

Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework

Introduction

1. In Harrow there is provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) in mainstream schools, including specialist resourced provision in some schools, and special schools. Some pupils with special educational needs attend schools outside Harrow where their needs cannot be met in the authority. Harrow is experiencing a growing and changing population and there is increasing pressure on the current provision for pupils with special educational needs. A shortfall in local provision increases the cost pressures of placements at provision outside the borough.
2. The Government is introducing significant changes to the special educational needs and disability system and processes, as well as to the role of the local authority and its relationship with schools and stakeholders. The local authority retains statutory responsibility to ensure that there is sufficient high quality provision. However, it is no longer so clearly the provider of services, but a commissioner of services. The local authority's new role is to champion vulnerable children and young people, parents and families and promote educational excellence.
3. In this context, to meet the growth in Harrow, in partnership with stakeholders, this Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework has been developed. The framework aims to ensure that there is sufficient and sustainable high quality provision in Harrow.
4. The Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework sets out the national and Harrow context, including details of the pattern of demand and next steps including options to increase the range of provision and choice for children with special educational needs. A set of guiding principles are included to inform the development of short and long term options. Four priority proposals to increase capacity are identified.

Cabinet and Consultation

5. At its meeting on 11 October 2012, Harrow Cabinet agreed the aims and guiding principles for the Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework that are set out in this document. Cabinet also agreed to a wide stakeholder engagement and consultation to develop options to increase provision in special schools and mainstream schools to meet growing demand.
6. The consultation was held from 12 November 2012 to 21 December 2012. A broad approach was adopted to this consultation to try to seek as wide an engagement as possible, and the intention is to continue dialogue with key stakeholders as proposals are developed, agreed and implemented. The next steps and options set out in this document are informed by the outcomes of the consultations and the continuing engagement activity with stakeholders.
7. At its meeting on 18 July 2013, Harrow Cabinet will be recommended to approve this Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework as the framework to inform proposals for increased provision over the next 3-5 years.

National Policy Context

8. The Government is planning to introduce significant reform and change to the special educational needs and disability system. In March 2011, the Government published a Green Paper Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability (SEND) for consultation. In May 2012, the Government published their response to the Green Paper consultation and described the progress made on the implementation of proposals and the next steps. The Government's vision for special education needs is a system in which:
- Children's special educational needs are identified early and support is routinely put in place quickly;
 - Staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills to provide the right support for children and young people who have SEN or are disabled wherever they are;
 - Parents know what they can reasonably expect their local school, local college, local authority and local services to provide, without them having to fight for it and are more closely involved in decisions about services;
 - Children who would currently have a statement of SEN, and young people over 16 who would have a learning difficulty assessment, have an integrated assessment and a single Education, Health and Care Plan which is completed in a shorter time and without families having the stress of going from pillar to post to get the support they need; and,
 - Parents have greater control over the services they and their family use with:
 - every family with an Education, Health and Care Plan having the right to a personal budget for their support, and;
 - parents whose children have an Education, Health and Care Plan having the right to seek a place at any state-funded school, whether that is a special or mainstream school, a maintained school, Academy or Free School.
9. The Children and Families Bill will introduce legislation to implement a single assessment process, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and offer personal budgets for families with an EHCP.
10. In addition, the Government has consulted on proposed changes to school funding. There are significant changes proposed for the funding for statements of special educational needs and special schools. The funding for special schools and specialist provision will continue to be funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), however, the level of funding will be based on places commissioned by the Local Authority. Developments for increasing provision will need to take into account the changes to funding to ensure that they are cost effective.

Local Policy Context

Harrow Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy

11. The Government's changes will affect the whole of the special educational needs system. To ensure that Harrow is best placed to implement the Government's vision within the new funding arrangements, it will be necessary to consider the full implications and develop the overarching Harrow SEND Strategy including system and processes. This strategy will inform all future developments for special educational needs in Harrow.
12. This work will take time to complete and to some extent the timescales will be determined by the Government and the legislative process. However, there is a need

to address the current pressure in special schools in Harrow in the immediate and medium term. The Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework is developed in the context of the proposed changes and seeks to ensure there is sufficient flexibility over time to ensure that as the changes to the system become clearer, the framework can evolve accordingly. The framework will contribute to the wider work to develop the overarching Harrow SEND strategy.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs in Harrow

13. Wherever possible children with special educational needs attend a local school, either a mainstream school, a mainstream school with specialist resourced provision or a special school. For some pupils this may be a school outside the authority. In Harrow, the current provision is as follows:
14. Special Schools
 - Kingsley High School for pupils with severe and complex needs, including autism, aged 11 - 19 years old;
 - Woodlands School for pupils with severe and complex needs, including autism, aged 3 - 11 years old;
 - Shaftesbury High School for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), autism and/or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, aged 11-19 years old;
 - Alexandra School for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, autism and/or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, aged 4 – 11 years old.
15. Specialist resourced provision at mainstream schools
There is specialist resourced provision at the following mainstream schools:
 - Aylward Primary School specialist resourced provision for children with autistic spectrum disorders;
 - Priestmead Primary School specialist resourced provision for children with autistic spectrum disorders;
 - Welldon Park Infant School specialist resourced provision for children with specific language impairment;
 - Elmgrove Primary School specialist resourced provision for children with physical impairment;
 - Cedars Manor School specialist resourced provision for hearing impairment;
 - Whitmore High School specialist resourced provision for children with physical impairment and autistic spectrum disorders;
 - Hatch End High School specialist resourced provision for children with hearing impairment.

Current Pressure on Places

16. Harrow's population is growing and there is considerable pressure on school places for primary aged pupils. In addition, there is a corresponding increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. The total number of special needs statements in Harrow has increased by 93 (or 9%) between 2006 and 2011 calendar years. In addition, the percentage of children with a statement placed in a special school (Harrow, other local authority, independent or non-maintained) has increased from 35% to 43% during the same period. This represents continued pressure and demand for more special school places.
17. The factors contributing to this increasing demand include:
 - Rising overall population;

- Increase in premature baby survival rate with the consequent greater percentage of children with severe and complex needs;
 - Growing number of children with significant learning difficulties moving in to the borough.
18. The biggest growth in demand across the four special schools is for pupils with autism (63% increase between 2009 and 2012). Three specialist resourced provisions for pupils with autism have been established in mainstream schools, eventually providing 36 places. While an increase in specialist resourced provision for autism might reduce current demand on special school places at the margins, more special school places will be required to accommodate pupils with severe autism.
19. The four special schools have nearly reached capacity within their existing sites not just in terms of classroom and small group/breakout space, but in associated infrastructure such as hall, dining facilities, equipment storage and therapy/changing facilities. The addition of further classrooms should be accompanied by a corresponding increase in those facilities if possible, including space to accommodate higher staff numbers. Further assessment of potential development within their sites will need to contribute to the Planning Framework, but this needs to be accompanied by other options to increase provision.
20. The most acute pressure point is for pupils with the most severe needs, currently at Woodlands which will in time progress through to Kingsley High School. Space and specialist facilities are required for pupils with profound medical and healthcare needs. Pupils with autism and significant learning difficulties require sufficient classroom space and breakout/cooling off areas in which their sometimes challenging behaviour can be managed.
21. The current demand has therefore not peaked. In addition, the proposed national change from pupils having a statement of SEN up to the age of 19 towards a single education, health and social care plan up to the age of 25 will further increase the requirement for specialist provision.
22. With Harrow special schools nearing capacity on their current sites, the local authority is presented with increasing difficulty in placing pupils requiring a place at one of the four schools. Placement officers are faced with less capacity to respond to parental preference and are in some cases having to make placements at special schools out of the borough. Headteachers are nearing the limits of their ability to make use of available space and create viable teaching groups, often losing communal or specialist areas to create more classrooms.
23. Given the high quality and popularity of special school provision in Harrow, it is expected that the solutions to meet increasing demand will be developed in partnership with special schools.

Financial Pressures

24. Any increase to special educational needs provision will inevitably have significant financial capital and revenue costs. Under the Government's new school funding proposals places at both special schools and specialist resource provision would be commissioned by the Local Authority and funded from Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The increase in places would result in a pressure on the DSG budget for high needs

pupils and this would have to be considered as part of setting the annual School Budgets.

25. The Department for Education (DfE) are currently proposing to amend the funding of post-16 places in special schools and specialist provision. The impact of this change is not yet fully understood but it would need to be considered as part of developing the options for increasing provision.
26. The Council has statutory duties around transporting SEN pupils to school that have to be funded from council revenue budgets. The increase in SEN pupils is likely to increase the pressure on the Special Needs Transport budgets. By addressing the increase in pupils through expanding provision in Harrow schools it minimises the need for out of borough placements, which on average have significantly higher transport costs.

Aims and Objectives of the Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework

27. The aim of the Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework is to ensure there is a strategic approach to secure sufficient high quality local provision for pupils and their families with SEN that:
 - improves outcomes;
 - is continuous from 0 to 25 years;
 - offers choice; and,
 - maximises the efficient use of resources.
28. The focus is on the special schools and their interface with other provision for pupils and young people with special educational needs, including mainstream schools, specialist resourced provision in mainstream schools, out-borough placements, alternative providers e.g. academies/free schools and provision in colleges and Independent Specialist Providers (ISP).
29. The Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework is one element in the local authority's vision for a new special education needs system. It will contribute to and inform other developments as they evolve.
30. A central element of the framework is to increase capacity at each school by developing new provision on the site or on separate sites. Continuing to increase the capacity on existing sites may limit headteachers' ability to manage their schools effectively and, in some cases, may be prohibitively expensive or impracticable. Site capacity assessments are being undertaken of the special school sites that will inform the development of options.
31. As well as the special schools possibly having further accommodation on their existing or separate sites for which they are responsible, additional specialist capacity needs to be created in the borough's primary and secondary mainstream schools. There may also be alternative models that are appropriate to consider, including specialist provision at mainstream schools that is supported or commissioned from a special school.
32. Beyond increasing capacity within the borough, the local authority continues to be conscious of and involved in developments within the West London Alliance of local

authorities. Collaborations and partnerships among neighbouring authorities may lead to the development of regional provision that benefits children and families in Harrow.

33. There may be opportunities for a free school provider to contribute to the increase in provision in the borough, or within the region, that Harrow children and families could benefit from.
34. This strategic approach will give the local authority its best chance of developing capacity in a way which builds on the expertise and success of Harrow's special and mainstream schools, enables Harrow's children and young people to attend specialist provision as close as possible to their home, as well as future proofing against subsequent increases and/or changes in demand.

Guiding Principles

35. To guide the development of options to increase capacity, a set of guiding principles have been adopted by Harrow Cabinet on 11 November 2012. Provision for children with special educational needs will be:
 - high quality and achieve the best outcomes for children and their families;
 - age appropriate, comprehensive and offer continuity and progression;
 - informed by best practice and stakeholders views;
 - increasing choice for parents by providing greater support in mainstream schools;
 - a model that places the child at the centre and is collaborative in approach;
 - sustainable and demonstrate the most efficient use of resources;
 - shaped by opportunities offered by government policy for models of school organisation, leadership and governance;
 - a commission-based model with the local authority and health agencies commissioning places and packages of support rather than being the provider;
 - effective in reducing the number of out-borough placements.

Options to Increase Capacity

36. A series of options to increase capacity have been developed to be delivered over the short and medium/long term that have been informed by the consultation processes with stakeholders. It is expected that options, building on the current provision, may be further developed as engagement continues that could contribute to short and medium/long term solutions. There is good provision in Harrow's mainstream and special schools and it is expected that the solutions for increasing capacity will evolve and be delivered from within Harrow. This could include some increase in existing capacity in the short/medium term as part of the long term solutions. The pupil projections will continue to be analysed to align the planning for the medium and long term solutions.
37. There are four key proposals based around pupil special educational needs and age:
 - Increase the number of places at special schools for primary-age pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties.
 - Increase the number of places at special schools for secondary-age pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties, autism and/or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
 - Increase the choice and number of places at mainstream schools for primary and secondary-age pupils with moderate learning difficulties and autism.

- Increase and develop post-16/19 to 25 years provision for young people with severe and profound learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties, autism and/or behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.

Next Steps

38. This Special School SEN Placements Planning Framework provides a framework for bringing forward proposals over the next 3-5 years. Proposals will be informed by continuing stakeholder engagement and opportunities will be sought to implement initiatives over this period.
39. Demand for special educational needs provision will be monitored. Regional initiatives that will meet special educational needs in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities and private and voluntary sector providers will be considered and promoted as may be appropriate.
40. In its developing role as commissioner of services rather than provider the local authority will promote commissioned provision wherever appropriate. An example is envisaged to be specialist resourced provision at maintained mainstream schools.
41. Funding will be sought as necessary to implement proposals. The Government's free school programme may provide opportunities and where possible proposals will be considered for funding through the Council's capital programme.