



Buckinghamshire Council Children's & Education Select Committee

Agenda

Date: Thursday 11 November 2021

Time: 2.00 pm

Venue: The Paralympic Room, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, HP19 8FF

Membership: Bull, Williams, Wilson, P Birchley (Chairman), S Adoh, K Bates, D Blamires, A Collingwood, M Dormer, R Gaster, N Hussain, S James, C Jones, S Kayani, R Matthews, A Osibogun, D Summers and P Turner

Agenda Item	Time	Page No
1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE		
2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST		
3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 th September 2021.		5 - 10
4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS The agenda item "Public Questions" is an opportunity for people who live, work or study in Buckinghamshire to put a question to a Select Committee. The Committee will hear from members of the public who have submitted questions in advance relating to items on the agenda. The Cabinet Member, relevant key partners and responsible officers will be invited to respond. Further information on how to register can be found here: https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/your-council/getinvolved-with-council-decisions/select-committees/ One question has been received as attached and will be responded to at the meeting.	14:05	11 - 12
5 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE	14:15	
6 SEND IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY The Committee will consider a report outlining the Council's SEND	14:20	13 - 28

Improvement Journey, setting the context of improvement in relation to the overarching SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the local SEND landscape. The report also details the improvement priorities and progress made against them as captured by the SEND Improvement Plan. Details of the governance structure ensuring oversight, scrutiny and challenge to the journey is also detailed in the report as is information relating to the Quality Care Commission/Ofsted SEND inspection that is expected within the next six months and activity underway in preparation for that inspection.

Contributors:

Richard Nash, Corporate Director – Children’s Services

Simon James, Service Director – Education

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| 7 | SEND EDUCATION SUFFICIENCY
The Committee will consider a report providing an overview of the issues relating to the sufficiency of educational placements for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It outlines the issues and headline data that informed the development of the draft SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy, and details the steps taken to publicly consult on 6 proposals to meet the expected demand over the coming 5 years. The report summarises the outcome of the consultation and next steps. These next steps include working with Buckinghamshire’s parent/carer forum and existing schools and colleges to develop new or different provision, as well as exploring the feasibility of new building projects to meet growing demand.

Contributors:

Richard Nash, Corporate Director Children’s Services

Simon James, Service Director - Education | 15:20 | 29 - 88 |
| 8 | WORK PROGRAMME
The Committee will receive the work programme for the council year 2021-2022. | 16:00 | 89 - 90 |
| 9 | DATE OF NEXT MEETING
The next meeting of the Children’s and Education Select Committee will be held on 20 th January 2021 at 2.00 p.m. at The Gateway, Buckinghamshire Council. | 16:10 | |

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

For further information please contact: Katie Dover on 01296 531339, email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

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Agenda Item 3
Buckinghamshire Council
Children's & Education Select
Committee

Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN'S & EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2021 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 3.30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

K Bates, P Birchley, D Blamires, M Dormer, S Kayani, R Matthews, A Osibogun and D Summers

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jones, R Nash, Mr S James, G Drawmer and E Biggs

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Collingwood, Gaster, Jones and Turner.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Matthews – School Governor and Volunteer at a Charity “Transitions UK”

Councillor Bates – Chair of Governors

Councillor Kayani – On the Senior Leadership Team of Bourne End Academy and Chair of the Dyspraxia Foundation

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th June were reviewed.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Select Committee meeting held on 24th June be AGREED as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman noted the following:

- (i) Corporate Parenting training would be available on 10th September and that all Councillors were welcome to attend.
- (ii) An agenda working group had been held prior to this committee meeting to have an initial discussion around the items being reported to this meeting.
- (iii) That invitations had been extended to the Catholic and Church of England diocese for a representative from each to become co-optees on this committee. The Chairman also noted that the process of inviting nominations for parent governor co-optees from

the primary, secondary and special school sectors was underway.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

5 EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

Councillor Birchley welcomed the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Mrs Anita Cranmer, Mr Richard Nash, Corporate Director for Children's Services, Mr Simon James, Service Director, Education and Mr Gareth Drawmer, Head of Achievement and Learning to the meeting. In addition they were joined by Dr Tim James, Principal Psychologist and Ms Elizabeth Biggs, Public Health Principal.

Councillor Cranmer thanked the Select Committee for bringing this report on emotional health in schools to the committee, noting that this was an extremely important subject particularly as it had been made more critical by the Covid-19 pandemic. This report focussed on the work undertaken by schools but it was noted that many agencies contributed to the emotional support of children.

There had been many challenges for Buckinghamshire children during the lockdown periods, and as restrictions were lifted it was hoped that children would return to more normality. Work to support children during the pandemic had been both broad and extensive. Having time away from school was noted to be detrimental to children and the service had put in place a wide range of programmes to assist children.

Richard Nash thanked Elizabeth Biggs, Gareth Drawmer and Dr Tim James for their work. It was noted that the service had been pro-active in their support of schools during the pandemic.

Simon James considered the work in schools and with partner agencies to meet the educational and emotional needs of children in schools. Both current and future work was detailed. The pandemic had led to new issues and made existing issues worse. 1 in 6 children has had emotional issues, exacerbated by school closures. Mr James outlined the current range of support programmes for schools including mental health support teams, provision of senior mental health leads, a robust return to school programme, the Anna Freud Centre link programme, and in-school training. It was noted that specific support to schools had been provided with regards to managing critical incidents. A new group has been set up to co-ordinate this support activity with four areas of focus; evidence based, work monitored, right support at the right time and evaluation of all new programmes. The outcomes of this work were outlined including how to refer to agencies, pupils provided with early support and staff support for own emotional needs.

In response to a question, Simon James noted that during the pandemic the partnership with schools had strengthened and the work detailed in the report would be for the longer term. The emotional health agenda was now mainstream and prioritised in schools. Dr Jones noted that communication links with schools which were initiated during the pandemic had aided the implementation of programmes such as senior leads for mental health in schools which would be rolled out nationally and continued at a strategic level. School liaison groups now had a framework which would continue to be used.

Simon James noted that needs analysis information was reported into the department, and live intelligence was gained weekly from both headteachers and the liaison groups and these elements aided targeting support work. One key area was that of transitions; both coming into school from early years settings and moving into year 7.

In relation to closures, public health advice would be sought in the first instance, followed by work with schools. This built on the bank of learning from the different lockdown periods. All schools had contingency plans in place. The laptop programme had been rolled out successfully to those that were most in need and would continue to do so should working from home become necessary again.

In response to transitions, Simon James noted that there are additional needs if a child transitions into a school mid-year. Extra help was offered to these children such as catch up groups or professional help. Early years providers had reported some differences to play behaviour, delays in being ready for school and differences based on parental capacity during lockdown. Schools were adapting their early years curriculum to ensure that the children moved through the curriculum in the most appropriate way.

Richard Nash noted the impact of Covid-19 on teachers and school staff and that their work had changed dramatically. Support for staff was focussed for the first time on headteachers with each headteacher offered specific support. Various opportunities were in place for headteachers to gain coaching and share information. Well-being return had focussed on teacher well-being as well as pupil wellbeing. The “Early Career” teacher programme now gave two years for additional time outside the classroom to support their development as opposed to one year offered previously. Headteacher huddles enabled the essential sharing of information between different headteachers. In addition, a wellbeing helpline had been set up for school leaders with an offer of coaching on a half-termly basis.

Families could choose to access other agencies as appropriate, often via health services. The family support service was noted to be part of the early help offer for families identified by professionals. Every family would be linked into health and education services; many factors determined how and which services they could access.

Action: The Chairman requested that details of the Oxwell survey could be reported back to the committee. Liz Biggs noted that this was the second year this had been undertaken, with 5,000 pupils completing it this year.

It was RESOLVED that:

- (i) the Chairman write a letter to all schools in Buckinghamshire to thank their staff for their excellent dedication to their work during the pandemic to support pupils.
- (ii) Councillors who act as school governors, become involved in supporting the emotional wellbeing agenda in schools and
- (iii) A letter requesting clarity with regards to the exam process for schools in 2022 be sent to Nadhim Zahawi MP at the Department of Education.

The Chairman thanked all the Officers for their extensive work in supporting the pupils of the county.

6 CLOSING THE ATTAINMENT GAP IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Chairman noted that Buckinghamshire was known for its high standards of education but

closing the attainment gap for those disadvantaged was a priority for the service.

Councillor Cranmer reported this was a long-standing issue, and that the Covid pandemic had made the situation worse. The report gave details of the size of the gap in the different age groups and the actions being taken to close it. The strengthening of the partnership working between schools and the council during the pandemic was very positive. The service would continue to support schools to help children achieve their potential.

Richard Nash noted that the report highlights that the service is in a good place to narrow the gap. The Buckinghamshire Challenge Board noted that the council has been working on reducing the gap for several years.

Simon James reported that the focus was on the attainment gap between the disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children in Buckinghamshire over the assessed points of key stage 2, GCSE stage and early years. Data was available up to 2019 and some indicative data was available for 2020. Headteachers and local authority officers and were working well collaboratively on the Buckinghamshire Challenge Board. The board had agreed five evidence-based approaches to target work to the most in-need pupils, focussing on inclusive teaching, issue assessment and the evaluation of intervention. Five outcomes were focussed on namely; the maintenance of the gap from 2019, a target of at least 90 % of schools to access training, 100% of schools to access to focus sessions, aiming for a reduction in the gap of ½% by 2023 across all age groups and to support schools further over the next few years.

The gap slightly narrows as children become older, illustrating how interventions benefit the children.

In response to a question, it was noted that school attendance was good across the pandemic and where attendance is lower than should be, the attendance team are on hand to encourage parents to return children to school. Schools are keen to persist in getting the children in school. There are 101 children who are electively home schooled in the county.

Gareth Drawmer noted the teams on-going hard work to increase attendance. Many schools develop their own resources. Sanctions are in place if required. The team worked closely with the Department of Education for example on the issue of children who went abroad last March and have not returned to school here as yet.

A Member enquired as to how the department directs attention to those more highly disadvantaged and it was noted that the definition of disadvantaged was those looked after by the local authority, those adopted and those accessing free school meals. 38% of children were in the BME category and 18% were children whose first language was not English. The latter can access extra support for the language issue.

Focus schools were defined by three criteria across the range of schools. The “Quality First Teaching” programme aimed to empower teachers to be the best they could. It also assessed children holistically and reassessed them further on. Another part of the work was around regulated self-learning. A teaching school hub was run by Dr Challoners with responsibility to increase standards across the system. As a result of the good partnership working with schools, communication had increased and best practice was shared.

Action: to bring information back to committee on how the Quality First Project is working as part of the data set on the Education Standards report.

A significant training offer was being made with the Education Endowment Foundation. The main focus was on delivering the best quality teaching in the classroom. Many conferences had been run over the last year online with high attendance levels. These included looking at peer-to

-peer working and best practice.

The Chairman thanked the Officers and requested a report back to committee on the work of the Buckinghamshire Challenge Board and for those on universal funding and work of Dr Challenors.

7 WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022

The Senior Scrutiny Officer introduced the Select Committee's work programme for the forthcoming year.

It was noted that a piece of work could be chosen for a more in-depth investigation, via either a rapid review group or a more in-depth inquiry.

Suggestions for further in-depth work would be taken into consideration in due course. It was noted that the deadline for receiving public questions to the committee was the day upon which the agenda was published. It was suggested that the work programme should be attached to the published minutes to enable the public to have an opportunity to see which items would come to which meeting.

The outcomes of the SEND consultation would be reported back to the November committee. A member of FACT Bucks could be invited to the committee to illustrate the parents' position within this agenda.

The Chairman requested that committee members come back to herself and the Senior Scrutiny Officer with any other ideas.

RESOLVED that

(i) the recruitment and retention of social workers could be the subject of a rapid review group and

(ii) The Educations Standards report would be added to the forward work programme and would include feedback from the Buckinghamshire Challenge Board.

8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Select Committee would be Thursday 11th November 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

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Children's and Education Select Committee – 11 November 2021

Agenda Item 4 – Public Questions

1. (i) *Does Buckinghamshire Council have any plans to implement an EHC Hub a digital platform supporting engagement, contributions and collaboration on EHC assessments, plans and reviews. Parents/guardians, staff and professionals can spend considerable periods of time chasing information which could be accessed online providing up to date information to all parties.*
(ii) *Are there staff recruitment and/or retention issues within the SEN department and associated support services which causes delay to statutory timescales.*

Sarah Hodges

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Report to Children's and Education Select Committee

Date:	11 November 2021
Reference number:	n/a
Title:	SEND Improvement Journey
Relevant councillor(s):	Anita Cranmer, Julie Ward
Author and/or contact officer:	Simon James, Director, Education
Ward(s) affected:	none specific

1. Executive summary

1.1 This paper:

- sets the context of improvement in relation to our overarching SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the local SEND landscape
- details the improvement priorities (including preparation for adulthood) and the progress made against them, as captured in our SEND Improvement Plan
- describes the governance structure that ensures oversight, scrutiny and challenge
- references the Care Quality Commission/Ofsted SEND inspection that is expected within the next 6 months and our inspection readiness activity.

2. Content of report

Context

- 2.1 The Children and Families Act (2014) outlined new duties for local authorities on how services and support are delivered for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (known as the SEND reforms).

Key features of the reforms are:

- the change from Statements of Special Educational Need to more holistic Education, Health and Care Plans

- a broadening of the age range of those children and young people covered by the Act, from 2 – 19 to 0 – 25 years old
- an increased focus on a child centred approach and co-production with families and professionals
- the development of the Local Offer, a free accessible hub bringing together all the information and services that might be useful to children and young people with SEND and their families.
- the opportunity for young people to make their own decisions about their future once they turn 16 if they choose to do so, instead of the parent/carers
- an increased emphasis on helping children and young people to prepare for adulthood (from year 9 upwards) so they have high aspirations and can feel confident about their futures and the transition to adulthood and independence.

2.2 The SEND Code of Practice (2015) provides further information on the implementation of the new duties.

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/442423/SEND-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years-2015.pdf)

2.3 In Buckinghamshire there has been significant activity to implement the reforms. SEND is a key priority across the Council; leadership is strong and is actively driving change across education, health and social care. Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks, the parent/carer forum play a key role in ensuring the voice of children and families is heard. They are pro-active and committed to working with teams and Services as a “critical friend” to help steer and support improvements that will make a real difference to children and young people with SEND and improve their experience in Buckinghamshire.

2.4 A new 3-year Buckinghamshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy was published in January 2020 following a period of engagement and co-production with stakeholders.

<https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/media/56587/send-inclusion-strategy-buckinghamshire.pdf>

2.5 The strategy sets out the collective ambition for children and young people with SEND and is aligned with the 4 Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes as defined in the SEND Code of Practice (section 7.38).

“Preparing for adulthood means preparing for:

- *higher education and/or employment – this includes exploring different employment options, such as support for becoming self-employed and help from supported employment agencies*

- *independent living – this means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have, their accommodation and living arrangements, including supported living*
- *participating in society, including having friends and supportive relationships, and participating in, and contributing to, the local community*
- *being as healthy as possible in adult life.”*

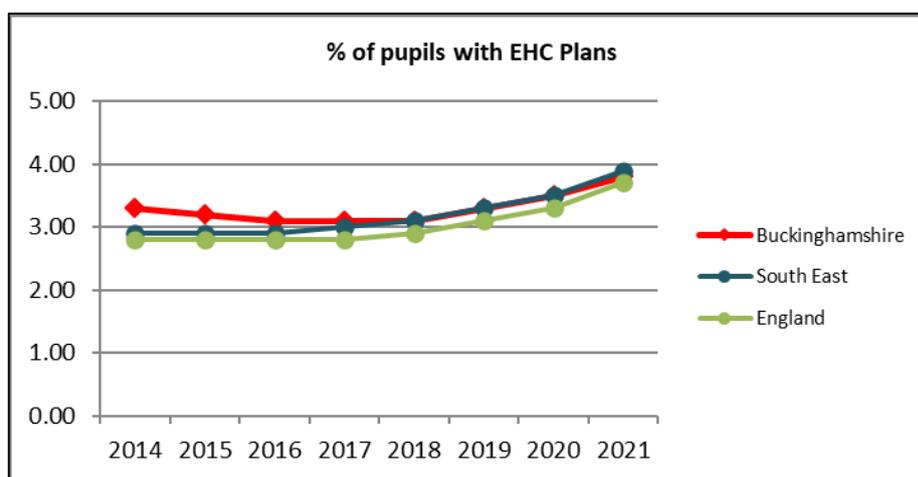
The Buckinghamshire SEND landscape

2.6 The Children and Families Act (2014) identifies two distinct categories for children with SEND, following a ‘graduated response’ to identification of needs and provision:

- 1) Children and young people in receipt of SEN Support; these children make up the majority of the SEND cohort and are mainly provided for within the SEND element of schools’ delegated budgets.
- 2) Children and young people with a higher level of need who require a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan, maintained by the Local Authority, usually with additional funding provided to the school to meet provision requirements.

2.7 In Buckinghamshire:

- Fewer pupils in Buckinghamshire schools (10.1% or 8559 children) are registered to receive SEN Support than the national average (12.2%) (Jan 2021 school census).
- More pupils in Buckinghamshire schools have an EHCP (3.8%) compared to the national average (3.7%) (Jan 2021 school census).
- There were 4910 EHCPs maintained by Buckinghamshire in January 2021, an increase of 315 (6.9%) from the previous year (SEN2 Return Jan 2021). The rate of increase is slowing in comparison to other local authority areas; since 2014 the number of statements/EHCPs in Buckinghamshire has increased by 55.4% compared to 81.6% across England and 92.2% within our statistical neighbour group. Currently, there are 5265 children with EHCPs maintained by Buckinghamshire (11 October 2021).



- The number of pupils with EHCPs with a primary need of Autism has increased significantly (+115%) in Buckinghamshire since 2015. Those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs have also increased considerably (+58%). There is also significant growth in areas of complex need (profound and multiple learning disabilities 105% and multi-sensory impairment 180%). Although these latter groups make up a smaller population overall, they are a cohort that require a high level of specialist provision.

Number of children and young people by primary need

Primary need	Mar 201	Mar 2017	Mar 2018	Mar 201	Mar 2020	Mar 2021	% change from 2015
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	715	868	1008	116	1339	1539	↑ 115%
Hearing Impairment	84	85	89	92	96	98	↑ 17%
Moderate Learning Difficulties	646	648	643	731	787	731	↑ 13%
Multi-Sensory Impairment	10	12	16	21	22	28	↑ 180%
Physical Difficulties	269	276	265	280	304	289	↑ 7%
Profound and Multiple	39	43	48	52	61	80	↑ 105%
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	463	492	483	588	692	730	↑ 58%
Severe Learning Difficulties	124	128	153	154	169	157	↑ 27%
Specific Learning Difficulties	146	127	113	139	180	190	↑ 30%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	822	836	781	871	970	1053	↑ 28%
Visual Impairment	55	58	62	66	73	84	↑ 53%
Not Recorded / Other	63	35	78	18	32	52	↓ 17%
Total	343	3608	3739	417	4725	5031	↑ 46%

- 35.1% of the children and young people with an EHCP issued by Buckinghamshire attend maintained or academy special schools, which is broadly in line with the national average of 35.8% (Jan 2021).
- 42.0% of children in Buckinghamshire with EHCPs are supported in a mainstream school compared with 39.9% nationally, which is above the national average. However, Buckinghamshire (14.3%) is below the national average (16.7%) for those attending mainstream Further Education settings. (Jan 2021).
- 4.6% of children in Buckinghamshire with EHCPs are supported in a mainstream school with an Additionally Resourced Provision (where they spend part of their day) compared with 4.8% nationally (Jan 2021).
- 69% of children attending independent or non-maintained special schools have Autism (40%), SEMH (18%) or SLCN (11%) recorded as their primary areas of need (Jan 2021).
- Buckinghamshire's recorded combined Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) and Unknown data for 2020/21 was 7%, which has reduced by 3.2% since 2019/20. Buckinghamshire NEET with SEND in year 12 and 13 is 11.3%, increasing from 10.3% in 2019/20.
- Buckinghamshire has 6.2% of adults with a learning disability in paid employment, as reported by NHS digital for the latest statutory return for 2019/20. This is slightly below the average of 6.9% for the South East.
- A number of children with SEND are also receiving support from Early Help services or are open to Social Care.

Number of Children & Young People with a Maintained EHC Plan at 14th January 2021, by Social Care Involvement

Children and Young People with a maintained Statement/ EHC Plan who were:											
Receiving an Early Help		Receiving services as a Child in Need		Subject to a Child Protection Plan		Looked After (LAC)				Care Leavers	
						All		S20			
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
87	1.8%	370	7.5%	45	0.9%	104	2.1%	27	0.5%	30	0.6%

Proportion of Children & Young People with a Statement/ EHC Plan with each Social Care Involvement- Trend

Receiving an Early Help Intervention						Receiving services as a Child in Need (CIN)						Subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP)					
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend
1.1%	#N/A	1.6%	2.6%	1.8%		12.9%	14.4%	13.4%	12.5%	7.5%		1.5%	1.6%	0.9%	1.3%	0.9%	

Looked After (LAC) - All						Looked After (LAC) - S20						Care Leavers					
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Trend
1.8%	1.7%	2.0%	2.2%	2.1%		0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%	0.5%		0.4%	#N/A	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%	

SEND improvement

- 2.8 Across Education, Health and Social Care there is a shared commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- 2.9 A comprehensive self-evaluation informed the development of our overarching SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-23 and this has enabled us to clearly identify where our strengths lie, and the areas we need to develop. A multi-agency Local Area SEND Improvement Plan details specific actions that are being taken against 8 priorities. <https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/media/56586/send-improvement-plan-buckinghamshire.pdf>

Priority 1: SEND Support

- 2.10 The number of pupils identified to receive SEN Support is currently below that of our statistical neighbours and national comparators (10.1% in Buckinghamshire, compared to 12.2 nationally [SEN 2 Jan 21]). This suggests we may not be identifying all pupils who have additional needs in a timely enough way.
- 2.11 A range of actions have already been completed. We have:
- co-produced an Ordinarily Available Provision document that provides guidance to settings, families and professionals about the type and level of support that is available to children and young people as part of the graduated approach to meeting needs. This comprehensive document was well received by schools and other settings but is yet to be fully embedded.
 - co-produced a SEN Support Toolkit which provides schools and settings with practical information on how they can support children proactively at the earliest stage, while also working alongside their families.
 - launched a new Educational Psychology SEN Support offer which aims to support schools in identifying needs and addressing them sooner as part of an early intervention approach.
- 2.12 Further work is required in this area including:
- working to increase the number of Level 3 qualified SEN Coordinators (SENCOs) in early years settings to ensure needs can be identified at the earliest stage, and to raise awareness across all schools and settings of the importance of early identification and the graduated approach.
 - reviewing the way specialist teaching services are delivered. A public consultation launched on 8 November to seek views of families and other stakeholders. The proposed new approach would help to ensure schools and other settings can be supported to identify needs at the earliest stage.
 - further embedding Ordinarily Available Provision and the SEN Support Toolkit.

Priority 2: Sufficiency; Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

- 2.13 The number of children and young people with Autism or Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs has increased significantly in Buckinghamshire, reflecting a national trend. It is challenging currently to ensure these children have the most appropriate educational placement to support their learning. A range of actions have already been completed. We have:
- publicly consulted on a new 5-year SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy. This aims to ensure there are enough suitable placements in Buckinghamshire to meet forecasted demand.
 - developed autism friendly standards for mainstream primary schools to work towards. Special School head teachers will be auditing a sample of mainstream primary schools during this academic year to identify achievements and offer support.
 - strengthened the monitoring of children and young people who do not have an educational placement, including those known to Social Care. Plans for this particularly vulnerable cohort are now only ceased following discussion and agreement with the virtual school.
- 2.14 Further work is required in this area including:
- developing a Buckinghamshire 'All Age Autism' strategy (aiming for summer 22 for publication) with alignment to national strategy.
 - finalising the SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy so it can be published in January 2022.

Priority 3: Preparation for Adulthood (PFA)

- 2.15 It is important that all young people with SEND are prepared for adulthood from year 9 onwards, in line with the SEND Code of Practice, 2015. This means supporting them to develop their skills, knowledge and abilities to enable them to make a smooth transition into adult life, whatever that may look like for them. A range of actions have already been completed. We have:
- developed links within Buckinghamshire's PHSE network to ensure that life skills and preparation for adulthood is included within these sessions in the Spring term 2022.
 - delivered our second Shout Out for SEND Conference (13 October 2021) which was attended by 51 young people from 18 Buckinghamshire schools. The conference was planned with young people from our SEND youth forum

and was co-hosted with them. Interactive workshops were delivered by a range of organisations on subjects including apprenticeships, volunteering, work experience and supported internships. Young people shared their lived experience of their own transitions aimed to inspire their younger peers:

“A few years ago, perhaps like some of you, I was ashamed of the labels I was given. Perhaps like some of you too, I hated school. I remember getting up each morning going into an environment that was a sensory nightmare After college, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do so I decided to take a gap year. During this time, I eventually realised that there was a need for disabled children and young people to feel less alone, so I decided to set up an Instagram account where I documented my experiences as an autistic adult existing in a world that wasn’t built for people like me. It is powerful that people are willing to listen to my voice and shows how much of a need there is for disabled voices to be heard. More recently, I have just started university, studying education studies, and am hoping that I can use my experiences to help others. I want to leave you with one message and that is, you are capable of building the life that you imagine for yourselves, whatever that looks like and that things always get better no matter how hard they initially seem.” (Louise, aged 19)

Following the conference, animated clips of the post 16 pathways will be created and published on Buckinghamshire’s Local Offer. These are intended to explain the range of options open to young people with SEND and encourage them to take the next step. A road show is now being planned to further disseminate the learning to a wider audience.

- offered supported internships linking with 9 employers. This provides opportunities for young people with SEND to have real employment experience especially in the fields of hospitality and healthcare, housekeeping and cleaning. 70% of internships from this programme led to meaningful employment in 2020. Stony Dean Special School also provide supported internships and independent travel training to their pupils, leading to meaningful employment for their students.
- secured additional mental health funding for 2 transition posts to work with young people to facilitate and support them to access adult mental health services and support embedding the transition process. Through 2021/22 the focus will be young people known to social care and those with SEND.

2.16 Further work is required in this area including:

- continuing to work with Bucks Skills Hub to align young people’s career guidance at year 9 with the Annual Review of their Education, Health and Care

Plan. This will ensure young people's aspirations are feeding into their Plans and steps can be taken to achieve them.

- completing mapping of current housing options suitable for young people with SEND with a view to identifying areas to develop and include in future housing strategies based on forecast needs.
- reviewing transitions between Children's and Adult Social Care Services to identify improved ways of working and achieve better cohesion between teams, to ensure a better transition and experience. Similarly, Buckinghamshire Health Care Trust are reviewing their transition processes, using the Ready Steady Go questionnaires where appropriate and holding teenage clinics on specific themes i.e. diabetes.

Priority 4: Joint Commissioning

2.17 Joint commissioning as an approach is well embedded in Buckinghamshire and there is a strong history of working in partnership with providers to deliver services. There are however pressures within the system. A range of actions have already been completed. We have:

- invested £750,000 within neurodevelopment services to reduce waiting lists for those children waiting for an autism assessment.
- held a collaborative workshop scoping pre-diagnostic support for those children waiting for a neuro developmental assessment; initial service offer due to be in place by January 2022.
- focused on the uptake of health checks for young people with learning disabilities aged over 14 years which has improved performance in this area by over 25%.
- agreed additional investment within children's integrated therapies services for this financial year.
- continued investment into Speech Link for schools to facilitate early identification of children with communication difficulties.
- achieved very short waiting times for those with intellectual disabilities within CAMHS (11 days). CAMHS have also surpassed their access target in achieving 42% against a 35% target.

2.18 Further work is required in this area including:

- improving waiting times for diagnostic assessment. Currently, the Neurodevelopmental Diagnostic Collaborative (run by Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust and Oxford Health Foundation Trust is at clinical capacity. Leading to a significant waiting list. Initial findings from a substantial review

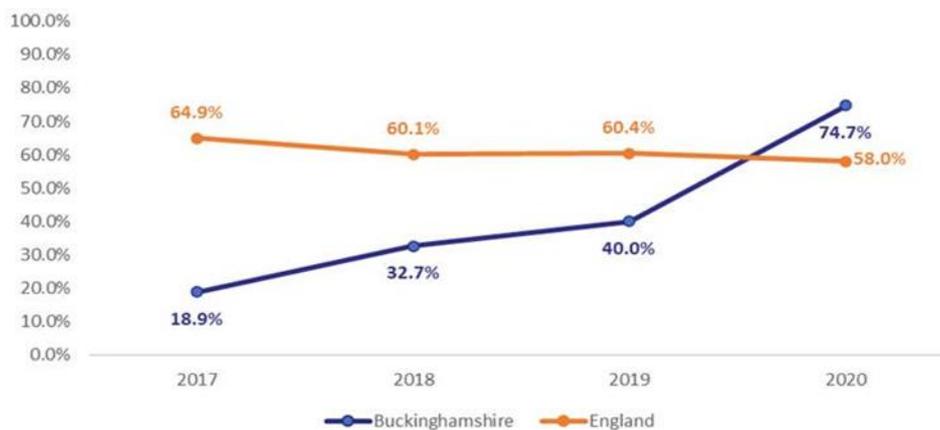
into the pathway (and surrounding system) made a number of recommendations and an action plan has been drawn up by the Neurodevelopment Collaborative.

Priority 5: Statutory Performance (SEND Operations)

2.19 This priority covers the range of statutory functions that underpin the support for children and young people with SEND. Increased oversight and performance monitoring have been integral to the improvements achieved. A range of actions have already been completed. We have:

- increased management oversight of the EHCP process which means that significantly more Plans are now issued within the 20-week statutory timescales. In Buckinghamshire, 74.7% of new EHCPs (excluding exceptions) were issued within 20 weeks during 2020. This has increased from 18.9% in 2017. Nationally 58% of EHCPs were issued within 20 weeks during 2020. Currently, for 2021 (Jan – Sept) performance is above 80%.

Percentage of EHCPs issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)



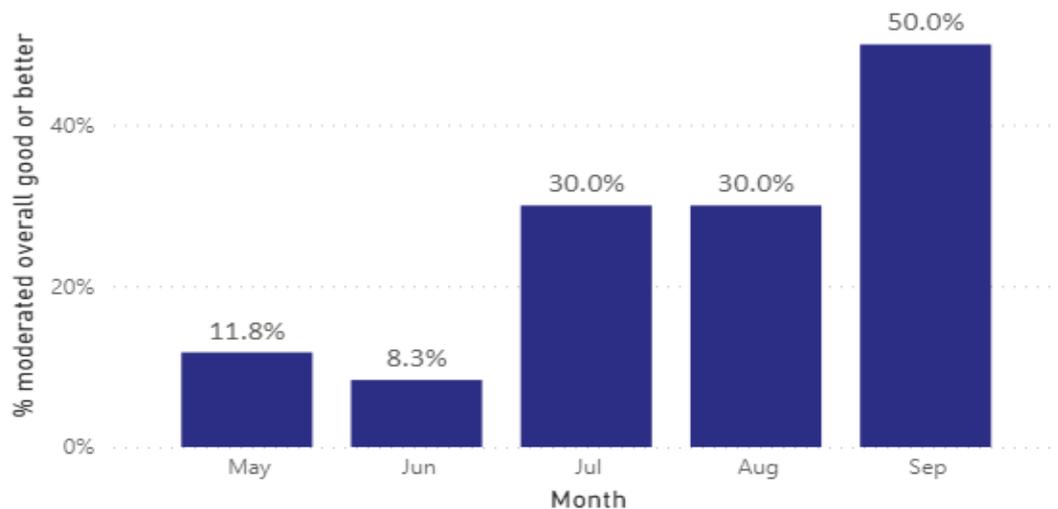
2.20 Further work is required in this area including:

- increasing the focus on improving Annual Reviews of EHCPs. This includes making better use of our internal ONE system to enable us to monitor children’s progress toward achieving the outcomes specified in their Plans.
- developing our points of communication with families through the new ONE portal. This portal has been live since 4 October 2021 and is the new way of collecting the professional advice required to create an EHCP. Enabling families to provide information about their child through this portal and view the advice provided by others is the next step.

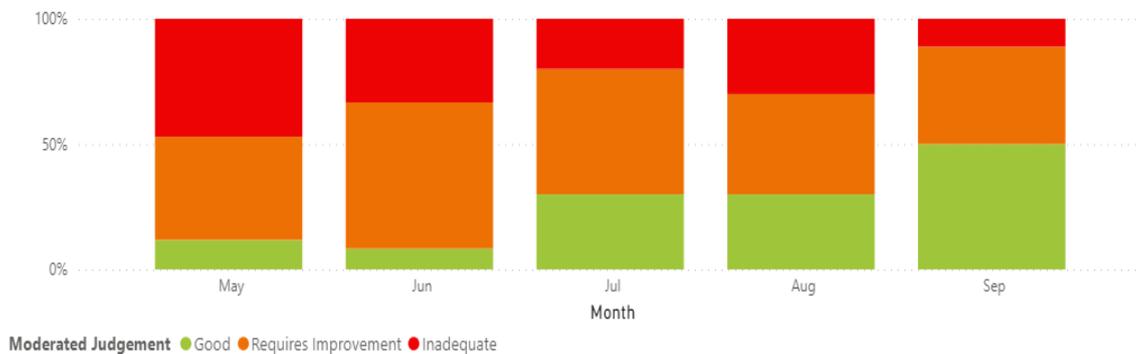
Priority 6: Quality Assurance

- 2.21 Quality assuring EHCPs is a key part of the improvement work and takes a multi-agency approach given the numerous contributors to a Plan. Audits completed over the last quarter are beginning to evidence higher quality plans being issued. The number of EHCPs judged to be good is increasing (Sept: 50%) and the number judged to be Inadequate is reducing (August 30%, Sept 11%).

% of moderated audit judgements that are good or outstanding



Overall moderated audit judgements - new plans



- 2.22 A range of actions have already been completed that have led to these improvements. These include:

- managers reviewing an increased number of Plans prior to them being issued to families.
- managers and Education, Health and Care Coordinators receiving more detailed feedback on the outcome of audits in their area to support the conversations happening in supervisions.

- successfully implementing a process to rectify Plans judged as Inadequate. All re-writes are now presented by the relevant officer to a moderation panel within 2 months. Dates are also now scheduled to cover all Plans judged as Inadequate since January 2020. This process is being carefully tracked and monitored.

2.23 Further work is required in this area including:

- resuming the quality assurance of existing EHCPs that have been amended following Annual Review. This project is currently being scoped as part of a larger piece of work on Annual Reviews.
- ensuring a common understanding across teams and services about what a good EHCP looks like to ensure consistency and high quality EHCPs.

Priority 7: Local Offer Advisory

2.24 The Buckinghamshire Local Offer has been developed with parents, carers, young people and professionals and is continually being reviewed and improved. The multi-agency Local Offer Advisory Group, including a representative from FACT Bucks, directs and oversees the ongoing improvement and development of the published Local Offer and ensures feedback is acted upon.

2.25 A range of actions have already been completed. We have:

- completed in-depth user research and user testing to help develop the website.
- conducted a review of the content by subject-matter and content-writing experts to ensure it meets best practice and accessibility regulations.

2.26 Further work is required in this area including:

- ongoing promotion of the local offer to all families of children with SEND. A recent FACT Bucks parent/carer survey with 530 responses identified that 77% of respondents had never used the Local Offer, though 56% had heard of it. Those who had used the Local Offer at least once gave mixed responses about the helpfulness of the information in it. Updating the Local Offer content and making sure it is helpful to families continues to be a priority of the Group.

Priority 8: Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

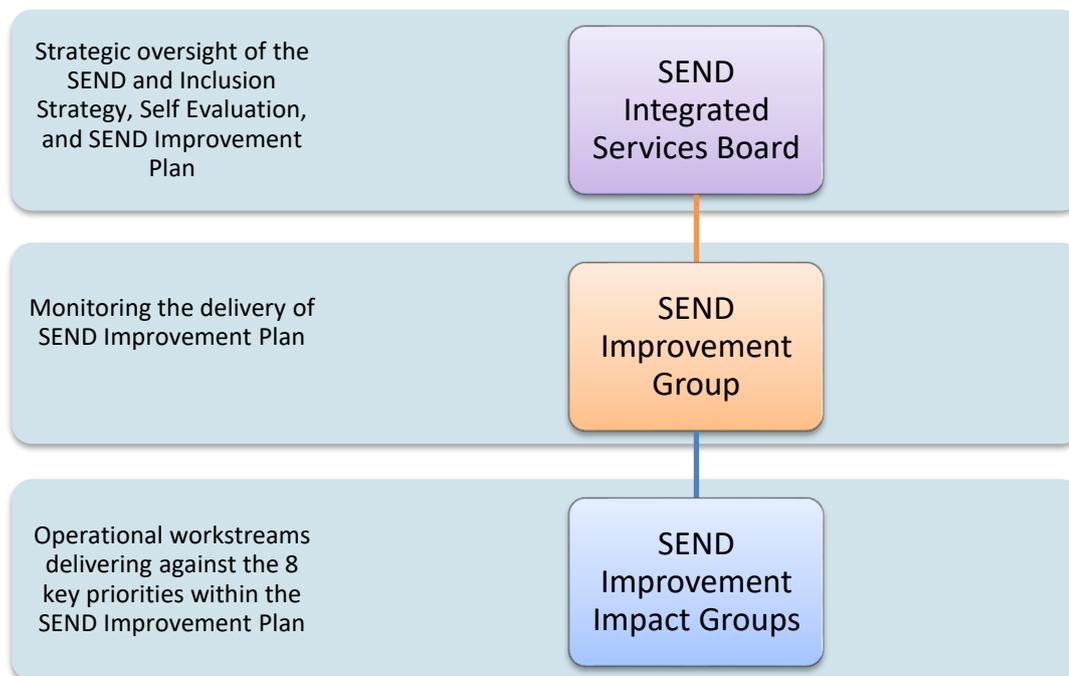
2.27 Buckinghamshire has a vibrant voluntary and community sector and this priority has enabled key representatives from the sector to come together to coordinate and share how they contribute to the offer for children and young people with SEND. This includes activity sessions, training days, employability programmes as well as more formal provision that may be part of an Education Health and Care Plan.

- 2.28 A range of actions have already been completed. We have:
- promoted the Local Offer to VCS providers to encourage them to register their provision.
 - conducted a survey among families to understand how much they know about local activities delivered by the VCS.
 - identified an opportunity to strengthen the collaboration between statutory services and the VCS, focusing on the Neurodevelopmental Pathway in the first instance. This has included the discussions previously referenced around commissioning a pre-diagnostic support service for children and young people with autism/ADHD.

- 2.29 Further work is required in this area including:
- improving how the post 16 offer delivered by VCS providers is promoted
 - exploring how the transition into new education and training placements within the VCS can be improved to ensure the provider is better able to support the young person's interests and aspirations.
 - developing a training package to encourage inclusive practice within community settings so that more children and young people can access activities within their locality.

Governance

- 2.30 The SEND improvement activity is governed through the SEND Integrated Services Board. The Board provide scrutiny and challenge, ensuring accountability of all agencies and partners in achieving the aspirations of the Strategy and associated Improvement Plan. The Board is co-chaired with FACT Bucks, and includes colleagues at senior level from across Education, Health and Social Care, as well as parent/carer and voluntary and community sector representatives.
- 2.31 Understanding, learning from, and acting upon the views and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families is also a critical element of the Board's role, co-producing solutions with family representatives wherever possible. A "You said, we did" approach to children and young people's feedback is embedded.
- 2.32 The table below outlines the governance and delivery structure.



SEND inspection

- 2.33 In May 2016 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission began a 5-year cycle of Local Area SEND inspections. [Local area SEND inspection handbook \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 2.34 In March 2020 these inspections were interrupted by the pandemic, however inspections have now resumed. As one of the few remaining areas yet to be inspected it is anticipated that inspectors will visit Buckinghamshire within the next 6 months. The inspection focuses on 3 key areas:
1. How effectively the local area identifies children and young people with SEND?
 2. How effectively the local area assesses and meets the needs of children and young people with SEND?
 3. How effectively the local area improves outcomes for children and young people with SEND?
- 2.35 Inspectors will consider:
- the leadership of provision for SEND across the local area
 - the impact of joint commissioning
 - the local arrangements, including the local offer and how well leaders understand the local area

- how well leaders have understood the impact of COVID-19 on the local SEND system and how they have adapted their plans to deal with the challenges caused by the pandemic
- whether any identified problems are long-standing and systemic or whether they have been caused or exacerbated by the pandemic.
- how the local area uses the intelligence gathered from evaluation of its effectiveness to plan for and lead future improvement.

2.36 The remit of the inspection is not limited to the local authority but covers all agencies and partners who support children and young people with SEND in the county. During the 5 days that inspectors are on site, they will talk to a range of people and organisations, visit schools and other settings, and meet with parent/carers and children and young people. An online survey will also be accessible for families to feed in their views and experiences. At the end of the inspection, a letter will be published outlining the inspectors' findings. A specific judgement is not given; however, the area may be required to submit a Written Statement of Action detailing how they will rectify any areas where significant improvement is necessary.

2.37 Buckinghamshire has been preparing for the inspection for some time and the improvement activity described above is enabling critical issues to be fully understood and addressed. Specific inspection readiness activity is helping to prepare colleagues across agencies to showcase Buckinghamshire's strengths, and be able to articulate where we still have more work to do, and how work is progressing in these areas. Buckinghamshire's strengths and areas for development are summarised below.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 The costs of the statutory activities in relation to SEND including assessment of pupils for EHC Plans and the Education Psychology Service are met from the Education Service budget. The total cost of the service is £5.7 million in the current financial year. The MTFP for 2020-23 included investment of £0.5m for additional capacity to manage the demand for EHC Plans and to ensure assessments can be completed within timescales.
- 3.2 The revenue costs of specialist provision and additional support for children and young people with SEND in schools and colleges is met from the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The high needs allocation for 2021-22 is £99.1 million. This allocation is expected to increase by 8% in 2022-23. The council currently has a deficit against its DSG of £1.795m and, in line with Department for

Education requirements, is developing a DSG management plan to ensure expenditure can be managed whilst continuing to meet demand.

4. Background papers

4.1 Buckinghamshire's SEND and Inclusion Strategy:

<https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/media/56587/send-inclusion-strategy-buckinghamshire.pdf>

Buckinghamshire's SEND Improvement Plan

<https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/media/56586/send-improvement-plan-buckinghamshire.pdf>



Report to Children's and Education Select Committee

Date:	11 November 2021
Title:	SEND Education Sufficiency
Relevant councillor(s):	Anita Cranmer and Julie Ward
Author and/or contact officer:	Simon James, Director for Education
Ward(s) affected:	all wards

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the issues relating to the sufficiency of educational placements for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It outlines the issues and headline data that informed the development of the draft SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy, and details the steps taken to publicly consult on 6 proposals to meet the expected demand over the coming 5 years. The report summarises the outcome of the consultation and next steps. These next steps include working with Buckinghamshire's parent/carer forum and existing schools and colleges to develop new or different provision, as well as exploring the feasibility of new building projects to meet growing demand.

2. Content of report

Context

- 2.1 A key priority within Buckinghamshire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2021-23 is to ensure there are enough educational placements for pupils with SEND.
- 2.2 Pupils with SEND either have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or receive SEN Support, captured in a SEN Support Plan. Both types of plan set out the support that the pupil needs to achieve their goals, taking an holistic view of their learning needs and future ambitions.
- 2.3 Pupils with a SEN Support Plan attend mainstream school settings. Those with an EHCP may attend a Special School, or they may attend a mainstream setting,

depending on their needs and the support required. Some mainstream settings have Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) which enable the pupil to spend a proportion of their day in the mainstream classroom, as well as accessing some targeted intervention from the ARP.

- 2.4 The majority of pupils with an EHCP attend educational settings within Buckinghamshire. Approximately 3% attend educational settings outside of Buckinghamshire. This can be because there are insufficient places available within the county that are able to meet the needs of these children, the type of provision required to meet their needs is not available in Buckinghamshire, or the parent may have a preference for an out of county setting that both meets the needs of their child and is cost effective for the Council.

Analysis of current needs

- 2.5 The analysis of current needs and placements identified a number of challenges that need to be addressed. These include:

- Fewer pupils in Buckinghamshire schools (10.1% or 8559 children) are registered to receive SEN Support than the national average (12.2%) (Jan 2021 school census). This means there is more to do to identify and support children and young people with SEND without an EHCP in mainstream settings.
- More pupils in Buckinghamshire schools have an EHCP (3.8%) compared to the national average (3.7%) (Jan 2021 school census).
- There were 4910 EHCPs maintained by Buckinghamshire in January 2021, an increase of 315 (6.9%) from the previous year (SEN2 Return Jan 2021). The rate of increase is slowing in comparison to other local authority areas; since 2014 the number of statements/EHCPs in Buckinghamshire has increased by 55.4% compared to 81.6% across England and 92.2% within our statistical neighbour group. Currently, there are 5265 children with EHCPs maintained by Buckinghamshire (11 October 2021).
- The number of pupils with EHCPs with a primary need of Autism has increased significantly (+116%) in Buckinghamshire since 2015. Those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs have also increased considerably (+57%). There is also significant growth in areas of complex need (profound and multiple learning disabilities 105% and multi-sensory impairment 180%). Although these latter groups make up a smaller population overall, they are a cohort that require a high level of specialist provision. In Jan 2021, 31% of all those with an EHCP had a primary need of Autism, 21% with Speech, Language or Communication Needs (SLCN), 15% with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and 14% with SEMH.

- 35.1% of the children and young people with an EHCP issued by Buckinghamshire attend maintained or academy special schools, which is broadly in line with the national average of 35.8% (Jan 2021).
- 42.0% of children in Buckinghamshire with EHCPs are supported in a mainstream school compared with 39.9% nationally, which is above the national average. However, Buckinghamshire (14.3%) is below the national average (16.7%) for those attending mainstream Further Education settings. (Jan 2021).
- 4.6% of children in Buckinghamshire with EHCPs are supported in a mainstream school with an Additionally Resources Provision compared with 4.8% nationally (Jan 2021).
- 69% of children attending independent or non-maintained special schools have Autism (40%), SEMH (18%) or SLCN (11%) recorded as their primary areas of need (Jan 2021).

Development of the SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy

2.6 A draft 5 year SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy has been developed to address these areas of growth in Buckinghamshire’s SEND cohort. This followed a series of engagement activities including:

- Dialogue with FACT Bucks, the parent/carer forum, to understand the experience of children and families in Buckinghamshire. This was informed by the ongoing dialogue with parents through meetings and support group social media conversations, feedback from SENDIAS service users, as well as specific surveys conducted by FACT Bucks in partnership with SENDIAS.
- Pre-engagement activity with schools. This included an analysis of all Buckinghamshire Special Schools which identified the types of special educational needs catered for, where there were gaps and where adjustments could be made to existing provision in order to target those gaps. The range of specialist provision has now been published on the Local Offer [Education options and admissions for children with SEND | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#) A further outcome of this work is that capacity has been increased in our existing special school estates by approx. 90 places over the last two years, with minimal building investment.
- Discussions with school networks (Primary Executive Board [PEB], Buckinghamshire Association of Secondary Heads [BASH] and Special School Heads). These centred on the needs of children and young people currently placed in our settings, and what this told us for now and the future.

- Discussion at the SEND Integrated Services Board (January 2021), the body that provides multi-agency governance of SEND and includes representatives from across Health, Education and Social Care as well as the Voluntary and Community Sector and parent /carers. This identified some critical considerations including the broader context beyond educational placements, for example health services and housing.
- Discussion in the Sufficiency Impact Group of the SEND Improvement Programme, which informed the discussion with senior leaders.

2.7 In June 2021 a public consultation was held to seek the views of key stakeholders (families, schools and other educational settings) across Buckinghamshire on 6 proposals. During the consultation period, online events were held for schools and parents/carers to share information and listen to feedback. Parent/carers events were jointly planned and chaired with Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks who continue to work with us to review consultation feedback and finalise the strategy. The 6 proposals were:

1. Develop nurture or other appropriate break-out spaces in all secondary settings to ensure consistency across the county. This may mean reconfiguring buildings in some cases where space is not available.
2. Reconfigure/expand ARP and SEN unit provision to meet future demand.
 - Establish a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 8 place ARP in a mainstream primary school in the Aylesbury Vale area.
 - Develop a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 10 place ARP in a mainstream secondary school in the Aylesbury Vale area.
 - Close 1 Primary Physical Disability ARP due to reduced demand.
 - Reduce ARP capacity where demand is reduced.
 - Develop a new SEN unit for primary pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs.
3. Reconfigure/expand specialist provision for children with Communication and Interaction needs (Autism) and significant learning difficulties:
 - Develop the capacity of Chiltern Wood and Vale Federation schools to accommodate the rise in young people with complex Autism with Severe Learning Difficulties expected in the secondary specialist sector from September 2022.
 - Consider, alongside social care and health partners in the local area, the need for residential schooling provision linked to a current special school for Autism and complex learning difficulties.

- Develop satellite classrooms in the north of the county (primary and secondary) for children with Autism enabling pupils to gradually integrate into the mainstream setting over a 2-year period in line with their needs being met. This will also broaden the GCSE offer to these pupils. Approx. 25 places across primary and secondary, linked to Furze Down School.
 - Increase capacity at Stony Dean and Pebble Brook Schools (subject to building works) to enable the school to support children with Moderate Learning Difficulties and Speech, Language and Communication Needs for whom it is evidenced will need long term support and preparation for independent adult living. This will increase placements by 16 places.
 - Close the residential provision at Alfriston School (following a needs analysis) and examine the possibility of converting to day places which are currently oversubscribed.
4. Review and expand the capacity of existing special schools to deliver a mainstream curriculum in a low arousal environment to cater for children with Communication and Interaction needs (Autism) for whom a mainstream curriculum offers the best possible foundation for their future. Approx. 80 places over the next four years.
 5. Reconfigure/expand specialist provision for children with SEMH needs.
 - Enable Special Schools that do not ordinarily cater for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs to provide support for children who present challenging behaviours as a result of their underpinning SEN. Designated Social, Emotional and Mental Health schools to provide for children who have severe Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs as their primary area of need.
 - Develop Secondary Social, Emotional and Mental Health specialist provision to offer a wider/vocational curriculum options.
 - Develop a new Special School which can provide therapeutically for children with identified attachment disorders and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.
 6. Develop the offer at Buckinghamshire College Group to meet the demand. This may include developing the skills and knowledge of staff in the areas of SEMH and Autism, conducting a space analysis to ensure the site is fit for purpose (building on previous works and investment) and working in partnership to develop initiatives to meet the needs of particular groups.
- 2.8 The draft strategy that includes the detailed analysis of current and future demand that informed the proposals can be found in appendix 1.

Consultation outcome

- 2.9 310 online survey responses were submitted and a further 5 printed questionnaires were returned and included for consideration. 5 additional email responses were received and their content was considered as part of the free text consultation feedback.
- 2.10 214 of the 315 survey responses were from parents and carers of which 190 (89%) have one or more children with an EHCP or on SEN Support. 17 parents (8%) were Electively Home Educating their child(ren). Responses were received from families with children and young people aged 0-25, with the majority of responses coming from those with primary (36%) and secondary (33%) age children.
- 2.11 The 101 other respondents represented 56 different schools and other educational settings in Buckinghamshire (i.e. special and mainstream schools, pupil referral units, early years settings). Respondents also represented social care and parent/carer representative groups.
- 2.12 In addition to consultation feedback 14 schools/settings expressed their interest in being involved in taking forward 1 or more of the proposals.
- 2.13 41% of consultation respondents felt the proposals were right with a further 43% feeling they were “partly right.” Some of the “yes” and “partly right” respondents made suggestions for additional measures and some of the “no” respondents actually supported some proposals.

In your view, are the proposals the right proposals?				
	Parents/Carers	Schools/Settings	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	%
Yes	90	38	128	41%
Partly right	92	45	137	43%
No	32	18	50	16%
Total	214	101	315	100%

- 2.14 The full consultation feedback can be found in the Consultation Outcome Report in Appendix 2.

3. Next steps and review

- 3.1 The consultation feedback is currently being considered. Discussions will continue during the Autumn term with all relevant parties including FACT Bucks, the parent/carer forum and those settings who have expressed an interest in taking forward some of the proposals or alternative suggestions identified. Once decisions

have been taken, a revised SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy for 2022 – 2027 will be published.

- 3.2 A delivery plan will be developed to ensure the ambitions of the Strategy are realised. This plan will be monitored by the multi-agency SEND Integrated Services Board that oversees Buckinghamshire’s overarching SEND and Inclusion Strategy and the Special School Property Board.
- 3.3 Key decisions that need to be taken about specific aspects of the Strategy will be taken in line with the Council’s constitution, for example, the closure of provision, or the building of a new school.
- 3.4 It is anticipated that the final Strategy and Sufficiency Plan will be shared with key stakeholders and published on the Local Offer in January 2022.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 Section 27 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires the Local Authority to keep under review:
 - (a) the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made in its area for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability, and
 - (b) the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made outside its area for—
 - (i) children and young people for whom it is responsible who have special educational needs, and
 - (ii) children and young people in its area who have a disability.
- 4.2 The Local Authority is obliged to consider the extent to which the provision is sufficient to meet the educational needs, training needs and social care needs of the children and young people concerned. The Local Authority discharges this responsibility by publishing its sufficiency strategy.
- 4.3 The Local Authority is legally required to consult with a range of people and organisations including children and young people in its area with special educational needs, and the parents of those children in reviewing the educational, training and social care provision in the area.
- 4.4 In addition to the specific statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 set out above, there are a number of overarching duties that are relevant to the SEND Sufficiency Strategy including duties under:
 - The Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist participation of young people with SEND up to the age of 25.

- The Equality Act 2010 in relation to having due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The revenue costs of provision for pupils with SEND in schools are met from the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The high needs allocation for 2021-22 is £99.1 million. Increases in demand for support mean that the high needs budget is under pressure and the council currently has a deficit against its DSG of £1.795m. Financial modelling of the increases in demand highlighted in this report indicate that the high needs deficit will increase significantly if needs cannot be met from more local provision.
- 5.2 Any local authority with an overall DSG deficit must co-operate with the Department for Education (DfE) in handling that situation. In particular, the local authority must produce a deficit management plan which supports evidence-based and strategic future plans for the provision of children and young people with SEND whilst ensuring that the financial implications of all decision are understood and monitored. The proposals in the draft SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy will support the management of the DSG deficit through developing sufficient local places and reducing the need for high cost external placements.
- 5.3 The council has established a DSG Spending Review Group as a sub-committee of Schools Forum to ensure the deficit can be managed. The Spending Review Group has discussed the recommendations in the draft strategy and detailed financial modelling will take place to confirm the costs and potential savings from each of the proposals. Costs will be both revenue and capital and savings will be a combination of cashable savings and cost avoidance in future years.
- 5.4 Capital implications of the proposals are to be included in the current and future capital MTFP proposals. Proposals have been included in the 2021 MTFP bidding round, to cover a number of potential projects that have been identified through the recent feasibility studies undertaken on the existing SEN school estate. As well as potential expansions of existing schools, the proposals include an initial business case for a new SEMH Special School. Funding will be from a combination of SEND capital grant, basic need and developer contributions.

6. Background papers

- 6.1 Appendix 1: Draft SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy [draft-send-education-sufficiency-strategy--7-june-2021.pdf \(citizenspace.com\)](#)

Appendix 2: SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy Consultation Outcome Report

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The Draft
Buckinghamshire
Special Educational
Needs and Disabilities
(SEND) Education
Sufficiency Strategy
2021 – 2026.

Contact Officers: Lucy Pike/Hero Slinn

Date: 7 June 2021

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1. Introduction

1.1 Buckinghamshire has a population of 161,400 (0-25, ONS mid-year estimates 2019), of which 3% of children and young people have an Education, Health and Care Plan (Mar 2021). 87112 children and young people attend Buckinghamshire state-funded schools (Jan 2021), with 8559 (10%) registered by their schools as SEN support (Jan 2020). It is important that these groups of children and young people are able to achieve their goals in education, and more broadly as they prepare for adulthood. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice, 0-25 years (January 2015) is clear that:

“all children and young people are entitled to an appropriate education, one that is appropriate to their needs, promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

This should enable them to:

- *achieve their best*
- *become confident individuals living fulfilling lives, and*
- *make a successful transition into adulthood, whether into employment, further or higher education or training.”*

1.2 As such, education and sufficiency of placements is a key strand of Buckinghamshire’s SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024 which sets out our aspiration for all children and young people with SEND. This is outlined below:

Ambitions for the Future

C1. Early and intensive intervention as appropriate to ensure better outcomes are achieved for the child

C2 Schools deliver effective SEN support in line with the Code of Practice and as set out in ‘Ordinarily Available Provision’

C3. Children and young people have the opportunity to receive an excellent education as locally as possible, without the fear of exclusion due to their special educational needs and disabilities.

C4. Children and young people are able to develop key work skills through a broad and balanced curriculum with stretching progress measures

C5. Schools and colleges aspire, in particular, to be Autism friendly as part of being inclusive, in order to meet a wide range of needs and support learning.

C6. Transport is not a barrier to children and young people accessing educational and career related opportunities

C7. Children and young people receive high quality careers advice and guidance and exposure to work related learning/enterprise opportunities

C8. There is a range of short breaks, work experience, internships and apprenticeship opportunities, including within the local authority, to help young people progress

C9. Options for post-16 study for young people in special schools and special colleges are as worthwhile as mainstream options

C10. Effective planning between educational providers and other professionals means young people can successfully access sustainable employment

1.3 The SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy aims to support the above objectives, enabling children and young people to participate in a challenging curriculum within an environment that promotes learning and development in line with their individual needs and abilities. It is recognised that meeting needs locally leads to more positive outcomes for children and young people, enabling them to stay connected to their family and communities particularly as they transition to adulthood. There are also benefits in respect of reduced time spent being transported to school, potentially more scope for the use of personal transport budgets to provide flexible and convenient transport solutions for families, and more children benefitting from independent travel training in their local area.

2. Developing the Buckinghamshire SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy

The activities described below have been undertaken to develop the strategy:

- Data collection and analysis of current capacity and projected future demand.
- Dialogue with FACT Bucks, the parent/carer forum to understand the experience of children and families in Bucks. This has been informed by the ongoing dialogue with parents through meetings and support group social media conversations; feedback from SENDIAS service users; as well as specific surveys conducted by FACT Bucks in partnership with SENDIAS.
- Pre-engagement activity with schools. This has included developing a continuum of provision with special schools which demonstrates the range of specialist provision available in Buckinghamshire, that has now been translated onto the Local Offer here: [Education options and admissions for children with SEND | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/education-options-and-admissions-for-children-with-send-family-information-service). We have also had discussions with school networks (Primary Executive Board (PEB), Bucks Association of Secondary Heads (BASH) and Special School Heads around the needs of children and young people currently placed in our settings, and what this is telling us for now and the future.
- Research conducted by Educational Psychologists relating to the evidence base for the effectiveness of mainstream settings with Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and SEN Units on pupil outcomes. Evidence suggests there are several factors that contribute towards parents', pupils' and teachers' views of an ARP being effective at supporting a pupil with additional needs. These include themes such as traits of the staff supporting the provision and how the provision is organised and integrated within the school. In addition, the literature states that ARPs are most

effective when there is good transference of learning and support in the ARP to the classroom. In order to uphold standards, there should be regular monitoring or assessments of pupil progress in the ARP to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision.

- Discussion at the SEND Integrated Services Board (January 2021), the body that provides multi agency governance of SEND and includes representatives from across Health, Education and Social Care as well as the Voluntary and Community Sector and Parent /Carers. This identified some critical considerations including the broader context beyond educational placements, for example health services and housing.

The above activities have informed the development of the Strategy with a view to ensuring that it meets the needs of children, young people and their families going forward. It is crucial that high quality provision that meets needs locally is planned for and developed without delay and definitely over the duration of this Strategy if positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND are to be achieved as soon as possible.

3. The Current Picture

Analysis of data has identified a number of key challenges that the SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy aims to address. These include:

- Fewer pupils in Buckinghamshire schools (**10% or 8559 children**) are registered to receive SEN Support than the national average (12%) (Jan 2020 school census). This means there is more to do to identify and support children and young people with SEND without an EHCP in mainstream settings.
- More pupils in Buckinghamshire schools have an EHCP (**3.5% or 4518 children**) compared to the national average (3.3%) (Jan 2020 school census).
- There were 4910 EHCPs maintained by Buckinghamshire in January 2021, an increase of 315 (6.9%) from the previous year (SEN2 Return Jan 2021). The rate of increase is slowing however in comparison to other local authority areas; since 2014 the number of statements/EHCPs in Buckinghamshire has increased by 55.4% compared to 81.6% across England and 92.2% within our statistical neighbours group.
- The number of pupils with EHCPs with a primary need of Autism has increased significantly (**+116%**) in Buckinghamshire since 2015. Those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs have also increased considerably (**+57%**). In Jan 2021 **31%** of all those with an EHCP had a primary need of Autism, **21%** with Speech, Language or Communication Needs (SLCN), **15%** with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and **14%** with SEMH.
- **31.6%** of the children and young people with an EHCP issued by Buckinghamshire attend maintained special schools, which is above the national average of 30.7% (SEN2 Return Jan 2021).

- **42.0%** of children in Buckinghamshire with EHCPs are supported in a mainstream school compared with 39.9% nationally (SEN2 Return Jan 2021).
- **69 %** of children attending independent or non-maintained special schools have Autism (**40%**), SEMH (**18%**) or SLCN (**11%**) recorded as their primary areas of need (Jan 2021).

4. What Are Families Telling Us?

First and foremost, families whose children and young people have a school place where they feel valued and have their needs met through adequate, appropriate provision flourish. If that can be achieved whilst the child or young person lives within their family home, it is even better. This is true for many current mainstream, additionally resourced provision, and special school (maintained or non) places with two thirds of parents responding to a recent FACT/SENDIAS survey indicating that the current place met the needs of their young person well. As parents have noted *“School ARP set up has been amazing during the pandemic and I feel my daughter had benefitted from ongoing schooling and other treatments available to her through school”* and *“Their (school) education, social, mental and emotional well-being provision is excellent with regular communication to me. The staff go above and beyond.”*

Sadly, this is not the experience of all families. In the recent FACT/SENDIAS survey, one third of families indicated that they felt that the current place attended by their child did not meet their needs well. As one parent commented, *“I believe we all deserve to feel normal – his life isn’t mainstream so I believe my son’s esteem will be better protected being taught with other kids with similar problems”* and another *“My son had to move school as he was treated terribly. He was constantly being excluded from school and his self-esteem was extremely low. He wasn’t given the correct support”*.

In addition, it is sometimes a lack of specific provision which has to be addressed. As a parent noted *“Support at primary school level has not been an issue as we have managed to find language ARPs to suit our son’s needs”* but this does not mean that challenges do not remain *“... however, there are no senior schools in Buckinghamshire that offer the same level of support as the primary schools.”*

Some of the key issues that have been identified by parents in the course of regular dialogue with FACT Bucks and SENDIAS include:

- **Lack of understanding in mainstream settings of children and young people with SEN specifically those whose unmet Autism or SEMH needs are displayed through behaviour**
“He has been repeatedly restrained by his mainstream so now is almost refusing to attend school.”

“My son's mainstream grammar school does not understand his condition or how to help support his needs. He is failing academically because of this.”

- **Lack of capacity, inconsistency of statutory processes and lack of timely support creates increased challenges for children and young people which inevitably leads to requests/needs for specialist placements**

“My son is currently at a PRU because there is no suitable school for him and he does not have an EHCP yet. He is school refusing and he is on many waiting lists but no support as of yet. If support had been offered as soon as his previous school raised serious concerns he would not have been permanently excluded and he would still be able to access education.”

- **“Lack of capacity in Special Schools delaying moves that increase anxiety and non-attendance impacting outcomes**

“Furthermore, there is a serious lack of specialist education spaces, leaving many children being pushed into unsuitable mainstream placements, often leading to an inability to cope, severe trauma and ultimate loss of education.”

- **Non-existence of local provision of residential places for young people who need space to grow outside the family home.**

“The big issue will be support for a residential special college placement which will have to be out of county as there is no provision to prepare for a more independent adulthood within Bucks.”

- **A lack of places in Buckinghamshire to provide for those young people whose Autism or SEMH should not impair their academic outcomes.**

“Please sort out the provision for children who are academically able, with autism, and unable to cope in mainstream classrooms. There is nothing in bucks for them at all. This is why you spend so much money funding places at independent schools.”

*“My daughter is in Year 8 at ***** has high functioning ASD (diagnosed this time last year) and suffers with depression and anxiety. The school have so far provided very little in the way of support.”*

- **Differences in curriculum, provision and approach in mainstream and special schools can create a gender bias that may have adverse effects on children.**

“My daughter was failed by her mainstream provision after years of them telling us she was fine. Despite successfully getting an EHCP they failed to follow it and meet her needs, giving her ‘enough rope to hang herself’ so we removed her from school to protect her mental health.”

- **Geographical inequality of existing provision requiring increased journey times if children are to remain in their family homes**

“Can’t find a suitable school, he’ll be out of his current school soon due to anxiety. All resources are in North Bucks which is too far for us - there is NOTHING for us in South Bucks.”

5. Future Demand

The forecasts suggest:

- The number of children with EHCPs funded by the Council will rise from **4910** (Jan 2021) to **6035** (Jan 2026). This rise is largely in the secondary 11-15 age group (658 pupils) although also in primary (168 pupils).
- By Jan 2022 we will need:
 - mainstream schools to accommodate an additional **153** pupils with an EHCP, increasing to **745** by Jan 2026 (170 in primary, 560 in secondary and 15 post 16). These places will need to cater predominantly for children and young people with Autism (c.40%), SLCN (c.20%) and SEMH (c.15%). There is also a need for schools to accommodate additional pupils with an EHCP with and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) and moderate learning difficulties, largely in the Aylesbury Vale area. The rise in children with EHCPs is proportionally greater than the rise in the overall secondary population. Currently children with an EHCP represent 6% of the secondary school pupil population and are projected to rise to 8% by 2026. As a result, there will be a need for even greater inclusive practices, embedding an inclusive culture in Buckinghamshire schools.
 - an additional **36** special school places, increasing to **142** by Jan 2026. This represents an increase of 85 and 55 places for the 11-15 age group and 16+ places respectively (c. 40% in Aylesbury) with negligible change in primary places. These places will need to cater predominantly for children and young people with Autism.
 - suitable post-16 Further Education provision across the county to accommodate a range of needs.
 - an additional **15** ARP places, increasing to **59** by Jan 2026 split between primary and secondary to cater predominantly for children and young people with Autism.
- There will be an additional **140 children** supported in alternative arrangements (“other” places or direct payments) by Jan 2026. These are predominantly children and young people with needs including SLD and SEMH. “Other” placements are those where alternative arrangements have been made (e.g. by parents in accordance with Section 7 of Education Act 1996 i.e. parents have exercised their right to make their own arrangements for the child, which is mostly either educating them at home or paying for them to go to an independent school or private, voluntary independent, early years setting).
- Provision is largely required in the major towns of Aylesbury and High Wycombe where the population is higher as shown in table below:

EHCP Pupils by planning area lived in (Jan 21)																						
Provision Type	Buckingham	Winslow	Waddesdon	Haddenham	Wing and Ivinghoe	Wendover	Aylesbury Town	Princes Risborough	High Wycombe	Wycombe West	Marlow	Bourne End	Beaconsfield	Chesham	Amersham	Great Missenden	Gerrards Cross and The Ivers	Burnham Farnham and Stoke Poges	Out County	Total		
Mainstream	59	48	39	47	65	78	405	54	358	47	75	48	37	126	55	32	100	29	45	33	6	1786
Special	68	59	23	34	53	40	379	37	341	47	50	65	29	78	55	26	68	26	30	29	17	1554
FE	14	16	9	14	29	11	149	13	169	19	20	38	15	39	25	14	31	17	13	9	38	702
Other	18	21	11	21	29	25	139	23	204	35	23	31	23	50	46	18	59	13	29	16	34	868
Total	159	144	82	116	176	154	1072	127	1072	148	168	182	104	293	181	90	258	85	117	87	95	4910

The forecasts above are based on projecting forward previous year's trends. Due to the small numbers of children with EHCPs involved and the year on year volatility in trends, the projections should be treated with caution.

In addition, whilst the primary pupil population in Buckinghamshire has risen rapidly in Buckinghamshire over recent years (i.e. 6000 pupils between 2012 to 2018 largely concentrated in Aylesbury Town and High Wycombe), last year it only rose by c. 100 pupils. The previous increase in primary demand is now starting to flow through into the secondary sector which may partly explain why the projected increase in the EHCP population is generally concentrated in the secondary sector. However, other data shows us that as well as increased numbers of children being identified with SEN, we have also to contend with the fact that Buckinghamshire is expected to experience significant inward migration largely due to the housing growth currently taking place across the county. In the emerging Local Housing Plans, the Council is proposing further homes across Aylesbury Vale (28600), Wycombe (11000) and Chiltern & South Bucks (11000) by 2033. The Council will need to continue to monitor the pre-school age population and pupil trends on an annual basis to ensure that additional places for children with EHCPs are provided as, when and where increased demand arises.

6. Our SEND Education Sufficiency Plan

Our SEND Education Sufficiency Plan aims to meet the growing demand detailed in this Strategy. In essence, it aims to address the following areas:

- 1) The need to increase the capacity/ability of secondary mainstream schools (including ARPs) to support children with Autism, Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) particularly in Aylesbury and Wycombe.
- 2) The need to increase the capacity/ability of secondary mainstream schools (including ARPs) to support children in Aylesbury with moderate learning difficulties and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).
- 3) The need to accommodate some growth in primary and post-16 mainstream schools particularly in Aylesbury and Wycombe.

- 4) The need for more secondary and post-16 special school places across the county, but particularly in Aylesbury, to primarily accommodate children with Autism and learning difficulties.
- 5) The need for more specialist provision to support children with Autism and/or SEMH for whom an academic education offers the best possible foundation for their future.
- 6) The need for suitable post 16 Further Education placements across the county to accommodate a range of needs.

The Proposal for Consultation

Our SEND Education Sufficiency Plan is outlined below. The first set of actions are already underway or are completed as part of Buckinghamshire's improvement activity.

Views are invited on the proposals that follow and whether there are additional actions we could be taking to ensure sufficiency of educational provision for children and young people with SEND in Buckinghamshire.

Actions already underway or completed

Mainstream

Continue to support mainstream settings to ensure they are confident and skilled in supporting pupils with SEND. This will include:

- Embedding Ordinarily Available Provision (Appendix 3), enabling schools to understand their role and make provision to meet the needs of children with SEND within their existing capacity.
- Developing a self-evaluation tool to assess levels of inclusion within a school, recognising achievements in supporting children with a range of needs and identifying further actions.
- Reviewing and acting on the outcomes of audits of SEND provision in secondary settings.
- Working with schools to identify and train a Designated Mental Health Lead to support students, in particular those with SEMH.
- Developing guidance to enable settings across education, health and care to be consistently Autism friendly.
- Training for Primary Schools to support them in identifying needs that first become evident in the school environment. SEN support toolkit for early identification of SEN (includes training).
- Specific outreach support for those with SEMH needs with EHCPs; one referral regardless of whether a child has an EHCP or not, enabling the right support to be provided at the right time.

SEN Units

Open a SEN unit to support children with a primary need of SEMH within the new Kingsbrook Secondary School in September 2022, taking Year 7 students initially, increasing year on year as the school's intake increases.

Special Schools

A sufficiency assessment of each Special School has been completed, confirming current capacity and potential capacity subject to internal/external works.

Alternative Provision

A review of Alternative Education Provision has been completed and a procurement process is underway to ensure appropriate educational provision for all children and young people, including those with SEND. This provision will include short term home tuition, virtual learning, and specialist placements for children who may have been excluded from other settings.

Proposals to meet demand

There are 6 key proposals that have been identified to meet the demand. These are outlined below.

Mainstream provision.

1. Develop nurture or other appropriate break-out spaces in all secondary settings to ensure consistency across the county. This may mean reconfiguring buildings in some cases where space is not available.

Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and SEN Units (see glossary for definitions).

2. Reconfigure/expand ARP and SEN unit provision to meet future demand.
 - Establish a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 8 place ARP in a mainstream primary school in the Aylesbury Vale area.
 - Develop a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 10 place ARP in a mainstream secondary school in the Aylesbury Vale area.
 - Close 1 Primary Physical Disability ARP due to reduced demand.
 - Reduce ARP capacity where demand is reduced.
 - Develop a new SEN unit for primary pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health needs.

Specialist Placements

3. Reconfigure/expand specialist provision for children with Communication and Interaction needs (Autism) and significant learning difficulties:
 - Develop the capacity of Chiltern Wood and Vale Federation schools to accommodate the rise in young people with complex Autism with Severe Learning Difficulties expected in the secondary specialist sector from September 2022.

- Consider, alongside social care and health partners in the local area, the need for residential schooling provision linked to a current special school for Autism and complex learning difficulties.
 - Develop satellite classrooms in the north of the county (primary and secondary) for children with Autism enabling pupils to gradually integrate into the mainstream setting over a 2-year period in line with their needs being met. This will also broaden the GCSE offer to these pupils. Approx. 25 places across primary and secondary, linked to Furze Down School.
 - Increase capacity at Stony Dean and Pebble Brook Schools (subject to building works) to enable the school to support children with Moderate Learning Difficulties and Speech, Language and Communication Needs for whom it is evidenced will need long term support and preparation for independent adult living. This will increase placements by 16 places.
 - Close the residential provision at Alfriston School (following a needs analysis) and examine the possibility of converting to day places which are currently oversubscribed.
4. Review and expand the capacity of existing special schools to deliver a mainstream curriculum in a low arousal environment to cater for children with Communication and Interaction needs (Autism) for whom a mainstream curriculum offers the best possible foundation for their future. Approx. 80 places over the next four years.
5. Reconfigure/expand specialist provision for children with SEMH needs.
- Enable Special Schools that do not ordinarily cater for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs to provide support for children who present challenging behaviours as a result of their underpinning SEN. Designated Social, Emotional and Mental Health schools to provide for children who have severe Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs as their primary area of need.
 - Develop Secondary Social, Emotional and Mental Health specialist provision to offer a wider/vocational curriculum options.
 - Develop a new Special School which can provide therapeutically for children with identified attachment disorders and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

Post-16

6. Develop the offer at Buckinghamshire College Group to meet the demand. This may include developing the skills and knowledge of staff in the areas of SEMH and Autism, conducting a space analysis to ensure the site is fit for purpose (building on previous works and investment) and working in partnership to develop initiatives to meet the needs of particular groups.

6. Funding and Governance

Any new buildings will be funded through Capital Funds.

The new Banded Funding system will make the resourcing of additional places more transparent and equitable for revenue costs. This has been rolled out for use with special schools already in Buckinghamshire, since April 2021, is planned to be implemented with ARPs and PRUs from April 2022 and with mainstream schools from April 2023.

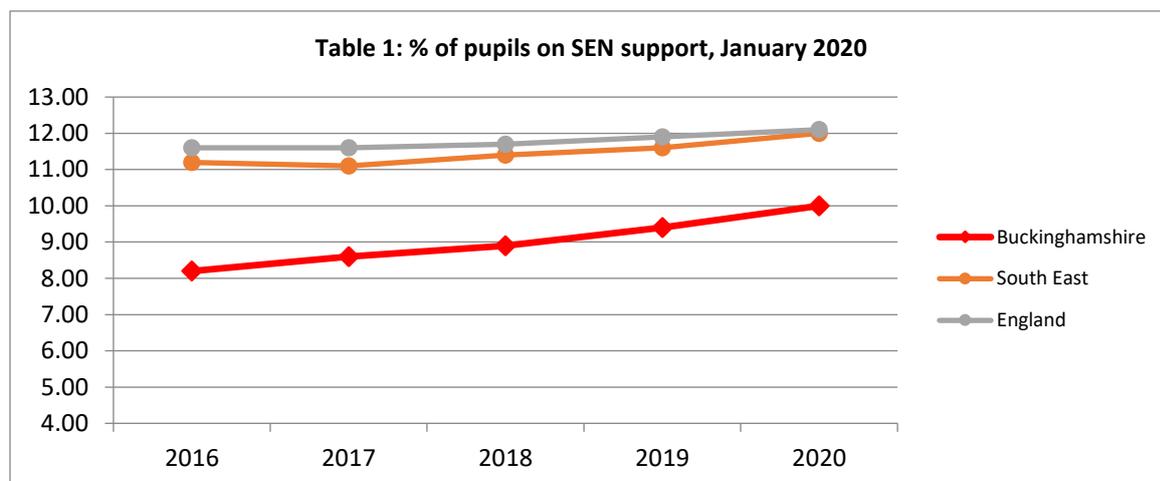
Governance of this strategy and sufficiency plan will be provided by the multi-agency SEND Integrated Services Board that oversees Buckinghamshire's overarching SEND and Inclusion Strategy and via the Special School Property Board. The Sufficiency, Autism and SEMH Impact Group will monitor operational progress as part of the SEND Improvement Plan.

7. Supporting Information

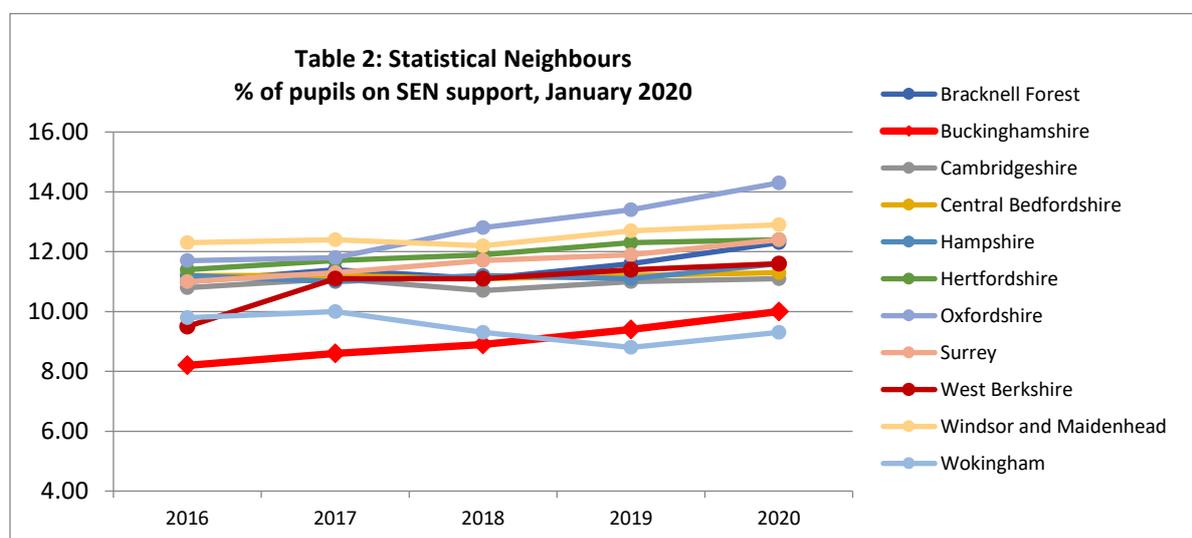
Appendix 1: Current Capacity

SEN Support

1.1 SEN Support is defined in the SEND Code of Practice, 0-25 years (Jan 2015): “All settings should adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review.” This graduated approach aims to ensure that progress is regularly monitored and appropriate interventions are made to support the child or young person to achieve their goals.



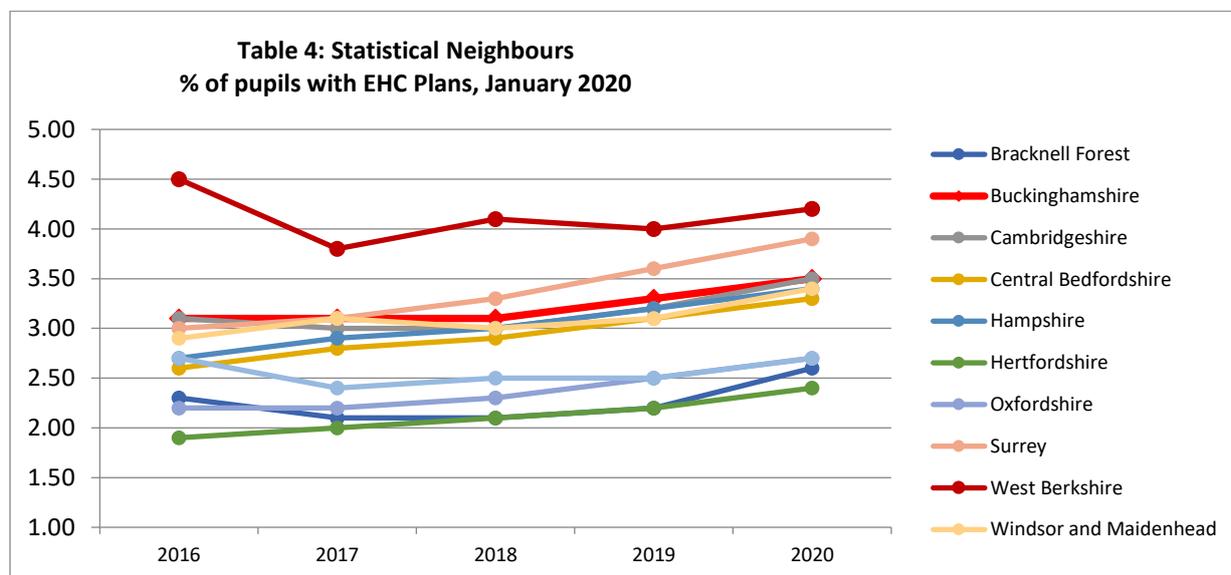
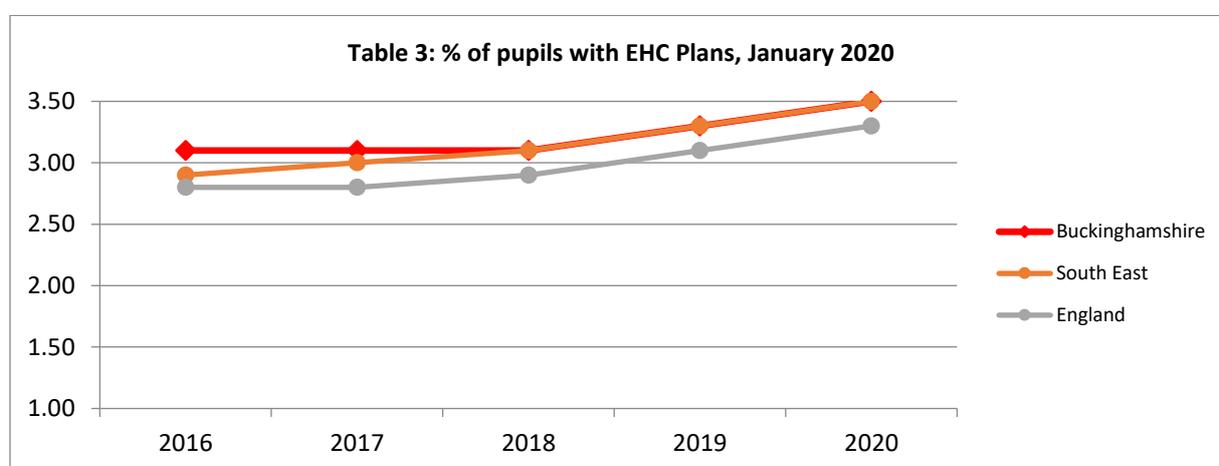
1.2 In Buckinghamshire the number of pupils who receive SEN support in a mainstream school has been consistently lower than national figures (Table 1). Whilst the gap is closing, it remains 2 percentage points below those nationally and in the south-eastern regions. At January 2020 Buckinghamshire had 10% of pupils registered as SEN Support, compared to 12% nationally and was significantly below levels registered by statistical neighbours (Table 2).



Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans

1.3 As at January 2020 there were 4595 children and young people with EHCPs, an increase of 541 (13%) since January 2019 (SEN 2, Jan 2021). Since 2014, the number of Statements of Educational Need and EHCPs has increased by 45.3%, compared to 64.5% across England and 70.6 % within out statistical neighbour group, so while the overall number is higher in Buckinghamshire, the rate of increase is slowing in comparison to other local authority areas.

1.4 3.5% of children and young people in Buckinghamshire have an EHCP, compared to 3.3% nationally (Table 3 and 4) (School census).



1.5 Table 5 details the age profile of children and young people with EHCPs in Buckinghamshire

Children and young people with an EHC plan by age group
 Year: January 2021

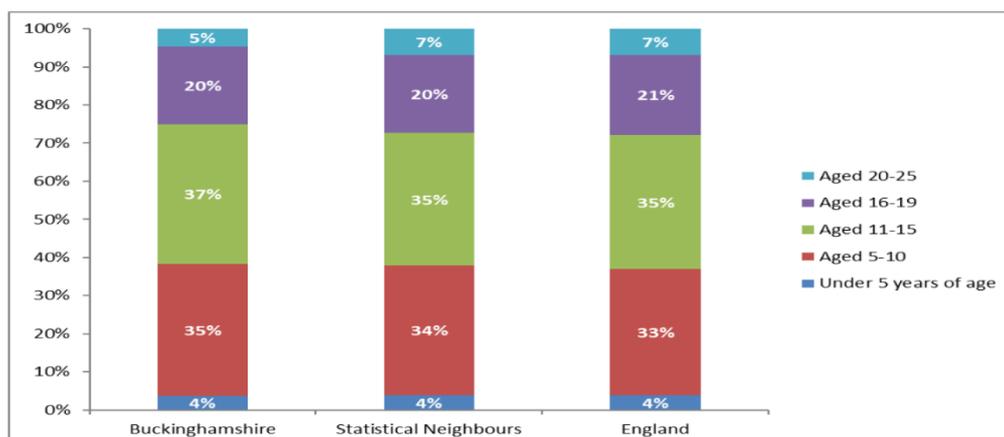


Table 5

Breakdown of Need

1.6 Children and young people in Buckinghamshire have a wide spectrum of Special Educational Need (SEN) and many have more than 1 need or inter-related needs. The SEND Code of Practice, 0-25 (January 2015) describes 4 broad areas of need.

1. Communication and interaction.

Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives. This area includes those children and young people with Autism who also are likely to have difficulties with social interaction, and with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

2. Cognition and learning.

Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) - where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and have associated difficulties with mobility and communication - through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Children with PMLD are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. This range of needs also includes specific learning difficulties (SpLD) which encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

3. Social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse eating disorders or physical

symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

4. Sensory and/or physical needs.

Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided in a mainstream setting. This includes pupils with visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) who are likely to require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning or support. It also includes those with a severe physical disability (PD).

1.7 Table 6 details the breakdown of primary need by type since 2015. It is evident that the number of children and young people with EHCPs and a primary need of Autism has increased significantly (+116%) in Buckinghamshire over time. Those with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs have also increased considerably (+57%). Whilst there has been a notable increase in the percentage of children and young people with multi-sensory impairment (+ 225%), the overall numbers remain very low. It is a similar picture regarding profound and multiple learning difficulties (+86%), however it is important to keep these areas of need in scope to ensure sufficient placements are available as part of this strategy.

Table 6: Primary Need	Nov 2015	Nov 2016	Nov 2017	Nov 2018	Nov 2019	Nov 2020	% change from 2015
Autism	686	798	940	1123	1316	1482	↑116%
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Development Needs/Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	448	468	465	541	663	702	↑57%
Hearing Impairment (HI)	83	83	83	92	100	97	↑17%
Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)	639	633	627	699	777	711	↑11%
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)	8	11	12	20	22	26	↑225%
Physical Difficulties (PD)	263	270	267	272	299	277	↑5%
Profound and Multiple (PMLD)	42	42	44	50	56	78	↑86%
Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)	120	123	143	152	169	151	↑26%
Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)	149	125	118	133	173	181	↑21%
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	841	838	813	844	968	1015	↑21%
Visual Impairment (VI)	58	57	60	66	71	84	↑45%
Not recorded /Other	41	51	27	1	15	26	↓37%
Total	3378	3499	3599	3993	4629	4830	↑43%

Placement type and capacity

1.8 Children and young people with SEND in Buckinghamshire are educated in a range of settings. Table 7 details the type of provision children and young people with EHCPs were attending as at Nov 2020, compared with the national data collection in 2019 (SEN 2).

Table 7: Type of provision: Children and young people with EHCPs	Aylesbury Vale	South Buckinghamshire	Buckinghamshire	England (2019)
Mainstream Schools	38%	36%	37%	34%
Additionally Resourced Provisions and SEN units	3%	5%	4%	5%
Special Schools	35%	31%	33%	32%
Non maintained Special Schools and Independent Special Schools	4%	5%	4%	5%
Hospital and Alternative Provisions	2%	2%	2%	1%
Post 16 & Further Education	14%	14%	14%	17%
Other	4%	7%	6%	6%

1.9 In mainstream settings (maintained and academy) the number of children and young people with EHCPs is increasing each year (Table 8), with most having Autism, Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) or Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) (Table 9).

Table 8: Mainstream Pupil numbers (headcount)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Primary	727	858	1,054	1,071
Secondary	564	556	666	710
Other	23	21	22	24
Total	1,314	1,435	1,741	1,804
% increase from 2017-18	-	9%	33%	37%

Table 9: Primary Needs in Maintained and Academy Mainstream settings (November 2020)	No. Pupils
Autism	468
Hearing Impairment (HI)	32
Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD)	239
Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI)	9
Other	9
Physical Disability (PD)	86
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty (PMLD)	4
Speech Language and Communication Need (SLCN)	455
Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD)	32
Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	279
Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	108
Visual Impairment (VI)	49
Other/unknown	34
Total	1804

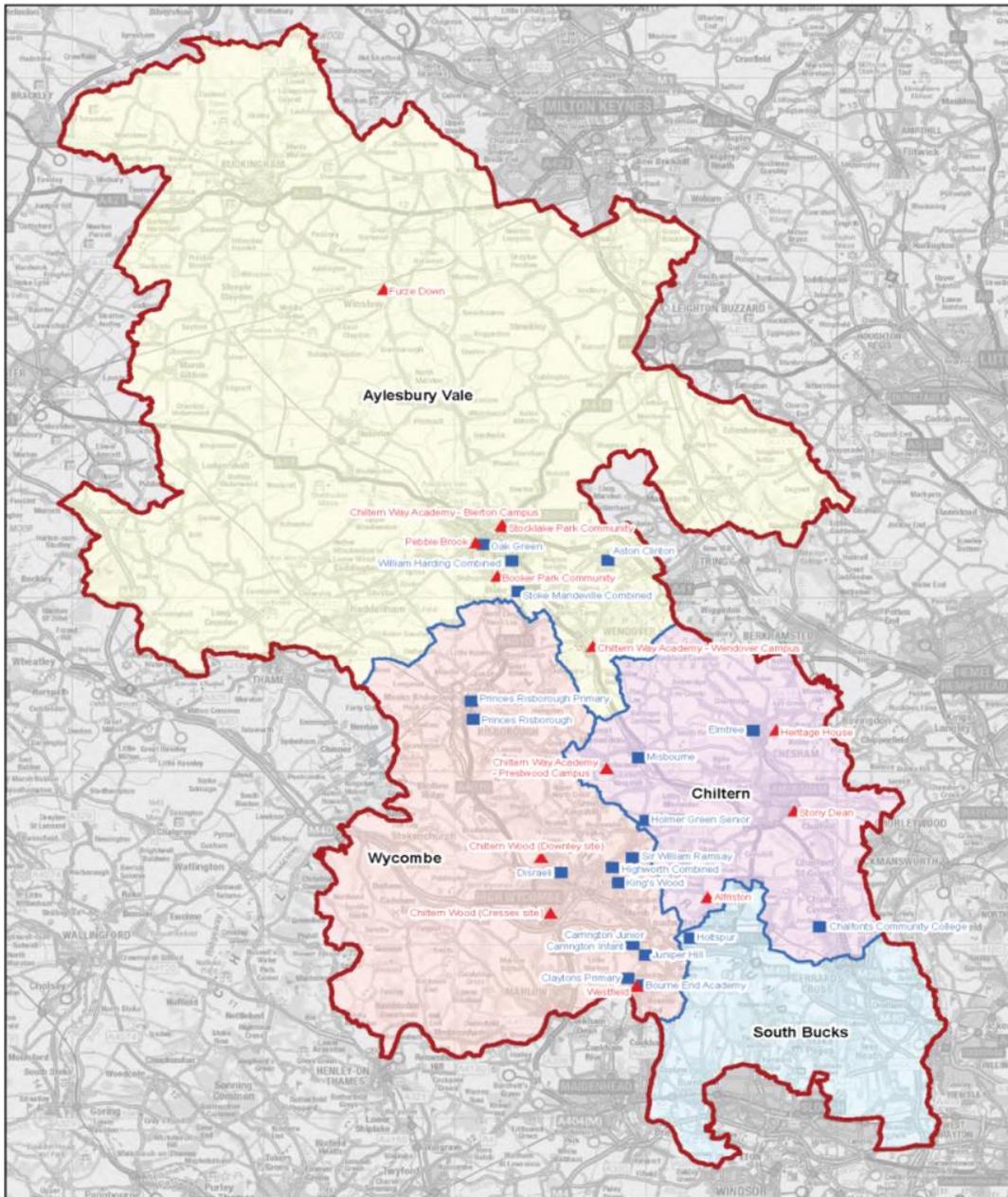
1.10 As at September 2020 there were 107 placements recorded in independent mainstream schools (i.e. those schools that charge fees instead of being government funded). This number includes private placements made by parents where top up funding is provided, in line with the value paid to a maintained mainstream or academy, as well as those funded directly by the Council. These schools do not have to follow the national curriculum but must be registered with the government and are inspected regularly.

1.11 34% of children and young people placed within independent mainstream schools have a primary need of Autism. Children and young people with a primary need of Autism or Speech, Language and Communication Needs account for 59% of placements.

1.12 In Buckinghamshire there are 15 primary and 7 secondary mainstream schools that have Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) to cater for specific needs. Resourced provisions are places that are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type of SEN, taught mainly within mainstream classes, but requiring a base and some specialist facilities around the school. Resourced provisions:

- are designated by the local authority specifically for making this kind of SEN provision
- receive funding of £6,000 or £10,000 per place, and usually top-up funding for the excess costs of additional support required by individual pupils
- cater for a specific area or areas of SEN (for example specific learning difficulties)
- are usually for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, but could include pupils with code 'K' (SEN support).

1.13 This map below indicates the locations of both special schools and ARPs. The majority of provision is located towards the centre and south of the county. There is limited access to specialist provision for children and young people living in the north of the county, which means they either have to travel long distances to access education which is costly and time consuming or they attend provision out of county.



Buckinghamshire Special Schools & Additionally Resourced Provision



Produced by Business Intelligence and Insight, August 2020

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1.14 4% of children in Buckinghamshire with EHCPs are supported in a mainstream school with an ARPs compared with 5% nationally (SEN 2 Return, Jan 2020). In November 2020, there were 215 pupils attending mainstream schools with ARPs against an overall capacity of 243. 8.8% or 28 places within an ARP are not being utilised (predominantly PD and SLCN). Table 10 details the designation and capacity of each ARP.

Table 10: ARP designation and capacity (Nov 2020)	Primary Need							Total	Space
	Autism	HI	PD	SLCN	SLD	SEMH	SpLD		
Primary SLCN									
Aston Clinton School	x			x				5	1
Elmtree Infant				x				5	3
Holtspur School	x			x			x	10	0
Kings Wood School				x			x	15	0
William Harding School				x				5	3
Secondary SLCN									
Holmer Green Senior School	x			x				20	6
TOTAL								58	15
Primary Autism									
Carrington Infant School	x			x				6	0
Carrington Junior School	X			x		x		8	0
Claytons Primary School	X							11	1
Princes Risborough Primary	x			x	x			14	0
Disraeli School	x			x		x	x	18	0
Oak Green School	x							13	-1
Secondary Autism									
Bourne End Academy	x			x		x		15	3
Princes Risborough Secondary School	x			x		x		18	0
Misbourne	x			x		x		7	-1
TOTAL								108	2
Primary HI									
Highworth Combined School		x						13	-1
Stoke Mandeville School		x						7	1
Secondary HI									
Sir William Ramsay School		x						8	0
TOTAL								28	0
Primary PD									
Juniper Hill School			x	x				12	0
William Harding School			x					3	5
Secondary PD									
Chalfonts Community College			x					6	2
Sir William Ramsay School			x					5	3
TOTAL								21	11
OVERALL								215	28

1.15 Alternative provision is used for Buckinghamshire children and young people with SEND, usually as a temporary placement until they can return to mainstream education or move to specialist provision. For some pupils it may be a longer-term solution. The provision can be part time and be part of a broader curriculum delivered alongside education at a school, further education college or other provider (i.e. when specialist facilities are required for vocational courses).

1.16 The Pupil Referral Units (PRU) in Buckinghamshire are a type of alternative provision that cater for children and young people who are not able to attend a mainstream school and may not otherwise receive suitable education. This could be as a result of illness, or they may have been excluded or need more specialist intervention or support.

Table 11: Pupil Referral Unit Placements		No. placed
Aspire	Secondary	30
The Buckinghamshire PRU	Primary	Less than 5
Kite Ridge PRU	Special	10
Haybrook College (Slough)	Special	6

Table 12: Primary Needs	AUTISM	MLD	SLCN	SLD	SEMH
Aspire	x	x	x		x
The Buckinghamshire PRU			x		x
Kite Ridge PRU	x	x		x	x
Haybrook College (Slough)	x		x		x

1.17 Maintained and Free Special Schools and Special Academies: All children and young people attending special schools have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and their needs have been considered at a multi-agency SEND Placement Panel. This panel assesses the suitability of the placement in line with guidance outlined in the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the suitability of specialist provision for the individual child or young person.

1.18 There are currently 10 maintained special schools and special academies in Buckinghamshire operating over 13 separate sites. The number of places in each school ranges from 58 pupils to 207 (Nov 2020). 33.1% of children and young people with an EHC plan maintained by Buckinghamshire are placed in state-funded special schools (LA maintained schools, academies and free schools). This is above the national average of 32.1% (SEN 2 data return, Jan 2020).

1.19 Special schools in Buckinghamshire have transitioned to a new Banded Funding model, to take effect from April 2021 for maintained schools, and September 2021 for academies. Development of the funding model over the past year, has created an opportunity for provision to be developed, and has led to greater clarity of the needs that are met within special schools. Special Schools have developed a continuum of specialist provision in Buckinghamshire linked to the broad areas of need within the SEND code of

practice, and the cognition range being met currently within the school. This information can be found on the Local Offer by following this link: [Buckinghamshire Special Schools](#)

1.20 The DfE defines an Independent Special School as a private school that specialises in teaching children with special educational needs. As at September 2020, there were 137 placements recorded in independent special schools over the course of the financial year 2020-21. 66% of those placed within these settings have a primary need of Autism or SEMH. 34% (47 out of the 137) are recorded as high functioning, 45 of which have a primary need of Autism or SEMH.

1.21 Non-maintained special schools are defined by the DfE as schools for children with special educational needs that the Secretary of State for Education has approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996. They are independent of the local authority and operate on a not-for-profit basis.

1.22 As at September 2020, there were 58 placements recorded in non-maintained special schools over the course of the financial year 2020-21. The proportion of children placed in non-maintained special schools is relatively evenly split by primary need. AUTISM accounts for 28% of placements, followed by HI and PD accounting for 12% each.

1.23 As of November 20, there were 32 students in early years settings or private nurseries with EHCPs. Primary needs are detailed in Table 13.

	AUTISM	MLD	PD	PMLD	SLCN	SLD	SPLD	Total
No. children	12	2	6	4	5	2	1	32

1.24 Post 16: Further Education and Independent Specialist Colleges: Young people can leave school at age 16 and progress to a further education setting. This can be a mainstream college or an independent specialist college. The numbers below show how attendance at these settings has grown over the past four years, for those with EHCPs that receive additional funding specifically to meet their needs in the further education setting. As at January 21, 58 young people were attending independent specialist colleges, all also accessing residential provision as part of a holistic package to meet their needs.

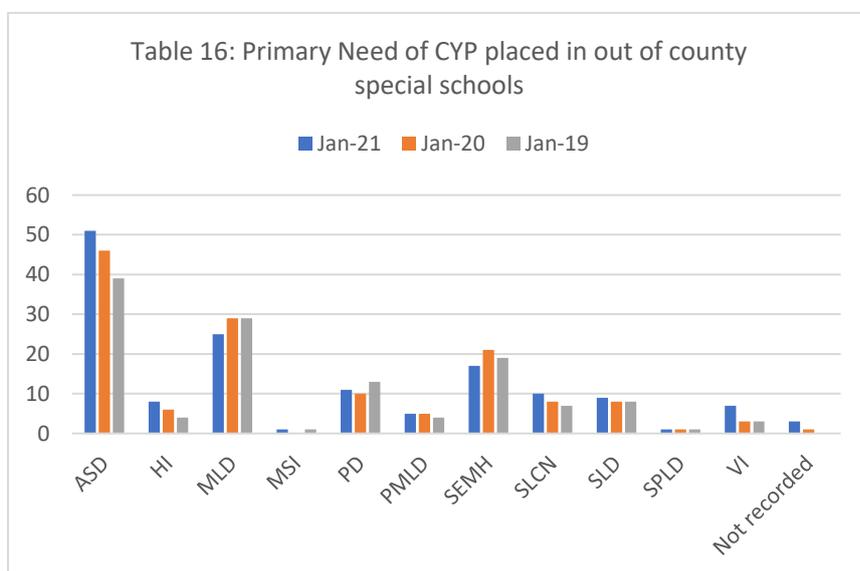
Provision Type	Actual			
	Sept 17	Sept 18	Sept 19	Sept 20
Post 16	304	362	408	450

1.25 Out of Authority Special Maintained and Academy schools. Currently, we do need to source Special School placements for children and young people that are outside of Buckinghamshire. These are predominantly in neighbouring authorities, where travel to

destinations is within reasonable limits. However, these can often come at a higher cost, and travel time can be longer. In some cases, for example the placements in Kent, the children and young people will be in the care of Buckinghamshire Council but living in Kent, making this the most appropriate placement for them. These placements provide predominantly for those with Autism, SEMH or MLD.

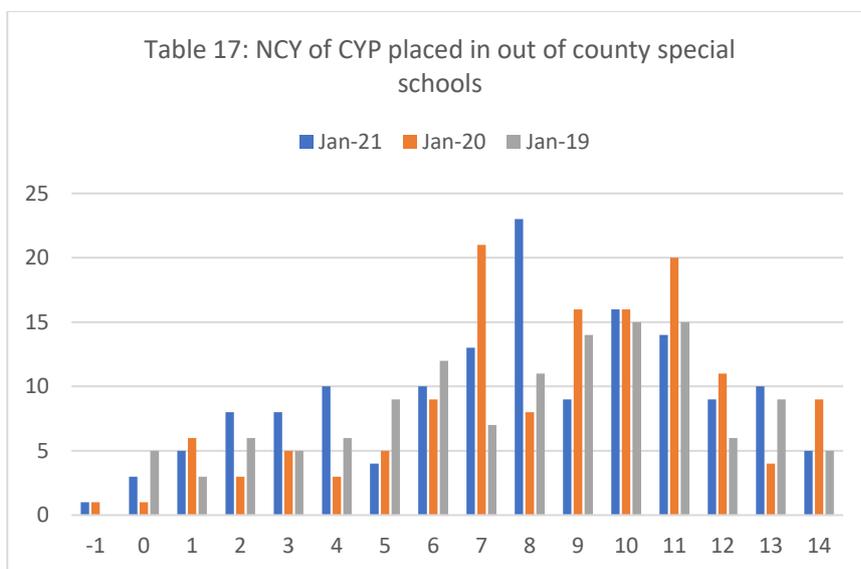
Table 15: Total Number of children attending Out of Authority Special Maintained and Academy schools

	Number	% of EHCP
Jan-21	148	3.0%
Jan-20	138	3.0%
Jan-19	128	3.2%



	Jan 21	Jan 20	Jan 19
ASD	51	46	39
HI	8	6	4
MLD	25	29	29
MSI	1	0	1
PD	11	10	13
PMLD	5	5	4
SEMH	17	21	19
SLCN	10	8	7
SLD	9	8	8
SPLD	1	1	1
VI	7	3	3
Not recorded	3	1	0

Table 17 and 18 show the distribution of these children and young people by year group and location.



NCY	Jan-21	Jan-20	Jan-19
-1	1	1	0
0	3	1	5
1	5	6	3
2	8	3	6
3	8	5	5
4	10	3	6
5	4	5	9
6	10	9	12
7	13	21	7
8	23	8	11
9	9	16	14
10	16	16	15
11	14	20	15
12	9	11	6
13	10	4	9
14	5	9	5

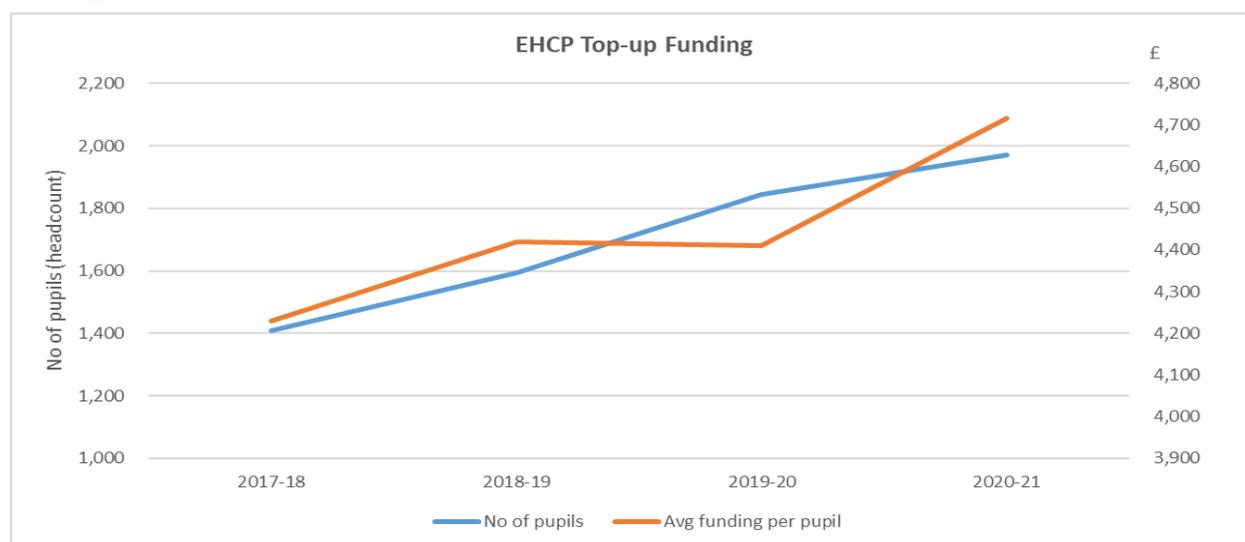
Table 18: Location of school by Local Authority area	Number of Children		
	Jan-21	Jan-20	Jan-19
Central Bedfordshire	10	9	5
Harrow	0	1	1
Havering	0	1	0
Hertfordshire	12	9	6
Hillingdon	16	13	9
Kent	2	1	0
Milton Keynes	21	19	18
Oxfordshire	8	9	8
Reading	1	1	1
Slough	17	20	18
South Gloucestershire	1	0	0
Surrey	3	3	3
Wandsworth	2	1	2
Windsor & Maidenhead	55	51	57

Placement cost

1.26 Outturn spend on the High Needs Block for the 2020-21 financial year was £90.03 million. This was an overspend of £4.072 million against the High Needs Block funding allocation for the year. Average funding per pupil is also increasing (Tables 19 and 20).

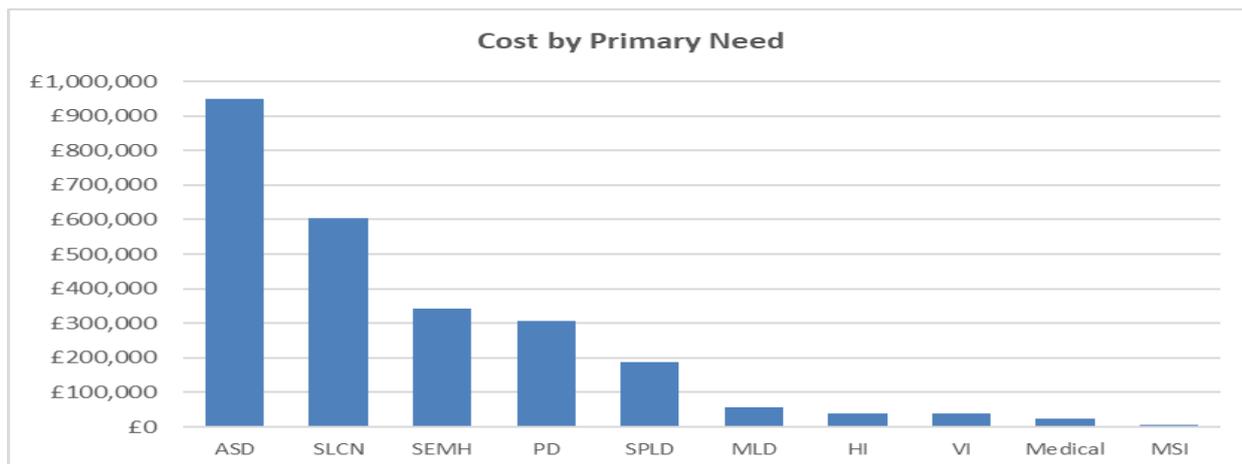
Table 19: Average funding £ per pupil (headcount)				
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Primary	4,459	4,578	4,571	4,932
Secondary	3,914	4,215	4,157	4,371
Other	4,271	3,218	3,811	4,093
Total	4,230	4,419	4,411	4,717
Increase from 2017-18		4%	4%	12%

Table 20



1.27 For children placed in independent mainstream schools, outturn spend for 2020-21 gives an average cost for these placements as £20,615 with an overall cost of £2,556,259. The highest overall cost by need is for Autism at £950,431 and the highest average cost per placement is for Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) at £30,164 (Table 21).

Table 21

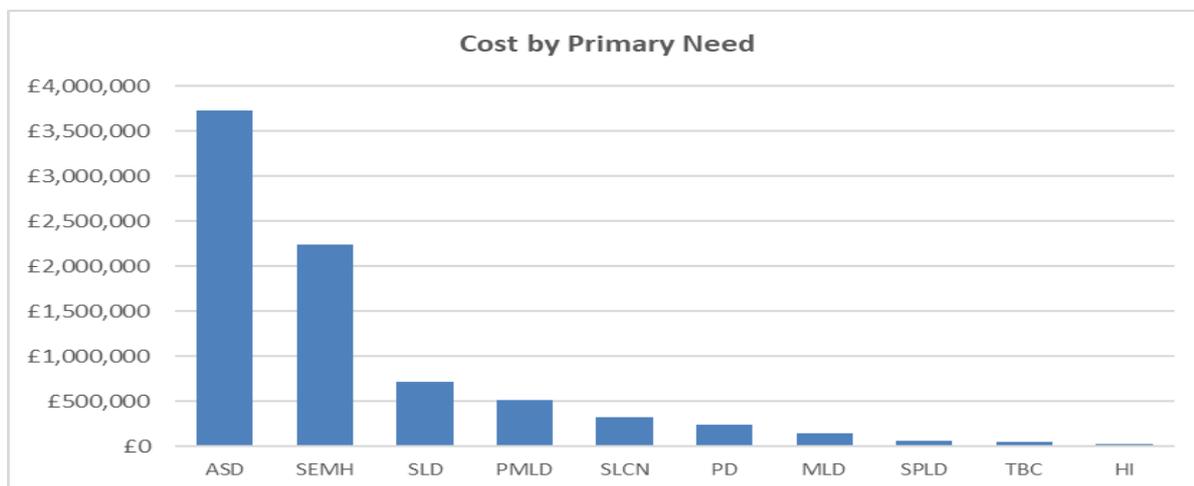


1.28 The outturn spend this financial year on our additionally resourced provisions is £3,439,385 (after academies recoupment) of which £2,494,385 is top-up funding.

1.29 The outturn spend this financial year on special schools is £31,738,409 (after academies recoupment) of which £20,030,075 is top-up funding. This makes up just over a third of the high needs block budget total.

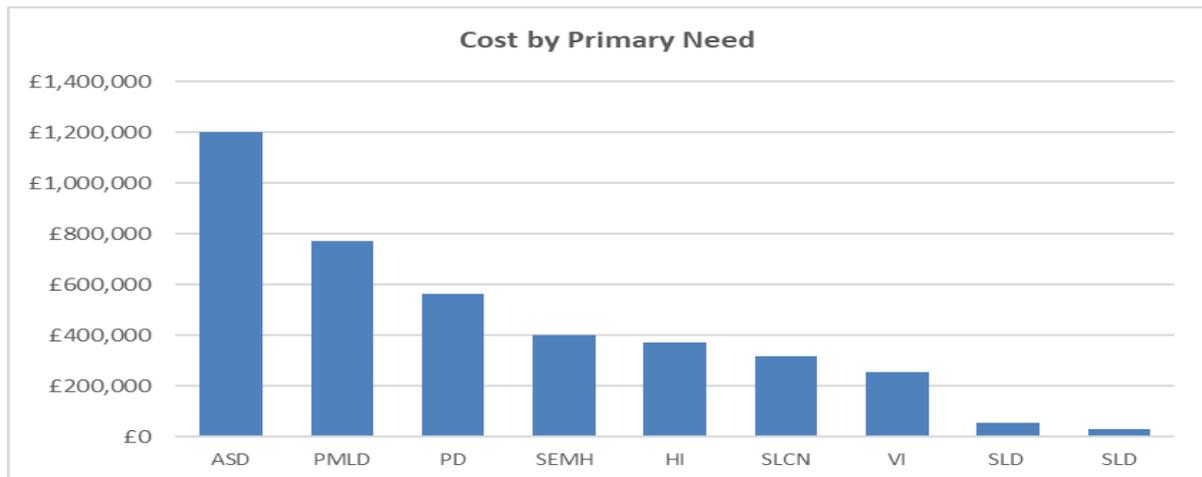
1.30 For children and young people placed in independent special schools the highest overall cost by need is for Autism at £3,722,366. The highest average cost per placement is for Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) at £88,676. (Table 22)

Table 22



1.31 The outturn spend for 2020-21 for non- maintained special schools is £3,958,159, with an average placement cost of £70,681. The highest overall cost by need is for Autism at £1,198,229 and the highest average cost per placement is for PMLD at £128,285 (Table 23).

Table 23



1.32 The outturn spend in 2020-21 for Early Years settings is £80,845.

Appendix 2: Forecasts

1.1 Projections are for Buckinghamshire resident EHCP pupils attending any setting (including out of county and non- maintained/independent provision). Projections for future EHCP admissions into Reception are based on the latest year's intake - so remains constant over the projection period as there appears to be no clear link between EHCP pupils and the wider population/housing growth (as trends may also be influenced by changes in processes and local/national policy. Projections are based on historic trends in cohort transfer rates (which effectively incorporate new housing based on existing build rates).

Table 1: Total Number of EHCPs by age group.

Age	Actual				Projected				
	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23	Jan-24	Jan-25	Jan-26
0-3	35	59	78	43	43	43	43	43	43
4-10	1370	1559	1713	1840	1933	1985	2004	2028	2044
11-15	1420	1540	1695	1794	1910	2070	2268	2413	2541
16-18	614	677	794	869	898	849	829	835	844
19-25	172	219	315	364	398	461	504	543	563
Total	3611	4054	4595	4910	5181	5408	5648	5862	6035

Table 2: Total Number of EHCPs by primary need.

Need	Actual				Projected				
	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23	Jan-24	Jan-25	Jan-26
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	954	1140	1306	1510	1713	1893	2074	2250	2409
Speech, Language & Communication	808	859	960	1031	1091	1136	1181	1224	1258
Moderate Learning Difficulty	626	701	766	719	667	613	565	517	469
Social, Emotional & Mental Health	465	559	665	712	749	777	802	815	818
Physical Disability	265	274	293	277	261	243	227	210	192
Specific Learning Difficulty	115	134	169	187	205	221	237	252	267
Severe Learning Difficulty	146	153	171	155	138	122	111	100	95
Hearing Impairment	80	93	96	98	101	105	110	114	117
Visual Impairment	61	65	71	86	99	112	126	133	142
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty	44	51	57	77	86	102	116	130	138
Multi- Sensory Impairment	14	20	22	27	31	36	42	49	54
Other Difficulty/Disability	33	5	19	31	40	48	58	67	75
Total	3611	4054	4595	4910	5181	5408	5648	5862	6035

Table 3: Total Number of EHCPs by provision type.

Provision Type	Actual				Projected				
	Jan-18	Jan-19	Jan-20	Jan-21	Jan-22	Jan-23	Jan-24	Jan-25	Jan-26
Mainstream	1195	1393	1634	1786	1939	2085	2252	2403	2531
Special	1399	1458	1520	1554	1590	1621	1649	1670	1696
Further Education	393	479	588	702	728	728	732	741	734
ARPs	222	217	208	224	239	250	260	271	283
Non-Maintained/Independent	183	212	223	232	234	238	245	252	254
Hospital/Alternative Provision	58	84	107	95	97	93	89	83	81
Other	161	211	315	317	355	393	420	442	457
Total	3611	4054	4595	4910	5181	5408	5648	5862	6035

1.2 An analysis of Special School capacity undertaken in 2020 using the BB104 government guidance identified scope for a potential increase in capacity in some schools. This work took into account the space available and the types of need catered for. As a result additional placements can be commissioned from April 2021, and further places may be available in future years in 4 schools, subject to identified spaces being developed. Table 4 details this capacity.

Table 4: Potential Capacity in Special Schools			
Special School	Current Number Attending	Physical Capacity of the School Site	Potential for additional students
Heritage House School	79	106	27
Pebble Brook School	136	140	4
Westfield School	55	70	15
Furze Down School	184	177 (Previous year funded at 165).	12

Appendix 3: Ordinarily Available provision

Information on Ordinarily Available Provision can be found at:

[Ordinarily Available Provision | SchoolsWeb \(buckscc.gov.uk\)](https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/ordinarily-available-provision)

Glossary

Primary needs

ASD/ASC	Autism Spectrum Condition/Disorder/Autism
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health
HI	Hearing Impairment
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MSI	Multi-Sensory Impairment
PD	Physical Difficulties
PMLD	Profound and Multiple
SeLD/SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs
VI	Visual Impairment

Broad categories of SEND

Social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH)	Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.
Sensory and/or physical needs.	Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided in a mainstream setting. This includes pupils with visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) who are likely to require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning or support. It also includes those with a severe physical disability (PD).
Cognition and learning.	Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) - where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and have associated difficulties with mobility and communication - through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Children with PMLD are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. This range of needs also includes specific learning difficulties (SpLD) which encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Communication and interaction.	Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives. This area includes those children and young people with Autism who also are likely to have difficulties with social interaction, and with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.
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Other terms or acronyms

Academy	Schools controlled and funded directly by the Secretary of State for Education and include: Academies, Free schools, UTC Schools, Studio schools, Academy special schools, alternative provision Academies and Academy boarding schools.
Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs)	Resourced Provisions are where places are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type of SEN, taught mainly within mainstream classes, but requiring a base and some specialist facilities around the school.
Alternative provision	Alternative provision is usually a temporary placement for a child until they can return to mainstream education or move to specialist provision. For some pupils it may be a longer-term solution. The provision can be part time and be part of a broader curriculum delivered alongside education at a school, further education college or other provider (i.e. when specialist facilities are required for vocational courses).
Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks	The parent carer/forum in Buckinghamshire representing the voice of families of children and young people with SEND
Independent mainstream school	Schools that charge fees instead of being government funded.
Independent Special School	The DfE defines an Independent Special School as a private school that specialises in teaching children with special educational needs.
Mainstream school	School provision other than special schools, hospital schools, alternative provision i.e. mainstream community schools, voluntary-aided, trust, foundation, or grammar schools)
Maintained school	A school that is funded by a local education authority.
Non-maintained special school	Non-maintained special schools are defined by the DfE as schools for children with special educational needs that the Secretary of State for Education has approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996. They are independent of the local authority and operate on a not-for-profit basis.
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)	A type of alternative provision that caters for children and young people who are not able to attend a mainstream school and may not otherwise receive suitable education. This could be as a result

	of illness, or they may have been excluded or need more specialist intervention or support.
Satellite classrooms	A classroom, within a school, designed specifically to provide education for supported learners who cannot be accommodated within inclusive education.
SEND Information, Advise and Support (IAS)	All local authorities, by law, have to provide information, advice and support to children and young people with SEN or disabilities, and their parents/carers. Buckinghamshire SENDIAS Service is the information, advice and support service here. The service is free, confidential, impartial and at arm's length from Buckinghamshire Council.
SEN Support	SEN support is the approach that all education settings are required to provide for children with SEND. It has four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review. This graduated approach aims to ensure that progress is regularly monitored and appropriate interventions are made to support the child or young person to achieve their goals.
SEN Unit	SEN units are special provisions within a mainstream school where the children are taught mainly within separate classes.
Special School	A school which is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEN.



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Education Sufficiency Strategy Consultation Outcome Report

Education Directorate, Children's Services

Coproduced by:

Lucy Pike, Head of Improvement and Transformation, Education

Hero Slinn, Head of Integrated SEND Service

Phil Ogley, Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks (parent/carer forum)

16 September 2021

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Introduction

A key priority within our SEND and inclusion Strategy 2021-23 is to ensure there are enough educational placements for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Work towards the development of a draft SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy has been ongoing, and in June 2021 a consultation was held to seek the views of key stakeholders across Buckinghamshire on 6 proposals. These proposals were developed following a needs and demand analysis in relation to pupils with SEND and the types of educational placements that would be required over the next 5 years. The draft strategy was completely new as Buckinghamshire has not had a SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy in previous years.

Background

Buckinghamshire has a population of 161,400 (0-25 years, ONS mid-year estimates 2019), of which 3.5% of children and young people have an Education, Health and Care Plan (Mar 2021). 87,112 children and young people attend Buckinghamshire state-funded schools (Jan 2021), with 10.1% registered by their schools as receiving SEN support. The draft Education Sufficiency Strategy that was consulted upon:

- detailed the current educational places available in Buckinghamshire for the 5 – 25 age group
- outlined the range of needs children and young people in Buckinghamshire have, and the areas where demand is increasing
- forecasted future demand, both in terms of the number of school places likely to be required over the next 5 years, and the nature of these placements
- identified some proposals for how this demand could be met.

Purpose of report

This report will:

- detail the SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy consultation process and outputs
- outline response numbers, types and key themes
- identify next steps to complete the Strategy.

Consultation process

In carrying out this consultation, the Council's corporate consultation process was followed. The project had four distinct stages:

- I. Planning and research to inform the engagement
- II. Pre-engagement work
- III. Public consultation

IV. Consultation close and report.

Methodology

Planning and research to inform the engagement

Data analysis and forecasting informed the development of the draft strategy that was shared during the consultation period. A number of strategies from other local authorities were also reviewed.

Research was also conducted by Educational Psychologists relating to the evidence base for the effectiveness of mainstream settings with Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and SEN Units on pupil outcomes.

Pre engagement

Pre-engagement included:

- Dialogue with FACT Bucks, the parent/carer forum to understand the experience of children and families in Bucks. This was informed by the ongoing dialogue with parents through meetings and support group social media conversations; feedback from SENDIAS service users; as well as specific surveys conducted by FACT Bucks in partnership with SENDIAS.
- Pre-engagement activity with schools. This included an analysis Buckinghamshire Special Schools which identified the types of special educational needs catered for and where there were gaps. The range of specialist provision has now been published on the Local Offer [Education options and admissions for children with SEND | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/education-options-and-admissions-for-children-with-send/)
- Discussions with school networks (Primary Executive Board [PEB], Bucks Association of Secondary Heads [BASH] and Special School Heads). These centred on the needs of children and young people currently placed in our settings, and what this told us for now and the future.
- Discussion at the SEND Integrated Services Board (January 2021), the body that provides multi agency governance of SEND and includes representatives from across Health, Education and Social Care as well as the Voluntary and Community Sector and Parent /Carers. This identified some critical considerations including the broader context beyond educational placements, for example health services and housing.
- Discussion in the Sufficiency workstream of the SEND improvement programme, which informed the discussion with senior leaders.

Public consultation

Public consultation was conducted through the Council's consultation hub. An online survey was produced. The survey design collected demographic data, to allow analysis of the results

by different groups of stakeholders. The survey was designed to allow stakeholders to be able to fully explain their responses and give in-depth feedback on the consultation. Some respondents who were unable to access the online survey received a printed questionnaire or submitted an email response.

Opportunities for stakeholders to discuss the proposals directly with the Head of Integrated SEND, Head of Improvement and Transformation, and the Chair of FACT Bucks were provided. 2 online sessions were held for parents/carers, and 1 session for schools/settings. The feedback from these meetings is being considered alongside the formal consultation responses.

The Council set a 30-day period to hold the consultation, starting on 7 June and closing on 18 July 2021.

Communications

The Council wanted to hear from as many stakeholders as possible and the following methods were used to promote the consultation:

- Dedicated consultation hub webpage
- Link to webpage shared via FACT Bucks and SENDIAS mailing lists
- Link to webpage shared via Primary Executive Board (PEB), Buckinghamshire Association of Secondary Heads (BASH), and via the Special School Headteachers Group
- Specific emails sent to key stakeholders to ensure all relevant parties were directly informed and invited to comment.
- Publication on the SEND Local Offer and schoolsweb for Buckinghamshire schools.

Summary of consultation responses

Profile of respondents

310 online survey responses were submitted and a further 5 printed questionnaires were returned and included for consideration. 214 responses were from parents and carers of which 190 (89%) have one or more children with an EHCP or on SEN Support.

17 parents (8%) were Electively Home Educating their child(ren).

Reponses were received from families with children aged 0-25, with the majority of responses coming from those with primary (36%) and secondary (33%) age children.

Ages of children and young people	Total	%
Early Years (0-4 years)	20	7%
Reception (4-5 years) and Primary Years 1- 6 (aged 5 - 11)	132	43%

Years 7 -11 (Secondary aged 11- 16)	101	33%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16 -18)	34	11%
Year 14 (Post-16 aged 19) to age 25	20	6%
Total	307*	100%

*respondents could select more than 1 category

The 101 other respondents represented 56 different schools and other educational settings in Buckinghamshire (i.e. special and mainstream schools, pupil referral units, early years settings). 1 response was received from an education setting outside of Bucks. Respondents also represented social care and parent representative groups.

In addition to the survey responses, a further 5 email responses were received and as such these are not included in the tables but their content was considered as part of the free text consultation feedback.

Headline data

In response to the question “In your view, are the [6] proposals the right proposals?” the largest number of respondents (43%) said “partly”. Many more said “yes” (41%) than “no” (16%). Some of the “yes” respondents made suggestions for additional measures and some of the “no” respondents actually supported some proposals.

In your view, are the proposals the right proposals?				
	Parents/Carers	Schools/Settings	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	%
Yes	90	38	128	41%
Partly right	92	45	137	43%
No	32	18	50	16%
Total	214	101	315	100%

Almost three quarters (74%) agreed that more could be done to meet demand with nearly all of those making specific suggestions for other measures.

Are there further actions we should be considering to meet the growing demand?				
	Parents/Carers	Schools/Settings	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	%
Yes	159	75	234	74%
No	56	26	82	26%
Total	215	101	316	100%

8 of the 17 parents/carers (47%) who Electively Home Educated (EHE) their child(ren) felt the proposals would enable their child to attend an education setting, and a further 4 (24%) were unsure. It is recognised that this is not representative of the full EHE cohort given the small sample size.

The majority of respondents felt the draft strategy was easy to understand (72%). Where respondents struggled this was generally due to the use of technical language, the inclusion of too much data, the document being too lengthy, and the complexity of the proposals in relation to how they meet the identified needs. More clarity on the intended outcomes of the strategy was requested as well as a visual representation of where changes would happen geographically. Implications for specific schools were also sometimes felt to be unclear, and some respondents would have liked more detail.

Is the draft Buckinghamshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Education Sufficiency Strategy easy to understand?				
	Parents/Carers	Schools/Settings	Total	
	Number	Number	Number	%
Yes	152	74	226	72%
Partly	49	21	70	22%
No	13	6	19	6%
Total	214	101	315	100%

Qualitative feedback

Feedback by proposal

Feedback was varied and has been grouped by proposal.

Proposal 1: Develop nurture or other appropriate break-out spaces in all secondary settings to ensure consistency across the county. This may mean reconfiguring buildings in some cases where space is not available.

All respondents who commented on this proposal were supportive, with some identifying the need for nurture spaces in primary settings too.

It was felt by some that the current proposals do not go far enough to detail the support required for mainstream schools to develop their provision. Training, accountability and expansion of the capacity of mainstream schools were noted as areas for consideration to enable mainstream schools to meet the needs of children with a greater variety of SEN.

Proposal 2: Reconfigure/expand Additional Resourced Provision (ARP) and SEN unit provision to meet future demand:

Establish a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 8 place ARP in a mainstream primary school in the Aylesbury Vale area.

Develop a new Communication and Interaction (Autism) 10 place ARP in a mainstream secondary school in the Aylesbury Vale area.

Close 1 Primary Physical Disability ARP due to reduced demand.

Reduce ARP capacity where demand is reduced.

Develop a new SEN unit for primary pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

Respondents generally agreed that more provision of this type (ARP or SEN Unit attached to a mainstream school) was needed, particularly for children and young people with Autism.

Some respondents felt the proposed expansion of ARPs and SEN Units for SEMH/Autism would not create enough spaces to support primary and secondary age pupils and that there was a need for this in High Wycombe too. Some respondents recognised the lack of such provision currently in the north of the county and the impact this has on home to school travel times for many children.

Some comments centred around whether this proposal would lead to sufficient placements in the right locations to meet the range of needs. There was also some concern expressed about there being too much focus on SEMH/Autism. 3 other areas of need were particularly highlighted:

- moderate learning difficulties
- hearing impairment due to the lack of secondary ARPs for primary children with a hearing impairment to transition to
- pupils with a speech and language need, felt to be an increasing area of need following the pandemic.

Some respondents felt that Autism SEN units attached to grammar schools are needed instead of ARPs:

“provision [is needed] for academically able autistic children, who don’t need a reduced curriculum, who may be best suited to grammar schools, who want to do A levels, but who can’t cope with massive schools.”

Caution was expressed that ARPs will not work for everyone as they do not provide a “constant alternative environment” and the need therefore for specialist SEMH provision separate from mainstream schools.

“More standalone SEN units required as ARPS push autistic kids in mainstream too much”.

In particular expansion of such provision linked to Autism was highlighted as requiring to work as SEN units rather than ARPs, with children not having to be in the mainstream classes as often as they are currently, particularly within secondary provision.

Some felt there should be more than 1 new SEMH SEN unit and this proposal should be replicated in other areas to support recovery from the pandemic and the impact it has had on pupils’ mental health.

The proposed closure of a Physical Disability ARP was commented upon with some respondents disagreeing with the proposal due to the benefits for existing students and the implications of moving pupils. This was particularly from parents currently accessing the ARP, with consideration being requested for reduced capacity for a time, but to keep the ARP running.

Concern was expressed that schools may become too big for children with SEND to cope with, both in relation to children attending the mainstream setting full-time and those with ARPs where a percentage of time is spent within the mainstream setting. Respondents suggested the need for more specialist provision in the form of SEN units or Special Schools where the environment and class size is appropriate. This concern was also reflected in comments relating to the proposal to develop satellite classrooms linked to Furze Down School, with some parents fearing that integrating pupils into mainstream would not be workable.

Respondents highlighted the need to ensure flexibility in the approach as demand may change over time, the need to re-designate, rather than close existing provision and/or continue to run at reduced capacity. Some creative suggestions were put forward, including the need for a ‘short-stay’ ARP/Pupil Referral Unit type provision linked to a mainstream school for children with Autism, providing explicit teaching to enable children to be reintegrated into mainstream. This would focus on arousal and on *“interoception, proprioception, attention and concentration, emotional literacy and language and social communication”*. There was also a suggestion that ARPs should provide outreach support to the surrounding schools.

Proposal 3: Reconfigure/expand specialist provision for children with Communication and Interaction needs (Autism) and significant learning difficulties:

- Develop the capacity of Chiltern Wood and Vale Federation schools to accommodate the rise in young people with complex Autism with Severe Learning Difficulties expected in the secondary specialist sector from September 2022.
- Consider, alongside social care and health partners in the local area, the need for residential schooling provision linked to a current special school for Autism and complex learning difficulties.
- Develop satellite classrooms in the north of the county (primary and secondary) for children with Autism enabling pupils to gradually integrate into the mainstream setting over a 2-year period in line with their needs being met. This will also broaden the GCSE offer to these pupils. Approx. 25 places across primary and secondary, linked to Furze Down School.
- Increase capacity at Stony Dean and Pebble Brook Schools (subject to building works) to enable the school to support children with Moderate Learning Difficulties and Speech, Language and Communication Needs for whom it is evidenced will need long term support and preparation for independent adult living. This will increase placements by 16 places.
- Close the residential provision at Alfriston School (following a needs analysis) and examine the possibility of converting to day places which are currently oversubscribed.

Proposal 4: Review and expand the capacity of existing special schools to deliver a mainstream curriculum in a low arousal environment to cater for children with Communication and Interaction needs (Autism) for whom a mainstream curriculum offers the best possible foundation for their future. Approx. 80 places over the next four years.

In relation to proposals 3 and 4, respondents agreed that increased specialist provision in Buckinghamshire is needed:

“All of the mentioned propositions sound great and are, am sure, greatly needed.”

There was a view that special school provision was particularly lacking in the north of the county, impacting on current travel times for children and young people to access the right provision for them. Others felt that the south of the county had less such provision. The need to have more local specialist provision available was shared.

Some comments suggested that schools needed to be more explicit about the needs of children that they were able to meet, particularly Autism, and that the published Sufficiency Strategy should more explicitly take into account the needs of children with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Others recognised a need for supporting children who

are more high functioning but require a lower arousal environment to cater particularly for their sensory needs, that can be provided within a special school.

Concern was expressed that schools will become too big for children with SEND to cope with, both in relation to children attending the mainstream setting full-time and those with ARPs where a percentage of time is spent within the mainstream setting. Respondents suggested the need for more specialist provision in the form of SEN units or Special Schools where the environment and class size is appropriate. This concern was also reflected in comments relating to the proposal to develop satellite classrooms linked to Furze Down School, with some parents fearing that integrating pupils into mainstream would not be workable:

“There needs to be more special schools rather than integrating into mainstream.”

One respondent asked for more details of the plans for provision for the post-16 age group that shows relevant work opportunities and integration into wider society from which they've been separate from while in specialist education, and another asking for the provision in special schools to be less sensory/play based.

The proposal to close the boarding provision at Alfriston School generated a number of comments overwhelmingly against the proposal. Some respondents referred to the key life skills that the boarding provision enables and the positive impact on those attending in preparing them for adulthood:

“Girls are literally transformed by this experience. Their mental health improves, their sense of self-worth is visible and they are able to learn life skills which were not always available to them before.”

Respondents also expressed concern that the building would not lend itself to being converted into day placements:

“In order to make the space fit for its new purpose, you would have to invest a significant amount of money renovating the original, historic school building. I feel this would be much better spent investing in other proposals mentioned in the strategy rather than for the very few places you would gain by converting the boarding space at Alfriston School.”

Other respondents were open to changes at Alfriston School if those were part of an increased offer of residential provision across the county, saying that funding could be:

“better utilised where the need is, for more than just a minimal number.”

There were specific requests for residential provision for pupils with complex Autism, including respite and for those post 16. Similar facilities to those offered in residential

schools outside of Buckinghamshire were also requested by some parents/carers to avoid having to place their child(ren) out of county.

Proposal 5: Reconfigure/expand specialist provision for children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs.

Enable Special Schools that do not ordinarily cater for Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs to provide support for children who present challenging behaviours as a result of their underpinning SEN. Designated Social, Emotional and Mental Health schools to provide for children who have severe Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs as their primary area of need.

Develop Secondary Social, Emotional and Mental Health specialist provision to offer a wider/vocational curriculum options.

Develop a new Special School which can provide therapeutically for children with identified attachment disorders and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs.

Comments relating to proposal 5 were generally supportive with particular interest in the proposal to develop a new therapeutic special school, aligning with a number of comments made about the need for more Special Schools in Buckinghamshire. The increased need for provision for pupils with SEMH, exacerbated by the pandemic, was also referenced, including the need for earlier mental health support in schools. Respondents also felt:

“more focus needs to be on expanding the capability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of children with a greater variety of SEN, particularly SEMH/ASCs.”

and

“there is absolutely a need to provide schooling for children with SEMH needs.”

The current situation was highlighted by some, with pupils having to travel long distances to attend high cost placements to access the right provision for them, particularly with SEMH and Autism linked needs (PDA and ADHD were mentioned specifically by some). There was a feeling that schools needed to be more flexible, rather than attaching one label to the children in relation to their needs, enabling provision for children that are “*neurodiverse in nature*”. Current SEMH special school provision was identified by some as “*inappropriate*” to meet their children’s needs.

Proposal 6: Develop the offer at Buckinghamshire College Group to meet the demand. This may include developing the skills and knowledge of staff in the areas of Social, Emotional and Mental Health and Autism, conducting a space analysis to ensure the site is fit for purpose (building on previous works and investment) and working in partnership to develop initiatives to meet the needs of particular groups.

Comments relating to proposal 6 focused on the need to have a broad post 16 offer for pupils with SEND that stretches beyond Bucks College Group and meets both demand and the needs of all young people with SEND. Some felt post 16 provision in mainstream schools needs broadening to include vocational and functional skills programmes; this would help to support vulnerable pupils including those who:

“struggle with change and are not able to independently travel further... to attend college if they don't meet 6th form entry requirements.”

Equally others felt specialist colleges were best placed to provide this, and a small-scale college for post 16 is needed. Further, a waking day A' level curriculum for children with SEMH was highlighted as a need.

Additional comments

In addition to the comments made about specific proposals, respondents made a number of other comments. These included:

- the importance of specialist support from professionals (including “direct” rather than “remote” or “delegated” support) to enable settings to meet the needs of a range of pupils. Educational Psychologists, specialist teachers and therapists were highlighted in particular with one respondent commenting *“they are worth their weight in gold.”* Collaboration across professions and with families was also identified as critical.
- the need to have a coherent and high-quality alternative provision offer
- the benefits of training to ensure settings are well-equipped to support pupils including but not limited to training on communicating well with families, understanding SEND law, and preparing for adulthood from the earliest years.
- the need to develop the culture in schools so that they can meet the needs of children without recourse to nurture spaces *“We need quiet, low arousal spaces in our classrooms so children can be secure within the learning environment”*
- The need for support for pupils with SEND within Grammar Schools.

Respondents also made suggestions that they felt would improve the experience of families in Buckinghamshire in relation to educational placements. These ranged from ensuring clear eligibility criteria for different settings, transparent and consistent decision-making processes, the need for family support in addition to support at the educational setting, the

need for more early intervention and staff training, the benefits of smaller classrooms, and reviewing how ARPs operate. It was suggested that establishing ARP social groups to encourage interaction and learning between parents/carers of pupils with Autism and settings could be helpful.

Finally, concern was expressed about whether there would be sufficient funding to support the proposals, the importance of value for money, and the need for ongoing review and analysis of projections.

Additional or alternative proposals

The online survey asked respondents to identify any other actions they felt should be taken. A number of suggestions were forwarded including requests for:

- more primary and secondary provision for complex needs, profound and multiple learning disabilities [PMLD], and wheelchair users, as current settings will not be able to accommodate future demand
- new purpose-built special schools to cater for specific needs (pathological demand avoidance [PDA], moderate learning difficulties [MLD], severe learning difficulties)
- a new secondary school for children with Autism who do not have learning difficulties, are very able, but cannot access a huge school
- primary schools suitable for children with Autism / social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and provision specially for girls
- increased primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provision in Chiltern and South Bucks and an Early Years PRU
- increased provision for students at home and refusing to attend school due to unmet needs
- a neurodiversity hub to support pupils with ADHD
- increased support for early years settings, including for SEMH
- primary ARPs that offer an interim space for children that cannot find a specialist secondary place so they can stay in Primary for another year(s), enabling a more successful transition when older
- an outreach hub based at Furze Down School for schools in the far north of the county to disseminate good practice and quality assure provision through peer review, with a focus on SEND Leadership Support and supervision for mainstream SENDCOs, maximising the impact of Teaching Assistants, making Autism research accessible to teachers, and training and support to ensure all schools confidently deliver ordinary available provision.
- opportunities for self-directed education and other more progressive education for those who struggle in current settings
- expansion of the Autism teaching team

- expansion of Kiteridge Pupil Referral Unit
- expansion of Woodlands primary Pupil Referral Unit to include placements for children with EHCPs and additional behavioural needs
- a short stay unit based in upper primary and covering transition into secondary to support young people's transition into mainstream or specialist settings at the right time and to the most appropriate environment.

Conclusion and next steps

The consultation feedback has been collated and is currently being considered. Discussions will continue during the early part of the Autumn term with all relevant parties including FACT Bucks, the parent/carer forum and those settings who have expressed an interest in taking forward some of the proposals or alternative suggestions identified. Demand data will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure plans are in line with the latest forecasts. Once decisions have been taken, a revised SEND Education Sufficiency Strategy for 2022 – 2027 will be published.

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Select Committee Work Programmes 2021/22

Children’s and Education Select Committee (Chairman: Patricia Birchley, Scrutiny Officer: Katie Dover)

Date	Topic	Description & Purpose	Lead Officer	Contributors
9 September 2021	Schools: 1. Attainment Gap	For members to understand issues around the attainment gap in Bucks.	Simon James	Anita Cranmer, Simon James, Richard Nash
	2. Mental Health Support in schools	Mental health in children considered to be a priority by the committee – members to hear of work ongoing in this area and provide input in to plans.	Simon James	Anita Cranmer, Simon James, Richard Nash
11 November 2021	SEND (including preparing for adulthood)	To understand the SEND provision and improvement plans and to provide input in to support given to children.	Simon James	Anita Cranmer, Julie Ward, Simon James
	Sufficiency of Places Issues	For members to understand issues around the sufficiency of schooling places in Bucks and provide feedback.	Simon James	Anita Cranmer, Simon James
20 January 2022	Buckinghamshire Safeguarding and Children’s Partnership Annual Report	To receive and to give feedback on the annual report of the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding and Children’s Partnership.	Palvinder Kudhail	Anita Cranmer, Palvinder Kudhail
	Fostering, Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders		Palvinder Kudhail	Anita Cranmer, Palvinder Kudhail
	Education Standards Report		Simon James	Anita Cranmer, Simon James

10 March 2022	OFSTED inspection update TBC	<i>Timing of this item to be confirmed</i>	Richard Nash	Anita Cranmer, Richard Nash
	Buckinghamshire Transfer Test		Simon James	Anita Cranmer, Simon James

Rapid Review planned

- Recruitment and Retention of social workers – commencing January 2022