

**Special Educational Needs and Disability
(SEND) Services for Children and Young
People (0-25) in Oxfordshire**

SEND Strategy

2019 – 2022

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A light green rectangular graphic with rounded corners and a drop shadow, resembling a scroll or a banner. The text "SEND Vision" is written in a dark green, italicized serif font. There are small circular icons at the top corners of the graphic.

SEND Vision

Investing in and developing good quality local provision which meets the needs of children and young people with SEND within Oxfordshire – the right pupils in the right provision at the right place.

Oxfordshire County Council has a whole-hearted commitment to investing in and developing schools' SEND provision for the children of Oxfordshire. Our 'local first' approach will ensure that children and young people's needs are at the core of our service planning.

In Oxfordshire we are proud of the SEND education provision we currently deliver which enables more children and young people with SEND to access local provision. Our future programme and creative approaches are enabling this work to expand and deliver even better outcomes.

Introduction

The purpose of the strategy is to set out how Oxfordshire County Council, along with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and partners (including education and health providers) will work together to provide services and support for children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and their families.

The commitment of stakeholders is to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families will demonstrate strong partnership across agencies. By further developing these existing partnerships, joint planning and delivery of services that are co-produced with children, young people and their families, we are confident that Oxfordshire is a place where children and young people with SEND will have every opportunity to:

- Learn and achieve with the right support from the early years through to further education/training.
- Be educated in their local school
- Live independently in their own community
- Secure employment that meets their individual aspirations and skills
- Feel safe in their community
- Access health services

We will do this by:

- Ensure that all early year's providers and mainstream schools support an inclusive approach to education.
- Strengthen co-production arrangements
- Identify children with additional needs at the earliest opportunity
- Improve the experiences for families in assessment and support planning
- Improve transition planning for all young people moving in to Adulthood
- Developing joint commissioning to support service delivery

Context

On the 1st September 2014 the Children and Families Act came into effect. Part 3 of the Act introduced significant reforms. These reforms placed new duties on Local Authorities (LAs), Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and their partners, for how services and support are developed and delivered for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).

The overarching objective is to secure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND to support them to achieve well in their early years, at school and at college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

The key principles that underpin these reforms include the requirement of LAs and their partners to have regard to:

- The views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents
- The importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- The need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes and effectively preparing them for adulthood

To ensure reforms are being effectively implemented a SEND inspection programme has been introduced. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) are tasked with jointly providing an independent external evaluation of how well a local area effectively carries out and meets its statutory responsibilities.

As you will be aware Oxfordshire was inspected in September 17 and was given a Written Statement of Action. The LA will shortly be revisited to check on our progress against the areas identified in the inspection letter.

Oxfordshire has highlighted the following priorities:

Priority 1: Ensure that all early year's providers and mainstream schools support an inclusive approach to education.

and

Priority 2: Identify children with additional needs at the earliest opportunity

Since the introduction of the Children & Families Act in 2014, Oxfordshire has seen an increase in the number of Education, Health & Care (EHC) Assessments, which have resulted in a significant increase in the number of EHC plans maintained by the Local Authority. Some of the increase has been caused by the age range being extended from 2-19 years to 0-25 years, but not all is due to this age range increase. The increase in requests for assessment since 2014 has been over 77% higher than before the Children's & Families Act was introduced.

The increase in demand is both a national and local challenge and given the current financial limitations, all organisations are struggling to meet the additional requests coming into the system.

It is Oxfordshire's vision that all children should be educated in their local school, receiving the support they need at the earliest stage. All providers will be encouraged to follow an Inclusive approach to all children, but particularly those identified with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

To ensure that support is available for all children the following will be addressed by:

- Provide advice and guidance to schools to ensure they are confident in delivering Early Intervention strategies and where it is considered appropriate, they can request support from professionals at the earliest opportunity.
- Review the high needs block funding (HNBF) allocations to all providers to ensure the funding model is appropriate and supports the schools/settings/colleges to support the child to achieve to their full potential.
- Ensure that any funding allocated to a child will follow them through their school journey, ensuring that the funding will always be available at the school or setting that the child attends.
- Review of the Special Educational Needs Support Service (SENS) to ensure that specialist teachers can support schools/settings to offer advice and guidance to staff so that they can meet the children's needs at the earliest opportunity. This support needs to be available before the school/setting feels the need to apply for an Education, Health and Care plan.
- There is a wealth of specialist expertise in schools/settings across Oxfordshire. Much of this support is used in its own sector and not spread across to support other schools who might be struggling to meet children's needs. The Local Authority needs to be able to utilise this support to upskill staff across all schools to ensure that the inclusive environment that many schools offer is available to all, with staff having the expertise to deal with children with more complex needs.

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- Offer outreach/in-reach support across the early years/mainstream sector. Using the expertise that is available in our alternative provision and special school sectors.
- School to school peer support to upskill staff who do not feel confident that they are able to meet all children's needs.
- Ensure the alternative provision available across Oxfordshire will meet the needs of children in the primary and secondary sector have their needs met if they are permanently excluded without any delays (by the 6th day).
- Ensure that a robust commissioning approach is in place across Children's Services to ensure that any provision required to be commissioned is appropriate, cost effective and contracted appropriately.

Actions:	Timeline	Lead Officer
Develop a Training plan for SENCO's	January 2020	QA Lead SEND DCO OXSIT Team Leader School Improvement Rep
Review HNBF to all settings to ensure an appropriate and consistent funding model is in place across the County (including AP provision)	September 2019	HoS SEND HoS Learner Engagement Finance Schools Forum
Ensure that funding allocated to a child – follows the child	September 19	HoS SEND Finance Schools forum
Review of the SENSS service	Phase 2 development of the service Review TBC on timeline	HoS SEND QA Lead SEND Project Officer Finance Team Parent/Carer Forum
Encourage the early years/school/special school community to work together to upskill the work force across Oxfordshire.	Communication to start with schools in September 19	HoS SEND HoS Learner Engagement HoS School Improvement OXSIT Team Lead DCO
Review of the Alternative provision available across the county	Review has started	HoS Learner Engagement HoS SEND Finance Team
Robust commissioning approach to be instigated across all services		Head of children's commissioning All HoS across Education DCO Finance Parent carer Forum

Priority 3: Improve the experiences for families in assessment and support planning

The Children and Families Act which came into effect in 2014 introduced significant reforms. It was introduced to encourage Local Authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other partners to work together to support children/young people and their families with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The overarching objective is to secure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND to support them to achieve well in their early years, at school and at college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

The key principles that underpin these reforms include the requirement of LA's and their partners to have regard to:

- The views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person and the child's parents
- The importance of the child or young person, and the child's parents, participating as fully as possible in decision, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- The need to support the child or young person, and the child's parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them to achieve the best possible educational and other outcome and effectively prepare them for adulthood.

How will we do this:

- Ensure effective early identification of SEND to secure appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure that children, young people and their families are actively involved in the Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessment process
- Ensure that families are kept informed at every stage of the EHC assessment process and are clear of the timelines from the beginning of the process.
- Ensure that all agencies involved with the child and family are invited to meetings to aid a swift resolution of issues.
- Remove any barriers to ensure that support is available for young people and families when considering preparation for adulthood, which would include independent living, employment, participating in society and contributing to the community.

Actions:	Timeline	Lead Officer
Ensure a quality, highly trained workforce is in place to ensure staff can identify children's needs at the earliest stage.		
Additional support/funding streams are known to all school/settings		
Ensure that parents/carers/young people are fully informed and encouraged to take part in coproduction during the EHC needs assessment process		
Ensure that the school/parents/carers/ young people know who the professionals are working with their children and they are invited to Annual Review meetings. Where possible meetings to be combined (AR,LAC review etc)		

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Priority 4: Strengthen co-production arrangements

and

Priority 5: Develop joint commissioning to support service delivery

Oxfordshire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group already have a strong working relationship and jointly commission many contracts. However there has not always been a consistent approach to involving other stakeholders in developing a service specification prior to tendering out a contract.

To improve this for the children and families in Oxfordshire a commitment will be made to:

- Ensure that all key stakeholders, including children and young people with SEND and their families are involved in strategic decision making and service developments to ensure provision is coproduced to provide best value to meet the needs of families locally.
- Further strengthen the joint commissioning arrangements between the local authority to ensure provision is available locally for young people as they reach the age of being able to live independently.

Actions:	Timeline	Lead Officer
All future joint commissioning commitments will have parent/carer/young people involvement throughout the process.		Joint Commissioning Lead HoS across Education Parent Carer Forum
To encourage parents to participate and be involved in coproduction		
To develop a children's joint commissioning strategy		HoS for joint commissioning Parent/carer forum

Priority 6: Improve transition planning for young people moving in to Adulthood.

A good transition program is important for all children and young people, but particularly those with SEND. Moving from one school to another can feel quite scary but moving into Adulthood, which may involve attending college, getting a job and then moving on to living independently must be even more challenging for those young people who have significant difficulties with managing change.

Therefore, for any transition to be a success planning and preparation is the key.

To ensure that this difficult process is managed carefully, and families are kept informed at each stage, we will:

- Start to plan for an effective transition between education, health and social care from year 9 into adulthood, ensuring that information and strategies to support children and young people are communicated effectively to professionals involved.
- Further develop close working relationships between Education, Children's and Adults social care team to ensure that planning for the future can be managed effectively, whilst ensuring that families are kept informed at every stage.
- Continue to improve the education offer available locally for young people moving into Post 16 education.
- To work with Adult services to develop where possible more local housing opportunities locally to enable young people to live, be educated and work in their local area.

Actions	Timeline	Lead Officer
Ensure that Preparation for Adulthood is included in each Annual review from Yr 9.		PfA Lead CSC lead ASC lead Parent/carer forum Rep
Increase awareness to schools/parents/careers young people for the need to start considering post 16 education options at the earliest opportunity		
To work with local FE colleges to ensure the offer for young people across the County is varied and appropriate to meet the needs for most young people across Oxfordshire.		
To work closely with the Adult services Transitions team (Moving on into Adulthood) to ensure a joint approach to placements		
To identify local options for young people in relation to housing and employment opportunities.		