

Strategic review of support, services and provision for children and young people with high needs in Wiltshire

Summary of key findings and recommendations

October 2019



Aims of the review

Evidence: To build an evidence base and collective understanding of how effectively the local system supports young people with high needs.

Engagement: To engage a broad range of partners, build consensus and harness collective expertise to shape and implement solutions.

Shared strategy: To work co-productively to develop a shared strategic approach.

How we have approached the project

Phase 1: Initial scoping

Initial work to understand current context, analyse data and documents, and scope out our evidence-gathering
(Jan-March 2019)

Phase 2: In-depth evidence gathering

Broad engagements with key partners to gather feedback and evidence
(April-May 2019)

Phase 3: Testing findings and shaping recommendations

Testing findings and shaping recommendations and a future approach through co-production
(June-July 2019)

Overarching messages

Wiltshire is well-regarded local SEND and high needs system.

At the forefront of developments around SEND and high needs (SEND pathfinder, National Exclusions Trial). Positive local area SEND inspection in 2018. High % of EHCPs completed within 20 weeks. Good outcomes for children with SEN in early years, primary and post-16.

The system is, however, facing considerable demand and financial pressures.

Wiltshire is seeing a significant increase in EHCPs, particularly for younger children. The high needs block is overspent and under significant pressure. These trends are not sustainable. It is clear that current arrangements (processes, continuum of support) need to be reconsidered.

There is a willingness to forge new relationships and a collective ethos around high needs.

New leadership of the education agenda has been welcomed. Partners, providers and parents are keen to foster a new, collective ethos, strategy and partnership around high needs. They highlight some “quick wins” to improve confidence in the local system: communication and relationships, rigorous core processes, building capacity and consistent quality of support.

Overarching messages

There is the need to build strong, strategic and co-productive relationships and partnerships with all key partners in the local system.

It would be a mistake to see the pressures on the high needs block purely as a financial issue. The factors driving these pressures are manifold, complex and inter-related. They are systemic in nature, and the solutions to them will require a whole-system approach.

There is the need to ensure core processes that govern the day-to-day operation of the system are effective, transparent, and have the confidence of families and professionals.

Parents and professionals expressed a lack of confidence in the consistency of some of core process that cover access to support (EHC assessments, issuing EHCPs, banding, SEND panel). There needs to be a coherent structure that aligns operations, commissioning and strategy.

There needs to be a strategically planned continuum of SEND and high needs support, services and provision.

This will involve ensuring that there are clear and complementary roles for all forms of support, services and provision, how they contribute to the overall strategy and outcomes for the system, which keep pace with changing needs and deliver consistently.

Six broad themes that we are planning to use to structure our discussions and evidence-gathering

- ① **Co-production with parents / carers and young people**
- ② **Partnerships working across education, health and care**
- ③ **Identification, assessment and access to support**
- ④ **Building inclusive capacity in mainstream schools and settings, and providing targeted support for inclusion**
- ⑤ **Developing responsive, effective local specialist provision**
- ⑥ **Preparation for adulthood**

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



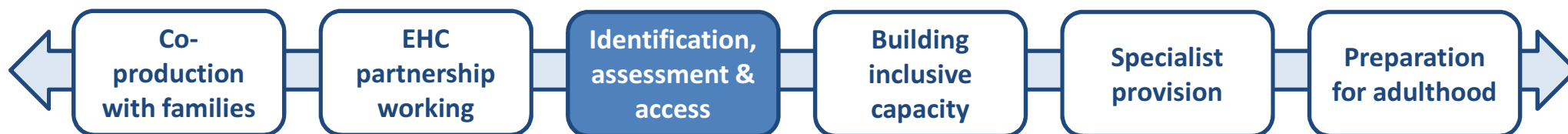
Headline findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a strong mechanism for <u>strategic engagements</u> with parents, through WPCCC. 2. Parents raised concerns about the quality and consistency of <u>communication</u>. 3. There are <u>opportunities to strengthen co-productive</u> working with parents and young people – this will be particularly important in taking forward the findings of this review.
Potential “quick wins”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Co-production</u> – start discussions with parents about how to take forward the findings from this review. Build a understanding and ownership of the challenges facing the system. 2. <u>Young people’s voice</u> – use existing networks of professionals, providers and families to identify “young people advocates”. Start to develop a network of young people to engage on strategic issues facing the system.
Longer-term actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Co-production</u> – identify some specific, dedicated co-productive projects to undertake with parents and carers. Feedback suggests (a) introductory information about the local SEND system, (b) effective mainstream inclusion and (c) working with families to prepare for adulthood could be the focus of some initial co-productive projects. 2. <u>Young people’s voice</u> –develop core routines for having systematic conversations with young people about their aspirations, and use this to inform planning pathways and commissioning.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



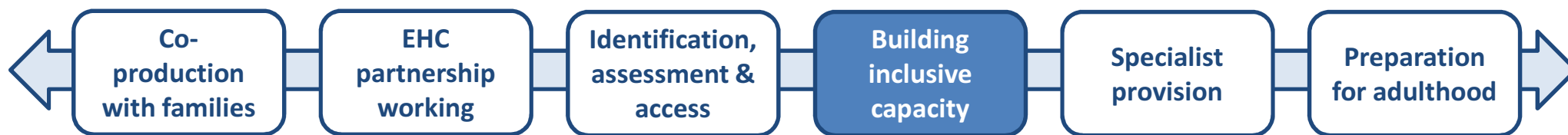
Headline findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>There were mixed views about the quality of support provided across education, health and care.</u> 2. <u>There is the need to strengthen joint commissioning across agencies at a strategic level.</u> 3. <u>There is a perceived lack of join-up between services on a day-to-day level.</u>
Potential “quick wins”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>The EHC process</u> – revisit and set out clearly how all agencies will contribute to EHC assessments, plans and annual reviews. Co-produce this with parents and professionals. 2. <u>Consistent communication</u> – ensure that there is a consistent understanding of and messages about the local system and how it supports young people with SEND and high needs. 3. <u>Support for young people with health-related needs</u> – develop and agree protocol.
Longer-term actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Joint commissioning</u> – strengthen joint commissioning in areas where there are identified gaps in the continuum of support, most notably SEMH, OT and PT. Building on the work that has been well received around the autism pathway, focus on “pathways” for specific needs. Test whether the local offer sets out a seamless joint pathway of support, identify gaps. 2. <u>Holistic family support</u> – strengthen links between early help and SEND / high needs support, so that there is an offer of holistic support for families to avoid issues escalating.

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Headline findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professionals were positive about the quality of <u>information</u>, but parents less so. 2. There were some concerns about the <u>core systems for identifying young people's needs</u>. 3. Strong concerns that <u>support depends on getting medical diagnoses and EHCPs</u>. 4. Concerns re: consistency, robustness and transparency of <u>decision-making about support</u>. 5. There were also concerns about the <u>paperwork and processes</u> for accessing support.
Potential "quick wins"	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Information</u> – work with parents to co-produce a refined local offer, building on information already available, but also giving a more strategic overview of the system. 2. <u>Access to support</u> – strengthen the panel's work through consistent chairing, consistent application of banding descriptors, reintroducing peer-to-peer moderation from SENCOs, considering thresholds (particularly the low rate of refusal to assess).
Longer-term actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Access to support</u> – refining the banding framework, developing routes to access time-limited top-up funding without an EHCP, and creating a more responsive support offer. 2. <u>Identification</u> – undertake further focused work with health professionals and education providers, as well as other services, to consider what accounts for the high proportion of children with autism as an identified primary need and to ensure the autism pathway is operating effectively to identify young people's needs and bring in support at the right time.

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Headline findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Mainstream</u>: Examples of positive approaches to inclusion in mainstream schools and settings, but the evidence suggests that this is not consistent. Networks required to challenge poor practice and build inclusive capacity need to be strengthened. Transition a concern. 2. <u>Targeted</u>: There was mixed feedback on the offer of targeted services that support inclusion. Overall, there is both the opportunity and the need to reframe the offer of targeted support.
Potential “quick wins”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Mainstream inclusion</u> – start a co-productive dialogue with mainstream settings / schools, parents / carers, about principles and hallmarks of good mainstream inclusion in Wiltshire. 2. <u>SENCO networks</u> – re-establish county-wide (locally delivered) SENCO networks, offering a rolling programme of induction and training around county practices and priorities. 3. <u>Whole-school inclusion</u> – share intelligence and join up support re: whole-school inclusion.
Longer-term actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Mainstream inclusion</u> – continue to develop a set of consistent expectations of mainstream inclusion across Wiltshire. Set this out on the local offer. Build on networks to facilitate school-to-school working. Develop a rolling programme of whole-school inclusion support. 2. <u>Targeted support</u> – consider the current offer of (and potential overlaps within) targeted support. Work with SENCOs and school leaders to co-produce a new offer, with clear aims, consistent models of support, and outcome measures.

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Headline findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Resourced provision</u> – primary “resource bases” seen to be strong feature of the SEND continuum; concerns about join-up with and clarity of “enhanced learning provisions” (ELPs). 2. <u>Special school</u> – need for a vision for specialist provision, rooted in the whole continuum of inclusion support and focused on long-term outcomes for young people with SEND. 3. <u>AP</u> – at both primary and secondary, concerns about access to alternatives to exclusion.
Potential “quick wins”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Resourced provision</u> – start a discussion with secondary schools about the future of the ELPs, linked to the discussion about expectations of mainstream inclusion, define “additionality”. 2. <u>Special school provision</u> – refine placement process, banding; enable special schools to develop collective offer for the most complex needs. Tighten INMSS commissioning. 3. <u>AP</u> – begin a focused discussions with schools about current AP arrangements.
Longer-term actions	<p><u>The role of specialist provision as a whole –</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there is a clear vision about the overall role of specialist provisions and the rest of the continuum, with clear processes for commissioning and adapting the offer. • This will require co-productive work with schools and professionals to refine the ELP model and define a clear and consistent offer of resourced provision and special school provision. • This will require considering what will be needed to support young people who might require a placement in an INMSS, and those who could be reintegrated from specialist provision. • Ensure this is understood by all professionals involved in placement decisions.

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Longer-term actions

1. Specialist provision (continued) – ensure that there is a clear and consistent process for specialist providers, mainstream providers and other agencies to work together to identify pupils who could be reintegrated into mainstream school and to support transition.
2. Independent placements – first, strengthen individual placement commissioning (consistent focus on outcomes, on specific support being commissioned, and on transitions). Second, develop a process whereby specialist providers and other services can come together to consider local, bespoke alternatives to independent placements. Third, consider the current in-county offer of specialist provision for pupils with SEMH needs.
3. AP – working with primary and secondary school leaders and other partners, revisit and refine current arrangements around preventing exclusion and the use of AP. We understand further work on this area is planned to start shortly.
4. Commissioning – develop a process of regular, pro-active, strategic discussions with specialist providers individually and collectively about current and anticipated future trends and planned need for provision (not just about numbers of planned places).

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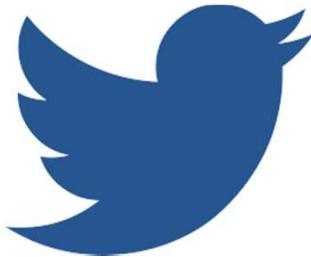


Headline findings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening and broadening options for young people preparing for adult life was one of the <u>key areas of positive practice</u> within Wiltshire. 2. This <u>remains a developing area</u>, with ongoing work required to ensure the local area provides good opportunities for young adults with SEND and high needs.
Potential “quick wins”	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Developing pathways</u> – continue to build on existing work around education study programmes and supported internships, focusing on routes into employment, strengthening special-school-college transition, and developing the offer from adult social care services. 2. <u>Planning processes</u> – develop routines for identifying young people with the most complex needs, requiring some transitional / ongoing support with their care needs.
Longer-term actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Joint offer of support</u> – pull together a broader offer of joined-up, seamless support drawing on inputs from education, social care, health and community services. Ensure that this offer is well co-ordinated and jointly owned by professionals. 2. <u>Young people’s voice</u> – develop a set of core routines for having systematic conversations with young people about their aspirations, capture this, and use this to inform planning of individual pathways as well as shaping future commissioning priorities.

Our details



www.isospartnership.com



[@Isospartnership](https://twitter.com/Isospartnership)



E: Ben.Bryant@isospartnership.com

E: Karinakulawik@googlemail.com