



Wolverhampton Self Evaluation for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2021



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Section 1: Evaluation into the Strengths and Achievements of the Local Area

Introduction to Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton's vision is that we become a highly inclusive City where we work with children, young people and their families with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) so that they can achieve their full potential. We recognise that all children with SEND are individuals with aspirations to lead their own lives. While life for a child or young person with SEND and their family is anything but ordinary, the ordinary life principles are what extraordinary achievements are built on.

As a partnership, the Local Authority (LA), the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), key stakeholders on our SEND and Commissioning Partnership Board and the Wolverhampton Voice for Parents group (V4P), share a common firm belief that all children and young people should have access to good local provision including health and care and every opportunity to thrive, whether this be in education, employment, independent living or participation in their community.

The Local Area has a shared view of where we are in our effectiveness in identifying the needs of children and young people, in meeting those needs and in securing good outcomes for children and young people. In Wolverhampton there are many strengths in the system, but there is still work to do to achieve our goals. We are realistic in our achievements but recognise that the 'lived experiences' of children, young people and their families do not always reflect the improvements that have been made. We know we need to work more collaboratively to join up and align our areas of good practice and strengthen where needed. We are committed to working together to continuously improve the quality of our work to secure better outcomes for children with SEND through a clear SEND strategy and fast-paced transformation projects such as 'The Culture of Inclusion and Belonging'. There is a commitment from all partners to give priority to improvements across all areas of SEND so that we enable a culture of inclusion, belonging and support, ownership, continuous improvement and, co-production of policy, strategy and services. We are collectively ambitious for our children and young people with a special educational need and/or disability and to ensure that needs are identified as early as possible, with timely assessment and appropriate support provided as early as possible.

Wolverhampton benefits from a Designated Medical Officer role and SEND Lead, providing the health link with the Local Authority. The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) has a rolling programme to update information for commissioning purposes. A SEND JSNA has been developed in 2019 that underpins the SEND Strategy.

In 2015, we developed a five year SEND Strategy in response to the SEND reforms. Since then, Wolverhampton has made good progress in realising the ambitions set out in the strategy and the aims of the Children's and Families Act. In particular:

- We have established a strong and effective SEND partnership board with governance arrangements and transformational leadership
- We are continuing to embed our coproduction charter and are working hard to embed co-production with children, young people, and their families as central to the way that we do things
- A Co-production Officer has been funded by the Local Authority and CCG, initially working within the IASS to support the parent/carer forum, Voice4Parents (V4P) and to embed co-production in the area. As a result, the strategic involvement of parents and carers is starting to be embedded with a desire and commitment to achieve genuine co-production
- We have worked together well to ensure the transfer of Statements to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans was achieved on time through following a transfer review process. We are now working on improving the timeliness and quality of our EHC plans, ensuring EHC plans are focused on achieving meaningful outcomes
- Our birth to early years provision is highly effective and has a strong "Team around the Child" ethos that is highly valued by families.
- We are continuing to review and improve our Local Offer so that information is available in one place
- Our partnerships with the CCG and NHS England are very strong and have remained supportive during the pandemic. We have representatives across all meetings and at scrutiny at board level. Wolverhampton benefits from a Designated Medical Officer role, providing the health link with the Local Authority
- Our social care links are going from strength to strength. We have introduced SEND champions across all areas of social care to improve and increase awareness and work within this area. We have a strong and committed and fully active DCSO role in post
- We have strong political support from our Lead Member, the Cabinet and Council. The Lead Member maintains a regular oversight of all activity through regular briefings
- We have invested in the development of the Wolverhampton Outreach Service, as a key strategic partner in supporting our mainstream practitioners in understanding and meeting the needs of our children with SEND.

Our Vision - The new SEND Strategy 2020 - 2023 [ER1](#)

Wolverhampton's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2020 - 2023 (the SEND Strategy) sets

out the vision and key priorities that partners in the city, including parents and carers, children and young people, education, health, social care and voluntary sector agencies want to focus on to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND over the next five years.

Our SEND strategy 2020 – 2023 has been developed in co-production with children and young people, their families and a range of professionals, [ER2](#) and sets out the following overarching aims:

- Children, young people and their families are empowered and well supported
- Wolverhampton will be an inclusive city
- Young people are well prepared for adulthood.

The Wolverhampton Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2020-23 sets out the vision and key priorities that council and partners in the city want to focus on to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND. The strategy has been developed by the Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board and demonstrates their commitment to making sure children and young people with SEND and their families have an equal opportunity to achieve a good quality life.

The strategy continues to promote the delivery of:

- Genuine Co-production – we believe that young people and their families are best placed to shape the services and support that they receive
- A highly skilled multi-agency workforce working together
- Aiming for a good quality ordinary life for all
- High expectations and aspirations – creating and nurturing a culture which raises everyone’s expectations for children and young people with SEND to ensure ‘ordinary life’ outcomes
- Tell it once – embedding a culture of ‘tell it once’ so that children, young people, and families don’t have to continually tell their story repeatedly to different people and services
- Joint commissioning – working together to know we, plan and deliver services that achieve real outcomes.

What do we know about Wolverhampton?

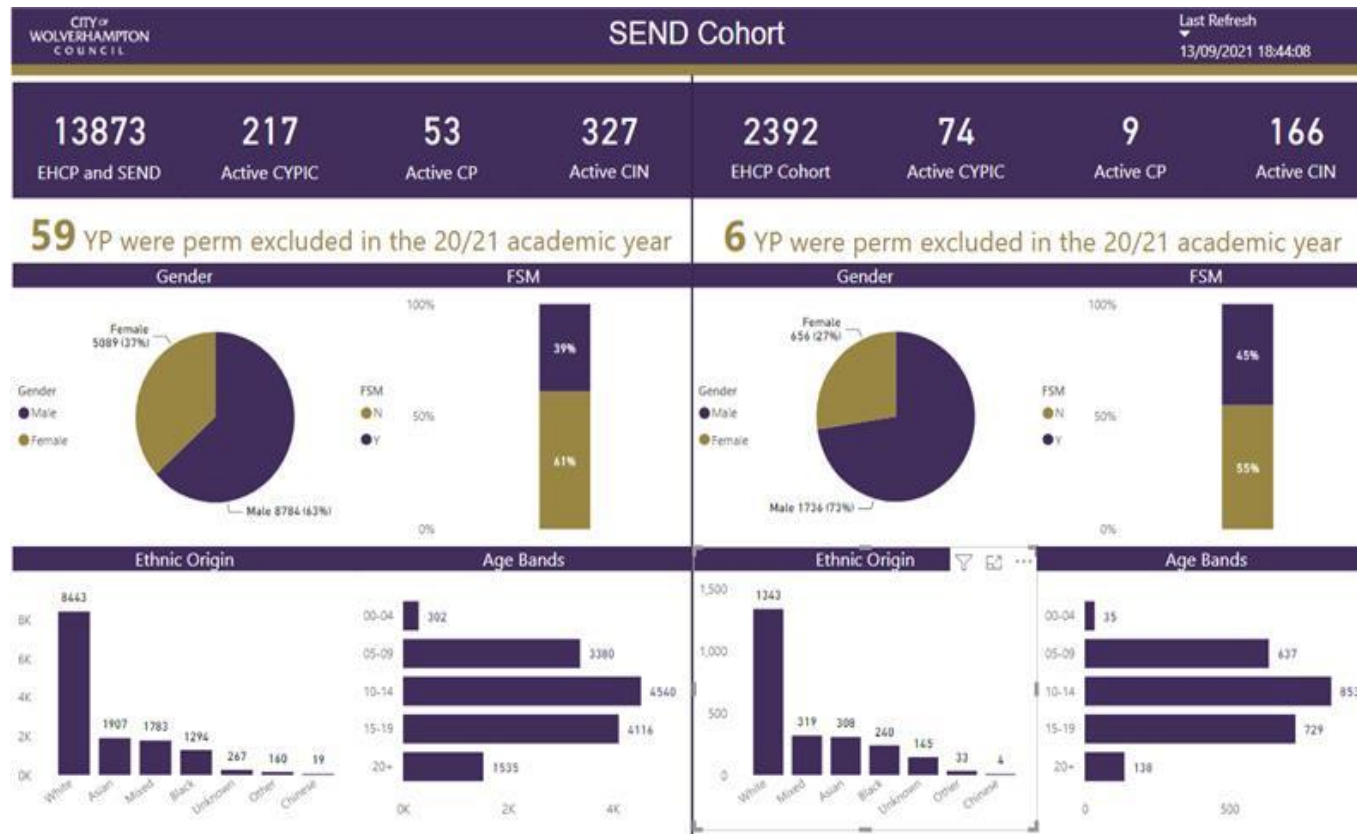
Insight and Performance are the Local Authority's corporate data and analytics team. The team have been supporting the improvement of education data and reporting since January 2021. The following is the work that has taken place to support improvement in these areas:

- The tribunals and mediation data have been collated from the ONE system
- Yearly attendance data from September 2018 onwards have been collated from the ONE system, to help monitor yearly trends for schools
- A Vulnerability Matrix report has been created to help identify those who may need additional support and potential early intervention, looking at certain areas such as Free School Meals, Exclusions and Funding.
- Weekly scheduled data quality reports have been set up from the ONE system to help identify issues with the data including:
 - Data quality page for missing criteria in EHCP plans
 - Active EHCPs
 - Timeliness of EHCPs
 - Elective Home Education (EHE)
 - Children Missing Education (CME)
- New processes and skills within Insight and Performance have meant that the data refreshes and flows daily into dashboards. Scheduled reports within these dataflows look at:
 - Attendance
 - Exclusions
 - Mediations and Tribunals
 - Free School Meals
 - Financial Provisions
 - Additional scheduled DQ reports.
- A new post in place since May 2021 focuses and drives improvements in quality within the world of SEND and to carry out additional work to reconcile EHC hub and the ONE system for EHCP assessments.
- SEN2 dashboard which looks ahead to the next submission.
- SEND performance dashboard looking at weekly/monthly performance of EHCPs covering:
 - EHCPs by month/NCY/In care/ Primary need/ establishment type/ source

- Caseloads
- Assessments in progress
- Assessment requests
- EHCPs completed/made inactive
- Mediations and Tribunals
- EHCP annual reviews

Moving forward, Insight and Performance have plans to work with the School Improvement Team on the completion of the school census to ensure development work within the service is included in the return. There are also plans to create monthly rolling cohorts to improve oversight of SEND performance and to align with social care performance reporting.

Current Local Data Sourced from Wolverhampton Systems



SEN2 National Comparative Data

SEND in Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton has 121 schools providing education to 49420 pupils

14% of pupils in Wolverhampton required SEND support in 2020/21. This is higher than the national figure of 12%

84% of SEND pupils in Wolverhampton are placed in mainstream schools

The number of personal budgets taken up for EHC plans is 22% below the national average

There are 1.3% of Wolverhampton SEND pupils attending Pupil Referral Units compared to 0.46% of pupils in England

There are 964 SEND pupils placed in special schools

There are 297 SEND pupils placed in independent schools

There are 12 SEND pupils placed in alternative provision

388 initial requests for an EHC plan were received in 2020, and 32 of these were refused

There are 1754 students with an EHCP in Wolverhampton

There were 3 mediation cases in 2020, and 1 of these cases was followed by appeal to tribunal

3 pupils transferred from mainstream to special schools in 2020 compared with 14 in 2019

24.4% of EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks in 2020

The permanent exclusion rate for pupils with SEN provision is 0.52 compared to the 0.2 rate for England

12 out of 427 pupils who are Electively Home Educated have an EHCP

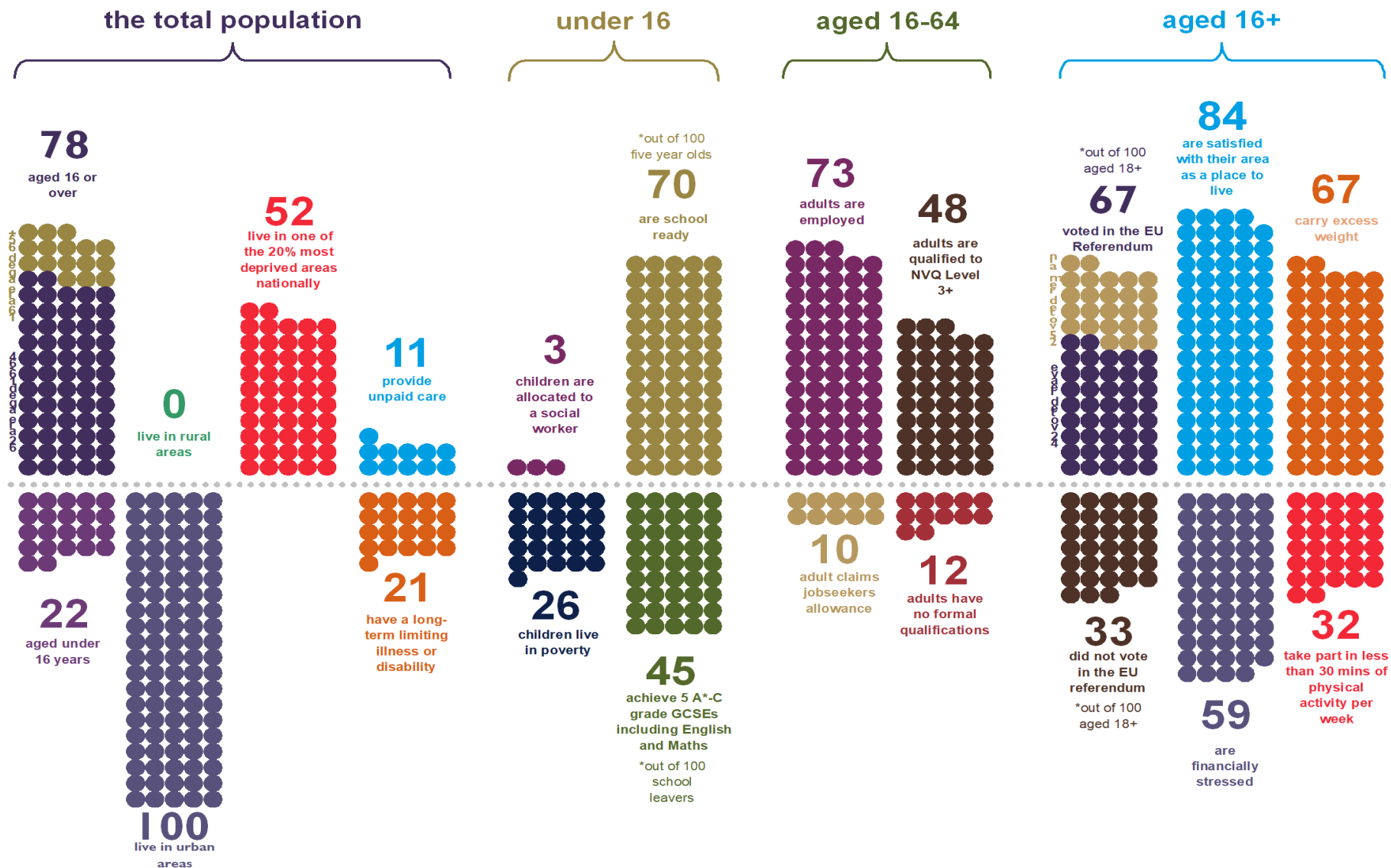
54.7% of adults with learning disabilities live in their own home or with their family compared to 79.4% for England

7% of pupils with an EHCP are reaching the expected standard of reading, writing and maths compared to 10% for England

7.3% of adults with learning disabilities were in paid employment in 2019/20 compared with 6.2 % for England

1.8 % of pupils with an EHC plan achieve grades 4 or above in GCSE English and Maths compared to 36.2% of those with SEN Support and 75.9 % of pupils with no SEN status

- **SEND in mainstream schools** – 84% includes the proportion of both EHCP and SEN Support in Mainstream schools based on published statistics. When looking at EHCP only the proportion is 39% and SEN Support only is 96%.
- **Students with an EHCP** – This figure is taken from data published from our most recent school Census. This does not cover those in early years settings. This data can be seen on the below dashboard.



Participation, Engagement and Coproduction

Our aim is to ensure genuine co-production is at the heart of our work to implement the SEND reforms and is increasingly the 'business as usual' model. Our Co-production Charter ^{ER3} seeks to ensure families remain at the heart of discussions and decisions. These values have been developed with young people, parents and carers, the City of Wolverhampton Council; Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and the Black Country and West Birmingham CCG; Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council and Wolverhampton Information, Advice and Support Service.

Parent Carer Forum - Voice4Parents

Voice4Parents (V4P) is Wolverhampton's Independent Parent Carer forum whose representatives are parents and carers of children and young people (aged between 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities, living in Wolverhampton. V4P work closely with families living in Wolverhampton and as a strategic partner with the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group, working through a coproduction approach to shape and improve services by gathering feedback from parents and carers and listening to families' experiences. As parents of children and young people with SEND, the Voice 4 Parents Forum have a genuine understanding of just how hard the struggle can be.

Since 2016 Voice 4 Parents have seen an increasing membership which currently stands at 484 registered members, 950 + followers on social media and a closed Facebook page, with 120 members and a social media reach approaching circa 20,000. Over the past 12 months they regularly meet with affiliated community groups which extends the reach further ensuring liaison with hard to reach communities. They represent the collective voice of our members and their families.

The strategic involvement of parents and carers continues to be developed in Wolverhampton. Representatives from V4P are involved in many aspects of strategic work including SEND Partnership Board, Culture of Inclusion, Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Steering Group

The SEND governance structure involves Voice4Parents at every level including the SEND Partnership and Commissioning board and the group make important contributions via surveys, focus groups, coffee mornings, social media and affiliated community groups and regularly feedback to SEND Services. The forum we're heavily involved in the SEND Health Review and are valued members of the SEND Health Steering Group. V4P is a highly respected strategic vehicle with which to engage with parents and is recognised locally and nationally as a forum model of best practice.

The Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)

Wolverhampton IASS has a well-established and long successful history since the early service in 1994. The IASS is well regarded locally and nationally and is often highlighted as an example of best practice. The IASS is jointly funded by the local authority and the CCG, this will be a key strength. Health also fund IASS accommodation at the Gem Centre (Child Development Centre) as part of the holistic offer to families. To support joint commissioning arrangements a new caseworker post has been agreed with funding from social care. The case worker is part of the Social Care SEND Champions project and links with SEND Champions across the social care and strengthening families' service.

The IASS has an Advisory Board which has an independent chair who is the Deputy CEO of Changing Our Lives. Parent/carers, education, health and social care are all represented on the Board which meets termly. The IASS Young People Advisory Board represents young people's voice. The Board is chaired by young people and feeds into HY5.

The service has its own branding, identity and line management arrangements which allow the service to operate independently from the City of Wolverhampton Council. Feedback ^{ER4} demonstrates that parents, carers and young people are satisfied with the information, support and advice received and that accessing the service has led to improved outcomes for children and young people.

Involvement and Engagement with Children and Young People

The City of Wolverhampton Launched its Youth Engagement Strategy (#YES) <http://www.youthengagementstrategy.co.uk/> and the Co-Production Charter together in January 2020. The #YES sets out three areas of youth engagement:

- Being Healthy
- Being Connected
- Being You- Key feature is Co-Production and Youth Engagement.

It was created from feedback from young people, Make Your Mark (10,000 children and young people) and the Youth Engagement Survey (1,600 children and young people and their parents). The Co-Production Charter set out a set of promises and commitments to children and young people and their families. With the launch of these two key commitments the Co-Production and Youth Engagement Team was developed, with the aim

and ambition to gather the views of Children and young people with SEND and their families with the support of a Co-Production and Youth Engagement Manager and a team of participation Officers.

In January 2021 HY5 Young People Inspiring Change was born, a group of young people with a range of additional needs and disabilities. They have developed their Terms of Reference ^{ER5} and their 12-month action plan ^{ER6}. In May 2021 they met with the SEND Partnership Board, where they showcase their model of engagement which they will use to canvas the views of other young people with SEND in the city affected by services and support. HY5 members contribute regularly to the Co-Production Workstream for the Culture of Inclusion, they have been part of the recruitment process for key members of staff responsible for the provision of SEND services.

The Local Offer

The Wolverhampton Local Offer was originally published on the City of Wolverhampton Council website in September 2014. For the following two years, work continued to develop the site to meet the needs and views of children, young people, parents and carers who frequently used the site and services and those using it for the first time.

In September 2017, it was agreed by the Local Offer Group to migrate the Local Offer to the Wolverhampton Information Network (www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localoffer). Since this point, significant development work has been carried out by Local Authority representatives, health colleagues, third sector organisations alongside parents/carers and children and young people to provide content that was both statutorily compliant and in line with best practice guidelines. The updated website was subject to a soft launch in February 2018 and a formal launch to raise awareness of the relaunched Local Offer website took place shortly after.

Following this it was recognised that further development was required to ensure that the voice of young people and their families are used to further develop the Local Offer. The Voice4Parents Annual Survey 2019 found that 68% of respondents that were users of the Local Offer had difficulty in finding what they were looking for and this will need to be addressed with further development of key word searches and categorisation. During 2020 much planned work for awareness raising was stalled due to Covid measures and this led to an inability to gather feedback required to further develop the website. Covid measures also impacted upon peer review exercises with the Regional SEND Local Offer Leads group to help develop the Local Offer, increase accessibility and promote regional working although this work is now being re-established.

Due to parental concerns raised through V4P regarding communications a detailed section was added to the Local Offer including a Q&A addressing queries posed by V4P members with the support of Wolverhampton IASS, home learning resources and various coronavirus resources for those with special educational needs. The section was promoted by schools and through social media by the City of Wolverhampton Council, the IASS and V4P.

Our Local Offer is a key workstream within the transformation and improvement projects to ensure that all development is aligned to the principles that the Local Offer will be Co-produced, accessible, up to date, comprehensive and transparent, also to the wider work around co-production and graduated response.

The Culture of Inclusion Project's Participation and Co-production Workstream are currently working with the digital experience services alongside V4P, HY5 and WIAS Advisory Group to develop and deliver an implementation plan to review the local offer website to ensure the right information for the local area is available, accessible, user friendly, consistent in layout and auditable. This will be with a view to migrate to a more suitable platform to achieve this.

Strategic Governance & Joint Commissioning Arrangements

SEND Partnership Board - previously known as the SEND & Commissioning Partnership Board

The SEND Partnership Board^{ER7} brings together key stakeholders including Voice4Parents, headteachers, leaders and service managers in education, health, social care, public health, commissioning, and the voluntary sector. The Board is responsible for providing strategic direction and supporting joint commissioning to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND. They work in partnership to provide strategic oversight to:

- Identify all children and young people with SEND
- Assess and meet their needs
- Improve their outcomes.

The partnership board believes that children, young people and their families are best placed to shape the services and support they receive and are committed to working with all stakeholders to co-design and co-produce solutions to create an inclusive future that changes lives. Their vision

is that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Wolverhampton live in an inclusive city where the local area works together to support them and their families to lead a good quality 'ordinary life' and achieve their full potential.

In the process of developing and implementing the SEND Strategy, the SEND partnership board have prioritised nine key areas. These are:

- Development of a joint commissioning strategy
- Improving performance in relation to EHC needs assessments and reviews
- Implementing the short breaks review
- Improving the autism pathway
- Redevelopment of the Local Offer
- Genuine Co-production
- An improved and updated graduated response
- Improved preparation for adulthood and transition planning
- A secure emotional and wellbeing response.

The Culture of Inclusion and Belonging [ER8](#)

These nine key areas above have been addressed through a fast paced and highly driven cross service transformation project known as The Culture of Inclusion and Belonging. This is a 12-month improvement project which will result in aspirational pathways being available for all children and young people in Wolverhampton and working towards our goal of being an inclusive city.

Much work has happened; however, we know we can do more and are ambitious to continuously improve the support we provide to children and young people and their families. The two-part improvement plan that draws together key strands from pre-existing projects across the city, recognises co-dependencies and drives forward positive change within a robust timeframe. The Culture of Inclusion and Belonging projects work together to draw out the key nine priority areas from deliverable outcomes from the SEND strategy, while providing a strong basis to make the positive changes and improvements within a robust timeframe.

The mission of the project is that Wolverhampton becomes a beacon for outstanding practice within inclusion and SEND. Children and young people who live within the city with special educational needs and disabilities achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead

happy and fulfilled lives. The Local Authority will work seamlessly in a coordinated joined up approach which enables families, young people and children to participate in making well informed decisions about best possible outcomes. Our ambitious aim is that by August 2022, the experience through any SEND or inclusion pathway for children, young people and their families is consistently good or better. We will fulfil this by working together across all services, recognising the importance of person-centred planning while enabling full participation in decisions. We will ensure that children young people and their families are provided with the accurate unbiased information and support to ensure they achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes and are prepared effectively for adulthood.

The Culture of Inclusion

The Culture of Inclusion Project has been developed to ensure the robust systems are in place to respond to and manage demand across SEND services, therefore supporting the SEND Partnership Board in the implementation of the SEND Strategy, while ensuring best value for money, and protecting the Local Authority's interests. It ensures that there is effective oversight of several key work streams including enhancing Wolverhampton's Local Offer, upskilling education settings in the delivery of outstanding SEND provision through a robust graduated approach, improved EHC delivery during assessments and reviews and ensure that clear pathways are carefully codesigned and planned for well in advance of any transition.

The Culture of Belonging

The aims of the Culture of Belonging project are to promote inclusion, promote educational engagement and improve educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. It has been developed to promote inclusion, engagement and educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. The vision motivating this programme is one where all children and young people grow up experiencing a positive sense of belonging that enables them to engage positively and achieve educationally.

This project will include establishing new resource bases within mainstream schools and expanding capacity within the specialist educational estate. Successful completion of the project will enable more effective arrangements in place to forecast future SEND demand and inform SEND commissioning. An outcome will be that we are able to monitor, understand, and can better control spend from the High Needs Block and core budgets. In addition, the availability and monitoring of accurate and timely information will support us to make informed strategic decisions.

Governance Arrangements

A review ^{ER9} has recently taken place to ensure that there are robust governance and accountability arrangements in place for the effective implementation of the SEND Strategy which was jointly agreed across the system and between the City of Wolverhampton Council and CCG. This has included a thorough review of the terms of reference for the SEND Partnership Board ^{ER10} and consideration of the most appropriate sub-groups that need to be established to further develop and deliver the SEND priorities and action plans. All sub-groups ^{ER11} are accountable to the SEND Partnership Board and lead on the different priority themes within the SEND Strategy and Improvement Plan. Regular meetings provide agencies with the opportunity to ensure that all arrangements which have been put in place are appropriate and continue to meet the needs of the SEND population. During the meetings concerns can be raised about vulnerable learners, learning needs, groups and courses.

The relationship between CCG, the LA and The Wolverhampton Voice for Parents (V4P) has strengthened, and all groups are fully engaged with the SEND Partnership Board ^{ER12}. This high level and widespread representation at SEND Partnership Board, ensures that all key commissioning discussions/decisions in relation to children and young people in Wolverhampton including those who have SEND take place within one forum and the board are able to align key budgets for the delivery of children's services including Children's Social Care, NHS children's community health services (such as CAMHS), public health and the High Needs Block funding. Although robust governance arrangements underpin joint commissioning in Wolverhampton, this is one of our nine key priorities for development with the SEND Strategy. As a result, leaders have focused on this for fast paced development within our 12-month transformation projects. Key services provide regular reports to SEND Partnership Board to enable effective oversight and management over education (High Needs Block), Social Care, Public Health and CCG commissioned health services. Formal risk-share against aligned budgets is agreed annually.

There are longstanding formal partnership arrangements between the Local Authority and the local CCG. This allows for the strategic alignment of resources and for commissioning decisions at strategic, operational and individual level to be made jointly. Services such as CAMHS, Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy, Substance Misuse, Short Breaks and pathways for assessment and diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorders are therefore jointly planned and commissioned. The Designated Clinical Medical Officer is firmly embedded and represented on the SEND Partnership Board and the CCG has a Senior Responsible Officer for SEND who is a member of the CCG Governing Body. Dedicated SEND roles within the CCG, ensure that time is protected to this area of work. The Deputy Director of Education and Executive Director of Families (including the DCS role) provide strategic leadership and accountability for the commissioning of SEND services. This is supported by the Head of Inclusion and Empowerment (SEND Lead for the Local Authority).

Quarterly assurance meetings are held with NHSE and the CCG and the domains within the NHS guidance are used to ensure the CCGs risk register is being monitored appropriately. Updates regarding SEND to the governing body are in place providing regular sighting of this work.

The 2019 High Needs Place Commissioning Process and its subsequent outcomes have been regularly reported to both SEND Partnership Board and at the Monthly Joint Commissioning Meetings between the CCG and Local Authority. The CCG is undertaking a review of the community health services to have an accurate view of the local offer of these services and to ensure that they are fit for the future.

Joint Commissioning

Effective Joint Commissioning sits at the heart of the SEND Partnerships priorities with the SEND Partnership Board, the SEND strategy and the subsequent transformation projects. Much work has already been undertaken but this is still relatively early in development and as a result, there are inconsistencies in outcomes and some improvements have not yet impacted the lived experiences of the families, young people or children. Initially the SEND Partnership and Commissioning Board focused on this area, however it was recognised that this needed higher level of formalisation and a dedicated approach and so the new 'SEND Joint Commissioning Group' was established to focus on strategic elements as well as specific contracted services and offers such as IASS, ASD pathway, mental health, Wolverhampton Outreach Service, short breaks and co-production.

The Joint Commissioning group has draft Terms of Reference ^{ER13} and a dedicated agreement and commitment for attendance ^{ER14}. The SEND Joint Commissioning Group uses the Council for Disabled Children Checklist for monitoring and information is regularly reported to the SEND Partnership Board. The group has oversight of joint commissioning activity at a strategic level and at the individual contract level. In addition, the team facilitates multi-agency decision-making for children and young people with more complex needs. The group have developed a three-year road map ^{ER15} which sees the first two years focusing purely on the implication of a SEND commissioning strategy. The following years will expand to include social care. The six priorities for the group as identified on the road map are:

- Short breaks and leisure
- Mental Health
- ASD Pathway
- EHCPs

- Co-production
- Local Offer.

Promoting and supporting personalisation around placements is a priority for the Local Area and we are aware that this needs further development. Our aim is that children, young people and their families are increasingly given greater choice and a greater voice in how they receive support. Although there are pathways in place to ensure joined-up decision-making for individual children and young people and to facilitate the personalisation of support, including the increased use of personal budgets and direct payments for continuing care, short breaks and EHCPs are a focus for the transformation projects and a key priority within the SEND Strategy.

Our focus over the next 12 months will be to look at the implication of our 'SEND Commissioning Place Numbers' process. We intend to improve discussions through the SEND Joint Commissioning Group and recognise implications on SEND placements with our partners. The group are looking to develop service specifications for SEND placements and integrated joint funding of posts.

Personal Budgets and Short Breaks

The refresh of the SEND Strategy has independence and empowerment as a priority action with the objective to increase the control parents and young people have over the support they receive thus, there has been an increase in personal health budgets for children and young people who have Continuing Care needs with all accessing a PHB.

Commissioning arrangements with the CCG are being developed to enable joint packages of care and support to be brokered efficiently and delivered in a timely manner often providing the opportunity for combined support to be offered via one package/method of payment. The SEND Joint Commissioning Group are looking to create a dynamic purchasing system with active involvement from all providers. This will result in an online booking system for short breaks and leisure, allowing complete personalisation over the management of their own personal budget. Our aim is that this model will create an increase in personal budgets being applied for and granted.

Personalisation within early years is a particular area of growth, with early years individual payments in place for short breaks. This provides families with greater flexibility and support at the earliest opportunity. Direct payments and personal budgets sit alongside a range of additionally commissioned resource providing increased opportunities for choice, control and a mechanism for supporting a high number along the continuum of support.

Currently, understanding and uptake of Personal Budgets remains low and the council knows there is work to do over the understanding, processes and availability of services and provision. The Disabled Children's Service is working to extend the range of providers to improve the offer. Personal Budgets for education services have a minimal take-up. Parents that have enquired have found the requirement for employing staff as a barrier to taking on a Personal Education budget.

The Black Country and West Birmingham CCG is committed to offering personal health budgets. A Personalisation Roadmap providing information, advice and support around personal health budgets has been developed and consulted with parents/carers. Market development work has been undertaken with young people and providers around developing the market to ensure that individual outcomes can be met via a personal health budget. Currently 100% of children who are eligible for Continuing Care access a Personal Health Budget. The CCG would like to see an increase in Personal Health Budgets for the SEND cohort and have a Joint Action Plan in place with the council around progressing plans to offer this for all eligible children and young people at the point of review we had a Joint Action Plan.

Service provision includes overnight short breaks, outreach, buddying, activity groups for children/young people with Autistic spectrum conditions and community group-based activities during the weekend and school holidays. In addition, the City of Wolverhampton Council also provide funding to Special schools in Wolverhampton to also provide short break activities. All short break provision packages are reviewed six-monthly by the team and commissioned providers to ensure that the service is meeting need and outcomes identified. The service hold firm an ethos of involving children and young people and their parents/carers in the development of provision as well as their individual care plans. For those children who receive an overnight short break, social workers visit the children and young people in placement. Quality assurance staff also audit provision to ensure it meets the desired outcomes and standards.

Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Children and Young people with SEND

Childcare and Education Provision – Early Years

Our services and joint arrangements between health, education and care services for children from birth to 5 with SEND are highly effective and well established. There are secure Under 5's Pathways to both the Child Development Service [CDS] and Special Needs Early Years' Service [SNEYS]. A Multi- Agency Referral Panel and Under 5's ASD Panel meet monthly to co-ordinate joint service delivery to children and families. Multi-Agency staff provide support training for referrers to ensure Early Identification through high quality referrals. This can include education partners, Health Visiting Teams and GPs.

Professionals from Health, Education and Social Care meet to co-ordinate the Multi-Agency Referral Panel. Referrals are received from the Local Authority, Health Professionals and can also be received from parents. Education referrals must include evidence of the Graduated Approach. Following the panel, children will be allocated support from the appropriate services. To coordinate service delivery, so that we promote the 'Tell it Once' approach, a child may be given a Joint Assessment Clinic appointment.

The Under 5's Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnostic pathway operates in accordance with NICE guidance and follows ICD10 criteria. The panel is made up of professionals from Health, Education and Social Care. A keyworker approach ensures co-production and that children and families remain at the centre of the assessment process. A range of post diagnostic support and training for parents and education settings is available.

Special Needs Early Years' Service (SNEYS) support children between birth and five years of age where learning is delayed or where a diagnosis or disability indicates there will be special educational needs. Support is provided through home visits, PVI settings, schools and through the CDS specialist groups. The team work closely with families to formulate an individual programme of assessment, diagnosis, care and support to meet the needs of each child through a coordinated approach. The outcomes for children and families are:

- Children receive a specialist individual assessment which will identify strengths and needs
- Children may receive a specialist intervention programme building on child's strengths
- Children's progress is reviewed so they can achieve the best outcomes
- Families are supported through the process of identification so that they can make informed choices
- Through TAC families receive a co-ordinated approach to meet their child's needs

There are 50 registered Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years settings in Wolverhampton. Area SENCOs from SNEYS deliver training and support for PVI settings, including a SENCO Induction programme and SENCO Network meetings which supports practice to ensure early identification. Wolverhampton has a well-established Inclusion Funding Panel that provide additional funding to support, advise and review inclusive practice in early years settings. The panel also monitors Disability Access Fund requests and payments. Guidance and criteria for the Inclusion Funding and DAF Panels are transparent to settings and can be found on the Local Offer.

Primary and Secondary Provision

The ambition of the Local Authority is for most children with SEND to be educated within their locality and with their peers. Wherever possible, children should be able to live and learn locally in a mainstream school or resourced provision or specialist provision that, delivers high attainment

and positive and improving life outcomes for all. This objective has been supported in the current School Sufficiency Strategy ^{ER18} by the Local Authority seeking wherever possible, to co-locate special and mainstream provision.

In order to deliver the ambition for all children to be educated within their locality, a focus has been placed on providing high support and challenge to all schools. This includes:

- SENCo network ^{ER19} – free, termly network event coordinated, planned and delivered by a partnership group including representation from V4P and schools
- SENCo development program – a new development programme for SENCOs to access on going locally-led CPD
- New SENCo Induction course - a programme to support SENCOs new to role or new to the city.
- Development of an online SENCo platform to facilitate easy access to early signposting and support, networking and sharing good practice across the city
- New Headteacher Induction Programme – this is led by Education Excellence. There is a specific focus on the leadership and governance of SEND
- Promoting Inclusion from the Early Years Project ^{ER20} – a project which aims to provide a co-ordinated offer of support to schools, from specialist services and health partners, in response to the increasing numbers of children identified with complex special educational needs and disabilities in the early years. The project focuses on promoting inclusive schools by offering: ‘The Keys to Inclusion’ training across the city; individual person-centred transition team around the child (TAC) meetings; staff skills, confidence and experience audits; a free tailored training offer; and development of support networks involving Solution Circles with schools, specialist services and health partners.
- A comprehensive training and support offer for schools ^{ER21} (including master's accredited courses and charter marks), delivered by a range of partners (including Educational Psychology, Outreach, Specialist Teachers)
- Implementation of Whole School SEND Reviews through the support of the LA and through peer to peer, the effectiveness of SEND provision is reviewed in schools. Reviewers include School Improvement Advisors, mainstream and special school Headteachers
- Clinicians attend settings to inform support staff and teaching staff of specific therapeutic needs or education around use of equipment and reasonable adjustments and delivery of therapeutic programmes in schools.
- The Wolverhampton Outreach Service are a team of 21 teachers and TAs from four of the special schools in our city. This team engages with all our mainstream settings to enable them to better include children with SEND. This includes child focused referrals, teacher to teacher support, SEND, Inclusion and Wellbeing focused CPD opportunities, a Universal Sensory and Autism training offer and the Autism

Friendly Schools Award.

- Clear pathways and guidance for schools to support them in meeting the needs of children and young people with specific needs (including the ISAPP pathway, 'Getting it Right' guidance for children with social and emotional needs, and the development of a 'Supporting children and young people with emotionally based non-attendance' pathway).

Preparation for Adulthood from the earliest years

Preparation for adulthood planning starts within our early years provision and work has been planned to support schools in further developing their practice in this area through the SENCo network forward plan. Our focus is on the young person's strengths and capabilities, and we ensure they maintain high aspirations with clear long-term goals agreed and we deliver the support required to achieve these. We recognise that as young people get older and become young adults, it is important that they are provided with opportunities to take more control over their lives and become directly involved in making choices. Support and training for schools is being provided through the SENCo network.

Transition to adulthood has been identified as a key priority for the SEND Strategy. It is also identified within the Culture of Inclusion improvement plan. Work within this area includes:

- A Further Education representative is now part of the SEND Board
- The LA has supported colleges to increase the number of Supported Internships across the county
- Further work is required to create a more person-centred study programme and a more integrated 16-25 offer for young people with a focus on employment and transition to adulthood
- The Disabled Children and Young People's Team works closely with the Transition team based in Adult Services and with schools to ensure continuous provision and support to successfully achieve independent living. Personal Assistants provide the co-ordination between services and advocate on behalf of the young person. The team supports young adults up to the age of 25 in their progression to adulthood and independence.

Placements, Provision and Sufficiency

Wolverhampton has 98 mainstream schools, eight special schools, four Pupil Referral Units and nine resource bases of our Special Schools; one of our special schools is rated Outstanding, four are Good and three Requires Improvement. All our PRUs are Ofsted rated Good. Eight of our open Resource Bases are rated Good, with 1 Requires Improvement. From our two new Resource Base provisions due to open in 2021/22, one is rated Outstanding and the other is rated Good.

SEN population data continues to inform the development and commissioning of services to ensure that local provision is driven by local need and demand. SEN2 data suggests that children in Wolverhampton are more likely to be identified as having moderate learning difficulties than national comparisons and less likely to be identified as having autism spectrum disorder; speech language and communication needs; and social emotional mental health as a primary area of need. However, it is not clear whether this reflects differences in the population or inaccuracies in the school processes for identifying and recording primary needs. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been the most common primary need in each of the last five years for children who have an EHC plan. There has been a consistent growth in demand for specialist provision for ASD and SEMH. This growth in demand together with a lack of specialist provision for SEMH and ASD locally, has informed our sufficiency strategy. We are working to ensure we have a complete understanding of identified 'primary need' to better inform commissioning decisions and future planning for sufficiency of appropriate places.

In addition to this, the LA has recognised the significant rise in children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs and Communication and Interaction needs and have responded with significant capital investment of £852,000 to increase the number of places available by 90 over the next two years.

Most Outreach Services only offer support for children with a diagnosis of Autism. However, in Wolverhampton, we have commissioned an Outreach Service that focuses on all four areas of need, so can support schools irrelevant of the child's primary area of need.

The process for agreeing both placements and funding for external residential provision is through the External Placements Panel (EPP). This multidisciplinary process ensures that alternative and innovative solutions within the city are explored in full before any external placement is considered. EPP is chaired by the Deputy Director, Children's Social Care or Head of Children and Young People in Care who manages a 'pooled budget' which consists of contributions from the Council (education and social care) and health partners (Clinical Commissioning Group). This is used to fund and review external placements, where need is clearly evidenced. The EPP budget is used when there are shared responsibilities

that must be met in a coordinated manner. All children and young people funded by EPP have a health need and an education and/or a social care need. This budget also funds pupils with education, health and care plans that receive their education externally in other local authorities-maintained schools (mainstream, special and academies), most of these are children and young people in care and reside out of city but remain the financial responsibility of the City of Wolverhampton Council.

There are clear lines of communication between NHS England and the CCG and subsequently the City of Wolverhampton Council and CCG to ensure there is a shared understanding of children and young people in tier four provision and the quality of education provision within those settings. Commissioners from Education, Social Care, CCG and Public Health routinely share sufficiency and commissioning intentions, this is now undertaken at the Joint Strategic Commissioning Group, with commissioned place numbers and the implications for supporting services analysed and understood.

Children and young people who receive their education out of city have funding elements 1 and 2 already factored into their placement. Top up funding (element 3) is charged by the host authority/provider and paid by the home authority (Wolverhampton) directly to the provider. These funding relationships between commissioners and providers have replaced inter-authority recoupment, except for pupils who are deemed to be children in care. In exceptional cases, where the provider is oversubscribed, all three elements may be funded by the home authority to secure provision for children in need of a place.

The local CCG and the City of Wolverhampton Council are involved in the Transforming Care Programme which is being implemented at a Black Country Level. A recent benchmarking exercise by NHS England rated the area's support needs as "amber". Improvements noted included significant reductions in the use of inpatient hospital beds, improved working between CCG commissioners across the region and improved engagement with LA services, and implementation of a dynamic risk register. Further work is required to improve engagement with young people and families, developing an improved work plan, and further strengthening and embedding the risk register.

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Restorative Practice training has been rolled out to Children's Services practitioners. Following this, Wolverhampton Safeguarding Together Partnership has invested in training a pool of RP trainers who can deliver training across the partnership. The Inclusion Support Service provides RP training to schools.

The Black Country and West Birmingham CCG, the City of Wolverhampton Council and other key stakeholders have undertaken a joint audit of the support available for children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). As a result of this a programme of joint training has been commissioned and implemented. In addition, the CCG have a process in place to receive Individual Funding Requests or Special Funding Requests for highly specialised and/or low incidence needs and, as part of the Autism Strategy, a multi-agency autism training programme is being developed.

A partnership emotional wellbeing and mental health workforce development training plan is being developed to ensure that learning and resources from the HeadStart programme can be coordinated effectively. This is being developed with involvement of schools, council services, health, and voluntary/community sector. From Paediatrics in Partnership and Future in Mind meetings there are regular discussions about CYP who have highly specialised needs particularly from a mental health point of view but also looking at specialist provision for CYP with complex physical needs.

Wolverhampton is a trailblazer site for the Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTs) pathfinder project. A joint model has been implemented in Wolverhampton (as a joint Black Country model), with CAMHS and Educational Psychologist posts within the structure. Work is ongoing to refine the implementation of the model and ensure that the work of the MHSTs compliments and enhances the existing other wellbeing work across the city.

In Wolverhampton there is recognition that in order to meet the emotional and mental health needs of children and young people, there is a need to focus on promoting positive wellbeing and developing whole school approaches in addition to ensuring clear accessible pathways to accessing appropriate specialist support. To facilitate this the City of Wolverhampton Council, Public Health and local CCG have:

- engaged in the Link Program to improve partnerships between mental health services and education, raise awareness of mental health concerns and improve referrals to specialist help when needed
- Established a 'Wellbeing Network' for key staff from schools, to provide a source of ongoing advice and signposting, share national and local good practice examples and to provide peer support
- Committed to implement the national I-Thrive model to support system change and ensure there is clarity across the partnership about what support is available, when and for whom
- Committed to apply to be an approved provider of Senior Mental Health Lead training for schools and colleges in the city to build on the training and support already provided

- Developing a wellbeing charter mark (currently in pilot phase) for schools.

SEN Support

The LA and schools invest in a range of specialist support offers with the aim of ensuring children's special educational needs are identified early and appropriately, that children receive the right support at the right time, and that they make good progress. Our current data shows that our SEN support of 14.2% is above that of the national average of 12.2%.

Although, in general, our data shows that the identification of children at SEN support is slightly above national average, there are some concerns regarding the identification of primary need for children at SEN support. Historically, SEMH has been an under identified group in Wolverhampton, but recent data demonstrates that the planned approach to addressing this has had a positive impact, as our proportion of children with SEMH as an identified primary need is now closer to the national average. The action taken involved the co-production of a 'Getting it Right' pathway, which provides clear guidance to schools on how to identify and meet the needs of children with SEMH needs. There has been a focus on workforce development with an ongoing free training offer for schools linked to the ['Getting it Right'](#) Pathway.

A review of data over time shows the positive impact of the joint work between Education Excellence and Inclusion and Empowerment on the accurate identification of SEND, with an increase in the proportion of children identified with speech, language and communication needs which has decreased the wide gap between local and national. Further work is now being implemented through the Culture of Inclusion Early Identification and Support workstream to apply this model across all areas of need and address the outstanding concerns. It is expected that the co-production of a local graduated approach guidance (including signposting to evidence based assessment tools and interventions) alongside a workforce development plan will have a positive impact on the identification of other primary needs and ensure that there is a consistent approach across schools. It will also ensure that schools use their 'best endeavours' to meet the needs of children and young people at SEN support, prior to a request for enhanced provision.

The 'Promoting Inclusion from the Early Years' project has provided all schools with an opportunity to access central training which promotes key messages about fostering inclusive school cultures. Alongside this, the Head Teacher Induction and the New/New to Wolverhampton SENCo Induction programmes for 2021/22 reinforce these key messages and the notion of 'SEND is everyone's responsibility'.

Other actions identified within the Culture of Inclusion – Early Intervention and Support workstream are in progress and will support a consistent approach to the identification of SEND across the city, ensuring that children receive timely, high-quality support and achieve good outcomes.

Education Health Care Pathways

Feedback from local authority partners, families, young people and educational partners within SEND indicated a lack of clarity regarding the function, purpose and role of the EHC pathways. As a result, this area is a focus workstream within the Culture of Inclusion project.

The project is driving the SEND Statutory Assessment and Review Team (SENDSTART) team to be purposeful and effective administrators of the EHC processes. There are currently 2 Team Leaders, 7.5 Full Time Equivalent SEND officers and 7 SEND Casework Assistants who work within the service. The team is split into 2 phases and work directly with children and families as the common link promoting integrative and collaborative working and reinforcing a tell us once approach. Phase 1 supports children aged 0 to 14 years and their families. This team focuses on readiness for school, transition to secondary and smooth transition between key phases. Phase 2 officers work with children, young people aged 14 to 25 and their families and focus on preparation for adult and transition to adult services. Within this project, we recognise there is much work to be done and parents have rightly raised concerns. We have been working with Voice4Parents to improve our practice and have held joint refresher days in April 2021 where we started to explore some of the processes and develop our team's knowledge of legislative duties. The SENDSTART are developing skills to work proactively for the children, young people and their families, ensuring tell it once and clear jargon free communication is at the centre of their work. Our aim is that the SENDSTART team become approachable contactable and accessible for families, continually motivated for to provide an outstanding service.

EHC Statutory Needs Assessment and 20-week Pathway

We have been developing clear EHC processes which are shared and disseminated with schools and other stakeholders. Our aim is that the EHC pathways and processes are consistent and effective with the best use of resources. We are developing coproduced EHC paperwork which is easy to use and accessible for all alongside our partners. We are reviewing the best way to achieve this and are looking at the efficacy of the EHC Hub online portal which parents and school settings have raised concerns about.

Requests for EHC plans has risen exponentially and the SENDSTART team have required additional capacity to complete the annual reviews. There is much pressure on special school places or resourced provision with many requests of independent or out of area places needed to meet demand. Lack of placements have led to delays in finalising EHC plans. We are examining our processes for statutory assessments to ensure that they follow legislation and are delivered in a timely fashion. Timeliness for EHC assessments is currently at 40% from a level of 17% at the start of 2021.

Timeliness and quality of EHC plans is a core priority for the SEND Partnership Board and is under scrutiny with a dedicated workstream under the Culture of Inclusion project. Our aim is that timeliness will be consistently within time by Spring 2022.

Annual Review of EHC Plans

We recognise timely annual reviews are crucial so that key information on needs, provision and outcomes are kept up to date to allow the educational setting to deliver relevant high quality special educational provision and ensure effective teaching and learning leads to good progress. In addition, the review and monitoring of required health and social care provision contributes to the measures of good progress towards securing outcomes.

Wolverhampton is working on improving a 20-week assessment pathway but have been less successful in establishing an effective annual review process. In 2018, the focus was on completing the conversions from statement to EHC plans within the prescribed deadline whilst maintaining the 20-week statutory duty for new assessments. Wolverhampton has been working to reduce a backlog of annual reviews through the implementation of a recovery plan. From September 2021, the SENDSTART team will begin to move forward on the completion of compliant annual reviews and move these decisions forward in a timely way. We understand it is essential to build in a new system which is robust, equitable and transparent so that further annual reviews are managed within the legislative timeframes while being supported by a strong quality assurance framework which can improve the EHC plans and in turn lead to the development of the local offer and feed into the JSNA.

Transformation projects are in place to address identified areas of improvement and focus has been placed on clearing the backlog alongside examining the processes and systems which caused the delay. A renewed Annual Review pathway process is being developed alongside our partners as part of the Culture of Inclusion project with a view to developing the guidance and paperwork and providing training SENCOs over the autumn term 2021.

Decision making

We are working towards a decision making process which is transparent, robust and equitable and in doing so can actively involve a range of partners. The local authority currently has a weekly SAM panel moderation system with contribution from education, health and social care partners which oversees the decision to assess new EHCP requests. Whilst this is an embedded system and has excellent contribution from partners, we are looking at developing this process further to include a wider scope for challenge amongst our SENCOs. Decision making processes

around issuing EHCPs are not sufficiently robust, and this is also being looked at as part of the wider transformation work to ensure that decisions to issue EHCPs can withstand scrutiny.

A new system has been established to consider Funding & Placement decisions for children and young people with EHCPs. This decision-making group has clear terms of reference [ER22](#) and helps to ensure that we are providing the right support decisions for the best outcomes for children and young people. It has links with commissioning to provide essential information around SEND sufficiency and placement planning.

Quality Assurance of EHC Plans

We want our EHC plans to become purposeful and meaningful centre on the views, feelings and aspirations of the children, young people and their families. We updated our template in 2021 with parents, young people and educational settings so that it becomes the ‘umbrella’ document uniting education, health and social care. The SENDSTART team completed training on writing outcomes in April 2021 and use a plan writing guide to support standardisation and quality.

Wolverhampton has undertaken two cross-service quality assurance samples [ER23](#) in 2021. This process is currently being embedded into a new Quality Assurance Framework. The intention is that Wolverhampton will have a universally accepted Quality Assurance Framework. This will be used on a day-to-day basis for all plans being written as well as strategic quality assurance with partners to ensure there is a feedback process allowing ongoing development of services across the partnership who contribute towards EHCPs. The framework will include triangulation with other data, including surveys, complaints, appeals to SENDIST and requests for mediation, to ensure there is a process of continual reflection on the quality of services as part of a structured approach.

Vulnerable Children and Children in Specific Circumstances

Wolverhampton is committed to improving the life-chances of the most vulnerable children and young people with Special Educational Needs and adheres to the vision that children with “special educational needs and disabilities achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives” SEND Code of Practice 2015. There is an acknowledgment and need to support schools to promote early identification of SEND and use Pupil Premium and SEN funding effectively, to ensure that there are successful interventions available in school to

meet most early and vulnerable needs. We have started this work through the Culture of Inclusion and Belonging projects, however we acknowledge the impact has not yet reached the lived-in experiences of families, children and young people.

Wolverhampton are in the process of creating a 'Vulnerability Index' which focuses on the most vulnerable children who have additional learning needs in the form of SEN support or an EHC plan and who are also facing additional challenges that potentially impact negatively on their lives. The framework aims to bring services and teams together to form a strong, pre-emptive and supportive team around the child. It should provide assurance that children and young people's additional learning needs and vulnerabilities do not act as a barrier to their aspirations or life chances. Our aim is that these children and young people can make progress within carefully planned provision and can achieve in fulfilling positive life outcomes. By Identifying the children most at risk of failure due to a combination of learning needs and additional vulnerability factors, the local area aims to plan services and provision in a timely and proactive manner. In addition, by drawing services together to recognise a shared responsibility and accountability for these children and young people will secure mechanisms for information sharing, collaborative working processes and a stronger Local Offer.

Children Looked After by the Local Authority and Children in Need

The Wolverhampton Virtual School rigorously tracks attendance, attainment and progress, and supports the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process, which includes ensuring that SEND issues are identified, assessed and appropriate support provided. At the end of the academic year 2020, 91% of PEPs were completed within the statutory six-month period and 81% were assessed in audits as having targets that were SMART (specific, measurable, achievable and time-related).

The School Head manages the Pupil Premium Plus grant for children and young people in care. Currently, one of the interventions funded by the grant enables 11 children in care with EHCPs (10 of whom are attending Wolverhampton special schools), plus a further three who are on SEN support, to access additional music tuition. The service also includes dedicated Educational Psychology support and delivers training in SEND-related matters to schools and social care teams, as well as regular training and support to designated teachers and carers. All CCG contracts are subject to Contract Review procedures where issues regarding quality are routinely considered. CCG commissioned providers also hold information regarding complaints, and this is provided to the CCG via Contract Review meetings.

The Inclusion Support and Alternative Provision Panel (ISAPP) ^{ER24} helps to identify vulnerable pupils who have unmet SEND needs. Permanently excluded pupils, and those at risk of exclusion, are referred to the panel for a joined-up, multi-agency approach to support. The panel members

include an Educational Psychologist and Outreach Service. Many pupils referred are at SEN support stage, and the panel helps to scrutinise SEN support plans, recommend or expedite EP assessments and allocate outreach services and other intervention for these pupils. For looked after children who meet criteria for tri-partite funding, the group meet monthly to discuss the small number of children with complex needs to ensure their needs are being met within the placement. This is reviewed to ensure step down for these young people are being considered for foster placements rather than the therapeutic care homes they require at the time.

Children and Young People supported by the Youth Offending Service

Intervention plans for young people in the Youth Justice System include screening for SLCN and other additional needs. The Youth Offending Team and Virtual School Team have received extensive training in SEND to ensure that both services are able to take young people's SEND properly into account in education plans. Both services have dedicated Senior Educational Psychologist support, and the Youth Offending Team (YOT) also has a dedicated Speech and Language Therapist on its staff team. YOT staff attend reviews for young people with EHCPs and SENSTART attend YOT's monthly education planning meetings to agree SMART action plans for any young people open to the service who are not engaged in full-time education or are struggling with engagement.

Support to Children, Young People and Families during Covid-19 ^{ER25}

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, schools in Wolverhampton closed to most pupils on 23 March 2020. Initially, schools were instructed to remain open for two groups: children of critical workers and vulnerable children. Vulnerable children were defined as those with a social worker; with an education, health, and care (EHC) plan who had needs that could not be safely met at home; and other vulnerable pupils identified either by schools or the local authority.

On 1 June 2020, children in nursery, reception, Year 1 and Year 6 were able to return to school. From 15 June 2020, secondary schools arranged that pupil in Year 10 and Year 12 could return to school for some face-to-face contact with teachers.

The Government had previously shared an ambition that all pupils in primary schools would be able to return before the summer holidays. However, this ambition has not been fully fulfilled. Primary schools were able to expand provision to further year groups where they had the capacity to do this and then return to school in the following September until the commencement of the subsequent restrictions.

Throughout the periods of lockdown, provision for pupils in schools has had to be significantly adapted to implement appropriate health and safety measures, including having reduced group sizes (maximum 15 children per group) and a range of health and safety measures have been in place with the help of public health and social care colleagues (see <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information>).

In the context of a rapidly changing situation, effective communication with schools, settings and providers has been crucial. During the initial weeks following the announcement of school closures, the Council produced a daily bulletin for schools to provide updated information, guidance and resources in relation to: children continuing to attend school; capacity in schools and settings; school and provider collaborations; assessments and exams; early years settings; holiday arrangements; free school meals; health and safety; information and support for parents; changes in legislation; support services for schools; teaching and curriculum; and transport. These bulletins have moved to being produced weekly.

In addition to regular bulletins, frequent and regular informal liaison with school leaders has taken place, both by individual officers from the Council's education services, and through structured group engagement sessions with school leaders of settings at distinct phases. These sessions have been used to canvas views and jointly develop plans for a coordinated approach to expanding provision to more pupils. Staff from Public Health, Health and Safety, and Human Resources have consistently contributed to the bulletin, engagement sessions and wider work with school leaders as part of this coordinated approach and they continue to meet as the Incident Management Team to review and monitor and respond to current advice and liaise with the DfE in relation to the Covid-19 response.

In preparation for the full re-opening of schools the council's education services held planning meetings with mainstream schools to identify concerns about particular groups, concerns about individual children and young people, and to gather feedback on what has worked well. Regular, weekly sessions were also facilitated by the Inclusion & Empowerment service for members of the parent carer forum to meet with services and raise concerns, request support and problem solve regarding common current issues (e.g. transport). The information gathered in these forums was used to inform the development of a tailored support offer, including a wide range of staff training, support for individual children and families and support for schools. From these sessions, the Heads Briefings and website were updated to inform the current schools advice and guidance: <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-and-information/guidance-for-city-of-wolverhampton-employees/schools-employees-education-providers>.

Our schools had clear and regular communication with families; weekly calls, discussing any issues and any important school updates. Parents were encouraged to contact the school if there were any problems. Our special schools worked hard to get the most complex children back to school^{ER26}. We very quickly set up a 'Virtual SENCO Forum' for all schools across both boroughs – this has enabled us to maintain regular

communication with schools specifically around the support of CYP with SEND. These sessions are also recorded which gives SENCOs the opportunity to watch later.

We adapted our SEND Service so they were flexible in their approach and could provide remote support through email, telephone and video calls, to school staff and families in any local settings. The Wolverhampton Outreach Service also joined together with EPS to provide a 'return to school' training package post lock down. This package covered a range of topics such as social anxiety and bereavement. The Wolverhampton Outreach Service continued to offer support to schools throughout the pandemic. This included online meetings with teachers, SENCOs and parents, a review of the website will include a home learning section for parents and engagement with teachers to provide suggested ways of delivering differentiated tasks when working online.

The SENDSTART team continued to deliver services as usual, throughout the Covid pandemic and were able to address some of the issues that were previously experienced with timeliness of assessments and delays in processing annual reviews. We worked closely with our partners from the CCG and health providers to ensure that appropriate support was available within the constraints that the NHS were working during the crisis. The team carried out Zoom calls with parents of children with SEND and supported families through video and telephone calls, ensuring regular contact for those who needed it, and where necessary providing extra support. This model improved throughout lock down as staff became more confident working in a remote and agile environment.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) continued to provide a service to all schools during the Covid-19 lockdown, carrying out consultations, assessments, training and interventions virtually. The EPS also worked in partnership with other support services to develop a parent/carer telephone consultation line which was well accessed and highly valued. This enabled parents/carers to access free support and advice in relation to concerns about children and young people's wellbeing, learning, behaviour and their return to school.

A Wolverhampton Wellbeing Network has been established during the Covid pandemic as a forum for providing support and signposting to staff in schools and colleges who play a key role in relation to wellbeing and mental health. This continues to grow in number, strength and impact. Wellbeing support for school staff has also been provided through Wolverhampton's Wellbeing for Education Return response.

For full details of Wolverhampton's full Covid response please see <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-08/Public-Health-Annual-Report-2020-21.pdf>.

The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust has also worked in conjunction with the Universities of Keele and Wolverhampton to undertake a study called Forgotten Voices to look at the impact of Covid on SEND families to understand and make improvements.

Evidence Reference Bank

Ref Linked	Evidence Required
ER1	SEND Strategy
ER2	What families and young people said at the Spotlight on SEND event 2019
ER2	What children and young people said at the Real Talk event 2018.
ER2	What families, young people and professionals said in the Citizen Lab events in 2019
ER3	Coproduction Charter
ER4	Case study and examples to confirm best practice examples from IASS.
ER5	Hy5! Terms of Reference
ER6	HY5! Draft Action Plan June 2021-22
ER7	Overview of SEND Partnership Board and governance arrangements
ER8	Culture of Inclusion and Belonging Project Overview
ER9	The Commissioning Review

ER10	Terms of Reference for the SEND Partnership Board
ER11	(SCPB) A graduated response to identification and assessment
ER11	SCPB Sub-group Joint Commissioning and Sufficiency
ER11	SCPB Sub-group Joint Commissioning and Sufficiency
ER11	SCPB Sub-group Local Offer Group
ER11	SCPB Sub-group Ensuring High Quality Provision
ER11	SCPB Sub-group Social, Emotional and Mental Health Reference Group
ER11	The ASD parent reference group which steers the work of the ASD co-ordination Group
ER11	The health workstream (led by Wolverhampton CCG)
ER11	Independent Support Task and Finish Group (until Independent Support Programme ended 2018)
ER12	Attendance and representatives on the SEND Partnership Board
ER13	Terms of Reference for the SEND Joint Commissioning Group
ER14	Attendance list for the SEND Joint Commissioning Group

ER15	SEND Joint Commissioning Road Map
ER16	Terms of Reference for the Inclusion fund panel
ER17	Case study to support direct referrals to the VI team and timely intervention needed here
ER18	School Sufficiency Strategy
ER19	Evidence of SENCO Network sessions
ER20	Early Years inclusion project
ER21	Evidence of training and support packaged delivered to schools
ER22	Terms of reference EHC Decision Making Panels
ER23	EHC Quality Assurance framework and Dip sample report
ER24	Terms of reference for the Inclusion Support and Alternative Provision Panel (ISAPP)
ER25	COVID recovery plan
ER26	Case studies to support COVID planning

Section 2: Evaluation into the Effectiveness and Development of the Local Area

As a reflective Local Area, we acknowledge many pockets of good practice. These have been summarised in section 1 of this document. However, under our ambitious aim to be an Inclusive City, we recognise there is still much work to do. Areas of good practice are not yet consistent and not yet fully felt through to the lived experiences of our families, carers, young people or children. We acknowledge there is still much transformation work to fully implement the fundamental principles of the Children's and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice (2015). Our aim is to build upon our good practice with fast paced and dynamic change, so we become more consistent and confident in our approaches, linking up and working better together.

The following 'Effectiveness Grids' supplement section 1 of the SEF (Strengths and Achievements of the Local Area) and provide an honest evaluation into the work which we have already started, tasks still to be completed and intentions behind our aims

How the local area effectively identifies the needs of children and young people who have SEND

What do our families, young people and children tell us?

(Taken from V4P Annual Survey 2021)

- Families know there are significant delays to update annual reviews. Improvements are not consistent or fast enough. Not all families are feeling improvements at a lived experience stage.
- Families mostly felt generally well supported by schools during lock down, however there were some families who were let down and did not get support fast enough. Provision improved during the second lockdown. Some families were provided with home education resources during lock down & health provided teaching packages for therapies for CYP/parents & staff
- Parents are generally content with extended timelines as long as delays are communicated but this discussion could be improved. Parents with children on SEND support don't always understand what Graduated Approach is and some schools can skip this stage going straight to EHCP. This means that some children have lacking interventions and early support. Some families have found a battle to get any support and waited a long time to get an EHCP.
- Some families don't feel listened to. When they raise concerns, they can feel not listened or not taken seriously. Opportunities are missed and much work has to be done to support a child in crisis rather than at an earlier stage.
- Finding out your child has additional needs can be a worrying time and it feels like there is a lack of information and support available for families. Information not readily available and what is available can be confusing or too corporate.

- It can feel like partners don't talk to each other and don't know what is needed by the families. This further compound the feeling of not being listened to. Personalisation to families could be improved in the commissioning of services as it feels like families have to fit to the offer rather than the offer fitting the family.
- A key area for parents is the ASD pathways as waiting times are lengthy and there is no support while on the pathway. It can be confusing criteria.

Key Areas for Development

Timeliness of EHC Pathways	Timeliness of EHC assessments deteriorated prior to lockdown and, on a continuing trend at the end of October 2019 was 20% within 20 weeks. Following additional capacity and a new focus on the assessment pathway timeliness improve to 60% within 20 weeks at the end of July 2021. However, since then, due to increased awareness, there has been a significant increase in referrals to EHC statutory assessment and the SENDSTART team have seen a 50% increase in their caseloads and working tasks. The has been further impacted by exceptions to timescales over the summer holidays, annual leave, increase absenteeism due to COVID and the resignation of 2 permanent officers. In addition, the new SEND Manager began in post in June 2021. Our target is to have consistent timeliness above 60% by January 2022. This will be achieved through stabilising the new pathway by the new manager, removing the annual review backlog to increase capacity, appointment to posts and developing awareness and understanding within schools and partners. A new graduated approach will support correct identification and meeting all needs.
Annual Reviews backlogs	We have been tackling the backlog in processing annual reviews. A dedicated team have been working through completion of these. The newly appointed SEND manager and the SENDSTART team are evaluating processes and working with educational settings and partners to relook at EHC annual reviews to codesign and establish a more effective way of working. This is a focused area within the Culture of Inclusion. The ambitious aim from these actions is that timeliness will be above 60% by January 2022.
Contributions to assessments	<p>We have been strengthening school links in SEND provision with key working training provided for SENCOs and working towards improved contributions from other agencies in reviewing EHCPs. Good quality advice is received from schools and providers for review. Health contributions have been limited in the past but with implementation of the Hub within health services will increase this due to automated requests. More work is required to improve advice from paediatrics. There are developments around decision making process to allow these to be more accessible and transparent and ensure advice is sought.</p> <p>Our peer review highlighted that Social Care contribution appeared under-represented. Training was given to social care on advice writing and provided training in summer 2019, however this needs to be implemented as part on ongoing CPD and as a requirement for new to role across all partners and professionals. There has been an improvement in advice from CAMHS but quality needs developing.</p> <p>We have developed a QA toolkit for education, health and social care contributions which feeds into the wider the QA framework. This is a new development and is set for trial in September 2021.</p>

<p>Data</p>	<p>We have completed much development of a dashboard and a shared understanding of data, however there is still work to be done on this. Partnership dashboards have been developed but require review and updated to align with strategic priorities and KPIs. We are currently embedding processes to make sure our data correlates between the Hub and Capita. T</p> <p>Since January 2021m the tribunals and mediation data have been collated from the ONE system along with yearly attendance from Sep 2018 which will help monitor yearly trends for schools.</p> <p>We have created a Vulnerability Matrix report created to help identify those who may need additional support and potential early intervention. This will focus attention on children and young people within certain areas such as FSM/ Exclusions/ Funding area, bringing together partners to agree outcomes and provisions.</p> <p>We have set up weekly scheduled DQ reports to help identify issues with the data. This was completed in July 2021 and includes active EHCPs, timeliness of EHCPs, Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME)</p> <p>New processes and skills within Insight and Performance have meant that the data refreshes and flows daily into dashboards. Scheduled reports within these dataflows look at attendance, exclusions, mediations and Tribunals, free School Meals, financial Provisions</p> <p>A new dedicated post has been created and been in role since May 2021 to focus and drive improvements in quality within SEND.</p> <p>Insight and Performance have plans work with School Improvement on the completion of the school census to ensure development work within the service is included in the return. There are also plans to create monthly rolling cohorts to improve oversight of SEND performance and to align with social care performance reporting.</p>
<p>Informing joint commissioning</p>	<p>This is a key area for the SEND Partnership board and was highlighted within our peer review. We know we need to formalize and embed a joint commissioning framework and arrangements. This will be completed in October 2021. This has taken a faster pace in development with the appointment of a dedicated SEND Commissioning Manager.</p> <p>A Joint Commissioning roadmap is in place to plan for enhancement of joint commissioning over a 3-year period. A Joint Commissioning Group was established in January 2021 has begun to formalise some of the joint commissioning practice. There is still much work to do in this area. We need to improve our use of data across the partnership to inform strategic understanding and planning and developed a Joint Commissioning Tracker to record decisions and funding agreements. A resource panel allows creative sharing of resource, knowledge and experience. There is not always dedicated health representation at the panel, and a commissioner does not always attend and so we know this needs to be more multi-agency.</p> <p>The matrix review timeline is on track, with draft descriptors now in place and sampling set to be completed by end of December 2020.</p> <p>Good work is taking place within strategic joint commissioning between the City of Wolverhampton Council and CCG to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND but these needs to be developed further, including transition to adult services, jointly commissioning placements and reviewing personal budgets within one system. We aim to make developments within changes to pathways</p>

	for short breaks following the short breaks review and address criteria for specialist outreach and early years so they don't work against each other.
ASD pathway	We are aware of delays and lack of clarity over the ASD pathway. This has been further impacted by COVID. The ASD pathway is currently being reviewed and is a key priority for the SEND partnership.
Early identification	<p>Inconsistencies in identification of need in schools means that SEND is not always accurately reflected. Our agencies are focusing on working well together to ensure that emerging needs are identified and assessed quickly, and suitable provision is put in place. Currently there is an over-representation of MLD and an under-representation of ASD and SCLN. There is a high threshold for involvement of social care, and this leads to varied expectations from parents and other professionals.</p> <p>We have increased use of EHA, with a focus on the impact of disabilities, and use of team around child/ family process to support children with SEND at school age. We will continue to embed within the Early Help offer and the local offer a clear universal/ targeted approach to supporting families of CYP with SEND however ensure it is recommended but will not be enforced</p> <p>We are working closely with educational providers to ensure they are more involved in the local area's response to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and more accurate in their response. We know our current Graduated response is not effective and does not fully embraced across the partnership, leading to Inconsistent parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet SEND needs. We have felt the impact of this in a increasing demand of parental requests for EHCPA over the summer holidays. A new graduated approach is being coproduced to ensure an effective system builds the skills and expertise of school staff, including special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs). This will ensure that schools identify pupils' needs quickly. In addition, a transformation project is developing a standardised approach across the area, making sure the best practice is shared. Our aim is that the Graduated response will be fully understood across the partnership, ensuring a joint responsibility and response across all partners. Our graduated approach will continue to build capacity within mainstream schools to support children and young people with a wider range of need. This will lead to greater inclusion. We know there are too many CYP with SEND are excluded or become disengaged from education. Our culture of Belonging Project specially tackles this and we will start to see results of greater inclusion with a wider range of placements in 2022.</p>
Impact from COVID	<p>The challenge has been for schools to continue identifying SEND accurately during lockdown and to not be confusing slower learning or missed learning. This has been supported through SENCO Networks, Whole School SEND Reviews, LA base line and midline assessments to support schools.</p> <p>Assessments for Access Arrangements were impacted by COVID. The JCQ advised against remote assessment if possible, so these were done as a priority in each 'open school' window between lock downs. We managed to complete them all in time. For general assessments in schools, we have reduced our use of standardised testing as the validity and reliability is questionable when children have been out of school for some time. Testing to identify targets as part of APDR continued.</p>

	<p>The move by the LA and schools to increased remote working has increased engagement with key partners in schools (Heads, SENCOs etc). We have responded to this and will continue to use a mixed model going forwards (with mixed face to face and remote SENCO network sessions and the development of an online SENCO network platform) to further extend our reach and the sharing of good practice in the identification and response to send across all schools in the city.</p> <p>HeadStart have commissioned 3 pilots re SEND and Covid response. The 3 organisations are Include me Too, Changing Young Lives and Let us Play</p> <p>We have increased engagement with schools in relation to wellbeing and SEMH needs resulting from the 'Wellbeing for Education Return' national focus. This has provided a platform for extending the reach of existing guidance and training (e.g. 'Getting it Right pathway' and trauma informed training) and will help us as we move forward with further work in this area through the Culture of Inclusion and Belonging projects.</p> <p>We know there has been an increase in wait times for the over 5 ASD pathway, in part due to service capacity and not being able to carry out assessments/observations in schools during lockdown periods. Data on this is held by CAMHS. This links to the wider ASD strategy/pathway work which is being examined to develop the sustainability of the assessment pathway.</p> <p>From public health perspective, the Health Related Behaviour Survey was paused in 2020 due to the closure of schools. It is due to be completed again in Spring 2022 with a focus on ensuring the survey is accessible for those with SEND both in special schools and mainstream schools.</p>
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How the local area effectively assesses and meets the needs of children and young people who have SEND

What do our families, young people, and children tell us?

- Parents and young people are supportive of #YES but would like the voices of young people with SEND to be louder and stronger in this
- At a strategic coproduction level, parents feel they are listened to but not heard and that being involved in meetings can feel tokenistic
- V4P feel under-utilised strategically and that they have willingness and capabilities to do so much more. This was highlighted in the peer review.
- Coproduction is not understood by all families. There are pockets of good coproduction especially within early years, but some families report not feeling involved. Coproduction can be better at individual level.
- Families want a more cohesive service that works together and truly embeds 'tell it once' and strategically planned meetings and assessments which reduce the demand on families.
- Schools not always supportive
- Some families report feeling like being the last to know. The EHC process feels too corporate and not full coproduction.
- The local area could be more innovative with modern approaches such as apps or online portals. Families would like to see one linked team and one place to access everything.

Key Areas for Development

Engagement and Coproduction – the voice of young people and children	<p>We know there are issues around communication and are attempting to support young people's communication by looking at alternative communication aids such as programmes and applications alongside increased attendance at meetings to gather their wishes and feelings. This is variable, and young person's voice can be brief or even non-existent at some panels.</p> <p>Young people's forums are being used to codevelop strategic plans including a clear voice in processes and systems.</p>
Working together for effective assessment and accountability	<p>A SEND workforce strategy is in development to bring together key messages from the SEND reforms and to equip all practitioners from across the local area to embrace new ways of working to continue to deliver high quality support to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and families in Wolverhampton.</p> <p>In response to identified areas for development the local area has used the SEN implementation grant allocation and its own resources to increase capacity across the SENSTART team and has invested in staff development and systems to improve quality. There has been a significant investment to create a dedicated annual review backlog team, however we are aware that further considerations are required over long term team sufficiency.</p>

	<p>The CCG has recognised the inherent risk described within the community health review report. The demands required of the DMO under the new EHCP process are not sustainable and has provided excellent mitigation by re-focusing the work plan and functionality of the CCG SEND team. However, all of the community health review recommendations against this are not yet complete and there is work to do. IASS have made positive progress with co-production with young people, with the LA agreeing to fund post for strategic involvement of YP with a view for this to be made permanent. Young people have been involved in developing transition to adult services – shaped policy, produced podcasts. This culture is being embedded across the Trust and meeting are being undertaken with executive leads</p>
<p>Coproduction and engagement with children, young people, parents and carers</p>	<p>We know our partnership needs clarity of understanding and more consistent use of language in relation to co-production. This is a key area within the SEND strategy as identified by the SEND partnership board.</p> <p>Improvements in co-production have been made, but we need to build on this and embed as a culture. We need to improve our health outcomes so that CYP and parents are more involved in setting targets, and they support the involvement of parents/carers and CYP in their own care/treatment.</p> <p>The co-production officer post is positive as this demonstrates the requirement in all roles. There can be difficulties in capturing the voice of parents and YP from the wider community when using established forums. IASS have parents on advisory groups with a co-produced Terms of Reference. Parents have also been involved in the testing of training packages.</p> <p>There are wide, varied and strong examples of co-production at strategic levels but less at an individual level. A toolbox has previously been developed to assist schools with engagement with CYP and could be refreshed. One-page profiles are produced for EHC assessment panels, but we are aware that person centred planning across transition needs to be addressed. We know this is a strength within Early Years and are looking to see any lessons that can be developed across the wider service.</p> <p>IASS have been collating lessons learnt from cases where families have wanted to progress to tribunal.</p> <p>Within health, there continues to be commissioned co-production, with Changing Our Lives, for discrete strategic projects. Families are part of the governance arrangements which keeps health accountable for strategy and review. All children that are continuing in care have PHBs which demonstrate person centred planning, but work needs to be undertaken to ensure that related outcomes are relevant.</p>
<p>Data management and sharing – The Hub</p>	<p>We acknowledge the EHC hub was procured in isolation and introduced too quickly. As a result, some parts of the system are starting to see benefits from it now but we need to ensure it is fully integrated with the wider electronic system development to support our ambitions for an accurate and up to date single child record.</p>

	<p>Implementation of the Hub has not been utilised as hoped for. It has caused much feedback from parents and schools. There have been issues correlating and sharing data and keeping records accurate. EHC Hub Drop in sessions and User Group established and were in operation but were paused due to Covid-19. V4P have received feedback that parents some parents can still not access hub as they have received contradictory advice on who can support with this. IASS have carried out online training with parents.</p> <p>We recognise issues over timeliness of information uploaded to Hub and have identified that parts of our EHC template such as the 1-page profile not able to be uploaded. This is a focus for the Culture of Inclusion project.</p>
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How the local area improves outcomes for children and young people with SEND?

What do our families, young people and children tell us?

- Short breaks criteria are confusing and it can be difficult to access leisure offers. The summer 2021 leisure programme was amazing for families and reaffirmed Wolverhampton needs better facilities for children and young people with SEND that are available all year. The short breaks review has never been implemented. Part of this was a new referral route that was more accessible and easier to understand. This has not been actioned and there is still no universal short break offer.
- Families feel incredibly well supported by early years. The whole process is enabling and is fully centred on genuine coproduction. This gives families the very best start however this needs to carry on to the next stage with improved transitions and preparation. Families can become reliant on the early years key worker and there is nothing to replace this with at the next stage.
- Preparation for Adulthood and transitions to adult service could be better. There can be very little preparation and often this is a case of 'too little too late'. Transitions between phases are not managed well. COVID has hugely impacted transition work and families are aware of this. Transition between year 6 to year 7 could be better however there are some pockets of good work. This could be replicated across all settings. It feels for families like partners don't talk to each other at key transition points, so information is lost, and parents must retell their story in order to ensure information is shared and maintained.
- Parents tell us our local offer is difficult to navigate and very cooperate. It is full of jargon and parents cannot find the information they need. The local offer can make things even more confusing. Some families have never heard of it, and it doesn't celebrate Wolverhampton

Key Areas for Development

Outcomes for children and young people with SEND	Our children and young people with EHCPs do not attain as well as their peers in Wolverhampton, West Midlands, Statistical Neighbours or Nationally. Our Joint commissioning strategy will include clear expectations about what provision the City of Wolverhampton Council will commission out of city, from special schools and alternative provision.
Transitions	<p>We know we need to Improve transition arrangements at 16+ and 19+ into FE</p> <p>We are getting better at completing out phase transfer reviews and this year the majority of phase Transfer Reviews were completed before the February 2021 deadline. Finding places in specialist provision was a major factor in plans which were not finalised in time. In addition. We need to work in a more pre-emptive manner for the few complex cases where we know transition is going to be difficult due to provision and funding.</p> <p>Transition from early years into special schools could be better and we need to work better with mainstream schools to improve the process. Wolverhampton Outreach are involved in TAC and have a good understanding of the family dynamic prior to transition from early years. We need to use this approach to make it more consistent for families.</p>

	<p>Transitions in early years has been impacted. The Local Offer was under-developed at the point of lock down and therefore under-utilised. A keyworker would normally be put in place in school to assist the transition period, but this was prevented by schools limiting visitors to schools. A process has been established to improve take up with Terrific for 2s an area of focus although this has been impacted by Covid 19 Measures.</p> <p>Covid impacted on parental visits to potential new schools and schools were agreed without families being able to meet or speak to staff and decide on a preference. We are supporting families through an improved annual review where a school may be inappropriate.</p> <p>Development of health passports as a tool to support tell it once was due to be launched but delayed due to Covid measures</p>
Preparation for adulthood	<p>Connexions provide information advice and guidance to NEET young people with SEND from Year 9 onwards through a personal adviser (PA) to support them into employment or training. This contributes to the preparing for adulthood section of their EHCP through providing advice and attendance at their review and supporting their transition to future provision. Connexions PA's are currently working with 433 young people 16-25 with EHCP's 35 of which are NEET (8%).</p> <p>Youth Offer was launched by the Mayor and Leader of the Council at the Way Youth Zone in October 2020.</p> <p>The Black Country Impact youth employment initiative is currently working with 10 SEND young people to support them to improve both their functional skills in English and Mathematics and deliver vocational training qualifications such as Hair and Beauty. It is anticipated that a number of these will continue to be supported into further training opportunities providing the young people with increased confidence and valuable skills with which to enter the job market.</p> <p>Further training opportunities are available on a bespoke basis to support SEND young people through the Impact programme where specialist support can be provided to overcome barriers that exist.</p>
Tell it once, listening to families	<p>We recognise we have Inconsistencies in the involvement of parents/ carers in assessment, target-setting and planning and our tell us once approach needs strengthening. Tell it once had been a strength in Wolverhampton but due to the increasing demand on the EHC process and COVID this became weaker.</p> <p>There are pockets of strong 'Tell it once' but across the board the families are being asked several times for information due to the number of professionals involved. We would like to aim for a single child record with a multi-agency chronology that is held as a live document. This is not currently coordinated by the Hub and information is requested haphazardly. We recognise that not all parents can access the Hub.</p> <p>There is evidence that restorative practice has encouraged family participation.</p>

	Early years use family file which is populated with background information in line with the health passport, although not all families use this due to literacy/language barriers. This needs to be joint work from the beginning with involvement from families. We need to empower families to have greater involvement and a clear tell it once content.
Early Help	We have a strong Early Help Assessment across the partnership and a strong understanding as to what an Early Help Assessment is and why it needed to be completed. However, there is some confusion around the graduated approach and compulsory pathways to support and this is something we are addressing through a clear graduated approach and inclusion offer. We will also work to embed the Early Help within the local offer
Short breaks and leisure	Our Short breaks review highlighted the lack of support at universal level or for those who do not meet statutory thresholds. We are working hard to Improve the short break offer through implementing the outcomes of the short break review