

SEND Improvement Update

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6th April 2021



Overview of item

This presentation provides an information update on local area progress on the SEND improvement agenda. The presentation covers the following:

- *Summary of our Self Evaluation*
- *Key issues from service users*
- *Inspection preparedness*
- *Next steps*
- *Appendices*



SEF Summary

Key strengths

- **Effective early identification in the early years** - Childcare settings are well supported and meet SEND needs well. Section 23(3) notification processes are working well.
- **Good, consistent attainment and achievement** of CYP with SEND, including CLA. CYP with SEND are well engaged in their education.
- **High quality and effective mix of education provision** for SEND in place, with high-quality education outreach services provided. Sensory impairments identified early, and most are well supported to remain in local mainstream or in resource bases.
- **Investment at SEN Support in well established and maintained.**
- **Schools are well supported in assessing and meeting needs** at SEN support and with EHCPs. There is effective planning for school places in place. There are effective responses to increased local SEN need of migrants from abroad.
- **Timelier intervention is embedding across parts of the system** - Introduction of multi-disciplinary, early intervention therapies model by Barts Health. CAMHS support through THEWS and the Neurodevelopmental Team are meeting need effectively.
- **Progress made in implementing the Integrated SEND Commissioning Plan.**
- **Low numbers of formal mediation requests and tribunals.**
- **Strong engagement with service users** through SENDIASS. The Local Offer is becoming a central, effective communication channel with service users. Service users are playing a growing role in system governance.
- **Good outcomes for young people aged 19-25 with a learning disability.**
- **Progress into employment is well supported** by effective programmes and initiatives.
- **Wider inclusion is championed** in strategic partnerships and informs service development.



SEF Summary

Areas in development

- **Work continues to ensure the needs of children entering Reception are fully disclosed by EY settings and families.**
- **Processes around EHC needs assessment need to improve**, including the timeliness and quality of plans.
- **Improvements needed to planning for transition to adulthood** - Year 9 annual reviews do not routinely make adequate plans for transition to adult services.
- **Improvements to the recording of SEND status across services need to embed** across the system to improve the holistic understanding and meeting of the needs of the child or young person.
- **Improved understanding of projected future demand for SEND** is required to ensure that the local area is better prepared for changing provision needs.
- **Gaps in Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision** mean that some needs are not being effectively met.
- **Parents report dissatisfaction with ASD diagnosis waiting times.**
- **Poor transition pathways and experience for young people who do not meet the thresholds for specialist adult learning disability services.**
- **Greater levels of support for Speech, Language and Communication Needs in the early years.**
- **Service users need to be more systematically engaged and heard at each stage of the commissioning cycle.**
- **Monitoring and tracking outcomes in annual reviews is inconsistent.** We also need to improve data capture on outcomes within management information systems, so strategic impact can be monitored.
- **Enhanced join up of healthcare support for transition to adults health services.**



Key issues raised by parents, carers and young people

- Improved understanding of EHCP process for social care, health and voluntary services - training for staff and awareness of role and responsibilities within process
- Commitment from all relevant parties to participate in Annual Reviews and input to EHC plans
- Clear understanding of how funding / resources can be used, including direct payments and personal budgets
- More accurate, easy to access, up to date information held within systems and shared when appropriate – education, social services and health
- Better integration and joined up working between education, social services and health
- Clear CAMHS Pathway reduced waiting times and improved access
- Clear transition planning from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services
- Greater opportunities for young people with SEND to access apprenticeships and supported internships
- Development of coproduction across all statutory and voluntary agencies including commissioning of services



Inspection readiness

- The SEND Progress Group is tightening its TOR and refocusing specifically on preparation for inspection. This focus will include assessing how closely the local area meets the SEND Framework guidelines
- Work is underway to complete the evidence library: the list of action plans referred to within the SEF are being gathered and will be reviewed to ensure that they are effective for driving improvements forward at a reasonable pace.
- Key lines of enquiry are being developed to help develop an understanding of areas where responses may be required for inspectors.
- Plans are being developed to share the SEF with staff and service users across the local area in a summary format to ensure its messages resonate and are well understood.
- Where there is confusion about how parts of the system work, One Minute Guides are being developed to provide a single clear message for staff and service users on what the processes are.



What we need from partners & next steps



Strengthening understanding of SEND priorities for all partners across the local area so that all parts of the system work together to address issues and drive improvement

Securing the commitment of partners around areas of work which are 'in development' and would benefit from a more joined up approach

Supporting partners to deliver key messages to wider staff and colleagues about their role in delivering the best possible services and outcomes for children and young people with SEND



APPENDICES



Engagement and involvement of parents, carers, children and young people

SEND Improvement Plan – Key strategic activities

P1: Parents and young people are active partners in decision-making and service development driving improvement across the SEND system

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P3: Coproduction / Personal Centred Outcomes - children, parents and families become an integral part of the commissioning process, as per the commissioning cycle in the SEND CoP where partners are engaged in all aspects of the process: understand/plan/do/review

RED

Actions

- Ensuring joined up approach for Parent/Carer Forum, Young People Forum, SEND Ambassadors and other groups
- Developing more systematic approach for responding to feedback from parents/carers and young people, and ensuring direct input to SEND Improvement Plan and Improvement Board
- Development of Co-production Plan for 21/22
- Development of You Said, We Did log of improvement actions

Potential challenges

- Complexity of governance and partnership structures
- Support, training and awareness for parents, carers and young people around processes and systems to ensure meaningful and effective participation
- Pressure of timescales and resources to building in participation



Update on improving EHCP timeliness

SEND Improvement Plan – Key strategic activities

P2: The timeliness of EHC improves, with the majority of cases assessed within 20 weeks; contributions to plans from all services are timely

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Key issues

- Range of issues around reduction in timeliness - high no. of plans, high individual caseloads, inconsistencies in data for monitoring, staff absences (exacerbated by Covid), delays requesting / receiving advice for needs assessments

Actions

- Plan to clear original backlog –
 - 42% plans now been issued (further 20% have draft plans in place)
 - Target for at least 60% issued by end of March. End of May deadline to clear backlog.
- Assessments since October 2020 (with additional capacity) –
 - In February – 6/12 plans (50%) delivered within 20-wk timescale.
 - Projections for March (31 plans) Yes – 52% / Likely – 68% / Possible – 77%
- Restructure of the SEN Service:
 - Staff consultation completed in Feb and structure being finalised (benchmarking has helped to inform this).
 - Longer term staffing capacity being looked with commitment to review needs of the service against core tasks annually.
 - Understanding future needs – benchmarking has been undertaken
- Improved tracking system breaking down each stage of the Assessment to pinpoint any difficulties

Potential challenges

- Resources – continuing pressures
- Receiving advice within 6wks from partner agencies
- Training for partners in Education, Health and Social Care (advice for EHC Plans)



ASD diagnosis pathway/timeliness

SEND Improvement Plan – Key strategic activities

P3: ASD Pathway - all services within the pathway to have a collective understanding of the immediate and long term priorities/objectives in supporting children and families from pre-diagnosis through to transition into adult services. All services to have closer dependencies and join up in meeting the agreed objectives

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Key issues

- Current waiting times are long and increasing, the longest waiting time is in excess of 118 weeks, whilst approx. 125 patients have waited over 52 weeks for the completion of an assessment (figures have been greatly impacted by Covid)
- Pre Covid 19 improvement plan reduced waiting times however approach not sustainable
- Lack of clearly defined ASD pathway in Tower Hamlets, with no collective insight or understanding of the journey of the understanding of the journey for a family.

Actions

- By end Feb 2021 - Development of Business Case to increase capacity – to be presented at WEL F&P Committee before the end of financial year
- Continue benchmarking exercise across WEL, TH are not outliers in this area.
- Initiate ASD Pathway Review, with a primary aim to be that children, parents and families can access support while waiting for the completion of the assessment for ASD, and that support is not contingent on a diagnosis.

Potential challenges

- Identifying and implementing sustainable resources to drive down assessment waiting times
- Impact of Covid 19 restrictions – future uncertainty
- Review of ASD pathway may be impacted by resources / capacity issues within the system



Inclusive practice in schools

SEND Improvement Plan – Key strategic activities

P4: Inclusive practice is routinely consistent across all mainstream schools, including the six nursery schools, particularly with regards to Sensory Impairment, ASD and SEMH

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Key issues

- Focus is on achieving more consistency in inclusive practice across all mainstream schools
- Improved consistency is expected to support a reduction demand for EHC Plans

Actions

- Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THEP) – SENDco and Inclusion Leadership Network established and CPD in Inclusive Classrooms being planned
- Inclusion benchmarking tool complete - being piloted in mainstream schools
- Support for Learning Service and Behaviour Support Team:
 - Delivering support, guidance and training on inclusive approaches to classroom teaching, multi-agency planning, and effective deployment of learning support staff in the classroom
 - Termly SENCo Conferences and SENCo forums - well attended, providing advice and training
- Tower Hamlets Education Wellbeing Service (THEWS - delivered by CAMHS):
 - Operating in 23 schools - universal service but work supports and develops a school culture and ethos that benefits pupils with SEN and SEMH needs
 - Schools receive support and advice in relation to any pupil of concern, including those with special educational needs

Potential challenges

- Ensuring SLS restructure and the newly created post of senior SEN adviser deliver on supporting strategic aims
- Progressing actions in context of schools responding to the pandemic - additional pressures
- Pressure on resources - financial and workforce for schools and council, particularly affecting the delivery of the High Needs recovery plan.



Transitions



Tower Hamlets
Clinical Commissioning Group



SEND Improvement Plan – Key strategic activities

P5: Local agencies work in partnership to help effectively plan for education transitions, so that needs are accurately reflected in EHC plans and new settings are provided with the right information

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P5: There are clear pathways into training and work experience and towards independent adulthood, for young people with SEND from age 14

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P5: All young people able to learn the skills to travel independently and safely are supported to do so

GREEN

P5: Local agencies work in partnership to help effectively plan for transitions from Children's to Adult Services, so that needs are accurately reflected in EHC plans and teams are provided with the right information

RED

Key issues

- Ensuring Annual Reviews at Y9 make adequate plans for transition to adult services
- Transition to adult social care for those with ASD not meeting thresholds

Actions

- Identification of needs at Reception stage - Early Years SEND Audit conducted, Action Plan in place for 2021/22
- Children's to Adults services - introduction of Transitions Nurse by Barts Health, developing and implementing a transitions framework
- EHCP Needs assessment guidance produced for schools following review by SEND Working Group
- SENDIASS Annual Transition Event – Y5 parents (for those with EHCP)
- Increased supported internship opportunities and opportunities for young people
- Accommodation – Supporting Independence Project and development of Shared Lives Scheme
- Y9 Annual Review Co-production pilot

Potential challenges

- Need better joined up healthcare support for young people transitioning
- Ensuring Annual Health Checks are taking place and those with complex needs have up-to-date Healthcare Plan
- Increasing employer engagement for more substantial into-work offer



SEND inclusion beyond education, health & social care support

SEND Improvement Plan – Key strategic activities

P1: Inclusion is actively promoted and championed through all partners' services, including capital programmes

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There is a significant minority within the children's population in TH with some form of recorded SEND – 17%

Tower Hamlets	SEND Support	EHCP	No identified need
	12%	5%	83%

Source: SEND in Tower Hamlets –Spring School Census 2020

This underlines why the 'Every Chance for Every Child Charter' was:

- Designed with all children, including those with SEND in mind
- Embodies the guiding principles for wider SEND inclusion

Inclusive Play Programme - example of capital scheme making a contribution to improving inclusive provision in the borough:

- Providing inclusive play equipment to council play areas
- 10 sites updated so far
- Bartlett Park – residents helped plan inclusive playground
- Sites increased via extra funding from Thames Water & SEND Programme - all three adventure playgrounds and major refurbishments planned at Weavers fields and Millwall Park



Any Questions

