

# Wokingham SEND Local Area Partnership

## Self-Evaluation

Approved by Wokingham Area SEND Strategic Partnership Board  
22 January 2025



Wokingham  
Education  
Partnership



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# Foreword

Wokingham Borough is an ambitious Council with a strong corporate and political commitment to ensuring all children and young people growing up in the borough are valued, safe and cared for, healthy, able to achieve their potential and that they feel happy, hopeful, loved and that Wokingham is place where they belong in their community.

To achieve this requires genuine partnership working and ownership across our Local Area Partnership (LAP) and we are pleased that our SEF has been coproduced in collaboration with representatives across Wokingham Borough, including young people, parent/carers and leaders across early years, schools and Education, Health and Care services.

Our Local Area is proud of our range of strengths in meeting the needs of all children and young people. Children with additional needs continue to achieve excellent educational outcomes, we have an active and engaged Parent Carer Forum that provide us with robust and constructive challenge, and we have expanded our specialist provision locally which will support children to remain in their community to access the right support at the right time.

However, we also recognise there is still much work to do, so that children and young people with additional needs and disabilities, and their families, have confidence in our collective and shared ability to deliver improved outcomes consistently for all children, as detailed within our SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 [Our SEND strategy](#).

Our SEF is a living document, owned by all and represents our shared view of where we currently are in understanding the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities, and our plans to improve their experiences and outcomes over the next 12 months.



**Emma Cockerell**  
Director of Children's Services  
Wokingham Borough Council



**Matthew Tait**  
Chief Delivery Officer  
NHS BOB ICB

# The aims of this document

Following the implementation of the new ASEND framework in January 2023, Wokingham's SEND Local Area Partnership significantly reviewed and refreshed its approach to understanding and evaluating the impact of its services.

In alignment with the ASEND guidance, this self-evaluation aims to convey a concise and standalone summary of what we currently know about the impact of our services, how we know this, and what we plan to do next to improve.

- **Section 1** provides a brief overview of our context in Wokingham – including what we are currently most proud of, and what we know about local demographics and the needs of our children.
- **Section 2** gives an overview of what we think we have learnt this year about the impact of our arrangements, includes a summary of the insights we have collated from data, audit, professionals, and most importantly the views of children and families.
- **Section 3** concludes with a focused examination of our response to what we have learnt and crucially what we plan to do next.

We have used the ASEND evaluation criteria to complete our self-evaluation.

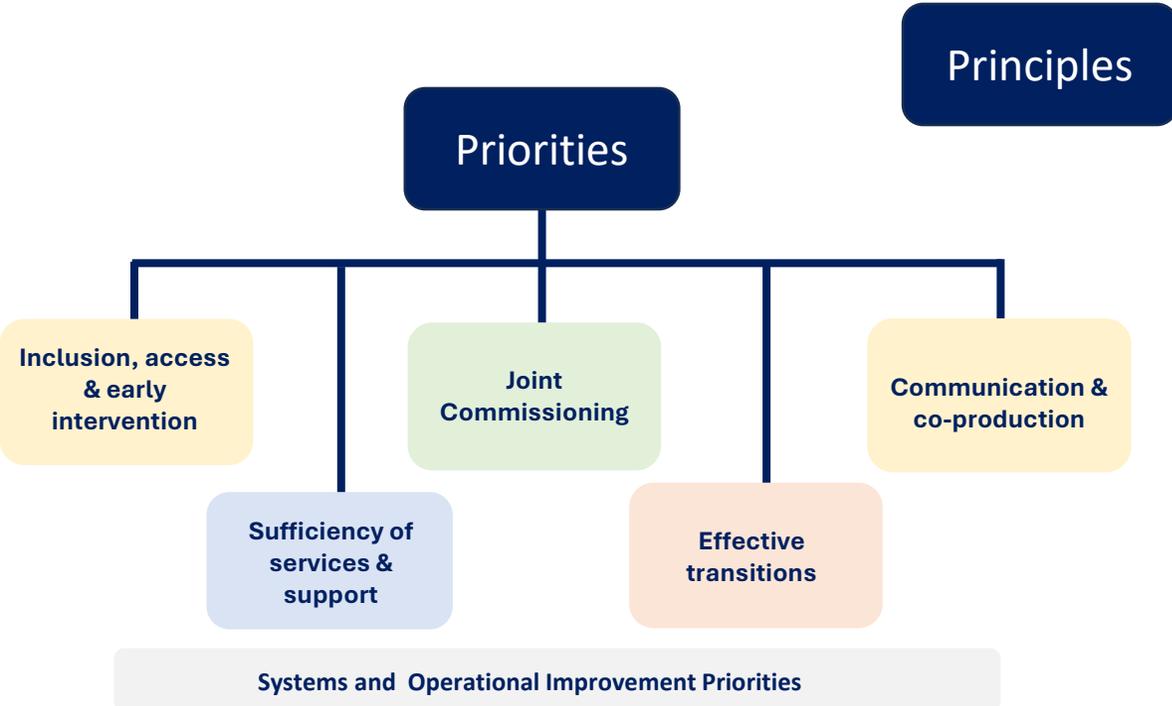


# Our vision for local children and young people with SEND

Over the last 12 months, significant work has been undertaken to produce Wokingham's new SEND and Inclusion Strategy for 2024-2029. The document was released for [public consultation](#) in July/August 2024. Feedback has been incorporated within a final draft, which is expected to be approved this year.

The document sets out our collective vision, which is for **Wokingham to be a borough where all children and young people are visible, valued and included in their communities, are safe and cared for, achieve their potential, are healthy and resilient, and feel happy, hopeful, and loved.**

To achieve this vision for children and young people with SEND, the strategy identifies 6 core strategic priorities (underpinned by annually reviewed delivery plans), alongside 8 partnership principles, which will guide and inform everything we do as a local area partnership.



## What are we currently most proud of in Wokingham?



**We have expanded our specialist provision locally, whilst maintaining strong inspection outcomes** - All specialist providers in our Borough are currently rated as Good or Outstanding (& our mainstream sector also performs well). Specialist local provision has also been expanded significantly over the last year (including the launch of Oak Tree Special Free School) and will continue to do so, following a successful bid to open two new special free schools in September 2026 (see section 1.5 for more details). We have also remodelled AP in the borough to focus on empowering local mainstream school SEND provision.



**Our social care intervention for those with profound disabilities has improved notably** - Our recent ILACS and Focused Visits for children's social care showed that children with disabilities are visited regularly by social workers and have their needs considered holistically - leading to a richer understanding of their experiences and needs.



**Children with SEND in Wokingham continue to achieve excellent educational outcomes** - The educational outcomes of our EHCP and SEND support cohorts continue to outperform national and regional averages across all measures at key stages. This positive picture of overall attainment provides an excellent foundation for our children and young people's development and future independence.



**Our partnership benefits hugely from an active and engaged Parent Carer Forum** - We are very fortunate to have the support and constructive challenge of our local Parent Care Forum – Wokingham SEND Voices - who form a crucial component of our LAP. This year has seen us cooperate on various projects such as the Local Offer Live Family Information Day, GP 14+ year health checks, a Parent Engagement Event with health to gain a greater understanding from parent carers about specific health topics.



**The support for children waiting is improving** – We have a range of support available to children and young people waiting for therapies, Autism and ADHD assessments. This includes the commissioning of parent advice workshops, the launch of online resources like “Young Sharon”, and helplines to support families and provide initial advice and guidance, irrespective of whether children are on a pathway or not.

## Areas we are focusing on in order to deliver even better outcomes:



**SEND COMMUNICATION** - We have identified communication as a key area for continued improvement - particularly in relation to how we engage with families during the development of plans.



**WAIT TIMES** - Although our support whilst waiting offer has been strengthened this year, we are conscious as a partnership that wait times for autism and ADHD interventions are still too long, and access to Occupational Therapies is not timely enough for many children who do not have EHCPs. The ICB is working with the regional and national teams to ensure continuous improvement.



**HEALTH DATA** - The ICB is currently in the process of developing a data dashboard which will capture health outcomes for children.



**HELPING EARLY** - We are strengthening our helping early offer in Wokingham to ensure there is a robust and evidence-based approach to delivering early intervention and support for families, children and young people who have additional needs but do not require a statutory intervention.



**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATION SERVICE** – in 2025 a new participation service will be developed with dedicated Officers recruited to support with ensuring children and young people can participate, engage and shape their local community.



## **Section 1**

Context and what we currently know about our impact on children and young people

# 1.1 Our local context - Population and factors associated with SEND

Wokingham is generally a great place for children and young people to grow-up, with high quality housing, community services, schools and healthcare, and relatively low levels of economic deprivation. However, it is important to note that the Borough's population has undergone a significant period of change over the last decade, with some of these changes relating directly to known risk factors associated with SEND (and so are relevant to our understanding of - and planning for - future SEND demand). Our recently produced SEND JSNA provides a full overview of what we know about the current population and demographics of our Borough, and how these trends can relate to SEND. Some key points are paraphrased below:

## Growing population

Our 0-25 population in Wokingham has grown substantially since 2011, with 16% growth compared to just 2% nationally. Of the 180,967 people living in Wokingham, 56,005 (31%) are now aged 0-25. However, this age group is only estimated to grow by a further 1% over the next 10 years.



## Increasing diversity

28% of children and young people living in Wokingham are now from non-white/global majority ethnic backgrounds. This proportion is higher for children aged 0-19 (30%), compared to those aged 20-25 (19%). This all represents a significant shift in the diversity of our borough's child population over the last 10 years.



## Low pre & perinatal risks

347 babies were born to mothers' resident in Wokingham at less than 37 weeks' gestation. This is a rate of 67 per 1,000 births and is lower than the England rate of 78 per 1,000. Fewer than 5 females from Wokingham who entered drug and alcohol treatment during 2021/22 were pregnant. There were 109 children living with adults who entered drug or alcohol treatment during 2021/22.



## Growing impact of economic deprivation

As has been seen nationally, recent factors such as the cost-of-living crisis have seen rising pressures being placed on families in our Borough, and pockets of deprivation have worsened. For example, there were **3,571** children aged 0-19 in Wokingham living in relative low-income households during 2021/22. This is up from 3,531 in 2020/21 and 3,101 in 2019/20.



## Numbers of Children in Need on the up

Pressures placed on local families have also impacted on our social care services. In 2023, 237 per 10,000 children were classified as "children in need" (CIN) in Wokingham, which is up significantly from 150 per 10,000 in 2016. Rates of SEND in our CIN cohorts are broadly in line with national averages, with 18.1% of CIN classed as SEN support (21.5% nationally) and 22.9% with an EHC plan (27% nationally)



# 1.1 Our local context - current demand (EHCP)

Like the rest of England, Wokingham has seen considerable growth in EHC Plans since the SEND reforms were introduced in 2014, with particularly notable rates of growth recorded since 2019 - meaning we now sit much closer to regional and national averages of pupils with an EHCP. Some key points to note about EHCP demand in Wokingham over the last 12 months are as follows:

## Requests for assessment



### Demand for assessments has continued to rise

Total requests for Assessment for 2023 (610) were 24% higher when compared to the year of 2022 (492), This marks a trend of continuing growth in demand since the introduction of the SEND reforms.



### Despite this, we have made progress in processing requests within timescale:

Although demand has increased, during 2023, our EHCP timeliness increased by 10% points, from 55% (2022), to 65% at the close of 2023. Our current average timeliness for 2024/25 to date is 62%.



### The ratio of EHCPs issued as a proportion of assessments requested has also lowered:

During 2023, 42% of Requests for Assessment converted into an EHCP, down from 70% across 2022. We believe that this is in part reflective of the work across our partnership to improve early intervention & support, wherever possible.



Although significant progress has been made outreach services and early intervention, **overall, our number of EHCPs have continued to rise.** (see right)

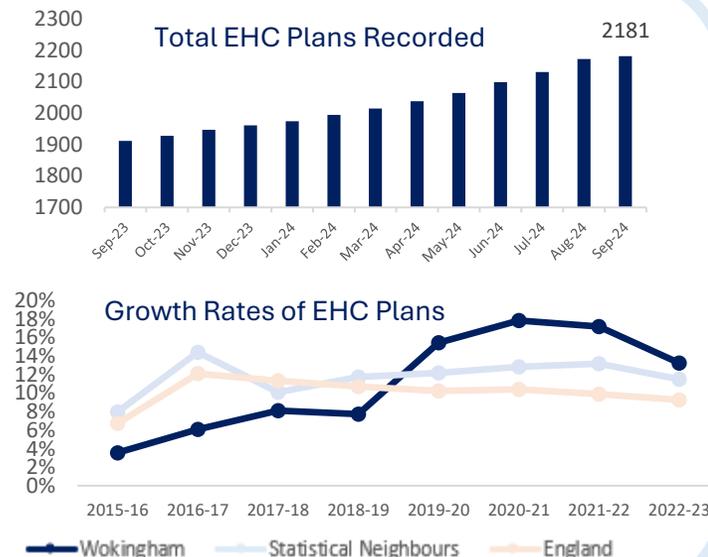
## EHCP Primary Need

Amidst significant growth in plans being issued, Wokingham's breakdown of EHCP by primary need has remained broadly in line with the latest national data. However, it is worth noting that although our two leading classifications of need - ASD (40.81%) and SEMH (20.54%) - are in broad alignment with the national trend, their local rates are slightly above national averages (see chart). Conversely, several other less prominent primary needs are slightly underrepresented when compared with their national averages. Most notably, we are an outlier in the low number of pupils recorded as having Speech, Language and Communication Needs, which has informed our commissioning priorities.

EHCPs by primary need	Wokingham (Sep 24)	England (23-24)
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	40.81%	33.03%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	20.54%	15.52%
Speech, Language and Communications needs	14.86%	19.53%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	7.79%	8.48%
Severe Learning Difficulty	4.81%	7.94%
Physical Disability	2.89%	3.64%
Specific Learning Difficulty	2.43%	4.34%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	1.60%	2.50%

## Growth rates and numbers of plans

In line with national trends, the identification of special educational needs in Wokingham has continued to increase and this is reflected in increasing numbers of EHC Plans locally (see bar chart). However, what has been notable for Wokingham, has been the rate of this growth since 2019, which has been well beyond National and Stat Neighbour averages (see line graph). Importantly though, this trend is now reducing. Alongside local population growth, we believe the spike from 2019-22 was due to improvements in our earlier identification of need, which saw us "catch-up" with the national picture. It is however important to note that despite this picture of continued growth, as of Jan 23, Wokingham remained at a lower % of pupils with EHCPs (3.6%) compared to the South-East region (4.6%) and England (4.3%).



# 1.1 Our local context - current demand (SEND Support)

## COHORT

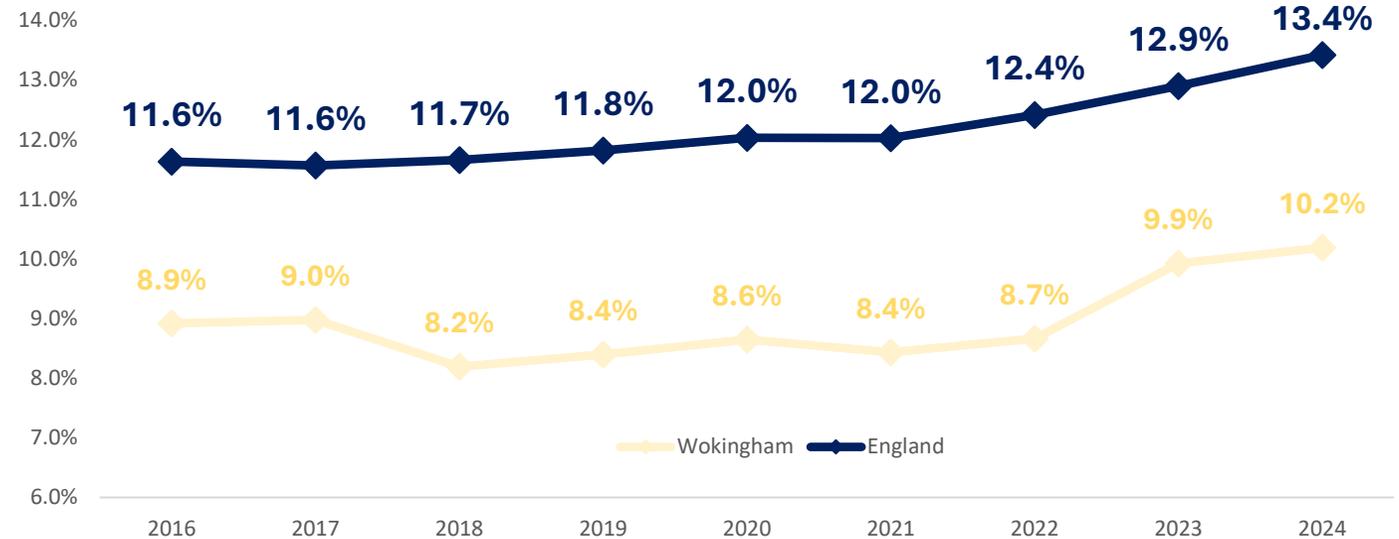
The numbers of children who receive SEN Support in Wokingham Schools has also been on an upward trend in recent years, with 3175 children recorded in May 2024, up from 2667 in May 2022 – a 19% increase.

Although growth in Wokingham’s school population is a key driver in this trend, it is important to note that rates of SEND support as a proportion of overall school population have risen over the same period, from 8.7% to 10.2%. This compares to 13.4% nationally (see graph)

## PRIMARY NEED

As is the case with EHCP primary need, Wokingham is an outlier in the low number and % of SEND support pupils recorded as having Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) as their primary need. This suggests a level of under-identification of need that needs further attention, and has informed WBC’s commissioning of a new Speech and Language outreach services. (See Section 3)

### % of SEN Support Pupils



## SEND Support Primary Need

SEND Support by Primary Need	Wokingham	England
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	15.4%	8.3%
Speech, Language and Communications needs	20.0%	25.5%
Social, Emotional and Mental Health	21.8%	21.0%
Moderate Learning Difficulty	8.7%	17.3%
Severe Learning Difficulty	0.2%	0.2%
Specific Learning Difficulty	15.3%	14.2%
Physical Disability	2.0%	2.1%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	0.0%	0.1%

# 1.1 Our local context - Sufficiency

Approximately 51% of EHCP placements are in mainstream schools which demonstrates the areas commitment to inclusion, and much has been achieved in recent years to develop new local SEND provision in Wokingham (see below) to mitigate the historical deficit in local provision, with work continuing to rebalance our local system to better reflect and meet local needs. Over the next 4 years, we believe that our strategic approach will reverse the historic growth in the proportion and complexity of EHCPs being referred to mainstream schools, reduce our reliance on INMSS placements, and remodel our use of AP placements. However, between 2024-2028 Wokingham's SEND system will continue to face acute challenges arising from historical gaps in provision, the time lag in developing required additional specialist capacity, and the DfE's delay in opening of two free schools. Mitigating this gap therefore remains a strategic and operational priority.

## SUFFICIENCY TIMELINE:

**2020:** A local SEND Sufficiency Review concludes that due to the significant increase in SEND population there is not enough specialist local provision to meet need

**2022:** A local review of our primary and secondary Resource Base indicates significant gaps between resource bases and special schools. The review recommends the phasing out of under-utilised provision and introducing new SEND Units.

### 2023:

WBC is successful in a funding bid for two new special free schools, due to open in September 2026.

WBC joins the DfE's Safety Valve programme, providing additional financial support to enable continuous improvement for consistent outcomes

A new satellite early years centre opens, in partnership with Addington Special School, offering 40 additional places to children (initial intake of 16).

Oak Tree Special Free School opens in Sept, which will grow to offer 150 places for children with a diagnosis of ASD. (jointly commissioned with Reading BC)

### 2024:

New Area SENCO Service and changes to our local specialist outreach offer are introduced, seeking to develop the graduated response across local schools

A new resource base opens at Loddon Primary School (21 spaces over the next three years) and a new designated SEND unit opens at Radstock Primary School in Earley (21 spaces over the next three years).

A Local Alternative Provision and EOTAS review takes place, proposing significant remodelling. Approach seeks to improve early intervention through a range of measures, including outreach support for mainstream schools, MAIC and short-term interventions integrating young people back into school.

Under-utilised provision in our Resource Base begins to be phased out over the course of 2023 and 2024 (as children move on), in preparation for new units.

**2024 - 2028:** Our SEND Resource Base continues to be developed, with a mix of under-utilised provision being gradually removed, alongside introduction of new units – this is anticipated to create a net gain of capacity, with provision expected to grow from 111 in 2025, to **171** in 2030 (we are currently considering options to accelerate this process). Two new special schools that were expected to open in 2026 now look likely to be delayed due to an updated DfE delivery timeline until 2028. Once in place, these will provide 120 places that meet the needs of pupils with a broad spectrum of cognitive need, as well as 120 places for children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

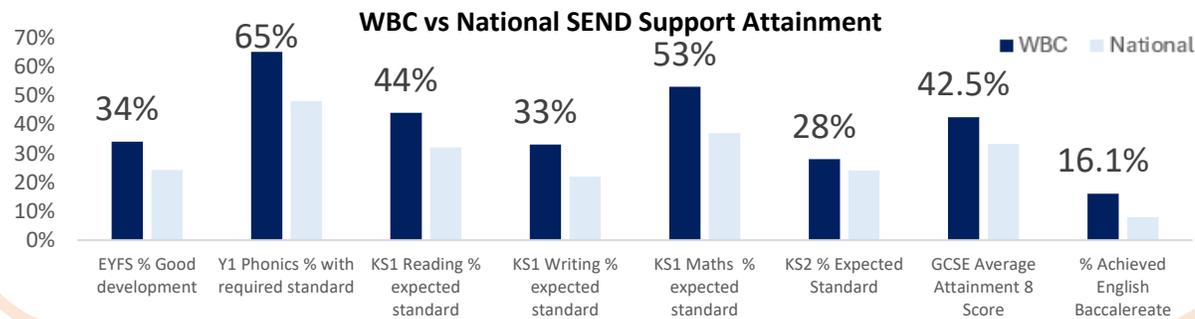
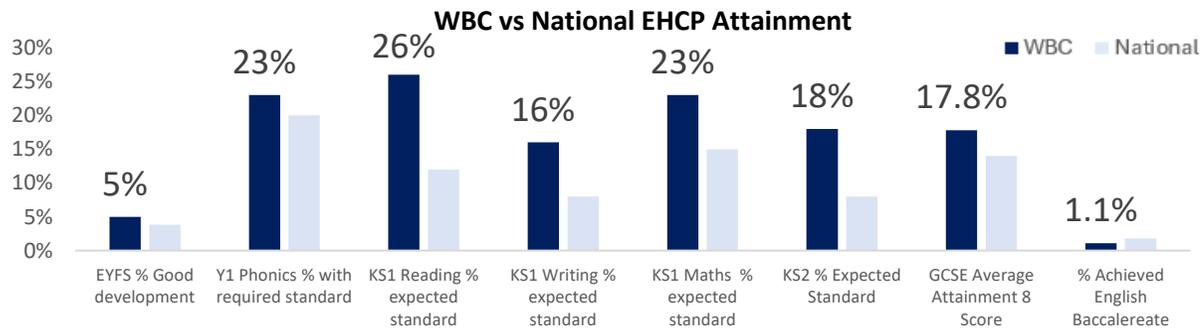
# 1.2 The positive impact of our work on children's outcomes - Attainment



**Children with SEND in Wokingham achieve strong academic outcomes** - Wokingham's children with SEND – both in terms of SEND support and those with an EHCP – consistently outperform national, regional and similar areas' averages at every stage between EYFS and GCSE. These outcomes are supported by a system-wide education partnership, which focuses on vulnerable learners.

## SEND Children Educational Attainment

Wokingham's children with SEND – both in terms of SEND support and those with an EHCP



## Preparation for Adulthood

### Education Employment and Training at 17 (end of KS4) :

**92.9%** of our KS4 cohort with an EHCP are in EET at 17 (National average 89.0%)

**92.7%** of our KS4 cohort with SEND Support are in EET at 17 (National average 88%)

## 1.2 The positive impacts of our work on children's outcomes - Attendance



**Wokingham's attendance rates are amongst some of the best in the country:** Wokingham's children with SEND - both in terms of SEND support and those with an EHCP – have been supported to improve their attendance consistently over the past two years, bucking the national trend. The latest DfE verified attendance outcome data release places Wokingham amongst the top performing local authorities in the country, with our children's overall absence rate standing at 5.7% (4<sup>th</sup> best in the country).

**October 2024 DfE - Overall absence rate for 'Absence by pupil characteristics' for EHC plan and SEN support for 2023/24 Autumn and spring term**

	Total	SEN provision	
		EHC plan	SEN support
<b>Wokingham</b>	5.7%	11.9%	8.7%
<b>England</b>	6.9%	12.5%	10.0%
<b>South East</b>	6.9%	13.2%	10.3%



# The positive impact of our work on children’s outcomes - Early Years



**Wokingham is one of the best Local Areas for Early Years Child Care Accessibility according to Ofsted analysis** - Ofsted’s recent annual report in December 2024, named Wokingham Borough as one of the best places for early years childcare access, as well as having one of the lowest levels of children and young people missing school.

**Neighbourhoods in local authorities with the highest proportion of “deserts” and “oases”, March 2020 to March 2024 (Ofsted Annual Report, Dec 2024)**

Top five childcare deserts	Top five childcare oases
Torbay	Wokingham
Walsall	Wandsworth
Sunderland	Bromley
Slough	Richmond upon Thames
Hartlepool	Brighton and Hove

**Best Start in Life** is a pivotally important focus for our Early Years Team’s multi-agency partnership work. The key impact is a sufficient, equitable and effective early years system for all children with a particular focus on children with SEND.

Ofsted’s recent annual report (December 2024), which included research undertaken with the Office for National Statistics, spotlighted Wokingham Borough as a “Child Care Oasis” – as an area that topped their table for easy access to early years child care provision. Currently only one group provider is deemed to be less than good or outstanding by Ofsted.

This is significant for our best start in life strategy, of which sufficient, good quality and equitable access to Early Years provision is a key priority.

**An Early Years Graduated Response** is embedded in our local settings’ work, with multi-agency support. It has led to the area’s consistently better GLD outcomes of SEND children in comparison with national and regional peers.

Our Early Years Graduated Response includes:

- Identifying needs early and accurately: through support from EYs SENCo and specialist EP, SENCo networks, Inclusion champions training and bitesize training offer
- Help from health professionals, including language development workshops, SALT phone line for parents has reduced waiting times for EYs children who require Speech Therapy and CYPIT sensory workshops, etc.
- Work group undertaken to commission EYs specialist provision
- Portage development of group offer to families referred to Portage, other groups for EYs or children with SEND including a Wiggly Worms group for children on social communication and interaction need (Autism pathway) and a Ladybirds group for under 5’s with SEND.

# 1.2 The positive impact of our work on children's outcomes - Exclusions

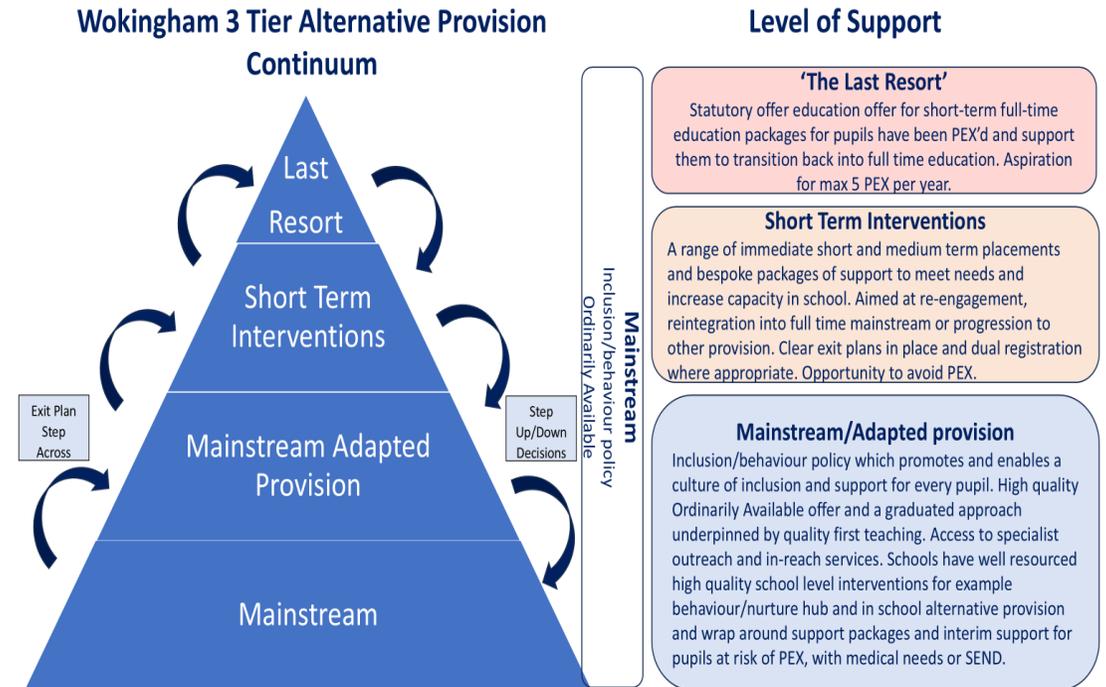


**Wokingham children with SEND have low exclusion and suspension rates** – in Wokingham we have developed a creative AP remodelling programme, built on a strong education partnership that prioritises school inclusion and providing good alternatives to exclusion and suspension. Our recently launched Multi-agency Inclusion Clinic (MAIC), together with our AP outreach support, are key aspects of our approach, demonstrating how all partners from education, health and social care come together in Wokingham to champion school inclusion and to find solutions to complex cases which would otherwise lead to exclusion.

'Suspensions and permanent exclusions' for EHC plan and SEN support in England, South East and Wokingham for 2023/24 Autumn term (DfE Nov 2024 data release)

		All Pupils	SEN provision	
			EHC plan	SEN support
<b>Wokingham</b>	<b>Permanent exclusions (rate)</b>	0.01	0.00	0.03
	<b>Suspension (rate)</b>	1.39	8.58	4.31
<b>England</b>	<b>Permanent exclusions (rate)</b>	0.05	0.11	0.16
	<b>Suspension (rate)</b>	4.13	10.05	11.27
<b>South East</b>	<b>Permanent exclusions (rate)</b>	0.03	0.07	0.10
	<b>Suspension (rate)</b>	3.50	10.85	10.29

## Wokingham's AP Continuum



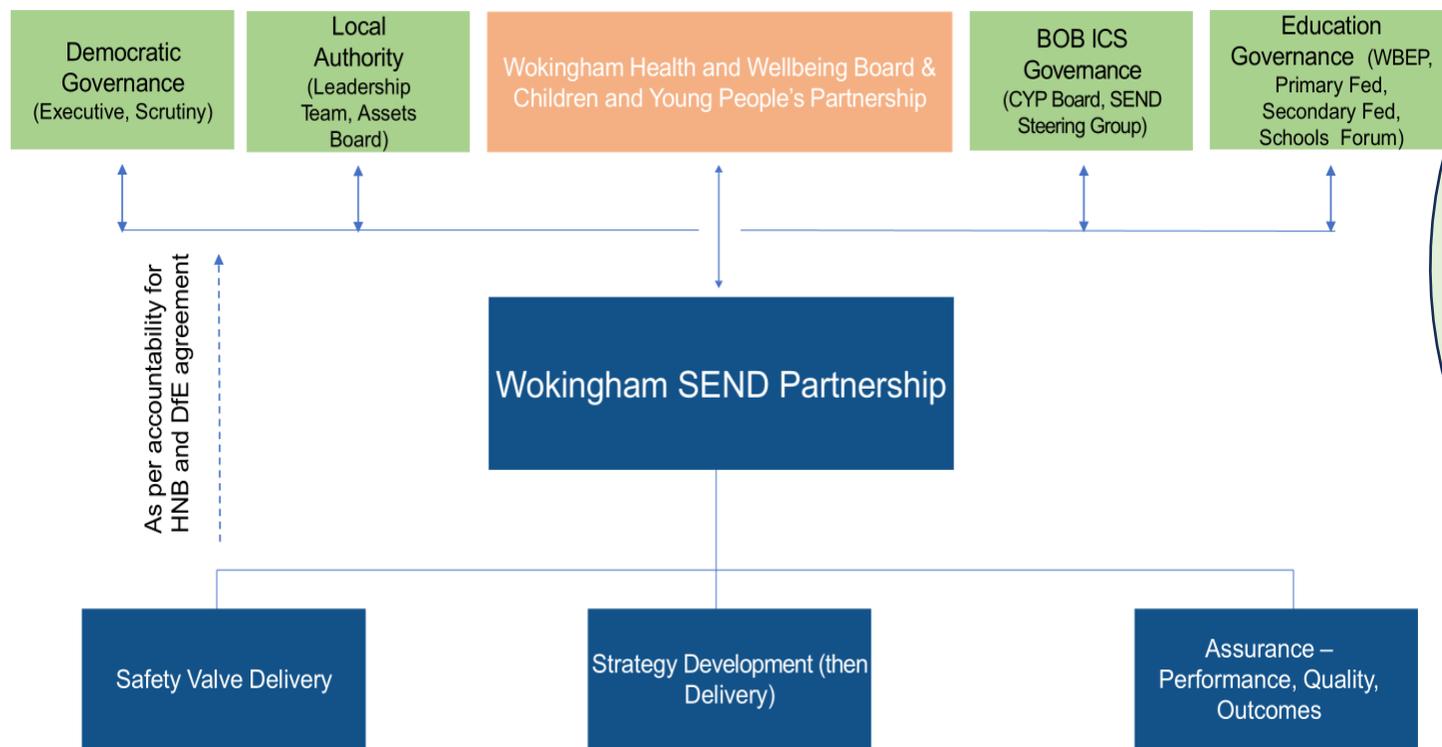
Private: Information that contains a small amount of sensitive data which is essential to communicate with an individual but doesn't require to be sent via secure methods.

# 1.2 The positive impacts of our work on children's outcomes - Governance



**Wokingham benefits from an effective Area SEND Governance structure:** Wokingham's local area partnership has progressed significantly since its last inspection and re-visit (more on this in Section 2.8). Through good communications, system leadership and insightful oversight, our LAP leaders are in a much stronger position to identify and respond to emerging issues or problems beyond those identified by inspectors, ensuring our trajectory of continuous improvement is maintained.

## Strategic view of SEND Partnership



**WSOA "Action 1: Strengthen governance and performance management of transitions for all children and young people with SEND in Wokingham."**

*In your documentation, during the progress review and in subsequent information shared, you have now been able to demonstrate:*

*Evidence of how information and data is used by all members in board meetings to strategically challenge and scrutinize progress being made.*

*A breakdown of the timings of each of the board meetings that have governance and accountability responsibilities linked to SEND and inclusion, to demonstrate how decisions/information flows effectively between them.*

*A data dashboard and a clear explanation of how this will be embedded into governance structures.*

*Clarity about the links between the Borough Education Partnership (BEP) and how information about the BEP will be made publicly available."*

- DfE/CQC (July 2024)

# 1.2 The positive impact of our work on children's outcomes - Educational settings



**100% of our Local Special Schools have recently been judged to be Good or Outstanding** - latest Ofsted Inspections of the local authority's maintained special schools - including CAMHS Phoenix School and Addington Special School (which subsequently, as a local area partnership initiative has formed an Academy Trust in December 2024 to sponsor two Safety Valve initiated free schools) resulted in both settings being judged Outstanding. All of our local special schools and AP providers are now Good or better. Our effective local school improvement partnership - supported by the local authority and multi-agency inputs - helps achieve these outcomes, which contributes to consistently good outcomes of our SEND children.



School report



## Inspection of an outstanding school: CAMHS Phoenix School

CAMHS Phoenix Unit, Wokingham Hospital, Barkham Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2RE

Inspection dates: 30 and 31 January 2024

### Outcome

CAMHS Phoenix School continues to be an outstanding school.

### What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are positive and engaged learners in this nurturing and calm school. Pupils' medical needs influence the length of their stay here, with many placements lasting for a short period of time. Staff very quickly get to know and understand pupils from the moment of arrival. As such, from day one of their placement, they receive highly individualised and specialist support for their medical, personal and educational needs. Relationships between pupils and staff are built on the highest levels of mutual respect and care. Pupils know that this is a safe environment for them and that adults will be patient and sensitive to their needs.

Pupils benefit hugely from the high aspirations that staff have for what they will achieve. Staff are committed to making sure pupils will leave here with ambitious goals for their futures. Pupils' tailor-made plans and targets are precisely and expertly designed to help them have the knowledge and confidence they will need to be ready for their next steps when they leave.

A culture of inclusion and support pervades the school. Every aspect of pupils' needs is extremely well considered and planned for by staff. This means that behavioural incidents rarely occur in the school, but are responded to expertly by well-trained staff if they do.

School report



## Inspection of an outstanding school: Addington School

Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 3EU

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 March 2023

### Outcome

Addington School continues to be an outstanding school.

### What is it like to attend this school?

Addington School is life-changing. Pupils who attend the school face significant challenges with learning. They receive an outstanding quality of education. Staff have high ambitions for pupils. Importantly, all pupils have a voice. Staff help pupils to communicate using various communication devices. Consequently, pupils communicate their wishes, likes and dislikes. This helps them to get on well with each other and to learn effectively in class.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. This helps staff get to know pupils quickly. Staff understand what will and will not work for each pupil. Pupils achieve highly because of the personalised support they receive. This includes a well-thought-out package of educational, sensory and therapeutic support. As a result, pupils behave well and become independent, confident learners who enjoy school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities. School clubs help to develop pupils' talents and interests. For example, many enjoy the choir, nail art, dance and computing clubs. A group of pupils who spoke to the lead inspector excitedly told him about their recent residential trip to Wales. They reflected on how the trip helped them, for example with social skills.

# 1.2 The positive impacts of our work on children's outcomes – Transitions to adulthood



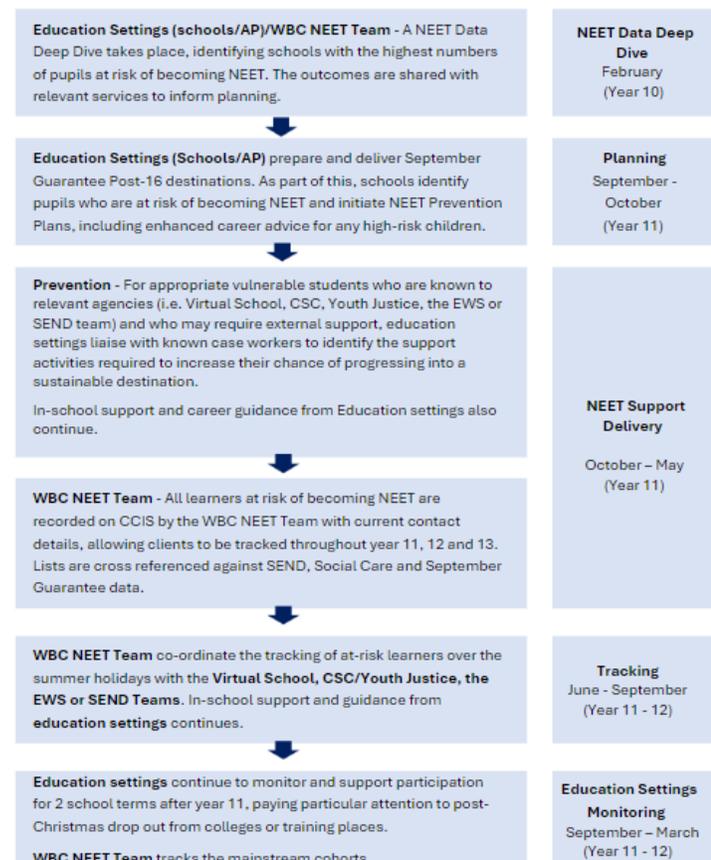
**More of our SEND young people are ready and prepared for a fulfilling adulthood** – in July 2024, the DfE and CQC confirmed that Wokingham's local SEND Partnership had “demonstrated clear and sustained progress” against its WSoA's actions relating to preparing for adulthood. That said, the area partnership is not complacent, and has recently developed a NEET to EET interdependency pathway - with schools, social care, skills and education all playing active parts in developing a co-ordinated approach to promote and enable vulnerable young people's participation in education, employment and training .

The latest data of October 2024 shows a sustained better than national average outcomes of participation, while Not Known (NK) is significantly reduced through effective tracking and personalised support.

EHCP Participation (E)		National (Oct 24)**	WBC Previous Year (Oct23)	Current Month (Oct24)
Total EHCP cohort (16-24)	No.		442	477
EHCP cohort EET (16 - 24)	No.		199	224
	%	37.8%	45.0%	47.0%
EHCP cohort NEET (16-24)	No.		63	43
	%	8.6%	14.3%	9.0%
EHCP cohort - Not Known (16-24)	No.		180	209
	%	53.6%	40.7%	43.8%

SEN Support Participation (K)		WBC Previous Year (Oct23)	Current Month (Oct24)	Previous Month (Sep24)
Total SEN Support cohort (16-17)	No.	95	194	193
SEN Support cohort EET (16-17)	No.	37	153	103
	%	36.9%	80.9%	53.4%
SEN Support cohort NEET (16-17)	No.	7	5	3
	%	7.4%	2.6%	1.6%
SEN Support cohort - Not Known (16-17)	No.	51	36	87
	%	53.7%	18.6%	45.1%

## Post-16 Vulnerable Young People Multi-agency NEET Prevention & Support Pathways



# Positive Impacts of Our Work on Children's Outcomes – Health



Our recent feedback from children, young people and families shows positive feedback and continued improved outcomes from health services delivered by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust

## Experience of Service

Experience of Service Questionnaire (child and parent versions) – used at the end of an episode of care. Data flows to CORC so enables national comparison. Links to NHSE guidance

I Want Great Care – feedback can be given at any point in a YP’s journey, provides immediate information, enables Trust service comparison

Feedback is monitored, at team, service and divisional level. Quality Improvement actions are put in place to address concerns through QMIS or escalated to the senior leadership team if action is needed at a higher level.

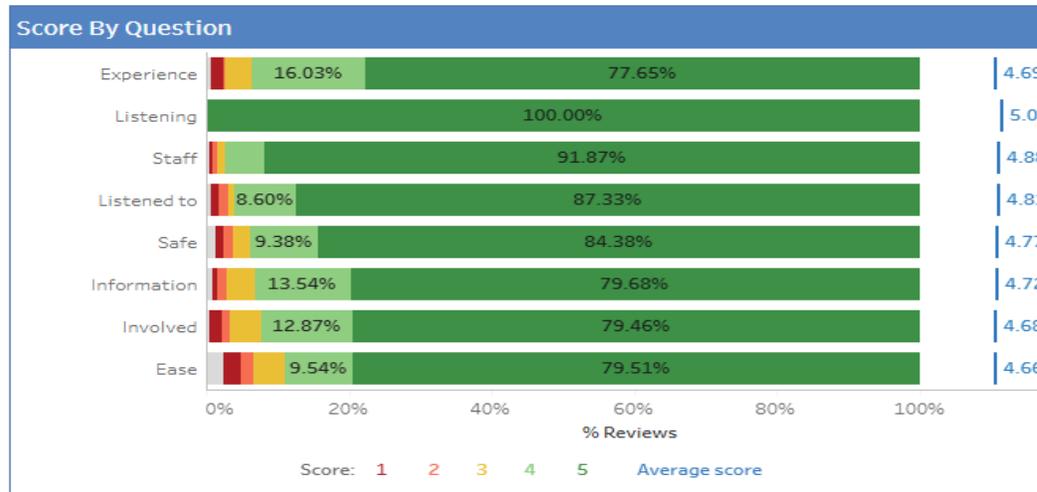
We involve children, young people and families in improvement work such as improving facilities and developing resources. We also work with the young health champions who undertake secret shopper activities as part of their development which provides us with helpful improvement information. We keep children, young people and families informed through use of a ‘you said, we did’ format.

The data below shows the feedback scores out of 5 for responses received in 2024.

## CYP Integrated Therapies

Q3 24-25 Stats:

33 CYP referred to CYPIT for assessment as part of the EHC needs assessment in Q3. 66 CYP were referred in Q2.



# 1.2 The positive impact of our work on children's outcomes - Social care



**Our social care intervention for those with profound disabilities has improved notably** - Our recent ILACS and Focused Visits for children's social care have shown that children with disabilities are visited regularly by social workers and have their needs considered holistically - leading to a richer understanding of their experiences and needs. Strong outcomes for children with disabilities also continue to be demonstrated via our social care core audit process.

## Children with disabilities inspection timeline

### ILACS - June 2019

*What needs to improve*

- The stability of the workforce in the disabled children's team and the three long-term teams.
- The quality and effectiveness of the social work support that disabled children and their families receive.



### Focused Visit - June 2021

*"Social workers in the disabled children's team actively seek to understand the communication systems of non-verbal children. This enables them to recognise how some of their feelings and preferences are demonstrated through their behaviours."*

*"Social workers have strong and constructive professional relationships with the parents of disabled children. They advocate effectively on their behalf, securing essential resources such as adaptations to their homes, suitable housing, respite care and school transport."*



### ILACS - March 2023

*"Children receiving a service from the dedicated children with disabilities team receive strong support. They are visited regularly, and their needs are considered holistically in child-in-need and child protection plans, meetings and supervision. Descriptions in case records of the children in different environments, such as home and school, or with friends and parents, enable a richer understanding of their experiences."*

*"... In other areas, including the quality and effectiveness of social work support to disabled children and their families, leaders have taken appropriate action to provide clearer differentiation between levels of intervention. This has improved the quality and impact of support provided."*



### Focused Visit (Feb 2024)

*"Children in Wokingham benefit from receiving the right help at the right time. Children in need and those in need of protection, including disabled children, now receive the right level of support in line with their needs. Appropriate actions are taken to address risk when progress is not being made and there is a need to escalate. Thresholds are applied effectively and the rationale for decision-making is clear. When children's risks or needs are reduced, the support to children and their families is adjusted accordingly."*

## CWD Social Care Audits (Nov 2023 - Sep 2024)

Of the 9 social care audits undertaken of CWD cases between November 2023 and September 2024, 4 were graded Requires Improvement, 4 Good, and 1 Outstanding. This was one of the stronger score breakdowns across all Wokingham's social care teams over this time period.



Our audits also provide practice area scores, providing insights into how our practice varies across teams. CWD audits over this timescale were particularly notable in that 100% of the cases looked at achieved Good or Outstanding scores for our "Impact on the Child" indicator.

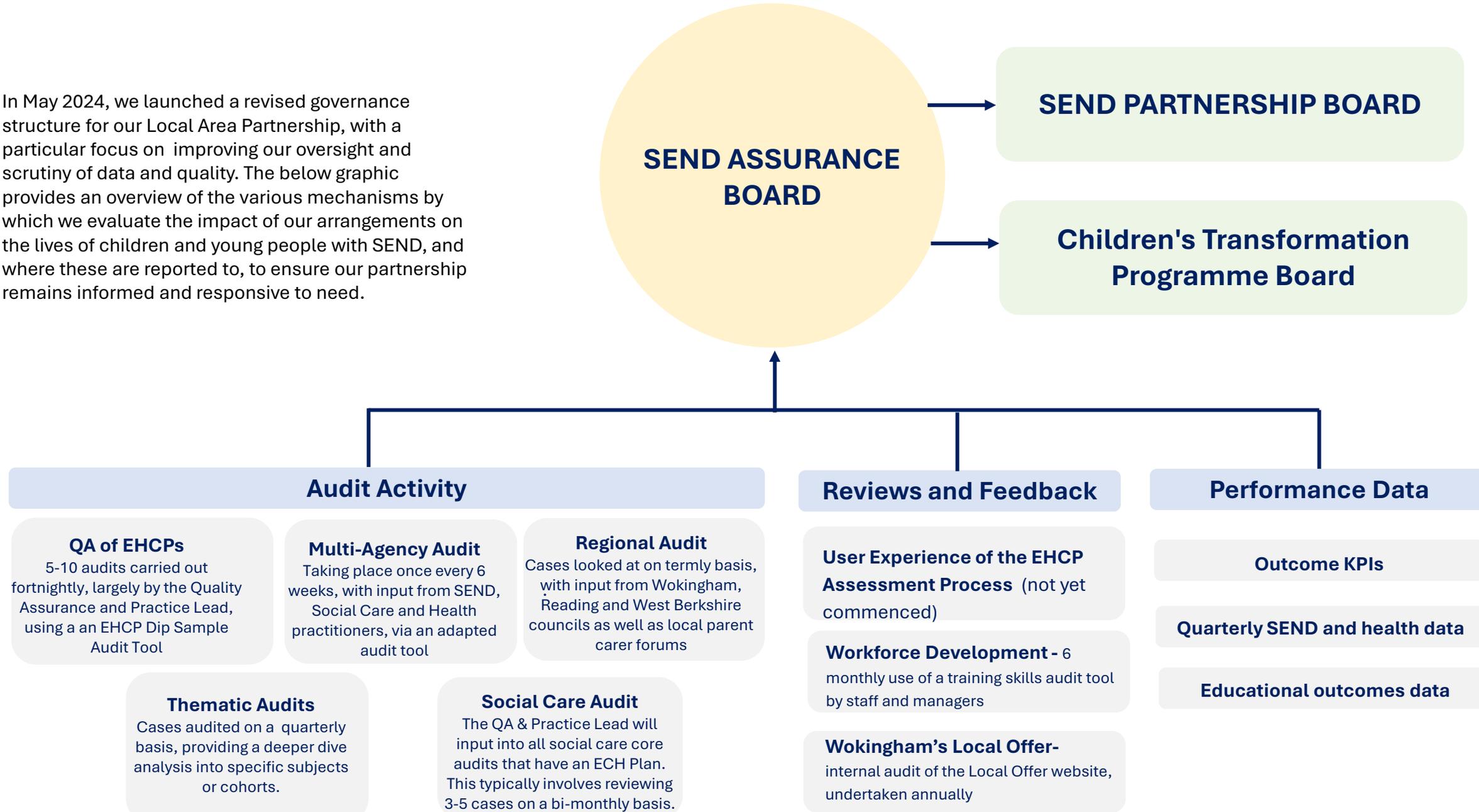


## **Section 2**

How do we know the impact of our work on children and young people with SEND?

## 2.1 How do we know?

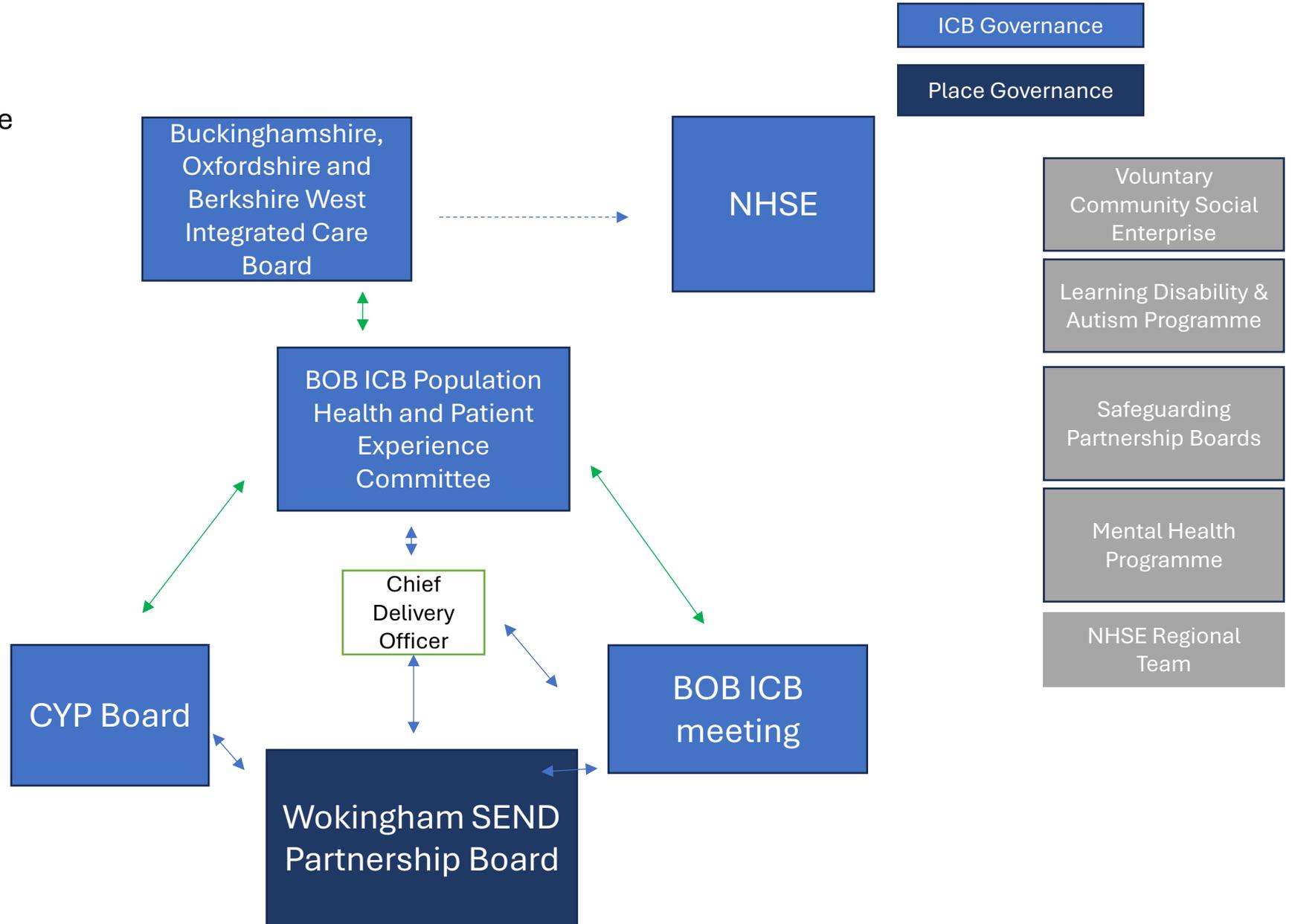
In May 2024, we launched a revised governance structure for our Local Area Partnership, with a particular focus on improving our oversight and scrutiny of data and quality. The below graphic provides an overview of the various mechanisms by which we evaluate the impact of our arrangements on the lives of children and young people with SEND, and where these are reported to, to ensure our partnership remains informed and responsive to need.



# 2.1 How do we know? (Part 2)

In December 2023 The Integrated Care Board developed a governance structure to ensure senior leaders have oversight on SEND across Wokingham

— Assurance  
— Accountability



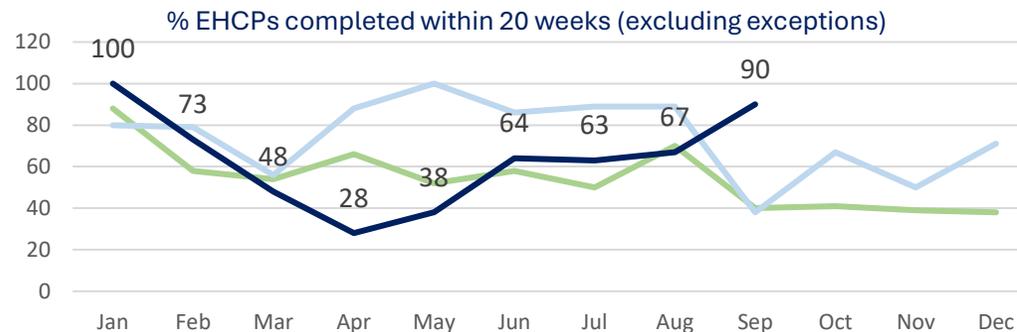
# 2.2 Learning from Performance Data and Management Oversight

As noted on the previous slide, following revisions to governance arrangements in the previous 12 months, Wokingham’s local area partnership benefits from a robust performance framework, providing regular oversight and scrutiny of key trends and outcomes data for our local children and young people with SEND. Examples of what we have learnt from some of our key indicators over the last year, and what we have done in response, are noted below.

— 2022 — 2023 — 2024

## EHCP Timeliness:

- Through strengthen managerial oversight, our performance on this indicator strengthened considerably across 2023.
- Although our performance has been subject to some volatility in 2024 (particularly in the spring term) our overall averages remain strong & above stat neighbour averages.
- To date, an average of 62% of EHCPs have been completed within 20 weeks this year, and we are confident that this average will continue to rise in the final months of 2024.
- An enhanced EP & SEND Team, alongside use of Power BI is expected to lead to further improvements in 2025.



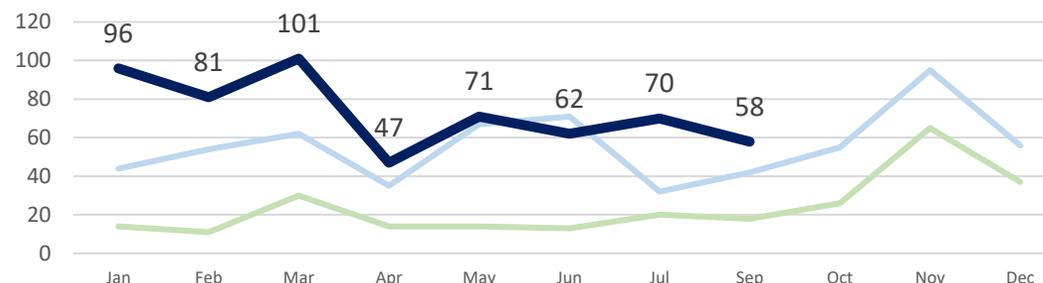
### Average EHCP Timeliness Rate

**2022:** 55.9%  
**2023:** 65.5%  
**2024:** 62% (YTD)  
**National Average:** 49.1%  
**SN Average:** 38.52%

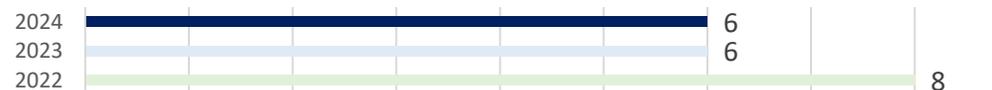
## Suspensions & Exclusions:

- As is being experienced nationally, Wokingham has seen notable growth in the numbers of children with SEND being subject to suspensions.
- Although our rates of suspensions for SEN support children remain below latest national averages, the corresponding figure for our EHCP cohort is now above the latest national comparator.
- Permanent exclusions of children with SEND are more stable in comparison, but our closing figures for the end of the 23-24 academic year (see right) shows that our overall rates are on the up for both EHCP and SEND Support cohorts.
- Our data shows that these exclusions are highly concentrated in just two schools.
- We have therefore developed multi-agency Team Around School meetings and our new MAIC panel to provide focused support and challenge for these particular schools.

Total suspension episodes for EHCP & SEND Support Cohorts in Wokingham



Permanent Exclusions for Wokingham’s EHCP and SEN Support Cohorts



### 23-24 Academic Year Stats:

**SEN Support**  
**529** suspensions - rate of **17.40%**  
 22-23 Rate: **16.4%**  
 22-23 National Average: **24.4%**  
**15** Exclusions – rate of **0.49%**  
 22-23 Rate: **0.2%**  
 22-23 National Average: **0.37%**

**EHCP Cohort**  
**391** suspensions - rate of **29.49%**  
 22-23 Rate: **21.6%**  
 22-23 National Average: **24.4%**  
**4** Exclusions - rate of **0.3%**  
 22-23 Rate: **0.08%**  
 22-23 National Average: **0.2**

## 2.3 Learning from complaints and tribunals

### Tribunals

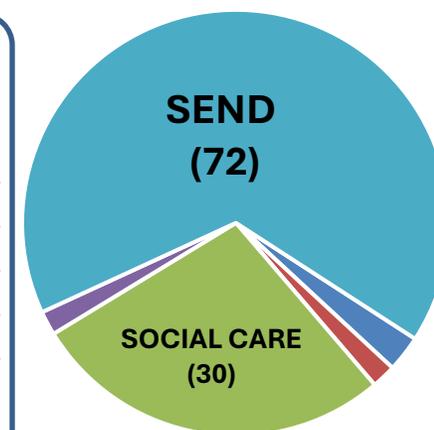
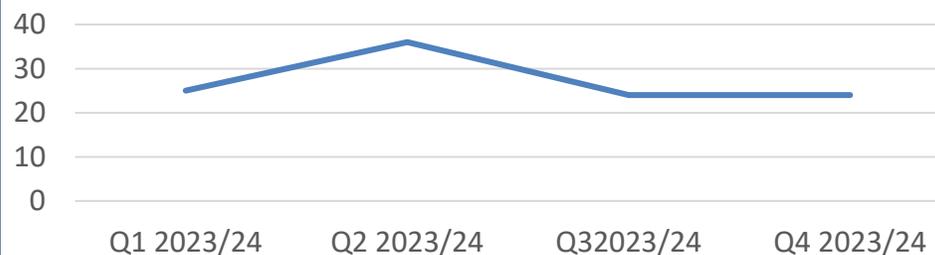
- Like many local authorities nationally and regionally, Wokingham Borough Council has received a significant increase in the number of SEND Tribunal appeals registered against decisions made in relation to the EHCP process. Tribunals increased by 157% between 2022-2023, however have slowed to an increase of 5% as of October 2024. 1.9% of appealable decisions are appealed, the second lowest rate in the SE-19 region.
- Wokingham Borough has improved its SEND decision making process with a partnership approach and reference to Ordinarily Available as well as outreach services (which details all the support available to children and young people without recourse to an EHCP). This has contributed to the increase of appeals received, with 28% related to decisions not to carry out an EHC needs assessment in 2024.
- Wokingham has therefore improved the transparency of its decision-making and has revised its suite of decision-making forms to improve recording of decisions. This will help to ensure that the discussions held within SEND Panel are translated to the information shared with families and schools following a decision. It is also expected that this will support key stakeholders to understand the rationale and the relevant legal test used to reach a decision.
- Wokingham continues to develop its data, analysis and insight and has produced a Power BI dashboard to help monitor the number of appeals received, the reason for the appeal, as well as other child level, receiving oversight and scrutiny through the SEND Assurance Board.



### Complaints

- The SEND Service in Wokingham experienced an increase in the number of formal complaints received, which is in part due to increased awareness of these processes (information has been made more accessible on the Local Offer website) as well staffing churn in the SEND Team. We also know from parents that poor communication continues to be a common source of our complaints.
- In response to this, a new SEND Customer Relations Manager has been introduced (April 2024), leading to an increase of complaints resolved through early resolution.
- In Q1 2024, 75% of Stage 1 complaints were responded to on time, with an aim for at least 90% in 2025.
- The Service continues to learn from complaints that are upheld, and has since produced revised Personal Budgets and EOTAS policies, reviewed the annual review process and is publishing new guidance for schools and Officers, and has published a 'Communication Promise' which is published on the Local Offer website.
- Quarterly reports will be considered by the Area SEND Assurance Board to maintain oversight and scrutiny of complaints activity.

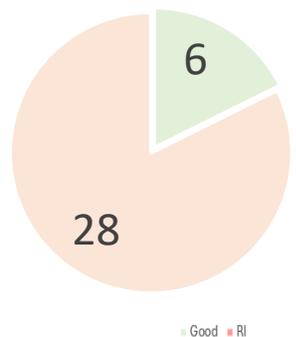
Children's Services 2023-24 Total formal complaints



## 2.4 Learning from our audit programme

In order to support our local area partnership to further improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND, earlier this year we refreshed our SEND Quality Assurance Framework and audit programme. A key component of this framework is the undertaking of regular in-person multi agency audits with health and social care colleagues. These audits provide a focus on EHCP quality as well as annual review paperwork, seeking to identify and celebrate best practice, as well as identify areas for development throughout the service. An overview of our most recent findings is set out below:

We have completed **34** Multi Agency Audits across Spring and Summer Terms in 2024. **6** (18%) cases have been graded as 'Good', with the remaining **28 (82%)** being graded as 'Requires Improvement'. We are purposefully holding ourselves to high expectations within this process, with cases requiring at least 70% of the EHCP to be considered Good or Outstanding to achieve an overall score that is above RI.



### Areas for development:

- Health and social care sections of EHCPs- consistency of description of need as well as the specificity of provision required to meet these.
- In the context of annual review paperwork, in some there was a lack of evidence of discussion around the health and social care needs of children and young people.

### Strengths:

- Special educational needs were generally well identified in Section B, meaning that children and young people's needs are understood and can be supported.
- This was supported by Plans that were found to be well written and easy to understand.
- All EHCPs captured the views of the family and their aspirations for their child's future. For most of the EHCPs, the outcomes for the children had relevant provision in place to ensure they could make progress.

### The cycle of auditing: how we use audits to improve our practice:

- ✓ Audit findings have been presented to over 50 SENCOs at an in-person SENCO Network meeting, to highlight good practice but also to provide advice on what good looks like and how they can support high quality EHCP and annual reviews.
- ✓ The request for advice templates for health and social care have been amended which we expect will lead to improved advice and quality health and social care sections.
- ✓ SEND, Social Care and Health staff took part in training session that shared audit findings and gave examples of good practice in regard to health and social care advice for the EHCP. They were signposted to training resources for continued support.
- ✓ More in person multi agency audits have been arranged for the next 12 months, with an emphasis on health and social care sections and contributions to the EHCP planned, to allow for detailed discussion and learning to take place.

### Green shoots of progress in autumn term 2024, with more work to do.

- ❖ 47% of EHCPs audited graded 'good'.
- ❖ Examples of outstanding practice in Section A.
- ❖ 83% social care provision (H1/H2) graded 'good'.

## 2.5 Learning from children and young people

The Me2 Club is an organisation working with local young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Over the Summer of 2023, young people's views were gathered to assist with the development of Wokingham's SEND & Inclusion Strategy. 52 young people completed the survey aged between 8-24yrs; 80% had an EHCP. Most of the young people attended a mainstream school or college (38%), and there were a good range of responses including young people in work, special school, home-tutored and one at university. These messages from children and young people have contributed to the development of LAP SEND and Inclusion Strategy and operation delivery. Key themes are summarised below:

### Key messages from young people

#### Evaluation of school/college placements

61.5% said that they had a local school or college that met their needs.

15.4% said that they had a local place that didn't meet their needs.

17.3% said that they didn't have a local school or college place (a number of these were in work or work or apprenticeships so this is not entirely an access issue)

#### Communication

More than half of the young people asked wanted services to communicate with them more effectively

#### Transitions

A substantial number of young people also raised transitions as an area of importance to them. Some suggested more transition days for SEND children, as well as information about the timetable before the first day of each new school year.

#### Accessibility

Respondents emphasised that our refreshed SEND & Inclusion Strategy needed to be clear - so that young people, their families, and other agencies who have not been involved in creating the strategy understand what is intended.

### Young people's priorities for our refreshed SEND & Inclusion Strategy

- **Better support in mainstream schools;** too many young people said they are sitting in class not understanding the work and not having help. A concern highlighted was that young people are being denied strategies to self-regulate such as removing fidget aids.
- **better mental health support for all levels of needs.** Responsive and accessible mental health support in schools and community, not just CAMHS.
- Providing more opportunities to attend SEND activities outside of school.

## 2.6a Learning from Family Feedback

SEND Voices Wokingham (our local Parent Carer Forum) carried out their annual Wokingham Borough SEND Survey in August 2024, receiving 294 responses . The survey provides an invaluable opportunity for the partnership to learn about a broad range of parent/carer experiences of the SEND system, with survey responses open to local families of children with any form of SEND i.e. not just those with an EHCP or on formal SEN support. Some key themes are summarised below, and full details are available via the SEND Voices Wokingham website [here](#).

Themes Identified in Survey	Headlines regarding what parents said	Headline response so far	Headlines regarding further improvements to follow
<b>Communication</b>	Communication across all services related to SEND is inconsistent and unclear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed a Communication Promise</li> <li>Improvements to the SEND Local Offer.</li> <li>SEND Drop In (in person) sessions</li> <li>SEND Local Offer newsletter (over 1000 subscribers).</li> <li>SEND Local Offer Contact Form for families to email or request a call back.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New, permanent SEND Team Officers and increased capacity from January 2025 will improve compliance with Communication Promise and build more consistent relationships with families.</li> <li>ASEND Partnership will refresh the Coproduction Charter, including a focus on communication.</li> </ul>
<b>SEND Team</b>	Overstretched team causing delays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved performance on statutory deadlines, although consistency remains a challenge.</li> <li>SEND Induction Programme developed for all new starters, including refresher training for existing staff.</li> <li>New way of working for SEND Team introduced to support close partnership working with all stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SEND Service is undertaking a comprehensive rewrite of the standard operating procedures which will ensure consistency and quality across the service.</li> <li>Deliver SEND Induction Programme &amp; embed revised Casework Procedures for new and existing staff.</li> <li>Plan in person 'meet the SEND Service' event for families.</li> <li>Embed use of 'Power BI' to support timely case management and further improve EHCP and annual review timeliness.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Offer</b>	Information overload and search difficulties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reorganized and simplified content,</li> <li>Developed a Local Offer newsletter</li> <li>Enhanced search functions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User testing for better search functionality and more direct engagement opportunities; this will be introduced early 2025.</li> <li>A series of SEND drop ins and in-person events throughout 2025, to give children, young people and their families more opportunities to speak to services directly and get the advice they need. These will be detailed through our Local Offer website, the SEND newsletter, SEND Voices website and social media where relevant, so as many families as possible are aware and can plan their attendance accordingly.</li> </ul>
<b>Education &amp; Inclusion</b>	More specialist provision needed for SEND.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opened two new autism resource bases in 2024</li> <li>Planned further expansion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 new Special Free Schools as well as seeking capital funding for additional primary and secondary SEND bases by 2029.</li> <li>SEND Sufficiency Statement will enable a shared understanding of need and development of specialist capacity in Wokingham.</li> </ul>
<b>Transport (SEND Travel)</b>	Issues with service consistency and ITT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced training for staff, improved turnaround times,</li> <li>started recruitment for a dedicated ITT trainer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-designing ITT programs with service users and parents and enhancing attendance monitoring.</li> </ul>

## 2.6b Learning from Family Feedback

Themes Identified in Survey	Headlines regarding what parents said	Headline response so far	Headlines regarding further improvements to follow
<b>Health</b>	Long waiting times for key services including neurodiversity diagnostic assessments, mental health support and delays.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed CAMHS LD service</li> <li>and invested in neurodiversity capacity.</li> <li>Adopted a needs-led approach to reduce dependency on diagnoses.</li> </ul>	Streamlining CAMHS services and launching a neurodiversity passport for healthcare.
<b>Social Care</b>	Lack of awareness of available services and limited short breaks options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Published comprehensive service descriptions</li> <li>completed a short breaks needs analysis.</li> </ul>	Redesigning the Short Breaks offer in collaboration with families and providers.
<b>Parent and Carer Wellbeing</b>	Declining parent / carer wellbeing and need for more support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have taken steps to improve and streamline communications with the co-production of the SEND Team Communication Promise, development of our SEND Local Offer to improve access to information and support, and increased capacity in the SEND Team, Education Psychology and specialist outreach services to support earlier interventions for children and young people.</li> <li>Helping Early Strategy- workshops with multi-agency and parent/carers representation held, identifying themes to improve access to early support, provide earlier support to families where required, and help families to connect with support networks and universal services.</li> </ul>	Helping Early Strategy to help provide earlier support for families.
<b>Preparation for Adulthood</b>	Mixed feedback on transition planning and limited knowledge of resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched a multi-agency PFA working group</li> <li>A multi-agency SEND Post-16 panel has been piloted in the autumn term 2024 to further strengthen planning and transitions for children and young people with EHCPs.</li> <li>Strengthened relations with local post 16 colleges to increase opportunities to Wokingham Borough young people with SEND.</li> <li>Hosted an in person 'market stall' event for young people aged 13 and above and their families, to allow them to speak directly to services, providers and educational settings to get advice for preparing for adulthood and post-16 provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of development of Post-16 Hub, for 40 places for young people with SEND. Curriculum to focus on preparation for work, including a vocational and apprenticeship based offer. Due to open 2026.</li> <li>Annual in person 'market stall' event for young people aged 13 and above and their families, to allow them to speak directly to services, providers and educational settings to get advice for preparing for adulthood and post-16 provision</li> </ul>

## 2.7 Learning from across our partnership

Below is a summary of some of the key learning we have obtained from partners over the last 18 months. This has been obtained by a variety of means. For example, we ran a survey for schools leaders, gathering their views on priorities for improvement of the local SEND system and Wokingham's new SEND & Inclusion Strategy. This was accompanied by dialogue with school leaders as to the current challenges schools face, and the opportunities for improvement. View and analysis from the Health Sector were also collated as part of this consultation process. We also recently surveyed SENCOs and have collated feedback from participants of our recently introduced Multi Agency Inclusion Clinic.

### SENCOs

- 41 SENCOs completed a survey produced by our Area SENCo
- Confident in adapting the classroom to meet a child's needs
- Would benefit from more signposting regarding Wokingham's local offer and outreach
- The SENCO Hub has been redeveloped and launched with the SENCO network in the autumn term

### Health partners:

- Increases in the number of children being referred for an EHC Needs Assessment who have previously been unknown to any service.
- Demand is outstripping capacity even with a highly developed Universal Offer
- There has been additional investment in local Autism and ADHD diagnostic pathways, but this investment cannot keep pace with the increasing demands.
- There is a common misconception that access to an EHCP requires an assessment –driving increases in referrals that are often to seek a diagnosis only, rather than to seek support.
- Despite excellent initiatives, children whose needs could be met by universal services are still being referred into targeted services.
- There is a clear opportunity to develop a more preventive model and provide support in a much quicker and more impactful way.

### Schools and other settings:

- Complexity of need is increasing (stretching resources) particularly complexity of mental health difficulties,
- There is a significant cohort with need that sits below the threshold for specialist CAMHS services - but too complex for preventative services
- There remains a significant number of pupils with EBSA following pandemic –
- Limited access to specialist support is noticeable e.g. Ed. Psych, SLT, OT, CAMHS,
- Limited specialists special school places means that mainstream schools are sometimes supporting very complex cases - with increased risk of exclusion.
- Importance of consistency and equality between what schools offer – every school needs to play an equal part
- Pro-active support for transitions
- Recruitment and retention of SEND staff is a key challenge

### MAIC – Multi-agency Inclusion Clinic:

- An innovative new AP delivery model as part of local area's AP remodelling.
- MAIC is attended by school leaders, education officers, Ed Psychologist, Social Care with schools bringing cases which may be at risk of permanent exclusion or with challenging needs that the school need external advice.
- The initiative was soft launched in Summer 2024, with over 40 cases being discussed at MAIC.
- Solutions are found and plans in place for over 95% of cases, where schools adopt new approaches to meet pupils' need without excluding them or placing them in an alternative provision. es in referrals that are often to seek a diagnosis only, rather than to seek support.
- Children are staying in mainstream schools and making progress

## 2.8 Learning from external scrutiny - Our response to recent inspection (Part 1)

In collaboration with Parents and Carers, we have taken a robust approach in responding to the findings of our 2019 inspection, as well as our 2021 re-visit. This culminated in our Written Statement of Action being formally closed, as of July 2024. Not only has this improvement work strengthened our position against the 6 areas of weakness identified in our last inspection (see below and overleaf), it has sharpened our ability to foresee new and emerging challenges faced by children and young people in our area and has laid the foundations for continuous improvement.

### Weaknesses identified from our 2019 inspection

### Assessment of progress in our 2021 revisit

### Latest work & evidence of our continuous improvement



**Lack of a clearly communicated partnership strategy**

**Sufficient progress:** Wokingham now has an ambitious SEND strategy; Leaders are focused on identifying & resolving difficulties to improve provision; leaders have sought high-level commitment across education, health & care.



2024-2029 SEND & Inclusion Strategy due for publication this year developed with more robust co-production and stronger partnership collaboration; document also provides a sharper focus on child outcomes, with strategic priorities underpinned by regularly reviewed service-level action plans.



**The timeliness and quality of EHC plans**

**Sufficient progress:** most EHCPs now completed within timescales. Backlog of requests addressed. Partners monitoring quality of reports that input into plans. However, more work required to develop the confidence of parents in the process.



Timeliness of EHC Plans average of 65% 2023 & 2024 (year to date) despite increasing demand. Power BI system developed to support timely practice, supervision and oversight from management. QA Framework providing more robust mechanisms to understand and drive improvement in quality of plans.



**Co-production work at all levels**

**Sufficient progress:** strong commitment to co-production from leaders now found e.g. SEND strategy and graduated response effectively co-produced. Co-production charter also developed.



Co-production continues to be at the centre of our approach, with recent examples including the Local Offer Logo competition, our EOTAS policy review, and a review of GP health check processes. A Co Production Charter is also being reviewed, as we know there is more to do to improve co-production at an individual level.



**The quality of Management information**

**Sufficient progress:** strengthened range of information now available to leaders; area beginning to secure the info it needs to tackle areas beyond inspection weaknesses; the sharing of information amongst partners is identifying new concerns/issues.



New Partnership KPIs which are now a standing item at our Partnership Governance Board. A recent example of impact has been the partnership's ability to respond swiftly to increasing INNMS placements demand, by introducing our new Multi-Agency Inclusion Clinic.



**Joined-up work across partners**

**Sufficient progress:** Co-produced 'Ordinarily Available', improving awareness of support. Joint working resulting in earlier identification of needs e.g. during the EHCP process. However - many parents still say that some services don't talk to each other



Partnership Governance Arrangements were re-launched in Sep 2023, with improved multi-agency representation & decision-making structures, improving awareness of processes across the partnership. This new framework has been instrumental in ensuring that our new SEND & Inclusion Strategy is joint-owned/co-produced

## 2.8 Learning from external scrutiny - Our response to recent inspection (part 2)

Despite making notable progress, our work to ensure effective transition pathways for young people with SEND was the one area of our written statement of action that failed to meet sufficient progress in our 2021 re-visit. In response, substantial work was subsequently undertaken in this area, leading to our WSOA formally closing in 2024. A brief summary of our improvement journey in this area is set out below:

### Weakness identified from our 2019 inspection:

*The area has an underdeveloped pathway to enable young people with SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood.*

### Key actions taken in response to 2019:

New transitions team created in adult social care; Transition workers now attending all EHCP meetings for young people with social care involvement

### Assessment of progress in our 2021 revisit

*The quality of transition support for young people with more complex SEND needs has improved since the last inspection. However, this work does not yet cover the needs of all young people*

### Key actions taken since 2021

Governance of transitions strengthened, evidencing information flow and scrutiny; PfA Professionals' Guide refreshed; new training package for SENCOs delivered to embed PfA offer; new PfA Co-Ordinator role appointed to; Adopted the NDTI toolkit for practitioners; PfA pathway guidance refreshed in co-production with PCF; new Post-16 Tracker implemented; PfA section of local offer re-written; transition arrangements through RBFT provision improved; training delivered to GPs on LD Annual Health Checks, in partnership with our PCF; numbers of 14+ on GP Learning Disability registers increased; PfA Strategic Commissioner employed to take the lead on EET for young people with SEND - leading on development of Supported Internships programme; Transitions into Adulthood Community of Practice initiative established, to reduce variation and to share best practice across health, education and social care.

### Latest work & evidence of our continuous improvement

Although we have demonstrated clear progress so far in relation to PfA, we know that more needs to be done to improve the experiences for *all* children and families. We have recently agreed a NEET interdependency process, making roles, responsibilities and processes clearer amongst partners. A core priority going forward will be to embed this into practice across relevant education, care and skills teams. (More detail in section 3).





### **Section 3**

Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND

# 3.1 Identifying and assessing need in a timely and effective way

## What we have been doing well

### EARLY YEARS

Guided by the findings of our EY survey results, our Early Years Team has continued to offer a wide range of targeted training opportunities for our local early years workforce (both in-house and via work with our regional Stronger Practice Hub) building additional skills and competencies across our borough. Our Early Years SENCo also continues to work closely with specialist EPs, and is now offering “surgeries”, training and face to face support – meaning local EY settings are able to access timely support from an Early Years Specialist EP.

### EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

Over the last year, Wokingham’s Educational Psychology service has continued to provide a high-quality and accessible support offer to schools and families, with our [Emotional Wellbeing Hub](#) (launched in March 2022) providing a central point of contact for all queries and referrals. As part of this, Wokingham has been particularly pro-active in its engagement with the national roll-out of **Mental Health Support Teams**, with two MHSTs now forming a core part of our emotional wellbeing offer. Wokingham has been an early adopter in this regard, with our first MHST launched in Jan 2021, and funding recently secured to incorporate a second MHST in September of this year. (See stats on impact to right).

### HEALTH

As part of our work to incorporate the Thrive model (which was launched in 2022, and seeks to draw a clearer distinction between treatment and support), a new helpline became available for neurodiverse young people and their families, with no requirement to be on a pathway. Communication of this initiative and promoting uptake will be a priority for the year ahead. Since January 2024, the children and young people’s therapy service has offered an enquiry line for parents of children under 5 with speech and language needs, and there is currently no waiting time for an initial conversation with a speech and language therapist. BHFT have started offering weekend clinics for children on autism and ADHD pathways, to gather pre-assessment information, as a way of speeding up the assessment process.

### SCHOOLS

In February 2024 we appointed a new Area SENCO, significantly bolstering our existing support for schools to identify need and make timely referrals. The post-holder has commenced a review of Ordinarily Available Provision, which will provide the foundations for peer moderation amongst schools, and enable more consistency in terms of what is offered.

### Local Offer:

This year we have focused on developing our SEND Local Offer to ensure families and CYP have greater access to information regarding services and support. This has included the launch of a half termly newsletter with over 780 subscribers. Latest analytics have shown a 65% increase in average monthly visitors to our local offer homepage, following recent improvement work.

Although our rates of SEND support continue to increase in Wokingham, we know that this cohort remains low relative to our growing cohort of children with EHCPs. In this context, effective identification and assessment of need remains a core priority for our local area partnership, to ensure children’s need do not escalate unnecessarily, and that support is put in place in a timely manner. Some key highlights of our work in this area across our partnership are summarised below:

*Our MHSTs now support a total of **29** schools – equating to 2/3 coverage of our local pupil population*

*Last year our MHST service provided **268** local CYP with assessments and delivered **198** interventions*



## 3.1 Identifying and assessing need in a timely and effective way

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **SEN SUPPORT SERVICE FOR SCHOOLS** - We have identified a clear need for an improved SEN support service for schools, and a fit for purpose outreach offer, enabling schools to access quality specialist support and intervention more consistently. Our new Area SENCO is currently refreshing our specialist outreach offer, with a re-tender to follow (based on feedback recently received from schools). Formal launch is planned for **September 2025**.
- **LOCAL OFFER** - We have refreshed our Local Offer website but want to do more to make this as accessible and easily understood as possible, supporting more families to understand the support services available to them. We have promoted aspects of the offer (for example summer holiday activities) and managed to improve user-hits in key areas of our website. Families feedback is guiding next steps of our improvement work, as we seek to simplify the website and improve usability further.
- **SERVICE REDESIGN** -The ICB is redesigning its speech and language therapy and occupational therapy services with stakeholders to improve access. This will 1) improve child access to support by providing more timely help in the right place at the right time; 2) strengthen the EHCNA pathway to become more needs led; 3) ensure the new SEND framework is reflected by the therapies services; 4) review pathways for children who need more specialist/complex therapeutic care. This project is expected to be take place in 2025.
- **ACCESS TO PATHWAYS** – the Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust is currently in the process of streamlining existing neurodiversity assessment pathways, including a new pre-assessment Neuro Development Questionnaire (a questionnaire for parents to cut down length of assessments and identify which type of assessment is needed). Length of assessment will consequently be varied depending on complexity, to improve efficiency and reduce wait times. This has been co-produced with parents and carers within the BOB ICB footprint and is to be embedded within Wokingham.
- **SIGNPOSTING TO SUPPORT SERVICES** - Feedback from our Parent Carer Forum has highlighted that we need to do more to signpost to support services where statutory assessment has been declined, or where an EHCP is not issued. We have already revised our suite of decision-making notifications, and have recently introduced more capacity into the SEND Team to ensure we can discuss decisions and the support available with families. This is also supported by our Local Offer website.
- **EXTENDING OUR WELL-RECEIVED EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE** - A focus group exercise undertaken has pointed to the need of extending the current well-received and impactful Educational Psychology service to address the need for experienced SENCOs. In response to this, in the next 12 months the service will be reverting to a “link EP model”, with face-to-face consultations in schools.

## 3.2 Participation in decision-making about plans and support

### What we have been doing well

#### Improved Quality of EHCPs

Our Multi-Agency Audit work this year has shown that our EHCPs are generally well written with minimal jargon, so that they are easy for CYP and families to understand. (see stats to right). Our EHCP's are also written in a way that breaks down outcomes into small, easier to understand targets, with the intention of supporting young people to easily understand and engage with processes.

#### TRANSPARENCY

Like many other authorities, Wokingham has experienced recent growth in the rate of appeals against its decision making. One of our strategic responses to this has been to develop a much clearer suite of decision-making forms, templates and processes - seeking to improve transparency and provide more clarity to families. Although we know that the experiences of parents and carers are still mixed in terms of feeling clearly communicated with (as is acknowledged in our SEND & Inclusion Strategy) these documents are an important step forward.

#### HEALTH ENGAGEMENT

Wokingham children with a long-term health condition (11+) now receive impartial information, advice and support via the **Ready, Steady, Go! Programme** which has a particular focus on encouraging CYP to engage in their care and connect with their key workers. Wokingham children & young people receive a Learning Disability Annual Health Check, supporting these individuals to make informed choices about their future health, The Support Hope and Recovery/Resources Online Network (SHaRON), seeks to provide a safe digital space for CYP receiving treatments to talk with peers who have had similar experiences, and to chat with care professionals for advice and guidance.

#### SOCIAL CARE

WBC maintains a specialist Children With Disabilities (CWD) service, including ASSIST and FIRST, which parents and carers tell us are valued services. As part of our ongoing improvement work, social care practitioners have been supported to develop their communication skills with children with disabilities, to ensure their views and wishes are reflected in and are driving plans. This improvement work commenced in 2023, when the service produced its first [CWD Communication Rights Charter](#), which was followed by training for all staff (alongside specialist training for CWD practitioners) with a particular focus on obtaining CYP views effectively during direct work. The impact has been commended in recent inspection.

#### SENDIASS

Feedback obtained from our parent carer forum's annual survey has shown that our SENDIASS team are continuing to provide a highly valued service to local families. Over the last two years the service's reach has also expanded considerably - with **694** new cases opened in 22-23, and a total of **715** opened in 23-24 - equating to a **64% increase** on the number of cases the team opened in 21-22 (437 cases). Latest feedback obtained by the service itself showed that this year 75% of respondents felt more involved in decisions about their child's education, and 78% felt more confident as a result of the support provided.

In **83%** of our multi-agency audits, plans looked at had the CYPs aspirations and hopes clearly recorded and informing the EHCP. **96%** of plans audited were deemed clear and easy to understand.

Our approach to communicating with children was commended in our most recent **Ofsted Focused Visit** in Feb 24 - with inspectors commenting that children had their needs considered holistically by social workers - leading to a richer understanding of their experiences and needs



## 3.2 Participation in decision-making about plans and support

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **ENGAGEMENT WITHIN HEALTH APPOINTMENTS AND PLANS** - Digital flags are now implemented in primary care alongside anticipatory care. Further roll out to secondary care is the next phase and is a national programme lead by NHS England. Co-produced Reasonable adjustments passports are our latest development and these are used within our Mental Health Trust. Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, Transitions into Adulthood Community of Practice have identified the need to obtain feedback from our Children and Young People on health plans and transitions. We are introducing a quality assurance framework for the under 18's Learning Disability Annual Health Checks, with GP's acting on feedback from parents and carers. To improve the quality of Learning Disability Annual Health Checks for our Children and Young People is a priority for the year ahead. The framework is to be developed against national standards.
- **SENDIASS** - Building on another positive year of supporting families to understand and engage with SEND processes, our SENDIASS service has an aspiration to increase the number of cases that it holds directly with young people, so that the team's reach and impact can be developed further. The service will aim to improve its engagement with young people via social media and community events (such as local offer live PFA events) and has set an ambition to increase its caseload with young people by 20% each year.
- **COMMUNICATING SEND DECISION MAKING** - We have commissioned 'Courageous Conversations' through SESLIP for the new year, to work with our parent/carer forum and health and social care partners to explore SEND Decision Making and how we can increase participation in this area.

# 3.3 Providing the right help at the right time

## What we have been doing well

**EHC PLANS** - We have made significant progress in relation to the timeliness of our EHCP assessments, providing a strong foundation to provide support promptly, and at the right time. This year we have also appointed a dedicated SEND Quality and Practice Lead, to provide further assurance about the quality of our EHC Plans. Although more audit work needs to be undertaken to ensure our findings are statistically significant, early indications are that our plans are generally well written and easy to understand, with the views of the family and their aspirations captured.

**SPECIALIST INTERVENTION** - Plans are developed via the DSR for children and young people at risk of admission to an inpatient mental health hospital. A new Key Worker service has been 24-houred to prevent a Mental Health hospital admissions of young people with mental health difficulties and this sits alongside the implementation of the national policy. A 24 hour mental health crisis service has been introduced to give rapid access to support and prevent A & E admissions in line with national policy. CETR and DSR processes now include the identification of Children and young people with EHCPs and proactive transitions

**SUPPORT WHILST WAITING** - The support offered for children awaiting health assessment continues to be a key strategic priority for our partnership. Examples of key activity this year include: **Autism:** the commissioning of parent advice workshops, access to the “Young Sharon” on line resource, a Neurodiversity newsletter & Autism Assessment Team helpline. **Occupational Therapy:** Sensory processing online workshops have been made available to support children waiting for assessment.

**PATHWAYS & SERVICE REDESIGN** - A new specialist CAMHS Learning Disability Service has been introduced to address a previous gap in service, to ensure children and young people with a Learning Disability within Wokingham are able to receive specialist mental health services in their local area. This will compliment of a range of other mental services ranging from targeted to specialist mental health provisions.

**EXCLUSION PREVENTION PROGRAMME** - Targeted and outreach offer to reduce Suspensions and PEX linked to offending behaviour. Referrals increased by 81% compared to previous academic year, with 21 children completing the programme.

**EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SUPPORT** - As part of our alternative provision remodelling project (more detail in section 3.12) in June of this year we launched a new **Multi-Agency Inclusion Clinic (MAIC)** - offering a surgery approach for accessing advice, support and signposting for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion or long-term absence. To date, the clinic has brought together stakeholders to consider 36 of an initial 56 referrals made by local schools. The forum has developed the local area partnership’s shared knowledge and understanding of some of the frontline challenges in relation to managing emotional needs timely and school attendance. **EBSA Approach** is adopted by the local area to support children and young people especially girls with ASC to improve attendance. Both MAIC and EBSA clinic is also leading to positive outcomes – see right.

**SCHOOL INCLUSION** - A range of resources continue to be made available to support schools & settings with the graduated approach, including guidance on what should be “ordinarily available” provision for children with SEND, an Autism Toolkit, Children & Young People’s Integrated Therapy Service materials for supporting children with speech & language or occupational therapy needs and an Early Years Toolkit.

As a result of our new MAIC, **20** placements have been made at Foundry College for medically vulnerable children - all of these students started with Foundry this September, and for some it was the first time they had accessed education since they were in primary school.



## 3.3 Providing the right help at the right time

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **WAITING TIMES** - Although our support whilst waiting offer has been strengthened this year, we are conscious as a partnership that wait times for autism and ADHD assessment are still too long, and access to therapies is not timely enough for many children who do not have EHCPs. The ICB is working with the regional and national teams to identify areas for improvement and national solutions to address this national issue.
- **EARLY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT** - Feedback from our Parent Carer Forum (which is echoed by local schools) continues to highlight a growing “mental health gap” for many children in Wokingham, with reference to a substantial cohort of children who have mental health needs that cannot be supported within schools or via our Emotional Wellbeing hub (but who sit below “Getting More Help” interventions). Expanding the support on offer for these children will be a strategic priority for the year ahead.
- **STRENGTHENING THE DSR** - A 2024-25 project plan for strengthening the DSR has recently been produced by the ICB, which includes the proposed development of a new digital DSR Data dashboard. The data dashboard will give us intelligence around impact and outcomes. A business case will be presented as part of the forward plan for the financial year 25-26.

# 3.4 Preparation for next steps and achieving strong outcomes

## What we have been doing well

**PLANNING** - All of our Annual Reviews of EHCPs now have a clear focus on planning for Preparation for Adulthood, from year 9 onwards, to ensure young people have adequate time to reflect and consider their options. SEND Case Officers also prioritise their attendance at Annual Reviews for all CYP approaching a key stage transfer, to ensure children and families have access to impartial advice and support at these key junctures, with parental preference at the forefront of decision making wherever possible. Our Post 14 EHCP's have a strong emphasis on PFA outcomes

**ENGAGEMENT** - This year saw the launch of our first **Preparation for Adulthood event** - a market stall style event that showcased a variety of local providers and services available to our young people. Held in June 2024, the event attracted over 70 attendees and received positive feedback from families. This feedback has suggested that Mental Health and Wellbeing is a gap that we can improve upon going forward, which will be a focus for the next event, currently planned for March 2025.

**GUIDANCE** - in response to feedback from parents and carers, in February 2024 we published a refreshed [Preparation for Adulthood Guide](#) (co-produced with input from our PCF and CYP groups), seeking to better support families and young people access support.

**HEALTH TRANSITIONS** - During Spring 2024 the ICB worked with young people to develop a series of videos about their experiences of transitions and coproduced a multi-agency Transition Guide with families. From the age of 14, Young People can receive information on health services available to them in adulthood with the use of the *Ready, Steady, Go!* Programme. The Royal Berkshire Hospital provides a transitions clinic for children with neurodisabling conditions from the age of 14 years. There is a clear process for transition of young people with learning disabilities to adult health services, overseen by the paediatricians, which starts at age 16 years. Autism Berkshire run transitions to adulthood workshops giving information to parents and carers to confidently support YP to adulthood. CTPLD support YP from the age of 17.5 years of age. Young People with a Learning Disability in Wokingham are invited to have a Learning Disability Annual Health Check with their GP, to support Young People getting used to attending the GP surgery and working with the GP to meet their health needs.

**ATTAINMENT** - The partnership can evidence strong educational outcomes across all key stages for CYP with SEND in Wokingham over the last academic year (both SEND support and EHCP) with our cohorts outperforming national averages at every stage between EYFS and GCSE. This year we have also been able to maintain above national average rates of Education, Employment and Training for our KS4 cohorts (both SEND Support and EHCP).

**EMPLOYMENT** - Supported internships are also available to local CYP through Route to Recruit, which includes supported internships via Royal Berkshire Hospital.

**NEET INTERDEPENDENCY PATHWAY** - In October 2023, our multi-agency NEET Interdependency Pathway was agreed to by Social Care, Schools, SEND Service, Skills and Adult Service. Its implementation has led to a rapid improvement in young people with SEND's participation in Education, Employment and Training.



## 3.4 Preparation for next steps and achieving strong outcomes

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **LOCAL OFFER** - We know that there is currently less traffic on our Preparing for adulthood section of our Local Offer – suggesting people may be accessing key information via Google, or possibly not at all. Improving awareness of our PfA offer is therefore a key priority for our ongoing Local Offer confidence building project, and we will continue to showcase services to local families via our annual PfA event.
- **REVIEWS** - Our latest local Parent Care Forum Survey highlighted mixed feedback around transitions, particularly in the context of Annual Reviews. Respondents indicated that where transitions were covered within reviews, the breadth and quality of support was good. However, many respondents indicated that this topic was too often not part of the review process. We are embedding this in our review process.
- **HEALTH DATA** - The ICB is currently in the process of developing a data dashboard which will capture health outcomes for children. Data on transitions will be a core aspect of this dashboard, with data captured across key milestones. The ICB is working with the regional team and its ability to capture impacts and outcomes across datasets
- **PARTNERSHIP-LEVEL GUIDANCE** - As part of our recently published SEND and Inclusion Strategy, we have committed to publishing a shared transition pathway, setting out what good transitions should look like across our partnership, providing clearer timelines and expectations for parents, professionals, children, and young people.
- **POST 16 PANEL** - Using the findings of an autumn term pilot of a multiagency Post 16 Panel, we will continue to develop and embed our approach to ensuring placements support independence and timely transition planning.
- **SUPPORTED INTERNSHIPS & POST 16 PATHWAY PLANNING:** We plan to expand our Supported Internship Offer - to achieve a year-on-year increase of Wokingham Borough young people engaged on the SI programme. Working with other SI providers to expand the offer and have a wider variety of SI's in multiple different sectors will be a priority. Work with FE colleges to look at their current offer and how this can be expanded to support young people with additional needs will also continue.

# 3.5 Ensuring children and young people feel valued, visible and included in their communities

## What we have been doing well

**LOCAL OFFER** - This year our online SEND Local Offer has undergone significant development work, as part of our ongoing *Local Offer Website and Parent/Carer Confidence Building* project - seeking to improve the accessibility of content and the uptake of local services. This has involved the relaunch of the offer on a new website, and the commissioning of consultancy work to better understand website traffic and improve accessibility. Following its re-launch of the offer, our analytics indicated an initial 160% increase in page views. This year we have also developed a new half-termly **SEND Local Offer newsletter**, which brings together news and updates about what's on offer locally to over 750 subscribers. Finally, in October 2023 our PCF organised a **Local Offer Live event**, which allowed parents, carers, children and young people to engage with various services all in one place, enabling them to further their understanding of what community activities are available. Over 400 people attended, with 98 families and 72 stallholders (including LA, health and local SEND charities). This year's event was recently held on Saturday 12th October.

**ENGAGEMENT** - Our Local Offer Co-ordinator regularly attends Say YES (SEND Youth Forum) meetings, to hear children and young people's views and to identify opportunities for individuals to participate and be included in the community – we regularly showcase and celebrate examples of participation in our SEND Local Offer newsletter, with the aim of inspiring other CYP to participate.

**SHORT BREAKS** - Since 2018, Wokingham has delivered its short breaks provision via a model of direct payments. However, through our conversations with children, families and providers, it is increasingly clear that this model of provision has not had the desired impact, in terms of stimulating the market and improving choice. We have responded to this by initiating a review of our short break services, which has highlighted opportunities for commissioning services alongside direct payments to increase the range and number of breaks available. Approval has recently been granted from our Transformation Board to move forward with undertaking a further coproduction exercise to explore the viability of expanding capacity within current successful short break provision and creating opportunities for new services to flourish.

**HEALTH** - Training for respite staff for CYP with complex health needs from the specialist nurses to support CYP within Wokingham feel included in their community. Established mental health social prescribers who link young people back into the community following discharge from a mental health inpatient hospital as part of the discharge plan

**LOCAL PROVISION**- As per our sufficiency strategy and following significant investment in the creation of local specialist provision for Wokingham, over 65 children have been able to remain educated in their local community.

**POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS** - Our LA maintained CAMHS Phoenix School, as part of our SEND system, provides education for young people aged 11-18 years who have been admitted to CAMHS Phoenix Unit at Wokingham Hospital. Adopting a positive affirmation approach, young people at the provision make personalised academic progress and find and believe in their own voice. The setting was graded by Ofsted in 2024 as Outstanding, being praised that “Pupils are positive and engaged learners in this nurturing and calm school.

Earlier this year we announced a competition to design a new logo for Wokingham's Local Offer, seeking to increase awareness and understanding of the offer amongst children and

families. **83** submissions were received from local children with the winner (a child attending a local primary school) selected by our SEND Youth Forum. This logo is included within our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy and is being added to our Local Offer website. Going forward, it will be at the heart of our communication with families.



## 3.5 Ensuring children and young people feel valued, visible and included in their communities

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **SHORT BREAKS REVIEW** – As noted, we are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of our Short Breaks offer, with phase 1 of the review concluded in October 2024. This work identified immediate need, and approval has been granted by the Transformation Board to proceed with the development of a Business Case to address this. It also highlighted the need for further exploration - including expanding the scope of the review to include a graduated response as part of a system wide early help and prevention approach – ensuring children and young people have the confidence to participate and benefit from local services. This work will continue in 2025.
- **LOCAL OFFER** - Ongoing work to revitalise and improve awareness of our Local Offer website will continue into next year. This will include children and young people working with our services to design their own videos on the website, so children and young people can ‘see themselves’ and are represented when they go online for further information about what is available in Wokingham Borough.
- **LOCAL PROVISION FOR LOCAL CHILDREN** - As noted previously in the Local Context, due to capacity in our local SEND system not keeping pace with recent growth in identified need, we have seen an over-reliance on out of area placements. Much has been achieved in recent years to develop new SEND provision in Wokingham, and work continues, with ambitions to rebalance our local system to better reflect and meet local needs over the next 4 years.
- **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATION SERVICE** - A new participation service is being developed and Officers recruited to support with ensuring children and young people can participate, engage and shape their local community. .

## 3.6 Ambitious leadership

### What we have been doing well

**REVISED GOVERNANCE** - In September 2023, we re-launched a revised and restructured governance framework for our Local Area, focusing on increased multi-agency representation, improved decision-making structures and stronger oversight and scrutiny of data and quality. Following the implementation of our new governance arrangements, we believe we have seen a much more effective flow of information across our partnership, as well as stronger evidence of multi-agency and partner scrutiny. A recent example of impact has been the partnership's ability to respond swiftly to increasing demand for INNMSS placements, by introducing our new Multi-Agency Inclusion Clinic.

**RENEWED PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY** - Our ambitions as a partnership have recently been formalised as part of our new SEND and Inclusion Strategy. This document provides a clear mission that is understood and shared by all partnership stakeholders - underpinned by clear priorities and principles that will inform all work undertaken with our children and young people. Being ambitious for our children and young people is one of our overarching strategic principles.

**CORPORATE INVESTMENT & AWARENESS** - SEND is acknowledged as a core priority in various forums and Boards working across Wokingham Borough Council, including our Children and Young People's Partnership and our Oversight and Scrutiny Committee. Recognition of SEND in these forums has led to significant investment in the SEND & EP Teams to enhance capacity and timely support and communication. Having entered into an agreement with the DfE as part of the national Safety Valve programme, implementing a deficit recovery plan to achieve a balanced DSG budget by 2028/29, awareness of SEND has been significantly strengthened with elected members and senior leaders across the council. A good example of the council-wide commitment towards SEND, is the implementation of an additional, time-limited 1% levy on Council Tax to provide a DSG Equalisation Reserve, which is planned to continue until 2030 to support us in creating a sustainable system of support for children and families.

**STRONG HEALTH PARTNERSHIP** - The Berks West Unified Exec (LA & Health leaders) has made SEND one of its top 5 priorities for Place Development. The ICB, RBH and BHFT have made SEND a priority within their governance structures and enhance capacity. The Designated Clinical Officer for SEND in the ICB reports quarterly on SEND performance to the ICB and the Local Authority. The ICB SEND meeting is chaired by Nick Broughton, Chief Executive and the Named Executive for SEND has improved ICB overview and there are now ICB specific projects established such as the ICB health data dashboard, alignment of therapies services and Delegated Healthcare Tasks project.

**SCHOOL-LED PARTNERSHIP FOR INCLUSION**- Wokingham Borough's Education Partnership has made SEND and Inclusion one of its four priorities for school leaders in the area. shared ownership of the challenges and improvement actions, leading to better and consistent outcomes for SEND pupils, whose attainments of all stages of learning outperform similar local areas and regional average.

**SCHOOL LEADERSHIP** - Our school leaders are ambitious for our children with SEND. This is evidenced by the fact that all three Special Schools and two PRUs have been judged to be Outstanding - taking a leading role in delivering the best outcomes in their schools while having the shared ownership of delivery outreach and inclusion support for mainstream schools.



## 3.6 Ambitious leadership

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

**NEW HELPING EARLY SERVICE** - We are strengthening our helping early offer in Wokingham via the creation of a new Head of Service role for 'Helping Early, Community and Prevention'. Leading on strategy and activity across Wokingham's partners to ensure there is a robust and evidence-based approach to delivering on early intervention and support for families, children and young people who have additional needs but do not require a statutory intervention.

**OUR SERVICES WORK TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY** – Through the Marmot Council initiative and developing a broad and integrated multi-agency helping early service, relationships with both statutory and voluntary partners are being developed to enhance the services and offer to Wokingham children and their families, meeting need and offering support in the right place, at the right time.

**CO-PRODUCTION** - Our helping early strategy is being coproduced with key stakeholders and will be finalised in spring 2025. Bringing together the local area offer for children and families who require additional help and support.

# 3.7 Our strategic approach to engagement and co-production

## Recent Examples of effective engagement and co-production

**LOGO COMPETITION:** In 2024 we announced a competition to design a new logo for Wokingham's Local Offer, seeking to increase awareness and understanding of the offer amongst children and families. 83 submissions were received from local children with the winner (a child attending a local primary school) selected by our SEND Youth Forum. This logo is included within our draft SEND and Inclusion Strategy and is being added to our Local Offer website. Going forward, it will be at the heart of our communication with families.

**EOTAS PROCESSES:** Feedback from our PCF has recently indicated that EOTAS parents feel that our processes are unclear. In response to this our SEND QA Lead met with families of EOTAS students to ask them what they would like to see in a revised policy. A new policy has been drafted and shared with parent carer forums, before a further round of consultation takes place.

**PfA:** In 2023 parents told our local PCF, SEND Voices, that they did not feel they were given enough information regarding preparation for adulthood and post-16 learning opportunities. In response to this, our Local Offer Coordinator and Post-16 Commissioning Lead arranged a local event in June 2024 for CYP and their families with a variety of Post 16 providers in attendance, ranging from education providers to local charities and social care provisions. The event attracted over 70 attendees, who were able to talk to providers and members of the SEND team in attendance about the different opportunities available to them and ask for advice on the process for their CYP.

**PATHWAYS:** The ICB have worked with autistic people to devise a RA pathway and toolkit so adjustment needs are known prior to the appointment.

**TRANSITIONS:** CYP across Wokingham with a Learning Disability or autism participated in videos to share their lived experience and key challenges when transitioning to adult services.

**“Me Too” ENGAGEMENT:** Over the course of 2024 our Local Offer Coordinator - along with various other members of the SEND Team - have regularly attended our local Me Too SEND Youth group, asking the group questions about how we could improve services and how we work with CYP. These meetings also provide an opportunity to give the group updates on work the SEND Team are doing to improve services. This year, in response to feedback, easy read materials have been produced to provide updates to the group, in order to further support our engagement.

**HEALTH ENGAGEMENT EVENT:** Partners, in coproduction with the Parent Carer Forum, held a Parent Carer Health Engagement event on 6th June 2024 for parents / carers of young people with SEND to get feedback on their experiences. The focus groups included neurodiversity, early support for mental health, therapies and transitions

**EPILEPSY AND NEURODIVERSITY SUPPORT:** The Royal Berkshire Hospital held a patient engagement event for young people with epilepsy and neurodiversity to gather families' views. As a result, peer to peer support for parents was set up. The co-design of services have improved with all health partners this year with the Annual Health Checks, Keyworker programme, CAMHSLD and transitions within the RB. Parent / carers are very active in the current RBH Transitions Project.



## 3.7 Our strategic approach to engagement and co-production

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **TO CONTINUE THE JOURNEY THAT WE HAVE STARTED -**

- ❖ Governance of Engagement and Co-production: Our revised SEND Partnership Board now has a strong focus on driving forward inclusive practices and co-production. The Board oversees and focuses on wider Inclusion strategy, and benefits hugely from the membership and views of SEND Voices Wokingham, - alongside regular contributions from children and young people.
  - ❖ PCF and CYP representatives play a central role in the board's decision making by presenting regular reports summarising latest feedback from parents, carers and young people, whilst also taking part in the Board's core co-production activities - including the development of our recent SEND and Inclusion Strategy and All-age Autism Strategy.
- **SEND VOICES WOKINGHAM:** our PCF will continue to be members of the Local Authority's Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel. This provides our PCF with an opportunity to scrutinise our SEND provision and delivery via one of our highest local governance forums, alongside input from elected members.
  - **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:** CYP will also continue to periodically attend the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Area SEND Strategic Partnership Board to share their life experiences - which informs the area's strategy development and service delivery. The Royal Berkshire Hospital have an engagement embedded CYP strategy.
  - **SEND SERVICE COMMUNICATION** - We have identified communication as a key area for continued improvement in order to better engage with children and families – particularly in relation to how we engage during the development of plans. In response to this, WBC have recently coproduced and launched a 'SEND Service Communication Promise', which clearly sets out how and when families should expect to be communicated with, when working with the SEND service. Monitoring our performance against the core components of this promise – e.g. response times to initial email enquiries – will be a priority for the year ahead.

# 3.8 Our work to develop a shared understanding of need

## What we have been doing well

### SEND JSNA

To strengthen our understanding of local need, over the last 6 months we have embarked on the development of a bespoke Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for SEND, bringing together data from across the local partnership into a single agreed statement of need. The document sets out current and future education, health, and care needs of Wokingham's children and young people, and is used to inform and guide the planning and commissioning of health, well-being, and social care services within the local authority area.

### PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERSHIP

In October 2023 Wokingham Borough Council took the decision to appoint its own Director of Public Health (previously there was a single DPH covering the 3 unitary authorities in Berkshire West). Our DPH is now a core member of our Strategic SEND Partnership Board and has significantly developed our capacity for better understanding local needs.

### GOVERNANCE

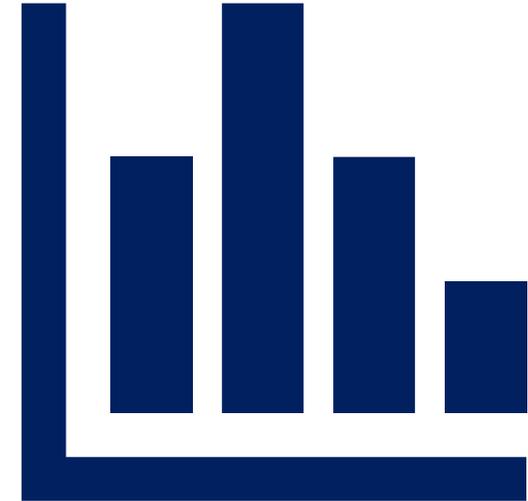
Our revised LAP Governance Structure now ensures a much more robust approach to sharing information across agencies. Our Strategic Partnership Board (now co-chaired by both the DCS and the ICB's Place-Based Director) has a much more diverse membership, so that leaders from across education, care and health services can learn from different perspectives and approaches. To strengthen our shared understanding of local need further, we have recently finalised a suite of shared **Performance KPIs** for the Wokingham Area SEND Partnership – which will be routinely scrutinised by our Strategic Partnership Board.

### SCHOOLS

Strengthened information sharing agreements have been established with schools to capture information regarding attendance and exclusions. This is then reported to Senior Leadership.

### SEND VOICES SURVEY

Our parent care forum's annual SEND Survey remains an incredibly valuable resource for our partnership, providing an invaluable window of insight into the experience of children and families. The survey continued to benefit from a high response rate this year (294 responses) and was shared at various strategic level forums.



## 3.8 Our work to develop a shared understanding of need

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **HEALTH DATA DASHBOARD** - Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board is developing a health data dashboard, aligning key KPI's across the ICB. The ICB is working with the NHS England regional team to develop and test a minimum dataset that can be shared regionally and nationally, once it has been evaluated. The health data dashboard will aim to integrate into a local area partnership data dashboard to support joint strategic planning and progression towards a more integrated approach to commissioning. The project team includes local authority and provider trust representatives. Some initial co-production has taken place within the BOB footprint with the parent carer forums and the ICB will be looking to strengthen this to including SEND Voices Wokingham. The ICB and our provider trusts have requested that NHS England enables national datasets (Mental Health Services Data Set and Community Services Data Set) to display data at local authority level to enable us to have specific data to enhance our understanding of need.
- **LONGER-TERM FUTURE FORECASTING MODEL** - Building from our SEND Sufficiency Statement, the development of a longer-term future forecasting model is planned – seeking to more accurately project need based on current and past trends. This will support the partnership to ensure that future provision is sufficient and in alignment with the needs of local children and young people.

## 3.9 Commissioning services that meet need

### What we have been doing well

#### EVIDENCE BASED COMMISSIONING

We have identified that Wokingham is an outlier in the low number (and %) of pupils recorded as having Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Plans, as a % of pupils at SEND. This suggests a level of under-identification of need, and has informed the commissioning of a new Speech and Language outreach service.

#### JOINT COMMISSIONING

Our Children in Care team is jointly commissioned by the ICB and Local. The ICB continue to contribute to the cost of Wokingham SENDIASS to provide support and advice to children, young people and their families. The partnership secured increased investment in therapies, with an increase in funding for OT & S&LT secured through joint commissioning with Reading and West Berkshire.

#### SPECIALIST PROVISION

Oak Tree Special Free School opened its doors in September 2023 with 52 Wokingham Borough pupils with Autism and associated complex needs. The school will ultimately grow to serve 150 pupils serving needs across Wokingham and Reading.

#### MEETING CYP NEED

Examples of other new services that have recently been commissioned by the ICB to meet need, include: the 24 hour mental health crisis service, the Epilepsy Transition Nurse role, a specialist eating disorders service for young people with autism, a helpline for neurodiverse children (who do not need to be on the pathway to have access) and the new Health Reasonable Adjustments passports.

#### SEN RESOURCE BASE

As part of our commissioning strategy, our LAP continues to invest in the SEN Resource Base or SEN Unit provision embedded within mainstream schools with the launch of the newly refurbished premises for the Indigo Resource Base operated by Maiden Erlegh Trust (MET). This will grow to accommodate 25 secondary aged learners with autism. Two new primary bases for pupils with Autism opened in September 2024.



## 3.9 Commissioning services that meet need

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **FORWARD PLANNING** – Next year we plan to publish a 5-year forward plan for local special education provision, based on predictive analytics
- **SEND SUFFICIENCY STATEMENT** – this project will have a particular focus on post-16 provision over the next 12 months, including expanding local specialist provision to include Year 12 places, and further development of a post-16 SEND Hub.
- **SPECIALIST PROVISION** – We will continue to work with the DfE and partners regarding the timeline for our two new specialist free schools.
- **THERAPY REVIEW** - The ICB-led Berkshire West Therapy review will seek to reduce complexity of pathways and improve the timeliness of responses, and will be co-produced with stakeholders including parent carers and Wokingham Borough Council.
- **QUALITY ASSURANCE** - We will ensure rigorous commissioning, quality assurance & contract management of the Independent & Non-Maintained Special School (INMSS) sector.
- **SHORT BREAKS** - We are currently undertaking a comprehensive review of our Short Breaks offer, with phase 1 expected to conclude in October 2024. This will consider emerging need and will map out the current local area service provision – ensuring children and young people have the confidence to participate and benefit from local services.

# 3.10 Self-evaluation and driving improvement

## What we have been doing well

### SEND KPIs FOR AREA PARTNERSHIP SYSTEM LEADERS

This year we have developed an effective set of KPIs to enable strategic oversight for Area SEND improvement, which enable LAP system leaders more oversight of strengths and areas for improvement.

### EHCP QA FRAMEWORK

This year has seen the appointment of a dedicated SEND Quality and Practice Lead, who is leading on the implementation of our new SEND Quality Assurance Framework. Formally launched at the start of 2024, the framework is Partnership-owned, and has created a more rigorous and ambitious audit programme, which reports directly to our SEND Assurance Board. 34 Multi Agency Audits across Spring and Summer Terms in 2024, which has led to a programme of training being delivered focusing on improving social care and health statutory advice with EHCPs. (see Section 2)

### REGIONAL AUDIT WORK

Wokingham have also collaborated with two neighbouring LA's (Reading and West Berkshire) to hold joint multi agency audits on a termly basis. The LA's use the chairing authorities audit tool to audit the EHCP and AR paperwork for 3 CYP and upon completion of the audit, a report and findings are produced and sent to attendees. It includes SEND professionals from each LA, health and social care professionals as well as members of the parent/carer forum for each LA.

### Utilising service feedback to drive improvement:

BHFT collate outcomes data via "I Want Great Care", Experience Service Questionnaires. RBHFT also held a patient engagement event for YP with Epilepsy/ Neurodisability – to feedback on transition pathways - make departmental patient feedback tool more accessible to disabled children and their families, to support the development of services to improve outcomes for CYP with SEND.

### REGULAR PARTNERSHIP FORUMS

Quarterly reporting to the BOB SEND Board and an established Berkshire West Partnership Service Leads Meeting between providers and the DCO where service improvement is discussed. The LAP also hold monthly DSR review meetings to facilitate a coordinated multi-agency response to manage care and support effectively.

As a learning organisation, in January 2024 Wokingham LAP commissioned a peer support review from the LGA. The key findings have been fed into our strategic priorities over the last 12 months. Key actions are summarised below:



<b>Develop a Partnership Comms Plan</b>	SEND Service Communication Promise <b>now in place, and a broader Partnership strategy has been committed to (see 3.2)</b>
<b>Develop a Partnership Engagement Plan</b>	A review of our existing co-production charter is included as a priority within our new SEND & Inclusion Strategy, seeking to drive more co-production.
<b>Develop a Partnership data set</b>	Formal partnership KPI's are now agreed, and will be a standing item in all future Strategic Partnership Boards
<b>Review EHCP processes</b>	An end-to-end review of all processes is underway, and restructure has already started - creating a single point of contact for schools to improve communication and link up.

## 3.10 Self-evaluation and driving improvement - next steps

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **POWER BI** - We will continue to develop Power BI dashboards to provide live and accessible data picture, using this to improve our timeliness, areas of focus for support, and commissioning for the future.
- **LEARNING FROM WHAT WE HAVE FOUND THROUGH CASE AUDIT** - Building on current quarterly audit reports, we will produce an annual report detailing the findings of our SEND Audit Programme to shape and inform service development in partnership with children, young people and their families.
- **RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES** - Alongside an annual survey, termly feedback from families is submitted to our SEND Assurance Board. We are initiating a more rigorous “*you said, we did*” report so families know what has happened as a result of their feedback.
- **LDA Oversight Board** - The LDA board was set up as a response to the national policy for CETR and DSR’s published in 2023. Thematic reviews and performance data are shared at the multi agency LDA Oversight Board to support and inform future strategic plans.
- **TRIBUNALS** - Wokingham has experienced a recent increase in the rate of appeals made against its decision making this year, which we are keeping under close review. We are actively working with our legal partners to produce quarterly reporting, to further support our understanding of this trend.

## 3.11 Developing our practice environment and multi-agency working

### What we have been doing well

#### **INFORMATION SHARING**

Regular Multi Disciplinary Team meetings for pre-school children provide clear processes to support the sharing of information and working together during Team Around the Child Meetings.

#### **CO-LOCATION AND SHARED MEETINGS**

Clinics for children with complex health needs take place in schools, bringing together parents/carers, health professionals from RBH and BHFT and school staff. All children under 5 with complex health needs are offered a joint meeting with health staff from across health providers including RBH and BHFT.

#### **PARTNERSHIP TRAINING:**

Extensive SEND training programmes and guidance is in place for schools and other practitioners plus SENCO Networks / SENCO newsletter and plans for an annual conference. On demand training has been developed since the pandemic to facilitate access for practitioners. Training programme for schools includes training from Health, e.g. Children & Young People's Therapy Service. Tailored to their roles, practitioners within BHFT and RBHFT undertake EHCP training (provided by DCO and staff from SEN Team in Education). Health staff also undertake the mandatory Oliver McGowan training to ensure that children with autism are appropriately supported, and all health practitioners undertake safeguarding training.

**13**  
New SENCOs  
participating in the new  
SENCO Induction  
Programme



## 2.11 Developing our practice environment and multi-agency working

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

- **SHARED WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN** - As part of our recent SEND and Inclusion Strategy, we have pledged to develop a shared workforce development plan that provides comprehensive training and support to those working with children and young people with SEND and their families across our partnership. This will promote inclusion and will support CYP to achieve their full potential and to co-produce solutions.
- **LOCAL DECISION MAKING AND COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS** – Our SEND and Inclusion Strategy also pledges to consolidate and strengthen local decision making and commissioning arrangements to reflect the area partnership and ensure that all agencies are involved in agreeing and resourcing the best outcomes for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities.

## 2.12 Alternative Provision

### What we have been doing well

**REMODELING of AP:** We have recently remodelled our local Alternative Provision Offer in line with demand, with a focus on aligning local PRU provision with the SEND/AP reforms 3 tier model (see right) to enable inclusion in schools..

**DECISION MAKING:** An innovative new Multi-agency Including Clinic (MAIC) was launched in May 2024 as an empowering mechanism – offering a surgery approach to accessing advice, support and signposting for mainstream schools to effectively support a range of pupils, including those with SEND and those who may be at risk of permanent exclusion or long-term absence. Where external AP is recommended as a short-term intervention, outcomes and timeframes are agreed at this panel, and reviews return to the panel to measure impact and plan next steps with a view to reintegration back to school. To date, the clinic has brought together stakeholders to consider 36 of an initial 56 referrals made by local schools, leading to positive outcomes for children and young people – for example, 20 placements have already been made at Foundry College for medically vulnerable Year 10 students as a result of the clinic

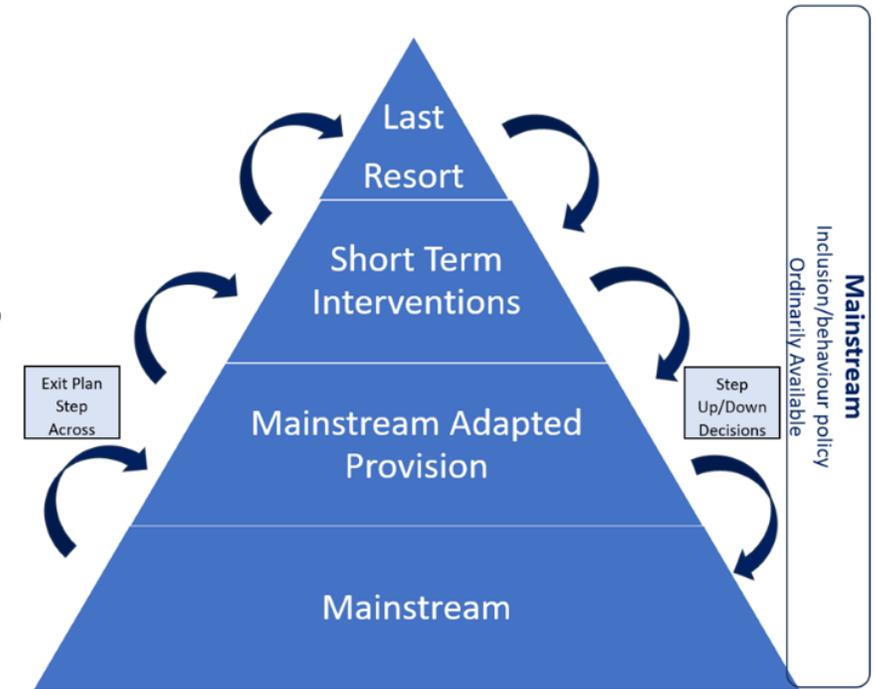
**CONTRACT MANAGEMENT:** we have recently developed a new contract document and individual placement agreement, which standardises the record of all individual intervention plans across providers – this was commenced in September, and we believe the measure will increase efficiency, consistency, quality control, transparency and equity.

**ENGAGEMENT:** An AP Providers Forum has been established where providers are invited to hear the latest developments and to input into the development of quality assurance practice and process. We plan to have at least two of these forums per academic year, in October and May.

**GOVERNANCE AND QA:** we have recently developed a board to quality assure AP provision, known as the SEND and Social Care Placements Quality Assurance Board. The board reviews outcomes of monitoring visits (including the monitoring of actions and improvement plans) and will make decisions on provider status. Due diligence processes have been established with all providers, with visits commencing during the first term of the 24/25 academic year – with these visits prioritised according to due diligence process. A termly multi-agency meeting is also scheduled to plan the detail of monitoring visits for each term – so visits can be tailored to any known issues or concerns, and thus maximising their impact.

**OVERSIGHT OF AP PROVISION:** We have developed a list of AP (both registered and unregistered) that are being commissioned by the LA and schools. Basic due diligence has been completed for all AP and a schedule of QA visits has been developed and are being undertaken. We are using this information to contribute to decision making on an individual placement level and exploring ways of sharing this with schools and other stakeholders.

### 3 Tier Alternative Provision Continuum



## 3.12 Alternative Provision

### Our plans to further improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people

**DYNAMIC PURCHASING SYSTEM** – Built on the AP Provider List that we have, we are working with schools to create a dynamic purchasing system taking into account the impacts on children and young people. We are currently in the process of developing an options appraisal, with specialist procurement input, to identify a way forward on this proposal.

**LONG-TERM SUFFICIENCY** - We are developing projections for Alternative Provision, alongside updates to our mainstream and SEND forecasts. These forecasts will form the basis of a wider conversation with the school community regarding the form that the Borough's Alternative Provision offer should take in the future, as well as the quantity/type of places that it should offer in dedicated provision. It is expected that this process will be complete by March 2025, with a view to including the strategy for this area of provision within the 2025/26 School Organisation Plan.

**HEALTH OVERSIGHT** - Work is underway in the ICB involving senior managers and safeguarding leads to ensure that the oversight of health services includes children in alternative provision and embedded in reporting to drive improvements across the LAP. E.g health needs of CiC, dental, hearing and eye tests in residential settings