

Divisions Affected -

EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 20 May 2024

An update on the Special Education Needs and Disability Priority Action Plan

Report by Lisa Lyons, Corporate Director (DCS), Children,
Education & Families

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) **ACKNOWLEDGE** the good progress made to date on implementation of the Priority Action Plan (PAP).
 - b) **AGREE** to receive a further update on progress in September 2024.

Executive Summary

2. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress against the Priority Action Plan (PAP), including the definition and use of co-production (CoPro), current performance and effectiveness the SEND Improvement Board.
3. The requirement for the PAP arose from the Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection report, dated 15 September 2023, to address the five areas of priority action and four areas of improvement.
4. On 12th December, Ofsted/CQC confirmed that it met the criteria set out in paragraph 149 of the Area SEND inspections framework and handbook (14 April 2023). The PAP was subsequently published on the Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) and the Integrated Care Board's (ICB) respective websites.
5. The PAP focuses on the action and improvement needed by February 2025 against the five priority areas. It is likely that this will be followed by an Ofsted monitoring visit shortly thereafter. In the intervening period the Local Area Partnership (LAP) will receive scheduled stocktake visits and deep dive reviews, alternating every 3 months approximately. The first deep dive took place on 25 March 2024.
6. The LAP comprises:
 - Oxfordshire County Council

- NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) Integrated Care Board (ICB)
 - Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
 - Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
 - Parent Carer Forum (PCF), the official body for the voice of parent carers
7. While the PAP is a key document, against which the LAP will be assessed, the overarching approach to improvement has been to implement a comprehensive transformation programme that addresses the ‘widespread and/or systemic failings’ identified in the Ofsted/CQC report¹.
 8. A co-production definition was co-produced by partners in 2022 working together as Co-production Oxfordshire (established in 2017). The PCF Steering Group reaffirmed the definition for the purposes of the programme in January 2024. CoPro is being embedded within the programme workstreams with the support and involvement of the PCF. Additionally, a CoPro training programme is available. The PCF also has a role to identify and coordinate the involvement of parent carers and CYP in CoPro by reaching into the SEND Network. CoPro definition:

‘Co-production is the process where providers and/or professionals and stakeholder citizens equally share a whole-life responsibility for the creation and delivery of products, services, or knowledge. Co-production is underpinned by the principles of equality, diversity, access, and reciprocity.’
 9. The programme governance (Appendix A) arrangements are now fully established, comprising three integrated levels that links delivery of change and improvement on the ground, through the Partnership Delivery Group (PDG), up to the SEND Improvement & Assurance Board (SIAB), which is independently chaired. The chair’s blog on the April meeting can be read [here](#) and is included as appendix D.
 10. Additionally, a SEND Transformation Roadmap was published [here](#) on 1 May in line with the commitment given to a parent carer at the Better Together event on 20 March.
 11. The SIAB has broad representation from across the LAP and political spectrum and has been receiving progress reports as well as undertaking focused sessions on subjects such as Post 16 provision, Alternative Provision, Voice, Views and CoPro and school funding.
 12. The transformation programme is now nearing full mobilisation and resourcing with a blend of service and programme professionals and support including Finance, Communications & Engagement, data analysts, and parent carers.

¹ [Oxfordshire Area SEND Full Inspection Report Jul 23](#)

Progress

13. The transformation roadmap provided as appendix C, summarises the work completed to the end of April 2024 and the work to be completed by each quarter thereafter until April 2025. The roadmap will be updated each quarter. The following provides more detail on progress.

Co-production and Communication:

- Partnership definition of co-production (CoPro) agreed and actively used. Partnership CoPro Charter agreed.
- Co-produced and implemented an inter-agency communications & engagement plan. A programme of events has commenced.
- SEND Oxfordshire Conversations events commenced and will occur as sessions at key points in the year.
- The partnership supported the 'Better Together' event 2024, to listen to the voice and views of parents and carers.
- Parent carer outcomes survey baseline underway.
- Voice of CYP, building on the SEND Youth Forum and existing schools focus groups for a wide range of participation and views. Planned quality assurance and analysis across case specific feedback of children on a case-by-case basis.

Assurance and Governance

- The partnership governance implemented for the SEND strategy and transformation work, with wide representation.
- The SEND partnership transformation programme is nearing full mobilisation.
- The EHCP quality assurance framework is in development. The Invision quality framework is used to improve plans.
- The strategic KPI framework is agreed, including outcomes and experiences of CYP and parent carers.
- DfE Deep Dive under the Improvement Notice completed in March 2024.
- Triangulation of outcomes from the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in February 2024, which were rated as Good.
- Establishing in May 2024 an Early Years Board for universal provision, including SEND specific.

Placement Sufficiency and Finance

- Bloxham Special School opened.
- Cherry Fields Primary School Resource Base opened with 8 additional places.
- Approval for Didcot special school
- Place planning and sufficiency plan developed

- Dynamic Purchasing system in place for Alternative Provision, with an increased number of commissioned providers.
- Bandings system from the High Needs Block under development with School's Forum.
- Delivering Better Value programme with the DfE continues

Support to Schools and Settings:

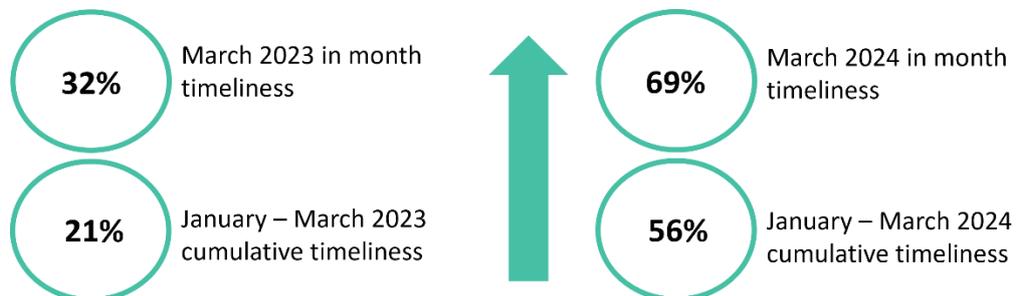
- Schools Relational Practice Programme (trauma and attachment aware) roll out to schools and settings continues.
- Enhanced Pathway pilots on-going
- Special School In-Reach, Out-Reach pilots on-going
- Roll out of the Ordinarily Available Toolkit.

Workforce

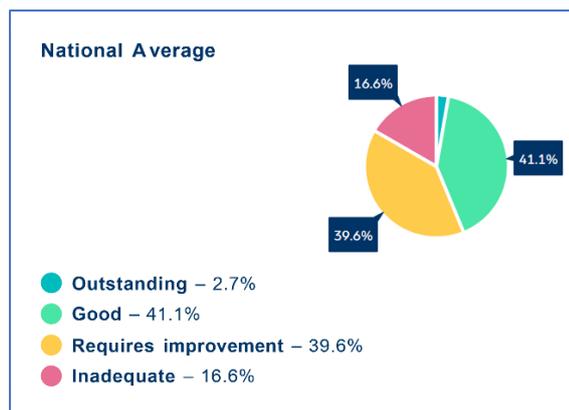
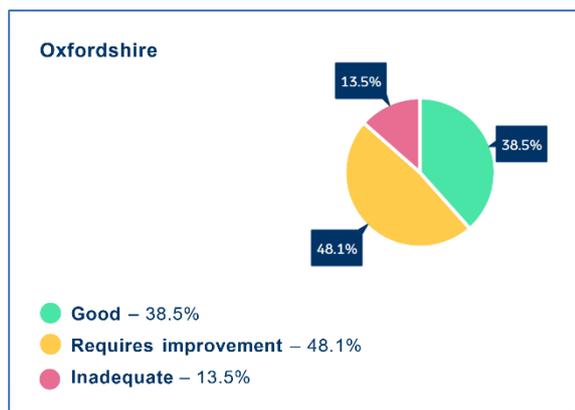
- Stabilisation of the SEND team and education leadership
- SEND Live conference 2024 delivered for continuous professional development.
- Practitioner baseline survey baseline in development.
- Introduction to restorative/ relational practice
- Adoption and roll out of speech, language, and communication screening tool (a partnership approach).
- Schools Relational Practice Programme (trauma and attachment aware) roll-out
- Training on EHCP quality assurance and plan writing
- Workforce scope and training schedule in design.

Performance/ Service Delivery

- Increasing performance of completion of EHCPs within statutory timescale.



- EHCP quality improving and comparable with national performance. The figures below follow an audit of a sample of case files (Q4) by Invision and independent, 3rd party organisation.



- Commissioned contracts with health providers completed for integrated therapies.
- Start Well, Public Health 0-19 contract launched, related to health visiting and school nursing programmes.
- Phased update of Local Offer, 0-4 and 5-16 completed.

Priority Action Plan

14. An Improvement Notice was issued to Oxfordshire County Council by the DfE on 09 November 2023 following the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) Area SEND Inspection, published on 15 September 2023.
15. Notwithstanding that the transformation programme is almost fully mobilised, delivery against the PAP has been progressing and was reported as part of the DfE Deep Dive on 25th March.
16. A highlight report on the status and progress of the PAP is provided at appendix B.
17. It should be noted that alongside the PAP specific work, there are four workstreams related to the Delivering Better Value programme that are underway and are integral to the wider transformation programme.

Financial Implications

18. Work is in progress with the DfE to define the financial projections and work continues in conjunction with Oxfordshire's Schools' Forum to develop a three to five year funding strategy. As part of this Council agreed an additional budget allocation of £1m from 2024/25 which will be used to support any financial implications of this plan as they arise.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Head of Finance Business Partnering,
thomas.james@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

19. There are no legal implications arising from the content of this report. The taking of such action as outlined in the report is lawful under the general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011; it is also lawful under section 20(8) Children Act 2004 and the duties to respond to findings from the local area special educational needs and disability inspections, as set out in the Area SEND inspection handbook, May 2021, No. 160026. There are no issues relating to GDPR as the data does not enable identification of an individual school or child, and the information is available to the public.

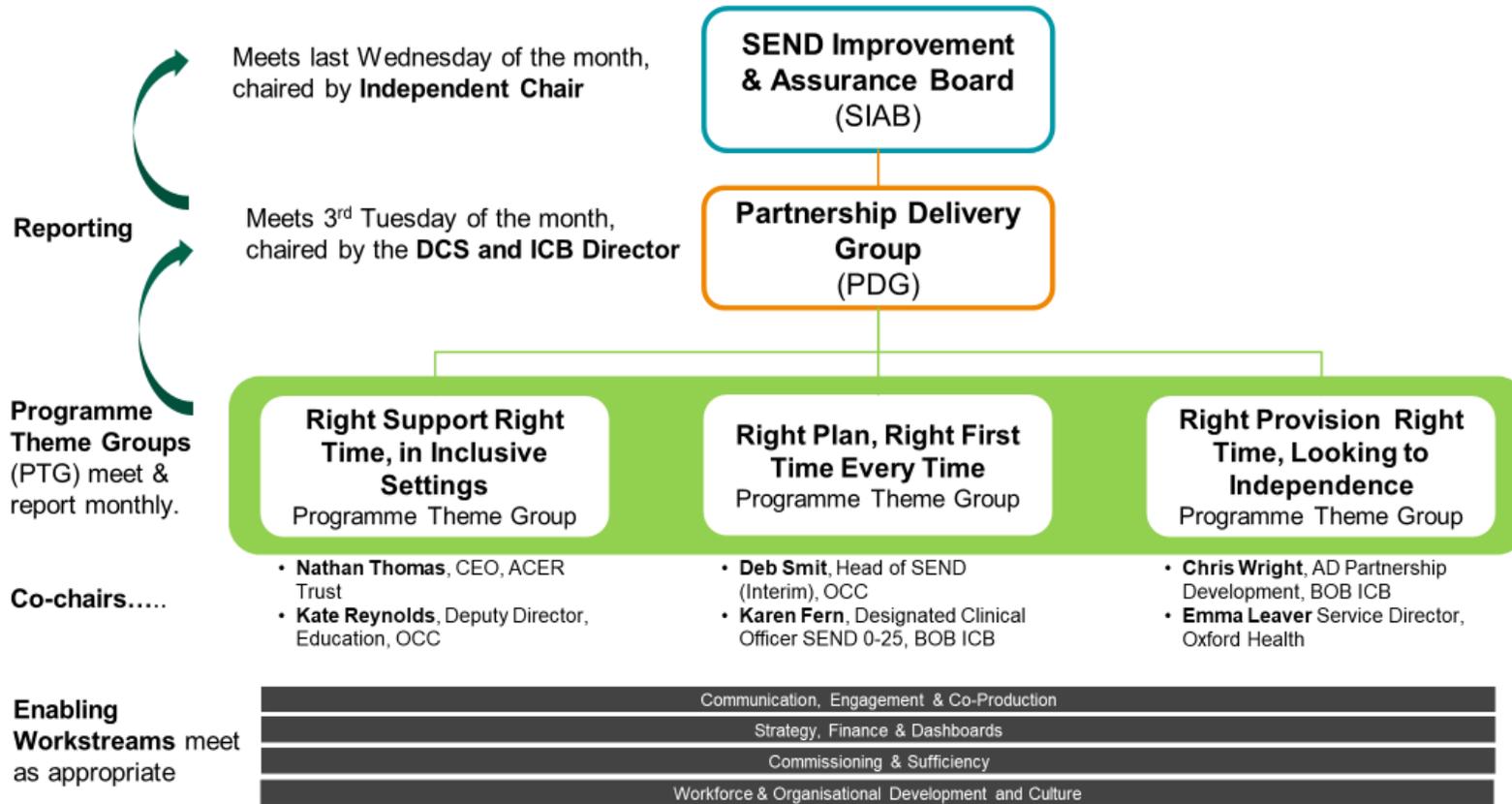
Comments checked by: Naomi Bentley-Walls

Naomi Bentley-Walls – Head of Law – Childcare
Naomi.BentleyLawson@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

NAME	Lisa Lyons
Background papers:	Oxfordshire SEND LAP Priority Action Plan
Other Documents:	Nil
Contact Officer:	Ian Smart Transformation Programme Director 07786 620002 ian.smart@oxfordshire.gov.uk
May 2024	

Appendix A: Governance arrangements

SEND Transformation Programme Governance



Appendix B: PAP Progress Report

The notice was given to address the five areas of priority action and four areas of improvement identified in the report of the Ofsted/CQC local area SEND inspection dated 15 September 2023. In response, a PAP was co-produced by the LAP, which focused on addressing the five priority areas for action:

- **PAP 1.** Systems to gather the **voice and views** of children and young people (CYP) with SEND effectively and use these views to inform their strategic planning for, and evaluation of, SEND services that improve the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- **PAP 2.** Develop **communication systems** across the LAP to improve the efficiency and quality of information-gathering processes to ensure that CYP's needs are understood and met effectively through coordinated approaches.
- **PAP 3.** Establish rigorous processes to help ensure the improved **timeliness and quality assurance of EHC plans** and use the learning to improve the quality of new and existing EHC plans.
- **PAP 4.** Improve the **commissioning of services** to ensure that CYP and their families receive sufficient support to better meet their needs and improve parental confidence in the SEND system.
- **PAP 5.** Identify the steps that will be taken to collectively monitor and measure the **impact of their strategy and actions**. These plans should be **co-produced** with and communicated clearly to CYP and their families so that their **experiences and outcomes improve**.

Additionally, the PAP addresses four Areas for Improvement (Afi):

- **Afi 1:** Evaluate the quality and impact of services and joint working more effectively to inform improvements that lead to better outcomes and experiences for CYP with SEND.
- **Afi 2:** Improve their strategic approach to transition planning at all ages so that CYP receive the right help and support they need to lead successful lives.
- **Afi 3:** Develop their oversight, strategy, and commissioning arrangements of suitable alternative provision so that there is sufficient suitable provision that meets the needs of CYP with SEND.
- **Afi 4:** Address the long waiting times for CYP requesting support from health services. The LAP should ensure that support is in place from health services for children and young people who are awaiting assessments.

The purpose of the following is to report progress against the **5 priority action areas** and the **34 actions** therein, which are embedded and being delivered through the SEND Transformation Programme. The **BRAG** rating denotes progress status

NB Please note that the **RAG rating colours and definitions** are instructed by the **DfE**.

- Grey  Actions not yet begun
- Red  Actions delayed and impact not being delivered
- Amber  Actions on track and expected impact on track
- Green  Action completed and early evidence of impact
- Blue  Change embedded, sustainable, ongoing evidence of impact

PAP Ref	Objective	Theme	Project(s)	Comment	Date	BRAG
1	Views of children, young people, and their families are sought, listened to, and acted on effectively					
1.1	To have systems and processes that will gather the views of children, young people, their parents/carers, and professionals that advocate for them	Cross-cutting	Voice, Views & Co-pro	Lived Experience survey goes live May 24 . Repeated 6/9 monthly	Apr 24	
1.2	An agreed definition of co-production (including monitoring and evaluation) is created by, shared, and understood across all partners, parents, and carers	Cross-cutting	Voice, Views & Co-pro	Completed	Jan 24	
1.3	An agreed approach and system in place that ensures children, young people and their parents/carers views are used to inform strategic planning.	Cross-cutting	Voice, Views & Co-pro	Lived Experience survey goes live May 24 . Repeated 6/9 monthly	Apr 24	
1.4	An established system for measuring outcomes and experiences of children, young people, and their parents/carers, to inform strategic planning and implementation.	Cross-cutting	Data, Insights & Dashboards	Strategic KPIs agreed and dashboard in production	Apr 24	
1.5	The views of children, young people, and their parents/carers are captured effectively and are evident in their influence on strategic planning and implementation	Cross-cutting	Voice, Views & Co-pro	Engagement plan underway	Oct 24	
2A	Cohesive communication systems between services across the partnership that supports joined-up working					
2A1	Co-produce an inter-service communication and information sharing strategy so that all parents/carers and stakeholders' queries are dealt with in a timely manner	Cross-cutting	Comms & Engagement	Comms & Engagement Plan live, including events i.e. Conversations	Apr 24	

2A2	Implement a local area system oversight process to support the application of strategy and policy	Cross-cutting	Governance	Programme governance in place	July 24	
2B	Joint effective working across all services supporting children and young people with SEND and their families					
2B:1	Parents carers, CYP with SEND can easily access all the information they need. This will include support at the earliest point of need and an EHCP, information about the agreed actions in place to support CYP progress and the impact of these actions.	Right Support, Right Time	Graduated approach	Phased launch, 0-4 and 5-16, completed	Apr 24	
2B:2	Named workers will be identified, fully trained, and supported to be the conduit between children, young people, and parents and all agencies.	All themes	n/a	Work underway	Jul 24	
2B:3	Partner systems and processes support CYP and parents/carers to experience a joined-up approach to meeting their child/young person's needs.	Cross-cutting	n/a	SEND AS IS pathways being mapped June 24, then TO BE improvements implementation by October 24.	Apr 25	

PAP Ref	Objective	Theme	Project(s)	Comment	Date	BRAG
3A	Children and young people's needs are consistently identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way from the outset					
3A1	Process map all timelines relating to statutory EHCP processes to identify clearly causes of delay, and identify solutions	Right Plan	EHCP Improvement	Workshops on 20w, Annual Reviews, Transfers, Appeals, Tribunals, incl. all forms	Apr 24	
3A2	Improve the timeliness of contributions from all agencies who are required to input to any EHCP process	Right Plan	EHCP Improvement	As per 3A1. Implementation from July to Dec	Sept 24	
3A3	Ensure that the system to communicate progress of new and existing EHCPs is understood and accessible to partners, parents, and carers	Right Plan	EHCP Improvement	Implementation from July to Dec	Sept 24	
3A4	Ensure that co-production is embedded throughout the EHCP processes, so that children and young people, parents and carers and all relevant professionals are included.	Right Plan	EHCP Improvement	Parent carers & professionals are part (CoPro) of the improvement workshops	Apr 24	

3B	Improve the quality of EHCPs so that contributions from education, health and social care are thorough and describe the child or young person accurately enough to ensure their needs are met effectively, particularly at the point of transition					
3B1	To review and embed an updated Multi-Agency Quality Assurance Framework so that the quality of reports feeding into plans and ultimately the plans themselves reflect the needs of each child	Right Plan	MAQA Framework	Framework being finalised including a measure of advice and plan quality (< week 15)	Jul 24	
3B2	To improve the quality of advice and identification of specific provision from education, health, and social care	Right Plan	MAQA Framework	Framework finalised including a measure of advice quality. On-going	Apr 24	
3B3	Audits of plans demonstrate advice from health, social care, and education leads to accurate assessment of child's needs	Right Plan	MAQA Framework	Invision audits will continue to validate new MAQA	Jul 24	
3B4	Processes will be in place to effectively monitor the achievement of outcomes and delivery of provision, as detailed in section F, G and H, through the annual review process	Right Plan	MAQA Framework EHCP Improvement	Monitoring process integrated in MAQA framework and Annual Review	Apr 25	

PAP Ref	Objective	Theme	Project(s)	Comment	Date	BRAG
4A	Partners know registered providers well and there are strong relationships with commissioned providers					
4A1	Services for CYP with SEND are on the Local Offer with contact details, referral pathways and links. The information will be co-produced, relevant, up to date and regularly updated by a dedicated resource.	Right Support Cross-cutting	Comms & Engagement	Phased launch, 0-4 and 5-16, completed	Apr 24	
4A2	Develop a robust system for ongoing monitoring and quality assurance of providers across the system. This will drive quality improvement and inform commissioning plans.	Cross-cutting	Commission'g	On track	Jul 24	
4A3	Map and consolidate existing Local Area Partners joint forums to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for joint working to build relationships	Cross-cutting	Comms & Engagement		Apr 24	
4B	Commissioning arrangements support timely decision making and transition arrangements					
4B1	Ensure there are robust joint commissioning arrangements in place to meet children and young people with SEND needs across the system	Cross-cutting	Commission'g	Improved model of integrated commission	Oct 24	

4B2	Ensure early identification and timely decision-making processes embedded in all services and interventions are in place CYP of all ages, incl. key transition points	All themes	Combination	Work underway	Jul 24	
4B3	Ensure service provision is responsive and timely to meet needs of CYP with SEND.	All themes	Combination	Tested in survey and KPI dashboard	Jan 25	
4C	There is a multi-agency approach to effectively meeting the needs of children and young people with a high risk of admission for mental health concerns and/or placement breakdown.					
4C1	Local area pathway is agreed for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns	Right Support Provision	Specialist Service Path	EMH&WB workstream	Oct 24	
4C2	Embed effective protocols incl. Care and Education Treatment Review (CETR) and Dynamic Support Register (DSR)) for CYP with SEND to ensure a multi-agency approach for those at risk of admission to in-patient mental health unit	Right Support Right Provis'n	Specialist Service Path	EMH&WB workstream.	Oct 24	
4C3	Ensure the partnership has a multi-agency approach for CYP at risk of a placement or familial breakdown	Right Support Right Provis'n	Specialist Service path	Early help and safeguarding arrangements effective EMH&WB workstream.	Oct 24	
4D	School staff are well supported to understand and meet the different needs of children and young people with SEND					
4D1	Develop a clear graduated response, including resources to help support mainstream education settings to meet the different needs of children and young people with SEND	Right Support	Graduated Approach	On track	Oct 24	
4D2	EHCPs fully detail the child and young person's needs and the level of support necessary to meet those needs in the right setting at the right time	Right Plan	EHCP Improvement	On track	Sept 24	

PAP Ref	Objective	Theme	Project(s)	Comment	Date	BRAG
5A	The Oxfordshire local area partnership is supported by consistent leadership in important roles within the SEND system					
5A1	Establish a clear and transparent leadership and governance framework that includes wide stakeholder representation	Cross-cutting	Governance	Governance in place	Jan 24	
5B	There is clear alignment between strategic thinking and operational practice that supports the partnership's ability to undertake transformation and make sustainable change					

5B1	Publish a reviewed and updated co-produced SEND strategy and implementation plan, which has been informed by the recommendations from the Ofsted inspection and learning from the implementation of the priority action plan	Cross-cutting	Strategy & Leadership	Refresh of SEND Strategy & PAP planned Support from Ofsted	TBC	
5B2	Oxfordshire will have finalised and published their SEND Sufficiency Strategy to meet the needs of children and young people in Oxfordshire	Cross-cutting	Sufficiency	Published March 23	Sept 24	
5C	Early intervention support in place to provide support to children, young people, and families before an EHC Plan has been produced					
5C1	To co-produce the Local Area Partnership Early Help and Prevention Strategy	Right Support, Right Time	Strategy	Work underway	July 24	
5D	Staff across the partnership have access to training and development opportunities, which equip them to identify and meet the needs of children, young people, and their families					
5D1	All staff who work with CYP with SEND and their families will undergo regular training and Continuing Professional Development opportunities appropriate to their role, resulting in a highly effective workforce	Workforce, OD & Culture	Combination	Work underway in Right Support. Needs to be broader and deeper	On go	

SEND transformation roadmap (part 1)

Jan
2024

- Partnership definition of co-production agreed.
- Developed and agreed communications and engagement strategy. Events began.
- SEND Oxfordshire Conversations.
- Implemented partnership governance to support the transformation programme and SEND strategy.
- SEND transformation programme resourced and ready to deliver activity.
- Bloxham Special School opened.
- Cherry Fields Primary School resource base opened with eight additional places.

April
2024

- Better Together event 2024.
- SEND Live conference 2024.
- Parent carers baseline survey.
- Practitioner baseline survey.
- Phased update of local offer webpages, with pages for ages 0-4 and 5-16 completed.
- Ongoing enhanced pathways pilot (this pathway recognises some families need additional support).
- Special school in-reach (professionals working in education settings) and outreach pilot (ongoing).
- Partnership co-production charter agreed.
- Key performance indicators (KPIs) and data dashboard developed including outcomes and experiences of children, young people and parent carers.
- Schools relational practice programme (trauma and attachment aware) rollout.

July
2024

- SEND Oxfordshire Conversations.
- SEND financial strategy, including banding system to Schools Forum
- Early help and prevention strategy, including early years, developed.
- Children and young people network and consultation group established and active.
- Improved education, health and care plan (EHCP) processes and timeliness.
- Improved timeliness of EHCP advices from partners.
- SEND continuous professional development and training framework rollout.
- EHCP quality improvement framework in place.
- KPIs informing strategic and operations planning.
- Graduated response and pathways: education, health and social care (all ages, stages), mapped, improved and published.
- Neurodiverse conditions and integrated therapies transformation plans agreed.
- Alternative provision implementation.

SEND transformation roadmap (part 2)

Oct
2024

- Consultation with schools on 3 year SEND financial strategy including banding system
- Improved joint commissioning processes and provider quality assurance system implemented.
- Education, health and care plans (EHCPs) fully detail needs and the support necessary to meet those needs in the right setting at the right time.
- The partnership has a multi-agency approach for children at risk of a placement or familial breakdown.
- Protocols for care and education treatment review and dynamic support register in place for those at risk of admission to in-patient mental health unit.
- Voices and views of children, young people and their families, and measurement of outcomes, are informing strategic planning and operational management.
- Local area pathway for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health concerns agreed.
- Improving transition to adulthood pathways (post 16)

Jan
2025

- SEND Oxfordshire Conversations.
- Parent carer follow-up survey.
- Practitioner follow-up survey.
- Education and inclusion strategy developed.
- Voice and views of children, young people and parent carers are effectively captured and evidenced.
- Monitoring of outcomes and delivery of provision is effective through the EHCP annual review process.
- Planned opening of Windrush Primary School resource base, with eight additional places.

April
2025

- SEND Oxfordshire Conversations events
- Better Together 2025.
- SEND Live Conference 2025.
- Partner services and processes support children, young people and parent carers to experience a joined-up approach to meeting needs.
- Improved responsiveness and timeliness of service provision.
- Phase one transfer of resource bases from county council to school leadership and management.
- Roll out Phase 1 SEND funding strategy including banding system.
- Planned opening of St Frideswide Primary School resource base, with eight additional places.