



# HILLINGDON

LONDON

## Policy Overview Committee Review Scoping Report 2017/18

### Supporting children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in their early years

#### Aim of review

- To consider how children with SEND have their needs identified and to understand what interventions are made to address these needs, including the support available to parents, with a view to identifying opportunities to strengthen current arrangements in order to improve outcomes.

#### Service Delivery Context

The London Borough of Hillingdon has high ambitions for children and young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). There is a long history of developing inclusive early year's provision for children with SEND within the borough.

The range of early year's provision in Hillingdon comprises of three early years settings, 81 private, voluntary, independent settings (PVI settings include full day-care nurseries, playgroups or sessional care & nurseries within independent schools). This provision includes; full day care, sessional care, early year's centres and childminders. There are currently 305 registered childminders in Hillingdon. An inclusive early years setting will adapt to enable a child with SEND to fully participate and access play and learning opportunities with their peers. Training and support is provided to enable settings to meet their legislative requirements and develop quality inclusive services. The Children and Families Act 2014 and the associated guidance requires local authorities to *'ensure that there is sufficient expertise and experience amongst local early years providers to support children with SEN' recognising that ' a pupil has Special Educational Needs where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, that is provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age.'*

PVI settings within the London Borough of Hillingdon are supported by the Council's Inclusion Team in developing quality inclusive provision; this team fulfils the role of the area Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and provide training and support to settings to enable them to include children with a range of additional needs and disabilities. These settings along with nurseries and reception classes in maintained

schools all deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the statutory framework for children aged 0 - 5 years.

Health visitors are highly trained specialist community public health nurses who play an important role in the identification of children who may have SEND and the provision of support for these families. They implement the healthy child programme, a national government initiative with the aim of *'improving the health and wellbeing of children, as part of an integrated approach to supporting children and families.'*

Community Paediatricians see patients aged 0 - school leaving age, who are resident in Hillingdon (with the exception of Hillingdon residents registered with an Ealing GP), and who have one or more of the following conditions: development delay or long term conditions, disabilities and complex health needs, epilepsy, cerebral palsy, chromosomal disorders, neuromuscular conditions, children with neurodevelopment concerns such as social and communication difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, developmental co-ordination disorder and babies who were identified as medically high risk at birth.

The council's Sensory Intervention Team provides support to families of children, whose needs are identified soon after birth, for example following the hearing screening test. We know that children and young people with sensory needs can require very specialist support at different points in their life. Evidence shows that early intervention can make a significant difference to their progression.

All of these services work in collaboration to support the process of identification and subsequent interventions to support early learning for children with SEND. It is proposed that the review considered the effectiveness of the early identification, interventions and subsequent transitions into the maintained sector (schools) for children 0 - 5 with SEND.

### **Legislative Context**

The Children and Families Act was given Royal Assent in March 2014 and brought about the most significant reforms to the statutory framework for Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) for 30 years. These changes to the law implemented a new system seeking to help children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND. More specifically, the changes aim to provide a system that is:

- Person centred;
- Outcome focused;
- Delivered through a co-ordinated and integrated model of support; and
- Inclusive of families in planning and decision making.

Following the passing of the Act, the reforms were implemented gradually and came fully into force on 1 September 2014. In Hillingdon we have embraced the reform agenda by working with partners to develop our approach and practice in accordance with the legislative changes and the Special Education Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice which provides statutory guidance for organisations working with children and young people with SEND.

The legislation requires services in the 'local area' to work together to identify, intervene and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND nationally have been poor, interventions have been thought to focus too heavily on provision and short term targets with not enough emphasis being given to improving outcomes. The Children and Families Act 2014 seeks to improve life chances for those with SEND encouraging those working with children and young people

with SEND to consider outcomes such as gaining employment, living as independently as possible, being part of the community having friends and good health from the early years.

## Identification

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires all those who work with young children to be alert to emerging difficulties and to respond early. This includes concerns raised by parents and children. All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify children with SEN or disabilities (this includes childminders).

Where a health body is of the opinion that a young child has, or probably has, SEN they must inform the child's parents and bring the child to attention of the local authority. Locally the early notifications from health are received by the Early Support Team, who contact the family and where appropriate offer Early Support key working or portage home visiting support.

The early years are a period of rapid change and development, it is therefore particularly important that any needs are identified early and appropriate interventions put in place to enhance children's development. *'Delay at this stage can give rise to learning difficulties and subsequent loss of self esteem, frustration in learning and to behaviour difficulties. Early action to address identified needs is critical to the future progress and improved outcomes that are essential in helping children prepare for adult life.'* (DoE Sept 2014)

### 0 - 2 age range

Children with more complex developmental or sensory needs may be identified at birth. Parents may raise concerns about their child's development with their child's health visitor, GP, child's nursery or at a Children's Centre. Those working with the family should support them in understanding their child's needs and help them to access support or be referred on to the appropriate agency for further assessment; this may include the child development centre or therapy services.

Health visitors provide the mandated reviews as prescribed national policy (Healthy Child Programme) these start during the prenatal period with the first review being offered on or after twenty eight weeks of pregnancy followed by a new birth visit within 14 days (normally delivered when the baby is between 10 to 14 days). Later a 6 - 8 week review is offered for the mother, father and child which includes a maternal mood assessment, assessment of progress in maternal mental health and ongoing support with breast feeding. The one year review assesses physical, emotional and development and needs within the family context; supporting parenting with information about attachment development, monitoring growth, health promotion, accident prevention, healthy eating and oral health, along with immunisation recommendations.

Speech and language therapists provide community based assessment opportunities 'Small Talk' sessions which children and families can be referred to. At these sessions the speech and language therapist will advise the family if the child requires a referral to speech and language therapy. They will also sign post them to other groups such as Language for Life or Attention Hillingdon.

## 2 year olds

National government have introduced two development checks when children are between the ages of two and three to support the early identification and intervention for children who may have emerging concerns or an identified SEN or disability.

For children attending a setting (PVI setting or childminder), early year's practitioners must review progress and provide parents with a short written summary of their child's development when a child is aged between two and three. This summary should focus on communication and language, physical and personal, social and emotional development. Where there are significant emerging concerns practitioners are required to develop a co-ordinated plan to support the child.

Health visitors carry out a further screening as part of the Healthy Child Programme, in Hillingdon they use a tool called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and where appropriate the social emotional ASQ) to structure these checks.

The 'Progress check at age two' and the 'Healthy Child Programme two-year review' together form the integrated review.

## 3 - 5 age range

89% of three and four year olds in Hillingdon attend some form of early years' provision. The EYFS framework sets standards that all Ofsted registered providers must meet. This includes ongoing assessment of children's progress. As well as the more formal checks early years' practitioners working with children should monitor and review the development and progress of all children during the early years.

During this period health visitors provide a range of services which include the handover of all families from Health Visitor to School Nurse and information sharing to inform the school entry assessment.

## The changing picture in terms of need

In Hillingdon as well as nationally there has been an increase in the numbers of children being identified with autism. This has led to an increase in the waiting time for a multi-disciplinary assessment.

## Intervention

Research has shown that early intervention improves outcomes for children. It is therefore particularly important to provide timely special educational provision. Early action to address identified need is crucial to ensure progress and improve outcomes.

*'Where a setting identifies a child as having SEN they **must** work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs.'* (DfE 2015)

Locally there is a history of health and the local authority working together to improve outcomes for children with SEND. There have been a number of initiatives which have led to better co-ordinated services for young children and their families. These include;

- Pathways for children with social communication difficulties. Shared pathways have been developed and interventions being delivered by speech and language therapy within health are based on the same model as early intervention groups (Attention Hillingdon) being run in both children's centres and early years' settings.
- A Speech and Language pack was co-produced by health and the local authority and provided to PVI settings, schools, GP's and children's centres. This supports communication and shares of good practice and provides resources and a

structure for sharing key messages about ways in which to promote children's communication with families, settings and schools.

- 'Language for life' sessions. Which are held in children's centres for families of children who are showing signs of or at risk of language **delay**. The sessions focus on skilling up parents & carers to support their child's communication development.

The recent CQC/Ofsted local area inspection letter commended this and other forms of early intervention within the borough; *'Parents and carers of young children under five value the high-quality support they receive from professionals. The portage service and speech and language therapy service are particularly well thought of. The 'Attention Hillingdon' programme, which has been rolled out in around 80 early years establishments, has been very successful in improving outcomes. This programme involves activities designed to improve children's focus and attention skills. Leaders check that the programme is delivered effectively, and grade providers to reflect the improvements made.'*

### **Interventions in nurseries**

It is recognised that high quality early education improves health and promotes development and learning. In Hillingdon the Inclusion Team work with early years settings to develop high quality inclusive provision; providing specific guidance and support in meeting identified children's needs. This support includes workforce development. The range of interventions available to support settings in meeting children's needs include:

- Playing and Learning to Socialise (PALS) Social Skills Programme
- Attention Hillingdon a group designed to develop children's attention and listening skills with a focus on developing shared attention.

### **Hearing Impairment/Visual Impairment/Multi-sensory Impairment (HI/VI/MSI) support**

The Sensory Intervention team work with children with a sensory loss from the point of diagnosis. The team work with the child to identify how they are using their vision/hearing; identifying strategies and resources that will support their development and minimise any potential negative impact of their condition. They also work with parents/carers and early years settings providing training, guidance and skill development to help those around the child to better understand and respond to their needs.

### **Interventions provided by health**

There are a range of therapy services provided for children in the early years. These include both individual therapy and group opportunities. Parent training is also a key feature of this work.

### **Support for parents to enable them to promote their child's development**

There is a range of support available to parents to support them in parenting a child who has or may have some additional needs or a disability. These include:

Six autism specific workshops designed to enable parents to understand and meet their child's needs. Parents are also invited to access Early Bird training, an autism specific parenting programme developed by the National Autistic Society. The recent Ofsted/CQC inspection made the following judgement; *'Parents whose children are diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition are offered an opportunity to attend courses to help them understand the diagnosis and identify ways in which they can support their children. Since 2014, 136 families have attended these programmes. The views of parents on completion of the course are overwhelmingly positive.'*

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Parenting programmes such as Triple P - Stepping Stones a specific parenting programme for parents of children with SEND. Along with universal parenting programmes.

Where there are a number of agencies involved due to the child's more complex needs they may benefit from the involvement of an Early Support key worker to support the co-ordination of services.

### **Local offer**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 - 25 requires local authorities to publish a local offer which must include childcare, special educational, health and social care provision for children with SEND, along with the support available to help children move between phases of education.

### **Funding SEN Support in the Early Years**

The 2014 Children and Families Act, lowered the age at which a request can be made for a Statutory assessment of a child's SEND from 2 years of age to 0.

### **Transitions**

It is well understood that effective transitions for children support their well being and enable continuity of learning. There has been work over a number of years to promote well planned transitions

A tool called 'Moving on' was developed.

### **Terms of Reference**

Chapter 5 of the Code of Practice sets out the actions early years providers should take in relation to identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities. It is therefore proposed that the review uses this section of the code of practice as the terms of reference for the review process with particular reference to enabling committee members to gather and consider evidence in order to:

1. To understand how children 0 -5 with SEND have their needs identified early with particular regard to vulnerable children;
2. Understand how early years providers and support services work together to improve outcomes for children with SEND;
3. Use qualitative and quantitative data to better understand the impact of support and interventions for children with SEND;
4. Understand the role specialist services play in meeting the needs of children with SEND in early years settings;
5. Understand of how parents with children with SEND are supported;
6. Understand how SEND support in the early years is funded; and
7. To understand how continuity and learning for children 0-5 with SEND are supported during periods of transition.

## Reasons for the review

It is recognised that children grow and develop more in their first five years than at any other point in their development. It is also widely understood that effective early intervention can improve outcomes for all children including those with SEND.

*'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) DfE, 2012.)*

This review is being undertaken in order to support the process of ensuring every child with SEND in Hillingdon gets the best start in life in line with the requirements and expectations of the SEND Code of Practice and the EYFS statutory framework.

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## EVIDENCE & ENQUIRY

### Witnesses and timeframes

In order to enable the committee to realise the aim of this review in accordance with the proposed terms of reference the following witnesses and witness sessions are proposed:

Session Information	Suggested Witnesses
<b>Agree Scoping Report</b> <i>31 July 2017</i>	The Assistant Director Early Intervention, Prevention and SEND and Inclusion Services Manager will present the scoping report and provide witness input
<b>Witness Session 1</b> <i>27 September 2017</i>	Identification of children's SEND <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoe Sargent (Head of Children's Services, Central and North West London) (health - CCG)</li> <li>• Jo Moody - advanced practitioner (provides training and support to other nurseries) / early years practitioner - South Ruislip Early Years Centre</li> </ul>
<b>Witness Session 2</b> <i>Private Members' meeting (outside formal committee)</i>  <b>TBC WITH CHAIRMAN</b>	The child and family perspective (identification, intervention and transitions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent</li> <li>• Parent Carer Forum representative</li> </ul>
<b>Witness Session 3</b> <i>18 October 2017</i>	Intervention and transitions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Simmonds</li> <li>• Member of staff from the child development centre (Dr Ahmed Ahmed is the designated medical officer).</li> <li>• Helen Thunder - Early Support team manager (responsibilities include Early Support key working &amp; portage - both are involved in transitions within early years)</li> <li>• Dorothy Chapel - headteacher Field End Infant school</li> <li>• Elaine Caffery (nursery manager, sits on schools forum)</li> </ul>
<b>Findings and Agree Recommendations</b> <i>28 November 2017</i>	Members to discuss and agree the recommendations.
<b>Consideration of Draft Final Report</b> <i>16 Jan 2018</i>	The draft final report will be presented by the Democratic Services Officer.



In addition to formal witness sessions, the Committee may wish to consider undertaking an additional session with young people and parents that have been affected by the reforms. This will ensure that the findings of the review are not based solely on the evidence of Council officers but also on the lived experiences of the previous and new systems.

### **Risk Assessment**

Relevant officers have been advised that this review is proposed and are aware of the possible implications on their workload.

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