

# Children, Environment & Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	13 March 2017
<b>Classification:</b>	General Release
<b>Title:</b>	Improving the local offer for 0-25 year olds with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
<b>Report of:</b>	Clare Chamberlain, Executive Director of Children's Services
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	Councillor Richard Holloway (Children, Families and Young People; Special Educational Needs/Learning Difficulties and Disabilities)
<b>Wards Involved:</b>	All
<b>Policy Context:</b>	City Aspiration
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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the current Local Offer for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). It also describes the local strategic principles informing the content of the Local Offer, the challenges that have been identified which need to be addressed by the offer and specific areas of service which have been prioritised for review and development in line with the underlying strategic principles which inform local services.

## 2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to review and comment upon this report.

### **3. Context**

- 3.1. The SEND service provides support for approximately 2,300 children and young people in receipt of a SEND statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) across the three boroughs.
- 3.2. The percentage of children and young people with a statement or EHCP in WCC has remained consistent at around 2.5% of the resident population.
- 3.3. The SEND team is establishing preemptive measures and different work practices to provide support for 1,035 children and young people in receipt of a SEN statement or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) but it is estimated that a further 75 children and young people resident in WCC will be issued with an EHCP by 2020 .
- 3.4. Over half of learners with SEND in Westminster present with either Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN 27%) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD 25%) as their primary need. A high proportion of local residents with SEND are in receipt of high quality, state funded educational provision within the Borough, HF or RBKC. However, 8% of the Borough's SEND cohort are enrolled in non-state maintained provision at an additional annual cost per learner. The London Councils annual publication 'Do the Maths' in 2016, estimated the average cost of a SEND provision at approximately £69,701 but the associated costs for each learner are dependent on the type of school and level of access required.

### **4. Background to the Local Offer**

- 4.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 requires the local authority to publish a Local Offer. This includes a need to publish a wide range of content, following significant engagement with parents, children, young people and service providers and a review mechanism to ensure that the offer is matched to local needs.
- 4.2. The 'Local Offer' refers to more than the information that is provided online. It is the embodiment of our overall strategic approach to providing services for children and young people aged 0-25 who have SEND. The local authority is therefore committed to taking a holistic, systems based approach to reviewing the different components of our local offer.

### **5 Principles behind the design of our Local Offer**

- 5.1 The development of Westminster's Local Offer is informed by a set of shared principles. These include an aim to ensure that more children and young people live, are educated and, where appropriate, work locally. We also aim to promote equal and fair access to universal settings for children and young people with SEND on par with their peers.
- 5.2 In addition, there is an aim to improve the services offered to children and young people who do not meet thresholds for statutory plans to meet their needs, particularly for those who are in mainstream education or who

present with mental health difficulties. This includes working with mainstream schools and colleges to strengthen their capacity to provide support for children at “SEN Support” level, (formerly ‘School Action’ or ‘School Action Plus’) ensuring equity of provision regardless of where children go to school or college.

- 5.3 We continue to work to develop and embed local partnerships where agencies, services and families can work together to review and plan provision and maintain a strong approach to joint commissioning.
- 5.4 We are also developing and maintaining a single pathway to best enable the identification of children and young people’s education, health and care needs, making sure there are effective and streamlined way to refer them on to the most appropriate agencies to support them.

## **6 Westminster’s current Local Offer**

- 6.1 Westminster’s SEND Local Offer website - <http://localoffer.westminster.gov.uk> underwent a complete refresh in 2016. This led to the development of a bespoke, hosted website which now provides users with a significantly more interactive and accessible way of finding information about the local offer available to children and young people with SEND in Westminster and their families.
- 6.2 All SEND Local Offer information for Westminster, Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea is now held in a designated tri-borough data store, maintained by Local Offer staff and supported with additional information from three Family Information Service directories. This also means that information about services in the other two boroughs which are open to Westminster residents can be located from the site.
- 6.3 The Local Offer site has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, and the views of young people with SEND and of parents and carers were central. Consultation and engagement activities by Local Offer staff included visits to local schools and colleges such as College Park School, where ideas and views were sought from students with SEND. Meetings also took place with parents and carers as well as regular communication with the Westminster Parent Participation Group (WPPG). A Parent Reference Group conference took place in July 2016 when the new website was launched. In addition, there was ongoing communication with professionals who work with children and young people with SEND or their families, including head teachers, key workers and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators.
- 6.4 Consultation with service users and their feedback continues to drive improvements as well as identifying development opportunities for the SEND Local Offer. A list of comments received about the new website and the work

done or planned in response to these comments can be found on the [Westminster SEND Local Offer website](#)<sup>1</sup>.

- 6.5 We aim to prioritise and continue interactive user sessions with young people with SEND, seeking their input on the SEND Local Offer in order to identify and implement additional service improvements. We have planned a session with young people with SEND in local college provision to co-produce the supported employment pathway on the Local Offer in March 2017.

## 7 Local challenges

- 7.1 There are already examples of good practice and clear commitment to achieving the best outcomes for our children across our local offer. However, there are also a number of challenges that need to be addressed.
- 7.2 These include the importance of ensuring that we maintain a dynamic view of how the needs of the local population are changing, for example there is a clear and ongoing increase in young people being diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- 7.3 There are also legislative requirements to ensure our offer is increasingly personalised with opportunities for parents and children to have personal budgets from which appropriate services from the local offer can be purchased.
- 7.4 There is also a need to continue to improve the degree to which services are integrated. This is important to address concerns expressed by both parents and professionals about fragmentation of services and the ease with which it is possible to coordinate a range of services for a particular child.

## 8 Areas for Development

- 8.1 In the light of these guiding principles and local challenges, the Special Educational Needs Service and the Children with Disabilities Team are working in partnership with colleagues from the Children's Services Commissioning Directorate to review particular aspects of this work. Key elements include:
- "Short Breaks" schemes for children with disabilities.
  - Special educational needs outreach services, including therapies.
  - Early Years provision.
  - How information, advice and consultation is provided for young people with special educational needs.

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<sup>1</sup> Local offer website:

<http://localoffer.westminster.gov.uk/kb5/westminster/fis/advice.page?id=X6xF5xXUj9M&localofferchannel=0>

- 8.2 While the above services are commissioned to improve the life chances of young people with additional needs and to enable them and their families to become resilient, as independent as possible and to achieve their full potential, their delivery can be fragmented and not strategically aligned. Also, if pathways to and through the services are difficult for parents and practitioners to navigate, this can sometimes prevent access to the right support at the right time. The offer can sometimes also be quite prescriptive, limiting our ability to work with children and their families to plan in a more personalised way.
- 8.3 With an aim for all children and young people to be independent as possible, resilient and achieving their full potential as they transition into adulthood, the Local Offer should facilitate this and to this end we are working with Adult Social Care (ASC) to ensure we collaborate in delivering person centred approaches to young people with SEND and their families as they move from school to college, to independent/supported living and to employment.
- 8.4 The work of the Supported Employment Stakeholder Network (SESN) is key to our work in preparing young people with SEND and their families for the world of work. The SESN has representatives from Children's Services, ASC, Housing, Economic Development, DWP, Schools and Colleges and the supported employment provider base. The focus of the SESN is to improve and communicate the pathways to employment from school to college and onto employment and in doing so improve employment outcomes for young people with SEND.
- 8.5 We have implemented a Supported Internship pilot in one of the three boroughs in 2016 for young people with complex needs and we anticipate that a Supported Internship Programme will commence in Westminster in September 2018.
- 8.6 These developments are being made as part of a wider, established programme structure which is designing and implementing reforms required from the Children and Families Act 2014. The programme is a collective endeavour bringing together local authorities, CCGs, schools, voluntary sector and parents to oversee and deliver a range of projects across our whole spectrum of services from universal to specialist level.

## **9 Conclusion**

- 9.1 Significant work has taken place to ensure that Westminster's Local Offer was in place in time to meet statutory requirements. However, since then the need to review and improve what is available on the site and how accessible and relevant it is has been subject to ongoing review and improvement. Review of key elements of the Local Offer has led to the identification of a number of specific service areas which are currently being reviewed to ensure they are easy to access, coordinated with other relevant services and flexible enough to enable personalisation to meet the needs of individual children and young people.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the  
Background Papers please contact Report Authors:  
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