

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	07/02/2022
Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) – Update Report	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to a flourishing society • Support a thriving economy • Shape understanding environments
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/A
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children’s Services	For Information
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Summary

“...the work you are doing is impressive and you may be small, but you are mighty!” – Feedback from the Department for Education (DfE) Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Professional Advisor for the City of London (COL).

SEND officers met with the SEND Professional Advisor in November 2021 to provide an update on the COL's work to support the needs and development of children and young people with SEND towards achieving good life outcomes. This report provides an update on the work which is in progress to achieve this.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report

Main Report

Background

1. The duties on local areas regarding provision for children and young people with SEND are contained in the Children and Families Act 2014. The Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection Framework sets out the legal basis and the principles of inspection.

2. The SEND Strategy 2020–2024 sets out three key outcomes to be achieved by 2024:
 - i. We have a robust and inclusive multi-agency approach to identifying, assessing, and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.
 - ii. All children and young people with SEND are well-prepared for and have successful transitions to adulthood.
 - iii. Children and young people with SEND are integral and valued members of the City of London community.
3. In terms of the first outcome, this is currently being addressed through work which the SEND Consultant and local authority officers are undertaking in schools and settings. For the second outcome, a Transitions Task and Finish Group has been meeting since the summer term to strengthen processes in preparing children and young people for adulthood from the earliest years. To ensure the third outcome, we are continuing to engage with children and young people with SEND to seek their views on how they would like to live their lives, and how we can enable them to do so. We want their views to be at the heart of decisions when services are being developed.

Current Position

Work with schools and settings

4. The SEND Implementation and Development Project was commissioned in April 2021 to provide the expertise needed to support the SEND Team with the development of the SEND Strategy priorities. In the summer term 2021, the SEND Consultant undertook a series of visits to 15 schools/colleges (mainstream, special and specialist independent) that are educating COL children who have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). This was to better understand the range and level of support needed, and to identify those who are on SEN support. SEN support is the process schools and other settings use to identify and meet the initial needs of children with SEND, and to provide extra help as part of the school's usual arrangements as needed. This provision is from the school's own resources, sometimes with advice or support from outside specialists. These pupils do not have an EHCP. As reported to Committee in October 2021, these visits have also enabled the sharing of best practice in SEND, identifying new and creative ways of partnership working and ways to better identify those children and young people who are on SEN support.
5. The SEND Consultant has written an overarching report on the visits, as well as summary reports for each setting visited. The overarching report is attached at Appendix 1.
6. The information gathered through these visits is supporting SEND developments in the COL. The following points outline the progress that has been made.
7. The COL Family of Schools – which includes the COL Academies, The Aldgate School, and the independent schools in the COL, as well as schools

attended by COL children and young people with EHCPs – have agreed to share data regarding the number of pupils who are on SEN support. Procedures have been put in place so that we can begin to collect this data. We will monitor the response, which should provide data to help steer the work that we are undertaking.

8. A Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinators (SENDSCO) Forum has been in place for some time now, but the visits to schools have breathed new life into the meetings. Numbers have increased and there has been greater commitment from SENCOs to play an active part. The Forum has been meeting twice a term since the autumn term, with schools leading on and sharing good practice on topics such as how to improve the quality of teaching and learning, how the Social, Emotional and Mental Health curriculum is helping students to develop communication skills, and raising issues of trauma awareness. There was also a presentation from the City Parent Carer Forum (CPCF), sharing some of their ideas on gaining greater support for parents and some of their planned training and events.
9. The SENDSCO Forum is providing opportunities for innovative collaborations and a higher level of understanding of current SEND legislation, expectations, and issues across the COL Family of Schools, as well as those schools and settings attended by COL children and young people with EHCPs. The aim is for the Forum to be sustainable and able to be run with minimal input from local authority officers.
10. Key issues raised during the visits included: the significant number of children with speech, language and sensory needs coming through from Early Years, and the need for substantial therapeutic support and intervention to be in place; and the increasing number of children and young people with a dual diagnosis of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and autism. This has presented an opportunity for the three main primary schools that this year admitted COL children at Reception (The Aldgate School, City of London Primary Academy Islington (COLPAI) and Prior Weston), to start working collaboratively across the three settings to meet the needs of these children. Initial work will focus on plans to develop a therapeutic hub approach within the schools. This is a long-term project and will involve working with health services across two local areas, which should eventually afford better access to therapeutic support and effective multi-disciplinary working.
11. The COL Principal Educational Psychologist and Early Years Advisor resumed visits to schools and Early Years settings when the schools reopened. These visits comply with all necessary COVID-19 guidance and protocols. This engagement has been important in meeting the needs of COL children and young people.
12. A SEND review, led by the SEND Consultant is also planned with The Aldgate School and will involve the Principal Educational Psychologist and the Early Years Advisor.
13. COL Early Years providers can access the Level 3 Certificate for SENCOs in Early Years, and five staff completed the course at the end of summer 2021.

Six new staff members are due to start their training in February 2022. This training ensures that practitioners have the necessary knowledge and skills to assess and support the needs of children attending their settings.

14. In autumn 2021, the Education and Early Years Team put in place SEND-specific training, including Behaviour for Learning (16 staff attended online), an introduction to PECS (two staff attended online), and Attention Autism (nine staff attended face-to-face). Sessions on ADHD and Supporting the Interaction of Children with Social Communication Difficulties are planned for the spring term.
15. Guidance has been refreshed for schools and settings on the provision that the local authority expects to be available for children and young people with SEND, and provision tables showing the interventions, responses, resources and outcomes that could be expected. This will further support schools and settings in identifying and assessing needs.

Preparing for adulthood

16. A Task and Finish Group that focuses on preparing COL children and young people with SEND for adult life from the earliest years was established in 2021. This group has had three meetings, with two remaining meetings scheduled for this year, the final of which will take place in July 2022. The group includes a parent representative and colleagues from education, health, social care, housing services, schools, and colleges. An action plan is in place to meet a set of objectives agreed by the group, with progress monitored through the group and reported to the SEND Programme Board.
17. Some of the work developed so far includes: a pathway document on preparation for adulthood for families and young people; a review of SEND documentation focusing on transitions for those with EHCPs; reports on SEN support and receiving SEN support in the Early Years. The COL Housing Team have made a request for young people with SEND to be prioritised in their policy. Health colleagues have agreed with Tower Hamlets and Islington clinical commissioning groups a joint set of guidelines to be developed for preparing for the transition into adult health services to ensure a consistent approach for all COL young people with SEND. The group will also focus on the development of employment and training opportunities in the COL for young people with SEND, including: pursuing opportunities in the COL, alongside the Education and Skills Service; and work experience and apprenticeships for children and young people with EHCPs.
18. In terms of children and young people transitioning to adulthood, there has been an increase since March 2020, with 35% of those with EHCPs now within the 14-to-25-years age group. Person-centred planning meetings for those in this age range have been further developed to ensure that their views about the life they would like to have are captured during the annual review of their EHCPs. An independent facilitator has been commissioned to use creative ways to develop plans with children and young people that focus on the key areas for preparing for adulthood: employment, further education and/or training; independent living; and community inclusion and health. These collaborative and informal meetings, which include the young person's

family, friends and key professionals, ensure that their views, wishes and aspirations are at the heart of the meeting.

19. Since September 2020 the SEND service has been working with the children and young people who arrived from Afghanistan and are living in the Bridging Hotels. In more recent weeks the team has started to support schools as Afghan children with SEND needs become apparent. There are a small number of children who require further assessments. Schools are being supported with additional funding from the Afghanistan resettlement education grant to ensure that these children are being supported and are receiving the specialist input they require.

Listening to voices of children and young people

20. We want the views of children and young people to be at the heart of decisions when services are being developed. To support this, we have been working on developing a short film with children and young people who have EHCPs. This will be put on the COL Local Offer, alongside the SEND Strategy and will inform the services we commission and how we deliver them.
21. We have also reviewed how we work with the CPCF to ensure that we have a wider representation of the views of the local SEND community. Since summer 2021, the COL has facilitated a monthly meeting with the CPCF, Contact (the organisation) supporting the development of the CPCF and SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). This will give us a clearer profile of strengths and areas for development to inform our decisions on policy and commissioning.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

22. Strategic implications – corporate outcome: Contribute to a flourishing society by ensuring that all children and young people with SEND and their families have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.
23. Resource implications – the SEND functions are resourced through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.
24. Financial implications – the SEND functions are resourced through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.
25. Legal implications – the duties on local areas regarding provision for children and young people with SEND are covered in the Children and Families Act 2014. This legislation sits in the context of the Equality Act 2010. The Ofsted/CQC Inspection Framework sets out the legal basis and the principles of inspection.
26. Risk implications – if children's SEND issues are not identified early, assessed and supported, this will impact on young people's educational attainment, progress and wider lifetime chances.
27. Equalities implications – all children and young people, regardless of their SEND, will be part of a community where they can learn, achieve and participate in

activities with other children and young people, and will be prepared to have a fulfilled adult life.

28. Disability and race are protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

29. Climate implications – N/A

30. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

31. The SEND service continues to meet statutory deadlines and provide resources to support schools. The SEND service also continues to work with children and young people with SEND and our key partners to deliver SEND services in the COL.

32. Progress in implementing the SEND Strategy and achieving the outcomes by 2024 is on track. A self-evaluation form (SEF) and action plan are in place to plan and track progress. These are being monitored through the SEND Programme Board, and progress will continue to be reported to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee.

33. The outcome of the National SEND Review should be published this term, and it is pertinent therefore that we are reviewing our provision for SEND 0–25 in a creative, innovative, and sustainable way, focusing on the areas of schools and setting, preparing for adulthood and co-production of services and provisions. This engagement process with schools, settings, colleges, and families provides an effective forum for extensive professional debate and a wide variety of opportunities to establish sustainable provision for the growing number of children and young people with EHCPs and those on SEN support.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Report of the SEND Consultant on Visits to Schools

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