks considered to be moderate or high compared to last quarter:

- Impact of Covid 19, particularly on the timely delivery of health support, need for emotional health services and impact on need and complexity of EHCPs. The Director of Children's Services will work with partners to monitor this area closely over the coming year so that partners can ensure these services are adequately resourced.
- It has taken several months to recruit commissioning resources, including following the departure of the Director of Commissioning and Partnerships from Achieving for Children in Q1. Peopletoo were commissioned to provide temporary capacity whilst the recruitment is completed. As per 3.4 above considerable progress was made with this in August, albeit partially on an interim basis. The challenges around staffing are being carefully monitored.

Regarding requests for additional support from the DfE to help Kingston meet its objectives:

- The opening date for the new local special free school for autism at Moor Lane looks like it may be delayed. Anything that could be done to help speed this process would be appreciated, as delays will have a negative financial impact.
- We continue to hear of cases where health professionals have discussed EHC needs assessments / plans and / or particular school placements with families in a way that is not always in line with the statutory process / SEND Code of Practice. We would ask that the DfE works with NHS England colleagues to ensure such conversations are conducted in line with formal processes so as to make the experience of families as joined up and understandable as possible.

### **Summary of appendices**

Appendix A - Demand and Financial Management Dataset

Appendix B - SEND Futures Plan Budget Monitoring

Appendix C - SEND Futures Workstream Update

Appendix D - Risk Register

### **Key contact**

Ian Dodds  
 Director of Children's Services  
 Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames &  
 London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
 Telephone: 020 8891 7551  
 E-mail: [ian.dodds@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:ian.dodds@achievingforchildren.org.uk)

KINGSTON DEMAND AND FINANCE DASHBOARD

Appendix A

Ref	Key Performance Indicator	Baseline 31st March 2021	Target 21/22	Q1	Q2	RAG	Comment	Target Derivation	KPI Category
1	Actual EHCPs	1429	1471	1447	1470	G	actual @ Aug, Target prorata	Pro rata	Demand Management
2	% increase in EHCPs	6.72%	2.92%	1.26%	2.87%	G	actual @ Aug, Target prorata	Pro rata	Demand Management
3	Net EHCPs @ Jan Projected	1436	1537	1550	1537	G	Projected @Jan census	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
4	% increase	9.29%	7.00%	7.94%	7.00%	G		Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
5	New EHCPs	27	172	24	52	G	actual @ Aug, Target annual	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
6	Ceased EHCPs	-41	-72	-7	-22	A	actual @ Aug, Target annual	Annual - In Plan	Demand Management
6a	Movers	n/a	n/a	1	11	G	actual @ Aug, Target annual	Annual	Demand Management
7	% of EHCP per head of population	2.20%	2.20%	2.25%	2.73%	A	updated population estimates used in Q2	Annual	Demand management
8	% of pupils with SEN Support	9.40%	9.40%	9.40%	9.90%	G	updated population estimates used in Q2	Annual	Demand management
9	HNB Surplus / Deficit	£6,564,065	£5,432,000	£5,120,000	£5,704,626	A	Reduction in budget for export adjustment has impacted in year position. Detailed financial exercise in autumn for new academic year cohort will give more clarity over variance and spend levels.	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
10	HNB Spend	£30,270,400	£31,791,000	£31,680,146	£32,057,326	A	£201K increase is matched by an additional schools block transfer agreed for additional Education Outreach Services.	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
11	HNB Spend - direct (includes recoupment and future demand)	£28,793,720	£29,912,412	£29,813,462	£30,230,169	A		Annual	Financial Control
12	HNB Spend - central	£1,476,680	£1,878,588	£1,866,684	£1,827,157	G		Annual	Financial Control
13	In Year DSG Surplus/Deficit	£5,149,967	£3,482,000	£3,485,000	£3,859,000	A	Likely to improve before year end - More clarity once new academic year has settled in and also additional Early years census data received.	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
14	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - before safety valve funding	£24,401,000	£28,607,000	£27,886,000	£28,260,000	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
15	Cumulative DSG Surplus/Deficit - after safety valve funding	£12,401,000	£11,607,000	£10,886,000	£11,260,000	G		Annual	Financial Control
16	Funding gap as % of HNB allocation	-30.09%	-22.76%	-22.33%	-24.79%	A		Annual	Financial Control
17	Early Years outturn	£-871,000	£-750,000	£-436,000	£-436,000	A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
18	HNB DSG allocation	£23,268,514	£25,897,000	£25,896,881	£25,689,881	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
19	Block transfers	£437,800	£462,000	£662,800	£662,800	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
20	General Fund	£0	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	£1,200,000	G		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
21	Savings / mitigation < 16 HNB only	n/a	£666,000	£309,967	£424,388	A		Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
22	Savings / mitigation > 16 HNB only	n/a	£595,000	£217,459	£309,851	A	Position has worsened due to cohort change. Awaiting info on new academic year to refine projection and assess whether action is needed.	Annual - In Plan	Financial Control
23	Average cost - all HNB 2 - 18	789	841	838	848	G		Annual	Value for Money
24	Savings / mitigation - HNB only	n/a	£1,261,000	£527,426	£734,239	A		Annual - In Plan	Value for Money
25	Average placement cost < 16s	£18,778	£16,483	£16,797	£16,928	A		Annual	Value for Money
26	Average placement cost > 16s	£13,206	£11,877	£11,778	£13,226	A		Annual	Value for Money
27	Average cost of an independent < 16	£38,140	£33,313	£33,657	£30,443	G		Annual	Value for Money
28	Average cost of maintained / academy special school - in borough	£29,683	£28,650	£28,547	£29,324	A		Annual	Value for Money
29	Average cost of maintained / academy special school - out borough	£30,204	£27,473	£29,189	£30,665	A		Annual	Value for Money
30	Average cost of an independent > 16	£32,658	£34,051	£33,837	£35,024	A		Annual	Value for Money
31	Average cost of FE colleges > 16	£2,495	£2,711	£2,691	£3,466	A	A number of lower cost placements have ceased. This average is likely to reduce as the academic year progresses.	Annual	Value for Money
32	Average cost of ISP > 16	£39,088	£29,202	£29,172	£34,266	A	A number of lower cost placements have ceased. This average is likely to reduce as the academic year progresses.	Annual	Value for Money
33	Average cost of in borough special school > 16	£30,606	£24,949	£24,766	£25,272	A		Annual	Value for Money
34	Average placement cost - alternative provision	£17,695	£17,171	£16,768	£16,768	G		Annual	Value for Money
35	Savings / mitigation - alternative provision	£133,000	£0	£0	£0	G		Annual	Value for Money
36	Annual Review Savings / mitigation all age	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a			Annual	Value for Money
37	Average cost of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	£21,183	£20,684	£20,009	£20,388	G		Annual - In Plan	Value for Money
38	% of spend in: the independent, non-maintained special school and independent college sector	28.45%	26.60%	26.37%	27.81%	A		Annual	Value for Money

## KINGSTON FINANCIAL MODEL MONITORING

KINGSTON FINANCIAL MODEL	2021/22			RAG
	Financial Model	Actual Q2	Variance	
	£m	£m	£m	
HNB allocation	25.897	25.690	-0.207	A
Budget additions (transfers)	0.462	0.663	0.201	G
<b>Total budget</b>	<b>26.359</b>	<b>26.353</b>	<b>-0.006</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>HNB expenditure before savings</b>	<b>33.052</b>	<b>32.791</b>	<b>-0.261</b>	<b>G</b>
Increased places in Specialist Resource Provisions (SRP)	-0.071	-0.056	0.015	G
Review of SRP vacant place funding	-0.073	-0.041	0.032	G
Increased special school places	-0.047	-0.042	0.005	G
Development of post 16 offer	-0.120	-0.024	0.096	A
Improved commissioning practice including annual reviews	-0.351	-0.329	0.022	A
Contributions from other partners (health & social care)	-0.599	-0.242	0.357	A
<b>HNB expenditure after savings</b>	<b>31.791</b>	<b>32.057</b>	<b>0.266</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Net HNB deficit</b>	<b>5.432</b>	<b>5.704</b>	<b>0.272</b>	<b>A</b>
Variance in other DSG blocks	-0.750	-0.646	0.104	A
General Fund Contribution	-1.200	-1.200	0.000	G
<b>Net DSG Deficit (incl GF contrn)</b>	<b>3.482</b>	<b>3.858</b>	<b>0.376</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Net DSG deficit - cumulative before safety valve</b>	<b>28.607</b>	<b>28.260</b>	<b>-0.347</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>Net DSG deficit - cumulative after max safety valve</b>	<b>11.607</b>	<b>11.260</b>	<b>-0.347</b>	<b>G</b>

## SEND Futures Plan Update

### 1. Introduction

- a. The Council's People Committee considered and endorsed the draft updated SEND Futures Plan in June. The update included the Dedicated Schools Grant Financial Model as per the Safety Valve Funding Agreement. The latest version of the SEND Futures documents are published on the [Local Offer website here](#).
- b. The final report of the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review of SEND provision in Kingston that took place in April is still awaited. The draft findings are included as a supporting document for a separate item on this meeting's agenda.
- c. Under the terms of the Council's "Safety Valve" Agreement, it is required to report quarterly to the Department for Education on performance against terms in the agreement. On 18th June the Council submitted their first quarterly reporting, and that report with two of the annexes is included as Annex 1 to this update report. The report states that "There is a good level of confidence that the terms and conditions for 2021/22 will be fully met and that this work will support the achievement of conditions associated with future years".
- d. The Ofsted / CQC inspection revisit following the original Local Area SEND Inspection of September 2018 has not yet materialised, and given the proximity of school holidays it seems likely that this will now take place sometime in the new academic year. Of note is that Richmond received its first Local Area SEND Inspection in June, with the outcome expected to be published in July.

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

- a. Children and young people with SEND continued to participate in a full programme of events including Recruits Crew, the Easy Info Group and the monthly health meeting with the CCG's Designated Clinical Officer.
- b. Recruitment for the new SEND Parent Carer Engagement Officer will start in July with the aim of having the role in place as soon as possible in the new academic year.
- c. In May the Director of Children's Services chaired a workshop style meeting involving members of the Parent Carer Forum Steering Group and colleagues from AfC and the CCG. With regard to joint working with parents and carers, a summary of what is currently going well, what could be better and the opportunities to improve is included as Annex 2 to this report. One outcome was to start a quarterly meeting with the PCF Chair and AfC and CCG seniors to monitor progress against delivering on the opportunities to improve. Another was to reassess identified priorities for joint working and to focus on the following:
  - i. Engagement and outreach (including diversity) and communications
  - ii. The Coram Parent Champions scheme
  - iii. Improving therapy provision

- iv. Developing the Outcomes Framework
- v. Improving the SEN Support Offer

Following Dr Jo Steer's attendance at the June Parent Carer Consortium meeting, it was agreed to add a further priority:

- iv. Support for parent carer emotional wellbeing

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

- a. Matters relating to therapy provision and emotional wellbeing and mental health are included under Workstream 3
- b. The consultation relating to the recommissioning of certain aspects of the short breaks provision has concluded and a summary of the findings is attached at Annex 3
- c. The service relating to social care direct payments, personal budgets and personal health budgets, currently commissioned from Kingston Centre for Independent Living, is due for recommissioning from April 2022. An options appraisal, including joint working with Adult Services and Health and potentially other boroughs, will be done to consider future opportunities to develop this service further.
- d. Recruitment is underway for two SEN Placement Commissioning Managers to build on and embed the improvements we have been making to our commissioning practice

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

#### **a. Therapies**

- i. Regarding the service specifications for the newly recommissioned services, the occupational therapy and physiotherapy specifications have been circulated and comments submitted. The speech and language specification has been released for comment and the CCG's Deputy Head of Transformation and Children's Services Lead will meet key stakeholders to discuss in July.
- ii. Mapping a delivery programme onto the Balanced System (the commissioning framework going forward) is in process. Recruitment is also ongoing for a number of services (following increased funding this financial year). The best way for parents to continue to actively contribute to implementation is also being discussed and progress with the proposed service level agreement with schools to increase speech and language input is being reviewed.

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

- i. The iThrive Model is being developed, including bringing national and regional leads together to plan implementation in Kingston. Work includes partnering with local boroughs who are already using action learning sets with operation, clinical, strategic perspectives, and for planning, providing and performance management. Funding has been secured to develop this process in Kingston. The assessment of the current situation is almost complete, with outstanding data required from SWLStG NHS Trust.
- ii. Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) in schools Wave 6 has been agreed and will begin in January 2022 encompassing all schools. [More information is available here.](#)

### **c. Local Places**

- i. Work continues on the opening of the new Dysart satellite primary special school provision in North Kingston in September 2021. Joint working with the DfE and Ambitious About Autism for the opening of the new special free school at Moor Lane, with a target date September 2023 also continues, with a planning application likely in the autumn.
- ii. Several new / expanded specialist provisions are also still planned for September 2021. These are moving forward although deadlines are now tight and we are grateful to all school and council colleagues for their commitment and hard work to have these open on time. They are at Malden Oaks (Post 16 SEMH), Alexandra (Key Stage 2) and Coombe Boys' School (consultation underway for 20 places).

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

- i. The multiagency Transitions Working Group is now meeting regularly and linking in with the wider agenda of the Council's Maximising Independence transformation workstream.

### **e. Concerns**

- i. Recruitment of therapists continues to be a problematic
- ii. Whilst the iThrive model is a very attractive proposition in the long term, it does require significant systemic change and investment across all providers and partners that will take time to deliver. This is at the same time as the number of children and young people requiring related support is increasing and waiting lists are significant.

### **f. Priorities for next 3 months**

- i. Establish a working party to take iThrive model forward, including parents and carers and children and young people and colleagues from across the CCG, AfC, partners, South West London St George's and Adult Services.
- ii. Complete specialist education provisions for September intake
- iii. Establish Kingston Transition Board
- iv. Finalise contract specifications for the three main therapies, with KPIs, and obtain all necessary sign offs

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

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

Significant initiatives to upskill the wider workforce continue:

- i. 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.

- ii. The Head of Children, Youth and Partnership will be re-introducing the Children’s Centre partnership - four dates agreed and terms of reference drafted to ensure partnership approach to early years offer.
- iii. Early Help Resilience Networks started to be held in January 2021 and continue to be held across both boroughs for the three age groups (0-4, 5-10, 11+) every month and signposting to local services has been possible for each family. The Early Help Strategic Board has agreed a data set and KPIs to review impact on referrals into the Early Help service.
- iv. Quality First Teaching (QFT) Inclusion Charter - core group and sub groups continue to meet to refine the resource. Headteachers being consulted prior to the official launch. QFT reflective journal [related to the part about teaching in the classroom] has been shared to see what initial thoughts are. SPARK Ed action research project to be delivered by the SIP team once the programme has been launched so that schools who identify themselves as needing support [through a self evaluation audit] can receive additional help to embed the charter into their everyday working.
- v. Transitions - Post 16 transition communication sharing has formally started for the first time with AfC facilitating and initial feedback from colleges is strong [30 YP included so far]. A working group has been established to further refine transition at both KS2-3 and KS4-5 so that schools manage it themselves and we avoid duplication of forms - this new process will commence for the transition of 2022.
- vi. Early intervention initiatives - Nurture continues to go generally well although some staffing issues on one school are impacting delivery. Further work for 21-22 will be about applying the Nurture principles across the whole school. Emotionally Related School Avoidance (ERSA) - continues to be a priority area - meetings with health and education have been taking place to enable us to think reflectively about how to better collaborate on meeting the needs of the young people where their needs are too great for the ERSA toolkit to be used.
- vii. Interventions - Education Inclusion Support Service (EISS) have re drafted their offer for secondary schools and will be presenting these to secondary heads to ensure they are in line with what secondary schools need ahead of 2021-22. These involve a focus on entrenched ERSA cases, an alternative curriculum offer for the small numbers of young people for who 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.

**b. Areas where progress has been slower than hoped / concerns**

- i. Entrenched Emotionally Related School Avoidance Cases (ERSA). Social anxiety has been on the rise for some time and it is becoming clearer that this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Schools have a rising number of young people unable to access school and in some cases leave the home. Hence our work with health to better align our energies.
- ii. There is an increase in adolescent referrals in the Early Help Service, presenting with challenging behaviour and mental health concerns. Data below for June 2021 (both Kingston and Richmond)

Age group (years)	Open cases	% challenging behaviour	% mental health
0 - 4	22	38%	

<b>5 - 10</b>	55	27%	13%
<b>11 - 19</b>	133	48%	25%

**c. Priorities for next three months**

- i. Have a Y7-8 alternative curriculum up and running
- ii. Consult with Heads on the provisional QFT IC document
- iii. Establish a clear strategy [with health] for supporting entrenched ERSA cases
- iv. Adolescent Safeguarding restructure to be borough focused and have an additional worker for young people presenting with contextual needs and mental health. Following this we will 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**

- i. Joint working across the system to embed quality assurance within individual services and ensure learning from bimonthly quality assurances into individual services for both Education, Health and Care plans and annual reviews. Recognition of improvement within plans through bimonthly Quality Assurance .
- ii. Continuing development work around holistic outcomes which is provoking discussion across the system . Development work is in process including introduction of a revised advice template for Education,health and care needs assessment. This is initially being piloted in Richmond Therapies and provides an opportunity for Physio,Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy to establish joint outcomes for children who are known to all 3 services.
- iii. School representatives are working together to develop school based quality assurance for Annual Review. Reminders have been sent out to school SENCoS to ensure that children and young people's views are captured within the Annual review.
- iv. Introduction of an education, health and care needs assessment panel to support robustness of decision making around decision making.
- v. Timeliness of advice continues to be monitored and triangulated with providers.

**b. Areas where progress has been slower than hoped**

- i. Quality work around plans in transition and linking to Preparation for Adulthood outcomes.
- ii. Consistency of approach to Person Centred Outcomes.

**c. Priorities for next three months**

- i. Agreement to use standardised QA tool for advice across all services contributing advice

- ii. Support for all parties involved in multi agency QA to improve quality and ensure consistency of advice across advice givers. This will include a Train the Trainer programme through Helen Sanderson Associates which will include a refreshed focus on “ Person Centred practice”.
- iii. Moderation of QA to be conducted by core QA team.
- iv. Increased school involvement in quality assurance of EHCP activities.
- v. Evaluate the impact of the Education,Health and Care needs assessment plan.

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

- i. The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston on 5th July stood at 1465. This was an increase of 96 over the previous twelve months, or 7%. 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.

**7. Finance update**

The Borough is currently projecting a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overspend of £4.685m, including £1.0m 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 an additional £5m in “Safety Valve” funding this year, and including a contribution of £1.2m from the Council, this would result in a £10.9m cumulative DSG overspend at the end of this financial year. This position is summarised below (note the budgets in this table exclude the £63.8m Schools Block and £5.5m High Needs Block Academy Recoupments).

	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m
2021/22 DSG Outturn					
Schools Block	53.674	53.674	0.000	0.000	0.000
Central School Services Block	1.128	1.128	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
Early Years Block	13.651	13.215	(0.436)	0.000	(0.436)
High Needs Block	21.011	25.131	4.120	1.000	5.120
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>89.463</b>	<b>93.147</b>	<b>3.685</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>4.685</b>
2020/21 Carry forward	(12.401)	0.000	12.401	0.000	12.401
Safety Valve Funding	5.000	0.000	(5.000)	0.000	(5.000)
Council Funding	1.200	0.000	(1.200)	0.000	(1.200)
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.262</b>	<b>93.147</b>	<b>9.886</b>	<b>1.000</b>	<b>10.886</b>

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

## SEND FUTURES PLAN RISK REGISTER - AUGUST 21

Risks	Impact	Strategy	Actions	Risk Score
<b>Partnership Board</b>				
Lack of partner engagement and shared ownership of the plan with resultant lack of investment	There is no or limited traction in delivering the system change and behaviours that are necessary to transform services and achieve better outcomes for children and young people with SEND within the financial resources available.	Mitigate	Provide strong leadership of the SEND Partnership Board. Maintain current engagement from all key partner agencies to the vision, shared values and key activities. Obtain support from the Health and Wellbeing Board. Maintain the current schedule of regular meetings and reporting to share progress and achievements.	High
Ineffective governance of the SEND Partnership Board and workstreams.	There is a lack of focus and pace in delivering activities, and drift and delay in decision making. There is duplication and mixed messaging from partnership boards and other organisations working in this arena, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, SEND Partnership Board Schools Forum.	Mitigate	Strengthen governance structures that are all clearly understood and adhered to by all stakeholders. Ensure there is effective stakeholder representation on the SEND Partnership Board and five workstreams. Deliver a detailed communications plan.	Moderate
Lack of capacity and capability to drive and deliver transformation.	Key activities in the plan cannot be delivered within the timescales necessary. Partner organisations, parents and carers lose faith in	Mitigate	Sufficient resources from all partner organisations are allocated to deliver the activities in the plan. There is	High

	their ability to achieve system change.		strong senior leadership of the five workstreams. There is a programme to upskill the workforce to deliver the plan. Additional resources and expertise are sourced externally where this is required.	
Lack of agreement on how DSG funding is shared between different blocks.	There is a significant financial gap in the plan which will need to be met from other activities.	Mitigate	Build consensus across the whole system for how DSG funding should be shared. Continue discussions with the Department for Education on the national DSG funding formula. Contingency plans are established to allocate the funding shortfall to other actions within the plan.	High
The impact of the COVID pandemic	The delivery of SEND services and progress of children and young people with SEND are impacted by a range of consequences including the redeployment of staff, increased absence from school and challenges of engaging with home learning.	Mitigate	Frequent communications between agencies, providers and families to identify and respond to related matters as quickly as possible. For those with an EHC plan, the annual review process will provide more information. It is important that schools and colleges use the substantial amounts of “catch up premium” funding provided directly to them by the Department for Education to provide additional support to relevant learners. The impact of COVID on the content and	High

			number of requests for EHC needs assessments will also be monitored.	
<b>Workstream 1: Participation , Engagement and Co-production</b>				
Inability to secure an effective and engaged parent-carer forum (PCF) that is able to work collaboratively in the SEND partnership.	The voices and opinions of parents and carers do not inform strategic decision-making. Implementation of the plan is not successful as parents are not informed, aware or signed up to the system change required.	Mitigate	Develop ways to incentivise and reward parents and carers to be involved. PCF membership of the SEND Partnership Forum and workstreams.	Moderate
<b>Workstream 2: Joint Commissioning</b>				
Inability to recruit and retain professionals with commercial and contract management expertise	There is insufficient capacity or skill in the placement commissioning to negotiate and manage contracts with providers that reduce costs.	Mitigate	Job profiles, salary levels and the recruitment process attract good candidates with commercial expertise and experience. There is an effective induction, development and support package available to all professionals involved	High
Commercial negotiations with SEND providers are unproductive.	Placement costs are not reduced, meaning that additional savings have to be found from other areas of the plan.	Mitigate	There is an effective induction, development and support package available to all professionals involved in placement brokerage. Expertise in commercial contract management is secured from the Council or brought in from an external consultant on a risk and reward basis.	High

<b>Workstream 3: Local Provision</b>				
Support from schools for the local SEND provision plan is not consistent or sufficient to create the additional school places required.	There are insufficient local special school places to meet the needs identified in the SEND provision plan, making the Council more reliant on maintained and special schools outside the borough and on non-maintained and independent school provision	Mitigate	There is effective engagement and communication with schools through existing networks to agree the local provision plan. Proposals are based on a detailed analysis of local needs. Good consultation with schools and other stakeholders leads to strong proposals and well managed plans to develop new provision.	Low
Local therapy provision is unable to be delivered to meet the identified needs of children with disabilities.	Children's therapeutic needs cannot be met locally leading to placements in more specialist school provision and at a higher cost.	Mitigate	The recommendations of the therapy review are implemented asap, and sufficient funding and resources secured.	High
Parents and carers do not feel confident that local mainstream schools, specialist resource provisions and special schools are able to meet their child's assessed needs.	There is an increase in the number of disputed EHCPs and appeals to the First-Tier SEND Tribunal on the basis of parental preference. The workload for SEND professionals is increased and there is a potential for the tribunal to direct that the local authority makes alternative and higher cost provision.	Mitigate	There is a clear strategy to promote the resources and facilities available in local provision and the outcomes they achieve for children and young people with SEND. The quality of local provision is actively promoted by all practitioners in their relationships with parents and through their professional networks.	Moderate
Emotional wellbeing and mental health needs amongst children and young	Expenditure from the High Needs Block increases to meet their needs	Mitigate	Develop the universal early intervention offer, recruit and redeploy staff to meet needs as	High

with and without SEND increase			quickly as possible and prevent escalation where possible, develop iThrive model asap.	
<b>Workstream 4: Early Interventions and Transitions</b>				
School professionals do not support inclusion and early intervention, or there is inconsistent support across schools.	Children and young people with SEND cannot be supported within mainstream schools or specialist resource provisions, meaning that they have to be transferred to special schools or non-maintained and independent schools at a higher cost.	Mitigate	There is effective engagement and communication with professionals through the SENCO and headteacher networks. There is an effective learning, development and support offer to schools to support inclusive practice. The shape of the offer is informed by learning from EHCP assessments, tribunals and other feedback.	Moderate
Inability to recruit and retain professionals who are able to provide expert outreach support to schools and providers.	There is insufficient capacity, skill and expertise within the inclusion service to support schools with targeted interventions.	Mitigate	Job profiles, salary levels and the recruitment process attract good candidates with inclusion expertise and experience. Flexible working arrangements are available including secondments from schools. There is an effective induction, development and support package available to all professionals involved in targeted interventions.	Moderate
Transition arrangements between children's services	Young adults with SEND do not receive the support they need in a timely way from the	Mitigate	The preparing for adulthood strategy, transitions protocol and inclusion in	High

<p>and adult social care services are not implemented.</p>	<p>appropriate services. Ineffective transition and working arrangements between children's services and adult social care lead to fragmentation and build higher costs into the system.</p>		<p>the Council's Maximising Independence transformation programme facilitates early consideration and planning for young people's transition. Funding responsibilities are made clear within the protocol and are agreed in each individual case.</p>	
<p><b>Workstream 5: Assessment and Planning</b></p>				
<p>Inability to recruit and retain experienced professionals within the SEND service, including educational psychologists, case workers and annual review officers.</p>	<p>There is insufficient capacity, skill and expertise within the SEND service to drive up the quality of EHCPs and maximise the benefit of the annual EHCP review process.</p>	<p>Mitigate</p>	<p>Job profiles, salary levels and the recruitment process attract good candidates with SEND expertise and experience. Flexible working arrangements are available, including secondments from schools. There is an effective induction, development and support package available to all SEND professionals.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Annual EHCP reviews and updates to plans following quality assurance require substantial changes to plans.</p>	<p>There is insufficient capacity within the SEND service to make required changes to EHCPs. Proposed changes to plans result in parental challenge, disputed EHCPs and appeals to the SEND tribunal, which may result in higher cost provision.</p>	<p>Mitigate</p>	<p>The management structure and staffing of the SEND service is regularly reviewed to ensure sufficient capacity. There is a priority programme for annual EHCP reviews and quality assurance and this is well coordinated and managed by specific senior staff. There is engagement with parents and carers. Assessments and</p>	<p>High</p>

			plans are well evidenced by all contributing professionals.	
Annual EHCP reviews do not reduce the costs of individual plans to an affordable funding level that meets the child's or young person's needs.	Proposed changes to plans result in increased parental challenge, disputed EHCPs and appeals to the SEND tribunal, which may result in higher cost provision	Mitigate	Annual EHCP reviews and quality assurance are well coordinated and managed. There is engagement with parents and carers. Assessments and plans are well evidenced by all contributing professionals.	High
The SEND service does not have the systems, processes and support it needs to drive up the quality of EHCP assessments and plans.	The quality of EHCP assessments and plans does not improve at the required pace. EHCPs do not robustly and sufficiently evidence how and where children's and young people's education, health and care needs can be met. This may result in increased parental challenge, disputed EHCPs and appeals to the SEND tribunal, which may result in higher cost provision.	Mitigate	There is a priority programme for annual EHCP reviews and quality assurance.	High