

People Scrutiny Commission

19 July 2021



Report of: Alison Hurley, Service Director Education and Skills, People

Title: Specialist Provision

Ward: All

Officer Presenting Report: Alison Hurley, Service Director Education and Skills, People

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Recommendations:

To note the content of the report.

The significant issues in the report are:

As of 6 July 2021, there are 139 children and young people (CYP) with an unmet request for a specialist education placement.

A Mainstream Awaiting Placement Panel (MAPP) has been set up to better support those children and young people.

To date 50 specialist placements have been delivered through the Specialist Provision Project with a pipeline of delivery further placements over the next academic year.

Phase two of the specialist provision project will start in September 2021.



1. Summary

1.1 The number of specialist education placements available in Bristol is lower than the demand for those placements. In order to fill the gap, the specialist provision project was started to work with education settings in Bristol to develop capital schemes to deliver additional placements.

1.2 To date 50 placements have been delivered and additional placements will be ready by September 2021.

1.3 Plans are in place to continue to bring online further placements to fully meet demand.

2. Context

2.1 As of 06 July 2021, there are 139 children and young people (CYP) with an unmet request for a specialist placement. It is important to note this is a snapshot as requests for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are continually received and completed as education settings are named in the corresponding plan.

2.2 Within the cohort of 139 children and young people, there are different types of situations that can mean that specialist provision is not required immediately. This can be where:

- CYP are already in a specialist placement/hospital education/education other than at school.
- CYP has been offered an appropriate placement but parent has refused.
- CYP not yet at statutory school age.

2.3 To better support CYP with SEND in a mainstream educational setting, BCC has introduced a system to enable greater oversight of this cohort. This includes the Mainstream Awaiting Placement Panel (MAPP), which is being piloted in the summer term.

2.4 To date there have been 6 MAPP meetings which completes the initial pilot and it has been agreed that the pilot will continue. 25 children's cases have been reviewed so far.

2.5 MAPP is a multi-agency panel that aims to:

- Offer an individualised approach to support for children and young people, so they can continue to be educated in mainstream settings until an appropriate specialist setting is available.
- Keep the focus on learning in the current educational setting.
- Ensure all local options have been considered including supporting current mainstream provider with additional library of specialist support.
- Discuss the children and young people currently awaiting specialist placement. Ensuring placements can be found as soon as possible.

2.6 The pilot will be continued as it is proving to be a useful forum for solution focused discussion. In addition to this the SEND team are undertaking a desk top exercise to appraise the issues for each case. This will be completed by September. Informal feedback on this approach from SENDCos is positive.

2.7 The MAPP meetings are giving a robust challenge and consistency of approach to the decision-making process for each of the CYPs.

- 2.8 An unexpected benefit has been the building of capacity and workforce development of the SEND statutory team and local area teams. Having a range of professionals in the meeting allows for a holistic approach to solution finding.
- 2.9 Attendance is fluid depending on the cases discussed. Professionals invited include SEND Commissioning and Business Manager, Senior Inclusion Officers, SEND Managers, Safer Options Education Inclusion Managers, ALP hub, HOPE school, Educational Psychologist, Attendance Strategy Manager, SEND Manager (Tribunals), SEND School Improvement Office, and Bristol Autism Team. Schools are not currently part of the pilot. Discussions are underway as to how to effectively include them as the panel develops.
- 2.10 The Specialist Provision Project was established to increase the number of specialist placements available for CYP with SEND in Bristol. An innovative approach was taken where existing education settings were invited to submit expressions of interest (EoI) to provide new placements.
- 2.11 The benefits of the approach taken are:
- Children and young people can be educated closer to their home, communities, and friends.
 - Reduced numbers of children and young people educated out of area.
 - Reduced pressure on Home to School Travel budget.
 - Increased inclusion for children and young people.
- 2.12 Feasibility studies for each of the EoI established the potential number of placements in that setting, the capital cost and indicative construction timelines. Detailed dialogue with settings which had promising ideas were also completed. This informed decisions for projects to proceed where good quality placements would be realised in the right part of the city, in the shortest time, and within the budget envelope. This approach was supported by Department for Education (DfE) and schemes within non-maintained settings require approval from Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC).
- 2.13 Additionally, discussions are being held to work in partnership with established providers from within the independent market to develop and tailor specialist provision, within the city to meet Bristol's individualised demand.
- 2.14 To date the specialist provision project has delivered 50 SEND placements. The chart below shows when additional placements are expected to be available. It also includes capital schemes outside of the Specialist Provision Project.

| | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 | Dec 21 | Jan 22 | Feb 22 | Mar 22 | Apr 22 | May 22 | Jun 22 | Jul 22 | Aug 22 | Sep 22 | Oct-Dec 22 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------|----------------------|------------|------|------|
| Specialist Provision Phase 1 | 50 ASC Venturers 3 ASC 8 SEMH | | 12 SEMH | | | | | | | | | 12 ASC 24 ASC 12 ASC | 3+18 PMLD 24 SEMH | | | |
| Phase 1 reserve | 8 ASC/ SEMH | | | | | | | | | | | 16 ASC/ SEMH | | | | |
| Specialist Provision Phase 2 | Development of phase 2 schemes | | | | | | | Placement delivery | | | | | | | | |
| Elmfield Primary | | | | | | | | | | | | 24 | | | | |
| Claremont Primary & Post 16 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 |
| KnowleDGE 6 th Form | | | 40 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project Rainbow | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 12 | |
| Cumulative total | 69 | 69 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 121 | 185 | 254 | 254 | 266 | 273 |

ASC autistic spectrum conditions; **PMLD** profound and multiple learning difficulties; **SEMH** social and emotional and mental health

2.15 The Mayor has committed to deliver 450 SEND placements within the next three years. Specialist Provision Phase 2 will contribute to fill the gap between placements in the pipeline and this commitment. We anticipate being able to meet current demand (139) and the next phase of the project (described in 2.20) is designed to meet expected demand.

2.16 Delivery of placements has been slower than anticipated. This is due to two main reasons:

- Impact of Covid-19 pandemic on education settings and the Local Authority. This especially impacted on the ability to support detailed conversations with settings regarding potential placements.
- Ability of external construction partner to schedule capital works which align to the academic year.

2.17 Work is continuing with education settings, the DfE and construction partners to deliver the schemes that have been identified. Additional placements will be announced when legal obligations have been agreed and are in place.

2.18 Following closure of the Specialist Provision Project, additional SEND placements will be delivered as business as usual activity in Phase 2 and beyond. Recruitment is in progress for a Specialist Placements Manager to support this.

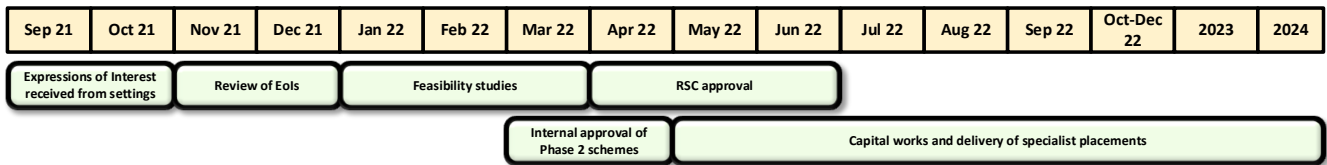
2.19 Phase 2 will take the same broad approach as previously, incorporating the learning received from the Specialist Provision Project to speed up delivery of placements.

2.20 As before, education settings will be asked to provide Expressions of Interest to provide new specialist placements. However, the approach will be more targeted than in Phase 1 and submissions that meet defined criteria related to type of need and area of the city will be invited. The criteria will be informed by projections of future need.

2.21 Quality of potential provision will be assessed at the start of the process. This will be completed in conjunction with DfE to ensure resource is focused on schemes that are likely to move forward.

2.22 Phase 2 will have defined timescales so that all parties are clear on what is expected when. Regular sessions between the setting, DfE and construction partners will also ensure that communications between all parties are improved.

2.23 Timescales for phase 2 are below.



3. Policy

Not applicable.

4. Consultation

a) Internal
Not applicable.

b) External
Not applicable.

5. Public Sector Equality Duties

- 5a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
- tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- 5b) The focus of the specialist provision project is on developing additional specialist placements. Equalities duties are considered at the point of placement of a child or young person into a placement.

Appendices:

None.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.