


Non-Executive Report of the: Health and Wellbeing Board 23 rd September 2024	
Report of: Steve Reddy (Corporate Director of Children's Services)	Classification: Unrestricted
Report Title: SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2023 / 24	

Originating Officer(s)	Linsey Bell (SEND Improvement Manager)
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the progress and impact of SEND improvement work during 2023/24. The report shows how NHS Northeast London and the Council have been working together with other partners across the local area to deliver on priorities set out in the SEND Strategy and SEND Improvement Plan.

The report includes input from children and young people and parent and carer representatives.

Recommendations:

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the SEND Improvement Board Annual Report 2023 / 24.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is grounded upon 6 principles that matter most to residents of Tower Hamlets. Detail how this report relates to these principles:

1. Resources to support health and wellbeing should go to those who most need it
Approved Mayoral growth bids include £1,121k for SEN Transport and £604k for additional caseworkers in the SEN and Preparing for Adulthood Teams. In addition, the NHS has committed £740k over the past year.

2. Feeling connected and included is a foundation of wellbeing and the importance of this should be built into services and programme

The new SEND and Inclusion strategy has been informed by a programme of consultation with young people, families and professionals, including in person discussions with the Our Time Forum, online surveys and an in-person workshop attended by 50 people.

Our SEND Young Person and Parent Ambassador scheme is well-established and expanding. Between October 2023 and March 2024 Parent Ambassadors attended 17 events, including school coffee mornings, reaching 356 parents.

3. Being treated equally, respectfully and without discrimination should be the norm when using services

Membership of the Co-Production Charter Working Group includes young people from the Our Time Forum and a broad subset of parents of children with varying needs. A draft charter will be consulted upon across education, health, & social care.

4. Health and wellbeing information and advice should be clear, simple, and produced with those who will benefit from them

A Social Communication Difference Navigation model has been developed to support families through the process of referral to the ASD waiting list and diagnosis, clarifying the support available along the way.

Consultation was carried out with 102 families, who provided input on the proposed model, highlighting the support they consider most important.

5. People should feel that they have equal power in shaping and designing services and programme that impact on their health and wellbeing

A multi-agency research project exploring the prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) amongst Somali children enabled researchers to hear first-hand from parents and carers of families living with ASD about their lived experience. Well-attended engagement events highlighted existing barriers and themes,

Partners are working together to establish how to reduce barriers encountered by the Somali Community when accessing services, including how to make universal services more accessible.

6. We should all be working together to make the best use of the assets we already have that support people's health and wellbeing.

Phoenix School launched the Autism Specialist Classroom pilot in September 2023, working with 20 mainstream schools. The project is supported by London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Bart's Health, NHS North-East London and Tower Hamlets Schools. This specialist outreach will upskill our school workforce and support children and young people to remain in mainstream provision.

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 2023/24 and priorities for improvement in 2024/25 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 Carer 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 sections devoted to summarising the difference made on the ground for young people and their families, including examples of *You Said We Did* actions. The report also includes 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 2023/24 include:

- Development of SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029, informed by consultation with children, families and professionals. We will launch the strategy in 2024.
- Secured Mayoral growth bids including £1,121k for SEN transport and £604k for additional caseworkers in the SEN and Preparing for Adulthood Teams, with £740k committed by the NHS.
- Our Delivering Better Value grant application was submitted in December 2023 and approved in February 2024.

- Average EHCP timeliness for 2023 was 48%.
- Recruited a new full-time Designated Social Care Officer to support improvement of quality and frequency of social care input, strengthening links between social care, health and education.
- Set up a joint Neurovariance Diagnostic Review Group. This group is responsible for overseeing improvements in neurovariance diagnostic pathways.
- Developed a new 3–5-year-old treatment offer with up to four parent coaching sessions a week. Invited families with children on the Autism Diagnostic Waiting list to parent coaching sessions.
- Undertaken our SEND Sufficiency Review. Established a secondary school age Autism resource base and a two-year Autism Pilot with Phoenix Special School involving 20 mainstream schools.
- Initiated development of a co-produced Inclusion Framework. The framework will provide guidance, training and whole school approached to strengthen schools' universal and SEN Support offer before a statutory assessment is considered.

3.5. The annual report also sets out areas for further improvement in 2024/25:

- Launch and implement our new SEND and Inclusion Strategy.
- Address shortfalls identified by the SEND Sufficiency Review. We will establish up to six specialist Additionally Resourced Provisions within the 2024/25 academic year.
- Roll out the Inclusion Framework to all schools by the end of the Summer Term 2024.
- Initiate Delivering Better Value workstreams.
- Launch our SEND Co-Production Charter.
- Continue to prioritise EHCP timeliness and quality. Sustain EHCP timeliness above national levels and ensure it continues to improve.
- The new Neurovariance Diagnostic Review Group will develop a business case for funding and an updated pathway to address this pressure by Summer 2024. It will also develop communication materials.
- Continue to develop our integrated therapies model for early years and school age children.
- Work with Bart's Health to develop standards for speech and language therapy provided in schools in the borough.

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.** There are no other specific statutory implications.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER (comments below received as per Cabinet cover report; Cabinet meeting dated 24 July 2024)

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

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES (comments below received as per Cabinet cover report; Cabinet meeting dated 24 July 2024)

- 7.1. Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 sets out the duties and responsibilities of local authorities in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in their areas.
- 7.2. In particular, section 27 requires a local authority to keep under review the educational provision and social care provision made in its area for children and young people who have a disability or special educational needs, or for such children and young people outside its area where it has a responsibility for them.
- 7.3. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires local authorities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- 7.4. The matters referred to in this report demonstrate the Council's efforts to comply with the above legislation.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- SEND Annual Report 2023-24

Appendices

- None

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.

- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

Linsey Bell (SEND Improvement Manager, Children's Services)