

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	04/06/2019
Subject: Special educational needs and disability (SEND) – Update	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
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Summary

This report provides an update to the Safeguarding Sub Committee on the progress of the special educational needs and disability (SEND) work in the City of London (COL).

During the spring term 2019, we built on the work that was reported to Committee in March 2018. The focus continues on the participation of children and young people and ensuring that their voices are heard, that the commissioning arrangements reflect and meet their needs, and pursue ambitious outcomes for them.

Progress has also been made with the commissioning of services to support the preparation to adulthood alongside support for travel training for young people.

Communication for social, emotional and mental health and independence was an area identified for development through the review of the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in 2018. The Education and Early Years team have developed a range of practical Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) toolkits to support early years settings and schools, along with further training opportunities.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The SEND update of 05/02/2019 reported on the priorities for development for 2018/19 and progress following the Local Area SEND Inspection of March 2018. These priorities are set out in the SEND Improvement Action Plan 2018/19. The action plan is comprehensive and covers all the key actions from the Local Area SEND Inspection, as well as the priority areas identified in the SEND Joint Strategy 2017–2020.

Update on progress

Participation – Young people

2. A Participation Workshop, facilitated by KIDS (a national charity providing support services to disabled children, young people and their families) took place in January 2019 to explore how the local area can engage with children and young people with SEND. The outcome of this is that four young people with SEND have since joined the City Youth Forum. Engagement and participation with the City Youth Forum will enable our young people with SEND to have their say on the services available to them, and services that they would like to be developed in the future.

Commissioning

3. A review of the aspirations and outcomes in the EHCPs has been carried out. In the report to Committee in February 2019, Members were informed that the review identified key strands that would be addressed through joint commissioning, and that work on two of the strands – communication and mental health – were under way.
4. This work has further developed, linking the outcomes of the review to feedback from the City Parent Carer Forum (CPCF) about the areas of concern for COL families and the services they would like to see. A mapping exercise with Commissioning, involving the CPCF and officers, is under way to map the current contracts. The purpose of this is to identify any gaps in provision and opportunities for further commissioning. This mapping exercise, which is being progressed through the Co-production Working Group, will be aligned with work being carried out by the City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group and the COL through the Children, Young People and Maternity Services and Family work streams to develop an overview of City health contracts.

Outcomes for children and young people

5. The Local Area SEND Inspection outcome letter notes the strengths in improving outcomes for children and young people, and that the COL had prioritised improving

pathways into employment. All four strands of the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) pathway – Employment, Independent Living, Community Inclusion and Health, are priority areas for development. COL officers have met with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to support the local area in identifying gaps and developing the PfA pathway (the NDTi is delivering the PfA programme which is funded by the Department for Education as part of the delivery support for the SEND reforms).

6. Chapter 8 of the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, is about supporting children and young people from the earliest years to prepare them for adulthood, and to help them achieve good outcomes in employment, independent living, community participation and health.
7. In terms of preparing young people for employment, the service commissioned by the COL to source training and employment opportunities and to support young people is 'Prospects'. This service is actively supporting young people with SEND to prepare for employment through work experience opportunities. A successful outcome of this has been the engagement of a young person on a summer work placement in an organisation based in the COL. This was the first young person under the age of 18 years that the organisation had offered a work experience placement. The placement was successful, enhancing the young person's confidence and employment prospects, and the opportunity has now been opened up to other young people under the age of 18.
8. In terms of employment for adults with learning difficulties, the Local Area SEND Inspection outcome letter notes that, *"leaders have prioritised improving pathways into employment for adults with learning difficulties. The local offer is currently being improved to include more information about preparing for employment and signposting possible pathways"*. Progress has been made in this area in that Adult Social Care has commissioned two SEND employment projects (Surrey Choices EmployAbility and The Tower Project) to support people with SEND in seeking meaningful volunteering, work experience or paid employment.
9. One of the ways children and young people are being supported to develop their independence is through travel training. This year, the programme is enabling young people who had previously accessed 'home to school transport services' to travel independently. During this academic year, one young person has completed the travel training successfully, another young person will continue with training to develop skills to travel independently on transfer to secondary school in September 2019.
10. Communication for social, emotional and mental health and for independence was an area identified through the review of the EHCPs. Communication skills impact on all four strands of the PfA pathway. An oracy workshop, involving SENCOs from the early years to secondary schools, took place in March 2019, with one of the independent schools in the City expressing a strong interest in adopting the approach to develop their pupils' language and communication skills. Furthermore, in June 2019 the COL Early Years Conference will focus on young children's 'Physical and Emotional Health', aiming to encourage practitioners and teachers to engage in this work in the early years.

There is also a two-year communication and language project entitled City of London Talks and Listens Enthusiastically, (COLTALE) which is being led by the Early Years

team, this will be important in developing early life skills to support all children to develop social and independence skills.

11. The City SENCO network has continued to develop over the academic year. At the time of the Local Area SEND Inspection, the network was relatively new, with the inspector noting that, *“some initiatives in the local area are relatively new, for example, the network meetings for special educational needs coordinators. As a result, not all initiatives have secured a high level of impact”*.

Over the past year, the termly SENCO network meetings – including our maintained school, the independent schools in the City and the COL academies – have focused on mental health, wellbeing, resilience and communication because SENCOs themselves identified these as the major areas of concern in their schools. We have developed early years, primary and secondary SENCO toolkits, resources that will help to ensure consistency in identification and assessment of SEND and in supporting children and young people to meet the PfA outcomes. A monthly SENCO newsletter also serves to keep colleagues informed and up to date with the SEND landscape.

Conclusion

12. As we review the SEND Joint Strategy 2018–20, the Self-Evaluation Form and the SEND Service Improvement Action Plan 2018–19, preparation for adulthood will be a key priority for 2019/20. We will start work to develop the SEND strategy for 2020–23 over the summer. This work will align with Adults Service Improvement Plan 2019/20.
13. As we develop the 2020–23 strategy, we recognise the achievement and progress made, particularly in terms of co-production, and will continue to work in partnership and collaboration with parents and carers, children and young people and stakeholders in taking forward the priorities in the next strategy.

Appendices

- None

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