

Introduction

1. There are 5 outcomes that drive the Children and Young People’ Plan for Buckinghamshire, 2014-2018. They are:

- Children and young people are safe
- Children and young people live fulfilling lives
- Children and young people are healthy
- Children and young people reach their potential in education and other aspects of their lives.
- Children, young people and families are resilient and build their own solutions

2. The Children and Young People’s Plan has 4 Priority areas:

1. Keep children and young people safe and in their families wherever possible.
2. Enable and support children, young people, parents and carers to overcome the challenges they may face.
3. Improve children and young people’s health and well-being
4. Provide opportunities for children and young people to realise their full potential

A Draft Vision for the SEND Strategy

Our vision for the future for Buckinghamshire children with SEN and disabilities, is that they will:

- Be able to attend their local early education setting, school and college, and develop as an included and integrated member of their local community
- Follow a smooth pathway through their education, supported by teachers and others with expertise and confidence and who will have high expectations of their learning potential
- Be supported and assessed by high quality professionals who listen carefully to their views, and those of their parents, and involve them in decisions about their lives and learning
- Receive a well-planned, complete and appropriately individualised education
- Be happy, feel confident, feel welcome and valued at school and make the best progress possible
- Be successful as an adult, living independently or with support, and engaging in purposeful and rewarding activity, in employment, positive and voluntary activities or work experience

3. We have made sure that our suggested Vision reflects what people have told us during the Review, and that it gives everyone a Vision to aim for. We would like to know what you think, and if you have any other suggestions.

Priorities for Improvement

1. To help us to achieve our Vision we know that we need to oversee and administer a SEND pathway that will ensure:
 - (i) Strong and strategic leadership of SEND system by the Local Authority, to link:
 - Accountability by schools and settings for provision made for children with SEND
 - the management of the statutory SEND process and related decision making
 - the deployment, co-ordination and performance management of specialist education fieldwork services
 - the central SEND team
 - accountability by schools, settings, Local Authority funded services for defined areas of SEND and high needs funding
 - (ii) A greater focus on planning and securing specialist educational places for those children with the most severe and complex needs
 - (iii) Increased capacity, confidence and competence for SEND in mainstream settings
 - (iv) Specialist provision is focused on the children with the most significant and complex needs.
 - (v) Developing a better shared understanding of the relationship between our High Needs Block, current demands and volume and need

4. We have developed some draft Improvement Priorities. The Review has shown that we need to do some things better and some things differently. We have suggested 8 Improvement Priorities. They are:

Children, young people and families	
Priority 1	Enhance the experiences of families, children and young people of the statutory SEND processes.
Developing provision and supporting Schools and Settings	
Priority 2	Develop greater confidence, competence and skills in mainstream settings, schools and academies, providing stronger leadership and support for SENCOs and others, across schools and settings.
Priority 3	Refocus specialist SEND provision, such as special schools and Resourced Provisions, on those children with the most significant and complex SEND.
Priority 4	Improve the leadership, co-ordination, deployment and collaborative working of specialist SEND specialist teaching, advisory and educational psychology services.
Planning ahead	
Priority 5	Develop and implement improved approaches to planning and securing specialist educational places for those children with the most significant and complex needs.
Strategic Leadership and Management	
Priority 6	Strengthen the management of the statutory SEND processes
Priority 7	Develop improved approaches to monitoring and accountability, especially in relation to the use and impact of High Needs funding in schools and other educational settings.
Priority 8	Develop a better shared understanding of the relationship between

	High Needs funding, current demands and volume and need.

So what will happen for each Improvement Priority?

5. Priority 1

Enhance the experiences of families, children and young people of the statutory SEND processes.

We will:

- Make sure that we keep in better contact with parents and young people, after they have contacted us. We will let them know what will happen next. If we can't do it by the time we said, we will let them know so that they are not waiting and wondering.
- Do much better at making sure that someone will call back within 24 hours of a phone call.
- Work with SENCOs so that they feel more confident about their role in Transfer Reviews and annual Reviews.

6. Priority 2

Develop greater confidence, competence and skills in mainstream settings, schools and academies, providing stronger leadership and support for SENCOs and others, across schools and settings.

We will:

- Convene a SENDCO advisory group to work with us.
- Encourage all mainstream schools to undertake a self-review of their arrangements for SEND, using an established and successful SEND framework.
- Target specialist SEN services to work directly with mainstream schools to ensure that provision for children and young people at SEND support is carefully planned and individualised, and that it follows the graduated approach.
- Ensure specialist services support children and young people, where necessary and that an ECHP is not a requirement of support.
- Monitor the provision of specialist support to individual schools and settings to evaluate its impact, and consider the school's / setting's response
- Be more proactive at Phase Transfer so that transition plans become a required process between the old and the new mainstream settings

7. Priority 3

Refocus specialist SEND provision, such as special schools and Resourced Provisions, on those children with the most significant and complex SEND.

We will:

- Strengthen our decision making, so that the places that we have in special schools or Resourced Provisions, are allocated to the pupils with the most significant needs.
- Target specialist SEN services where parents of children with less complex needs may experience a loss of confidence in their child's mainstream school.
- Work with special school leaders to explore the implications of extending the complexity of needs that their schools may provide for
- Incrementally develop specialist provision to provide for their localities, reducing unnecessary time spent in journeys to school and the consequent cost
- Undertake a short review of Resourced Provisions to consider what facilities and staff experience may be required to ensure that the RP provision is making the level of specialist provision required
- Undertake a forensic analysis of current out of authority placements, to consider the implications of exploring options for returning to locally based education
- Develop an improved approach to considering requests for specialist placements, using an options appraisal and costing methodology, re-focusing attention on locally based mainstream provision wherever possible and appropriate
- Undertake a review of residential provision to consider what provision is required.

8. Priority 4

Improve the co-ordination, leadership, deployment and collaborative working of specialist SEND specialist teaching, advisory and educational psychology services.

We will:

- Introduce new approaches so that the allocation of all specialist SEND support to schools and settings is better co-ordinated and achieves better value for money
- Develop a "Support around the school" approach so that those schools that have sought more EHC assessments, plans or extra funding than others are able to be supported to develop improved arrangements at SEN support
- Reduce the very significant increases in the number of EHC assessments, so that skilled specialist advisory and educational psychology support, is available to work with schools and settings to support the majority of children and young people with SEND who do not have statements or EHC Plans, and are at SEN support.

- Put in place a co-ordinated leadership structure for all SEND fieldwork services, that makes best use of available resources and which is available for children and young people both with and without statements and EHC Plans or specific diagnoses.
- Ensure that specialist teachers have enhanced skills and experience and can add value to the skills already in place in many mainstream settings
- Ensure that there are close links with the administration of the statutory SEND processes, decision making and the role and function of specialist teachers and educational psychologists

9. Priority 5

We will:

Develop and implement improved approaches to planning and securing specialist educational places for those children with the most significant and complex needs.

- Make better use of the annual review process and annual review reports to predict potential requests for a change in the type of school from mainstream to special school
- Use data from previous years and cohort size to plan ahead and predict reductions or potential increases in demand for specialist provision through a 5 year special school place planning strategy.
- Improve casework management, through drawing on fieldwork intelligence of support services and identifying early indications of parental or school views that a move to specialist provision may be being considered
- Monitor the percentage of year cohorts attending specialist provision, and where other in-year places are unavailable, outlining coherent plans in place to support locally available alternatives
- Develop robust financial plans to demonstrate planned use for places in Buckinghamshire special schools, using these plans as the basis for discussion with any other authority that may seek increased use of Buckinghamshire specialist provision
- Ensure that there are robust and structured links between SEN officers and school funding officers in relation to the financial implications of placement trends

10. Priority 6

Strengthen the management of the statutory SEND processes

We will:

- Review the way in which we make decisions about:
 - When to carry out an EHC assessment
 - When to issue an EHC Plan
 - What school or setting to name on the EHC Plan
 - What financial support will be provided to the school or setting
 - When we oppose SEN appeals and when we concede them
 - When we make amendments following annual review and when we do not

- Embed the description of the provision that schools and settings should make from within their own budgets, using the Graduated Response as a vehicle to support this, and reviewing its impact after 6 months

- Introduce more rigour into decision making, exploring new approaches to moderation in the current context of very large numbers of requests.

11. Priority 7

Develop improved approaches to monitoring and accountability, especially in relation to the use and impact of High Needs funding in schools and other educational settings.

We will:

- Review the way in which top-up values are allocated, to consider approaches that would:
 - move away from describing top-ups for mainstream by teaching assistant hours,
 - reduce the number of top-up bands to create more stability, less bureaucracy and more flexibility at school / setting level
 - allocate funding values that are compatible with salary ranges in different types of settings

- Review widespread approaches that allocate enhanced pupil level funding to schools for pupils without EHC Plans, undertaking a thorough audit of a sample of schools and settings

- Refocus the allocation of High Needs funding for pupils without statements or EHC Plans in the way that EFA guidance expects such a system to operate.

- Linking with Priority 2, embed the use of resources within a tool to support schools and settings evaluate their effectiveness in making SEN provision for children at SEN Support and with statements / EHC Plans

12. Priority 8

Develop a better shared understanding of the relationship between High Needs funding, current demands and volume and need.

We will:

- Establish a new approach to gathering and analysing SEND data and trends, drawing on the examples in the report of the SEND Review
- Publish data on a regular (at least) annual basis, explaining trends in the statutory process and financial implications, and highlighting any particular pressure points
- Put in place a framework of Performance Indicators and targets, and monitor these on a monthly basis
- Address any perverse financial and data trends
- Make regular reports to the Service Director – Education, the SEND Board and the Schools Forum to track the progress of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy

CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

Q1 Do you think that the draft Vision for the SEND Strategy is complete? (Y/N/DK)

Q2 Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve the Vision?

Q3 Do you agree that the 8 Priorities cover the most important things we should try to improve?

(Y/N/DK)

Q4 Do you have any suggestions for Priorities that we have missed that we need to improve?

Q5 Please write any comments you have about the individual Priorities below. (The box will expand as you write)

Priority	Comments
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Q6 Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for the time you have spent in telling us your views.

Please send your comments to us by