

Committee:	Dated:
Safeguarding Sub Committee	12/05/2022
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?	<p>Contribute to a flourishing society</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People are safe and feel safe 2. People enjoy good health and wellbeing. 3. People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. <p>Support a thriving economy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. We have access to the skills and talent we need.
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 purpose of this report is to update Members on the current work of the City of London (COL) special educational needs and disability (SEND) service and on the plans to respond to the Government’s green paper *SEND Review: right support, right place, right time*. In September 2019, five years after the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND reforms, the Government launched a review to evaluate the impact of these reforms.

The SEND local area inspections, which started in 2016, and consultations with parents and carers, provided evidence that, while the 2014 reforms had the right

aspirations and there were many examples of good practice, the outcomes for children and young people were still often poor, parents and carers were frustrated by navigating a complex system to access support, and financial challenges for local governments were increasing.

On 29 March 2022, the Government published its green paper *SEND Review: right support, right place, right time*, which sets out its proposals for a system that they consider will offer “children and young people the opportunity to thrive, with access to the right support, in the right place, and at the right time, so they can fulfil their potential and lead happy, healthy and productive adult lives.”

The full consultation report, a summary report and the consultation questions are provided as appendices to this report.

The Education and Early Years Service will be co-ordinating a response to the consultation, which will include engagement with partners across Education, Health and Social Care, the City Parent Carer Forum and service areas such as Housing. This report sets out how we will be responding to the consultation.

On 29 March, the Government also issued the schools white paper, *Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*. This sets out their long-term vision for a school system that helps every child to fulfil their potential, by ensuring that they receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time. A copy of the white paper is included in the appendices for information.

This report also provides an update on some of the work that has taken place over the last half term, and which will be progressed to ensure that COL children and young people continue to thrive and to achieve their potential.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. 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.

These outcomes accord with the Government’s vision as set out in the green paper, of children and young people’s needs being met in a timely way, and that they are prepared to lead healthy, happy and productive lives.

2. Summary of the Government's proposals:

The green paper sets out three key challenges and five proposals to address these:

The challenges

- I. Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for too many children, young people and their families.
- II. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are consistently worse than their peers across every measure.
- III. Despite the continuing and unprecedented investment, the system is not financially sustainable.

The proposals

- I. Establish a new national SEND and alternative provision system setting nationally consistent standards for how needs are identified and met at every stage of a child's journey across education, health and care – parents and carers will be confident that their child's needs will be met effectively in the most appropriate local setting, they will be clear about what support their child is receiving and will be engaged in decision-making at every stage.
- II. Create new local SEND partnerships bringing together education, health and care partners with local government to produce a local inclusion plan setting out how each area will meet the national standards – when specialist support is needed, the local inclusion plan will set out the provision that is available within the local area, including units within mainstream, alternative and specialist provision.
- III. Support parents and carers to express an informed preference for a suitable placement by providing a tailored list of settings, including mainstream, specialist and independent – they will continue to have the right to request a mainstream setting for their child.
- IV. Introduce a standardised and digitised EHCP [Education, Health and Care Plan] process and template to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency.
- V. Streamline the redress process to make it easier to resolve disputes earlier, including through mandatory mediation, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases.

Responding to the consultation

3. The consultation process will run nationally until 1 July 2022. We are arranging for Inclusive Solutions, an external company we have commissioned previously, to facilitate the co-production work with children, young people and their families, to facilitate an interactive workshop with key partners across education, health and social care, parents and carers and other key services such as housing, to consider the proposals and to respond to the 22 consultation questions. We will also consider how we can begin to prepare for the changes.

4. The workshop will take place during May 2022 and will be reported to the SEND Programme Board in June before it is submitted as part of the consultation to meet the 1 July 2022 deadline.

Current Work

SEND Review at The Aldgate School

5. In February, the SEND Consultant led a review at The Aldgate School, with the Lead Early Years Advisor focusing on the Early Years, (including the Children's Centre), the Principle Educational Psychologist focusing on the areas of need identified by the school across SEND Support, as well as Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and developments to meet those needs, and the SEND Consultant focusing on whole school issues.
6. The review found The Aldgate School to be inclusive with a strong vision and passion across its senior leaders and staff and that, during the pandemic, staff worked hard to ensure that the needs of all children were met, particularly those with SEND.
7. The report focuses on the areas of SEND leadership, the allocation and deployment of resources, the quality of education, the use of data, assessments and outcomes, and makes a number of recommendations in terms of how these areas can be further developed.
8. The new Ofsted framework and recent inspection experiences are said to have highlighted the need for governors to be accountable for the curriculum, equalities objectives and understanding the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND. The governors and headteacher at The Aldgate School welcomed the report, and the governors have identified SEND as an area of focus for them.
9. This review is to support the school in further developing their practice and to prepare for any Ofsted inspections. It will also support the school community and the COL as we begin to consider the implications of the outcome of the SEND Review.

Preparing for Adulthood

10. Preparing children and young people to lead happy, health and fulfilling lives is at the heart of what we do. A Transitions 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. The group includes a parent representative and colleagues from education, health, social care, housing services, schools, and colleges. Through this group, the SEND Service have developed a guidance document for parents and professionals on preparing children and young people with SEND for adult life, and have attended the City Parent Carer Forum meetings to consult on this document. The final document will be presented to the next meeting of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee.

Listening to Voices of Children and Young People

11. We have been developing a short film with children and young people who have EHCPs. This is so that their views are at the heart of decision making when services are being developed to meet their needs. The film is now ready and will be screened at the COL Local Offer, alongside the SEND Strategy. It will inform the services we commission and how we deliver them.
12. We will arrange for Members to view the film at this Committee meeting.

Hidden Disabilities

13. Not all disabilities are visible and are not immediately obvious. These include autism, chronic pain, and learning difficulties as well as mental health conditions, mobility, speech impairments, and sensory loss such as speech difficulties, sight loss, hearing loss, or deafness. People living with these disabilities often face barriers in their daily lives, including a lack of understanding, and negative attitudes. So some choose to wear the Sunflower lanyard to discreetly identify that they may need support, help, or just a little more time in shops, transport, or public spaces.
14. The City of London SEND service now has the Sunflower lanyards and pins available for all children and young people living in the City who want one, including those with autism. We also have supporters' lanyards for those that want to support the scheme.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. 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.
16. Resource implications – the SEND functions are resourced through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.
17. Financial implications – the SEND functions are resourced through the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block.
18. 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/Care Quality Commission Inspection Framework sets out the legal basis and the principles of inspection.
19. 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.
20. 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.

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

22. Climate implications – N/A

23. Security implications – N/A

Conclusion

24. The SEND Service is continuing to progress implementing the SEND Strategy to achieve the outcomes by 2024. The Government's vision for children and young people, as set out in the green paper, is in line with the COL's vision and is reflected in the three key outcomes which are set out in the SEND Strategy. We will continue to progress these with our partners across education, health, social care and other services such as housing. We will also begin to consider the implication of the green paper's proposals and how the final recommendations will be implemented in the COL to best meet the needs of COL children and young people.

25. The SEND self-evaluation form and action plan, which are in place to plan and track progress, will be amended in due course to reflect any changes needed. We will continue to monitor these through the SEND Programme Board, and to report progress to the Safeguarding Sub-Committee.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – White paper – *Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child*
- Appendix 2 – Green paper – *SEND Review: right support, right place, right time*
- Appendix 3 – SEND Review Consultation Questions
- Appendix 4 – SEND Review Summary Report

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