

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Provision Panel Update	
REPORT OF Chair of the SEND Provision Panel	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE 13 March 2024
SUMMARY OF REPORT The purpose of the report is to update members of the Children, Schools and Families (CSF) Scrutiny committee regarding the progress so far of the SEND Provision Scrutiny Panel. It summarises the key findings from interviews up to December and outlines the next steps being followed up through interviews, workshop, and meetings this spring up to April. Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report. Contact Officer: Hannah Raffin, Project Manager - Children's Social Care, Supporting People Strategy, London Borough of Camden 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG 020 7974 2977 / hannah.raffin@camden.gov.uk	
RECOMMENDATION The Committee is asked to comment on and note the report.	

Sylvia McNamara
Signed:
Councillor Sylvia McNamara

Date: 1 March 2024

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to update members of the CSF Scrutiny committee regarding the progress so far of the SEND Provision Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.2. It summarises the key findings from interviews up to December and outlines the next steps being followed up through interviews, workshop, and meetings this spring up to April. It is brought to the full CSF committee to receive comments and suggestions to inform the next stage of the research.

2. Interviews carried out so far

- Vikram Hansrani Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion on 3 October 2023
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) on 30 October 2023
- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) finance on 31 October 2023
- Children and Young People with Disabilities (CYPDS) service on 13 November 2023
- Children's Integrated Commissioning on 2 November 2023
- Senior Advisor SEND Camden Learning on 9 November 2023
- Camden Special Parents Forum on 6 December 2023
- SEND engagement and quality
- Exceptional Needs Grant (ENG) Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDSCO) Cluster co-ordinator on 31 January 2024

3. Meetings attended

- 2.1. SENDCOs meeting - Questions and Answers session on 14 December 2023
- 2.2. Autism Partnership Board - Observed and spoke about the special panel on 6 December 2023

4. Analytical Framework

- 4.1. Following the interviews carried out in the period October to September, this Analytical Framework was created for the panel to discuss at a panel meeting on December 13th 2023. This was accompanied by a suggested set of questions to pursue.
- 4.2. The table below contains emerging insights based on the analytical framework previously identified.

	Diagnosis	Provision/ Funding	Outcomes	Mild/ Moderate/ Severe need	Institutions
Effectiveness	Depends on condition being diagnosed. Not all diagnosis available to all. For example, dyslexia assessment.	Some excellent provision but depends on level of need. Problematic school-to-school differences. Effectiveness may be reduced by delays. Budget issues (what should be ordinarily available; what from notional SEND budget) sometimes reduce timeliness and effectiveness of provision.	No data for outcome measures re ENG such as pupil progress/attainment. In general, not much information so far available about effectiveness of outcomes - genuinely hard to measure. Issue of primary/secondary transfer.	More attention needed to this. Interviewees note a shortage of out-of-school provision for PSLD YP. Also risk of CYP without EHCPs not getting appropriate provision. Further exploration of gaps in provision needed. Family payment	Officers generally believe Camden practice is comparatively good, and that SEND is comparatively well-funded. They acknowledge that funding is still insufficient to meet need and waiting times (sometimes NHS-dependent) are too long. There is a question about how a generally good service can bear to look at and address cases where things have not gone well.
Efficiency	Diagnosis and assessment are slower than wished, and sometimes not available to all families.	Insufficient funding. SEN K students may lose out. Difficult to 'justify' high levels of funding needed for some highly beneficial interventions for PSLD young people 'Need a more efficient use of the adults in the schools.'	Nobody has so far suggested that good outcomes could be achieved more cheaply. Concern is more about lack of resources. Improved communication between parents and schools cited as a desired outcome for all including children.	context of lack of carers or places to take children especially PMLD young people to looks inappropriate.	
Equity	Lack of data regarding extent to which different communities coming forward or regarding SEN as stigma Evidence of some parents paying for private assessments eg dyslexia - what does/should this then mean in terms of (limited) provision?	Some questions about equitable access to independent specialist schools.	Co production between parents and teachers/Educational Psychologists of expected outcomes on plans would lead to less unrest.		
Accountability	Problematically divided between school, NHS and LA. Private diagnoses complicate things further (quality, speed).	Concerns about ENG accountability. Lack of monitoring of quality of plans.	Schools not accountable for SEND spending. LA is not acting as accountable for SEND provision. Important to distinguish bn accountability for money and for outcomes.		
Appropriacy	Early Years diagnosis delayed under 'developmental' heading. Reception children being left on part time timetables (often due to wrong placement)	Concerns about ENG appropriacy given lack of therapists and inconsistent knowledge and understanding re ENG itself and SEN between schools	Exclusions of children with EHCPs seen as indication of inappropriate provision.		
Sufficiency	Evidently insufficient to meet need; waiting times are so long that interventions may not be timely. Referrals are rising. School cohorts are changing.	Interventions and placements for children with high Needs not there Insufficient therapists across the board. Insufficient teachers/classes too large/TAs to carry out interventions effectively in schools			

5. Suggested questions for further investigation

5.1. ENG and Clusters

Continue to investigate how, why and whether these two Camden-specific mechanisms are producing positive outcomes. Could more be done to use Clusters as better peer support mechanisms? Is the right evidence is being collected, to allow evaluation and improvement?

5.2. Equity

Focus on this across the piece, looking both at equity/inequity for CYP, but also for schools (in terms of the numbers of children they provide for etc.) How can all families be engaged regardless of wealth/language/cultural background?

5.3. Quality and consistency

Quality and consistency have been mentioned several times – currently, quality of practice is not consistent, which seems to make things harder for parents.

5.4. Outcomes

Continue to work to clarify what is meant by a 'good outcome' by different stakeholders. What data is/could be collected? How are outcomes linked to interventions?

5.5. What is missing?

Interviewees suggest that there is an absence/gap in provision. This should be investigated further, notably whether it is possible to have clarity and honesty with parents about what they can expect from 'ordinarily available'/ENG/EHCP and what the thresholds for each are. This would require consistency across schools.

5.6. Information and communication

Seek out best/alternative practice examples of information packs/communication with parents, of children with different needs, and different levels of need.

5.7. What can be done to educate, support and empower parents?

Interviewees agree on the central role of parents (in knowing/supporting their CYP). What is the evidence of good practice in supporting parents to support their CYP, which could reduce adversarialism, increase flexibility and responsiveness?

5.8. Addressing trauma

What can be done to support parents, children and officers to address and deal with (their own) trauma, as a way of moving forward?

6. **Next steps as agreed by the panel**

6.1. The key next steps will be to meet with parents and schools to get their perspectives and to answer questions above and to triangulate findings.

6.2. The table below outlines scheduled meeting attendance, visits and workshops; as well as other activities to be scheduled.

Activity	Dates (February – March 2024)
Observed Schools Forum online	6 February 2024
Royal Free Hospital visit	9 February 2024
Special Parents Forum 1	27 February 2024
Netley School visit	28 February 2024
Acland Burghley School visit	4 March 2024
Special Parents Forum 2	6 March 2024
MOSAIC (Integrated Service for Children and Young People with a Disability)	25 March 2024
Panel hosting a workshop for 10 special schools and resource hubs	25 March 2024
To be scheduled	
Survey of SENDCOs and Headteachers	
Find a way to speak directly to smaller groups of classroom teachers	
Visits to other boroughs (best practice, neighbours etc)	

7. **Finance Comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services**

The Director of Finance has no comment to make in the context of this report.

8. **Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

The Borough Solicitor has been consulted on the report and has no comment to add to the report.

9. **Environmental Implications**

There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

REPORT ENDS