

# Area SEND inspection of Haringey Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 29 January 2024 to 2 February 2024

Dates of previous inspection: 5 July 2021 to 9 July 2021

## Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately five years.

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

## Information about the local area partnership

The London Borough of Haringey local authority and the North Central London Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Haringey.

The commissioning of health services changed across England in 2022. On 1 July, the North Central London ICB became responsible for the commissioning of health services in Haringey.

Within Haringey, there are approximately 7,025 children and young people with SEND. Of these, 2,831 have an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

The London Borough of Haringey commissions an alternative provision service called the Haringey Learning Partnership (HLP). This offers an educational setting for children or young people who have, for example, been unable to attend a school due to their social, emotional or medical needs, and for those who have been or may be at risk of being permanently excluded.

## **What is it like to be a child or young person with SEND in this area?**

Children and young people with SEND and their families benefit from a culture of listening, flexibility and cooperation from professionals who support their best interests. The outcomes and experiences of the most vulnerable are central to planning and decision-making in Haringey.

Most children's and young people's needs are identified quickly. Professionals across the partnership work creatively to address the rising numbers of children and young people with SEND. Innovative approaches to reducing waiting times for assessments and training school and nursery staff to identify and support needs have been introduced and are making a difference.

The voice of the child or young person rings very clearly through EHC plans. Their journey and aspirations are captured and communicated as a priority.

Children and young people arriving in the country with clear and obvious SEND are quickly placed in specialist settings where their needs can be met, irrespective of whether their assessments or plans are finalised.

Children and young people with SEND do well at school, their academic outcomes and attendance figures are positive. Schools are strong partners in supporting those with SEND. They know them well and work with other knowledgeable services to provide bespoke, culturally aware support that meets their needs.

Most children and young people move between phases and across settings smoothly. This is because professionals talk to each other and listen to parents, carers, children and young people. Careful consideration ensures that they are in the setting or provider that will help them most.

Children, young people and their families are represented at a strategic level, so their voices and opinions are heard and acted on. The parent carer forum, Haringey SEND Power, has grown significantly since its formation three years ago. 'Elevated Youth', a forum for young people with SEND, is visible and valued. They speak at panels and board meetings where their experiences and insights influence service decisions.

Through HLP, children and young people who are identified as needing additional support with their social, emotional and mental health are supported to know their own strengths and areas to develop. In-house support from family workers, speech and language therapists, and mental health specialists means that their needs are quickly identified and met.

Children and young people in Haringey benefit from a broad and developing range of out-of-school activities. Careful thought has been given to ensuring that children who might not normally be able to enjoy some of these opportunities are included and can enjoy sport or cultural activities. The music service is a particular strength in providing

high-quality opportunities for children with SEND to enjoy music and for some to perform in iconic public settings.

## What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Leaders in Haringey are ambitious and focused on improving the lives of children and young people with SEND. At an executive level, there is a deep understanding of how factors such as housing exacerbate the vulnerabilities of some families. Knowledgeable, culturally sensitive professionals offer direct support to families and provide advice on the navigation of SEND systems.
- Strategic leaders are committed to co-production (a way of working where children, families and those that provide services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all). Haringey SEND Power is a valued partner in decision-making. It is involved in commissioning transport services, interim support for children and young people waiting for autism assessments, and tendering processes for the short breaks offer, respite care and future resourced provision.
- Leaders provide accessible support groups and online resources to children, young people, parents and carers while they wait for mental health and neurodevelopmental assessments.
- Leaders ensure that parents and carers are well informed about the EHC plan assessment process. Focused work with families has significantly increased their contributions to EHC plans. When the decision has been made not to issue an EHC plan, 'next steps' meetings provide the opportunity for professionals to meet with families to offer explanations and advice on next steps and support.
- Leaders make good use of data from a range of sources in order to understand the needs of their community and plan for them. For example, they have commissioned resourced provision for children with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs for both the primary and the secondary phase, as they had identified this as an increasing need.
- Health and education practitioners have developed training in response to changing needs within the local area, such as programmes for both speech and language and sensory needs delivered to nursery providers and parents and carers.
- Leaders have used creative commissioning to reduce waiting times across the partnership. By creating the 'North Central London Autism Hub', they have increased capacity for rapid assessments. Similarly, assessment places commissioned with specialist providers prior to EHC plans being agreed ensure that children and young people get the support they need quickly. There are no waiting times for occupational therapy or physiotherapy.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have made considerable improvements in the quality of annual reviews, EHC plans and the application process. The majority of EHC plans are up to date and accurate. The expansion of personnel and training across education, health and care partners means that most new plans are issued within the 20-week time frame and that professional advice is of better quality. Leaders have implemented impactful quality assurance and monitoring processes that involve

professionals from education, health and care.

- The dynamic support register has been effective in supporting children and young people, and high-level admissions have been reduced. Key workers meet families 'where they are', sensitive to their willingness to engage with services. Early work with families helps to identify and refer children and young people before the point of crisis.
- Multi-agency working flourishes in Haringey. The partnership approach is enhancing the skills and understanding of professionals across services. For example, the Language and Autism Support Team works with primary schools to support children and young people at risk of exclusion. The education psychology service has led training for schools, special educational needs coordinators, social workers and health practitioners. The new speech, language and communication needs pathway is focused on developing knowledge and skills across the partnership, and school nurses deliver training on health interventions such as managing epilepsy and asthma education in schools.
- HLP's outreach works effectively with schools across the borough in order to support children and young people at risk of exclusion to engage with school.
- Young people who become involved with the Youth Justice Service benefit from a holistic assessment. Joined up working with SEND teams, health, schools and settings mean that children's needs are responded to, for example in returning to education following a serious offence.

## **What does the area partnership need to do better?**

- Currently, there is no provision for children to have overnight short breaks in Haringey. In response to this, the local authority is in the process of establishing a short breaks children's home, which is expected to be operational by summer 2024, offering overnight stays to several children each weekend. They are also commissioning a service that can provide carers to support children overnight in their own homes.
- Young people have mixed experiences of moving to adult services as they reach 18. For example, some young people have more than one Care Act assessment before their needs are identified accurately. This means they are left waiting longer for the help they need, causing additional worry at a key transition point in their lives. Partner agencies are aware that preparation for adulthood and effective transition planning is something that needs improving. Funding has been identified for a multi-agency transitions team to work with children and young people between the ages of 14 and 25.
- Children's and young people's EHC plans do not adequately address preparation for adulthood. Leaders have built in changes to the way annual reviews and the plans work to remedy this. Recent examples show that plan writers and contributors know what a good plan looks like, but this transition planning needs to start earlier for most young people.
- Despite significant improvements in the quality and timescales within which reports

are completed so as to contribute to EHC plans, health professionals do not have the capacity to routinely review draft or final EHC plans. As a result, health provision in EHC plans is not accurately updated for some children.

- Children and young people do not consistently have the equipment they need to meet their needs at home or at school. This is due to gaps in the ordering process and adaptations to homes. Although this affects a small number of children and young people, it can have a significant impact on the quality of their lives. When leaders are made aware, they act swiftly to resolve such issues.
- The increased demand for specialist mental health services has meant that some children and young people with SEND are waiting too long to receive therapeutic input from child and adolescent mental health services and Open Door (a voluntary sector counselling and psychotherapy service provided for young people aged 12 to 24) following assessment. A number of care pathways are available for children and young people to receive targeted work while they wait.
- Despite the growth in involvement of parents and carers, some continue to feel that they are not listened to, that their child's needs are not understood and that, consequently, they do not get the help they need.
- There are several entry points to the under-12 autism diagnostic pathway, which can be confusing for parents and carers to navigate. There are long gaps between appointments. While there are initiatives to keep parents and carers informed, the process can feel fragmented and convoluted for parents and carers.
- Despite improvements in waiting times, some children and young people are waiting too long for specialist speech and language assessments, as well as for assessments for autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which means there is a delay in identifying their needs. Leaders are aware and have coherent plans to further improve waiting times. They have also built in a 'waiting well structure' to provide support for those waiting for assessment.

## Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement
Leaders across the partnership must ensure that individual plans and aspirations in preparation for adulthood are specifically discussed across education, health and care from an earlier age and clearly described and updated in EHC plans.
Leaders across the partnership must ensure that recent changes, such as work to reduce waiting times and improve the quality of EHC plans, have a positive impact on a greater proportion of children and young people with SEND.
Leaders at the NHS North Central London ICB must maintain the pace and traction around timely access to health services for children and young people with SEND.

## Local area partnership details

Local Authority	Integrated Care Board
London Borough of Haringey	North Central London Integrated Care Board
Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services	Phill Wells, Chief Executive Officer
<a href="http://www.haringey.gov.uk">www.haringey.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.ncihealthandcare.org.uk">www.ncihealthandcare.org.uk</a>
River Park House 225 High Road Wood Green London N22 8HQ	North Central London Integrated Care System Laycock PDC Laycock Street London N1 1TH

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including: one HMI from social care and an Ofsted Inspector from education; a lead Children's Services Inspector and two Children's Services Inspectors from the CQC.

## Inspection team

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