

Cabinet

Tuesday, 16 June 2026

ADDENDA 1

8. SEND Reform Plan (Pages 3 - 58)

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People

Forward Plan Ref: 2026/107

Key decision

Contact: Anna Jennings, Head of Transformation

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Report by Director of Children's Services (CA8)

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- a) **Approve the draft special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reform plan for Oxfordshire to support submission to the Department of Education by 19th June.**
- b) **Delegate authority for delivery of the SEND reform plan, subject to business cases and appropriate governance for specific initiatives, to the Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer, overseen by the SEND Executive and Local Area Partnership.**
- c) **Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer to make any necessary minor amendments to the SEND reform plan prior to the final submission deadline to the Department of Education.**
- d) **Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer to utilise Year 1 of the Experts at Hand Department of Education grant in line with the direction outlined in this report. This will include recruitment of roles required and through procuring external services in accordance with the grant conditions and Procurement Regulations 2024**

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CABINET 16 June 2026

SEND reform plan

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

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 - a) Approve the draft special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reform plan for Oxfordshire to support submission to the Department of Education by 19th June.
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 - d) Delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services and the Section 151 Officer to utilise Year 1 of the Experts at Hand Department of Education grant in line with the direction outlined in this report. This will include recruitment of roles required and through procuring external services in accordance with the grant conditions and Procurement Regulations 2024.

Executive Summary

2. This paper outlines the work that has been carried out to date to prepare a local SEND reform plan for Oxfordshire, in line with the latest Government plans for SEND reform. Oxfordshire is required by the Department for Education to prepare and submit its SEND reform plan by 19 June 2026 to access a High Needs stability grant which may fund up to 90% of Oxfordshire's County Council Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.
3. The SEND reform plan has been developed with partners including health and education alongside input from children , young people and families. It responds to the Government criteria in full and aims to create a local SEND system which both improves outcomes for children and young people and is financially sustainable into the future.

4. The SEND Reform plan does not change the current statutory duties in relation to the Children and Families Act 2014.

Oxfordshire's SEND reform plan

Context

5. In February 2026, the Government published its Schools white paper 'Every child achieving and thriving' ([Every child achieving and thriving \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#)) and proposals for SEND reform ([SEND reform: putting children and young people first - GOV.UK](#)). These publications go alongside existing change programmes set out in the Best Start in life, Families First reforms and Post-16 and Skills.
6. These two recent publications set out major changes to the way we support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), including how schools will take a lead role. Delivering the reforms will require wholesale system transformation, working in close partnership with schools and all education settings, health services, our parent carer forum, and other partners across Oxfordshire and are estimated to take up to 10 years to fully implement. The Local Authority is responsible for convening and leading partners through this transformation, including co-design, pilot and implementation.
7. The schools white paper sets out transformation across early years and schools, where schools will serve their local community of children through developing a wider inclusion offer. This includes all secondary schools hosting inclusion bases, working together through cluster arrangements, widespread workforce training to upskill teachers and requiring local school leaders to focus collaboration and partnership. The Department for Education (DfE) have commissioned changes to the Ofsted framework which will further set out expectations of school leaders on how inclusion will form part of inspection regulation and have signalled the start of Multi-Academy Trust inspections.
8. Under existing statutory duties, Local Authorities have responsibilities for place planning and sufficiency and now have new duties to convene and support the development and establishment of new working arrangements and pathways. The white paper further sets out the expectation all schools to be part of a Trust, whether an existing Multi-Academy Trust, or a newly formed Local Authority Trust.
9. The SEND consultation (which closed on 18 May) proposed fundamental changes to the current SEND system, seeking to reduce the number of children who may require an Education, Health and Care plan, through an enhanced inclusion offer where children have their needs met earlier and locally, introducing Experts at Hand, and changes to mediation and appeal rights. Following consultation, the Government are expected to seek and mandate changes to legislation, which are not expected to be complete until 2029-2030. Funding to schools is expected but as yet unannounced.

10. Government expectations have been further clarified that the implementation of the white paper must begin immediately to provide the building blocks and infrastructure for new legislation, supported by planned changes to Ofsted and Multi-Academy Trust inspections and success will be judged on a range of outcomes including the experience and confidence of parents in seeking additional support for their children through a reduction in Education, Health and Care plans, alongside Local Authority transformation.
11. Collectively these signal the largest change to the education system in decades and require Local Authorities to maintain current compliance with the existing SEND legal frameworks and implement transformation concurrently. Government have laid out the need for this transformation to be planned, implemented and monitored through the development of a local SEND reform plan to be submitted on 19 June 2026.
12. This is a comprehensive plan involving in-depth data analysis, financial information and forecasting, as well as our proposed mitigations to alleviate pressure on our high need's deficit, details of how we will deliver the reforms locally, including how the Local Area Partnership plan to utilise the Experts at Hand three-year grant and a self-assessment maturity index to be completed.
13. We will be required to report quarterly on delivery of the plan, including KPIs and financial information for the next three years. If the Government is satisfied that our SEND Reform plan meets the requirements and we make appropriate progress, we will be eligible for funding to repay up to 90% of Oxfordshire's dedicated schools grant deficit as at end March 2026 and the Government will consider additional High Needs Stability Grant funding to reduce in-year overspend on the High Needs budget.
14. Like most upper-tier authorities across the county, since the pandemic and rising inflation, Oxfordshire County Council has overspent on its High Needs component of the Dedicated Schools Grant. In Oxfordshire, this has resulted in a deficit of £149.3m at 31/03/2026. The High Needs stability grant is expected to fund 90% of that balance, meaning that if successful, the brought forward net deficit would be £16.3m instead of £149.3m and rising.
15. If we get this right, this is an opportunity to place Oxfordshire County Council and its successor authorities on a sustainable financial footing and deliver whole system SEND and education reform which achieves better life outcomes for children, young people and their families prior to Governments further planned changes to the relevant legislation from 2029, the details of which are not yet known.

Our local SEND reform plan

16. Since the Government announcement in February, work has been carried out at pace to develop a local SEND reform plan for Oxfordshire. In doing so, we have drawn on the learning from our SEND improvement journey to date, the work of our SEND local area partnership and our new Oxfordshire Education Partnership. As a local area partnership, we undertook a maturity assessment

against Government criteria which has also shaped this plan and is a requirement.

17. Our SEND reform plan is designed to align with the strategic direction set out in our SEND strategy, which is currently out for consultation. The same vision and eight commitments have been adopted at the heart of the SEND reform plan.

(a) Our vision: As a Local Area Partnership, we are committed to taking accountable and purposeful action to ensure that children and young people with SEND, along with their families, are valued, respected and empowered to thrive in an inclusive and supportive community.

Together, we embrace a holistic approach that celebrates individuals' strengths, aspirations and achievements. Through partnership, involvement and collaboration, we support children and young people with SEND, their families and carers to fulfil their wishes and aspirations.

(b) Our eight commitments:

- Inclusive Culture: Recognise and value diversity so that every child and young person with SEND feels included, respected, and supported.
- High-Quality Provision: Deliver person-centred, high-quality inclusive provision that is flexible, ambitious and continuously improves outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND
- Proactive Engagement: Consistently seek, hear and respect the views of children, young people with SEND, and their families to inform and enhance how we do things.
- Early Intervention: Ensure early identification so that timely intervention leads to better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Working Together Effectively: Ensure that all partners who work in SEND collaborate effectively and transparently - with other agencies, and with the children and young people, and the families they serve.
- Sense of Belonging: Ensure that children and young people with SEND experience a sense of belonging in their local community through accessible activities, inclusive environments, supportive peer groups, and health services that are welcoming and easy to access.
- Preparing for Adulthood: Empower young people with SEND to transition into adulthood with confidence, supported to build the skills and opportunities that are meaningful to them.
- Skilled Workforce: Recruit, develop and retain a high-quality, skilled and confident workforce to deliver excellent services, drive innovation and improve outcomes for CYP with SEND and their families.

18. Workshops have been carried out including with education and health partners and parent carer representatives to develop the SEND reform plan. Our SEND Improvement and Assurance Board has reviewed the plan, and we have also received and incorporated feedback from our DfE advisers.

19. In line with the guidance from the Department for Education, our plan has been structured around four key building blocks and four system enablers.

Four key building blocks:

- (a) **Strengthening inclusion across education settings:** Organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.
- (b) **Access to specialist support and local placements:** Improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.
- (c) **System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production:** Putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.
- (d) **Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours:** Using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

Four system enablers:

- (e) Capital
- (f) Workforce
- (g) Data/digital systems
- (h) Communication.

- 20. The plan sets out how we will build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support early to achieve and thrive through more inclusive settings and stronger local partnerships. We will improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need, and improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system
- 21. The plan includes detail about how we will implement some of the key new elements of SEND reform, including new working arrangements for schools through locality clusters, Experts at Hand and inclusion bases.
- 22. It also sets out how we will stabilise finances and improve value for money. More children will be supported to have their needs met in high-quality, inclusive mainstream settings. Children who need additional support will receive early, targeted interventions, and children who need specialist provision will be supported locally with sufficient and sustainable high-quality services.
- 23. The plan is underpinned by in-depth demand forecasting and cost modelling. Key mitigations have been identified to make our local SEND system financially sustainable, as follows:

1. Additional Special School Places – as set out in our deficit management plan (DMP)
 2. Resource Bases - Specialist Units in Primary and Secondary - DMP
 3. Specialist Units - Secondary Schools
 4. Inclusion Support Bases in Secondary Schools
 5. Specialist Units - Post 16 (Further Education Colleges)
 6. Financing for Clusters
 7. Experts at Hand
 8. Enhanced Pathways
 9. Contract Management Efficiencies
 10. Reintegration into Mainstream - Long Term Alternative Provision
 11. Increasing Access to Therapy
24. In addition to these mitigations, we know that a core part of our plan being successful is the improved inclusion outcomes for children, young people and families through a focus on attendance in mainstream schools: local schools will meet needs of most children. We will track these through qualitative feedback from our children, young people and families as well as the key performance indicators aligned under the following core objectives:
- a) More inclusive mainstream settings
 - b) Improved confidence in mainstream settings
 - c) Meeting children's and young people's needs locally
 - d) Meeting children's and young people's needs earlier
 - e) Using the views of children, young people and families to inform system transformation.

Governance and next steps

25. This plan is due to be submitted to the Department for Education on 19 June 2026. The DfE will review the plan and identify whether it meets the criteria, providing their formal response by November 2026. Quarterly reporting will be required and assessed to determine whether Oxfordshire is eligible for the High Needs stability grant to assist with our Dedicated Schools Grant deficit.
26. The plan has been developed by a SEND reform planning group, chaired by the Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion as the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) and including finance, commissioning, data, property operational and health colleagues. This will become the SEND reform delivery group, with task and finish groups established beneath it for key workstreams as required.
27. The SEND Executive will act as the most senior governing body for the SEND reform plan, with the SEND reform delivery group escalating key risks, issues and decisions as required. This group is formed of the Oxfordshire County Council's Chief Executive Officer, Section 151 officer, Director of Children's Services and Deputy Director for Education and Inclusion, as well as senior leaders in the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board, education leaders and the independent Chair of our SEND Improvement and Assurance Board.

28. Other partners will be engaged in the successful delivery of this plan, including through our SEND Improvement and Assurance Board and existing SEND local area partnership governance, as well as Schools Forum and our Oxfordshire Education Partnership.
29. Although timescales have been challenging, we have sought to engage with relevant stakeholders as much as possible in the development of this plan, including partners in education, health and Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum as outlined above. We will continue to work closely with partners to further develop, design and implement our response to SEND reforms and to give wider stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector, providers, children and young people and families, opportunities to learn more about SEND reform and shape delivery in Oxfordshire.
30. Robust programme management will be key to the success of our SEND reform plan, and an approach is already being established for clear project planning, risk and issue management, and tracking of progress.
31. The Department for Education is making available a grant of £4,945,966 to Oxfordshire to deliver SEND reform, for year one of a three-year transformation grant. Of this, 80% must be spent on direct delivery of Experts at Hand. 10% can be spent on administrative costs for delivering the Experts at Hand offer, and 10% (£495,967) has been allocated to local authority transformation.
32. This funding is not sufficient to deliver the large-scale system change required to successfully achieve SEND reform. As such, a business case has been approved to access the Oxfordshire County Council transformation reserve to fund additional officer capacity. This element will be monitored by the new Portfolio Board, reporting to the Senior Leadership Board. In addition to this, we will draw on the expertise and capacity of existing officers to realise this generational opportunity to make local SEND services sustainable and deliver the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families.
33. A proportion (28% of the direct delivery funding) of the Experts at Hand grant will be used to fund additional Speech and Language Therapists and Occupational Therapists in accordance with the DfE grant conditions. It is proposed that the Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 is used to transfer the allocated Experts at Hand funding to the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (ICB) to pass through the funding to Oxford Health Foundation Trust. The Trust will recruit to additional therapy roles to encompass the Experts at Hand offer into the Children's Integrated Therapy Service. This will ensure a seamless continuum of support across universal, targeted and specialist provision, so that children and young people do not fall between gaps in service delivery. A schedule of the S75 will detail the specification of the Experts at Hand funding, outcomes to be achieved and any payment schedules based on recruitment of roles.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

34. The Oxfordshire SEND reform plan aligns with the vision, values, objectives and priorities in the County Council's Corporate plan, particularly in relation to fairer and healthier. It promotes health and education outcomes for children and young people with special education needs and disabilities – from early years to post-16. Getting this right means that children, young people and families will receive support earlier, in a joined-up multi-agency way, that enables them to thrive in their local communities and achieve the best possible life outcomes.

Financial Implications

35. The proposals set out in this report have significant financial implications. The local SEND reform plan is intended to support both delivery of SEND reform and the long-term financial sustainability of the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). On 31 March 2026, Oxfordshire's cumulative DSG deficit was £149.3m. Subject to approval of the local SEND reform plan and satisfaction of the grant conditions, the Government's High Needs Stability Grant is expected to fund up to 90% of the eligible DSG deficit balance at that date, which would reduce the residual deficit to be managed locally to around £13.5m. This funding can only be used to extinguish eligible historic DSG deficit and should not be treated as available to fund ongoing expenditure. The grant remains subject to Department for Education approval of the SEND Reform plan, confirmation of eligibility and continued satisfactory progress against required delivery and reporting arrangements.
36. The Department for Education have not yet provided details of the level of DSG deficits that will be funded by High Needs stability grant for the 2026/27 and 2027/28 financial year, but it is expected to be a higher percentage for robust SEND reform plans.
37. In addition, the report identifies estimated Experts at Hand grant funding of £4,945,966 in 2026/27 to support delivery of SEND reform. In line with grant conditions, 80% of this funding must be spent on direct delivery of the Experts at Hand offer, 10% may be used for administration of that offer, and 10% (£495,967) is available to support local authority transformation activity.
38. The report also notes that this funding is not sufficient to deliver the full scale of system change required. Additional capacity has therefore been approved through the Council's transformation reserve. Any further financial commitments arising from implementation of specific initiatives within the plan, including new provision, specialist bases, capital schemes or service changes, will be subject to separate detailed business cases, governance and approval processes. These will need to identify the full revenue and capital implications, affordability, funding sources, deliverability and any impact on the medium-term financial position.

Jane Billington, Strategic Finance Business Partner,
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Legal Implications

39. No legal comment required.

Leanne Schrouder, Locum SEN and Education Solicitor
leanne.schrouder@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

40. A specialist, in-house team drawing on the expertise and capacity of existing officers will be put in place on a fixed term contract basis, to deliver the SEND reform plans. This additional officer capacity will be funded by the Oxfordshire County Council transformation fund. This approach provides the most cost-effective option for delivering the necessary SEND reform and white paper education transformation securing the high needs stability grant, while managing spend and prioritising upskilling in-house.

Michelle Higgs, Strategic People Partner Children's and Education
Michelle.higgs@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality & Inclusion Implications

41. This SEND reform plan is designed to have a positive impact on equality and inclusion and is in line with the latest Government guidance. Children with special educational needs and disabilities will be supported to have their needs met earlier, in their local communities, and to achieve the best possible life outcomes.
42. Detailed business cases will be developed for specific initiatives outlined in this plan (for example Experts at Hand, or new inclusion bases) and this will include in-depth equalities impact assessment.

Sustainability Implications

43. This paper does not have sustainability implications. Detailed business cases will be developed for specific initiatives outlined in this plan and this will include in-depth climate impact assessments where relevant, for example in relation to work to increase local school place sufficiency.

Risk Management

44. The SEND reform plan (Annex 1) includes a section analysing the key risks as relevant to this programme. These include sufficiency of specialist provision and workforce. Mitigations are in place, including targeted recruitment, workforce development and use of alternatively qualified staff, and our place planning sufficiency strategy.
45. There will be a proactive and robust approach to risk management as part of the overall programme, including risk logs, regular discussion and review at thematic groups and the SEND delivery group, and escalation as required to the SEND Executive.

Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services

Annex: Annex 1: Oxfordshire's local SEND reform plan

Background papers: UK Government's plans for SEND reform [SEND reform: putting children and young people first \(HTML version\) - GOV.UK](#)

Contact Officer: Annette Perrington, Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion
June 2026



Oxfordshire Local SEND Reform Plan

Developing a Local SEND Reform Plan is an important first step for local areas to set out how they will lay the foundation for reform, and design an approach tailored to their local context. A shared plan which focuses on co-designing the local approach as system partners and with children, young people and families will help foster collective responsibility for delivering the reforms.

It is critical that all system partners, including health, education and childcare settings, work together to design and deliver the Local SEND Reform Plan, under the local authority's leadership. It is also crucial that representative family carers e.g. the local Parent Carer Forum, are involved in the development of the plan.

The expectation is that this plan is discussed, agreed, and signed off at your relevant SEND Governance Board. As a minimum, the plan must be formally signed off by the Local Authority Chief Executive (CEO), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Chief Executive, the Local Authority Director of Children's Service (DCS), the Integrated Care Board NHS Place Director, and the Local Authority Chief Financial Officer (CFO/Section 151 Officer). We encourage other colleagues and partners who have contributed to also review and sign-off the plan, particularly early years, school, college and trust leaders.

Name of Local Authority: Oxfordshire County Council

Name of Integrated Care Board: Thames Valley

Local SEND Reform Plan SRO: Annette Perrington, Deputy Director of Education & Inclusion

Executive Summary

A brief summary of your local system 'change story' – your local context, where you are now, where you want to get to in the next 3 years, how you know you are succeeding and how you will know you have achieved your vision for the next 3 years. Please include a brief qualitative summary. This summary should also include your assessment of current and forecast performance against the headline metrics. Please structure your 'change story' using the following aims:

- Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships
- Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need
- Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system
- Stabilise finances and improve value for money

Oxfordshire's local area partnership enters SEND reform from a stronger foundation following the lifting of the DfE improvement notice in 2026, however the local system continues to face significant pressure, demand for assessment and support is rising, particularly in autism, SEMH, and speech, language and communication needs. Too many children and young people still do not have their needs met at the earliest opportunity or locally, placing strain on mainstream schools, specialist provision, therapy services and out-of-county placements, and confidence among families is not yet sufficiently positive.

This plan sets out a three-year programme of whole-system reform designed to improve outcomes, build confidence, collaboration through partnerships and place services on a more sustainable footing. Our ambition is to create a more inclusive 0-25 system in which more children and young people with SEND are supported to thrive in their local communities, with less reliance on escalation, diagnosis or distant specialist placements and where parents show confidence in local provision through their choices and reported experiences and where children and young people will feel prepared for their adult lives.

Delivery will focus on a clearer shared standard for inclusion; stronger, consistent ordinarily available provision to meet most needs, earlier support, wider outreach, and locality-based multidisciplinary Experts at Hand teams supporting 0-25, aligned to new school and Family Hub clusters so that children's needs can be identified and met earlier; improving transitions; reducing exclusions and strengthening attendance, re-engagement and reintegration into education with a focus on mainstream. Expanded specialist capacity is required for children who need on-going and continued support across education, health and care, to ensure children are accessing education suitable to their needs, return to education and to reduce long travel times and reflects the lower than national average of special school provision and is needed alongside the development of inclusion hubs in all secondary schools to meet the needs of most children. Expanding the continuum of provision, deployment of Experts at hands, and stronger collaboration throughout the system will create the optimum conditions for system and culture shift towards inclusion and a wider universal offer at mainstream schools.

Workforce capability will be developed through cluster and joint training, improved access to specialist advice, resources and tools, and stronger quality assurance. By year three, we expect more consistent needs-led and inclusive practice across the system and less dependence on EHCPs as the main route to support. By year five there will be a reduced need for specialist provision due to a comprehensive wider mainstream offer, created through our expanded continuum of provision, system shift, EAH, collaboration and stronger partnerships and joint accountability.

Oxfordshire will deliver SEND reform through a **local area partnership model**, embedding integrated education, health and care delivery within **locality clusters aligned to Family Hubs and the neighbourhood health framework**. This ensures **equitable, community-based access** for all children, young people and families. At the core is a **co-designed Experts at Hand (EAH) multi-disciplinary team (MDT) model**, bringing together Educational Psychologists, therapists and specialist practitioners to deliver a **graduated, needs-led offer** across all levels of provision. This model will:

- **Shift support earlier** into mainstream settings, reducing the need for escalation to statutory services
- **Strengthen inclusion and collaboration** through workforce development, outreach and system capacity building
- Provide a **single, coordinated front door** with centralised triage for access to EAH
- Enable **joined-up delivery and accountability** across education, health and care
- Use **needs-led data** to target resources and drive impact

Delivery will be driven by the local area partnership, maximising existing local authority, education and NHS provision and engaging wider VCSE community partners. Clinical services will be delivered through established joint commissioning arrangements, supported by clinical leadership, governance and quality assurance. The model also strengthens cross-border arrangements, ensuring continuity of support and coordinated pathways for children and young people accessing provision across local authority boundaries and through strengthened relationships with Out of Local authority schools.

Overall, this represents a system-wide shift to early intervention, integrated delivery and improved outcomes, reducing demand on specialist services while improving experience and access for families.

The intended impact is a SEND system that is joined up, easier to navigate, and more trusted by children, young people and families, supported through a co-designed SEND strategy, clearer communication, an improved Local Offer, stronger parent carer and youth engagement, and visible feedback showing how lived experience is driving improvements. Over time, we will increase consistency in mainstream provision, expand early intervention, improve attendance and reduce suspensions, exclusions, supporting children and young people's needs locally from the earliest point and strengthening preparation for adulthood.

Financial sustainability is a central success measure. Oxfordshire's DSG high needs deficit is £136.6 million on 31 March 2026, the plan therefore shifts the system towards earlier intervention, stronger local inclusion and better targeted specialist capacity, supported by improved joint commissioning and better use of data. This will deliver better value for money by reducing avoidable escalation and enabling more children and young people to be supported successfully closer to home.

Developed jointly across local areas partners including health, education and parent carer representatives, this plan brings together SEND improvement, inclusion and financial recovery within a single three-year programme: mobilisation in year one, implementation in year two, and embedding and scaling in year three. It provides a clear strategic direction for reform while retaining the flexibility to respond to national policy changes and the evolving needs of Oxfordshire's children, young people and families.

Section 1 – Vision and Goals

What the local area partnership is trying to achieve?

Please set out your goals for your local system. These should be clear, aligned to the vision set out in the Schools White Paper, small in number and measurable. These goals should include clear reference to:

Outcomes for children

Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system

Management of finances to secure value for money

We have co-designed our vision and key eight commitments for SEND and inclusion, working across our local area partnership and with children, young people and families. This underpins our new SEND strategy, informs our ongoing SEND improvement work, and provides the bedrock for SEND reform in Oxfordshire.

Our vision: As a Local Area Partnership, we are committed to taking accountable and purposeful action to ensure that children and young people with SEND, along with their families, are valued, respected and empowered to thrive in an inclusive and supportive community. Together, we embrace a holistic approach that celebrates individuals' strengths, aspirations and achievements. Through partnership, involvement and collaboration, we support children and young people with SEND, their families and carers to fulfil their wishes and aspirations. This is underpinned by eight core, shared commitments (see SEND strategy appendix).

To support fulfilment of this vision and SEND reform we have identified five core inclusion measures. Each of these is underpinned by a detailed suite of targeted KPIs as outlined later in this plan. Our core inclusion measures:

- IM1 More inclusive mainstream settings
- IM2 Improved confidence in mainstream settings
- IM3 Meeting children's and young people's needs locally
- IM4 Meeting children's and young people's needs earlier

- IM5 Using the views of children, young people and families to inform system transformation

We know that if we are successful in progressing these inclusion measures (and the KPIs that inform them), our local SEND system will improve outcomes for children, boost confidence of parents, carers and young people, and become financially sustainable.

Section 2 – Strategy

Where the local area partnership expects to be in the next 3 years

A description of what your local system would look like in the next 3 years in line with the national vision set out in the Schools White Paper and set within the context of where you are starting from as a local system.

In particular, as commissioning system partners, you should reflect on and agree what your fully fledged **Experts At Hand Offer** model should be and how this will be deployed via mainstream settings and providers (including those not based in your area – e.g. further education colleges attended by your young people) to build their capacity as well as identify and meet the needs of children and young people earlier and without the need for a statutory assessment for Education, Health and Care.

To help you fully consider the scope and scale of change required, you may find it useful to structure your response using these 4 building blocks of an inclusive system, reflecting on what is working well in your system, what you are most worried about, what needs to change, and how the enablers will help you achieve your 3 year vision.

When summarising where your local area partnership currently is, please include an assessment of where you are in reference to the core minimum requirements above and how you bridge the gap, making reference to and attaching additional documents that provide underlying evidence for your summary.

Strengthening inclusion across education settings– organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production – putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

Access to specialist support and local placements – improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours – using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

Local blueprint for the next 3 years	Where we are	Where we will be in the next 3 years
	<i>(a short summary of where you are now including a reflection on what is working well, what needs to change and the status of the enablers that underpin your system)</i>	<i>(a short summary of the vision for your local system in the next 3 years including the system enablers, reflecting how your Experts At Hand Offer model will underpin this vision, helping you scale and enhance what is working well and change what is not working so well)</i>
Building block 1: Strengthening inclusion across education	<p>There is a clear strategic system wide commitment to inclusion, with increasing focus on supporting children and young people to thrive in any school or setting, across all ages and stages.</p> <p>Guidance and support for all settings is strengthening, including Universal/Ordinarily Available SEND Provision (OASP) materials and practitioner support, which have been positively received. This helps support consistent expectations across settings. Established SENDCO helpdesk, well utilised by a range (and phase) of settings. Schools and settings are engaged in CPD programme offered by the partnership.</p> <p>Enhanced Pathways and early intervention approaches are well established,</p>	<p>We will have a shared understanding of what good inclusive practice looks like which helps to strengthen inclusive culture across early years, schools and colleges so children and young people with SEND feel welcomed, respected and belong in their local communities, by building confidence, capability and consistency in mainstream settings with clear, shared expectations of inclusive practice and responsibility for outcomes for all children.</p> <p>Through sustained investment in inclusive and specialist provision within local communities, linked to Family Hubs offer and neighbourhood care more children and young people with SEND will be supported to thrive in mainstream education, without the need for an EHCP and in line with parental preference. This will be underpinned by a stronger use of data and lived experience to understand the drivers of EHC needs</p>

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	<p>promoting early support and reducing escalation.</p> <p>Behaviour Support team rolled out across the county, supporting children and young people at risk of suspension or exclusion.</p> <p>A strong in-reach and outreach support programme from specialist settings to professionals in mainstream schools, building confidence, and supporting inclusion.</p> <p>Alternative Education Provision (AEP) is increasingly used as part of a continuum of support, alongside work with schools to develop in-house and preventative approaches.</p> <p>Schools are engaged with the Wellcomm pilot to support early identification of speech, language and communication needs and we are developing a model for wider roll out.</p> <p>Well established and well-regarded SENSS (free for all schools), EP (traded offer), therapies (SLT/OT) service</p> <p>There is currently a long wait for children to access to Therapies: 2 years for SLT, 1 year for OT, 4 years for a NDC assessment and often EHCNA requests are submitted to access specialist provision. Although the Oxfordshire CIT team provide all three therapies to all mainstream and special schools (excluding private and INMSS) the support offered is either at a targeted level – offering a time limited block of therapy or is specialist input because of a EHCP or health referral.</p> <p>Support from the therapy teams sits at the targeted and specialist level with little universal work delivered by specialist teams to settings. There is a list of training recommended by the CIT for each therapeutic area, some of which is delivered by CIT.</p> <p>There is structured transition toolkit in place to support children moving from nursery to reception and primary to secondary through early identification of need, joint planning with settings and schools, and close engagement with families to ensure a smooth, confident start to school and transition to secondary school, however this is not utilised by all schools and settings.</p>	<p>assessment demand and inform a more responsive and sustainable system.</p> <p>Ordinarily available SEND provision and graduated approach will be delivered consistently using national Practice standards and embedded across all schools, colleges and early years settings and will inform their inclusion strategy's and offers at different levels. Individual Support Plans will be high quality, child focused, co-designed with families and consistently used across all education settings. Clear dispute resolution and escalation processes will be place. Practice will be shared across networks at locality and district levels, and education settings will have access to a clear core workforce development offer, agreed across the local area partnership and planned to increase high-quality, child-centred and ambitious inclusive provision, delivered in cohorts or at individual level as need required.</p> <p>Oxfordshire's Enhanced Pathways model will continue to grow, including children with EHCP's in all schools where need is identified, based on sound evidence data, positive impact on meetings children's needs and improving their outcomes, supporting children to stay in their local community and creating a more inclusive culture at mainstream. Children on enhanced pathways will have a more developed and clearer pathway offer, supporting onward transition. The programme has received positive evaluation from parents of children on a pathway.</p> <p>Support for children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs will be co-ordinated at Locality and district level, through named Behaviour Inclusion Officers working in close partnership with schools, Family Hubs, MHST and special school and Alternative provision Outreach, providing early intervention, targeted support, and continuity of practice for CYPs; to prevent exclusions and ensure smooth, timely support and reintegration. With a focus on planning for transition points, early and with families.</p> <p>The expansion of Special School Outreach and development of Alternative provision outreach developed in consultation with mainstream schools, will strengthen inclusive practice by extending specialist expertise into the mainstream sector, enabling earlier support and reducing the need for children to need EHCPs or specialist placements. This approach will be data and needs led, focusing on the greatest areas of need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oxfordshire will deliver a partnership-based EAH model across locality clusters, ensuring accessible, community-based support. • A co-designed Experts at Hand multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach will bring together education, health and care professionals to deliver a graduated, needs-led offer from universal to specialist support, available to early years, schools and FE colleges • EAH Provision will be delivered through existing local authority and NHS partners working within a shared framework, through an operational delivery group reporting through governance, with integrated teams and clear clinical and professional leadership. A named lead will be in place. • The model strengthens early intervention, builds workforce capability in mainstream settings, and integrates services to improve outcomes and reduce demand for specialist provision.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embeds inclusive practice through whole-setting training, coaching and support, while also delivering timely, targeted, targeted plus and specialist interventions at individual and cohort level where needed • A single front door and centralised triage will enable coordinated access, equitable delivery across localities, and more effective use of data to drive continuous improvement without reliance on diagnosis or statutory processes. <p>Early years settings, schools and colleges will have access to and training for a range of digital screening and profiling tools such as WellComm for communication and language needs (ELSEC) and Neurodivergent / SEND screening tools based on PINS modelling to identify needs to provide targeted resources through the graduated approach, building on the learning from PINS programme.</p> <p>Alternative Education Provision will be an integral part of the graduated response, with strengthened expectations around planning, quality and reintegration and a clear Outreach offer. This will follow the 3-tier model, with a focus on reintegration and engagement and transition into mainstream schools and college and will ensure that placements are purposeful, time limited and focused on securing successful reintegration wherever possible, and where appropriate focus on transition and pathway planning.</p> <p>Early years SEND transitions are strengthened through a whole-system approach that builds capacity, consistency and partnership working across settings. The transition support will establish clear, standardised approaches, enhance workforce capability through training and specialist support, and tests improved models—including enhanced funding and cross-phase working—to better meet the needs of children with more complex needs. Over time, this delivers more seamless transitions, earlier support, and improved outcomes within a more inclusive and sustainable SEND system.</p> <p>Finally, transitions will be strengthened across all phases. Transition toolkits will be embedded within early years and between primary school to support consistent approaches to school readiness, aligned with Best Start in Life principles. Transitions to secondary school will be further enhanced through improved cross phase collaboration, earlier planning and better information sharing, ensuring that all children and young people experience continuity and a positive transition, supported by clear plans in every setting. Transition to Post-16 will be strengthened through improved cross-phase collaboration between secondary schools, alternative provision and further education colleges, including those out of local area. This will include earlier and more coordinated planning, stronger relationships between providers, and improved data sharing systems to better track and support young people through transition. FE colleges will expand their programme offer to meet a wider range of needs, supported by clearer pathways between education phases. Young people at risk of being NEET, including those supported by youth justice services, will receive targeted support from a dedicated team working with schools and colleges to identify appropriate study programmes and ensure readiness for transition, drawing on Experts at Hand and VCSE support where required.</p> <p>In summary, early identification and support will be strengthened through locality-based, multi-disciplinary <i>Experts at Hand</i> teams, bringing specialist expertise closer to settings and families. These teams will work across clusters aligned to Family Hubs and</p>

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		neighbourhood health arrangements, providing needs-led support, including special school and AEP outreach. Through this approach, children and families will benefit from more coordinated, locally accessible support, reducing reliance on travel and enabling earlier, more inclusive intervention.
<p>Building block 2: Access to specialist support and local placements</p>	<p>There is a clear strategic focus on sufficiency and place planning, with capital investment being used to expand local provision and reduce reliance on out-of-county placements. However systemic challenges continue to constrain delivery and impact.</p> <p>A significant reliance on specialist out-of-county provision, including independent non-maintained special school (INMSS) placements is driven by insufficient capacity within local specialist and inclusive settings, many children and young people with SEND continue to travel further afield to access appropriate support.</p> <p>There remain delays for some children in accessing specialist provision, reduced continuity of care, and weaker links to local support networks. It also places sustained financial pressure on the system.</p> <p>The partnership has robust mechanisms to review performance and spend, including rigorous scrutiny and challenge of KPIs and financial pressures through PDG and SIAB however joint financial planning across education, health and social care is not yet fully embedded, limiting the system's ability to maximise opportunities to align investment to fully achieve shared outcomes.</p> <p>Cost avoidance approaches are in place, including early intervention and Enhanced Pathways, supporting more sustainable use of high needs resources.</p> <p>SEND improvement work is increasingly aligned to financial planning processes, ensuring that service development is deliverable within the available resource envelope. This includes a stronger link between SEND strategy, sufficiency planning and High Needs Block pressures. This alignment supports a more sustainable approach to managing demand, balancing statutory duties with long-term financial resilience and enabling reinvestment in local provision.</p> <p>Improved data will support clearer identification of need, better forecasting of demand, and more targeted deployment of resources including specialist health resources to reduce reliance on out-of-county provision.</p> <p>There is also a clear system focus on sufficiency and sustainability, with capital investment supporting the expansion of local provision and reducing reliance on out-of-county placements. Performance, demand and financial pressures are actively reviewed through partnership governance, with early intervention and cost-avoidance approaches supporting more sustainable use of resources.</p>	<p>In three years' time, improvement work to strengthen existing arrangements will have led to us meeting all requirements for governance, integrated commissioning, financial planning and transparency, joint decision making, and sufficiency planning. Our capital programme will embed joint financial and resource planning across education, health and social care, through strengthened systemwide governance, including place-based capital planning boards feeding into the Sufficiency Board. This will ensure investment is aligned to shared priorities, statutory duties and agreed outcomes across partners.</p> <p>A stronger emphasis will be placed on data-led sufficiency planning, ensuring that forecasting directly informs commissioning and capital decisions. This includes the systematic use of demand indicators such as increases in phase transfer requests, sustained growth in EHCPs (particularly for specialist provision), rising reliance on INMSS placements, increasing numbers of children and young people in alternative provision, and evidence that Oxfordshire currently has a lower-than-national level of special school places relative to its EHCP population. These drivers provide a clear rationale for both immediate system response and longer-term transformation, recognising the need to stabilise pressures and "level up" local specialist capacity before full system transformation through inclusion can be realised. At the same time, work is underway to increase transparency and shared understanding of SEND spend, pressures and value for money across the partnership.</p> <p>The county is facing a significant and growing pressure on specialist provision, with current special school and specialist provision in mainstream schools' capacity of 1,633 places set against forecast demand of 2,312 places by 2028/29. This widening gap reflects both rising levels of need and increased statutory demand. In response, the SEND Reform Plan sets out a comprehensive programme of expansion and system redesign, including the delivery of 896 additional places through a combination of special school expansions, new special schools, and the development of specialist units and resource bases within mainstream settings.</p> <p>This planned growth in capacity is designed not only to address the current significant shortfall compared to other local authorities but also to reshape the system towards more sustainable, local provision. As a result, we expect to significantly reduce reliance on Independent Non-Maintained and Specialist School (INMSS) placements, improving sufficiency, strengthening inclusion, and ensuring that children and young people can access high-quality provision closer to home.</p> <p>Governance arrangements are already being strengthened through the Sufficiency Board and linked place-based capital boards, providing a clearer line of sight between investment, delivery and impact, supported by improved benchmarking, forecasting and peer comparison to inform strategic, evidence-based decisions. This will ensure that</p>

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		<p>capital allocation decisions are explicitly linked to sufficiency priorities, service deliverability, and health system capacity (including therapy provision.) Resources are being increasingly targeted towards early intervention and preventative approaches, supporting more sustainable demand management. This is complemented by closer alignment between SEND reform activity, DSG management and capital programmes, alongside more integrated planning of health resource implications, such as therapy provision, to ensure that services are fully sustainable.</p> <p>The sufficiency strategy linked to the SEND Reform Plan is funded by a mixture of existing capital allocations for the provision of additional Special School places and use of new allocations of HNCPA capital. The first allocation of HNCPA (£11.299m) has already been announced and it has been assumed that two further tranches of the same value will be forthcoming. This assumption is based on the overall national allocation announced and Oxfordshire's "usual" percentage allocation. The HNCPA allocations have been initially allocated as below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Support Bases: twenty bases per Cluster (five Clusters) each with a pupil capacity of six pupils over three years. This will be supported by an active bidding process with a maximum allocation per base of £10,000. Total allocation of £1m. • Support Bases – Schools: support for 42 Secondary schools' bases built over a three-year period on a bid basis. Funding is assumed to be 80% at £75,000 and 20% at £125,000. This will create capacity for 1720 pupils over across all Oxfordshire's Secondary schools and an allocation of £3.57m has been provisionally made. • New Specialist Units – Secondary Schools: This is a combination of an additional 88 Resources Base places funded from existing capital funds (original July 2025 DMP) and the creation of an additional c. 10 Specialist Units within Secondary schools spread across the Clusters according to need. These will create 467 new places by 2030/31 and have been costed using the Oxfordshire's EBD OG Extension rate of £34,173 per pupil. £15.959m HNCPA funding has initially been allocated for this activity. • New Specialist Units – Post 16: Provision of an additional 126 capacity within Further Education over the next three years costed using the EBD OG Extension rate of £34,173 per pupil. Initial allocation for this activity is £4.3m. <p>Sufficiency will operate as a whole-system lever for SEND reform rather than solely as a capital or place-planning function. It is defined as ensuring the right support is provided, in the right place, at the right time, so that more children and young people have their needs met in local mainstream provision, closer to their home, increased local choice for parents so specialist placements are planned rather than default, and pathways into support are predictable rather than crisis-led.</p> <p>Over the next three years, Oxfordshire will implement a phased sufficiency model delivering a coherent 0–25 continuum through strengthened mainstream inclusion; targeted inclusion and support bases in mainstream secondary schools for pupils without need for an EHCP; specialist bases within mainstream schools for those with an EHCP;</p>

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		<p>continued special school expansion and new SEND free schools; and development of early years and post-16 provision. The sufficiency strategy is underpinned by a clear and consistent set of demand indicators which have informed both commissioning and capital investment decisions. These include sustained increases in EHCP requests, particularly for specialist provision at phase transfer points and an increased reliance on independent non-maintained special school (INMSS) placements.</p> <p>Given our lower than national level of special school places relative to the EHCP population, these pressures require immediate system stabilisation alongside longer-term transformation. The strategy therefore recognises the need to address current demand and “level up” local specialist capacity, before full system transformation can be achieved through scaled mainstream inclusion and prevention models.</p> <p>A sustained programme of capital investment (covering refurbishment, adaptation and new build) will increase local capacity and enable more children and young people to access high-quality support within their communities. Inclusion and support bases in mainstream secondary schools will provide targeted provision for pupils at risk of escalation, delivered through school and MAT-led proposals with council oversight and supported by investment in adaptations and assistive technology. A core enabler of this model is ensuring that the physical environment supports inclusive practice.</p> <p>Capital investment will therefore prioritise refurbishment, adaptation and targeted new build to create appropriate learning environments, including reconfiguration of space within mainstream schools to enable inclusion and support bases, provision of sensory environments, therapy-informed spaces and physical adaptations and deployment of assistive technology to support access to learning. This recognises that additional and adaptable space is required for successful inclusion and that well-designed environments reduce escalation by enabling children’s needs to be met locally.</p> <p>Delivery will be undertaken in partnership with schools, trusts and providers. OCC will work with schools and MATs to identify suitable sites for expansion and new provision, through cluster-based arrangements, prioritising opportunities where space is released through falling rolls or estate rationalisation. The Oxfordshire property team will work closely with schools and MATs in localities to maximise existing internal and external capacity before building new.</p> <p>This approach will be complemented by a tailored strategy for rural areas and for schools with lower numbers that play a critical role in sustaining local communities. OCC recognises that smaller rural schools are often central to community cohesion, access, and parental choice, and may not benefit from economies of scale in the same way as larger settings. As such, the Council will work proactively with these schools and their trusts to explore flexible and innovative solutions, including shared provision across clusters, satellite or hub-and-spoke models, and the use of surplus space to support inclusion, early help, or SEND outreach.</p>

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		<p>In areas of declining rolls, particular care will be taken to balance efficiency with sustainability, ensuring that decisions about estate use and capacity do not inadvertently undermine the viability of small schools that are essential to local access. OCC will provide strategic and technical support to help rural schools and MATs review their estate, optimise use of space, and identify opportunities for adaptation or diversification, including co-location with community or family services where appropriate. This will ensure that sufficiency planning supports both system efficiency and the long-term resilience of local provision, particularly in rural and sparsely populated areas.</p> <p>Early Years settings will be supported to apply for capital grant funding to improve inclusive provision across childminders, PVI and school-based settings. Investment will be prioritised in line with identified sufficiency needs in specific geographies. In addition, VCSE sector will be able to access smaller grants where they deliver inclusive stay-and-play and early support for children with additional needs.</p> <p>We are working in partnership with our three FE colleges in Oxfordshire to expand provision through capital grant applications, including development of inclusion bases and increased capacity for young people to access education and training locally. This will include development of specialist provision for young people with complex needs to reduce reliance on independent specialist placements and out-of-county provision. The Council will also work with neighbouring authorities and explore pooled investment approaches where cross-border attendance is needed to ensure all young people can access appropriate local pathways aligned to their programme of study.</p> <p>Critically, sufficiency will be underpinned by a strengthened system of outreach, multidisciplinary support and workforce development, ensuring that physical capacity is matched by capability. Specialist bases within mainstream schools will increase capacity for pupils with EHCPs, typically ranging from 16 to 40 places, with early delivery prioritising sites with existing capacity.</p> <p>Taken together, this model supports a shift to a needs-led system, where provision is shaped by children's needs rather than thresholds or availability. By year three, most children and young people with SEND will access high-quality local mainstream provision</p> <p>Reliance on out-of-county and independent provision will reduce significantly as local pathways strengthen and access to specialist support improves within mainstream and local settings. Families will no longer need to seek provision outside the county to access specialist expertise, strengthening confidence, choice and community connection.</p> <p>Reductions in out-of-county placements, improved access to local provision, shorter travel distances, and increased inclusion within mainstream settings are our key success indicators for this building block and Capital enabler. In doing so, sufficiency will directly support SEND reform—reducing crisis demand, improving outcomes and contributing to the long-term sustainability of the high needs system.</p>

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		<p>Alongside this, special school and Alternative Education Provision (AP) outreach will be expanded as a core element of the sufficiency model, enabling expertise within specialist settings to be deployed systematically across mainstream schools. This will provide targeted advice, modelling of practice and direct support at universal, targeted and targeted-plus levels, strengthening inclusion and reducing escalation into specialist placements. Existing outreach arrangements will be scaled and aligned to locality clusters to ensure equitable access and consistent delivery. We will see reductions in suspensions and exclusions, and more children attending school.</p> <p>This will be complemented by the development of the Experts at Hand (EAH) offer, which will act as a key delivery mechanism within the sufficiency model. The EAH model will provide a coordinated, multidisciplinary route for mainstream settings to access specialist expertise from education and health, including educational psychology, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and specialist teaching support.</p> <p>Through cluster-based delivery aligned to Family Hubs and locality partnerships, the EAH offer will enable settings to access advice, triage, training and targeted intervention at scale, strengthening whole setting practice and reducing reliance on individualised, high cost provision. This integrated approach, combining sufficiency, outreach and EAH, will ensure that support is delivered earlier, more consistently and closer to home.</p> <p>Capital development will go alongside workforce development ensuring capacity and capability of the workforce corresponds and aligns with additional capital investment and will create a system where expertise is shared rather than concentrated, enabling mainstream settings to meet a broader range of needs confidently and effectively and create conditions where expertise is shared rather than concentrated, enabling mainstream settings to meet a broader range of needs confidently and effectively.</p> <p>Provision will be planned at district and locality level to ensure equitable access. Over the next three years, every secondary school will be supported to deliver inclusive provision, with sufficient specialist capacity across each district. This will create a balanced and responsive continuum aligned to local need and community infrastructure, including Family Hubs and partnership networks.</p> <p>Alternative provision will form part of this continuum, mapped by district and delivered through a three-tier model at targeted and targeted-plus levels. Outreach, reintegration and EAH models will support engagement and prevent escalation, underpinned by relational and trauma-informed practice.</p> <p>This building block provides clear evidence that Oxfordshire's sufficiency model is aligned with and delivers against the core minimum requirement to deliver a coherent 0-25 continuum of provision and a sufficiency-led local offer. It further evidences the systematic scaling of special school outreach to build capacity within mainstream settings, alongside a structured and integrated approach to workforce development and joint workforce planning. The model is underpinned by place-based delivery through locality</p>

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		<p>clusters and Family Hubs, incorporates alternative provision within a tiered framework, and sets out a clear trajectory for reducing reliance on independent and out-of-county placements. Collectively, these elements demonstrate a transition to a needs led, preventative system with a clear line of sight to improved outcomes, increased system capacity, and the long-term financial sustainability of the high needs system.</p>
<p>Building block 3: System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production</p>	<p>Oxfordshire's SEND system has well-established and strengthening partnerships across education, health, and social care, supported by embedded governance structures that provide clear decision-making, escalation, and accountability.</p> <p>Leadership is stable, with schools, health, and social care represented in strategic planning and joint commissioning. Co-production is increasingly embedded, with the Parent Carer Forum playing a strong role and the SEND Youth Forum providing a growing voice for children and young people. Education partnership arrangements are a key strength, with school leadership and SENCO networks becoming more influential.</p> <p>Health and social care are engaged in governance and planning, and early help reforms are supporting more joined-up support. Overall, the system shows increasing maturity, with improving collaboration, stronger shared accountability, and greater use of feedback, audit, and self-evaluation to shape priorities.</p>	<p>Partnership accountability will be strengthened across education, health and care by making roles, responsibilities and ownership of improvement actions clearer across all partners. We will embed social care and family help reforms into the SEND improvement journey to ensure more co-ordinated pathways of support for children and young people.</p> <p>Joint governance structures will be strengthened with early years, schools and FE college cluster representatives at SIAB (SEND Improvement and Assurance Board), Schools forum and OEP (Oxfordshire Education Partnership) and will support measurable impact linked to outcomes for children and young people. Connectivity will extend beyond governance through the local networks which will extend membership and provide opportunities for collaboration on joint working pilots.</p> <p>Family Hubs, neighbourhood health arrangements and place-based partnerships will provide the structure for joint action, oversight and delivery from frontline practice to strategic governance furthering developing education, health and care alignment to strengthen joint planning and commissioning in priority areas.</p> <p>District and locality school clusters, aligned with Family Hubs and EAH MDTs, will strengthen collaboration across services and clarify the universal core offer. This will support earlier intervention, more joined-up multi-disciplinary working and stronger locality leadership for meeting need closer to home. Joint self-evaluation and audits will monitor progress and support continuous improvement and identify gaps in service provision or quality and support targeted action.</p> <p>Co-production and lived experience will be central to improvement, with a shared agreed framework for collecting and receiving feedback in place ensuring that children, young people and families experiences help shape services and improvements. The local area partnership will demonstrate its commitment to co-production through the development of a co-production framework based on the NHSE co-production guidance.</p> <p>The span of PCF, Youth Forums, Family Hubs and VCSE partners will be extended and strengthened, with each district cluster developing PCF advisory groups and having PCF representation at cluster steering groups. District clusters will connect to the newly developed district Youth Partnerships and SEND Youth forum satellite groups increasing community reach, embedding lived experience and co-production in planning, commissioning and quality assurance.</p> <p>A joint workforce development plan will support consistent expectations, stronger multi-disciplinary practice and support schools and settings readiness for national inclusion standards. Developed with the PCF and experts by experience, cascaded through</p>

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		<p>strengthened cluster networks across all phases, it will strengthen professional capability and reinforce inclusive leadership across education, health and care partners.</p> <p>Inclusive leadership across schools, settings and FE will be strengthened through visible representation, locality-based governance and clearer partnership arrangements, ensuring collaboration across all phases of education. Shared data, feedback and annual review will support collective responsibility for local children and sustained progress against shared ambitions, monitored through the success measures and suite of KPIs.</p> <p>Schools will develop internal mechanisms to ensure SENCOs, attendance leads, DSLs, DTs and pastoral teams are working closely together, identifying needs earlier and offering holistic support to children and young people, accessing EAH and wider community support where required to keep children in school, removing barriers to attendance and supporting transition planning.</p> <p>Capital investment, commissioning and governance will be aligned to strengthen locality-based inclusive provision across early years, schools and FE, improving access to support closer to home. Family Hubs, EAH and Best Start arrangements will provide a more integrated local offer, with partners working together around children and families through clear collective accountability.</p> <p>Transitions will be a key focus and for all partners, demonstrating commitment to planning forward and preparing for adulthood. Pathways between early years and schools will be place, with access to extended transition support from EAH and wider community teams.</p> <p>Secondary schools and FE colleges will have stronger relationships and will work together to develop a transitions toolkit with a core offer for young people with an ISP or EHC, supported by EAH. New pathways will be developed in line with a wider programme and curriculum offer, to enable more young people to access their local FE colleges.</p> <p>Connectivity between colleges, Training providers and employers will develop the careers offer and pathways, from secondary school to employment. Existing partnerships such as the Oxfordshire inclusive economic partnership will take a more central role in connecting schools, colleges and businesses to offer wider ranges of work experience and employment opportunities including supported internships.</p> <p>Post-16 representation will be strengthened and include FE Colleges, training providers and Alternative providers collaborating with skills and businesses to support a more connected system for young people at risk of or experiencing NEET. Data sharing between schools and colleges will be in place to support transition planning, reintegrating or reengaging young people as required. New programmes offering entry level 1 and 2 will be developed, widening curriculum accessibility and providing opportunities for more young people to attend FE colleges, supported by expanded post-16 inclusion provision and clearer pathways into employment and training will improve transition, independence and preparation for adulthood.</p> <p>Alternative provision will operate through a clear locality-based framework, with shared responsibility across schools, colleges and partners for early intervention, reintegration</p>

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		<p>and meeting need closer to home. Alongside stronger universal support and cluster-based funding, this will support prevention, reduce escalation and enable local innovation.</p> <p>Dispute resolution, mediation and escalation arrangements will be implemented through locality delivery, supported by SENDIASS, the PCF and reported through place and system Governance ensuring disputes are resolved swiftly and locally wherever possible. SENDIASS will be expanded and arranged at District level providing independent information, advice and guidance to parents and will provide SEND expertise through the establishment of District level dispute resolution panels, able to address and resolve disputes between parents and schools swiftly. Investment in the PCF to expand into district level advisory groups, providing navigation support to parents at local community level, signposting to SENDIASS where dispute resolution or mediation is required will improve navigation and escalation routes for families, promote earlier resolution and strengthen oversight, accountability and continuous improvement.</p> <p>Shared data, outcomes and financial planning will support stronger system leadership, earlier action and more transparent decision-making across education, health and care. Through shared KPIs, governance and collective review, partners will align resources, monitor impact and ensure that investment supports sustainable, inclusive services.</p>
<p>Building block 4: Encouraging inclusive culture and behaviours</p>	<p>There is a clear and strengthening strategic commitment across the partnership to inclusion, with a focus on supporting children and young people to thrive in mainstream settings where appropriate. This is reflected in the development of consistent expectations for inclusive practice, supported by strengthened guidance such as Ordinarily Available Provision and practitioner support resources.</p> <p>Education settings are actively engaging in a wide range of continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities, supported by a strong and expanding SEND training offer. Schools have access to practical support through SEND Live events, SENCO networks, helpdesk services, the relational schools programme, and Local Offer resources. Engagement with this offer is high, contributing to improved confidence and practice across the system.</p> <p>Enhanced Pathways and early intervention approaches are being embedded, with increasing school participation, supporting earlier identification and intervention, alongside growing engagement with services such as the Behaviour Support Team. The Wellcomm pilot is also being used by more schools to support early identification of speech, language and communication needs.</p> <p>A continuum of provision is in place, including the use of Alternative Provision as part of a broader, graduated response and a focus on developing in-school and preventative approaches, strengthening in reach and outreach support from specialist services to mainstream settings to build capability and confidence.</p> <p>Quality assurance arrangements are becoming more embedded, with increasing audit and review activity. Multi-agency quality assurance mechanisms, Partnership working across education, health and social care is well established and continuing to strengthen. Schools, health partners and social care are represented within SEND governance structures and contribute to joint planning.</p>	<p>Leaders across education, health, care and wider services will model inclusive behaviours and high expectations, working together to meet need earlier, remove barriers and reduce escalation. By aligning SEND and social care reform, partners will provide a more joined-up experience for children and families, with stronger collective responsibility for outcomes.</p> <p>A strengthened partnership offer at place and system level will align joint planning, commissioning, shared data, workforce development and governance to embed inclusive culture and shared accountability across education, health and care. Family Hubs, neighbourhood health arrangements and place-based partnerships will connect services and communities through a more coherent system from frontline delivery to strategic oversight.</p> <p>Locality clusters will operate as delivery partnerships, bringing together schools, services and families at early years, school and post 16 phases to drive early intervention, inclusive practice and shared responsibility. Supported by EAH, they will develop cohort planning and individual support approaches that inform joint commissioning, pooled funding and local innovation.</p> <p>Focus in the early years will identify children who need fast track assessment and support, sufficiency and expertise in local settings and supporting children with their good level of development and readiness for primary school. School and FE joint collaborative networks will be established with colleges and training provisions and youth services, identifying opportunities where planning across the curriculum and in delivery could support transitions, transitions, careers information and pathways to focus specifically on children identified as risk of NEET and onward into employment.</p> <p>Expanded local provision, strengthened outreach and a clearer continuum of support will build capability and consistency in inclusive practice across all settings. SENCO and</p>

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	<p>commissioning and strategic decision-making. Relationships across the system are generally positive, with increasing collaboration to support inclusive practice and timely intervention.</p> <p>Health partners, including the ICB and providers, are engaged in SEND governance and contribute to wider system planning, co-production and partnership activity. Joint commissioning arrangements are in place in key areas, supporting more coordinated delivery.</p> <p>Social care is embedded within the SEND partnership, contributing to integrated working across education and health. Family Help and early intervention reforms are supporting more coordinated support for children and families, with social care actively involved in joint planning, commissioning and co-production activity.</p> <p>There is increasing use of support mechanisms such as the SEND helpline by schools, alongside growing engagement in co-produced strategy and improvement work, including delivery of the SEND improvement programme. Stakeholder feedback from schools, families and young people is increasingly used to inform priorities and decision-making.</p> <p>Overall, inclusive culture and behaviours are being strengthened through clear leadership, growing collaboration, increasing consistency of practice, and strong engagement across the partnership.</p>	<p>leadership networks will play a stronger role in shaping inclusive cultures and behaviours, while reinforcing the expectation that children's needs should be met locally wherever possible.</p> <p>Alternative provision will operate within a clear locality-based framework, supporting reintegration and engagement through relational and trauma-informed practice. Alongside a strengthened universal and targeted offer, this will ensure a more consistent and accountable approach to meeting need across the county.</p> <p>Workforce development, supported by EAH MDTs, shared data and quality assurance, will set clear expectations for inclusive behaviours in practice and strengthen professional confidence across the system. This will help ensure that staff are equipped to respond consistently and effectively to local need.</p> <p>Shared data and locality governance will support earlier identification, better planning and transparent reporting across universal, targeted and specialist provision. This will strengthen joint accountability for outcomes, sustainable provision and the continued development of inclusive cultures across education settings.</p> <p>An improved digital information offer, alongside Family Hubs, Best Start inclusion practitioners, SENDIASS and EAH, will make support more visible, accessible and connected for families. Where children are educated outside the county, partners will work together to maintain shared responsibility for outcomes.</p> <p>Through clusters, EAH, Family Hubs and neighbourhood health arrangements, partners will reinforce inclusive behaviours by working together to meet need earlier and closer to home. Supported by clear expectations, shared protocols and governance, this will strengthen collective responsibility and ensure investment supports inclusive culture, practice and outcomes.</p> <p>Leaders across education, health and care and wider services will model inclusive behaviours, promote high expectations for participation, belonging and standards, focussing on meeting needs earlier and working collectively to remove barriers and reduce escalation, embedding social care reforms alongside SEND reform and working cohesively together to offer a seamless approach for children and families where they tell their story once.</p>
Enabler 1: Capital	<p>There is a clear strategic focus on sufficiency and place planning, with capital investment being used to expand local provision and reduce reliance on out-of-county placements. This provides a strong foundation for the next phase of delivery, including the planned rollout of secondary inclusion and support bases, which will further strengthen local capacity and reduce reliance on specialist and out-of-county provision.</p> <p>The partnership has mechanisms to review performance and spend, including discussion of KPIs and financial pressures through PDG and SIAB. These arrangements will support ongoing oversight of the inclusion base programme, ensuring that investment decisions are aligned to performance, demand trends and financial sustainability.</p>	<p>Capital investment is a critical enabler of sufficiency reform and will be deployed as part of a phased three-year programme, aligned to sufficiency modelling and delivery priorities.</p> <p>Year 1 will be focussed on mobilisation and early delivery. We will launch inclusion/support base programme (MAT-led delivery model) and deliver first tranche of specialist bases on sites with existing capacity or minimal build requirements. With falling birth rates, we are already working with primary and special schools to maximise existing physical capacity through satellite and annex provision. A clear capital pipeline is being established with confirmed priority projects that can be expedited.</p> <p>In year 2 we will scale up and expand inclusion and specialist bases across additional localities through a mix of MAT-led and OCC-delivered projects. This will enable us to</p>

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	<p>Cost-avoidance approaches are in place, including early intervention and Enhanced Pathways, supporting more sustainable use of high-needs resources.</p> <p>The development of inclusion and support bases builds on this approach, creating earlier, structured intervention points within mainstream settings to reduce escalation into high-cost specialist placements.</p> <p>Stakeholder feedback (from schools, families and young people) is increasingly used to inform priorities, supporting more needs-led decision-making.</p> <p>This will be critical in shaping the design and delivery of inclusion bases, ensuring that provision reflects local need and improves accessibility and confidence in mainstream settings.</p> <p>SEND improvement activity is aligned to wider financial planning, including High Needs Block and DSG considerations.</p> <p>The proposed use of High Needs Capital funding to support the development of inclusion and support bases aligns directly with this approach, ensuring that investment supports both system improvement and financial sustainability.</p> <p>Review and refresh of KPIs and data baselines to support more informed investment decisions.</p> <p>This will enable clearer tracking of the impact of inclusion bases, including their contribution to reducing demand for specialist provision and improving outcomes within mainstream settings.</p> <p>We are commencing work to develop a network of secondary inclusion and support bases as part of our wider ambition to strengthen provision and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>The inclusion bases are intended to act as visible, active spaces within local communities, bringing together expertise, outreach, and targeted support to enable schools and settings to respond more effectively to a broader range of SEND needs.</p> <p>By providing structured professional support, shared resources, and access to specialist practice, the bases will strengthen capability across mainstream provision and contribute to an ever more consistent and inclusive county-wide approach.</p> <p>We propose allocating a proportion of High Needs Capital 26/27 allocation to enable the adaptation/conversion of spaces. This is directly in line with DfE expectations for use of high needs funding.</p> <p>There are already several Resource Bases running in primary and secondary</p>	<p>progress more complex capital schemes. Year 3 will see us bringing to completion projects requiring newbuild including special school expansion and new provision thus completing locality-based model across the county.</p> <p>While there is a clear strategic direction to strengthen SEND provision, a number of systemic challenges remain which continue to constrain delivery and impact. Joint financial planning across education, health and social care is not yet fully embedded, limiting the ability to align investment to shared outcomes. Sufficiency planning, particularly for specialist provision, is still developing and is not consistently underpinned by robust forecasting data. In addition, the link between investment decisions and measurable impact is not always clearly articulated through governance, and transparency around the use and impact of High Needs Block funding remains limited for some partners.</p> <p>Delivery will operate through a blended model of MAT-led and OCC-led capital delivery, with Oxfordshire County Council retaining overall governance, assurance and oversight. Funding agreements will ensure appropriate use of capital, with support from property, legal and capital teams to ensure compliance and delivery assurance. The programme is designed with explicit recognition of delivery risks, including planning and regulatory timelines, site capacity constraints, and programme delivery capacity.</p> <p>Capital programme will embed joint financial and resource planning across education, health and social care, through strengthened system-wide governance. This includes the establishment of joint capital planning arrangements through place-based capital board feeding into a central Sufficiency Board—to ensure that investment decisions are aligned to shared priorities, statutory duties and agreed outcomes across partners.</p> <p>A stronger emphasis will be placed on data-led sufficiency planning, ensuring that forecasting directly informs commissioning and capital decisions. At the same time, work is underway to increase transparency and shared understanding of SEND spend, pressures and value for money across the partnership.</p> <p>Governance arrangements are being strengthened through the Sufficiency Board, which provide a clearer line of sight between investment, delivery and impact, supported by improved benchmarking, forecasting and peer comparison to inform strategic decisions. Resources are being increasingly targeted towards early intervention and preventative approaches, supporting more sustainable demand management. This is complemented by closer alignment between SEND reform activity, DSG management and capital programmes, alongside more integrated planning of health resource implications, such as therapy provision, to ensure that services are fully deliverable.</p> <p>The SEND strategy recognises that a significant shift in local capacity is required to reduce reliance on specialist and out-of-county provision, establishing a clear case for targeted capital investment in local placements. Central to this is the development of a county-wide network of inclusion bases across secondary schools, commissioned and delivered by schools and multi-academy trusts. These bases will act as active hubs within local communities, bringing together school-led expertise with outreach, advisory and</p>

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	<p>schools in Oxfordshire. Whilst we are planning to expand that offer by creating support bases to better meet the needs of our local communities, we will continue to develop our Specialist Resource Bases (Specialist Provision Packages – SPPs) to deliver EHCP backed specialist provision within mainstream schools for pupils with most complex needs.</p> <p>In summary, the rollout of secondary inclusion and support bases represents the next phase of delivery, moving from strategy into tangible system change. This approach will strengthen local capacity and support mainstream inclusion, enabling schools to respond more effectively to a wider range of needs. It is expected to reduce reliance on specialist and out-of-county provision by increasing the availability of local, appropriate support, while improving outcomes for children and young people by ensuring they can access provision closer to home.</p>	<p>specialist support to strengthen inclusive practice across the system. Building on existing learning and pastoral spaces within schools, the programme aims to create around 1,950 inclusion support places over a three-year period, enabling earlier intervention and access to targeted support for a significantly larger cohort of pupils.</p> <p>Delivery will be through a structured Expressions of Interest process, with capital investment aligned to established SEND capital principles to ensure consistency, transparency and value for money. Inclusion bases are designed to provide early, targeted intervention, stabilising placements, reducing exclusions and preventing unnecessary escalation into alternative provision or specialist settings, while strengthening schools' capacity to meet a broader range of need.</p> <p>Alongside this, Oxfordshire will develop a complementary network of new specialist resource bases, commissioned and funded directly to increase local capacity for pupils with EHCPs. With an ambition to deliver approximately 500 additional places across planning districts, these bases will address identified gaps in provision, particularly where existing school estates cannot accommodate specialist need. Delivery is being progressed at pace through early engagement with identified schools and trusts, with investment from the High Needs Capital programme.</p> <p>Together, inclusion and specialist bases will bring specialist expertise into mainstream settings, strengthen partnership working across education and multi-agency services, and provide a more coherent continuum of provision. This integrated model reduces reliance on external and high-cost placements, supports more consistent locality-based delivery, and enables a clearer, needs-led pathway between mainstream and specialist support.</p> <p>The Capital enabler evidences alignment with the core minimum requirements by demonstrating a coherent 0–25 continuum of provision and a sufficiency-led local offer, alongside a strengthened inclusive mainstream system underpinned by early intervention and targeted support. It establishes a clear capital strategy aligned to sufficiency modelling and forecasting, supporting the expansion of both inclusion and specialist provision to reduce reliance on independent and out-of-county placements and improve financial sustainability.</p> <p>The narrative further reflects a place-based delivery model through locality and cluster approaches, integrates alternative provision within a tiered framework, and embeds governance, accountability and value for money through strengthened oversight and performance monitoring. In addition, it evidences a commitment to data-led commissioning and planning, with investment decisions increasingly informed by demand forecasting and linked to measurable outcomes, ensuring that sufficiency contributes directly to a needs led, preventative and sustainable SEND system.</p>
Enabler 2: Workforce	Strong and expanding SEND training offer in place, particularly for education settings, supporting improved confidence and practice, upskilling mainstream settings and widening inclusion capacity. This is a commitment in refreshed SEND Strategy.	In three years' time, workforce development across the Local Area Partnership will be fully integrated, with a confident, skilled and sustainable workforce operating within a shared framework of inclusive practice. Coordinated across education, health and social care, the workforce offer will provide equitable access to high-quality training and development for all settings, reducing duplication while strengthening partnership working

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	<p>Schools have access to practical support and advice, including SEND Live events, SENCO networks, helpdesk support, relational schools programme and Local Offer professional resources.</p> <p>Local Offer has undergone large scale review. Newly designed professionals' section to support professional knowledge and expertise. Supports workforce development by providing clear, accessible guidance and expectations (such as the refreshed Ordinarily Available SEND Provision), enabling staff to build confidence, consistency and capability in meeting needs effectively within mainstream settings.</p> <p>Quality assurance of EHCPs is being used to establish a structured training and support offer across children's social care to ensure good quality advice is written. EHCP advice from Health needs further focused work, with plans in place to address this.</p> <p>Enhanced Pathways support workforce development by providing structured, practice-based opportunities for school staff to deepen their skills and confidence in meeting complex needs, through targeted funding, collaboration and embedded learning within mainstream settings.</p> <p>Special school outreach in place to strengthen workforce development by building the skills, confidence and capability of mainstream staff through direct access to specialist expertise, training and ongoing support embedded within local settings.</p> <p>Relational Schools Programme in place to support workforce development by providing sustained training, coaching and implementation support that builds staff knowledge, skills and confidence in trauma-informed, relational and restorative practice across whole-school systems. 4 cohorts in place, 5th running currently.</p> <p>Annual SEND Live conference supports workforce development by bringing together education, health and care professionals to access expert-led workshops, share best practice and gain practical knowledge that can be applied directly to improve support for children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>Established SENDCo helpdesk supports workforce development by providing timely, specialist advice, problem-solving and guidance to practitioners, enabling them to build knowledge, confidence and capability in delivering a consistent, high-quality graduated response in their settings.</p>	<p>and shared expertise, ensuring continuity of expertise across the local workforce. A strengthened, system-wide framework aligned to SEND reform priorities will ensure a consistent understanding of the graduated response, early intervention and co-production, underpinned by clear expectations for inclusive practice.</p> <p>Training and development will be more targeted, accessible and responsive to need, with particular focus on strengthening provision in early years and post-16. A blended offer of shared e-learning, webinars and locality-based training will support flexible access, while improved monitoring and evaluation will ensure that professional learning translates into measurable improvements in outcomes for children and young people. This will include a sharper focus on understanding impact, linking workforce development directly to improved inclusion, reduced escalation to specialist provision and increased confidence across the system.</p> <p>There will be a particular emphasis on strengthening multi-agency capability, with joint training and practice development embedding a shared understanding of the graduated response, reintegration pathways and ordinarily available SEND provision. Targeted programmes will support children's social care practitioners to deepen their understanding of the SEND system and improve access to support, alongside focused work to improve the quality and consistency of EHC needs assessment advice across all partners, particularly within health and social care.</p> <p>Locality-based, multi-disciplinary workforce models will be embedded across cluster areas, bringing education, health and care practitioners together to support integrated working and a consistent local offer. Access to specialist expertise will be significantly expanded through outreach, multidisciplinary teams and "experts at hand", enabling practitioners to build confidence and capability in meeting more complex needs within mainstream settings. These teams will provide practical support through training, coaching, learning walks, action planning and direct engagement with families, alongside access to evidence-based screening and intervention tools that support early identification and track progress over time.</p> <p>Leadership development will be strengthened at all levels, including system leadership, SENCo development and middle leadership, to drive inclusive cultures across settings. Alongside this, a greater focus on co-production will ensure practitioners are confident in working with children, young people and parent carers in planning and decision-making. Reflective practice, supervision and continuous learning will become embedded as standard, supporting workforce resilience and ongoing improvement.</p> <p>Collectively, these changes will build a more consistent, confident and capable workforce, with increased parental confidence in mainstream provision, a reduction in requests for specialist placements and exclusions linked to SEND, and stronger outcomes for children and young people across Oxfordshire.</p>
<p>Enabler 3: Data/digital systems</p>	<p>There is a growing use of data at both operational and strategic levels to understand needs and inform SEND improvement activity.</p> <p>The partnership uses a range of quantitative data sources, including SEN2 returns, needs assessments and performance metrics, to support planning and monitoring.</p>	<p>Over the next three years, we will see shifts in the use of data and analytics from being primarily descriptive, to diagnostic analysis with improved forecasting and predictive analysis to better inform proactive decision making. There will be a move away from siloed views, with inclusion, safeguarding, social care, education, health and schools' data all represented.</p>

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	<p>We have developed our EHCP audit process & data analysis, as well as our Multi-Agency Quality Assurance (MAQA) forum. Self-evaluation and stocktake activity have strengthened the partnership's understanding of current strengths, pressures and gaps.</p> <p>Data and insights derived are discussed at relevant boards, supporting shared system understanding and challenge. There is increasing recognition of the value of qualitative, subjective insight, including lived experience, alongside objective data.</p> <p>We have developed a Power BI SEND dashboard, to improve visibility, interrogation and use of data across the partnership.</p> <p>A refreshed set of SMART KPIs aligned to priority action plan priorities and theme groups has been agreed, with further scoping underway.</p> <p>Data is not yet consistently accessible or usable across the whole partnership, limiting shared ownership and timely use at all levels and some is too high level to influence operational level change. Data is not always translated into clear narrative insight, making it harder for leaders to link evidence directly to decision-making and impact.</p> <p>There is limited triangulation of data sources (performance, finance, lived experience and outcomes) into a single, shared system view.</p> <p>Quantitative data is stronger than qualitative insight, with lived experience and feedback not yet systematically integrated into needs analysis.</p> <p>There is variation in data maturity across partners, and some challenges linking education, health and social care datasets, with forecasting and sufficiency modelling still developing, requiring a stronger focus on confidence in longer-term demand projections.</p>	<p>Stronger partnership working across the system through improved quality assurance processes at operational level will enable a better shared view of the challenges across the system, and actions required to address at operational and strategic level. This will be driven by clear shared data definitions, quality checks and standardisation. Delivery will be explicitly linked to measuring progress against KPIs, indicating an expectation that data is integral to improvement and used to understand performance and outcomes. The system will utilise trusted, high-quality, standardised data</p> <p>We will see greater integration of data across the LAP system partners, through new data sharing agreements, with shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities. This, alongside improved capability for data and analysis, will support clear linkage between operational understanding and improved strategic oversight. Shared Governance accountabilities for each part of the system, including clear data ownership, identifying where further input is required, identifying risks and agreeing timely mitigation. Data and digital maturity across the system will be improved (irrespective of the LGR outcomes for Oxfordshire) with self-service analytics available across the partnerships alongside more narrative focused data products to allow the 'so what' of the data to be better surfaced and utilized by practitioners.</p> <p>There will be improved and routine use of qualitative insight (including parent/carer and CYP feedback) alongside quantitative data when assessing need and impact, linking the: You said, we did approach to improvements in service delivery and children and young people's outcomes and families experience</p> <p>Data and analysis will be utilized from operational teams up to strategic leaders and used in both reactive and proactive ways to drive improvement and commissioning at locality, district and whole county levels across LAP partners. Data and analytics will be at the forefront of evaluating impacts of interventions to improve services.</p> <p>Screening and intervention tools such as WellComm will be embedded within settings to assess and identify need at the earliest opportunity and equip setting staff with evidence based, practical tools to support need and make progress with children.</p> <p>Reports can be generated across clusters of schools to be able to look at trends, performance and outcomes, and will be used to inform actions, joint commissioning opportunities and to deploy specific support and resource where required.</p>
<p>Enabler 4: Communication</p>	<p>A Communications, Voice of the Child and Young Person, Local Area Partnership Working Together Group has been set up to review current communication and engagement and work towards achieving the KPIs set out in our SEND Priority Action Plan.</p> <p>Following feedback, two-way communication with parents/carers is being improved with planned publication of regular 'You Said, We Did' feedback to close the loop and enable families to feel heard.</p> <p>An engagement calendar has been set with our partners which is tracking</p>	<p>In three years', time families, children and young people will report that proactive engagement, co-production and ongoing dialogue is seen as business as usual and that co-production is used in every practicable instance and regarded as standard practice in line with our co-production charter.</p> <p>Families, parents, carers, children and young people will report that they feel heard and listened to and understand how to feed back into the service, how that is used and what difference it has made, using a "You said, we did" approach as a result of regular planned engagement from the activity tracker</p>

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	<p>touchpoints with audiences to co-ordinate 'drumbeat' engagement and communications, avoiding duplication and maximising opportunities so we can hear from parents and carers in the most effective way possible.</p> <p>There are regular newsletters (short breaks and general) from OCC and OxPCF that go to parents/carers. We would like to drive more sign ups to reach a wider audience.</p> <p>A SENDCO newsletter is sent monthly – however cascade communication through schools requires improvement so that education professionals understand the SEND offer.</p> <p>8 new satellite branches of the SEND Youth Forum have been developed to improve engagement and influence. This has allowed a more diverse set of young people to become involved in the group</p> <p>A Local Area Partnership communication narrative has been co-developed and shared to align messaging. This will offer partners a consistent narrative to use when communicating with audiences, so there is a single voice relaying straightforward messaging.</p> <p>A review of communication strategy and a channel audit have been undertaken with recommendations suggested.</p> <p>The Local Offer Website Development Group is improving content and pro-actively promoting the site. The group is listening to feedback from professionals and parents and carers, children and young people and making improvements as soon as possible. Improvement of the SEND Local Offer website needs to continue.</p> <p>Better data is still required to drive focused communication, but collection of data and improved monitoring is informing efficacy of Communications.</p> <p>An improved social media offering is underway to extend our reach to children and young people, as well as their families, parents and carers which needs expansion and more diversity.</p> <p>A Communication Pledge for families has been developed and is now being embedded across EHCP casework.</p>	<p>Partners across the system at individual and partnership level will be consistently seeking, hearing and acting on lived experience, positioning this communication so that it is central to how the SEND system operates. Children, young people and families' experiences will be authentically reflected in the communications we share.</p> <p>All professionals will understand the SEND improvement journey and be able to describe change relevant to families, signposting to the Local Offer, Family Hubs, SENDIASS or PCF where additional information, advice and guidance or support is needed. All families are effectively informed of the SEND Reform changes and what those might mean for their child's provision and support.</p> <p>More effective communication will support greater understanding of national policy change and share its direct impact at local level.</p> <p>Equally all professionals understand the SEND Reform changes in a timely and effective way, prepared to adapt to change. Cascading information to all colleagues is habitually done in all relevant team meetings and two-way communication goes both up and down the management chain and key messages are jointly prepared and shared across the Local area partners.</p> <p>All stakeholders report that they receive relevant and timely communication on their channel/platform of choice, evidencing a wider and more diverse audience. That communication follows the principles as laid out in the partnership MOU.</p> <p>The LAP communication narrative is embedded across the partnership, creating one voice, with consistent messaging, used as the cornerstone of all SEND communications. This will change over time as SEND services improve. In three years' time this will be co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders so that messaging feels authentic and relevant.</p> <p>A single, outward-facing articulation of "what good looks like", supporting clarity, shared understanding and transparency across the system will ensure that everyone understands the standards expected in SEND communication. This will be informed by our audiences telling us what good feels like to them in a regular feedback loop.</p> <p>Improved two-way communication with schools, settings, health and social care ensuring partnership messages, learning and decisions are routinely shared and understood in cascade mechanisms. All LAP professionals are regularly updated with SEND news and know about the Local Offer and where to find further support there, how to use toolkits and how to share resources with families.</p> <p>SEND support information and signposting is available in all public spaces including healthcare settings.</p> <p>All senior Leaders in the partnership will ensure that SEND communication cascaded as BAU and SEND updates become a regular feature of Senior Leadership briefings, newsletters and intranets. News and information is regularly communicated to the Comms Team for wider and possibly public sharing via the media.</p>

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		<p>In three years', time the improved Local Offer website will be widely used, linked to family hubs digital offer and includes the most useful and most up to date, information, support and guidance is available to families and professionals alike. The Local Offer will be the first port of call for all families with questions about SEND and SEND support. There are more videos on the Local Offer website offering support, information and guidance with accessible and family friendly content, including those made by children and young people with lived experience Readers offer regular feedback which is acted on. Finally, families report that the local offer has enabled them to find the right support at the right time.</p> <p>Improved data collection and monitoring improve the efficacy of communications and engagement on an ongoing basis. This will come from regular surveys, focus groups, digital analytics etc and be shared at operational and strategic level.</p> <p>School clusters will communicate with parents, using their websites, through their inclusion strategies, evidencing input from CYP and families at school and cluster level, communicating clearer the universal offer.</p>
<p>Success measures</p>	<p>Success of the SEND reform plan is focussed on a system shift towards inclusion which will support improved financial sustainability. A core part of our plan being successful is the improved inclusion outcomes for children, young people and families through a focus on attendance in mainstream schools: local schools will meet needs of most children, and feedback from our children, young people and families will tell us that their experiences have improved.</p> <p>We have set out five key inclusion measures to capture this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IM1 More inclusive mainstream settings • IM2 Improved confidence in mainstream settings • IM3 Meeting children's and young people's needs locally • IM4 Meeting children's and young people's needs earlier • IM5 Using the views of children, young people and families to inform system transformation <p>A suite of more detailed KPIs sit beneath these five inclusion measures, with targets and trajectories to know whether we are achieving success, as well as others identified where we need to strengthen our local data capture and recording. To reflect the stronger collaborative focus and shared accountability we know we will need to develop some additional shared data sets, and these will be planned into the roadmap.</p> <p>These key inclusion measures cut across all four building blocks and enablers. The specific KPIs have been mapped to each of the building blocks, and this is set out in full in our KPI appendix and are evidenced through financial mitigations detailed in financial modelling, including pupil numbers and average costs. This additional information financial modelling information is referenced throughout the model and the full excel workbook can be provided on request.</p>	

What is the local area partnership's strategy for delivering on the above?

*A brief summary of your local system's theory of change or reform strategy. Reflect on the output of your **Local Partnership Maturity Assessment Tool**, particularly your Local System 'change story.'*

Working together as a local area partnership, we will build inclusive capacity in mainstream settings, strengthen early identification and support, improve communication and trust with families, and use evidence consistently to guide investment and practice. This collaborative approach will mean that more children will have their needs met earlier and locally, avoiding the need for escalation to EHCPs or specialist placements, unless needed. Children and parents' experiences will be more consistent and positive, and outcomes for children and young people with SEND will improve sustainably, and more children will be in mainstream schools local to their homes.



We have strong foundations and infrastructure in place in Oxfordshire to deliver this strategy collaboratively and to hold ourselves to account. Our SEND improvement journey means we have established good partnership working and already have multi-agency delivery groups clustered around key themes. We have created an Oxfordshire Education Partnership, drawing together education settings and schools, from early years to post-16, and an associated education & inclusion strategy which aligns closely with the approach to SEND reform. Our approach to delivery will be pragmatic, collaborative and child and family-focused, seeking to draw on existing partnerships and what is working well, while addressing key new areas at pace and with robust accountability.

Our theory of change focus on four key elements, which need to be tackled in tandem and as a partnership to achieve success, supported by measurable KPIs to monitor deliver and drive accountability for success:

- **Build:** Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships
- **Improve capacity and capability:** Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need
- **Improve confidence:** Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system
- **Stabilise:** Stabilise finances and improve value for money.

How will the local area partnership deliver the first-year plan?

*Please set out **how** you will ensure the required capacity and capability is in place from organisational corporate functions to support implementation of the plan. This could include reference to **how you plan to build or bring in project delivery capability to manage delivery against the plan**, support prioritisation, and effective use of resources; and how you plan to build the capacity and capability in data and analytics to support effective tracking against the measures in the plan and reporting that informs decision making.*

We will deliver our first-year plan through a programme management approach, with robust project plans breaking down key actions, assigning clear roles and leads, tracking monthly progress and escalating risks/issues for senior leaders to unblock.

We will make use of existing partnership governance structures where appropriate and relevant. Key partners are already engaged at a system leadership level, for example through the Oxfordshire Education Partnership, our Education Executive, Schools Forum and SEND Improvement & Assurance Board.

Delivery groups will need to be established to progress key priorities, such as Experts at Hand and locality clusters – reporting into governance as outlined in the later section. Where possible, existing groups will be utilised, for example we already have multi-agency groups working on Alternative education provision and Preparation for adulthood, these will become the forums for SEND reform delivery of these themes in addition to existing improvement work.

We have scoped at pace the capacity and capability needed to deliver this major system change and developed an internal business case requesting support in key areas. This business case has now been approved and we are progressing to recruitment. We have already brought in additional expertise in our performance team and finance function as we identified these as essential to preparing this plan. The additional posts will be fixed term to support through the duration of SEND reform, funded in part through DfE SEND reform transformation monies, although this is insufficient to cover the necessary capacity. These posts include:

- Project/programme management
- Sufficiency and capital projects capacity
- HR capacity including to support with system redesign, change management, learning & development and talent acquisition
- Commissioning capacity.

These posts will sit within existing management structures, drawing on the expertise of key officers who have been involved in this work and who understand Oxfordshire in depth and making use of existing systems/infrastructure, such as the Power BI dashboards we have already begun to develop.

Other funding **Local Authorities**

Block Transfers: If you have made a block transfer (Schools Block to High Needs Block) for 26-27, please set out how your plans for this funding align with the activities outlined above.

250 words

Special School Outreach block transfer of £400,000 from the Schools Block to the High Needs block, is designed to support children who may otherwise require specialist placements, by embedding specialist expertise within mainstream settings. Building on a successful pilot, the approach aims to stabilise placements, reduce costs, and raise the confidence and skills of mainstream staff, as well as parental confidence in mainstream provision. National data shows a growing proportion of pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are now educated in mainstream schools, reinforcing the need for robust support within these settings.

Special School Outreach supports mainstream schools to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND through workforce development via a package of leadership or keyworker support. This support aims to develop long term and sustainable change in culture and ethos. There have been 340 referrals for support from Sept 23 – July 25 with post evaluation surveys from schools highlighting improvements in staff confidence and a positive impact on outcomes for pupils with SEND.

Capital: We have announced at least £3 billion in high needs capital between 2026-27 and 2029-30 to support children and young people (CYP) with SEND, or those requiring alternative provision (AP). This funding is intended to support place delivery across the full 0-25 age range, including early years and post-16. We expect funding to support the following outcomes:

Inclusion at the core of high needs sufficiency strategy, resulting in more children and young people with SEND accessing suitable places in mainstream settings, across all phases of education

Every child or young person who needs a place in an inclusion base can access one

Fewer children and young people with SEND needing to travel a long way to access a suitable placement

Improved suitability of the mainstream estate to support children and young people with SEND, with adaptations to improve inclusivity and accessibility of the physical environment

We also welcome innovative uses of high needs capital to drive inclusion, for example, investment in assistive technology for use in mainstream settings.

Please outline your strategy for how this funding will meet the outcomes above, with reference to the core minimum requirements and other workstreams in this reform plan where appropriate. We would like to see detail around your plans to increase capacity for inclusion bases (formerly known as SEN units, resourced provision and pupil support units – SU/RP/PSUs), such as schools, colleges or early years providers identified, engagement with relevant settings and trusts, and target cohort of needs.

If your plans include increases to places in special schools or specialist post-16 institutions, please include a clear rationale, showing the need that is being met, and why it cannot be met through other types of provision, such as inclusion bases.

If you are receiving additional capital funding to replace one or more planned special or AP free schools, please set out how this funding will meet need in your area, and plans for engaging relevant trusts in your sufficiency planning.


Oxfordshire County Council will use high needs capital, including the £11.3m 2026/27 allocation, to address rising EHCP demand, increasing complexity of need (especially autism, SEMH and speech, language and communication needs) and unequal access to local specialist provision. These pressures have increased reliance on out-of-area and independent placements, with higher costs and longer travel.

Our strategy prioritises inclusion-first investment by expanding mainstream capacity so more children can be supported locally. We will grow inclusion bases from the current 16 bases (207 places) through a phased programme across all districts, delivering 72 new places in 2026/27 and rising to 408 places by 2031/32. This includes additional primary and secondary bases, including in West Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, where sufficiency gaps are greatest.

Inclusion bases will span early years, school and post-16 provision, with cluster-based commissioning to reflect local need. Delivery through five district clusters will help us respond to rurality, local variation and falling rolls, while identifying suitable sites within existing estates. We will adapt and repurpose current buildings where we know there will be ongoing surplus space due to natural demographic changes, before considering new build to secure value for money and sustainability.

Capital will also improve mainstream suitability through accessibility adaptations, sensory-friendly spaces and assistive technology. We will support inclusive practice through technology-enabled approaches, including profiling and screening tools such as WellComm, alongside multidisciplinary delivery aligned to Experts at Hand, so physical investment is matched by stronger outreach, transition support and early intervention.

Where mainstream adaptation and inclusion bases are not sufficient, we will progress special school expansion and new provision. Our modelling shows that some cohorts, including children with complex autism and SLD/PMLD, require highly specialist environments that mainstream settings cannot provide safely or effectively, even with enhanced support. Planned



growth and new provision in Didcot and Faringdon will help meet these needs and reduce dependence on costly independent placements. The Didcot provision in particular will enable us to meet the needs of the expected population growth in the south of the county due to large-scale housing development in the area.

The 2026/27 allocation will be fully used for priority inclusion bases and mainstream adaptations, with years 2 and 3 funding supporting later phases, including further specialist units and targeted special school expansion where needed. This phased approach will help meet projected demand and reduce long-term system costs.

We are modelling the travel impact of all capital schemes. Increasing local capacity, particularly in West Oxfordshire and the south, will reduce journey times, lower transport dependence and improve access to education within local communities. Reduced travel should also impact directly on the well-being of children, with their needs met in the local community. Delivery will depend on our existing strong relationship and collaboration with MATs to jointly identify sites and development co-investment models and standardised MOUs to ensure consistent quality, clear expectations and shared accountability.

System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production.

Please outline how the local area partnership plans to engage system partners and stakeholders to develop and implement the plan – include planned engagement with schools and early years settings, alternative providers, FE and post-16 providers (including those your young people attend that are not within your local area), Parents and Carers and children and young people with SEND, with reference to the core minimum requirements. Consider changing roles and responsibilities in the context of the Schools White Paper and how you work collaboratively to manage the transition. Please indicate where additional support is required to engage partners or stakeholders - senior officials at the Department for Education will be available to contribute to summer term events with education leaders and parent carer forum leaders.

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Together, the Local Area Partnership (LAP) is committed to a proactive engagement approach that consistently seeks, hears and respects the views of system partners, especially children and young people with SEND including their families, as set out in our SEND strategy. The partnership has a strong foundation for working together, reflected in both the SEND Strategy and Improvement Journey, which emphasise proactive engagement, co-design of key commitments, and clear feedback loops such as 'You said, we did'. Our approach aligns with the NHS England ladder of co-production, by working in partnership with system partners, and with children, young people and families, to inform service design, delivery and evaluation, and recognising the value of lived experience alongside professional expertise. We are embedding this framework through structures such as the Youth Forum, OxPCF engagement, and co-production training across the partnership. We recognise further development is needed to strengthen consistency and impact, particularly in ensuring, where possible, true co-production is followed at the earliest stages of design, is applied consistently across all workstreams, and more clearly evidences how lived experience directly shapes transformation, decisions, and outcomes across the SEND system.

We have developed our SEND reform plan through system partner engagement. We have held a series of workshops with both education partners (including Schools Forum, our Oxfordshire Education Partnership and MAT CEOs) and members of our SEND local area partnership (including health partners and our Parent Carer Forum). This has shaped the proposals set out in this plan. We will continue this collaborative approach as we develop and launch key initiatives as part of SEND reform. Our SEND local area partnership and education partners will continue to play a key role, both through established board meetings and new delivery groups/workshops as required on key themes.

We will also continue to work with our SEND Youth Forum to hear the views of children and young people in our SEND reform planning process and implementation. The SEND Youth Forum has recently been extended to include 8 new satellite forums in schools/settings across the county, where we will continue to gather views and feedback to further inform SEND reform. We are implementing a strong feedback loop through regular 'You said we did', with the first being published during July 2026.

We have been working to strengthen engagement with parents and carers with children and young people with SEND and we will build on this further as we progress SEND reform. Particularly, again, implementing a strong feedback loop through a 'you said, we did' approach so families can clearly see how their feedback has influenced change. We will use surveys and SEND Connect sessions run by OxPCF to gather parent and carer views on what is needed in the plan and how best to implement change, adapting our approach to feedback as we go. We will review the funding needed to support SEND reform co-production activity with partners such as the PCF, to help ensure reform actions are co-produced wherever possible.

In the context of changing roles and responsibilities set out through the Schools White Paper, Oxfordshire Education Partnership is working collaboratively towards a strategic partnership role focused on ensuring a "collaborative network" exists, ensuring all schools and settings engage in local, inclusive, and improvement-led actions. By moving schools and education settings into cluster arrangements, aligned with family hubs and neighbourhood care we will extend feedback gathering through education, health and social care, from 0-25, ensuring

feedback is central to the ongoing developing SEND system and service design and delivery. We will work collaboratively to co-design an MOU for district clusters, setting out an equitable core offer.

We will strengthen FE engagement on key boards and ensure that FE partners are a key partner in designing and delivering across the SEND system, identifying opportunities for widening local provision and working with and through school and setting cluster arrangements, widening the choice and access to appropriate study programmes and ensuring the FE workforce have access to appropriate training and development from EAH.

We are planning a roadshow approach to share the full SEND reform plan once finalised and to engage a wider group of practitioners and families in understanding what SEND reform will mean for them and how they can be involved. The roadshow will include events in each district (eventually cluster) and ensure that the widest group of stakeholders are included (parents, carers, children, young people and professionals). We would welcome DfE support with this.

Risks and Mitigations

What are the key risks that could affect the successful implementation of your Local SEND Reform Plan, and what mitigation strategies are in place to manage these risks? Please include a maximum of 5 risks with impact and likelihood RAG for each risk. See Annex C for suggested risk matrix.

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	RAG	Mitigation	Residual RAG
Specialist workforce sufficiency	Critical	Likely	Red	Targeted recruitment campaigns to demonstrate why Oxfordshire is a great place to work, including working with universities to target graduates Ensure there is clear workforce development plans for specialist roles including entry requirements and apprentice/trainee roles Combine the use of non-qualified staff e.g. therapy assistance and TAs with clinical qualified staff to support capacity and grow our own Call for national support in this area	Amber
Sufficiency of specialist provision	Critical	Likely	Red	Supporting more children to have their needs met in mainstream education, and through the use of targeted, time limited interventions Sufficiency strategy to increase capacity as outlined in this plan To ensure governance and approval processes do not delay the creation of additional places, we will put in place appropriate delegated authority for spend on individual projects, inform planning authorities about the pending expansions requiring planning permission, and share early information about our significant change programme with RSD colleagues.	Amber
Managing growing demand and complexity of need	Moderate	Likely	Amber	Supporting more children to have their needs met in mainstream education, and through the use of targeted, time limited interventions at the earliest opportunity to prevent needs escalating Forecasting and modelling of future demand, to plan sufficiency system capacity Work with parents and families to manage expectations about support available and how needs are best met Using a combination of universal, targeted and specialist provision to meet a range of needs to maximise the capacity of specialist staff	Green
Capacity to implement reforms alongside running existing system	Moderate	Possible	Amber	Bring in additional capacity to support with SEND reform, as outlined in section 7 Robust project management approach, careful planning and use of phased approaches where appropriate	Green

				Adequate timelines, clear guidance and sufficient funding from Government are vital to support with this area	
Bringing partners and families with us on this journey	Critical	Possible	Amber	<p>Joint working, including with our Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum and SEND Youth Forum, to develop how SEND reform can work in Oxfordshire</p> <p>Ongoing feedback loops, through representatives on key boards, to hear how this is landing and respond accordingly</p> <p>Including parent/ carer reps on working groups and commissioning boards to shape the design of services</p> <p>Our refreshed SEND communications and engagement strategy, as outlined in section 9</p> <p>Support needed from Government in communicating about SEND reform nationally and how this is framed to families</p>	Green

Dependencies

Please detail the key areas of the local area partnership's proposed SEND future state and roadmap that may be impacted by wider reforms nationally and locally and outline how you will manage these. We expect these will include but not be limited to:

NHS reforms including neighbourhood teams

Local Government Re-organisation

Reforms to Children's Social Care

Best Start in Life, including Family Hubs

Best Start In Life Strategy

Curriculum and Assessment Review

500 word count limit

There is substantial change being progressed at pace across the Oxfordshire SEND local area partnership. Throughout this change, we will continue to be guided by this SEND reform plan, remaining consistent to our co-produced SEND strategy & vision and reflecting key national policy expectations and direction. Our key partnerships will continue on a pan-Oxfordshire footprint – even though individual partners may go through change, our commitment to this direction of travel and our shared role as system leaders will continue.

On 1st April 2026, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (BOB) ICB ceased to exist and the Thames Valley ICB was established as a new organisation. For Oxfordshire, this change does not have a material impact on the Oxfordshire County Council-hosted Health, Education and Social Care Joint Commissioning Team and the proposed changes retain the current Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) arrangements. The Oxfordshire SEND Local Area Partnership will work closely with NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care as functions and responsibilities from 2027/28 are laid out.

We await the Government's minded-to decision about local government reorganisation, with options on the table including splitting Oxfordshire into two or three unitary councils which would significantly affect delivery of this plan. Some readiness planning has begun and the planned new arrangements have been developed with future decisions to mitigate impact on the SEND reforms. Once we know the decision we can understand in more detail the impact and, if necessary, make plans to continue delivery of SEND reform while local authority SEND services are disaggregated.

Reforms to children's social care are being progressed successfully in Oxfordshire, with a Families First Partnership test and learn pilot underway in our South locality. The need for coordinated assessment, specialist expertise and alignment with education and health creates clear dependencies with SEND reform around workforce capacity, assessment pathways, and system coherence, requiring joint planning to manage sequencing and implementation risk.

We have published our Best Start in Life strategy and are developing proposals to open a network of Family Hub sites across the county. These are positive changes which align with the direction of travel of SEND reform – for example the emphasis on multi-agency working and early intervention – and many of the same system leaders are involved through partnership governance. We are using the same five district clusters to plan across all these initiatives which will strengthen our locality working and future-proof us in the event of local government reorganisation.

We will continue to work closely with schools, partners and stakeholders to ensure that the principles of the Curriculum and Assessment Review (inclusion, excellence, and relevance) are embedded across all phases of education within our area. Our newly formed Oxford Education Partnership has established an 'Outcomes for All' subgroup, and this review will form part of its first focused initiative. This clearly aligns with the direction of SEND reform and we will work closely with our Oxfordshire Education Partnership to bring forward both changes in tandem to create a coherent and inclusive system for children and young people.

Section 3 – Monitoring and Evaluation

How will the local area partnership know delivery is on track?

Please set out how you will monitor and track progress referencing:

Monitoring tools and processes - the specific tools, systems, and data you will use to track delivery milestones and measure the impact on outcomes.

Some Local Area Partnerships hold data in a central SEND operational dashboard. This is used by teams on a weekly basis to identify trends in demand or inform conversations with local school or setting leaders.

In some Local Area Partnerships, a view of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is reviewed monthly by a SEND Board to take decisions on prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of services informed by regular data.

Please set out how you will use data to track demand (e.g., EHCP applications for assessment), Service delivery (e.g., Speech and Language Specialists deployment; places created), Service quality (e.g., parental satisfaction) and outputs (e.g., pupil attendance; pupil exclusions)

Feedback and adaptation mechanisms - what feedback loops and stakeholder input you will use to review progress and adjust your approach.

We will use a programme management approach to monitor and track delivery of the activities in this plan. All actions will be assigned to a thematic delivery group, with monthly reporting of progress and KPIs (linked to the success metrics in this plan) as well as escalation of any risks/issues/barriers to the SEND reform delivery group. In turn, the SEND reform delivery group will report to and escalate matters as needed to the SEND Executive. This gives us straightforward governance and a clear line of sight, so all members of the partnership are kept apprised of delivery.

In addition to the monthly highlight reports, we will further develop our existing Power BI SEND dashboard to include new key metrics relating to SEND reform. We have already made good progress in developing real-time Power BI dashboards for managers and senior leaders to use including to track demand and service delivery, and with some additions these will become a key tool for monitoring the impact of SEND reform work. We are already working with our data team to develop this.

Our multi-agency quality assurance forum and multi-agency audits are an important part of how we understand service quality, and we will develop these existing mechanisms to capture the emerging impact of SEND reform on families.

We have feedback mechanisms in place including with our Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum and SEND Youth Forum. We have plans to further develop and expand the reach of these feedback mechanisms which will provide vital input as we progress SEND reform. Our Parent Carer Forum maintains a feedback tracker, collating themes and feedback from across their engagement activities with local families. This feedback is then shared with relevant stakeholders/theme groups and incorporated into our SEND project plans where appropriate.

We will continue to use these feedback mechanisms, and as set out in our maturity assessment we will develop and implement a clear partnership-wide feedback framework, setting out how feedback is gathered, analysed, escalated and responded to through governance so that this is a shared, system-wide approach.

Our new satellite SEND youth forums and Youth partnerships will share feedback with the central SEND youth forum team, to identify common themes and to report at our SEND Improvement & Assurance Board. We will use the full range of boards outlined in the governance section to engage key local stakeholders, encouraging frank and reflective conversation to hear feedback and use this to inform our approach.

These activities will enable us to have an in-depth and responsive picture of delivery of this plan, through both qualitative and quantitative data sources. Monthly monitoring and a clear governance framework will enable us to adapt and change our response as we go in response to emerging feedback.

Reporting to DfE

Using the attached data template, the local area partnership is required to provide quarterly data returns to DfE against selected key metrics. DfE will, in turn, provide quarterly data reports with visualised analysis and benchmarking that will support your local delivery, monitoring and evaluation. This will include data the department holds on **Attendance, Exclusions, and Unauthorised absence**. Please use the attached data template to upload your initial data return to DfE.

Section 4 – Governance

How will the local area partnership ensure delivery of plans remain on track?

Please outline the governance structures in place to oversee delivery. Clearly set out who is responsible for overseeing reform delivery, what each governance group or individual is accountable for, and how these arrangements ensure progress is monitored and decisions are made transparently. Please identify where the named SRO for the Local SEND Reform Plan sits within the governance structure and ensure your response incorporates the core minimum requirements.

Governance Mechanism <i>This may be a governance group, or an individual (e.g. SRO).</i>	Purpose/ Responsibilities <i>What is the function of this governance mechanism? What are they accountable for overseeing? What information is reported to this governance mechanism?</i>	Membership <i>Who does this governance mechanism comprise of? [should include health and PCF representation] What stakeholders are represented at this governance mechanism? Please indicate who chairs this. (Include n/a if an individual).</i>	Cadence <i>How regularly does this governance mechanism meet?</i>	Decision Rights <i>What decisions can this governance mechanism make?</i>	Escalation Route <i>Where can this governance mechanism escalate issues or decision to?</i>
SEND Executive	The most senior, executive governing body for escalation of key issues/risks and overarching oversight of SEND reform as well as SEND improvement.	Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, Director of Children's Services & Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion (SRO) Oxfordshire County Council Chief Executive and Place Director, Thames Valley ICB Independent Chair of SEND Improvement & Assurance Board	Quarterly, or as needed for escalation	Sign-off of SEND reform plan and any major changes to plan Key system decisions	Chief Executives/ governance of constituent members
SEND reform steering group	Operational delivery of SEND reform plan	Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion (SRO) Oxfordshire County Council Oxfordshire County Council teams including SEND, sufficiency, performance, finance, commissioning, project management Thames Valley ICB	Monthly	Strategic decisions to drive delivery of SEND reform plan, within agreed scope/tolerances	SEND Executive
Thematic delivery groups	To drive delivery of key elements of SEND reform plan, for example: Alternative education provision Preparation for adulthood Some of these groups already exist and others will be stood up in response to SEND reform. Membership will vary depending on the relevant theme.	Oxfordshire County Council Thames Valley ICB and health providers Education settings & schools Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum Other members as appropriate	Monthly	Operational decisions to drive delivery of SEND reform plan, within agreed scope/tolerances and as set out by the SEND reform steering group	SEND reform steering group
Education Executive	Provides collective system leadership for education in Oxfordshire, bringing together senior education leaders to represent the sector where no single individual can do so. It coordinates and shares information	Director of Children's Social Care Deputy Director Education and Inclusion (SRO) Oxfordshire Education Partnership Co-Chair SEND Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB) Education Lead	Twice termly	Strategic issues across the education landscape	Member boards as required

	across education partnerships, ensures consistent two-way communication with school associations, and represents education leadership at key system and statutory forums. The Executive provides strategic oversight, check and challenge, and steers delivery of priorities across the Oxfordshire Education Partnership. It supports alignment across major boards, responds to national and local policy developments, and escalates risks and issues requiring collective action.	Education Lead for Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Schools Forum Chair			
Schools Forum	The purpose of Schools Forum is to provide strategic direction for the funding of schools in the local authority and support services in relation to new school funding arrangements covering: the Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) the Schools' Budget (centrally retained and Individual School Budget) wider issues such as service contracts and service level agreements.	Primary representatives (including maintained) Secondary representatives (including maintained) Alternative provision representatives Special school representatives Early years representative 16-19 representative Finance business partner Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion (SRO)	Five times per year	Strategic direction for funding for schools, including dedicated schools' grant and schools' budget.	N/A
Oxfordshire Education Partnership	The Oxfordshire Education Partnership (OEP) is a whole system partnership across the schools and settings landscape. It is the overarching strategic Education Partnership to drive key objectives and programmes across the whole schools and settings system. It aims to be the collective representation of senior leaders in the local education system, mandated to work actively across settings and with partners.	Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion (SRO) Representatives of a wide range of schools and settings across the county, from early years to post-16, including alternative provision and special schools and leads from school headteacher networks	Half-termly	Strategic direction of schools and education settings across the county	Education Executive
SEND Improvement & Assurance Board	The purpose of SIAB is to provide strategic leadership and accountability for vision, strategy, performance and improvement of the SEND system.	Chief Executive, Director of Children's Services & Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion (SRO) Oxfordshire County Council Chief Executive and Place Director, Thames Valley ICB Independent Chair of SEND	Monthly	Oversee SEND improvement & the SEND local area partnership	SEND Executive

		Improvement & Assurance Board Theme group chairs Children's Transformation Special School Reps OxPCF			
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If you have a diagram to show the relationship between these governance mechanisms, please upload this here.

Section 5 – Central Government Support

How can we help you?

Please outline any practical support you need from central government to implement your plan effectively.

This may include:

Access to specialist expertise or advisory support

Help with workforce development or recruitment challenges

Tools or templates to support data collection, reporting, or evaluation

Facilitation of peer learning or regional collaboration

Support with system-level coordination across education, health, and care

Guidance on navigating regulatory or policy barriers

- Strengthen regional support: successful delivery of these reforms requires substantial capacity and support at a regional level, for example through the regional director's office, shared peer learning, and regional resources tailored to the local context across all Education partners
- National workforce planning to address key pipeline issues with hiring to specialist roles e.g. Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language Therapists
- Resources to support co-production, including the creation of national resources and appropriate funding to support meaningful co-design
- New guidance and information for local areas to roll-out to be published in good time with sufficient notice and support for local areas to implement
- Coordination across the various policy areas that are interlinked with SEND reform, eg Families First, Best Start in Life, curriculum review, local government reorganisation, NHS reform and more, as well as regulatory inspections (e.g. Ofsted).

Oxfordshire
SEND

SEND reform

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What is SEND reform?

This February, the Government published landmark proposals setting out major changes to the system for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities:

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[SEND reform: putting children and young people first](#)

These reforms have five key guiding principles at their heart, as detailed on the following slide.



DfE guiding principles

1. Early

Children and families should receive the support they need as soon as possible, with a quick response to changing needs. This will start to break the cycle of needs going unmet and getting worse. Instead, we will intervene swiftly and proactively, focusing on providing support earlier in children's lives when this can have the greatest impact.

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2. Local

Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at an education setting close to their home, alongside their peers, rather than travelling long distances from their family and community. Specialist settings should continue to play a vital role supporting those with the most complex needs.

3. Fair

Every education setting should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including as they change over time, without parents having to fight to get support for their children. Where specialist provision is needed for children and young people, we will ensure it is there, whether that be a mainstream, specialist or Alternative Provision setting, with clear legal requirements and safeguards for children and parents.

4. Effective

Reforms should be grounded in evidence, ensuring all education settings know where to go to find effective practice that has excellent long-term outcomes for children and young people.

5. Shared

Education, health and care services should work in partnership with one another, Best Start Family Hubs, local government, families, teachers, educators, experts, the voluntary sector and representative bodies to deliver better experiences and outcomes for all our children and young people. The voices of children should be at the heart of decision making.



Key elements of SEND reform

Strengthened universal offer in all mainstream settings

National inclusion standards

New inclusive mainstream fund & national SEND training

Investment in early years

Individual Support Plans (ISP) for children with additional needs

Inclusion bases – support bases & specialist bases

Three-tiered model for alternative provision

Develop transition planning – from early years to post-16

Experts at Hand

Legal duty for every school to publish an Inclusion Strategy, and inclusion embedded in Ofsted frameworks

Capital investment to increase sufficiency

Pooled funding between local schools



What are local areas required to do?

- All areas have been asked to prepare a SEND reform plan outlining how this change will be implemented locally – **due 19 June** to the Department for Education
- As well as the SEND reform plan, we are also required to submit a **data and finance return** and a **maturity self-assessment**
- There will be quarterly monitoring of our plan for the next three years to scrutinise progress against our KPIs
- If our plan is found to meet the Government criteria, Oxfordshire will be eligible for a **high needs stability grant** to repay up to 90% of our dedicated schools grant deficit.



How have we developed our local SEND reform plan?

- Series of workshops with SEND local area partnership and education colleagues to develop the plan, including health, schools and education settings, and Oxfordshire Parent Carer Forum
- We have agreed to structure our plan against the key building blocks and enablers identified by DfE, with the addition of communication as a focused area for local improvement
- We are drawing on the plans already in place locally, including our SEND priority action plan, education & inclusion strategy and former deficit management plan – as well as addressing gaps and new areas.

Oxfordshire SEND reform plan

Four key building blocks

1: Strengthening inclusion across education settings

Organising places and provision to meet as many needs as possible, as close to home as possible, with all settings and providers moving towards a shared understanding and consistent practices around inclusion.

2: Access to specialist support and local placements

Improving collaboration between settings and deploying expertise from a range of specialist and expert sources, to support schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people earlier and locally.

3: System leadership, local partnership collaboration and co-production

Putting in place the enabling conditions across a local area that ensures planning and provision reflects the local area & is joined up, including strategic co-production with parent carers and children and young people.

4: Encouraging inclusive culture & behaviours

Using funding and shared accountability towards a system that works for children and families while achieving value for money.

Plus four system enablers

Capital

Workforce

Data/digital systems

Communication



How will the system be different in the next 3 years?

- Focus on SEND support
- Focus on early intervention for CYP at mainstream schools and settings
- Access to universal and targeted support that is not currently available in the system
- Needs led approach, improving outcomes for CYP (but may not be delivered at individual level)
- Partnership approach informs service delivery

Our change story

Build

- Build a 0-25 system where children and young people receive support to achieve and thrive through (a) more inclusive settings and (b) stronger local partnerships

Improve capacity and capability

- Improve capacity and capability of the mainstream and specialist workforce to identify and meet need

Improve confidence

- Improve confidence of children, families, and stakeholders in reform and readiness of the system

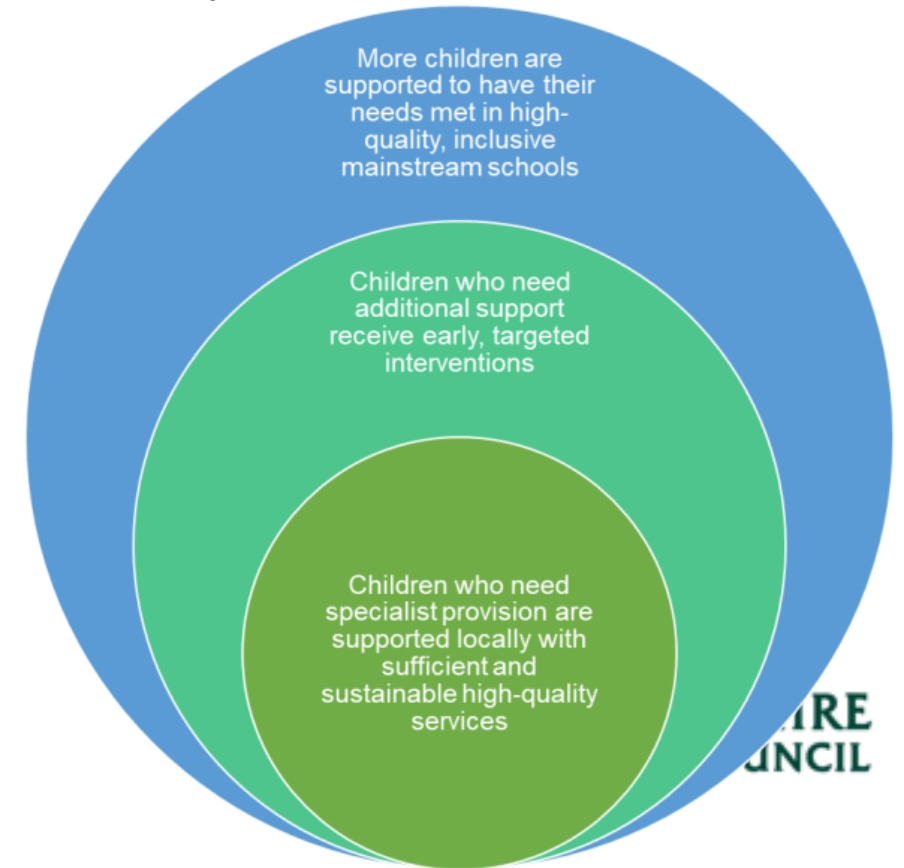
Stabilise

- Stabilise finances and improve value for money

Vision and Goals

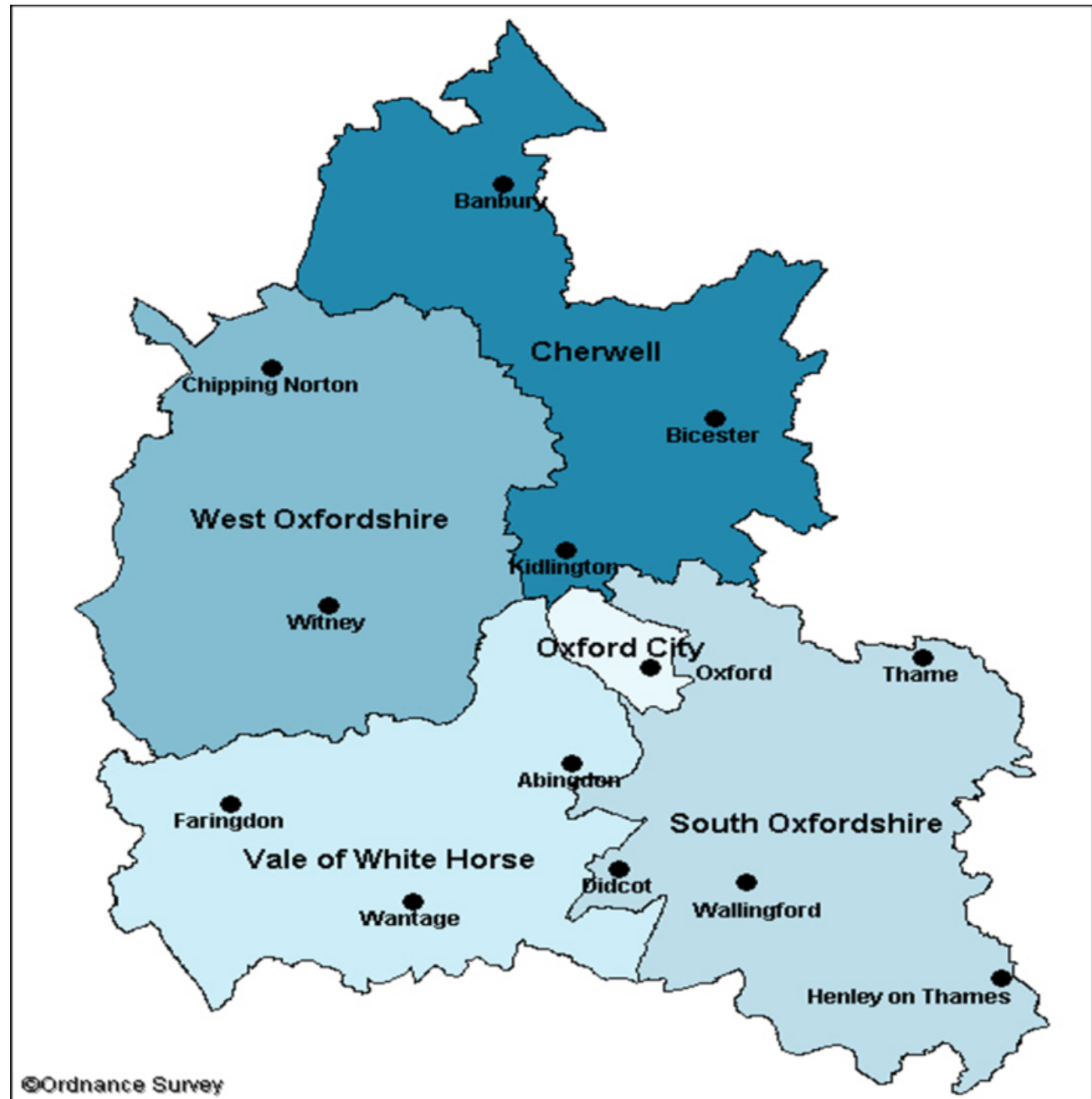
What are we trying to improve?

- ✓ Outcomes for children
- ✓ Confidence of parents, carers and young people in the system
- ✓ Management of finances to secure value for money



Locality clusters

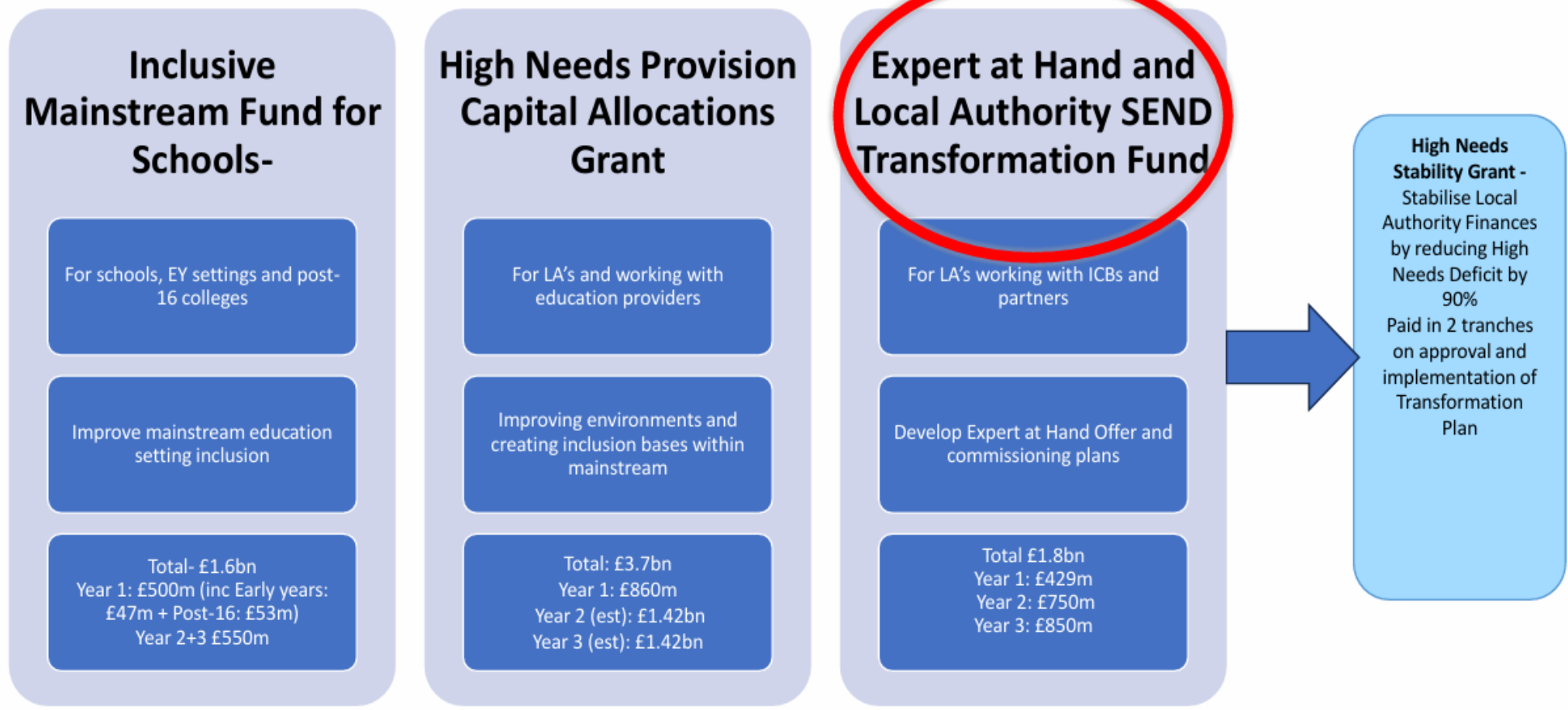
Every school
connected:
5 district
clusters,
3-4 locality
clusters per
district –TBA





Funding Stream Allocations

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All interact

Types of Expert at Hand activity expected to set out in Expert at Hand plan



Focused at children

- **Whole school interventions**- support from E@H to deliver whole school programmes
- **Group/class interventions**- interventions- including joint delivery with setting staff- focused on specific needs
- **Individual interventions**- potentially time-limited interventions including placements within a specialist unit with reintegration for individual children

Focused at staff capacity within settings

- **For Leaders**- SLT/SENCOs- policy review and development to improve setting wide practice, develop senior knowledge and capacity
- **For whole workforce**- Training & resources to develop skills and evidence-based interventions focused on specific needs
- **For targeted professionals**- Modelling interventions, practice development and coaching/supervision for specific staff within setting

Support for settings at place level

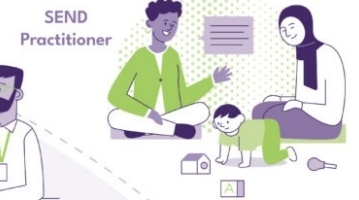
- Available source of advice and guidance for education settings
- Whole area training opportunities
- Problem solving clinics
- Support for schools to engage with parent carers

Experts at Hand: an offer of support to mainstream settings

A continuum of support that includes alternative provision intervention and specialist pathways



Sharing spaces and resources with Best Start Family Hubs



Educational psychology



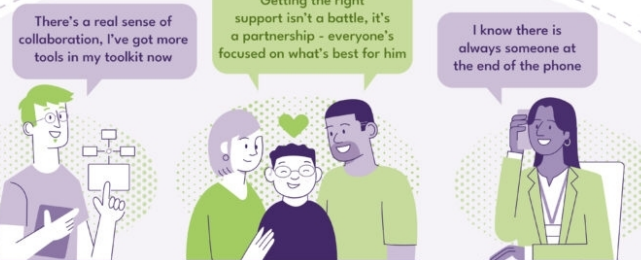
Providing easy access and support to navigate available services



Support with screening & identification of needs



Working with settings to understand what they need and plan support



Building confidence & capacity in the mainstream workforce



Teams of specialists working together

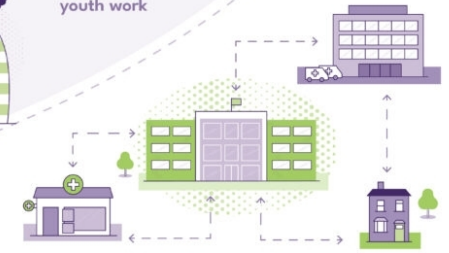
Facilitating targeted support & sharing effective practice



Family support & youth work



Strengthening links between home and setting



Integrated with multidisciplinary working in Neighbourhood Health Teams

Whole-school strategies for inclusive environments



Occupational therapy

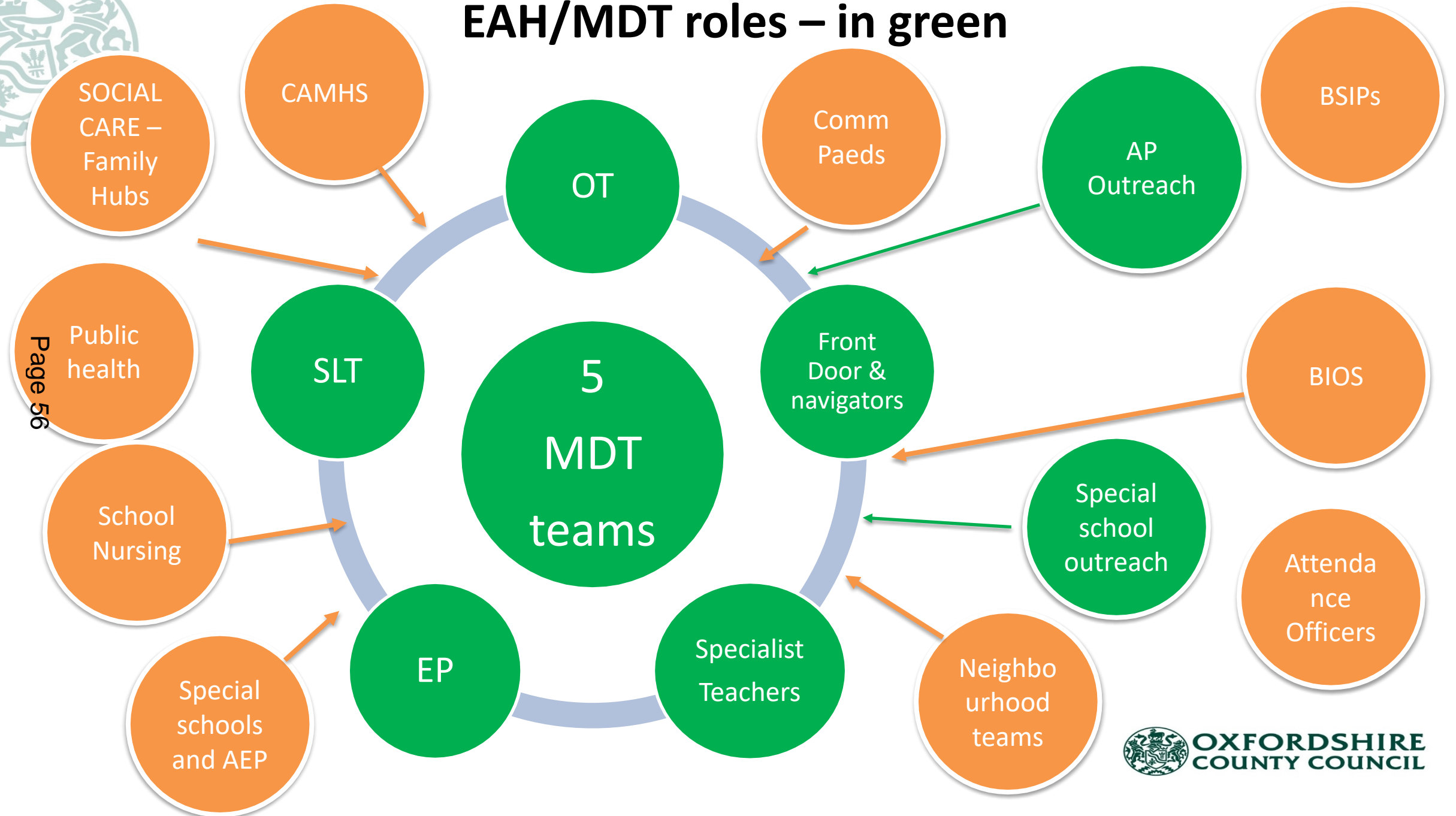
Working alongside Mental Health Support Teams



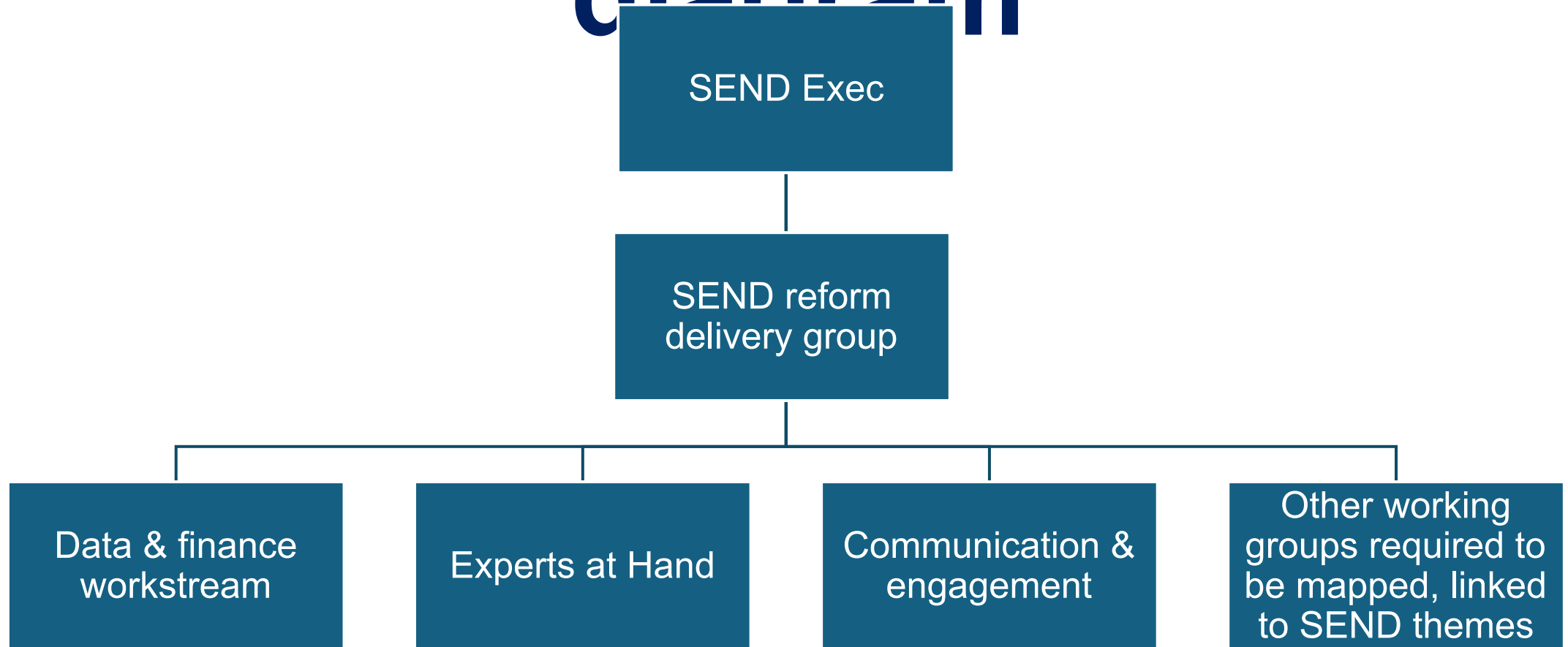
Part of reforming the Special Educational Needs & Disabilities system to be:

- Early
- Local
- Fair
- Effective
- Shared

EAH/MDT roles – in green



Governance diagram



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