

SEND Improvement Update

HWBB, 29th June 2021



Overview of item

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

- Update on Self Evaluation Framework – strengths and areas in development
- Inspection Readiness
- Progress on SEND Improvement actions
- What we need from partners



SEF - Timely identification of need

Strengths

1. The local area has effective oversight of the opportunities for the early identification of need in the early years (EY) and takes advantage of these, with multi-agency work to provide effective identification of need at the earliest possible stage in the early years.
2. Much joint work has been delivered in order that families remain known to services, to ensure that no child with additional needs is missed. Effective processes are in place to ensure that vulnerable children with additional needs, including those where there are safeguarding concerns, are kept in view by services.
3. Senior leaders recognise the importance of continued investment in the early identification and meeting of needs.
4. Amendments to EHCPs are made in a timely way at key transition points, such as entry to school, secondary transfer, and post-16, ensuring appropriate provision is in place.

Areas in development

1. School leaders have raised concerns about a cohort of children entering statutory education provision in Reception with a range of previously unidentified needs.
2. Young peoples' annual reviews at Year 9 do not routinely make adequate plans for transition to adulthood and any appropriate services.
3. SEND is not systematically considered as a relevant need by all parts of the local system workforce. This is borne out in how consistently services outside of Education monitor and record information around SEND status which has the potential to negatively impact on efforts to identify and meet need in a timely way.
4. The need to improve our understanding of projected future demand for SEND —and specialist education provision in particular— has been identified as an area for development.



SEF - Assessing and meeting need

Strengths

1. Parents tell the council that EY childcare provision meets the needs of young children who have SEND well, however, the impact of the Pandemic has seen numbers in EY provision reduce significantly. Plans are in place to ensure a return to pre-Pandemic levels of take up.
2. Across Tower Hamlets there is a broad spectrum of educational provision for SEND, with high quality mainstream settings, resource bases and satellite provision in mainstream settings; through to high quality special schools and alternative provision to ensure all children can have their needs met locally.
3. Schools are well supported by the local area in assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with EHCPs and at SEN Support.
4. Many services for the most vulnerable children with SEND are providing high quality assessment and meeting their needs effectively, including the Virtual School, CWD, THESS.
5. There are clear and strong examples of responsive joint commissioning in practice that is developing defined, co-produced services to meet need effectively, including home-to-school travel assistance, the THEWS and the work of the CIT.
6. Co-production is a significant area of strength and contributes to a strengthened governance system, lower levels of tribunal activity and better quality commissioning.

Areas in development

1. Processes around EHC needs assessments including timeliness, requests for advice, co-production and the quality of plans remains a key area for development, though plans are in place to address this.
2. The local ASD pathway needs better join up between various system partners in a range of areas, with a view to improving the timeliness of assessment, service delivery and transition to adulthood.
3. Young people with complex care needs who do not meet thresholds for specialist services do not receive a good enough transition into adulthood.
4. Inclusive practice is not yet routinely consistent across mainstream education settings for specific needs, particularly with regards to SI, ASD and SEMH.



SEF - Improving outcomes

Strengths

1. We are proud of the attainment and achievement of children and young people with SEN at schools and in EY settings across Tower Hamlets and consider this an area of strength, despite the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes CLA.
2. In the main, pupils with SEND in Tower Hamlets are well engaged with their education and school attendance and exclusion figures are better than national averages.
3. Outcomes for children and young people, looked after, supported by the Virtual School are good. The attainment 8 score for CLA with EHCPs is in line with national CLA for cohort and slightly above regional (NCER 2019).
4. Effective programmes and initiatives are in place to support young people who have SEN to progress into employment.
5. The CLDS works closely with joint commissioners for health and social care and other key stakeholders and partners to deliver good outcomes for young people aged 19-25 with a learning disability.
6. Children, young people, and families with SEND have been clear with us that they want their needs considered alongside, not separate from, the needs of all children. This spirit of inclusion is being championed by our strategic partnerships and is actively informing our service development and planning.

Areas in development

1. Children, young people and parents are not yet consistently heard at each stage of the commissioning cycle.
2. We need to improve how we capture information relating to individual level outcomes for children and young people with SEND within our management information systems, so that we can more easily monitor the impact we are making at a strategic level.
3. The monitoring and tracking outcomes supplied as part of the EHCP and annual review processes is inconsistent.
4. We want better outcomes for young people making the transition to adulthood.



Inspection readiness – update in June

- Steve Nyakatawa has joined LBTH as Director of Education with SEND as one of his key priorities.
- The SEND Inspection Group has developed an inspection preparation action plan and has identified improvement actions which will have the most impact and can be delivered at pace.
- A staff webinar, led by Directors, was delivered on 1st June to brief and prepare people for an inspection. This included sharing of key messages from the Self Evaluation Framework and Key Lines of Enquiry.
 - The webinar was recorded and can be accessed here:
<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/c559cb24-e2a4-47b7-b323-df7e5dc092c7>



COVID and the inspection



- Local area leaders should be prepared to discuss with inspectors how they have:
 - Understood the experience and needs of children and young people with SEND, and their families, during the pandemic
 - Continued to involve children and young people with SEND and their families in coproducing decisions about how best to support them
 - Worked collaboratively to prioritise, adapt, and provide the services and support that children and young people with SEND and their families need.



Progress on improvement actions: Leading SEND & identification and assessment

- Workforce pressures and training needs – report with recommendations for next steps produced, analysing training needs and requirements, workforce sufficiency and recruitment & retention issues.
- SEND Local Offer – focus group with parents and young people meeting on termly basis. New look front page and Young People’s Zone launched in April and 'You said We did' feedback being made available on website.
- Thresholds & criteria for categorising primary need - work on track to complete document and identifying support and training for Sep 2021. Final document to be published for start of the school year.
- Quality of EHCPs - Working Group to trial ‘single advice form’ for professionals to assist with improving quality of advice received. Training for officers to begin in Autumn 2021 on QA-ing plans and making recommendations
- EHCP timeliness:
 - Overall timeliness of plans issued in 2021 – 27% (this includes the backlog) - timeliness of plans since Oct at 53%
 - Backlog – 23% still to clear



Progress on improvement actions: Commissioning services & education provision

- ASD Review Group:
 - Meeting in parallel to 4 engagement sessions with parents and families to fully understand issues
 - Business Case for increased diagnostic capacity scheduled for consideration in June 2021
 - TNW benchmarking undertaken on ASD assessment with sharing of learning and best practise
- SEMH Base opening in Sep 2021 at Ben Jonson for primary age pupils - will allow those who are able to return to mainstream schooling and those who require more specialist support to receive this onsite. Staff undertaking a research project on SEMH need in the primary sector beginning in the Summer term.
- Inclusive practice - benchmarking tool being piloted in schools and training programme on implementation to be rolled out via SENCO conferences in the summer term.
- Sufficiency of specialist SEND places (in mainstream and special schools):
 - Expansion of Phoenix School complete and planning is well underway for expansion of Beatrice Tate and London East Alternative Provision
 - Mastadon-C are being commissioned to refresh special school pupil projections.



Progress on improvement actions: Transitions and promoting independence



- Transitions Group re-convened and Options Paper produced which will steer future work- particular focus on issue of consistency of handovers and regular reviewing of plans between agencies.
- Annual Review co-production pilot with Year 9 pupils continuing - now Transitions Group workstream where progress will be reviewed



What we need from partners & next steps

Prepare for any potential role in a Local Area SEND Inspection

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



Any Questions

