Evaluation of progress in delivering the Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms in Newham - a summary of our strengths and areas for development July 2016

(Date: July 28 2016)

Leadership commentary

- In Newham interest in SEND and inclusion is high. As a result of this many children with SEND achieve positive outcomes with positive support and intervention for families.
- More needs to be done to resolve the issues for families whose experience is less positive on the arrangements in Newham.
- The new Best for All strategy and the Inclusion Alliance create a significant opportunity for leaders in Newham to build on areas of strength and resolve areas of weakness.

The identification of children and young people with SEN and disabilities

Strengths

- The Child Development Service has developed a new triage system so that children with complex needs are more swiftly put on a health pathway so their needs can be assessed.
- New arrangements, coordinated by the area SENCOs within the SEN hub of the Children’s Centres, are identifying additional children with SEN in line with our desire to foster early intervention.
- Quality Assurance visits to schools confirm that the vast majority of schools have assessment systems underpinned by a graduated approach including a cycle of assessment and review.
- Programmes such as Early Start and the SCERTS* programme for children with communication needs and/or autism are valued by parents and increasing their understanding of need and confidence to talk to and work with professionals about meeting those needs.

*Social, Communication, Emotional Regulation and Transactional Support

- The arrangements for the identification of children who are deaf are comprehensive and supports timely intervention from services.

Areas for Development

- The recent creation of the 0-25 SEND Service is a critical step for Newham in breaking down the barriers between services so that more families report positively on the support they receive. As this stage it is too early to say whether this service is yet achieving intended outcomes. Leaders and staff recognise there is much to do but are ready for the challenge.
- Newham has noted that support with early identification (and any assessment
that comes from identification) now needs to be a priority area of work as
- There are additional routes by which children and young people with SEND are coming to the attention of services
- There are waiting lists in some specialist services for assessment;
- The routes to accessing assessment are in need of review.
This issue will be addressed as a key theme within the Best for All strategy.

- The commissioning arrangements for early health checks and health screening programmes do not give sufficient feedback on children with SEN. The pilot project as part of the integrated review of health services should be concluded so that next steps can be determined.

- Given that more children with SEN will be attending private, voluntary and independent nurseries and have less resource and experience than schools in meeting the needs of children with SEN, the area SENCOs should continue to give extra support to these setting so that they improve their use of routine assessment.

- The Child Development Service should ensure that it notifies the local authority of children who have or may have SEN need through a central point of contact within the local authority so that information can then be shared with relevant services and partners.

- Given the changed pattern of need within the census work should be undertaken to check that inconsistencies are minimised. The information from the census can better be used to support planning.

- Whilst social care thresholds for disabled children to access social care support are clearer, the long term arrangements on who will carry out assessments need to be finalised.

- Greater focus is needed on how many children and young people are appearing on the Disabled Children’s register – the current number is low and insufficient to influence commissioning.

- Recommissioning of the Healthy Child programme needs to be completed so that better information about children with SEND is gathered.

- Recommissioning of the school nursing service and child health services needs to be completed so the arrangements for children with SEND, particularly in mainstream settings, are more consistently understood and supported.

- Actions in response to the CQC inspection of the Child Development Service in June 2016 should be added to this self-evaluation once the inspection report has been published.

- Departments and services in Newham each hold data on the different cohorts of children and young people with SEND but leaders cannot easily cross reference this information. Arrangements to ensure full and accurate data collection need to be improved. Arrangements to track children with SEND in specific circumstances across agencies need to be improved so that parents can be assured that planning for these children is integrated and that outcomes are as good as they can be.
• The local area needs to build on the new assessment processes within the Child Development Service so that education (including SEN support services, Children Centres and SEN hubs) and social care partners can be more engaged in the process of multidisciplinary assessment.

• The new contract for Child Health Services needs to be in place so that performance on access to health assessments can be clearly monitored.

• Processes for considering requests for statutory assessment are now made with greater involvement of education, health and care services. This supports the ethos of the Children and Families Act 2014. Criteria for statutory assessment should now be revisited with particular focus on those who may need assessment but may not have been considered for it in the past e.g. those known to Youth Offending Services.

Assessing and meeting need

Strengths

• Co-production with parents, where services and parents work together to review and plan provision, is an area where there has been significant progress in Newham. It is now central to our culture and this work has significant impact on strategic thinking and planning.

• Newham has high numbers of parents of children with SEND seeking school places in inclusive settings.

• Parents, carers and children are more involved in reviews - person centred approaches are being used by schools and settings for children with and without EHCs. This approach is creating more meaningful plans with clearer outcomes for more children.

• Early years services and schools use good tools to assess need so that parents can understand where children are making progress.

• Schools and services are working well to establish the “Assess, Plan, Do, Review” model of working.

• Leaders in most schools have good systems in place:
  - for the routine assessment when considering educational attainment and progress
  - to look at progress and attainment data
  - to foster a graduated response to assessment.

• Colleges are welcoming the idea of increasing their involvement to provide more local provision.

• SENCOs work well together. Arrangements such as peer moderation usefully support SENCOs to share practice and to strengthen their own knowledge.
• By combining local authority funding with new funding from schools there has been an increase in resourcing for the Educational Psychology Service which is enabling more children and young people to access better and earlier assessment.

• Early years support teams work well with parents and carers and value the role of parents as first educators. The creation of the area SENCO posts linked to the Children’s Centres and an SEN hub is creating new opportunities to intervene early with more young children who have SEND.

• SEN support services have significant levels of expertise and can ably support schools through light touch or more intensive and specialist interventions.

• Teaching schools and special schools ably offer schools expertise in assessing and meeting need.

• The arrangements for diagnosing autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) are identifying more children earlier. Having a diagnosis is not used as a pre-condition to high needs funding being agreed for a child. This means that schools can funding to support interventions can be more responsive to meeting need.

• The local authority and schools have been proactive in putting interim arrangements in place whilst some longer term joint commissioning arrangements are being addressed. For example, high needs funding has extended access to therapies within resourced and special school settings and this has been welcomed by schools.

• The local authority continues to invest in SEN to raise the quality of SEN provision in schools. For example, a new SEN adviser with externally commissioned support from school leaders is now looking at the quality of SEN provision in schools with resourced provision. It is too early to fully assess the impact of this work but the aim is to align quality assurance work on SEN more closely with the school improvement agenda.

• Leaders have created a range of systems so that families do not feel they must secure an EHC plan as the only way to get support they need. This has led to innovative practice in schools to meet diverse needs.

Areas for Development

• Co-production with young people that influences strategic planning, is underdeveloped in Newham.

• Parent representatives report that the arrangements for information, guidance and support do not give enough parents the support they need. Not enough of these parents are telling us or each other that they have an adequate sense of choice or being in control. We need to do more so that all parents know where to go, or how they will be helped, if they have concerns or worries.

• Newham is rightly realigning commissioning services that affect children with SEND by considering access at universal, targeted and specialist levels. The significance for children with SEND is that i) high numbers of children and young
people in Newham attend mainstream settings and ii) specialist settings not always having had access to services that their children needed.

- The rescheduling and complications in recommissioning some services jointly have led some parents, carers and some settings to query when new arrangements will be in place. Partners in Newham are showing ever increasing commitment to progressing these programmes and completion of the programmes are critical to effective delivery of SEND reforms in Newham.

- The recommissioning of CAMHS is an example where agreements to pool budgets, enhanced by effective working relationships, sets Newham on the right road so that resources have positive impact on more children and young people.

- Whilst the Local Offer website meets the statutory requirements, further work needs to be done so that:
  - parents can find information more easily;
  - more parents and professionals can use it as a “one stop shop” for information about the arrangements in Newham.

- The local authority needs to ensure that performance on the completion of EHCs rises, that the conversion plan for LDAs is complete and more information is given to parents on when remaining statements will be converted.

- Newham has recently confirmed that it will undertake the POET survey which looks at parental satisfaction with the EHC process. This work and other work to systematically gauge parental satisfaction needs to be put in place. Confirmation should be sought that social care health partners are making full contributions to EHC assessments.

- The Educational Psychology Service needs to review next steps given that:
  - the new traded element has been established
  - the service is extending its role to work with new group of children and young people.

- The Early Help pilot for disabled children has been positive but is limited in its reach. Work in this area needs further development so statutory and non-statutory arrangements are understood by parents and gain their support.

- The Early Help record is showing itself as a valuable tool in understanding needs and planning provision. The record needs to be more consistently used so that multi agency plans have most impact.

- Support for children and young people with challenging behaviour is an area for development within Newham. The authority needs to confirm that clear arrangements are in place on a 0-25 basis.

- The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is in the process of putting in place a GP lead for SEND and longer term arrangements should be confirmed.

- Useful frameworks have been developed to promote a focus on outcomes in reviews but this work can be extended. Consistent record keeping across education, health and social care should be reviewed as part of this work.
Outcomes

Strengths

- The vast majority of schools and colleges in Newham have secured positive comments on SEN provision as a result of inspection.
- The headline figures on the academic performance of children and young people with SEND are above national in most areas.
- The headline figures on the absence rates and fixed term exclusions for pupils at SEN support are above national.
- The local authority and schools have reduced permanent exclusions including those for children and young people with SEN.
- The local authority has developed its system of personal budgets for young people 14+ and can now work to put similar arrangements in place across the full age range.

Areas for Development

- We cannot yet say that the impact of services for care, education and health in improving the lives of each and every child and young person with SEND and their family is as high as it should be.
- Whilst headline figures on performance are above national in most areas, specific discussion on outcomes for young people with SEND as shown in the national dataset need to be given more prominence, specifically:
  - outcomes for children with SEND in the early years
  - performance of children with EHCs at the end of KS2
  - performance of young people with SEN at the end of KS4
  - absence rates for children with EHCs – authorised and unauthorised
  - fixed term exclusions for children and young people with statements / EHCs
  - outcomes at 19 and level 2 qualifications
  - the percentage of adults with learning disabilities in residential and nursing care homes
  - the percentage of adults with learning disabilities in settled accommodation and employment
  - the percentage of adults with learning difficulties in employment
- We need to do more to systematically know if children and young people are satisfied that their needs are being met and whether they feel their aspirations are being met. Steps to address this can include a greater focus on analysis of children’s views as reported in annual reviews.
- New and additional provision and pathways are needed for young people with SEND 16-25 to support them in adulthood including education, employment and training. Newham recognises that there is much work to do and has confirmed that ideas will be developed with providers, parents, carers and young people as part of the Best for All strategy.