

**Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee    3 September 2024**

Report of the Assistant Director, Education and Skills

**SEND Update: Delivery of the SEND Operational Plan, 2023-2025**

**Summary**

1. This report provides the members of scrutiny with an update on the implementation of the SEND Operational Plan, 2023-25. The report sets the update within the national context which is seeing continuing and accelerating pressures for all partners and stakeholders. There is a growing national narrative which acknowledges that the SEND system is 'broken'. The recent publication of the independent report by ISOS commissioned by the County Councils Network and Local Government Association, 'Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England' (July 2024) has added to this narrative (background paper).

**Background**

2. The members of scrutiny received an update on the delivery of the SEND Operational Plan at their meeting on 5 March 2024 and agreed to maintain a watching brief on SEND (special educational needs and/or disabilities) as part of their annual work plan over the next two years. This reflects the fact that, in common with local authorities nationally, York is facing continuing financial and reputational pressures related to the implementation of provision and support for children and young people with SEND and their families.
3. The completion of the SEND Health Needs (Annex A) identifies similar pressures to the four key facts in the ISOS report. The ISOS report found that:
  - **Key fact 1:** More children and young people than ever before are being identified as having SEND;

- **Key fact 2:** There are more children and young people than ever before whose needs are not being met in mainstream education, and thus require specialist provision;
- **Key fact 3:** More money than ever before is being invested in SEND, but it is significantly less than what is actually being spent on SEND by LAs, health services and education settings;
- **Key fact 4:** Despite rapidly rising expenditure, outcomes of children and young people with SEND and families' day to day experiences of the system have not improved.

4. This analysis resonates with what we are seeing in York. We have continued to make improvements through work both on the SEND operational plan and the Safety Valve agreement however, to secure sustainable change which delivers better outcomes cannot be delivered without some significant changes in both national policy (including a review of school funding to promote inclusion) and local practice.
5. The current York SEND strategy, 2021-25, was developed in response to the previous local area SEND inspection and was written during the covid pandemic. We are in a very different place since both the SEND strategy and the Safety Valve agreement was written and in approaching the review of the current strategy it is going to be important use the recommendations in the SEND Health Needs Assessment to focus on the following:
  - Supporting an inclusive education system – delivering the SEND outcomes framework.
  - Improved commissioning by the local inclusion partnership (education, health and care).
  - Improving the quality of practice through co-production and voice, rather than an obsession with process.
  - Preparation for adulthood.

6. The table below summarises the areas of progress made in delivering the actions in the SEND Operational Plan, 2023-25:

Priority Area	Actions and Progress	Next Steps
1) Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft launch of the Talk to Me campaign has taken place.</li> <li>• Quality assurance of EHC plans is focusing on capturing evidence of the quality of children and young people’s voice (CYP). This is an area for development.</li> <li>• ICB have developed the Nothing About Us, Without Us campaign.</li> <li>• The Local Offer website has been redeveloped and relaunched</li> <li>• The Parent Carer Forum (PCF) has seen an increase in membership in 2023/24 80 to over 400. The PCF has developed as separate entity from York Inspirational Kids and has increased its strategic profile</li> </ul>	<p>To formal launch of Talk to Me campaign from January 2025. All partners to use CYP voice in commissioning decisions, service development and delivery.</p> <p>Feedback from the Nothing About Us, without Us campaign to be used to inform the development of place- based actions to address CYP mental health.</p> <p>Continue the development of the Local Offer. The development of the SEND Hub will be a physical representation of the local offer. Embed the PCF as the strategic convenor of parent/carers voice.</p> <p>Mental Capacity Act training needs to be provided for parents/carers.</p>

	through a regular programme of listening events.	
2) Sufficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SEND Health Needs assessment has been completed.</li> <li>• Two new Enhanced Resource provision bases were opened in 2023-24. Capital schemes are Danesgate, Applefields and Hob Moor Oaks have taken place between 2022 and 2024.</li> <li>• New service level agreements have been put in place with the specialist provisions.</li> <li>• The Learning Support Hub has been implemented to support more impactful intervention in mainstream settings.</li> <li>• The All About Autism Hub run by York Inspirational Kids has been in place for three years.</li> </ul>	<p>Use the SEND Health Needs assessment to inform the development of the local area Inclusion Plan to be published in 2025.</p> <p>Work with MAT Chief Executives and other school leaders to create appropriate school places to meet future needs through convening a strategic school organisation group in 2024-25.</p> <p>Complete the review of short breaks.</p> <p>Develop the SEND Hub</p>

<p>3) Early Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) document was developed and published in September 2023.</li> <li>• Ofsted inspections of mainstream schools during 2023-24 have commented positively on SEND provision in York Schools.</li> <li>• The city roll out of Early Talk for York is continuing and Baby Talk for York and More Talk for York are being piloted during 2024-25.</li> <li>• The York Neurodiversity Project was launched in January 2024. A year long programme of webinars for professionals and parents and carers is being delivered by the ADHD Foundation finishing in December 2024. 8 schools (a mix of primary and secondary) are</li> </ul>	<p>To review the impact of the OAP and the consistency of its application and us.</p> <p>During 2024-25 work with school leaders to develop and implement the Inclusive Education Charter based on the SEND outcomes framework.</p> <p>Ensure that the work on the York Neurodiversity Project is reflected in the All Age Autism Strategy.</p> <p>Work with MAT Chief Executives and other school leaders to create appropriate school places to meet future needs through convening a strategic school organisation group in 2024-25.</p> <p>Improve oversight and quality assurance of children and young people placed in out of area provision, elective home education and EOTAS (educated other than at school)</p>
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	<p>taking the ADHD Friendly Schools Award. The Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) project is being implemented across 9 primary schools in partnership with the Parent Carer Forum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The health commissioner has provided a second year of funding for the Reintegration worker role. This role is proving successful in supporting CYP with EHC plans to return to school/education after being persistently or severely absent.</li> </ul>	
<p>4) Transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Protocol has been published. Strategic and Operational PfA groups have been implemented.</li> <li>• The SEND Employment Forum has been</li> </ul>	<p>The Parent Carer Forum to inform the review and further development of the PfA protocol during 2024-25.</p> <p>Parents/carers are requesting more support/information about what happens when an EHC plan</p>

	<p>formed and is active in developing pathways to employment, particularly through supported internship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Learning Support Hub has implemented targeted transition support for identified individuals in the reception and Year 6 cohorts.</li> </ul>	<p>ends.</p> <p>Further develop business engagement to support the development of the network of inclusive employers.</p>
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7. The academic year 2023-24 has been a challenging one for the local authority SEND team; in December the SEND casework manager left the local authority and in May 2024 the Head of Service retired. There have also been capacity issues within the educational psychology service due to an inability to recruit to vacant posts. This coupled with an increase in requests for assessment has had a severe impact on the 20 week statutory assessment process. This has impacted on the quality improvement journey in SEND services. In particular, the timeliness, quality and consistency of EHC plans has been adversely impacted.
8. The SEND casework manager post has been successfully filled and the new manager started work in August 2024. The head of service post is currently being delivered through the secondment of two experienced members of staff working together to provide interim leadership. The head of service role is being covered by the manager of the specialist teaching team and the school inclusion adviser. They are implementing an improvement plan which is focused on improving the quality of practice through more impactful quality assurance and more robust anticipatory commissioning in partnership with health and care.

## **Consultation**

9. Consultation with stakeholders and co-production with parents and carers remain central to the delivery of SEND improvement priorities. Engagement with stakeholders was part of the SEND Health Needs Assessment and co-production is essential to the successful development of the SEND Hub.

## **Options**

10. This purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the SEND Operational Plan. The members of scrutiny may want to consider further scrutiny of any specific aspects of the plan and the review of the SEND Strategy as part of their annual workplan over the next 2 years.

## **Council Plan**

11. Affordability – through delivering SEND transformation which ensures that partnership resources are used to jointly commission and achieve best value outcomes for children and young people with SEND
12. Health & Wellbeing – the delivery of the SEND strategy and operational plan promotes integrated working across, education, health and care.
13. Equalities & Human rights – through ensuring that children with SEND have access to education that meets their needs and that they are able to live their best lives in York.
14. The Environment – promoting active travel where appropriate through independent travel training

## 15. **Implications**

### **Financial**

Management of the Safety Valve agreement carries on-going financial risks.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

None.



## **Equalities**

No equalities impact as this is an update paper with no decision to be taken.

## **Legal**

Work on SEND is governed by the Children and Families Act, 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice, 2015.

## **Crime and Disorder**

None.

## **Information Technology (IT)**

None.

## **Property**

None.

## **Other**

None.

## **Risk Management**

16. Risks to the delivery of the SEND operational plan include:

- On-going changes in staffing and leadership across education, health and care;
- The challenging financial climate across public sector partners;
- Growing complexity and sufficiency of appropriate provision to meet need.

These risks are being mitigated through the work taking place to deliver the operational plan, continued development of the local area partnership, particularly with parents and carers and the Safety Valve agreement.

## **Recommendations**

16. Members are asked to consider contents of this report to note both the progress made but also the continuing financial and reputational challenges that SEND poses for the local authority, partners and stakeholders.

Reason: To ensure that the members of scrutiny have an understanding and oversight of the on-going opportunities and challenges to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

## Contact Details

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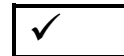
**Report**  
**Approved**



**Date** 19 August 2024

**Wards Affected:** List wards or tick box to indicate all

**All**



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers

Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England, ISOS report July 2024 - [Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND \(squarespace.com\)](https://www.squarespace.com)

## Annexes

Annex A SEND Health Needs Assessment

## Abbreviations

CYP Children and young people  
EHCP Education, health and care plan  
PfA Preparation for adulthood  
SEND Special educational needs and/or disabilities.