


Cabinet 1 August 2022	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children and Culture	Classification: Unrestricted
SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2021/22	

Lead Member	Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning (Statutory Deputy Mayor)
Originating Officer(s)	James Thomas, Corporate Director of Children and Culture / Steve Nyakatawa, Director of Education
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	N/A
Reason for Key Decision	N/A
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	This decision will support one or more of the Corporate Priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-26 which is anticipated to be approved at this meeting

Executive Summary

The SEND Improvement Board (SIB) Annual Report 2021 provides an overview of the progress and impact of SEND improvement work during this period. The report sets out how the CCG and the council have been working together with other partners across the local area to deliver on the priorities set out in the SEND Strategy (2020-24) and SEND Improvement Plan, as well as progressing work to address the four areas of significant weakness identified in the inspection carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in June / July 2021.

Partners look forward to working with the new Mayor and Cabinet on the manifesto pledge to improve SEND support for children and young people, which remains a significant priority.

Recommendations:

The Mayor in Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2021/22

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

1.1 Not applicable.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

2.1 Not applicable.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

3.1 The Tower Hamlets SEND Improvement Board (SIB) Annual Report provides an overview of key achievements in 2021/22 and priorities for 2022/23 as well as work to address areas of significant weakness as identified by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

3.2 The report features an introduction from the Chair and Vice Chair of the SIB, as well as reflections on the year from the Chair of the Independent Parent and Carers Forum and the Chair of the 'Our Time' Young Person's Forum. Contextual and performance data is also included.

3.3 The report is organised around the five priorities of the SEND Strategy (2020-24), with details of You Said We Did actions featured for each. The report also includes two case studies setting out where good practice and collaborative working has made a difference to young people with SEND and their parents.

3.4 Areas of significant progress during 2021 include:

- Additional investment across the partnership to boost SEN caseworker and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) diagnostic capacity, as well as development of a business case for delivery of a contract with Barts to deliver a Speech and Language Treatment Pathway for age 3-5s and a Social Communication Difficulty Pathway for age 0-5s.
- Introduction of *Let's Talk SEND* events providing an opportunity for parents and carers to actively engage with strategic improvement plans and feedback on progress directly to senior leaders.
- Regular reporting from the Our Time Youth Forum and Independent Parent and Carer Forum (IPCSF) to the SIB is well embedded and a tracker has been introduced to allow more rigorous oversight of issues raised by parents and young people and raise awareness at board level of how this feedback has influenced service changes.
- Work to enhance the Local Offer website and increase awareness has continued via co-production work with parents and young people, including input from the local offer focus groups - as a result views have increased from 13,058 in 2020-21 to 16,822 in 21/22.
- Work to strengthen our approach to quality assurance (QA) has continued with the development of a QA matrix clarifying the criteria for a high-quality

Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP), with input from schools and support from the Social Work Academy.

- Co-production and partnership working emerging as a strength of commissioning process, with active parent and young person membership on steering groups and representation on interview panels for commissioning roles that will lead on some areas of SEND.
- ASD Pathway Review underway to improve waiting times and support, including introduction of new diagnostic pathway in early 2022 and additional clinical diagnostic capacity following agreed additional investment. Waiting times expected to significantly decrease by July 2022.
- SEN Inclusion Advisor appointed in March 2022 to lead on identification of provision ordinarily available in mainstream settings and improving support for children and young people at SEN support.
- Bowden House Special School and Ben Jonson Primary Schools formed a partnership to jointly run a Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) provision, on the Ben Jonson site which opened in September 2021.
- Multi-agency Transitions Board established to focus on ensuring a seamless transition for those with EHCPs from children's to adult services.
- Annual Review Team recruited to increase capacity. A more robust approach to co-production in the annual review process will be supported by co-production workshops with parents and young people, as well as capturing their experiential feedback.

3.5 The annual report also sets out priority areas of work for 2022/23:

- Completion of refreshed SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), delayed from the original September 2021 timescale.
- Expansion of the capital programme for inclusive playgrounds with four more playground upgrades planned in 2022.
- IPCSF to explore ways to increase membership and continue to maintain pan disability connections by inviting all SEND groups to join under The Forum umbrella and nominate a member to the steering group in April 2022.
- Our Time Forum to work with professionals to develop a Co-production Charter for Young People with SEND – including a survey of young people with SEND on their experiences with Youth Service Providers.
- Our Time Forum to design a Let's Talk SEND session in July.
- Implement 3/3.5 years targeted face to face review by the health visiting skill mix team which had been delayed by pandemic pressures - to identify children whose needs may have changed since the 2 – 2 ½ years old review and to reduce the risk of children starting school with unidentified and unmet needs.
- Independent Travel Team to recruit one full time and two part time (term time only) members of staff on fixed term contracts to help with the backlog due to Covid. Waiting times and numbers completing travel training expected to improve from summer 2022.
- The Tower Hamlets Education Wellbeing Service is expanding and aims to provide coverage to all Tower Hamlets schools in September 2024.
- Consultation for George Green's School Resource Base to be redesignated from Physical Disabilities to ASD (High Functioning).

- Schools to be supported to gain 'autism aware' accreditation.
- Transitions Board to develop a clear Transition Policy to reflect work undertaken and set out key principles between health, education and social care.
- Transitions Board to undertake an audit across the SEND system to benchmark effectiveness of communication between agencies and develop a quality assurance system for transitions.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The SEND improvement work is directly concerned with equalities and by driving improvement work will improve outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

- 5.2 There are no other specific statutory implications.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities to provide services to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and to keep the provision made for these children and young people under review. The proposals set out in this briefing comply with the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2021

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

Linsey Bell, Strategy & Policy Officer - Children and Culture