

Committee	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	19/09/2018
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 Development Plan 2018/19 and the progress following the Local Area SEND Inspection of the City of London 12–16 March 2018.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London local area was inspected under section 20 of the Children Act 2004 from 12 March 2018 to 16 March 2018. The inspection provided an independent external evaluation of how well the City of London local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to support their development.

2. Ofsted published the inspection findings in a letter on 19 May 2018, setting out briefly the context of the inspection, the evidence gathered, strengths and weaknesses and areas recommended for improvement for the local area. The inspection was timely and happened as the outcomes of the first year of the three-year strategy were being reviewed. This report provides an update on progress of the work on SEND in the local area since March 2018.

SEND Strategy 2017–2020

3. In February 2018, the SEND local area self-evaluation form (SEF) was reviewed to record the progress during the first year. The SEF identified the main areas for development in 2018/19. The SEND Improvement Action Plan for 2018/19 includes the identified areas for development, the recommendations from the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Joint Local Area SEND Inspection and reflects the ambition of the City of London Corporation to continue to improve the services and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

4. The priorities for development in the next year are to:

- continue to drive a high level of ambition for excellent outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families within all Corporation and partners' systems and structures
- increase the level of challenge from the SEND Programme Board and the focus on outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- increase the participation of children, young people and families in co-production so that their voices are integral and impact on the quality and delivery of commissioned services
- work with families, City organisations and/or charities to develop new short breaks and social and learning opportunities for children and young people with SEND, particularly young people in the 14 to 25 years age group
- ensure that commissioning arrangements reflect and meet the needs of City of London children and young people with SEND and develop ways to inform the joint commissioning of services and the monitoring of contracts for children and young people and their families
- develop an effective system to evaluate outcomes that will inform our commissioning and strategic planning, oversight and scrutiny
- improve co-ordination of personal budgets across agencies, and develop the market of services from the public, charity and commercial sectors to offer

parents and young people greater choice and control over delivery of provision in Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans

- develop closer relationships, including data-sharing protocols, with the Early Years settings, schools and colleges outside the City of London local area and in the independent school sector where children and young people with SEND who are resident in the City are educated
- increase Education, Health and Early Help joint working through the multi-agency referral process to create more effective pathways and services for children and young people with SEND
- develop a systematic, comprehensive Children's Centre offer for young children age 5 years and under, and their families
- develop plans for post-16 and post-19 progressions and exit pathways so that, when children and young people are transitioning into adulthood, their access to training, employment and independent living is facilitated
- develop links with available resources to support employment and training and to ensure that action pathways are in place to work towards increased employability and improved employment levels
- improve the arrangements for collecting and sharing information about the outcomes and achievement of children and young people, as well as information that relates to their attendance, exclusions and achievement.

Update on progress

5. The National Parent Carer Forum has been working with parents and carers from the City to establish an independent City Parent Carer Forum. In June, the SEND team and the City Parent Carer Forum arranged a joint meeting with SEND families and the City Parent Carer Forum was formally launched. A representative from the City Parent Carer Forum co-chairs the SEND Programme Board with the Assistant Director-People Services.

6. The Tower Hamlets SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) has provided an independent, impartial advice and information service to City parents for several years. Although over this time the numbers of families using the service have been small, the City does need an identifiable service with a dedicated resource that provides independent and impartial advice to parents and young people, as this is a statutory obligation.

7. The inspection in March 2018 identified the need to develop and raise the profile of access to good-quality information and advice for parents and young people. The report indicated that, although the Tower Hamlets SENDIASS is meeting the needs of parents based in the City, there is a need to enhance the service available. Since the inspection, the SEND team have worked with Tower Hamlets SENDIASS and submitted a joint application for funding to the Council for Disabled Children. The application for funding was to secure the costs for a part-time post dedicated to the City local area. The funding application was successful in securing £20,000 to cover the cost of a part-time worker for 20 hours a week.

8. It is essential that this service has an independent identity and provides an impartial service to users. Therefore, the post will be based with the Tower Hamlets SENDIASS and will be managed as part of their organisation. A job description has been agreed and the recruitment process is underway. A joint contractual agreement between Tower Hamlets SENDIASS and the City of London will be secured. This will ensure that

service provision is measured against the current quality standards for impartial information, advice and support services. The post will be dedicated to the City local area to provide information, advice and support to parents. Initially these developments will include consultation with the City Parent Carer Forum and the Young People's Forum, particularly in the development of work with young people and preparation for adulthood.

Health

9. In terms of health services, the Local Area Inspection identified capacity issues in relation to the Designated Medical Officer (DMO) which "*has meant that their work for children from the City focuses on operational priorities ... and the DMO is unable to attend the SEND programme board meetings.*" *Ofsted CQC Local Area Inspection letter May 2018*

10. Progress has been made in this area, with the appointment of a Designated Clinical Officer (DCO). This means that, as well as having oversight of operational issues, there is now capacity for the DMO or DCO to have oversight of, and be engaged in, strategic priorities. The DMO has carried out an audit of the quality of medical assessment being used in the EHC plans and has reported this to the SEND Programme Board. There will be DMO or DCO representations at all future SEND Programme Board meetings.

11. Parents' dissatisfaction with GPs in the City in relation to advice and/or referrals to specialist services was also identified during the inspection. Progress has been made in this area, with the Children's Programme Board Manager from the City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group meeting with the Practice Manager at the Neaman GP practice to address the issues raised. Further work is planned, which will include representatives for the City Parent Carer Forum and the DCO or DMO.

Conclusion

12. The Local Area SEND Inspection provided an independent external evaluation of how well the City of London local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with SEND to support their development. The evaluation identified many strengths as well as areas for further development, which are being addressed through a SEND Improvement Action Plan and monitored through the SEND Programme Board.

Appendices

- SEND Improvement Action Plan 2018/19

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