

## SEND Futures Plan Update

### 1. Introduction

- a. Under the terms of Kingston's "[Safety Valve](#)" Agreement, the Council is required to report on performance against conditions in the agreement on a quarterly basis. In December [the Council reported to the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#) in relation to the Q3 payment with the report stating 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". The DfE has confirmed that the next quarterly payment will be made. The Council will report to the DfE again in March for the final quarter of this financial year. We expect to meet with the DfE to discuss progress in more detail in February or March.
- b. The total number of education, health and care plans (EHCs) is slightly in excess of the number that was forecast in the Safety Valve Agreement. It is also important to note that there is significant price inflation for placements across SEND education settings, particularly in Post-16. The placement price increase alongside the significant increase in need presents budgetary pressures with regards to the Safety Valve funding agreement which needs to be closely monitored.
- c. On 24 December 2021, NHS England and NHS Improvement released its [operational planning guidance for 2022/23](#), including its nine priorities for the service. One of the most significant points to note is the delayed implementation of integrated care systems (ICS) from 1 April 2022 to 1 July 2022, due to parliamentary timings. In line with contingency planning, this requires straightforward changes to clinical commissioning group regulations that will enable ICS leaders to continue their development work during this transition. Current statutory arrangements will remain in place until July, with the first quarter of 2022/23 serving as a continued preparatory period.
- d. On-going work with the implementation of recommendations arising from the LGA Peer Review of SEND Provision continues. An example is a Parent Carer Engagement Officer started in post in December; they will be responsible for developing closer working relationships with families that will ensure that parents and carers of children and young people with SEND are fully involved in the SEND Futures Plan.
- e. The Ofsted / CQC revisit following the original Local Area SEND Inspection of September 2018 has not yet materialised, and is expected sometime in this academic year.

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

#### a. Children and Young People (CYP)

##### Impact and progress

- i. Children and young people with SEND have continued to share their views and influence planning and decision-making through a range of projects.
- ii. 7 members of the Recruits Crews have been involved in staffing appointments to Short Breaks, Emotional Health Service (including Schools Teams), Disabled Children's Family Support Service and Physiotherapy.
- iii. 1 young person joined peers from the Children in Care Council, Kingston & Richmond Youth Council and Windsor & Maidenhead Youth Voice to meet the new Non-Executive Director of AfC Board to discuss Young People's engagement with the Board.

- iv. Young people have been involved in delivering participation training to staff which has been positively received and is raising awareness across the service.
- v. The Young People's Health Group discussed KPIs and outcome measures with the Designated Clinical Officer.
- vi. 4 new young people referred to the Recruits Crew and they have been contacted with the aim of joining the team shortly.
- vii. A huge thank you to all the children and young people who have been participating and giving feedback to shape future services, their time and effort is appreciated.

### **Strategic work**

- i. Participation leads meetings have been held with Integrated Service for Children with Disabilities, Special Educational Needs team & Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare (HRCH) with the aim of promoting participation across multiple services.
- ii. Advisory/development meetings have been held with the Virtual School, Designated Social Care Officer, Dysart School, RBK Adult Engagement, Children Looked After (CLA) Nursing Team, Your Healthcare and Inclusion Development Officers to promote collaborative working and ensure that participation is embedded across the services.
- iii. 'Have My Say' app development has begun with 'This is Focus' and Education, Social Care & Health representatives selected to help drive the development forward.
- iv. Development work has been undertaken with regards to health and hospital profiles.
- v. A system has been implemented for health teams to present children and young people's feedback to Senior Health Care Managers, this feedback will be discussed in meetings for consideration and/or action.

### **Areas of concern**

- i. There is currently restricted access to Boardmaker symbol software and work is ongoing to widen access and deliver training. This software is required to improve the accessibility of information provided by professionals and to support production of Easy Read materials.
- ii. The capacity within the Participation team to deliver on the "Have My Say" app project.
- iii. The impact of general recruitment challenges across the service on Recruits Crew.

### **Priorities and milestones for coming months**

- i. The procurement and distribution of Boardmaker symbol software and ensuring the staff that need it have access to the software.
- ii. Development of Emotional Health Service Recruits Crew role to support organisation, facilitation & recruitment of young people.
- iii. 'Have My Say' app development work.

- iv. Recruitment of new members to the Recruits Crew to ensure that the quality of participation work remains high and that as many children and young people as possible have the opportunity to share their view to influence service development.

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

- i. Further information on the Parent Carer Engagement Officer mentioned in the introduction, who started their role in December is available here: [SEND Parent and Carer Engagement Team](#).
- ii. Initial meetings have been held with regards to the launch and delivery of the Coram SEND Parent Champions scheme and the Parent Carer Engagement Officer will be leading on the implementation of the scheme and acting as the Parent Champions Coordinator. Nationwide planning meetings have been attended and this information will be shared at a local level to ensure that the implementation of the scheme can be as effective as possible.
- iii. The Parent Carer Engagement Officer will be attending local events throughout the upcoming months and will be raising the profile of their role and ensuring that parents and carers are aware of the newly created post.
- iv. [Notes and actions of recent Parent and Carer consortium meetings](#). Parent Consortium meetings continue to be held monthly, there have been updates provided to the PCF, and feedback received, on the following items: the annual review process, direct payments, short breaks recommissioning and the SENDIASS contract.
- v. Development of the Local Offer website is on-going; meetings between the Parent Carer Engagement Officer and AfC Local Offer Website Manager are scheduled to ensure that the PCF are included in the developments moving forward. The SENDCO zone is due to go live early in 2022 to enable easier access to resources for school practitioners.

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

#### **Impact and Progress over past 3 months**

- i. AfC's Head of Strategic Commissioning started in early December and a new Associate Director for Business Development and Strategic Commissioning will also be starting in March 2022. The purpose of these roles includes to lead improvements in SEND and social care procurement and commissioning practice. There will also be a review of the current team structure to ensure that we can maximise capacity, skills and expertise.
- ii. Improved joint working continues to improve the timeliness of decisions on joint funded placements via the SEND panel and Joint Agency Panel.

#### **SEND Placement Commissioning**

- i. SEND Placement Commissioners are working to continue to improve the quality and value for money of SEND placements and good progress is being made against their objectives. Negotiations are on-going with education providers who have been prioritised with regards to value for money and quality of their placements. At present there is a focus on high cost individual placements and where there is a large number of placements in one setting. Meetings are scheduled throughout the rest of the academic year, with independent special schools and colleges being the main priority, to ensure that quality is being maximised and value for money is being achieved.
- ii. There has been a reduction in cost in Further Education (FE) colleges on a per pupil, per placement basis compared to last year. 66% of FE colleges have committed not to pass on inflationary increases

for the 22/23 academic year, 33% of FE colleges have confirmed that they will be applying for price increases, the impact of this is to be fully analysed following the 31st March 2022, which is the phase transfer deadline.

- iii. A system is being trialled for the SEND team to directly refer individual young people to commissioners when in-year fees appear too high, the young person has not attended the placement or the placement has not been able to provide full range of delivery within EHCP. This level of individual pupil work is starting to result in cost reductions.
- iv. The recruitment process for the permanent roles within the SEND Commissioning team is underway with interviews scheduled for early February.

### **Concerns**

- v. The post pandemic placement market is exceedingly complex. There are difficulties in negotiating price on current placements and the ongoing fee increase requests that exceed normal levels of inflation. These increases continue to present budgetary pressures.
- vi. Due to the impact of inflation there is uncertainty around providers' willingness to hold 2021 prices into the new academic year.
- vii. Recruitment and retention issues and COVID related absences are driving up staff costs both teaching and to a greater degree therapists.
- viii. Overly high expectations about the levels of funding that will be made available to local authorities with the introduction of the National Funding Formula (NFF) and what this could mean for fee increases.
- ix. There is significant price inflation for placements across SEND education settings, in borough and regionally, particularly in post-16 provision and also in out of borough specialist placements due to growing demand and a lack of specialist places. It is important to note that the average age of a child or young person (CYP) who has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan is going up and there is now a larger percentage of total plans at post-16 which is causing further budgetary pressures.

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

- vii. There continues to be a strong focus on negotiating better value SEND placements, both in terms of quality and cost, through the SEND Placements Commissioners. There is a specific focus on post-16 placements within the borough.
- viii. Commissioning procedures and processes to be fully reviewed and commissioner and provider handbooks to be produced. The handbooks will include best practice and guidance on the purpose of SEND commissioning across a broad range of topics.
- ix. A data dashboard of providers to be created to summarise providers' performance to identify more focussed commissioning work and allow ongoing "real time" assessment.
- x. Post 16 curriculum planning reviewed with a focus on special independent providers.

### **Therapies and emotional wellbeing and mental health**

- i. Matters relating to therapy provision and emotional wellbeing and mental health are included under Workstream 3.

### **Short Breaks Commissioning**

- i. The tender process has now closed and all bids that were received are being evaluated with regards to compliance, quality and value for money. This process is to be completed prior to the contracts being issued in March 2022.

### **Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)**

- i. Following the extension of the SENDIASS contract with the current provider until March 2023 the CCG and Achieving for Children have agreed to increase the annual contract value for 2022/23 and have also revised the service specification. The agreed service specification will ensure compliance with the SEND Code of Practice and will include the additional element of supporting families with tribunal cases.
- ii. Work has begun to develop a project timeline for the engagement and procurement of the new contract which will commence on 1st April 2023.

### **Direct Payment Support Service**

- iii. Joint CCG and AfC providers meetings have resulted in ways to improve service delivery and the communications between providers and families.
- iv. Recent months have seen joint contract monitoring, between the CCG and AfC, with specific focus on spend and activity of personal budgets has improved governance of the contract.
- v. Work has begun to develop a project timeline for the engagement and procurement of the new contract which will commence no later than 1st April 2023.

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

### **a. Therapies**

- i. A briefing note has been produced and is being presented at the next Therapies Oversight Group meeting this month. The briefing note sets out the investment to date compared to the original level of investment stated and highlights funding gaps based on a needs assessment and associated delivery risks. This is to clarify realistic expectations about what can be delivered in terms of the Balanced System at this stage. A timeline is being developed to explain the journey towards the Balanced System which will be shared with parents, carers and schools. The intention is to increase understanding about what the new system will look like and timescales for fully delivering the model.
- ii. Investment priorities for year 3 are to be agreed by January and service specifications reviewed and revised early this year for year 3 to ensure that all services are aligned.
- iii. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are being developed in collaboration with the CCG, providers, the PCF and children and young people. A meeting has been held with representatives from the PCF to begin work in relation to outcome measures and KPIs. As a result of the meeting, we will be distinguishing between service data indicators (i.e. caseloads, number of referrals, waiting lists) and outcome data that sets out how each therapy service is performing. We will refine the service data indicators with the providers following feedback received from the PCF.

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

- i. Waiting list funds have been provided to reduce waiting times for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and Family Therapy.
- ii. A virtual waiting room with more contacts have been established whilst children and young people are waiting to access the Emotional Health Service and additional resources have been provided.

- iii. Wave 6 of the Mental Health Support Teams launches at the end of January 2022, this will ensure that all primary and secondary schools in the borough will have dedicated support, there will also be a team dedicated to SEND. There has been good engagement from schools to ensure these teams are integrated.
- iv. New Assistant Psychologists focusing on support post diagnosis are starting in early 2022.
- v. A series of iThrive webinars were held and an initial mapping exercise completed with key partners across November and December 2021. The next phase of work that is underway, prior to the implementation of the new model, involves mapping the current service and partnership offer, understanding current service pressures and service gaps; this will ensure that a priority list across all key stakeholders is agreed and the model can be implemented to improve service delivery.
- vi. A 3-6 month action plan is now in place to redesign the CAMHS SPA, improve communication for preventative work and the universal offer, prioritise plans to implement the iThrive model and adopt good practice in waiting list management.

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

- i. A contractor has been appointed for the new special free school, at the Moor Lane site, and the planning application is expected soon. The Department for Education and Ambitious About Autism are aiming for a 2023 opening, however due to delays beyond the Council's control this may be delayed until 2024.
- ii. Good progress continues to be 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. This would provide up to 80 new post and pre-16 places in the borough. The initial consultation is completed and approvals have been obtained, a site-search is still ongoing.
- iii. Work is progressing with regards to delivery of phase 2 of the post-16 social emotional and mental health provision at Malden Oaks, due to open in September 2022.
- iv. Robin Hood Primary School is in consultation with regards to opening an ASC SRP in September 2022.

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

- i. Support has been secured from the [National Development Team for Inclusion](#) to embed pathways into post 16 for learners with SEND. Further support has also been secured to develop a post 16 transitions framework mapping out key roles and responsibilities for all partners.
- ii. Vocational pathways: At the end of quarter 3, 10% of young people with EHCPs (post-16) are in vocational pathway destinations (45 out of 453 young people with EHCPs (post-16)).
- iii. The Next Steps programme is now delivered as an integral part of EHC Plan annual reviews in Year 9 and 11 and offered as a one-to-one interview to EHC plan and SEN support learners in Year 10. The Next Steps programme is an integral part of the transitions pathway and to date 72 learners up to Year 11 have been supported (40% of borough baseline target).

#### **Concerns**

- i. Waiting times for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), occupational therapy, physiotherapy and also for CAMHS continue to be significant, this combined with the reported increased level of demand and

level of need this is presenting significant pressures on the services.

- ii. It is becoming increasingly difficult to meet demand for therapies across the borough. There are also challenges around direct funding/ spot commissioning arrangements.
- iii. Recruitment of therapists and specialist staff in Kingston remains an issue across the board, including Educational Psychologists, Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists. This is leading to challenges around statutory provision and ensuring that statutory deadlines are met.
- iv. Due to the lack of specialist SEND places in the borough and a higher than usual number of in-year admissions requiring specialist provision, a number of children and young people are beginning school in mainstream schools whilst waiting for specialist places. The lack of specialist SEND placements is a regional issue, with the DfE reporting that a number of LAs are continuing to report difficulties meeting requests for special school placements.
- v. Timescales for opening new schools may be delayed causing there not to be sufficient local specialist places.
- vi. The complexity of the iThrive plans and the time they will take to deliver and see benefits.
- vii. Ensuring that partners are aware of their role with regards to transitions and vocational pathways, there has been a lower than expected uptake of placements within the local offer, COVID is hampering progress in this area, and there are some schools that are not engaged in the Next Steps programme. There is also a lack of understanding from some independent training providers as to how to meet the needs of young people with SEND.

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

- i. Therapies' KPIs are to be agreed and signed off by the Therapies Oversight Group. A briefing paper is being presented at the next Therapies Oversight Group for sign off.
- ii. Agreement to be sought for therapy investments for 2022/23 and also for the Section 75 budget for 2022/23.
- iii. Progression of temporary and permanent additional school places for children and young people with Autism, Social Emotional and Mental Health needs and Moderate and Severe Learning Difficulties.
- iv. Establish Kingston Transitions Board.
- v. Key leads from RBK to be established to ensure a collaborative approach to improve transitions and pathways for 16-25 year olds.
- vi. The iThrive model is to be scoped with all partners.
- vii. Ensure statutory functions are delivered whilst immediate capacity challenges are addressed. Plan has been put into place with Your Healthcare and is to be closely monitored. Work is ongoing to ensure statutory provision can be delivered in spite of these workforce challenges.

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

#### **a. Recent impact and progress - Early Years onwards**

**Significant initiatives to upskill the wider workforce continue; key progress items below:**

- i. The Inclusion Charter resource continues to be developing well. The Inclusion Charter itself is complete, alongside the school audit, systemic and operational guides. The next steps of implementing this resource is to promote the work that has been completed to professional partners.
- ii. Transition framework is in the final stages of development; this has been produced in collaboration with school partners, AfC colleagues and other key partners. A number of resources have been developed including a google form, checklist, timeline and FAQs which will improve the transitions process at both primary to secondary school and secondary to post-16.
- iii. Work continues around the consistency of the Local Offer in terms of Quality First Teaching.

**b. Recent impact and progress - First 1,001 Days and Early Help**

- iv. The Partnership audit of the impact of Resilience Networks on families has been completed and findings shared with relevant stakeholders, report is to be produced.
- v. Interactive Video Guidance is now available to families of children of any age (previously only those under 1 year old) and open to social care to help support and guide them.
- vi. The Children’s Centre Partnership held a review of the previous strategy and work carried out to support the new strategy in 2022.
- vii. Funding secured for Reducing Parental Conflict, via the Department for Work and Pensions which is led by Learning and Development and supported by the Parenting Coordinator. Family Coaches have been identified that will deliver the programme.
- viii. Funding secured from Violence Reduction Unit that will be used for a parenting program where parents are harmed by their children, titled ‘Who’s in Charge?’.

**c. Areas of concern**

- i. Funding for the Key Stage 4 alternative curriculum pathway is proving to be a challenge.
- ii. Attendance at Resilience Networks has dropped as a result of services returning to more face-to-face work.

**d. Priorities and Milestones**

- i. Complete draft Inclusion Charter toolkit resource and share with key stakeholders.
- ii. Complete transition framework and ensure that stakeholders have framework in readiness for the summer term.
- iii. Finalise the standard and accessible Ordinarily Available documents.
- iv. Establish a clear strategy with health for supporting entrenched ERSA cases.
- v. Practitioners to be identified that will deliver the “Who’s in Charge” programme and support mechanisms are to be agreed alongside the Domestic Violence team.
- vi. Referral pathways and criteria for new parenting groups are to be confirmed and agreed with relevant parties.

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



**a. Recent impact and progress**

- i. Project work has begun with the National Development Team for Inclusion around preparation for adulthood with a focus on careers guidance and development of holistic outcomes.
- ii. Deep dive activity around the timeliness of health advice continues at a granular level and is leading to process changes to support an improvement in timeliness of advice.
- iii. The schools quality assurance team are now undertaking quality assurance work of EHC Plans.
- iv. The EHC Needs Assessments multi-agency review group is developing a targeted approach to the increase in EHC Needs Assessment requests in collaboration with the School Improvement Partners and an action plan is being developed.
- v. As a result of multi-agency participation work in the Council for Disabled Children's Holistic Outcomes session, bespoke workshop sessions have been introduced on Multi Agency Development of Holistic Outcomes. The initial session was delivered in December with participants attending from across the system, further sessions have been scheduled.
- vi. SENDCo Bitesize training is in progress; workshops for secondary schools are starting week commencing 17th January 2022.
- vii. Outcomes training has been delivered to professionals to ensure that outcomes that are written are person centred and holistic; impact on this is to be confirmed.
- viii. All services, including Social Care, Education and Health, are developing specific quality assurance guidance for advice and annual review.
- ix. Bimonthly multi agency quality assurance of Education, Health and Care plans continues to happen. There has been continued improvement of quality, the amount of plans that have been assessed to be good or better has increased every quarter , particularly around specification and quantification of provision.
- x. Strategic outcomes have been embedded into key performance indicators as part of the Therapies review following input from Parent Carer Forum and Children and Young People's health participation group.
- xi. The Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment panel, which began in September, has continued and provides a multi agency forum to moderate decision making and is providing more robustness around decision making.

**b. Areas of concern**

- i. Challenges with the delivery of provision, especially therapies.
- ii. Timeliness of advice continues to be monitored, this is impacting the timeliness of EHCP and annual review process and the ability to ensure that they are issued within statutory timeframes.
- iii. Timing of some workforce development activity (e.g. Helen Sanderson) in the context of wider pressures across services.
- iv. Further work is needed in all service areas to upskill knowledge and understanding of the role and quality of statutory advice in relation to EHC activity.

- v. Annual reviews from providers in educational settings are sometimes late and therefore are impacting on statutory timeframes and KPIs. More collaborative working with these providers is needed to ensure that information is provided on time.

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

- i. Development of holistic outcomes across the system and ensuring that they are consistent across the services.
- ii. Further training with teams on compliance and how that applies to specific service areas is to be conducted.
- iii. Focus on quality assurance of EHC Plan activities through increased school involvement.

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

- i. The total number of Education Health and Care plans maintained by Kingston on 17th January stood at 1546. This is an increase of 112 plans over the previous 12 months, or 7.8%. 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**

- i. The Borough is currently projecting a Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overspend of £5.2m, including £0.40m 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 £11.4m 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 September.

2021/22 DSG Outturn	Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m	Future Demand £m	Variance incl Future Demand £m	Last month £m
Schools Block	50.403	50.188	(0.215)	0.000	(0.215)	(0.215)
Central School Services Block	1.128	1.128	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)	(0.000)
Early Years Block	13.651	13.180	(0.470)	0.000	(0.470)	(0.470)
High Needs Block	20.804	26.678	5.875	0.040	5.915	5.848
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>85.986</b>	<b>91.175</b>	<b>5.189</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>5.229</b>	<b>5.162</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>91.175</b>	<b>11.390</b>	<b>0.040</b>	<b>11.430</b>	<b>11.363</b>

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