

# SEND Futures: consultation on Kingston's SEND transformation plan

## Consultation on Kingston's SEND Transformation Plan: 2019/20 to 2021/22

Welcome to our survey on Kingston's three year Transformation Plan for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services.

The Council is facing huge financial pressures, and in these times it's more important than ever that your voices are heard. We would be grateful for your help in shaping the future of SEND services in Kingston.

We are asking you for your views on a number of specific proposals contained within the plan, the full version of which can be found [here](#).

School and SEND funding is a very complex area governed by regulations, guidance and case law. For this reason the survey is lengthy. We have aimed to provide enough information, in one place, to enable participants to make informed judgements or comments.

If you would like a paper copy of the survey, an accessible version, or would like some help completing it, please contact [julia.hunt@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:julia.hunt@achievingforchildren.org.uk).

We will also be holding some drop-in events for parents and carers to speak to representatives of the Council and Achieving for Children.

- 10 January (7.30pm to 9.00pm) at the Mayo Centre, Kingston United Reformed Church, Eden Street, Kingston, KT1 1HZ
- 17 January (10.30am to 12 noon) King Charles Centre, Hollyfield Road, Surbiton, KT5 9AL
- 18 January (2.00pm to 3.30 pm) King Charles Centre, Hollyfield Road, Surbiton, KT5 9AL

If you would like to attend one of these events, please go to [www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk)

We will also be working with schools, colleges and other education providers inside and outside of the borough to gather the views of children and young people.

Your views from the consultation will be fed into Kingston Council's budget setting process. Decisions on the budget for education services will be made at Full Council on 26 February 2019, but will also be discussed at the meetings below. These are council meetings to which the public are invited: details can be found [Council website](#).



The consultation closes at midnight on 20 January 2019.

## About you

First, we would be grateful if you could provide some details about you. These will help us to analyse the results of the survey more meaningfully.

### Data privacy

The information collected about you in this survey is collected in compliance with data protection legislation. The information is held securely by Achieving for Children for the specific purpose of this survey and will not be shared with other agencies or organisations without seeking your explicit consent. For more detail, please read our full privacy policy here: [www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/privacy-notice/](http://www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/privacy-notice/)

Your name (optional):

Do you live in the borough of Kingston or have a child who attends school, college or other educational setting in Kingston?

Yes

No

Are you completing the survey as a: (Click as many as apply)

- Parent/carer of a child or young person with SEND
- Parent/carer of a child or young person without SEND
- Young person with SEND
- Young person without SEND
- Representative of a voluntary and community organisation
- Representative of a school
- Other (please specify):

What is the age of your child with SEND?

- 0-4
- 5-10
- 11-16
- 17-25

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation (e.g. school, voluntary/community organisation, health provider) please enter the name of the organisation below:

## How this survey is laid out

Through this consultation we are seeking your views on the three year [SEND Transformation Plan](#) for Kingston, **and specifically the proposals for savings to be made during the 2019/20 financial year.**

The Transformation Plan is likely to evolve over time. If new savings proposals are put forward for the following two financial years (2020/21, and 2021/22), we will consult separately.

The survey is divided into two main sections:

## 1. Context:

- How education and SEND services are funded
- Local context around SEND funding and services
- The three year Transformation Plan

## 2. Specific proposals:

- Pay for a higher proportion of high needs services from the Early Years block
- Make efficiencies of up to £300,000 per year from central support services, so as to release funding for high needs services
- Reduce spending on placements outside of Kingston
- Funding alternative education from within schools' budgets
- Improving early intervention so that children with SEND are supported to remain in local mainstream schools, and we're able to meet the needs of more children without the need for an EHCP
- Improving the annual review process of EHCPs so that the services we provide are more timely, better quality and more cost-effective

Kingston Council and Achieving for Children are consulting separately about planned changes to SEND transport (which are described in detail in the Transformation Plan) and these are not therefore included in this survey and consultation.

# Section 1: Context

## How are SEND services funded?

The Council receives funding from central government to meet its responsibilities for education. This is known as the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). It is a ring-fenced grant which can only be used to fund the following four areas:

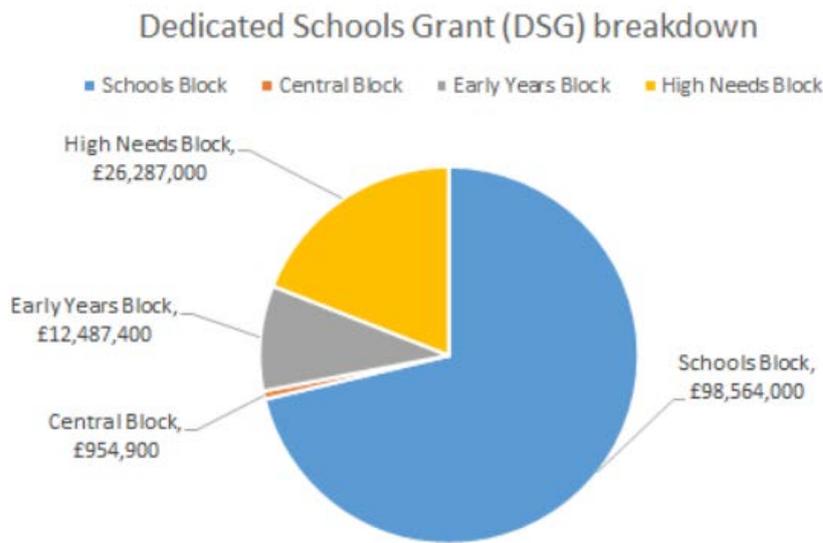
**Schools Block** - Funds the individual school budgets of maintained schools, academies and free schools.

**High Needs Block** - Funds education provision for pupils with high needs including those with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in special schools and specialist resource provision. For pupils with EHCPs attending mainstream schools not as part of a specialist resource provision, the money the school receives from the Schools Block pays for support specified within an EHCP up to the value of £6,000 per year, and the High Needs Block funds any support specified above this £6,000 per year threshold. The High Needs Block also funds support for pupils who need additional support with their education, for example those unable to attend school for medical reasons, or those who have been excluded from school.

**Early Years Block** - Funds nursery education for children aged zero to five and the costs of free nursery places for two, three and four year olds.

**Central School Services Block** - Funds the central services for all maintained schools and academies that local authorities have a statutory duty to provide, e.g. the school admissions services, school place planning, statutory school improvement services including support for school Governors, and extra support for children in care.

**In 2018/19 the grant was split as follows:**



Councils across the country are facing significant financial challenges as a result of ongoing budget reductions, and the increasing and more complex needs of some of our most vulnerable residents. Councils are not alone in this situation; it is felt right across the public sector by colleagues in schools, health services, policing and the voluntary sector.

The financial challenge is particularly acute in the services councils provide for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, councils have a legal duty to provide suitable education provision for all their residents who are aged between 0 and 25 years and are in receipt of an EHCP.

For many councils across the country, the cost of meeting this duty exceeds the High Needs Block allocation received from central government. In 2017/8, 31 out of the 32 London local authorities spent more on high needs services than they received from central government in their High Needs Block allocation. Where this is the case, councils have had to cover the additional costs either from their reserves, or from their 'general fund' which is used to fund other council services such as waste collection, libraries, adult social care.

## Local context in Kingston

It is estimated that 15% of Kingston's 0-25 years population, or approximately 8,500 children, young people and young adults, has a special educational need of some kind.

The vast majority of these individuals have their educational needs met without the need for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), but about 13% of these, or 2% of the total 0-25 years population, require additional support specified within an EHCP for this to be the case. Because those with an EHCP have the most severe needs, they require the largest amount of additional support for their needs to be met, and explains why their education provision costs significantly more than those without an EHCP.

The funding situation for high needs education is so severe in Kingston that in March this year, the Government provided an advance of £3 million of the following year's DSG.

Despite this additional funding, demand for services continues to rise. This year, we estimate that we will overspend our grant allocation by more than £2 million, taking into account the £3 million advance received from Government.

By the end of the year, we expect our cumulative deficit over the last four years to reach £13 million, and we know that it is likely that the need for these services will continue to grow as it has done over the last four years. If the need for EHCPs and other SEND provision continues to rise at its current rate, and spending on high needs provision continues at its current level, by 2022, the accumulated overspend would reach £46 million.



If the Council and its partners take no action, this deficit will be greater than could be met from the Council's general fund and reserves, which means that the Council wouldn't be able to set a balanced budget.

We have looked at a number of options within the General fund such as Council Tax, reserves and other income sources.

### **Council Tax**

This funds nearly 80% of the Council's net revenue budget with the remainder coming from a small number of specific grants and business rates. Business rates are collected locally and are a significant source of income but they are set nationally so the Council has virtually no control over them. And the Council no longer receives any general grant funding (Revenue Support Grant).

Raising Council Tax would not resolve the issues presented in the Transformation plan as we are limited to a maximum rise of 2.99% (without the requirement of a local referendum). This raises only £2.75 million.

### **Reserves**

The Council has relatively low levels of reserves. Reserves have to cover all unforeseen circumstances and can be used to mitigate one off pressures. At 31 March 2018, earmarked reserves (net of DSG deficit) were £17.5 million and the General Fund balance was £11.6 million. Many of the earmarked reserves have restrictions on how they can be spent and cannot be used to fund education. It is not sustainable to use reserves to fund ongoing expenditure as they will eventually run out causing serious issues of financial sustainability for the Council.

### **Other income sources**

If education spending is supplemented with local sources of income, funding of other council core services would be reduced such as Adult and Children's Social Care, libraries, waste collection and highways maintenance. All of these services are already looking for ways to generate income, make efficiencies and transform to deliver services for less - if the funds available for non-Education services were further reduced, it is likely this could result in service reductions.

### **The three year Transformation Plan**

As a condition of the £3 million advance, the government asked the Council to produce a three year plan which sets out how we intend to bring our spending on education for children and young people with SEND into line with the funding we receive from government. Given the scale of the financial deficit (and the likelihood of this continuing to rise) the Council and AfC have no option but to act now.

We are now at the stage where we have produced a draft of a three year **SEND Transformation Plan** (on [www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk)) This plan offers no quick fixes and recognises that transforming the system will take time, and a commitment from all stakeholders to work together to find the best solutions. Whilst it is a plan to reduce expenditure, it is also an opportunity to create a more sustainable, resilient system and to

work with all our partners to develop our provision.

The proposals in the plan aim to reduce expenditure on services paid for from the High Needs Block by approximately 8% from financial year 2018/9 to 2019/20, with further reductions in following years. For 2019/20, the proposals would aim to reduce expenditure by approximately 15% compared to the expenditure we would expect if these changes were not made.

This consultation asks for your views on five main proposals. We are not consulting on the other savings proposals contained in the Transformation Plan, as it is not anticipated that they will impact service users. However, we have listed all of the savings contained in the Plan as an appendix, which can be found on [www.afcinfo.org.uk](http://www.afcinfo.org.uk) (search: Transformation Plan)..

## Section 2: Specific proposals

### 1. Pay for a higher proportion of high needs services from the Early Years block

#### Current situation

The Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant currently pays for the following education services for 0 to 5 year olds:

- Subsidised nursery care (30 hours) through a standard hourly rate of subsidised nursery care provided by each early years setting. This hourly rate is set by the Council each year.
- Additional funding for nurseries who support children from relatively deprived areas.
- An early years advisory service which works across Kingston to ensure there are enough nursery places for families, and offer advice to nurseries to help them to improve the care they provide.
- Home-based teaching programme for pre-school children with special educational needs.
- Additional support to early years settings who support children with SEND to enable children to be included in mainstream early years settings.

In previous years, £486,000 additional SEND support for early years settings was also funded from the High Needs Block. This included:

- Payments to nurseries which provides dedicated support for children with SEND.
- Early intervention social communication intensive support packages.

## What we're proposing

This proposal looks at whether all services for 0 to 5 year olds could be funded from the Early Years Block rather than High Needs Block. The Council and Achieving for Children believe strongly that supporting children at a young age will help to ensure that as many as possible can attend mainstream schools in the future. This option looks to ensure that the borough can continue with the same number of specialist places at pre school age and that there is effective intensive support at this early stage of education.

## Potential impact

In practice, this will mean that there is less money for universal early years services.

The exact amount will depend on how much money Government provide for early years in 2019/20, which they are due to announce in mid- December. We expect that the additional high needs spend will be approximately 2% of the overall Early Years Block funding.

Essentially the standard rate that is paid to nursery providers for subsidised nursery care would need to remain the same as in 2018/19, in order that we can re-prioritise funding towards supporting young children with SEND. To ensure the Council can do this we may need to ask for Secretary of State approval.

It is difficult to predict what the impact of this change will be, as once the funding is provided to early years settings, the Council or AfC are unable to dictate how that funding is spent. It is possible that some early years settings may opt to increase charges to parents for non subsidised nursery care (where more than 30 hours is purchased), others may opt not to provide subsidised nursery care and others may be able to absorb the shortfall within their existing budgets without an impact on how much they charge families for their nursery provision.

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to re-allocate an additional 2% of early years grant funding for high needs services for children aged under 5?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any other comments?

## **2. Make efficiencies of up to £300,000 per year from central support services, so as to release funding for high needs services**

### **Current situation**

The following central support services are currently accessed by schools and/or children, young people and their families:

- The Special Educational Needs Team (caseworkers and management)
- Speech and language therapy services
- Educational psychology including Portage service
- Sensory impairment support
- Outreach / support for groups of children and young people who are vulnerable / underperforming academically.
- Virtual School (coordinates educational support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers who come into care in Kingston, whether they attend schools in or out of the borough).
- Support for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion from school or who have been permanently excluded or who are unable to attend school for health reasons.
- 14-19 year old support - preventing young people falling into outcomes of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- School Performance Alliance Richmond and Kingston SPA[RK] - support schools in improving provision, raising standards and narrowing attainment gaps.
- School admissions (coordination of pupil admissions process for maintained schools in compliance with the school admissions code)
- School place planning (are responsible for planning and commissioning sufficient supply of school places in the borough)
- Inclusion Grant (this pays for additional support for children with disabilities to enable pupils to be included in school activities particularly in terms of sports activities)
- Reintegration Support - educational support for pupils unable to attend school for health issues etc.

### **What we're proposing**

We are proposing to find efficiencies within the overall 'central services' part of the Dedicated Schools Grant of between 5-10%.

This would deliver savings of:

- 2019-20: £250,000
- 2020-21: £300,000
- 2021-22: £300,000

### **Potential impact**

At this stage, we are not proposing how the overall efficiencies target of 5-10% would be broken down by each service. This makes it difficult to evaluate what the specific impact would be from delivering these efficiencies.

However, the vast majority of these budgets are spent on staff, and therefore reducing the budget by 5-10% is likely to result in fewer staff to deliver some of these services.

Where we believe any of the efficiencies will have a material impact on service users, we will carry out a separate consultation with those likely to be affected.

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to make savings of between 5-10% from the overall budget for central services, to free up funds for high needs services?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any other suggestions of how we could free up more funds for high needs services?

Do you have any other comments?

### **3. Reduce spending on placements outside of Kingston**

#### **Current situation**

Approximately 50% of Kingston's pupils and students with an EHCP currently require a specialist placement, as opposed to inclusion within a mainstream school cohort, for their needs to be met.

#### **These specialist placements are located in:**

- specialist provision located at mainstream schools
- maintained, academy, independent or non maintained special school
- specialist college provision for those between 16 and 25 years.

Kingston has a significantly higher proportion of pupils and students with EHCPs attending independent and non maintained special schools than average, and this has been the case since at least 2010. Data from the January 2018 school census shows that across all local authorities in England the average proportion of EHCPs in independent and non maintained special schools is 4.9%, the average across Outer London authorities is 6.5% and in Kingston it is 14.2%.

These 150+ placements are at more than 50 different schools, the vast majority of which are located outside the borough, and many of which are more than an hour drive from Kingston. This high number of different schools presents a logistical challenge when quality assuring placements and ensuring value for money as to do so requires regular visits to the school.

Placements at independent and non-maintained special schools generally cost more than placements at local maintained and academy special schools, for several reasons:

- If transport needs to be provided to and from the school, because the distances are longer, the costs are higher.
- If the journey is too long to be endured twice per day, the placement might be agreed as a residential placement. This incurs the additional costs of residential provision.
- Operating costs of academy and maintained special schools are lower partly because their premises are usually owned by the local council, and they therefore don't need to include a charge for the value of their site and buildings in the costs they charge.
- Private or independent providers are usually profit-making and therefore their costs will include a profit margin.

**Example 1:**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>School type</b>       | <b>Academy special school within borough</b>  |
| <b>Needs</b>             | Autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties   |
| <b>Education setting</b> | Class of eight, with a child to staff ratio of 4:1 (one teacher and one teaching assistant) plus speech & language and occupational therapy |
| <b>Typical costs</b>     | £13,500 per year plus £3,500 per year transport to school (35 minute journey each way daily)  |

**Example 2:**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>School type</b>       | <b>Maintained special school outside borough</b>   |
| <b>Needs</b>             | Autistic spectrum disorder and moderate learning difficulties  |
| <b>Education setting</b> | Class of eight, with a child to staff ratio 4:1 (one teacher and one teaching assistant) plus speech & language and occupational therapy |
| <b>Typical costs</b>     | £13,500 per year plus £9,000 per year transport to school (45 minute journey each way daily)   |

**Example 3:**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>School type</b>       | <b>Independent special school</b>  |
| <b>Needs</b>             | Autistic spectrum disorder and associated learning difficulties  |
| <b>Education setting</b> | Class of six, with a child to staff ratio of 2:1 (one teacher and two teaching assistants) plus speech & language therapy and occupational therapy |
| <b>Typical costs</b>     | £60,000 per year plus £7,500 per year transport (50 minute journey each way daily)   |

**Example 4:**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <b>School type</b>       | <b>38 week independent residential special school</b>   |
| <b>Needs</b>             | Autistic spectrum disorder and associated learning difficulties   |
| <b>Education setting</b> | Small classes with a high staff to child ratio offering an integrated approach of education, on-site therapies and care |
| <b>Typical costs</b>     | £85,000 per year plus £9,000 per year transport (90 minute journey twice weekly)  |

## **What we're proposing**

### ***Create more local school places for children with SEND, to reduce the need for more expensive out-of-borough places***

Current proposals for the number of new local specialist places opening in Kingston are for an additional 38 places to be added in September 2019 on top of the 19 that opened in September 2018. By doing this, the needs of more children and young people are met in their local communities, and there is less reliance on more expensive places in independent and non maintained special schools outside of Kingston.

We have made a conservative estimate that each local specialist school place delivers an average saving of £7,000p/a against an alternative place in an independent special school.

There are more than 300 young people and young adults aged over 16 years with an EHCP. By increasing the proportion of this age group studying at local colleges or undertaking a supported apprenticeship, it is estimated that the average cost of an EHCP for this cohort could be reduced by 6%, a reduction of £775 on the current average cost of £12,400.

### ***Reduce the amount we spend on out-of-borough placements and other contracts, through better commissioning and contract management***

#### **The types of contracts which we currently fund from the High Needs Block include:**

- independent and non maintained special school placements
- academy special schools placements
- specialist provision in mainstream schools
- therapy contracts with healthcare providers.

Some of these contracts can cater for more than 100 children and young people and have an annual value of over £1 million.

We have already made some savings this year, without impacting on the quality of support for young people. We have achieved this through tighter contract management, and by negotiating discounts where we are purchasing more than a certain volume of services.

We believe further savings will be achievable through expanding on existing joint purchasing with other local authorities in South and South West London including through the South London SEN Commissioning Consortium.

There has already been investment in a specialist commissioning team within AfC, and if necessary this could be expanded and funded through the savings achieved (in this case those proposed savings are net of investment). This team will work very closely with staff coordinating the annual review process to not only forensically match the support specified in an EHCP with what is being paid for, but also to implement new approaches to contracts such as outcomes based commissioning.

We have estimated that further savings, equivalent to approximately 6% of our current expenditure on out-of-borough placements or schools, are achievable in 2019-20.

### **Potential impact**

We believe that the overall impact of delivering this proposal will be positive for children, young people and their families both with and without high needs.

By creating more local specialist places, there will be more opportunities for children and young people with high needs to be educated within their local communities rather than having to travel significant distances to school. In addition to the reduction in travel times and increase in time spent learning or with their families, this will increase the sense that their schooling is provided on an equal basis to their peers without additional needs, instead of the current situation that can reinforce a sense of difference.

By delivering a lower cost financial model, the whole system has a greater chance of becoming more financially viable. In addition, it is expected that by developing a more inclusive society, children and young people without additional needs will benefit from learning in a more diverse community.

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to reduce spending on out-of-borough placements?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any other comments?

## 4. Funding alternative education from within schools' budgets

### Current situation

'Alternative education' is education provided for students who are unable to access mainstream school for reasons **other** than having a special educational need, for example following permanent exclusion, or for medical reasons.

Kingston has historically allocated significantly more funding from the high needs block to alternative provision than other local authorities, where the expectation is that the mainstream schools whose students are accessing the provision pay a greater proportion of the costs. This is particularly the case where students are accessing the alternative provision for reasons of, for example, risk of permanent exclusion or persistent absence.

In Kingston's case Malden Oaks Pupil Referral Unit and [Anstee Bridge](#) are the main alternative education providers. The exception to this is that after a student has been permanently excluded it is the case that in the absence of a new mainstream school placement being available it is common practice that the local authority would pay for the place in an alternative provision or pupil referral unit (PRU) from the High Needs Block, in Kingston's case at Malden Oaks.

Importantly, the £240,000 has already been achieved through restructuring and efficiencies delivered in 2018/19, and these savings will be carried forward to future years. The additional saving proposed is therefore only £60,000.

### What we are proposing

We are proposing that in the future, an increased proportion of the total costs of alternative education should be met by schools. We believe this would incentivise schools to keep pupils in mainstream education as much as possible and would help to make our alternative education support more targeted and cost-efficient.

The proposal is to require mainstream schools to contribute an additional £60,000 per year towards the cost of delivering alternative education in Kingston.

### Impact

Considering funding of secondary schools in Kingston accessing Malden Oaks and Anstee Bridge is in excess of £10 million, it is not anticipated that £60,000 of additional expense shared amongst them in proportion to how they access the provisions would have a material impact on their overall school finances

This would free up £60,000 to be spent on high needs that would otherwise be being spent on alternative provision.

To what extent do you agree/disagree with the proposal to require schools to pay for the costs of alternative education, rather than funding the costs out of the high-needs budget?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any other comments?

## **5. Improving early intervention so that children with SEND are supported to remain in local mainstream schools, and we're able to meet the needs of more children without the need for an EHCP**

### **Current situation**

Children and young people are issued with an EHCP when their needs cannot otherwise be met from the support available in a school or education setting.

We recently set up an Early Intervention Panel, which comprises experts from Achieving for Children, local schools and the health service. The panel aims to find ways to meet children's needs earlier in a local school, and by doing so reduces the number of new EHCPs needed. This might include, for example, providing more training for local teachers in mainstream local schools, or supporting a student who is at risk of exclusion.

### **What we are proposing**

The proposal to improve early intervention is based on the principle that the earlier an additional need can be identified, and the quicker the additional need can be addressed with evidence based support and interventions, the less likely it is that the need will escalate, and the more likely it is that the need can be met without the need for an EHCP.

The additional support available through the Early Intervention approach would be Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Clinical Psychology, Emotional Health Support, and Education Welfare and Social Work expertise. There would also be

access to a training budget to support the upskilling of the wider workforce and parent body. This additional support has been made available through both the restructuring and reallocation of existing resources and additional short term transformation funding from the Council.

We are forecasting that more targeted support provided at an earlier stage would help to reduce the need for 40 new EHCPs in 2019-20. This would save an additional £355,000 from the High Needs Block in 2019-20. As the new early intervention approach beds in, we expect to save an additional approximately £500,000 in 2020-21 and £500,000 in 2021-22.

Without the changes proposed in the transformation plan it is forecast that the number of EHCPs in Kingston will increase by approximately 95 in financial year 2019/20 compared to 2018/9. The average cost to the High Needs Block of an EHCP is approximately £25,000 per year, so to reduce forecast expenditure by £355,000 in 2019/20 would require a reduction in the number of EHCPs needed of 14. However early intervention is more likely to prevent EHCPs of below average cost, so it is assumed here that a reduction in EHCPs of 40 is required to generate the same saving, an average saving to the HNB per EHCP of £9,000.

### **Potential impact**

It is expected that this new process will benefit not just those children and young people who have their needs addressed earlier than would otherwise be the case, but also a much wider group of students. Given that about 15% of children and young people have a special educational need of some kind, many of these would benefit from an upskilling of the wider workforce. By helping deliver a more sustainable local education system, and reducing the likelihood of money being taken away from mainstream schools to fund high needs services, in the long-term the whole school population would benefit.

This proposal wouldn't prevent or delay parents from applying for an EHCP assessment. However, as it takes up to 20 weeks to issue an EHCP, this process would provide more immediate support to the child or young person and may reduce the need for an EHCP to then be issued.

Importantly whilst initially early intervention might be largely focused on specialist staff visiting the education setting to deliver support and interventions for a particular child or young person, because they will seek to simultaneously train other staff (and parents) in that setting, over time the need for these specialist staff will reduce, and the wider staff (and parent) pool will be able to meet the needs of these children and young people, and in addition those children and young people who may present with similar needs in the future. There is considerable evidence from existing practice in Kingston with early years settings that this is an effective approach, and the intention here is to expand the model to all ages up to 25 years.

Do you have any suggestions of how we could strengthen our early intervention services?

Do you have any other comments on this proposal?

## **6. Improving the annual review process of EHCPs so that the services we provide are more timely, better quality and more cost-effective**

### **Current situation**

It is a legal requirement for every Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to be reviewed each year.

The purpose of reviewing each plan is to check whether it still meets the needs of the child or young person, and where possible is focused on encouraging each child and young person to progress towards their particular specified outcomes.

The recent SEND Local Area inspection found that the current process for annual reviews in Kingston needs to be improved. We are focusing on our annual review processes and practice, so that the annual review is an effective tool in monitoring and evaluating the impact of a plan on a child's progress and achievements.

### **What we're proposing**

We believe that a more robust annual review process would help to ensure each plan is based on up-to-date evidence, and is more aligned to the changing needs of children and young people.

AfC has recently recruited an EHCP Annual Review Officer for Kingston, which has increased capacity to carry out effective reviews. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness and timeliness of annual reviews, and may invest in additional posts in the future.

We are forecasting that improvements to the annual review process would reduce High Needs expenditure by £1.4 million in 2019/20.

### **Potential impact**

As a result of this proposal, it is likely that children and young people with EHCPs are more likely to experience change in their provision than is currently the case, where this is appropriate to their needs.

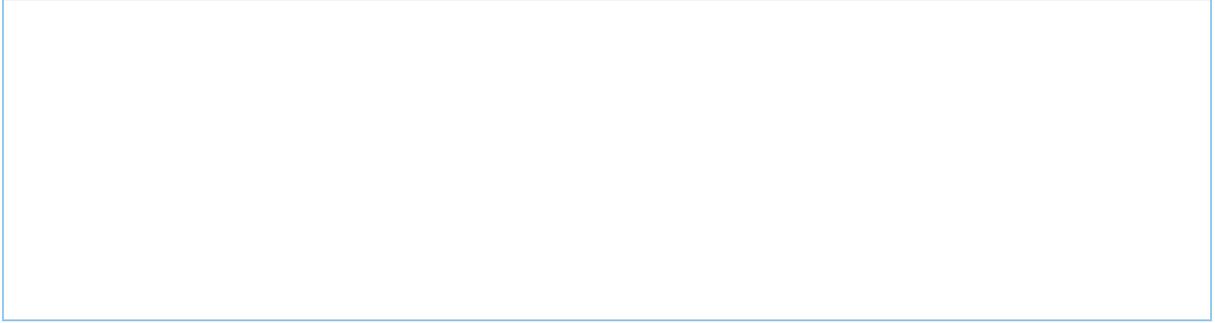
In some cases, an annual review could lead to a reduction in support where the evidence shows that the child or young person no longer needs the existing level of support, or that it would benefit them to have the support provided in a different way. In other cases, this could lead to an increase in support for a child or young person, where existing support is not considered to be sufficient or effective.

Nothing proposed would change the statutory duty the local authority has to consider within the EHCP how the child or young person can be best supported to facilitate their development and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes. The EHCP would continue to set out the additional support the child or young person needs and the school or other institution they are to attend.

Do you have any suggestions on how we could improve how we carry out an annual review of a child's EHCP?

Do you have any other comments?

Do you have any final comments you would like to make?

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