

Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework

Outcomes of the consultation held from 12 November 2012 to 21 December 2012

Introduction

At its meeting on 11 October 2012, Harrow Cabinet decided to hold a consultation about provision for special educational needs and about some initial options that proposed in the draft Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework.

The report to Cabinet set out the background to the need for the framework:

- Harrow is experiencing a growing and changing population and there is increasing pressure on the current provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The Government are 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.

In this context, to meet the increased numbers of children with special educational needs in Harrow, in partnership with stakeholders, a Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework is being developed to ensure that there is sufficient and sustainable high quality provision in Harrow. The local authority will also lead on the development of an overarching Harrow Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy which will inform all future developments for special education needs in Harrow

Consultation

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.

A consultation plan was developed to engage with key stakeholders, including: families; schools and colleges; voluntary organisations; Health, Adult Services; Harrow Forums; and other stakeholders.

A short summary consultation paper on two sides of A4 was widely circulated to stakeholders and interested parties. This consultation paper explained how more detailed information could be obtained from the Harrow Council Website or from the Education Strategy and School Organisation Team at Harrow Council.

- Summary of the Draft Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework
- Draft Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework

Included with the letters and consultation paper was a response form to elicit views and comments about the options presented in the consultation and to seek other comments and suggestions for consideration. The response form was available for completion on the Harrow Council website consultation portal, and postal and email addresses were given for the return of completed response forms. The response form invited respondents to answer monitoring information questions as part of Harrow Council's commitment to check that services are being delivered in a fair and equal way to all residents.

Consultation distribution

There was a wide distribution by letter to stakeholders. Schools were asked to engage with their school communities as they think best to encourage responses, and the detailed documents and newsletter text were provided. Schools were asked to refer individuals to the

Harrow Council website to make responses or to forward any paper responses to Harrow Council. Interested parties were asked to send their views and comments and to do all they can to promote engagement in the consultation among your staff, membership or contacts. Information was included for distribution together with text that could be used in a communication or newsletter, and organisations were asked to facilitate discussion at any meetings or gatherings there may be. It was offered that officers are willing to attend any discussions they may arrange as availability permits.

A Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework page was created on the Harrow Council website with links to detailed information and to the electronic consultation response portal.

Consultation activity

Open meetings were held at the special schools:

- With parents on 12 December 2012 at Woodlands School
- With parents on 27 November 2012 at Kingsley High School
- With parents and staff on 5 December 2012 at Shaftesbury High School

At these meetings attendees were encouraged to submit their own individual responses to the consultation. Discussion at the meetings focussed on three questions about their experiences of provision in Harrow:

- What is good?
- What would you change?
- What would you like to see in future?

Records were made of these meetings and analysis of key themes is included below.

Officers have engaged in discussion with special school headteachers and college principals separately and together and these will continue.

Consultation responses

39 completed response forms were submitted by individuals and organisations. Other responses were received from: Harrow College of Further Education High School Headteachers; Shaftesbury 'High School; Adult Social Care and Children's Service, London Borough of Barnet; schools expressing interest in additionally resourced provision at their school.

Consultation Response Form

The consultation response form asked 8 questions under 5 general and option headings. Respondents were invited to respond to each question either: Yes; No; or Not sure. The Responses are available in pages 8 to 12 and are summarised below beneath each of the tables of responses. Three option areas were covered in Questions 2, 3 and 4. Questions 1 and 5 were general questions asking whether respondents had any other comments or suggestions to make.

Analysis of consultation responses

Tables showing the responses to each question are included below (percentages adjusted to the nearest per cent) and key themes from the comments made are given to give a flavour of the responses. These key themes are not intended to replace reading the full comments which are available in pages 8 to 12, and are produced here to provide an introduction to the contributions. The key themes are not weighted in any way, and the numbers of completed response forms (39) received do not lend themselves to doing so.

Question 1 asked:

Do you have suggestions to make about increasing provision for special educational needs in Harrow?

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	28	80%
No	6	17%
Not Sure	1	3%
No Response	4	

Key themes from the comments made following Question 1:

- New / additional provision for a range of needs
- More / new schools
- Recognition of the distinctive needs of children
- Expansion / further development at present school sites
- Increase access to speech and language therapy
- Local provision

Question 2 asked:

Do you agree with the proposals to increase the numbers of pupils at Woodlands?

Almost two thirds of those who responded to this question agreed with the proposals to increase the numbers of pupils at Woodlands.

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	24	65%
No	3	8%
Not Sure	10	27%
No Response	2	

Question 2a asked:

Do you think the additional places should be at Woodlands?

Over half of those who responded to this question agreed the additional places should be at Woodlands.

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	23	62%
No	4	11%
Not Sure	10	27%
No Response	2	

Question 2b asked:

Do you think the additional places should be at other settings in the borough?

Equal numbers of respondents were in agreement and disagreement that the additional places should be at other settings in the borough.

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	14	38%
No	14	38%
Not Sure	9	24%
No Response	2	

Key themes from the comments made following Questions 2, 2a and 2b:

- More / new schools needed
- Local provision
- Aim provision at type of need
- Develop the provision at the current site
- Limitations of expanding the current Woodlands site
- Consider the training needs of staff
- More thought should be put into assessing the children that are seeking a place at the school
- More information needed to be able to evaluate proposals

Question 3 asked:

Do you agree with the proposal to establish a shared post-16 provision for students of Kingsley and Shaftesbury on a different site?

Over one third of those who responded to this question disagreed with the proposal to establish a shared post-16 provision for students of Kingsley and Shaftesbury on a different site. One quarter agreed with the proposal. Almost 40% were not sure about this proposal (the highest proportion that stated not sure in the responses to the consultation questions).

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	9	25%
No	13	36%
Not Sure	14	39%
No Response	3	

Key themes from the comments made following Question 3:

- The needs of Kingsley and Shaftesbury students are very different
- Points made about the proposal
- Alternative suggestions about provision
- Beneficial to have sixth form at high schools
- Retain and expand current provision at Kingsley

Question 4 asked:

Do you agree that additional resourced provision should be created in mainstream schools?

Half of those who responded to this question agreed that additional resourced provision should be created in mainstream schools. Over one third disagreed with the proposal. (Note: two primary schools responded separately to express interest in additionally resourced provision at their schools).

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	18	50%
No	14	39%
Not Sure	4	11%
No Response	3	

Question 4a asked:

Do you think there should be additionally resourced provision in primary schools?

Nearly two thirds of those who responded to this question agreed should be additionally resourced provision in primary schools. Almost one third disagreed with this proposal.

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	22	61%
No	11	31%
Not Sure	3	8%
No Response	3	

Question 4b asked:

Do you think there should be additionally resourced provision in high schools?

Over half of those who responded to this question agreed there should be additionally resourced provision in high schools. Nearly one third disagreed with this proposal.

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	20	55.5%
No	11	30.5%
Not Sure	5	14%
No Response	3	

Key themes from the comments made following Questions 4, 4a and 4b:

- Training and resources
- Points made about the proposal
- Points made against the proposal
- Alternative suggestions about provision

Question 5 asked:

Do you have any further comments and suggestions to make?

Response	Count	% of Responses
Yes	28	72%
No Response	11	28%

Key themes from the comments made following Question 5:

- The importance of early intervention
- The importance of talking to parents
- Coordinated approach by agencies
- Assessment processes

Meetings with parents

Key points from the discussion at Kingsley High School:

- Keep class sizes still small
- Therapies on site and health care provisions
- Look across the region to group children more to their needs within a geographic area
- More after-school provision needed, and after-school clubs needed for children with most profound needs
- It would be good to have post-16 provision in the borough for transition and support
- Include respite in the post-16 provision
- Have five day per week provision post-19

Key points from the discussion at Shaftesbury High School:

- Maintain access to information on what is available in the community
- Don't lose out on small groups for children with SEN
- It helps with transition if staff know the children that are coming through to post-16
- Important the school isn't too large
- More activities for children from beginning of life
- More activities in school and holiday activities
- Don't prevent parents from wanting to send their children out of the borough
- Build at the school to accommodate more children

Key points from the discussion at Woodlands School:

- The school provision needs to remain at least as good
- Being in-borough is crucial – don't want child to travel a long way
- Early years is vital. Local quality provision offering early intervention
- The thought of more transition is not good
- Perhaps mix and match 16-25 provision to suit the child's needs
- Local provision is good. An idea could be to involve a local mainstream school somehow with the Children's Centre

Response from Harrow College

Harrow College is broadly in agreement with the options proposed. In its response the college points out its current successful provision for students, including integration into the mainstream college provision.

Key points made in the response include:

- Continuity of provision from Primary through Secondary and into mainstream college would give parents the confidence of open pathways for many MLD students
- A closer working partnership would serve to reinforce and enhance transition opportunities for MLD students, with the potential to develop a seamless provision
- The college would welcome the opportunity to work in partnership to further expand its already varied curriculum offer
- Harrow College is already in the locality of both Kingsley and Shaftesbury and has the potential to develop on its current site and, funding permitting, be operational for September 2014
- The college considers it has a significant role to play in increasing the capacity of post 16 special educational provision in Harrow

Response from High Schools Headteachers Group

The High School Headteachers recognise the need to review specialist provision and provide additional capacity, and want to be part of the process for identifying potential options. We want to consider the medium term requirements for specialist and mainstream provision together so that we develop a coherent set of overall principles and proposals.

Key points made in the response include:

- establishing Post-16 provision on a different site is an option to consider in more detail; though at this stage we do not have a view as to whether it is the best option
- We share the principle that more designated provision within high schools would be an appropriate strategy. It provides local access to high quality facilities, within an ethos of inclusion and maximising opportunities for those students who would benefit from a mainstream curriculum with additional support as appropriate

- We believe that as a group of schools we should collectively explore this in more detail with the Council

Response from London Borough of Barnet

Barnet are committed partners in joint work with other councils and endorse the observation made that there is a need to increase provision across West and North London.

Key points made in the response include:

- The proposal to increase capacity to meet the needs of young people with Autism will be particularly welcomed while recognising there are other pressures to be responded to in meeting the needs of young people with social and emotional needs and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- It is generally recognised that there is insufficient local provision in West and North London for young people with learning difficulties aged 16 plus
- Barnet is committed to ensuring that there is sufficient high quality local SEN provision available and we look forward to effective collaboration with our other council partners in this regard

Special School and SEN Placements Planning Framework

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Consultation analysis

The following analysis identifies key themes from the responses given to the consultation questions and includes extracts from the written comments received.

Q1. Do you have suggestions to make about increasing provision for special educational needs in Harrow?

New / additional provision for a range of needs

- A good school for children across the autistic spectrum within the borough
- Specialist ASD provision along the lines of residential schools
- Cater for children with a medium range of disability
- Autistic provision catering specifically for students with autism
- Provision for pupils with social, emotional and behavioural needs must be strengthened
- Will new free schools provide for SEN pupils' needs e.g. Jubilee Academy?
- Create a school college covering the needs of students up to 25

More / new schools

- Build new SEN schools for all age phases
- New all-through special school
- New larger site for Shaftesbury

Recognition of the distinctive needs of children

- Not sure how this would work for Kingsley and Shaftesbury pupils together
- Ensure that currently distinctive and successful providers are not amalgamated

Expansion / further development at present school sites

- Build extra level on existing building
- Increase the number of places at existing special schools
- Increase accommodation of existing Kingsley High School building

Increase access to speech and language therapy

- Access to speech and language therapy is very limited
- Children and School Action Plus need access to specialist speech and language support

Local provision

- Provision needs to be available locally
- Provision needs to be kept in Harrow

Q2. Do you agree with the proposals to increase the numbers of pupils at Woodlands?

Q2a. Do you think the additional places should be at Woodlands?

Q2b. Do you think the additional places should be at other settings in the borough?

More / new schools needed

- Consider opening another site offering the same provision as offered at present
- Separate unit for Nursery at Woodlands
- Extra nursery classes on Woodlands site
- Separate nursery provision of Woodlands site
- Provision for a new early years centre based at Woodlands
- Children with profound needs need a dedicated SEN school to enable them to learn and progress further
- It would be better to place early years at Alexandra

Local provision

- Provide provision within the borough for children who cannot thrive in mainstream education

Aim provision at type of need

- Better for the provision to be aimed at a type of need
- Better for the professional to be grouped in a hub
- Harrow is a small borough and it is better for the children to be brought to the hub

Develop the provision at the current site

- Utilise the expertise currently within the school
- Harbour a cohesive link between Foundation stage and Primary stage
- Easy access to medical staff and facilities
- Remove stress and disruption to routines during transition times
- Better opportunity for parents to access support, workshops, expertise, advice
- Allow the growth of a school community
- Children at the school form cross-class friendships and learn from each other
- Teachers get the benefit of seeing their pupils progress through school
- It would seem that it would be more cost effective to provide additional places at Woodlands

Limitations of expanding the current Woodlands site

- Woodlands School does not have the space to provide further places for children
- Not sure how many more places Woodlands could cope with
- To increase number of pupils will mean less support for special needs pupils

Consider the training needs of staff

- More training and support to mainstream schools so that they can support more pupils
- Consider the training needs of staff and the resourcing of alternative provision in other settings

More thought should be put into assessing the children that are seeking a place at the school

- To establish their special needs requirements
- Do the children have 'real' special needs or are there behavioural issues?
- Are mainstream schools unable to cope with them?
- Huge drain on the current resources that are at Woodlands School

More information needed to be able to evaluate proposals

- Not enough information to evaluate the options
- Implications of the changing SEN system
- Need to know further details in order to make a judgement

Q3. Do you agree with the proposal to establish a shared post-16 provision for students of Kingsley and Shaftesbury on a different site?

The needs of Kingsley and Shaftesbury students are very different

- The clientele and provision are very different
- The needs of the students would be different
- A joint provision will be difficult for both sets of students
- The respective students' needs are too dissimilar
- In many cases little in the way of peer relationships with the pupils
- Kingsley students have a greater element of dependency than Shaftesbury students

Points made about the proposal

- Perhaps as part of future academy group
- Who would manage the sites or would that mean a complete separate management?
- Agree if it will better support the post-16s
- The devil will be in the detail
- Could joint provision be offered taking into account best interests of all students?
- How would both sets of students' needs be met adequately?
- As long as Kingsley and Shaftesbury students are taught separately under the shared site as their needs are very different

Alternative suggestions about provision

- Please ensure that if this goes ahead autistic kids are catered for
- Need a new location for Kingsley and up the age limit to provide in borough college facilities provided by Kingsley
- Perhaps a post-18 provision could be considered

Beneficial to have sixth form at high schools

- Older students provide good role models and mentors within each school
- Shaftesbury students benefit from seeing on-site 6th form and staff get broader experience
- Kingsley post-16 need access to structures, routines, staff and environment the rest of the school has
- The rest of the school needs a visible post-16 to aspire towards

Retain and expand current provision at Kingsley

- Kingsley High School must have 3rd floor
- Better to have 3rd floor on top of Kingsley
- Kingsley staff and governors wish that the school remains one for pupils aged 11-19, but would welcome working with others to explore suitable post-16 options

Q4. Do you agree that additional resourced provision should be created in mainstream schools?

Q4a. Do you think there should be additionally resourced provision in primary schools?

Q4b. Do you think there should be additionally resourced provision in high schools?

Training and resources

- If the facilities, support and specialist staff were in place it might be an option
- Would staff be trained in the needs of pupils?
- How will staff manage pupils who may have more special needs?
- Only with proper funding/training for all staff
- How it's done and supported are critical

Points made about the proposal

- With specialist support on hand in the school
- Will need to be more rigorous support and provision across schools
- Early intervention may enable the child to successfully be able to work and live in the community
- This is a short-term solution.
- Less expensive in mainstream schools
- Units in mainstream for autistic kids
- Must be done with the right support
- There needs to be an agreed optimum number in these schools
- Important to integrate for some activities
- Should mean 1:1 staff support also provided
- Schools have to be 100% in agreement
- Not to the exclusion of out of borough placements, no
- Replicate the provision at Whitmore across to more high schools where they have at minimum the same amount of passion or more for actually supporting the children with autism
- This must be in addition to special needs places in separate schools
- Although shared resources are useful on a shared site, the mix of mainstream and special needs does not greatly benefit the children with disabilities

Points made against the proposal

- Mainstream children suffer enormously as a result
- Not suitable for our students needs
- 'inclusion' doesn't work for many kids with special needs

Alternative suggestions about provision

- We need more special schools
- Special autistic only schools – these are essential for the many autistic kids who can't cope in mainstream
- Speech and language units in mainstream schools should be explored
- Build new schools for SEN children 3-16

Q5. Do you have any further comments and suggestions to make?

The comments and suggestions cover a wide range of matters and are not easy to group into themes. Some key points not fully captured in themes identified from earlier questions are.

The importance of early intervention

- Early intervention is key
- With the right support at home and at school children who may be cognitively relatively capable, but have social or behavioural needs, have the chance of growing up and getting jobs and paying taxes
- Early intervention is essential and can prevent the need for expensive investment at later stages

The importance of talking to parents

- Please meet with parents and talk with them
- All parents, whether they have a disabled child or not wants the best for their children
- Recognition of parents' rights to assess their child and understand their needs is paramount
- Parents should be listened to - they know the kids better than any expert

Coordinated approach by agencies

- There should be greater efforts to form links between special needs schools and teachers providing special needs support in mainstream schools
- It is important that the education, health and social services work together in a coordinated way
- Cross borough coordination is important

Assessment processes

- The statementing process is very bureaucratic
- It should be possible for schools to work collaboratively so that they have a better understanding of the systems, procedures and thresholds
- The development of a mediation service would also help to prevent cases from going to tribunals
- Provision for non special school students/statementing etc should be decided by specialist SEN teachers and not admin at SENARS. Suggest this responsibility delegated to Shaftesbury