



North East London



TOWER HAMLETS

# SEND Written Statement of Action Improvement Update

Children's Scrutiny Session

8 December 2022



# Existing Priorities



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## SEND Strategy (2020-24)

The SEND Improvement Board (SIB) tracks progress against these priorities on a bi-monthly basis.

1. Leading SEND
2. Early identification and assessment
3. Commissioning effective services to respond to local needs
4. Good quality education provision for all children
5. Supporting successful transitions and promoting independence

## SEND Local Area Inspection 2021

Work led by monthly workstream leads group - reports to the SIB.

1. Ensure that EHCP's are of a high quality and meet the SEND Code of Practice in all areas
2. Assessment and Diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
3. Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)
4. Communication between local area leaders and parents



# Overview of progress vs challenges

## Priority 1 - Leading SEND

- SEND Partnership continues to strive to improve services for CYP with SEND, despite increased demand post-pandemic across the local area and amid ongoing recruitment pressures.
- [SEND Annual Report \(2021-22\)](#) published on Local Offer.
- Co-production embedding across local area; draft Parental Engagement Strategy; development of ASD support pathways; revised EHCP processes & documentation.
- Strategic engagement with parents continues via termly Let's Talk SEND events; recent event was most successful yet. Partners considering pilot roadshow events in local settings.
- Ofsted focused visit for children in care very positive; *Social workers .. are effective advocates for disabled children.*

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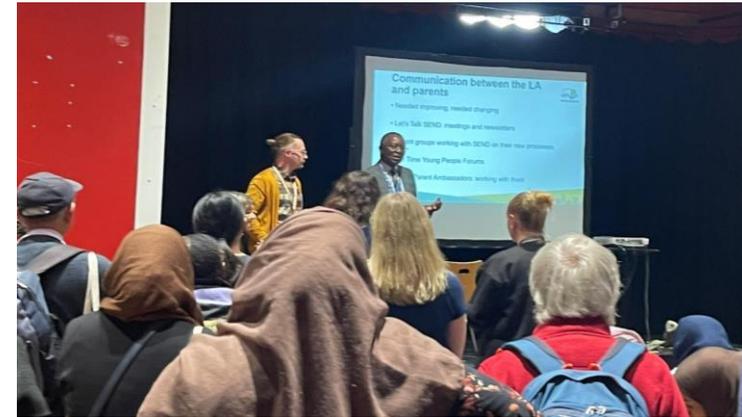


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# Let's Talk SEND Events

- Building momentum with successful event held in November - over 70 parents and 30+ professionals, including Parent/Carer Forum & Parent Ambassadors, in attendance.
- Feedback received reinforces sense of positive change on the ground, including comments on improvements to EHCPs and co-production approach. Parents really liked the co-production meetings and felt listened to and valued in the assessment process.



# Overview of progress vs challenges



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## Priority 2 - Early identification & assessment

- 37% of EHCP assessments meeting 20-week deadline (Cumulative % in 20 weeks for 2022)
- Two successful growth bids to boost EPS and SEN capacity and address recruitment challenges
- New EHCP template & Quality Assurance (QA) Matrix developed to support quality & consistency. QA group meets every half term to audit plans. Islington peer review to provide external audit of plans via Sector Led Improvement Partnership.
- 90% of new plans accurately reflect advice received but quality of advice needs more work. Advice guidance in place; one advice style for the local area which mirrors format of new plans and annual reviews promoting consistency.
- Co-production – SEN Co-ordinators developing confidence & skills in co-production approach - full roll out spring 2023. Parents reporting change ‘on the ground’, with words matching actions.



# Overview of progress vs challenges



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## Priority 2 - Early identification & assessment (cont.)

- Annual Review (AR) Team began work in Feb 2022, focus on phase transfer work. Full capacity not reached until May 2022 which impacted on early work. However, 780 ARs processed in half a term (almost double previous year figure).
- 72% of ARs received have now been processed.
- AR [guidance](#) produced for parents - 500+ copies distributed so far to aid understanding of the process.
- To address AR concerns:
  - LA to write to schools/settings clarifying schedule for ARs, with follow up comms.
  - Synergy work to be escalated to enable accurate reporting at each stage of active EHCPS and AR process.
  - Quality of EHCPs issued through AR, at manager and QA audit group levels, as well as QA template.
  - Full reform of AR process: paperwork, process, guidance, training, and expectations, in use by Easter 2023.
- Survey of communication & information sharing for children with SEND transitioning to school complete; analysis shared with SIB.
- Take up of Early Learning 2-year-old placements continues to improve - rate increased from 53.4% (Sep 22) to 66% (Nov 22).



# Overview of progress vs challenges



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## Priority 3 - Commissioning effective services in response to local need

- Delivering around 25 ASD discharges/diagnostic decisions per month due to increased diagnostic capacity & new pathway.
- Sustained higher referral rate for ASD assessments – risks outstripping additional funded capacity. Additional capacity to be mobilised with independent sector to deliver more paediatric assessments and increased discharges/decisions per month.
- Planned deep dive to include appropriateness of referrals, impact of the new service pathway & benchmarking with neighbours.
- Barts Health, Phoenix School & local parent delivered successful partnership ASD Training Session; 120 families & professionals attended.
- Integrated Therapies Programme developed Early Years model. Pilots / initiatives mobilised to test approaches. Engagement with partners for School-Age provision underway.
- Growing demand on specialist services impacting waiting times, with Speech & Language Therapy (SaLT) in greatest demand. Early Years SaLT assessment waits remain high.
- Recruitment of therapists remains a challenge – Barts exploring staff-mix to address capacity / sustainability issues.



# Overview of progress vs challenges



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## Priority 4 - Good quality education provision for all children

- SEND Inclusion Adviser in post: remit to support schools and settings – challenge inclusive practice. Focus on quality first teaching and ‘additional to or different from’ support (COP 2015) to ensure reasonable adjustments are made to support the learning of children with SEND. Local area guidance on Inclusive Education being developed.
- Redesignation of George Green's School Resource Base from PD to ASD (High Functioning) on track to open from Jan 2023, subject to formal consultation period & final Cabinet approval.
- Post-16 Educational and Training Directory for young people with Preparing for Adulthood section complete.
- A LBTH council (joint funded by SEN and Economic Development) apprenticeship programme for young people with EHCPs began in October 2022.
- A multi-agency group has been developed to look at ways in which we can further develop in-house opportunities for vulnerable children and young people.
- Work with Phoenix Outreach Service to explore supporting schools to become ‘autism aware’
- Exploring pathway and provision options for primary aged children with severe visual impairment (VI) to ensure their needs can be met in a timely and cost-effective manner, whilst also providing suitable peer group opportunities.
- Year 2 of Sensory Hub pilot project at NCC. Support staff embraced specialist support provided by Sensory Support Service (VI and DPH teams). More students showing an interest in their local college as a result of this project.



# Overview of progress vs challenges



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## Priority 5 - Supporting successful transitions and independence

- Successful SEND transition event held at Brady Arts Centre; 70 parents/carers attended.
- Transitions Board established to support CYP from 14+ with an EHCP transitioning from children's to adult social care. Strategic actions impacted by increasing scope & requirements of the board since its inception, and related capacity issues.
- The Transitions Board has established pathways between children's & adult social care, which can now be articulated. Current Transition Resource Pack will be updated & reviewed by a task & finish group, with an agreed Transition Pathway launched by Jan 23.
- Data is being shared across services in respect of young people due to transition, and as a result the Transitions Board is now in a better position to identify gaps that exist and implement pathways to address them.
- The board has recently been awarded project management support which will increase capacity. A request for additional business analyst support has also been submitted.



# Overview of feedback

From second formal review with DfE and NHSE, 22 Sep 22.



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- Leaders continuing to work closely together across the partnership and strengthening integration.
- A lot of activity and progress made in the majority of areas, but some slippage, with four of the six delayed areas identified in Area 1 (Quality & oversight of EHCPs & ARs).
- Leaders are aware that although progress is being made, pace of improvement is an issue. Increased demand and recruitment are particular challenges, but leaders are committed to keeping this under review.
- Written submission could be strengthened with more evidence of impact of actions so far. Very positive & encouraging feedback from school & parent reps indicating early positive changes did not come across as clearly in the written submission.
- Developments with the early years integrated therapies model and plans for school-age work are positive and wide ranging – important to be realistic about commissioning capacity to deliver.
- Further work suggested on SEND Strategic Planning in Tower Hamlets to support roll out of integrated therapies to ensure proper oversight and direction from local leadership.



# Actions for the WSoA Leads Group

Next review meeting - 26 Jan 23

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- Build on evidence bank to demonstrate impact more effectively; refine QA process.
- Develop more One Minute Guides for parents on key issues and publish on local offer (e.g. support available for those on ASD wait list).
- Identify where targets can be pushed forward for completion to 'offset' areas behind schedule.
- Strengthen feedback mechanisms with stakeholders and links to You Said We Did messaging.
- Use Let's Talk SEND events to sense check WSoA progress. Use intelligence to assist with evidence gathering.
- Provide information on development of Family Hubs approach and explicit SEND Offer at next meeting.
- Interim 8 Dec meeting will focus on evidence of impact & flag areas of potential delay.

