

## Equality Impact Analysis

**Department:** Children and Young People (Forward Planning, Performance and Partnerships)

**Person Responsible:** Tanuja Saujani, Senior Commissioning and Market Insight Manager

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**Status:** Screened

**Next Review** 12 months

### Stage 1 Screening Data

#### 1. What are the objectives and expected outcomes of your proposal? Why is it needed?

This Equalities Impact Assessment is in respect of re-commissioning the provision of Speech and Language Therapies (SLT) supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). These services include SLT for children in mainstream schools (5-19 years) and Children's Centres and linked early years settings (0-5 years).

**Local Authority responsibilities** - under the Children and Families Act 2014 (paragraph 24) local authorities have the statutory responsibility to meet the needs of children and young people as stated in Education Health and Care Plans (or Statements of Special Educational Need, as was the predecessor). This will often include speech and language therapy.

The current SLT service in Children's Centres supports children aged 0 to 5. The service works with parents, practitioners and children to encourage age appropriate communication development and to prevent speech delay. The service provides advice, guidance and training to improve parents' understanding of child communication development.

The current SLT contract in mainstream schools supports pupils attending Brent mainstream schools and pupils in some out of borough mainstream schools in Harrow, Ealing, Westminster and Barnet and a small number in further education colleges. The service provides assessment and therapy interventions, as well as guidance for staff in schools on how to implement programmes that assist speech, language and communication development.

#### **Needs Analysis for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, local authorities have a responsibility to meet the educational needs of children and young people as stated in a child or young person's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

It is estimated that between 1% and 2% of the UK's population at any one time has a severe speech, language and communication disability, requiring specific assistance in order to have their needs met, including enabling children to access education. Nationally, speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) are the most common type of need in primary-aged children with EHCPs and for 26.5% of this group it is their primary need.

Demand for SLT services provided by Brent Council is high. The numbers of children and young people with an EHCP in Brent is continuing to rise. The total number of children and young people with an EHCP increased from 1,804 to 2,076 (15%) between January 2016 and January 2018 and the number of children identified as having SLCN in their EHCPs increased from 296 to 316 (7%) over the same time period.

In 2017/18 (Quarter 4) 308 pupils received SLT, with an average of 20 new cases per quarter, as part of the current mainstream education contract. Through children's centres and linked early years settings, in 2017/18 2,879 under 5s received universal SLT support, 1,221 under 5s received targeted SLT support and 237 under 5s were identified as needing specialist SLT support.

## **2. Who is affected by the proposal? Consider residents, staff and external stakeholders.**

SLT services seek to improve the communication skills of children and young people and to identify children with additional needs who would benefit from referral to specialist services. The service is intended to provide support at the earliest opportunity to reduce communication related disabilities as children grow older through providing children/young people and their families with strategies to support age appropriate communication skills development.

Services are therefore designed to reduce any adverse impact on children and young people by identifying and working with children who would benefit from early intervention speech and language support. The additional support they receive increases pupils' and parents' understanding of their needs, and will equip them with the relevant tools and aids to allow them to realise their potential.

### **3.1 Could the proposal impact on people in different ways because of their equality characteristics?**

SLT services seeks to improve the communication skills of pupils and to identify children with additional needs who would benefit from specialist support.

The proposed new service does not impact differently on any groups on the basis of their equality characteristics. The service is designed to reduce any adverse impact of speech and language difficulties on children and young people, including those with Education and Health Care Plans. The specification for the new service has been revised to ensure and promote access for vulnerable groups.

Service provision will assist in building young people's confidence and supporting them to realise their full potential. As an early intervention and prevention service it will allow children and young people the best start in life.

### **3.2 Could the proposal have a disproportionate impact on some equality groups? If you answered 'Yes' please indicate which equality characteristic(s) are impacted**

No. The proposal supports a vulnerable pupil population. The specification for the new service has been revised to ensure and promote access for vulnerable groups.

**3.3 Would the proposal change or remove services used by vulnerable groups of people?**

The new service will cover the same specification as current services.

**3.4 Does the proposal relate to an area with known inequalities?**

This service will be available across the Borough and will support a vulnerable population of children and young people, responding to Speech and Language needs related to the education section of Education Health and Care Plans or identified through the Early Help Assessment Process.

**3.5 Is the proposal likely to be sensitive or important for some people because of their equality characteristics?**

The service will be sensitive to some children and young people because of their age and disability. Under the Children and Families Act 2014 (paragraph 24), local authorities have the statutory responsibility to meet needs as stated in Education Health and Care Plans. This will often include speech and language therapy, particularly for younger children (0-5) who are identified in early year's settings, including children's centres.

**3.6 Does the proposal relate to one of Brent's equality objectives?**

This proposal relates to Objective 4: To ensure that local public services are responsive to different needs and treat users with dignity and respect.

**Recommend this EA for Full Analysis?**

Yes

**4. Use the comments box below to give brief details of what further information you will need to complete a Full Equality Analysis. What information will give you a full picture of how well the proposal will work for different groups of people? How will you gather this information? Consider engagement initiatives, research and equality monitoring data.**

**Stage 2: Analysis**

**5. What effects could your policy have on different equality groups and on cohesion and good relations?**

**5.1 Age (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

**Please give details:**

SLT services seek to improve the communication skills of children and young people and to identify children with additional needs who would benefit from referral to

specialist services. The new service will ensure that children and young people have their special educational needs met as appropriate regardless of their age and phase of education

Bringing together the Council's commissioned SLT services in children's centres, early years settings and mainstream schools into one contract will deliver a fully integrated model covering the 0-25 age range. The model will deliver an inclusive service to young people attending a range of settings, including mainstream schools, children's centres, early years settings, pupil referral units, alternative education settings and where applicable further educational facilities including colleges. This will include high quality support for children and young people who have a need identified and specified in their EHCP. The integrated SLT model will provide the following benefits:

- Ensuring clear co-ordination of Speech and Language Therapy services across age groups and settings, supporting multi-agency professional work.
- seamless services and seamless transition – establishing consistent links between therapeutic services to support smooth transition with regard to age of child and level of need.
- effective access – service delivery in a variety of settings, including schools and early years settings
- a focus on prevention and early intervention – as part of a continuum of service delivery offering training, consultation and advice to staff in universal service settings to promote early identification, intervention and prevention consistently
- responsive services with agreed response times – ensuring that an assessment of need takes place in a timely manner and that parents and referrers are kept informed of developments

## **5.2 Disability (*select all that apply*)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

### **Please give details:**

SLT services are for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The new service is expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- Early identification and prevention and promoting age appropriate development of children's (0-5 years old) speech, language and communication (SLC) skills.
- Improve children's school readiness with respect to their SLC skills.
- Increase the skills and confidence of parents, staff and volunteers to encourage children's SLC development, particularly for parents of children with additional needs.
- Enable families of children with additional needs to have timely and properly coordinated access to specialist and/or early intervention services including effective early help services for families with multiple needs.
- Ensure the Council meets its statutory responsibility to provide the level of care specified in Section F of an EHC and an equitable service provided across all

Key Stage 1-4 to support further improvement in children and young people's educational attainment and participation in the curriculum.

- Enable children and young people to independently use strategies to support their communication difficulties in everyday situations

The service has robust contract monitoring processes in place to monitor outcomes and impacts and to inform future delivery. This includes regular feedback from service users, monitoring complaints and compliments received, service data analysis and contract monitoring meetings.

### **5.3 Gender Identity (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

#### **Please give details:**

The service is fully inclusive and aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people and their parents and carers regardless of gender identity.

### **5.4 Marriage and civil partnership (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

#### **Please give details:**

The service is fully inclusive and aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people and their parents and carers.

### **5.5 Pregnancy and maternity (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

#### **Please give details:**

The service is fully inclusive and aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people and their families.

### **5.6 Race (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

#### **Please give details:**

The service will impact equally upon all children and young people and their parents and carers regardless of race.

**5.7 Religion or belief (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

**Please give details:**

The service will impact equally upon all children and young people and their parents and carers regardless of religion or belief.

**5.8 Sex (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

**Please give details:**

The changes will impact equally upon all young people and their parents and carers regardless of their gender.

**5.9 Sexual orientation (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

**Please give details:**

The changes will impact equally upon all young people and their parents and carers regardless of sexual orientation.

**5.10 Other (please specify) (select all that apply)**

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

**Please give details:**

This proposal will not have any socio-economic impact upon families. Interpreters will be provided for young people and their parents and carers with limited English language skills.

**6. Could any of the impacts you have identified be unlawful under the Equality Act 2010? Prohibited acts include direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, victimisation and failure to make a reasonable adjustment.**

- Yes
- No

**7. Please provide a brief summary of any research or engagement initiatives that have been carried out to formulate your proposal.**

Parent/Carers have been involved in the revision of therapy service specifications through Parent/Carer representation on a Children's Trust Joint Commissioning therapy workstream alongside special school representation, as well as through the Brent Parent/Carer Forum, Brent Health Partners Forum and Healthwatch. A programme of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities engagement workshops has taken place with parents and carers to capture their views in the development of services. These have shaped the development of enhanced service specifications.

**STAGE 3: ACTION PLANNING**

**Now, you will respond to your findings from the analysis stage and complete an action plan. At this stage you need to think about how to remove or reduce all the negative impacts that you have identified and how to maximise any opportunities to promote equality. This might mean making changes to your proposal or to the way that it is implemented.**

**8. What actions will you take to enhance the potential positive impacts that you have identified?**

Any new provider will be required to maintain diversity monitoring information which will be reviewed as part of the quarterly contract monitoring processes and will inform future planning of services.

A programme of SEND engagement workshops has taken place to ensure families are inputting into the development of services, identifying areas to improve. Their recommendations are being built into the development of enhanced service specifications and integrated service delivery. For example, parents expressed a wish for seamless delivery of services at the point of contacts for families.

Consultation and engagement sessions have taken place at the Brent Parent Carer Forum and engagement will continue. Continued dates for engagement sessions are advertised publicly on Brent Parent Carer Forum. These activities will sustain a co-production approach with parents to enhance local services.

Furthermore, the Brent Local Offer is under review with the Brent Parent Carer Forum on the suitability of presentation, content and format. The aim is to ensure that families can access the right information in the right way to support easy access to the services they need.

**9. What actions will you take to remove or reduce the potential negative impacts that you have identified?**

N/A

**10. Please explain how any remaining negative impacts can be justified?**

N/A