Bi-borough Sensory Impairment Consultation Report

February 2019
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1. **Purpose of document**

1.1. Specialist teaching support services for children and young people with sensory impairments in Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster are currently delivered by two separate teams.

1.2. A consultation was carried out by Special Educational Needs Commissioners across Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster between the 16\(^{th}\) of January and the 8\(^{th}\) of February on bringing the two teams into one from September 2019. This report outlines the outcome of this consultation and the planned next steps.

2. **Context setting**

2.1. In Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster support services for children and young people with sensory impairment are delivered by two different teams of specialist teachers.

2.2. In Westminster, the service is delivered by the Federation of Westminster Special Schools (FWSS) Training and Outreach Team and in Kensington and Chelsea, the service is commissioned from the Inclusion and Specialist Intervention Service in Hammersmith and Fulham.

2.3. We also have two Specialist Resource Bases in Westminster, one at Edward Wilson Primary school supporting children with Visual Impairment (VI) and one at St Augustine’s CE High School for children with Hearing Impairment (HI).

2.4. The following table shows the current numbers of children and young people with HI and VI known to the councils with the number of pupils on Education Health and Care Plans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory Support Service - Caseload</th>
<th>Vision Impairment (VI)</th>
<th>Hearing Impairment (HI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kensington &amp; Chelsea</td>
<td><strong>39</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 on EHCPs (61%)</td>
<td>28 on EHCPs (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td><strong>119</strong></td>
<td><strong>133</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66 on EHCPs (55%)</td>
<td>40 on EHCPs (30%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5. The pie charts below represent the percentage of pupils educated locally or out of borough for each sensory impairment in each borough.
2.6. Across both Local Authorities an average of 74% of children and young people with HI choose local schools provision in comparison to 57% of children and young people with VI. Growing and improving our local offer, particularly on VI support, would increase the chances of children and young people choosing to stay local.
3. Proposal

3.1. What is the proposal?

3.1.1. The proposal is to develop a Bi-Borough Sensory Impairment Support Service led by the FWSS Training and Outreach Service from September 2019 to deliver specialist visual and hearing impairment support services to children and young people in both boroughs.

3.1.2. The proposal would not result in a reduction in service or the number of front-line staff. It would, however, enable a more joined up and flexible approach across Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea to meet the needs of the children and young people with sensory impairment needs. The new service will work flexibly with the two specialist resource bases.

3.2. What is the rationale?

3.2.1. The rationale is to develop a future-proof service that flexibly meets the needs of this group of children and young people. Specialist teachers for sensory impairment are hard to recruit so it is important that we develop and grow a sustainable local service that effectively supports children and young people through a whole system approach, supporting them to remain and thrive in mainstream education where appropriate.

3.2.2. There are no HI or VI specialist resource bases in Kensington and Chelsea but there are two sensory impairment specialist resource bases in Westminster, at Edward Wilson Primary School (VI) and St Augustine’s High School (HI).

3.2.3. Edward Wilson Primary School is commissioned for 7 places for children with VI and there are currently 3 children using it. The spare capacity has allowed staff to support the sensory support service at the FWSS Training and Outreach team.

3.2.4. There is potential for this model to be developed to create a larger Bi-Borough Sensory Impairment support service that supports children to remain and thrive in mainstream schools. This would be accomplished through increasing capacity and therefore spending more time training and supporting classroom teachers, teaching assistants, SENCOs, and parents so that they are better able to support pupils with sensory impairments.

3.2.5. Specialist teachers will continue providing direct support for children and young people with high levels of sensory impairment.
3.3. **What are the key principles?**

3.3.1. The key principles underpinning this proposal are as follows:

- We want local provision for children and young people wherever possible.
- We want families to be able to choose inclusion in a local school.
- We want to sustain high quality specialist support.
- We want to have fully equipped accessible schools for those whose needs call for an adapted environment and, where we cannot meet needs in the nearest school, we want to have robust commissioning arrangements that reflect parents’ preferences and the breadth of provision that severe sensory impairment calls for.

3.4. **What is changing?**

3.4.1. The main change will be that the Kensington and Chelsea Sensory Impairment Support Service will no longer be delivered by the Inclusion and Specialist Intervention Team at the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

3.4.2. The service will be delivered by the FWSS Training and Outreach service from September 2019.

3.5. **What will be the impact of the change?**

3.5.1. Possible impacts might include the following:

- A change in specialist teacher working with a child or young person.
- A change in location of specialist learning groups.
- A larger team and a more coordinated training offer.

3.5.2. We do not expect a change to the following:

- Level of provision available.
- Number of front line staff delivering provision.

3.6. **What is the proposed team structure?**

3.6.1. The new Kensington and Chelsea team of specialist teachers will sit alongside their Westminster colleagues from the FWSS Training and Outreach team. All staff will report to the FWSS Training and Outreach Team Manager for operational functions, while the bi-borough service will be overseen by the Head of Local Offer and Special Educational Needs and Outreach in the local authority.
3.6.2. Once all staff are in place, we will provide the opportunity for a member of the team to take a Bi-borough Sensory Impairment Team Leader role. The Team Leader will work with the Training and Outreach Team Manager to bring both teams together strategically and operationally to ensure the team’s joint work provides the best outcomes for children and young people across both boroughs.

3.6.3. An outline of the new team structure can be found below

![Team Structure Diagram]

**KEY**

- **Existing FWSS Westminster Training and Outreach team**
- **Existing RBKC post that oversees the FWSS Training and Outreach Team service**
- **New RBKC specialist teachers’ posts**
- **This post will be recruited to from the existing team of specialist teachers**

4. **Purpose of the consultation**

4.1. The purpose of the consultation was to share the proposal for a Bi-Borough Sensory Impairment Specialist Teacher service support with key people and organisations, so that they are active participants in designing a future way of delivering support to children and young people with sensory impairments.
4.2. The three-week long consultation was an initial invitation for comments and suggestions. There will be further opportunities to co-design the future of the service during the implementation phase.

5. Methodology

5.1. Approach and participants

5.1.1. The consultation on the Bi-Borough Sensory Impairment Specialist Teacher service support opened on the 16\textsuperscript{th} of January and ran until the 8\textsuperscript{th} of February.

5.1.2. A summary of the proposed changes was shared with people and organisations in different ways such as emails, websites, phone calls, events and meetings in person. These included:

- Local Offer Websites
- School Bulletins
- Direct emails to service users and parents in and out of borough
- Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SEnCO) mail-out
- Emails and meetings with staff affected in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.
- Letters and meetings with the team manager at the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
- Email and meeting with Parent Reference Group Leads in both boroughs
- Mail-out to all Early Years settings
- Disabled Children’s Team’s Newsletter
- Email to national bodies:
5.2. Participation summary

5.2.1. A total of 11 meetings were held during the three weeks, including one event for parents. We received responses from all four national bodies, all staff directly affected, the two parent groups and five families of children and young people using the service.

5.3. Questions

5.3.1. If we were to use the overall capacity to support children and young people with sensory impairment in a different way:

➢ Are there opportunities to improve support for children and young people with sensory impairment to remain and thrive in mainstream schools?
➢ What would your concerns be about changing the delivery model to focus on supporting children and young people with sensory impairment to remain in mainstream schools?
➢ How could we alleviate any concerns you may have?
➢ How could the resource provisions work better with mainstream schools and the sensory support service?

6. Findings and recommendations

6.1.1. There was overwhelming support for the proposal and the recommendation is to move to a Bi-Borough Sensory Impairment Support Service led by Westminster Training and Outreach Service from September 2019 to deliver specialist visual and hearing impairment support services to children and young people in both boroughs.

6.1.2. The service delivery model piloted at Edward Wilson whereby one of the teachers used some spare capacity to do outreach work has worked well and we envisage exploring expanding this model in the bi-borough sensory service.

6.1.3. We noted the suggestion from the National Deaf Children's Society to involve children and young people in the process. We recognise how important this is and will engage them during the planning for the transition into the new service, whether there is a change in teacher or not, to ensure they are aware of what is happening and to take part in the development of their individualised plans.

6.1.4. As part of the data analysis and from feedback we are increasing the qualified teacher for the visually impaired from 0.6 full time equivalent to 1 full time equivalent post. Currently, 49% of children and young people with visual impairments in Kensington and Chelsea are choosing out of borough schools. The increase in teacher capacity will provide an opportunity to develop local sustainable
services. Future changes in level of need are expected to be managed by exploring the potential for trading additional support with other local authorities so they can commission some of this provision from us.

6.1.5. There were many positive and encouraging suggestions from participants about what currently works well in the FWSS Training and Outreach and how we could build upon this good practice (see theme 6 below). There were also other comments that we have addressed under the themes below.

6.1.6. **Training and Support**

“Practitioners need training in this area”

“It would be good to have a forum for Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators to share ideas and training”

“It’s important to support the child as well as the teachers”

“We would like to include more school attendance to training”

**Training and support**

We want to build on the well-regarded existing training and to support staff and professionals to share best practice. Workforce development is central to our strategy for delivering all SEN provision across the Local Authority. We will use the co-design event in June to discuss ways of achieving this from September 2019.

6.1.7. **Use of technology**

“It’s important to ensure the promotion of independence and integration”

“The focus should be on what is the child’s potential and what is the best environment and support for them to thrive, rather than provide them with the bare minimum”

“Include mobility teachers and technology to ensure children with sensory needs can access the curriculum successfully”

“Sometimes the technology is there but teachers are not able to use it (i.e. no training or knowledge)”

**Use of technology**

We agree with you that technology is really important in supporting independence and integration and we want to enable children and young people to access the curriculum successfully.

For this to happen we need to make best use of the technology that is available to them. We will continue to take advantage of developments that support children to be included in all settings and ensure that all staff are confident and able to use this in those settings.
6.1.8. School placements and choice of provision

“Money spent on out of borough placements could be used to enhance the local offer for higher needs”

“Our preference is for children and young people to have school placements in their local borough, closer to their family and friends, and we want to reduce the need for children to have to attend out-of-borough schools, if that is their choice.

“Mainstream provision will not always be appropriate”

“Transition support from primary to secondary needs to improve”

“Schools need to be empowered and supported with training and technology and there needs to be an attitude shift from ‘I don’t want to take on a child I cannot support’ to ‘what do I need to do to support this child’”

“Support at secondary school level is not always sufficient and has resulted in out of borough residential placements”

“There needs to be recognition that there will always be some children and young people for whom mainstream provision isn’t the most appropriate for them to flourish”

School placements and choice of provision.

Our preference is for children and young people to have school placements in their local borough, closer to their family and friends, and we want to reduce the need for children to have to attend out-of-borough schools, if that is their choice.

The focus of the new bi-borough sensory service will be to develop the offer of provision and support in our local schools and resource bases to be better able to meet children and young people’s sensory needs. We will give special attention to transition from primary into secondary school. Enhancing the local offer will provide better choice for families.

6.1.9. Quality assurance

“Review eligibility between the services to ensure consistency across the bi-borough offer”

“Increase quality assurance processes”

“The local authority needs to make schools accountable if support is there and they are not delivering as agreed”

Quality assurance

We are improving the way we will monitor performance and service delivery progress as part of the new arrangements.

Creating a bi-borough management structure will provide us with an opportunity to understand where the strengths and weaknesses are in each borough and to build on what we do well – providing a more consistent, flexible, and high-quality offer.

6.1.10. Working together

“Parents to be given the opportunity to present at SENCO Forum to provide feedback on their experiences”

“We would like more events like this, parents don’t always feel included or listened to across SEN services – more collaboration with parents”

Working together

Your feedback and experiences are really important to help us develop this new service, so we are pleased to hear you would like to be more involved. We will continue to work with families to develop more opportunities to review provision and make changes so that we continue to improve.

We want to work with you and hear from you so we will provide opportunities for you to join us and also meet with other families with children and young people who use the service.
6.1.11. Suggestions and considerations for the new bi-borough model

“We will the tri-borough training programme continue?”

“The flexible model at Edward Wilson is working very well and staff are supportive of joining the central service from September 2020”

“Opportunity to have a deaf instructor/deaf role model within the service which would help to create a BSL community”

“Setting up a VI support group or having VI champions in schools”

“There would need to be a base for families to attend groups, etc.”

“Opportunity to develop a deaf role model that all children could have access to – common in other boroughs (e.g. Newham, Tower Hamlets). This would provide an opportunity for all children to learn BSL. It would also support the development of deaf identity and informed choices.”

“The Speech and Language therapist service at the resource bases needs to be more linked to the central team”

“The model needs to remain flexible as the resource bases intake will vary year on year”

“To have a deaf instructor that is a native BSL user that could work with families”

“We are seeing more children with increasingly complex needs – changing nature of the role so it’s important to link with other teams”

“It would be positive for the teacher of the deaf at St Augustine’s to be part of the central team and have more opportunities to link up with colleagues”

Suggestions and considerations for the new model

We would like to thank everyone for their valuable contributions to the consultation process and for providing feedback on how we can continue to develop our offer for children and young people with sensory needs.

We will ensure that these ideas are part of the service planning once the team is in place, and we would like children and young people, their families and staff from schools and settings to continue to be involved as we explore how we can put some of these in place.
## 7. Next Steps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>When</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation outcome report</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Transformation Lead Head of Local Offer and SEN Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of Specialist Teachers</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Head of Local Offer and SEN Outreach Westminster Training and Outreach Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment of Team Lead Engagement with children and young people to develop their personalised plans Development of Contractual Agreement</td>
<td>April/ May 2019</td>
<td>Head of Local Offer and SEN Outreach Westminster Training and Outreach Manager Children and Young People Expert panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-design of future service event with all stakeholders</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>Head of Local Offer and SEN Outreach Westminster Training and Outreach Manager Bi-borough staff team Children and Young People and parents Transformation Lead</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**New Bi-borough Sensory Impairment Specialist Teacher Support service starts** September 2019

### 7.1. For any further comments, feedback or suggestions on the proposal, this report or the future of your local sensory impairment service, please contact Marta.Garcia-Farinos@rbkc.gov.uk