

SEND Written Statement of Action Update

Summary of progress against areas of significant
weakness identified in the SEND Local Area
Inspection

Health and Wellbeing Board

23 May 2023



Introduction

Overview of progress vs challenges

- Sustained increase in demand post-Covid with concentration of need amongst younger children.
- Workforce capacity challenges - recruitment and retention of key SEND roles, as well as some leadership gaps.
- Pace on some core actions has been impacted. Unrealistic framing of some timescales, given scope of profound system wide transformation requiring significant engagement to deliver sustainable change required.
- Further investment by Tower Hamlets Together Partnership and Integrated Care Board (ICB) - the Council committing growth of £1.1m and ICB committing £870,000.
- Positive progress addressing EHCP timeliness and backlog; Audit & feedback show tentative but promising improvement in quality of new EHCPs.
- Parent and young person feedback across the system reinforces a positive shift on the ground.
- ASD monthly diagnoses exceeding initial targets; Integrated Therapies Early Years model finalised.
- Peer improvement partnership with Islington; Launch of Family Hubs Approach and new Early Help Strategy with explicit focus on SEND.



Quality & oversight of EHCPs & ARs

- Positive progress addressing EHCP timeliness and backlog.
- QA matrix and framework introduced in Sep 22 showing impact, 90% of new plans sampled accurately reflect advice received.
- New EHCP content continues to improve using revised template, feedback from parents and schools reflects this.
- Reformed Annual Review process is also proving successful with schools and parents trialling it.
- We are proud of the progress we have made so far but recognise that the profound level of change needed to fully embed our revised processes and a co-productive approach will take more time.
- Unprecedented increase in requests for EHCP assessment – 111 received in March alone.
- Package of continuous feedback with families being developed- includes Saturday parent engagement sessions from May. Plan writing to be brought in-house to further embed co-production meetings as an integral part of our working.
- Enabling effective monitoring/reporting of AR timeliness via Management Information Systems remains an issue.



What difference is it making to parents and young people?

- **On Co-production:**

Co-production meeting was invaluable.. it provided a “face” & humanised the whole process. We felt “included” and “listened to”.

- **On new EHCP template:**

Very clear but very big, it’s my first time going through document like this, felt a little lost trying to absorb the info, but the template itself is clear.

It can be a struggle to be heard so it (the EHCP) being granted is an acknowledgement we’re being heard.

- **Parents liked:**

Face to face meeting with caseworker

- **Suggestions included:**

Improve communication timelines

Provide examples of previous EHCP’s to parents



ASD waiting times

- ASD pathway impacted significantly by recent uplift in EHCPA requests. In SW locality 300% increase in ASD prevalence over last 5 years.
- 40% reduction in waiting times for ASD assessment since mid 2022.
- London Autism Clinic commissioned to deliver additional diagnostic assessments. ASDAS waiting list patients prioritised for referral to this new service based on length of wait. Securing funding to extend this.
- Achieving an average of 45 discharges per month since launch of London Autism Clinic capacity in November-against an original target of 25.
- Pre-diagnosis support pathway mapped and ready to be promoted.
- Plans for systematic support offer for families on waiting list via Social Communication Difference Navigation model. Planned launch by May 23. Proposed £150k over two years to support new model. Planned phased launch from May 2023.
- £45k secured via NHSE Personalisation Team to test approaches for supporting those on ASD waiting lists will align with this model.



What difference is it making to parents and young people?

- 100% of families accepted on to London Autism Clinic pathway report a positive experience of the service.
- Of the 100+ professionals & parents who attended a Universal ASD Training Session, 98% rated it good or better, with most attendees more confident in supporting a child with autism post-session.
- Service mapping completed with good feedback from professionals and parents.
- 102 families inputted into the Social Communication Difference Navigation Proposal and raised what support is most important to them. This has helped to shape the Social Communication Difference/Autism Navigation Model.
- Autism cards designed by young people have had positive impact since launch in Nov 2021, with 1500 issued.



Fragmented Speech & Language Therapy Services

- Integrated Therapies model for Early Years aims to support. The phased launch has been finalised and is in progress to be rolled out for delivery this year.
 - Targeted groups with therapy support for developmental language delay, social communication difference and complex needs
 - Specialist service redesign with new staff mix and additional capacity- additional 60 early years assessments per month
 - Virtual Workshop model to deliver virtual workshop/training offer for both early years and school age.
- Developed School-age Model, involving targeted groups in schools and therapy advice for EHCPs
 - Initial engagement with schools positively received
 - Further engagement with school leadership
- Integrated commissioning model will involve Section 75 agreement between the council and the NHS to jointly commission services – phased approach to this is planned
- Launch 3-5 SLT Intervention Model delayed due to workforce recruitment challenges. Recurrent funding now confirmed enabling a new recruitment round by Barts Health.



What difference is it making to parents and young people?

- Play and Connect now running in 3 Children and Family Centres - 88 families received support from the model to date.
- 100% of parents attending Play & Connect reported *significant* uplift in confidence supporting their child using therapy techniques.
- Very positive feedback from Early Intervention Professionals on support received. They liked - Joint working with the therapies, learning new skills and being supported to develop their understanding of autism.
- New Speech and Language Therapy Resources received positive feedback from parents.
- Therapist-led training for all Children and Family Centre Staff – attended by 36 Early Years professionals with very positive feedback.



Communication between leaders & parents

- Strategic engagement with parents building momentum - Nov 22
Let's Talk SEND event most successful yet.
- Local Offer continuous improvement is becoming a BAU process of co-production with young people and parents. Public re-launch of website planned for early summer.
- Family Hubs approach co-produced with valuable input from parents and schools.
- Parental Engagement Action Plan for 2023 developed – to be complemented by dedicated SEND communications strategy.
- You Said We Did mechanism embedding across local area. In response to requests from parents, paper copies of Let's Talk SEND magazine distributed across public areas and buildings.
- Some parents still report lack of understanding on what is available locally & eligibility for offers such as respite.



What difference is it making to parents and young people?

- *I feel very happy and empowered .. To give my opinion as a parent of a young SEND child and I was listened to and appreciated for my time.* (Parent involved with Co-production of Family Hubs approach).
- *The SEND ambassador programme has enabled me to become more confident that Danyals future will be more inclusive, & he will have the same opportunities as his older siblings. .. I am proud to be part of it.* (Parent Ambassador)
- SEND IASS service evaluation (21-22) records majority of parents/carers *very satisfied* with staff & service:
*Excellent service. Member of staff 'B' was remarkable
Very friendly, accessible and knowledgeable staff.*
- *A huge thank-you to Tahmina and Salma (SEND Parent Ambassadors) for coming to our meeting yesterday. It was very much appreciated, & very interesting & moving. .. We will be promoting far & wide!* (Children & Family Centre Manager)
- Parent Ambassadors attended 48 events in 2022 reaching 642 parents.
- Local offer page views increased from 198,664 (2021) to 210,622 (2022). 2022 saw 16% increase in social media use.
- Let's Talk SEND e-bulletins well-received; positive feedback from parents & professionals.



Feedback from DfE and NHSE

1 Feb review meeting

- Good summary of current position, focus on impact comes across. Progress presented positively, whilst being open about issues with pace.
- Importance of milestones – key to provide confidence amongst stakeholders.
- Continue to focus on pace.
- Evidence base needs to be refined and sense checked.
- Tracker cited as one of the best provided by an Local Authority.

