

SEND Improvement Board

Update to Health and Wellbeing Board

10 June 2024



Introduction

- The aim of this presentation is to provide an update on the SEND system, including progress, demand & risk issues, as we prepare for inspection.
- Inspectors will scrutinise the Local Area SEND System as a whole, which includes health, education and social care in partnership; All partners will be accountable at inspection.



Questions / requests for the Board:

- To prioritise shaping our SEF, alongside requests for information / documents as we prepare for inspection
- How can we strengthen our partnership approach? Are there opportunities to link with existing work to strengthen multi-agency approaches?

This presentation will cover:

- Progress made against our WSoA
- Current Challenges
- What difference are we making for parents & young people?
- Preparation for inspection
- Key strategic workstreams, including the new SEND & Inclusion Strategy



Progress against our Written Statement of Action (WSOA)



- *Tower Hamlets continues to make good progress on their WSOA priorities and provided a really robust clear set of documents for this meeting. (WSOA monitoring meeting Mar 24)*
- Recognition from DfE and NHSE on progress made, with many actions embedded as business as usual.
- Relationships with parents, carers, & young people continue to be strengthened; themed transition events successful in reaching different parents.
- Exceeding Autism discharge targets; high numbers of referrals continue to put pressure on waiting times & caseloads.
- Good progress on therapies mobilisation - 3-5s treatment pathway now launched.
- Integrated Therapies Early Years Model launched - phase in school age offer in 2024.
- We know there is work still to do, including;
 - Further embedding & evidencing co-production.
 - Building in support & challenge through the inclusion framework.



Current Challenges

- **Sustained rise in demand for EHCPA impacts on timeliness of assessments & caseloads**
184% growth in EHCPs issued since 2020; TH is an outlier compared with most statistical neighbours. Approaches identified to provide support before a statutory assessment is considered; Inclusion Framework; SEND front door system.
- **Quality of EHCPs is an area for improvement**
Improving consistency of content, including strengthening child voice, is a priority. Foundation in place for multi-agency QA improvement, but lack of capacity to drive forward. SEN Service review to be undertaken, including a focus on QA.
- **Sustained rise in demand for Autism diagnostic assessment**
50-60 referrals per month, compared to 20 pre-Covid. Waiting times lengthy (88 weeks) - longer term funding plan required to address pressures; Neurovariance Diagnostic Review Group to develop business case & new pathway by Summer 24. Extension of Bart's Health therapy & London Autism Clinic capacity to Mar 25 in interim.



Current Challenges

- **Significant shortfall of specialist education places at all ages means accessing appropriate provision is a challenge for pupils with the most complex needs**
Currently demand is met by mainstream schools which may only partially meet pupil needs, or via the private sector, which is an expensive option. (See SEND Sufficiency slide)
- **Ensuring that our data systems are accurate, fit for purpose and joined up**
Extensive work underway to QA Synergy data, review workflows & reporting to support cross-service SEN data diagnostic work.
- **Lack of a cohesive multi-disciplinary offer which is well understood by professionals, parents & carers**
Impacts effective joint working, early ID of needs and access to support. To be included in new SEND & Inclusion Strategy.
- **School readiness impacted by communication and language needs in the Early Years**
Early Language acquisition will be supported by EY interventions, including 0-5 SLT offer.



What difference are we making for parents & young people?



- **EHCNA timeliness at 63%** (April 24). National average 49% (2023).
- Average Autism diagnostic waiting time has improved, now 88 weeks (performing above national average). Bart's Health and London Autism Clinic continue to deliver 40 diagnostic decisions/discharges per month.
- Waiting times for under-fives Speech & Language Therapy (SLT) assessment reduced significantly from a high of 35 weeks (Oct 2022) to just over 10 weeks (Jan 24).
- Parent Coaching received 90% positive feedback from families as part of the 3-5 SLT Treatment offer.
- Parent Carer Forum active membership grown from 85 to 245.
- Since Oct 23 SEND Parent Ambassadors attended 17 events, reaching 356 parents.
- Year 9 Let's Talk SEND event in Dec 23 attended by over 45 people.



Preparation for Inspection



- Fortnightly Inspection Preparation Group; includes representation from Health, Education & Social Care.
- Local Area Designated Officer (LANO) identified.
- Group to maintain risk log & prepare evidence against Annex A requirements.
- SEND Self-Evaluation is in development and Local Area to receive support/challenge on this from Debbie Orton (SEN consultant)
- Self-Evaluation Summary document to be developed.
- NEL SEND Inspection Readiness Group - meeting regularly since April 2023, TH DCO & education rep attends.



SEND & Inclusion Strategy

- Learning from participation in Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme & LGA peer review used to develop new SEND & Inclusion Strategy.
- Informed by consultation with young people, families and professionals, including in person discussions with the Our Time Forum, online surveys & in-person workshop attended by 50 people.
- Public consultation on draft strategy: 1 May – 12 June 2024
- HWBB approves new policy: 17 Sep 2024
- Launch in Autumn 2024.



Inclusion Framework

- Prioritising development to provide guidance, training & whole school approaches to strengthen schools' universal & SEN Support offer before statutory assessment considered.
- Draft framework co-produced with schools, children & young people & parents, with support from the Council for Disabled Children.
- Shared with schools by end of the Summer Term 2024.
- Training programme for schools from autumn 2024 to support auditing of inclusive practice & identification of areas for improvement.



Delivering Better Value (DBV)



- DBV grant application approved on 29 February 2024.
- Workstreams include:
 - SEND front door (early identification and intervention) system;
 - Inclusion Framework at both Ordinarily Available Provision and SEN Support levels, along with associated quality assurance, training and support for schools;
 - Review of banding arrangements.
- Includes new Participation and Co-production Officer role to work with parents and carers, ensuring information on provision at universal & SEN Support known & understood.



SEND Sufficiency Review



- Significant shortfall in specialist provision & placements; Projections indicate a shortfall of up to 260 places in specialist placements across all needs within the next 10 years.
- Greatest areas of need are Speech, Language and Communication (SLC); Autism; and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).
- Pilot up to six specialist Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) to be established & operational within the 2024/25 academic year.
- New Autism resource base at a primary school has been approved. A secondary school age Autism resource base also opened in September 2023.
- Two-year Autism Pilot programme with Phoenix Special School delivering support to ensure that pupils with Autism and high levels of need can continue in a mainstream school.
- Significant shortfall in specialist post-16 and post-19 provision - we aim to increase provision at Phoenix (independent) College by supporting their move to larger premises.



Questions and Discussion

