

HALF YEAR REVIEW

2018/19



## OVERVIEW

### 1. Introduction

**i** This report provides feedback to our shareholders on the performance of the business against the 2018/19 Business Plan.

The first half of the year has continued to be demanding with Cognus facing ongoing and significant changes and challenges as we continue to develop our services to ensure we meet the needs of those we work with.

We have made progress in developing the quality systems we need. This was in advance of and enhanced by the need to meet the expectations set out in the Ofsted Written Statement of Action. Along the way we have found much more that we want to improve, and we will continue to develop the services as a result.

We have already delivered and are well on the way to completing key change programs, which include the re-location of two offices into our renovated office at Denmark Road, the migration of and full implementation of the customer database and our procurement of our new ICT supplier.

At the mid-way point we have made substantial progress and we are confident that we will achieve nearly all that we set out in the Business Plan by the end of the financial year.

One of our biggest challenges remains to re-build our reputation with local stakeholders, we know that damage was done to our reputation during the set-up and for a period following this and we continue to make every effort to regain the trust of stakeholders.

### 2. Our Key Priorities

**i** The Business Plan for 2018/19 included four key priorities for the year:

1. Deliver high quality, value for money services that maximise the impact for our customers and for which we can be held to account
2. Provide strong governance, leadership and accountability for our shareholders and as a provider of public services
3. Improve our capability through organisation development and investing in our people. This includes developing skills through training and professional development
4. Secure additional income through new and existing markets and services

These priorities were detailed in the plan and are additional to our routine Board monitoring of KPIs.

### 3. Key Priority Deliverables

#### **i** Deliver high quality, value for money services

We recognise the importance of delivering quality services, but also ensuring value for money. As a result, we set our priorities to focus our teams on ensuring we maintain and where possible improve quality and that we find ways to deliver more efficiently, therefore offering the best value for money.

	<b>Performance</b>	
	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Quality through implementing a Quality Management System for all services	100%	40%
Quality through measured through customer satisfaction (Satisfactory, good or outstanding)	90%	98%
Value by maximising delivery staff: Ratio of delivery staff cost to total staff cost	85%	94.5%
Value by providing Sutton schools and parents with direct access to the Synergy database*	100%*	In progress
Value by increasing the average hours per FTE of delivery contact time*	100%*	90%

\*where appropriate to service

Table 1 - Performance table for delivering high quality, value for money services

#### Quality Management System

We have developed Standard Operating Processes for several of our services, we have tested our approach and are testing using technology to enable managers to audit our services and provide feedback reports to teams. Over the last 3 months of the year we will complete the roll out. This will start to provide benchmark data that we can use to demonstrate improvements year on year as we move into 2019/20.

#### Customer Satisfaction Surveys 2018/19

The company have asked customers how they would rate the services provided by the Company.

Our early years settings have reported high levels of satisfaction as shown below:

	Number of replies	Percentage
Outstanding	8	32%
Good	12	48%
Satisfactory	5	20%
Unsatisfactory	0	0%

*Table 2 - Survey results from Early Years Settings 2018*

Our response rate from early years settings was 34% and provided positive feedback both statistically and from the narrative comments received.

We have also surveyed our primary, secondary and special schools, again results are shown below:

	Number of replies	Percentage
Outstanding	0	0%
Good	9	45%
Satisfactory	10	50%
Unsatisfactory	1	5%

*Table 3- Survey results from School Settings 2018*

Our response rate from schools was just above 9%. We have discussed this with schools and it was felt that the reason for the low level of response was the number of people who did not recall receiving the email or reminders.

Overall, the feedback was mixed and the results certainly demonstrate that we have much more work to do both in delivering our services but also building our reputation.

Our aim moving forward is to increase the response rates from our customers to ensure that the data improves in validity, but we see this as a benchmark from which we can build in future years.

Implementation of new Database

We have worked incredibly hard to develop the Synergy database, but this was delayed for reasons outside of our control. Despite this, great progress has been made. From January 2019 almost 50% of team members will have received training

and will be using the system, the remainder will be trained and fully active using the system before the financial year-end. We also anticipate the system being migrated to a cloud based hosted environment from mid-January 2019, this will improve accessibility and speed for Cognus, the London Borough of Sutton users and schools. Our next steps are to provide training to council officers who use the system and to further investigate school access to the system.

We are continuing to investigate the options to enable schools and parents to have direct access to the database, something now possible with cloud based hosting, but further work is required to ensure information is controlled and shared appropriately.

#### Value by maximising delivery staff

Our ratio of delivery staff cost to total staff cost during the year to date is 94.5% and we forecast the year end position to be 94.2%. We recognise that this figure includes the use of higher cost temporary staff within therapies and some Special Educational Needs roles. This is necessary to meet fluctuating demand for services and a low supply of specialist staff. However, we will continue to monitor this figure to ensure costs are appropriately controlled and that this measure is a sign of best value.

#### Value by increasing the average hours per full time equivalent

The Therapies team and the Educational Psychology team have traditionally used hours to determine workloads. We have adapted the approach for both teams to ensure that a consistent and appropriate number of hours per full time equivalent ("fte") are available to work directly on supporting children and young people. This has meant increasing the 'allocated hours' from 1100 per year to 1200 per year per fte, resulting in an increase of 9% in the year 2018/19. This has needed to be completed in line with guidance from the relevant national bodies. We continue to monitor and adapt the model for the new financial year with adaptations being implemented from the new academic year, September 2019.

A similar approach has been taken across the other teams with caseloads increasing to meet as much demand as possible with the available resources. 2019/20 business planning will investigate all caseloads and activities to maximise the direct impact we have.

**i Provide strong governance, leadership and accountability**

As a limited company, but also a public body, we have worked hard to make certain we are compliant with all relevant legislation. The big shift during the year has been the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (“GDPR”) which has resulted in significant improvements in how we handle and store data.

	<b>Performance</b>	
	Target	Actual
Legislative compliance including new GDPR requirements	100%	90%
Controlling costs appropriately and delivering aligned to approved budgets	100%	90%
Reserves policy developed and implemented	100%	100%
Unqualified audit response	100%	100%
Behaving transparently and involving our commissioners, stakeholders and Shareholders in co-design whenever possible	100%	75%

*Table 4 - Performance table for providing strong governance, leadership and accountability*

Compliance

We have developed, implemented and reviewed our GDPR policies and procedures to reflect the business and the sensitive data that we work with. Our specialist GDPR team has received external training and all team members have received both online training and face to face briefings. Whilst we have seen reports of potential breaches increase, we believe this to be largely due to better educated team members displaying extreme caution when working with data. To date since the introduction of the new GDPR there have been no significant data breaches which have required reporting to the Information Commissioners Office. We continue to work with the Synergy database to cleanse data and ensure that historic information is also aligned to GDPR requirements.

Reserves

The Board of Directors has approved an initial reserves policy set at 10% of company turnover. This enables the Company to ensure that we will be able to meet debts as they fall due and to manage any unforeseen circumstances should they occur.

Audit

For the second year running the Company has achieved an unqualified audit result. Whilst we would expect nothing less, we are pleased to report that no significant concerns have been identified by our external auditors.

Transparency and co-design of services

Teams have spent considerable time co-designing services working with the Sutton Parents Forum and including the Parents Forum in interviews of team members as well as commissioning the Parents Forum to develop the Local Offer website content. In addition, we have worked closely with the Local Authority in developing new services and changing practices, this has included co-designing the Paving the Way project with a Shareholder school and others to best meet the needs of children.

At a strategic level, the Company sends financial information to Shareholders on a monthly basis and has developed BaseCamp - an online platform that will allow all Shareholders to login to a secure site to access key company information and documents on demand. The Company has also run briefing sessions with Councillors, and after their success, these will be repeated twice every year. This not only provides transparency but allows Councillors to better support residents through responding to queries about services being delivered by Cognus.

**i** *Improve our capability*

Cognus team members have been working hard to improve our capability, we know that only the best is good enough for our children and young people in Sutton. To achieve this, we have worked to improve the knowledge and skills of the team as well as seeking efficiency savings through working differently using technology.

	<u>Performance</u>	
	Target	Actual
Skills audit undertaken	100%	0%
Staff attend training and appropriate continuing professional development	90%	100%
Plan for organisation development designed and implemented	100%	90%

Synergy database overhauled and improved	100%	40%
Interactions delivered through new technological approaches	100	10
Recruitment of expertise aligned to news ways of working wherever possible	100%	100%

*Table 5 - Performance table for improving our capability*

Skills audit

Cognus has undertaken significant work to improve the quality of information that we hold about our team. We have achieved this through the transfer of further HR information and HR files from the London Borough of Sutton and through asking team members for information to ensure that our equalities data is up to date.

In the final quarter we will be completing the skills audit, this will then support the HR plan for the next 12 months.

Continuing professional development

We have invested significantly in continuing professional development during the year. Every team member has had to opportunity to participate in development and growth activities related to their role. The Special Educational Needs (“SEN”) team has commenced working towards the Level 4 SEN Casework qualification, the Information and Advice Service team has achieved Level 1 and 2 in the Independent Parental Special Education Advice SEND Law training developing specialist knowledge in the field of special educational needs and disability law and they are now working towards Level 3. The Leadership Team has been working through the 12 Days of Leadership programme which will be complete before the end of the year. All team members have accessed data security and safeguarding training relevant to their role.

Organisational Development

The HR team has developed a HR action plan which will be delivered over two years, this includes activities to support organisational development. However, much of this work is a theme that feeds through everything that we do. This started with aligning our strategy and values, sharing the vision and securing buy-in from our teams. Our recent team conference focussed on delivering as one team and emphasised the need for quality, it was clear to teams that our children and young people depend on us to make the difference to their lives.

Synergy Database

Although the Synergy project has been delayed, January 2019 will see an expert dedicated to Synergy and systems working within Cognus for the first time. This

specialist was recruited externally to ensure that the ICT systems and Synergy, as well as any new technologies available are adopted and implemented effectively supporting our drive to be more efficient.

### Recruitment

Recruitment processes have been changed with person specification and job descriptions carefully constructed to reflect specialist skills requirements and used throughout the recruitment process. Interviews have been developed to ensure successful candidates always demonstrate the required essentials. Our processes have also been adapted to ensure that we follow Safer Recruitment practise and all leaders are required to attend Safer Recruitment training during January 2019.

### **i** *Secure additional income*

Throughout the year the teams have worked to increase investment into the services we provide with the aim of increasing the reach of the work we do to support more children, young people and the schools and settings that they attend. Wherever possible we have sought to secure funding from sources outside of Sutton so that Cognus can add greater value to the local area.

	<b>Performance</b>	
	Target	Actual
Increase the number of schools that we serve	5%	-3.7%
Increase in the total value of sales to schools	5%	-10.6%
Win a bid for new funding	1	1
Develop a new service for children, young people or young adults	1	2
New contract/commission from outside of Sutton	1	7

*Table 6 - Performance table for securing additional income*

### Serving schools

As anticipated, convincing schools to continue to purchase our services has been challenging, our target of increasing the value of sales to schools was deliberately ambitious to ensure the Company remained focussed on developing a sustainable business model.

However, the target was made even more difficult due to the attention required on the Ofsted Written Statement of Action and our decision to offer a 5% discount to all shareholding schools for the 2018/19 year. Another factor has been our increase in traded work delivered on behalf of local authorities, in some cases where this has previously been paid for by schools. The result is that although we now receive funding from 3 fewer schools than in the previous year, the number of schools that we work in has not reduced as these services are being purchased by some local authority areas on behalf of individual schools.

We can report that we continue to provide traded work to all schools in Sutton. Overall in 2017/18 Cognus traded with 82 schools both inside and outside of Sutton, in the year to date this has reduced to 79 schools against our target of 86 for the reasons outlined above.

We are aware of changes in purchasing patterns from customers and changes in the value of services purchased across teams and this our work with team managers as we lead into the next business planning cycle will ensure that we respond to this change.

We will continue to work towards the target and are holding a further event to promote services to schools and develop our relationships in March 2019. We anticipate this number increasing in the final months and that we will move closer to achieving our 5% target at the year-end.

### New bids for funding

Cognus has used existing capacity to develop the business, whilst this is efficient, we feel this is challenging for existing teams and may be restricting how successful we have been, and we will be taking action to increase capacity in coming weeks. Despite this we have secured a new bid for funding from the Department for Education which we are delivering in partnership with local Alternative Provision providers to help support some of our most vulnerable young people moving from education to employment. This project involves testing new ways of working with the young people and their parents as they reach and progress through a critical transition point at 16.

### New services and new areas

We have also developed a new service, Paving the Way, funded by the London Borough of Sutton and the Sutton Clinical Commissioning Group. This partnership approach pools funding from both partners creating a much more joined up approach and has been developed through co-production with Sutton schools.

Feedback from the parents, children and schools has been incredible with waiting times for first contact often being a matter of days for the first few months. This project has been developed as an early intervention approach which we hope will provide support for children and young people before their needs escalate resulting in longer-term support needs.

We have also successfully expanded services to support Wandsworth, Bromley, Kingston, Croydon, Surrey and Merton local authority areas. We aim to build on these successes in the coming year and expand the breadth and volume of our offer in these areas.

#### 4. Financial Performance

**i** Our financial performance until the 30th November 2018 is shown below, in addition year-end forecasts are included. The year-end forecasts are based on a worst-case scenario with cautious income forecasts and liberal expenditure forecasts.

	2016/17	2017/18	18/19						
	Actual	Actual	Budget 30/11/18	Actual 30/11/18	Variance	Year-end budget	Year-end forecast	Year-end variance	Year-end variance
Income	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	%
Dedicated Schools Grant		£ 2,977	£ 1,792	£ 1,797	£ 5	£ 2,608	£ 2,695	£ 87	103%
General Fund		£ 1,941	£ 1,288	£ 1,438	£ 150	£ 1,932	£ 2,092	£ 160	108%
Traded Services		£ 980	£ 636	£ 704	£ 68	£ 924	£ 895	-£ 29	97%
Contracts		£ 998	£ 1,173	£ 1,272	£ 99	£ 1,821	£ 1,881	£ 60	103%
Grants		£ 390	£ 434	£ 406	-£ 28	£ 611	£ 611	£ -	100%
<b>Total Income</b>	£ 2,677	£ 7,286	£ 5,322	£ 5,617	£ 295	£ 7,896	£ 8,174	£ 278	104%
<b>Less Costs of Services</b>	£ 2,965	£ 6,908	£ 5,194	£ 5,215	£ 21	£ 7,827	£ 7,965	£ 138	102%
<b>Profit / Loss (pre-tax)</b>	<b>-£ 288</b>	<b>£ 378</b>	<b>£ 128</b>	<b>£ 402</b>	<b>£ 273</b>	<b>£ 69</b>	<b>£ 209</b>	<b>£ 140</b>	<b>303%</b>

Table 7 - Financial performance with income broken down by funding source

Our financial position has improved throughout the year. We have secured additional income, whilst also making savings against planned expenditure. The increase in the General Funding is mainly as a result of the transfer of the Synergy database contract. Whilst this has increased the Company income, the amount paid to the Company is in the region of £100k less than the costs paid by the Council each year demonstrating the value that the Company brings to our majority shareholder.

We can also report a year on year increase in Contract Income as a result of the Paving the Way contract part funded by the Clinical Commissioning Group to help with early identification and diagnosis of £120k and the new Alternative Provision contract secured from the Department for Education to support young people leaving Alternative Provision into education, employment and training.

**i** Expenditure during the year and a forecast to the year-end can be broken down as follows:

	18/19							
	Budget 30/11/18	Actual 30/11/18	Variance	Variance	Year-end budget	Year-end forecast	Year-end variance	Year-end variance
	£	£	£	%	£	£	£	%
Salary Costs	4,078,771	3,951,785	- 126,986	- 3.1	6,115,743	6,038,756	- 76,986	- 1.3
Travel	28,687	24,395	- 4,292	- 15.0	43,090	43,090	-	-
Premises	227,137	227,137	- 0	- 0.0	360,574	310,574	- 50,000	- 13.9
Recruitment	17,133	11,048	- 6,085	- 35.5	21,800	21,800	-	-
Operational Costs	56,643	65,080	8,437	14.9	73,464	104,880	31,416	42.8
Marketing	7,467	5,021	- 2,446	- 32.8	10,000	10,000	-	-
Training	45,998	51,080	5,082	11.0	70,207	70,207	-	-
ICT	278,642	272,989	- 5,653	- 2.0	443,928	443,928	-	-
Synergy Project	-	103,133	103,133	-	-	234,000	234,000	-
Central Overheads	212,907	273,751	60,844	28.6	319,426	319,426	-	-
Corp. Management	240,682	229,815	- 10,867	- 4.5	368,768	368,768	-	-
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>5,194,068</b>	<b>5,215,234</b>	<b>21,167</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,827,000</b>	<b>7,965,430</b>	<b>138,430</b>	<b>1.8</b>

Table 8 - Breakdown of expenditure 2018/19

Expenditure has increased against the planned budget to reflect the increase in income, additionally whilst the Synergy Project was identified within the Business Plan, at the time neither income or expenditure could be confirmed and therefore neither were included.

During the year we have identified and made savings in several areas, leading to a year end positive variance. There are also unintended savings through several people on maternity leave, something which is prevalent in a predominantly female workforce and vacancies that have existed during the year. Most of the vacancies have been within Business Support functions, although there have also been vacancies within the Special Educational Needs, Educational Psychology and Therapies teams at leadership and caseworker levels. Delays within the Special Educational Needs team were in part due to us setting high standards for recruitment and only making offers where we had very strong candidates and due to the London Borough of Sutton progressing through recruitment for the Head of SEN. We will continue to take this approach as we feel it is the right decision for children and young people and schools in the longer term in that we must only have team members of the highest caliber.

Planned savings which will last beyond the current year include the following:

- changing our photocopier supplier direct to Canon saving in the region of £30k per year from February 2019;
- consolidating our premises and re-negotiating our lease arrangements with some immediate benefit and saving £155,000 in future years;
- opening a stakeholder pension scheme for all new team members saving circa £43,200 per year;

- changing our insurance provider saving £62,062 per year.

All savings made are used to ensure we meet our reserves policy and are invested in ensuring effective delivery of services and meeting the requirements set out in our contracts. This will include deploying additional team members where we know that we can improve the services.

An aim at the start of the year was to maximise the amount of funding spent on delivery of services. The original values in the 2018/19 Business Plan are shown below against a revised year end forecast for the year.

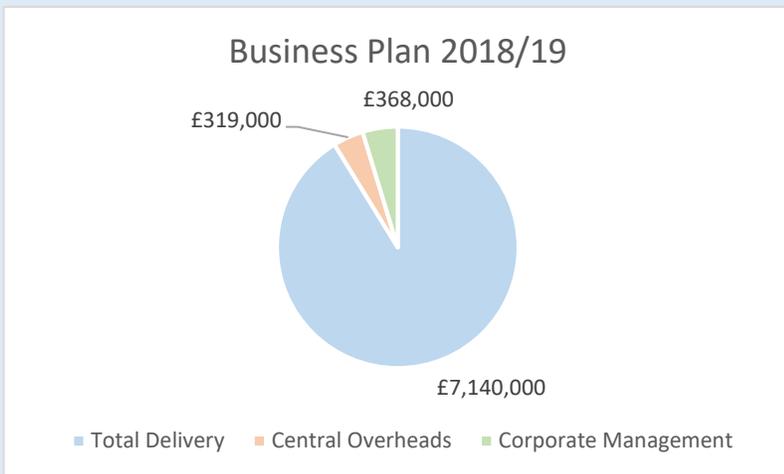


Figure 1 - Original 2018/19 Business Plan

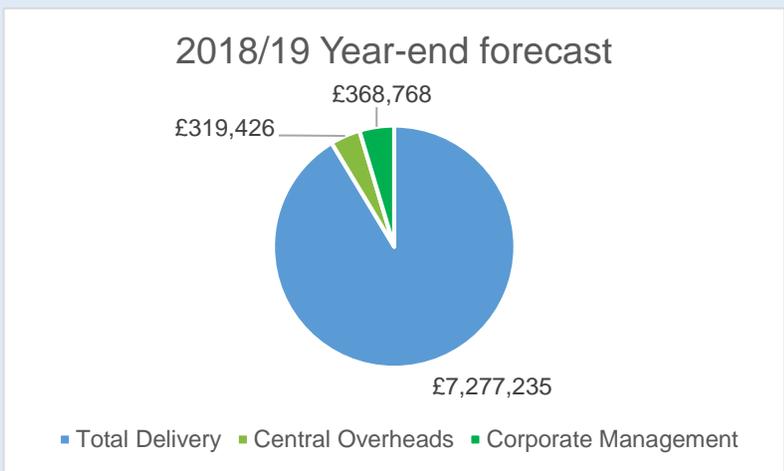


Figure 2 - Revised 2018/19 year-end forecast

The numbers reported throughout this report demonstrate an increased income with the same level of investment in corporate management and overheads, but with an increase in front-line delivery.

## 5. Performance against original business plan

**i** The Company was set up based on an approved Business Plan covering the 2016/2017 year. The document included a three-year forecast as both income and expenditure as set out below.

	Original 2016/17 Business Plan			Cognus forecast	
	Sep 16 - Aug 17	Sep 17 Aug 18	Sept 18 - Aug 19	Forecast Apr 18 - Mar 19	Variance (18/19)*
Income	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
DSG	3,513	2,959	2,509	2,695	107%
LB Sutton	1,488	1,423	1,423	2,092	147%
Grants	594	594	594	611	103%
Schools and Other	944	1,303	1,548	2,776	179%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,539</b>	<b>6,279</b>	<b>6,074</b>	<b>8,174</b>	<b>135%</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Staffing	4,832	4,235	4,035	6,408	159%
Other	2,030	1,961	1,881	1,558	83%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,862</b>	<b>6,196</b>	<b>5,916</b>	<b>7,965</b>	<b>135%</b>
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>	<b>- 323</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>132%</b>

*\*the original 2016/17 Business Plan was written against academic years, it is not possible to extract benchmarking data on an academic year and so the variance figures presented compare the budget period from September 2018 to August 2019 against the forecast for the period from April 2018 to March 2019.*

Table 9 - Cognus performance against original 2016/17 Business Plan

The figures presented show that the Company has achieved the targets set in the original business plan in terms of income generation. Much of this has been possible due to the expansion outside of Sutton and securing income from sources such as other local authorities, the Department for Education and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

## 6. Areas for improvement

**i** In the second half of the year we will ensure we achieve the approved Business Plan deliverables wherever possible, recognising that whilst some factors maybe outside of our control, there is an expectation of meeting performance indicators.

During the last two months, every team manager has reviewed their service business plan and been scrutinised on performance, this has enabled us to clearly outline work that must be completed in the final months of the year.

Appraisals of individual performance across the teams has identified the need to have more robust CPD recording and insight in to needs of individuals. Through this years appraisal and planning process we will review spend on CPD and ensure budgets are being used accordingly.

The team(s) will be focusing on four key areas:

- i) there must be a greater focus on ensuring that KPIs are meaningful and are effectively monitored and managed;
- ii) implementation of the final stages of the Quality Management Framework;
- iii) development of new technologies to improve our services including the completion of the ICT migration project, the Synergy project and new technologies that will support schools, children and young people such as pod casts and webinars to improve school's knowledge of specialist topics
- iv) continuation of our change plans to ensure the support put in place in the local area fully meets the needs of children with SEND aligned to the Ofsted Written Statement of Action.

The work undertaken during the year will ensure that Business Planning is fully embedded and that there is an expectation of delivery and accountability.

Continuing with the theme of one team, we are also working very hard on the Written Statement of Action deliverables bringing a collective response together across Cognus and influencing stakeholders wherever possible.

We will also be investing and adapting existing or investing in new posts to improve delivery for SEN Support, Inclusion, Virtual School and other teams.

## 7. Successes

**i** The ***Sutton Information, Advice and Support Service*** (“IASS”) has already received great feedback and had an incredibly positive impact on the service despite only being fully operational since mid-August. This was an area of concern within the Ofsted Written Statement of Action. Not only are parents providing great feedback, but the team have made significant progress on their IASS Legal training with level 1 and level 2 complete, they are now commencing on level 3.

The ***Special Educational Needs (“SEN”) Team*** have implemented significant changes in working practices. These changes have been in support of the Written Statement of Action put in place as a result of the Ofsted inspection in January 2018. These changes have included an overhaul of the SEN Panel process with much clearer minutes driving actions following meetings and a cover sheet which now includes clear times lines to ensure we meet statutory requirements. Panel membership has also been reviewed to ensure that the right agencies are in the room and able to input into the decision-making process. Aligned to this we have implemented a tracking system that enables us to support all agencies to meet deadlines, ultimately this will lead to faster response times for children and parents/carers. Along the way we have engaged heavily with Sutton Parents Forum commissioning the Parents Forum to make improvements to the Local Offer website content and involving them in the co-production of processes and forms as well as the recruitment of many team members.

The team has also introduced Next Steps meetings, these meetings are for those children who do not require an Education, Health and Care Plan to ensure that the child and their parents and carers still receive appropriate support. These meetings have been well received by parents and carers and are seen as a significant step forwards.

We know that we needed to improve communication and as a result our team has increased the amount of contact with schools, agencies and parents/carers to keep children at the centre of the new processes.

We have invested in our team to achieve this and all SEN Caseworkers will be working towards the Level 3 Caseworker qualification during the year. Our aim being to ensure that our team have the tools they need to perform their roles at the highest standard possible.

The **Early Years** Foundation Stage Profile results have increased this year to 72.8% (of children achieving a Good Level of Development) which is above the national average of 71.5% and Sutton currently has 66 pre-schools and day nurseries, all are now rated as "good" or above by Ofsted. This is a significant improvement, in the previous year there were 5 settings rated "requires Improvement" by Ofsted.

The **Admissions Team** has, despite unprecedented number of applications, managed the admissions process effectively, dealing with over 8,500 applications, 2,500 phone calls and countless emails from parents. Their effectiveness has in part been due their focus on trying to improve the admissions process for parents and by clearly communicating the process.

The **Educational Psychology** team undertook a piece of academic research in combination with University College London. This research was conducted by one of our trainee Educational Psychologists and focused on evaluation and monitoring within service delivery. The findings and recommendations of this research directly informed improvements to the service and promoted further training to increase the quality of the evaluation and monitoring techniques within the service.

This highlights the team's ongoing commitment to innovation and evidence-based practice. The services strong connections to Universities ensures that we are at the forefront of practice and able to offer a high-quality service to all high-quality.

The **Safeguarding Team** have in the last three months delivered training to 3,166 teachers, children and young people helping to raise awareness around safeguarding. Around 1,300 of these sessions were delivered straight to children and focused on e-safety - there is no doubt that this will help those children stay safe online.

Our **Virtual School Team** has supported all looked after children in Sutton often travelling long distances to ensure children are receiving the education and support that they need. The destination results for 2018 demonstrate the success within the last 12 months with 26 out of 30 young people (86%) achieving a destination of education, employment or training. The process commences very early in year 11 and makes sure there is a clear plan in place. The team continue to monitor the destination(s) and when necessary and students become 'at risk of drop out'/becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) they intervene as appropriate.

The **Attendance Team** has managed to increase the volume of their work within one school almost four-fold from 2017/18 to 2018/19 despite having a smaller team and at a time when many schools are reducing the amount of support that they are able to purchase. Additionally, other schools have also bought in more - reflective of the reputation of the service. As schools have struggled with budgets the team have taken a pragmatic approach, suggesting to schools that when working in a primary school where there is a sibling in an infant school who also has attendance issues, then there is an opportunity to work smarter and provide better value for money through joined up sessions.

Our **Support Teams** have also made great progress. We have seen a significant shift in how we use our finance system and we have moved away from paper invoices and orders on to our Xero finance system with all invoices attached to payment records improving our ability to pass financial audits and demonstrate the probity of public funds. We have also moved to electronic payments to our suppliers through exports from Xero to our bank. This may seem simple, but it has significantly improved our efficiency and accuracy.

### **Feedback from children, parents and schools:**

#### ***Child who was supported by Paving the Way***

*“Better because I don’t need to do circles anymore. I go to bed better. I give Mummy a kiss and hug goodbye and come in to school on my own. I don’t need a teacher to collect me anymore. I still like to play on my own sometimes.”*

#### ***Parent***

*“We appreciate very much the team putting this into place and are very reassured, given their excellent support of my child previously. I know it is not really the teams concern as you have such a lot to coordinate, but I want you to know what a huge difference a positive experience can make to a young person.”*

#### ***Principal***

*“This is the first Open Morning where I have been able to confidently speak about the high-quality support that students receive. I just wanted to take the opportunity to say a massive thank you to you all, for everything the whole team does to support our students. You all go above and beyond and I just wanted you to know it is recognised and much appreciated.”*

# Contact Us

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# Cognus

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