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## **Children and Young Peoples Services Scrutiny Committee**

**26 February 2025**

### **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Journey: Progress Update**

**Report by Interim Director of Children, Young People and Learning**

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#### **Summary**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with a progress update on the current SEND Improvement Programme being undertaken by the County Council and its partners. The inspection was conducted jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and took place between 27 November and 1 December 2023. The [Inspection Report](#) was published on 21 February 2024 and gave the West Sussex Partnership the middle judgement: The experiences of children and young people which are inconsistent experiences and outcomes.

The headline finding of the West Sussex Inspection is in category 2:

'The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.'

This outcome is the middle of three possible regulatory judgements of the service and is in line with the County Council's self-evaluation prior to the inspection.

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#### **Focus for Scrutiny:**

The Committee is asked to assess the progress being made on the SEND Improvement Plan since its last update in June 2024.

#### **Key lines of enquiry for scrutiny include:**

- Whether the narrative and key performance updates demonstrate that sufficient progress is being made on the SEND Improvement Plan. Are aims, objectives and milestones being met?
  - The evidence of the impact of the Improvement Programme on improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people.
  - To identify any areas the Committee wishes to highlight to the Cabinet Member for consideration as part of the development of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2025-30.
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## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The local partnership must provide evidence that progress is being made to address the five specific areas of improvement as detailed in Ofsted's inspection findings, following our 2023 Joint Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted Area SEND Inspection which include:
1. Local area health leaders should act swiftly to identify and address 'waiting well' arrangements, and gaps in service provision to meet the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND. This includes speech and language provision, neurodevelopmental pathways and CAMHS.
  2. Health leaders should act immediately to ensure that children identified as at high risk of aspiration are fully assessed including access to video-fluoroscopy as necessary.
  3. Leaders across the partnership should work at pace to further develop their strategy to improve the timeliness of EHC plans to ensure processes are rigorous, sustainable and lead to plans of consistent quality.
  4. Leaders should continue to implement their oversight and commissioning arrangements of suitable specialist school places and alternative provision so that there is sufficient high-quality provision that meets children and young people's SEND.
  5. Leaders should review and further strengthen their strategic approach to preparation for adulthood, so that young people consistently receive the right help and support they need to lead successful lives.
- 1.2 The Strategic Improvement Plan (Appendix A) addresses each of the five recommendations in detail and provides a link to the wider improvement activity that is underway which addresses additional areas for development and improvement that were also highlighted by the inspection but were not outlined as specific recommendations.
- 1.3 For each of the five Areas of Improvement, the Strategic Action Plan sets out the detailed inspection findings, outlines the governance and workstream arrangements and describes the impact and desired outcome of the improvement activity. The plan is overseen by the SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) Partnership Board, which is independently chaired and is attended by the Department for Education (DfE) SEND advisor. This Board reports to the Children First Partnership Board and onwards to the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 1.4 The local area has also identified other areas of focus to improve, which do not appear as formal recommendation in the Areas SEND Inspection. These are also being managed and delivered through the SEND Partnership Working Groups (PWGs). There were six PWGs which, have now been rescoped to four PWGs, taking an emergent approach to our thinking, post inspection, and approved by our SEND and AP Partnership Board.

1.5 There is regular and ongoing monitoring of the progress being made by senior managers within the County Council and Integrated Care Board. Monthly progress updates and reporting mechanisms are being managed via the monthly Area SEND Partnership Improvement meetings, chaired by the Assistant Director for Education and Skills, attended by a range of partners to drive practice improvements to ensure quality and rigour of progress and assess the impact and effectiveness of work, with our partners and the Department for Education (DfE). In addition to this the County Council has had two meetings with officials from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) as part of their overview of our improvement activity. The first of these meetings took place in March 2024 and the County Council's action plan in response to the inspection was endorsed by the DfE and NHSE. At the six-month progress review in October 2024 with the DfE and NHSE the area partnership was praised for the work being undertaken to tackle the areas for improvement and acknowledged that progress was being made and there were now some green shoots. This review was attended by officers from the County Council, headteachers and representatives from the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum. The next six-month review will be held in March or April this year. There will also be a meeting with Ofsted/CQC on 12 March 2025 to confirm progress on the plan by the regulators.

## 2 **Ofsted Focus Area 1 - Local area health leaders should act swiftly to identify and address 'waiting well' arrangements**

- 2.1 Action that has taken place in this area includes the collaboration between partners to produce linked strategies and establish five strands of work. A CAMHS briefing paper has been developed to highlight the current service offer and areas for development, including "waiting well" arrangements, and the CAMHS "waiting well" offer is included on health provider websites.
- 2.2 A system-wide action plan for improvement is in place and continues to be refined so that the partnership ensures a cohesive approach. The action plan also includes a focus on effective communication with children, young people and families.
- 2.3 A Health 'Support whilst Waiting' page has been developed on the West Sussex Local Offer which has detailed guidance, resources, and links to a wide range of condition specific information (Neuro-developmental Pathway, Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT), Physio, Dental, Community Paediatrics and CAMHS). There is ongoing monitoring of impact via feedback and newly established Task and Finish Groups.
- 2.4 In terms of early impact, positive feedback has been received from professionals and parent carers. The site activity is also high, with over 1,000 site clicks since August 2024.
- 2.5 Improvement work currently sits under the CYP Mental Health Task and Finish Groups within the Integrated Care Board (ICB), with a focus initially on communication in relation to early help and support. The ICB SEND webpage has also been updated with dedicated information around what is available while patients are waiting, including detailed information on "Right to Choose" (RTC).

- 2.6 NHS Sussex has finalised its own contractual arrangement with three *Right to Choose* providers to enable greater alignment with local arrangements, alongside quality oversight.
- 2.7 There has been exploration of future commissioning arrangements for provision as outlined in relation to the adults' assessment pathway above and GP webinar to support with RTC guidance.
- 2.8 The use of data to review performance improvement work, will be transferred over to the ICB to lead in this area going forward. Wider support work continues through programmes such as Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS), which includes a day-long workshop on Communicating Well with Parent/Carers, in which schools can create their own communication strategy.
- 2.9 In addition to this, information on the communication strategy that underpins the system-wide action plan, to ensure that families are aware of what is available to them, is being met by delivering support webinars. These cover:
- 'Neurodivergence and Mental Health' with a psychotherapist
  - 'Auditing and Adapting the Sensory Environment of Primary Schools' with occupational therapists
  - 'Unmasking Hypermobility and Neurodivergence' (SEDS Connective)
  - 'Understanding Children's Strengths and Skills' (Changing Chances), and 'Using a Relational Approach to Supporting Dysregulated Children' (Changing Chances).
- 2.10 Planned next steps include working with providers, the West Sussex Parent Carers Forum and other partners to develop better and more consistent communication for families whilst waiting.
- 2.11 Aims, objectives and milestones within this area are being met, and local area health leaders will continue to evaluate impact using both quantitative and qualitative measures, as well as County Council held data to review performance, and evaluate whether progress has been sustained.

### 3 **Ofsted Focus Area 2 - Health leaders should act immediately to ensure that children identified as at high risk of aspiration are fully assessed**

- 3.1 Action has been taken to address this area for improvement, namely immediate mitigating actions to offer alternative provision on other sites while the video fluoroscopy machine was replaced. The video fluoroscopy machine is used by health professionals to assess children's swallow reflexes.
- 3.2 A new machine was provided in January 2024 and is now fully functional, meaning interim measures are no longer required. All staff have now been trained in use of the machine and all high-risk patients are being seen. Recruitment of staff in this context is challenging and is something the partnership are focused on.

- 3.3 In the next review with the DfE, the focus will be on establishing the impact of these actions (e.g. performance data, complaint/compliment information, ICB risk register) to demonstrate the reduction/removal of this risk. As well as any progress that has been made in terms of recruitment and training.
- 3.4 The ICB is working with Planned Care and Acute Care Commissioning teams to monitor progress, NHS Sussex have escalated the risk to NHS England because access to video-fluoroscopy assessments is a regional and national issue.
- 3.5 University Hospital Sussex (UHSx) (NHS Provider Trust) are being served with a Contract Performance Notice, due to issues raised regarding access to video-fluoroscopy.
- 3.6 Aims and objectives within this area continue to be met and fortnightly meetings are taking place with NHS Sussex and UHSx to monitor the action plan.

#### 4 **Ofsted Focus Area 3 - Leaders across the partnership should work at pace to further develop their strategy to improve the timeliness of EHC plans**

- 4.1 Progress made includes changes to the way the Educational Psychology (EP) Service operates, as well as commissioning additional EP capacity. The impact of this is that the County Council is completing significantly more Educational Psychology assessments than previous years. There has been a 32% increase this Autumn term (September to December 2024) compared to Autumn term 2023/24 and a 121% increase compared to Autumn term 2022/23.
- 4.2 The SEN Assessment Team (SENAT) have also been reconfigured and now has additional capacity; the team has also received additional training. The impact of this for children and their families has also been positive, and the SENAT service has received 104 compliments from parents since the move to a new operating model, when in the previous year, there were no recorded compliments.
- 4.3 Performance data evidences increased productivity in SENAT comparing performance in July 2024 with that of July 2023. Almost 55% of all annual reviews were completed and processed within the statutory timeframe.
- 4.4 Performance of the EPS highlights performance remains significantly higher (January–August 2023 453 assessments; January–August 2024 625 assessments); 38% increase.
- 4.5 To ensure the quality of plans continues to improve, the service has introduced an EHCP quality assurance auditing programme that includes direct feedback from parents and carers. Quality assurance (QA) processes are now effectively managed within a consistent approach in line with quality assurance across the Children's, Young People and Learning directorate. This includes the review of individual EHCPs, with dip sampling also taking place and thematic audits planned for later in the year. Monthly SEND performance monitoring meetings focusing on data and quality have also been established

with the Assistant Director for Education and Skills and Head of SEND & Inclusion.

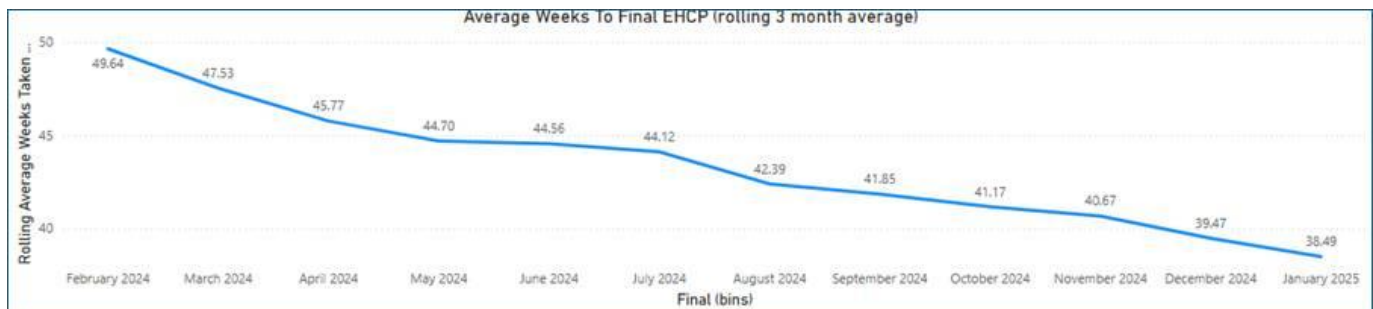
4.6 The Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) obtains regular feedback from the parents of the children whose EHCPs are selected for audit. An increasing number of EHCP audits are now graded Good or better (43% in May 2024) and family feedback is also improving.

4.7 Parent feedback has included:

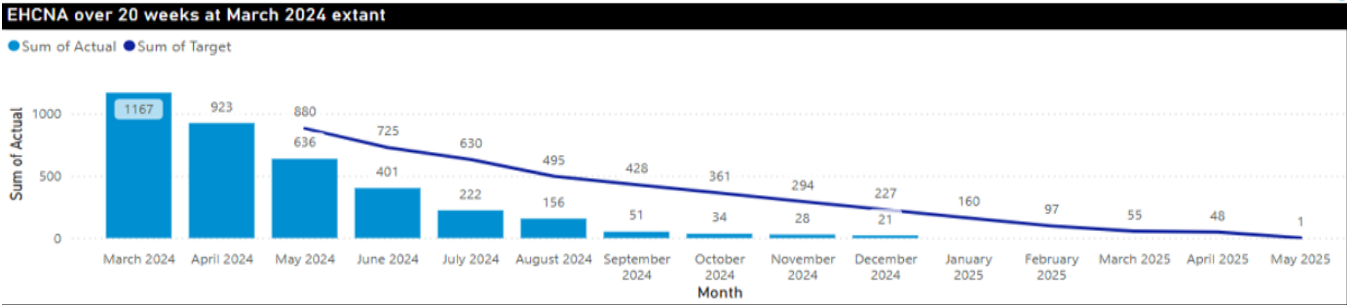
- *'It's nice to be asked what my experience is, during the process and hope my experience can help improve the service more.'*
- *'In general, I'm very happy with outcome. Things are in place, and O is better'*
- *'I feel my child's voice was included in the (EHC) Plan and we had a meeting with Ed Pysch who saw him at home.'*
- *'I had good communication with my planning co-ordinator'*
- *'I think it is very good. The Ed Pysch was very good, she was superb, she drew up and listened to us and reflected how things really were. She got X to a T. It has taken a long time for people to get X.'*

4.8 There has also been improvement in the timely completion of Education Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNAs), although the County Council realises there is more to do. Pressure in this area remains high, due to the continued increase in requests for statutory assessment this academic year, which is projected to continue to rise over the next several years. Over the last 12 months West Sussex has received 2,447 new requests for assessment and West Sussex is now responsible for 9,416 EHCPs, compared to 7821 at the same time in 2024. In December 2024 alone the County Council received 224 new requests for assessment compared to 148 in the same month in 2023.

4.9 Despite these significant challenges, the County Council is making progress on reducing lengthy waiting times for EHCNAs to be completed. For example, the average number of weeks taken to complete an EHCNA is steadily falling, so children are not waiting as long as they once were. The graph below shows that in January 2025 the average length of time taken to finalise an EHCP was 38.49 weeks compared to 48.64 weeks in February 2024. This measure is an important one because it gives us a clear insight into the trajectory of improvement.



- 4.10 The percentage of EHCPs finalised in 20 weeks is also improving, however this figure is impacted by the increased volume of requests for assessment being received by the County Council. Staff capacity, school holidays, staff illness and difficulties securing appropriate placements for children, also affect this figure. In January 2025 the County Council issued 8.6% of EHCPs within 20 weeks. It is important to note that the 20-week timeliness percentage does not indicate how much longer than the 20 weeks the assessment took, so if the EHCP was issued within 21 weeks, it would still be counted as out of time. Therefore, the average number of weeks taken to finalise an EHCP is more useful.
- 4.11 Productivity is steadily improving. The County Council has increased the number of EHCPs finalised each month. In January 2025, 163 EHCPs were issued compared to 104 in January 2024.
- 4.12 The County Council continues to reduce the number of EHCNAs that have been waiting for longer than 20 weeks. The original 'backlog' of assessments that had built up is now virtually eradicated, ahead of schedule, as shown in the graph below. The final few are actively being worked on and mostly relate to difficulties in finding appropriate placements for children.



- 4.13 The associated ongoing areas of focus are on improving the timeliness of EP assessments, improving the quality of health advice, further embedding the quality assurance process, and evaluating the evidence of impact.
- 4.14 Discussions are underway to review NHS provider input into EHCNAs and Annual Reviews as well as the longer term, ongoing oversight of this. The EHCNA response data dashboard that has been developed, allows for increased scrutiny of timelines and monitoring remedial plans developed by providers.
- 4.15 In addition to this, in health, the Sussex Community Foundation Trust are reviewing their EHCNA response process and Designated Clinical Officers (DCO) and health commissioners continue to work closely with providers to support this. Additional administrative support facilitated through the SEND Improvement Co-ordinator is in place to support the DCO regarding health involvement in tribunals.
- 4.16 The County Council accepts that a cultural shift is needed to support educational settings and partner services to improve the quality and appropriateness of requests for EHCNAs. Much work in tackling this challenge is taking place under the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme, as well

as Practice Working Group 1, in *Developing a Shared Understanding of SEND & Inclusion and Increasing Inclusive Practice in Schools*.

- 4.17 The County Council is of the view that greater focus on the 'Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice' (OAIP) is required, as well as the delivery of consistent Quality First Teaching (QFT) and an understanding and embedding of the graduated response, to enable consistent and well-timed requests for EHCNAs. To support this need, the County Council has been working closely with schools to co-produce and refresh the Ordinarily Available Inclusive provision (OAIP) guidance document, directly with groups of school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) across the county.
- 4.18 The new OAIP document is set to launch imminently, with training and opportunities to embed recommendations planned for throughout the summer 2025 term.
- 4.19 Feedback from the SENCO partners who are using the OAIP in their schools and upskilling other colleagues has been very positive, and as such, each are planning an area of focus to trial as part of their inclusive teaching and learning strategies. More data and information on impact of this will become available in the next few months, as the County Council reviews and evaluates the success of each of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) pilots, including the OAIP.
- 4.20 Moving forward, leaders will be ensuring that there is a partnership-wide approach to quality assurance and evidence of this in practice. Senior leaders, have a commitment to ensuring there are high quality plans that are reviewed regularly.
- 4.21 In addition to this, leaders will review how lessons are being learned from the effective practice in social care with the Designated Clinical Officer, who is coordinating advice and quality assurance to ensure plans are of high quality.
- 4.22 The SEND and AP Partnership Board will also continue to monitor progress against the strategic action plan and key performance indicators to secure a sustained improvement in the length of time taken to finalise an EHCP.
- 4.23 Aims and objectives continue to be met in this area and children and family's experiences are improving. However, this area of focus remains a challenge due to the significant number of statutory assessment requests that are received, and the pressure that this puts on already very stretched capacity across the partnership. The statutory SEND system itself is highly complex and often adversarial, that is causing significant challenges across the country, and not just isolated to West Sussex.

## 5 **Ofsted Focus Area 4 - Leaders should continue to implement their oversight and commissioning arrangements**

- 5.1 Improvement in this area remains challenging. A model to support planning and accompanying principles has been developed to ensure that the County Council has sufficient specialist school places, and locations for new special schools, or Specialist Support Centres (SSCs) have been identified. A SEND Strategic Outline Case (SOC) has been co-designed with special school headteachers and describes the plan to increase the number of specialist



places over the next few years, if capital funding allows. There has also been engagement with special schools on a new funding model to ensure sufficiency and transparency. However, further sampling is needed to achieve an equitable offer.

- 5.2 The total number of children and young people in the county awaiting a specialist placement varies from 600 to 750. This includes those requiring a specialist placement now (in year) and those who will need a specialist placement when they go through Age Phase Transfer in September 2025.
- 5.3 However, there are currently only 246 placements becoming available in maintained special schools from September 2025, as part of age phase transfers for Reception and Year 7.
- 5.4 The highest number of placement deficit in terms of type of need, district, and age, are generally for children and young people in secondary school with needs of: Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Speech language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Social, emotional, and mental health needs (SEMH) in the Arun, Chichester, Crawley and Worthing areas. This is closely followed by children in the infant sector, with ASD and SLCN in the Arun and Crawley areas.
- 5.5 Whilst there are many challenges in ensuring that there are sufficient specialist provision across the county, there has been progress in delivering against this priority which includes implementation of SEND SOC projects (subject to capital funding approval), aimed at creating an additional 143 Specialist Support Centre placements and 415 new special school placements over the next 5 years.
- 5.6 The insufficient number of specialist school places is a national issue and puts extreme pressure on local services. It is also compounded by many Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) also being full. The Delivering Better Value pilot projects are also aimed at increasing inclusivity in mainstream schools and using the new SEND needs Analysis Dashboard to help with current and future forecasting of placement need.
- 5.7 In terms of commissioning arrangements and oversight of Alternative Provision (AP), there has been a review of both health and social care commissioning arrangements for regulated and unregulated alternative provision. This includes those with EHCPs who are unable to access a full-time educational placement in county, and there are plans to improve the current practice around the use of AP.
- 5.8 The focus is now to clarify school responsibilities for children and young people attending AP, and we are moving towards establishing and implement a robust system for effective oversight and quality assurance of AP. The County Council has developed an AP strategy and improvement plan which now needs to be finalised and implemented.
- 5.9 Moving forward, the partnership will clarify how AP improvement is co-ordinated and overseen at a strategic level by the local area partnership, as well as clarify the measures being taken as a partnership to ensure that children and young people with SEND who do not have a school place are being supported while they wait for a placement.

- 5.10 In addition to this, the action plan is being enhanced so there is clear accountability for the development of both additional specialist school places and the development of a coherent AP strategy.
- 5.11 This area of focus is incredibly challenging and complex, with many nuances and interdependencies and therefore, progress remains relatively slow, particularly for those children and young people requiring a special school placement now. Work is being done to mitigate these challenges by offering additional support and training to colleagues within the education system, by enhancing our current offer of support, as well as upskilling practitioners and educators, so that they feel more confident in meeting the needs of a wider and more complex range of children and young people.

## **6 Ofsted Focus Area 5 - Leaders should review and further strengthen their strategic approach to preparation for adulthood**

- 6.1 Planning for a co-produced Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) strategy is underway. The service is working to improve the number of 14+ annual health checks. Additionally, there is improved post-16 tracking planned for those who were receiving SEN support and those with an EHCP in their previous learning establishment.
- 6.2 It is recognised that a strengthened strategic approach to PfA is required, along with clear transition pathways, with information about the Dynamic Support Register (DSR) and the work with CAMHS to ensure effective transition for young people moving to adult mental health services.
- 6.3 From October 2024, the duty to maintain the Dynamic Support Register (DSR) transferred to the Chief Nursing Office which has improved oversight and clinical governance. This has created an all-age single management structure for the DSR and Care Education Treatment Reviews (C(E)TR) and includes expertise in the following areas:
- Learning from lives and deaths - People with a learning disability and autistic people (LeDeR)
  - Complex case management
  - Health facilitation teams
- 6.4 Communication tools have been developed for GP practices to increase uptake of annual health checks (AHC) for 14–17-year-olds with a learning disability, and transition mapping and scoping exercise is underway within the ICB. This will ensure that there is correct representation at meetings/ panels and opportunities to link health led work to placed based programmes.
- 6.5 This has enabled the clinical capacity for Learning Disability Assessments to be strengthened and pathways have been redesigned to ensure there are clear links between functions and teams.
- 6.6 AHCs are a key transition point for 14–17-year-olds and in March 2024, 66% had taken place and 63.4% have a health action plans in place.
- 6.7 From an education perspective, the Post 16 team has supported 79 young people who are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET) and

identified as having SEND and this included support for careers guidance. This figure represents just over 15% of the current NEET referrals.

- 6.8 In addition to this, the Post 16 team is recruiting to a new post which will aid the responsibility to track all young people and further help to identify those young people who are NEET, so that we can intervene as appropriate and help to support these young people back into education or paid employment.
- 6.9 To demonstrate impact further, there is a plan to map and gather information on the lived experience of young people as they transition into adulthood and develop data in the data dashboard, to include KPIs on Preparation for Adulthood.
- 6.10 In addition to this the team will also develop information on the local offer for young people and families to prepare for adulthood and provide an update on the transition approach for young people on the Dynamic Support Register and the CAMHS caseload.

## 7 **SEND and Inclusion Strategy renewal.**

- 7.1 The SEND and Inclusion strategy is on track to launch in September 2025. Workshops have been held with colleagues, strategic partners, and stakeholders across the local area partnership, in the Autumn term 2024. Further consultation with parents and young people has taken place in January, and this information has been used to inform the upcoming consultation on the Your Voice platform, that will go live very soon (early February).
- 7.2 Committee members are welcomed to contribute to shaping and developing the strategy. Consultation on the proposed Vision, Principles and Priorities is also planned. Work has taken place across the partnership to ensure that the new SEND and Inclusion Strategy aligns and compliments other strategies, such as the 'Autism all age Strategy' and the 'Alternative Provision' strategy.

## 8 **Resources**

- 8.1 The service has an agreed budget envelope, supplemented by additional resource to support the implementation of the transformation and improvement work through the Delivering Best Value (DBV) and Change Programme Partnership (CPP) programmes; these will add an additional circa £2.5m to support service improvement and development.

## 9 **Consultation**

- 9.1 Not applicable – this is a report for information.

**Risk Implications and Mitigations**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigating Action (in place or planned)</b>
The levels of demand for special educational needs cannot be managed downwards, making the Inspection recommendations more difficult to deliver	This is a national issue affecting all local authorities and reform of the SEND system is under active consideration by central government. It is believed that the improvement plans already in place and those promoted by the Inspection report offer the authority an achievable interim position that will improve both outcomes and customer satisfaction.
The risk of not being able to resolve the backlog of EHCNA cases	This is a national issue affecting all local authorities and reform of the SEND system is under active consideration by central government. It is believed that the improvement plans already in place in West Sussex and those promoted by the Inspection report offer the authority an achievable interim position that will improve both outcomes and customer satisfaction. To support this, the structure of the SENAT team has been changed from an area basis to a more centralised and focused approach that is geared to delivering more efficient outcomes with a focus on driving performance upward.
The current plans are unable to deliver satisfactory EHCP timeliness consistent with national averages	Service management is confident that measures being put in place will continue to reduce the average number of weeks taken to complete an EHCNA. The performance levels have started to rise, and the Committee will be kept closely updated on progress.
Shortage in specialist staff functions that cannot be met through ordinary recruitment	This is also a national issue. Plans are in place locally to increase recruitment in specialist areas and will be closely monitored by the senior leadership team.
SEND Sufficiency – insufficient maintained specialist places to meet children’s needs.	This is a problem of regional dimensions. The relative shortage of places in maintained specialist provision will be impacted by the effectiveness of work to improve the sustainability of mainstream solutions. A SEND Sufficiency Plan is also in place to increase the capacity of the maintained special schools and specialist support centres to accommodate more children in West Sussex.

## **11 Equality Duty**

- 11.1 The service recognises the primary importance of educational attainment and support for children to fulfil their potential and to provide effective transitional arrangements into adulthood. A full equality impact assessment and testing against the public sector equality duty will be maintained throughout the improvement programme and inform its implementation.
- 11.2 In terms of those with a protected characteristic, the service will ensure enablement and support across all relevant categories, and this will both continue and be enhanced through the SEND Improvement agenda as part of the full equality impact assessment that will be maintained throughout the improvement programme and its implementation.

## **12 Social Value**

- 12.1 The services for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) discussed in this report will directly support improved delivery of the West Sussex Plan priority to give every child the Best Start in Life. Supporting the development of young people will continue to build resilience and social capital and contribute towards stronger and more effective communities. The implementation of the service improvements will also respect sustainability principles in accordance with the County Council's strategic policies.

## **13 Crime and Disorder Implications**

- 13.1 There are positive implications for Sections 17, 37 and 39 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in the prevention and reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour, and in reducing offending and re-offending by young people, all of which are affected by the progress activity discussed in this report.

## **14 Human Rights & Data Protection Implications**

- 14.1 The County Council has an overriding duty to safeguard the Human Rights of children and young persons in its area, and this has been recognised in its Children First agenda. The County Council is mindful of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights – The Right to Respect for Family and Private Life - and has taken relevant factors into consideration in preparing this report. The processing of personal and special category data is subject to the County Council's Data Protection Act policies and procedures in relation to discharging the County Council's and its partners' legal responsibilities.
- 14.2 The County Council is also mindful of Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - which states that all children have the right to be consulted and to have their opinions heard on any decision that affects them. Hearing, understanding, and acting upon the voice and experiences of the child is a key design principle of the SEND service improvements. The County Council will continue to ensure it fulfils all its statutory duties regarding meeting the needs of children and young persons in its area during the SEND transformation programme.

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**Appendix A:** West Sussex Local Area SEND Partnership Strategic Improvement Plan, October 2024

**Background Papers** – None