

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Friday 20 April 2018

10.00 am Luttrell Room - County Hall,
Taunton



To: The Members of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee

Cllr L Redman (Chairman), Cllr J Lock, Ms Helen Fenn, Mrs Eileen Tipper, Mr Richard Berry, Cllr N Bloomfield, Cllr A Bown, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Ruth Hobbs, Cllr M Pullin (Vice-Chair), Cllr J Williams and Cllr N Taylor

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Issued By Julian Gale, Strategic Manager - Governance and Risk - 12 April 2018

For further information about the meeting, please contact Neil Milne on 01823 359045 or ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

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AGENDA

Item Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee - 10.00 am Friday 20 April 2018

**** Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe ****

1 **Apologies for Absence**

to receive Members' apologies

2 **Declarations of Interest**

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils will be displayed in the meeting room. The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via the Community Governance team.

3 **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 16 March 2018** (Pages 5 - 18)

The Committee is asked to confirm the minutes are accurate.

4 **Public Question Time**

The Chairman will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chairman's discretion.**

5 **Scrutiny Work Programme** (Pages 19 - 34)

To discuss any items for the forthcoming work programme. To assist the discussion, the following documents are attached:

- a) – The Cabinet's latest published forward plan;
- b) – Current Work Programme for the Committee;
- c) – Outcome Tracker.

6 **Changes to the Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team (PIMS)**
(Pages 35 - 74)

To consider this update report, requested at the last meeting.

7 **SEND Peer Review update** (Pages 75 - 96)

To consider this update report and receive a presentation.

8 **Pathways to Independence (P2i)** (Pages 97 - 120)

To consider this update report.

9 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chairman may raise any items of urgent business.

Guidance notes for the meeting

1. Inspection of Papers

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Neil Milne on 01823 359045 or email: ndmilne@somerset.gov.uk
They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

2. Members' Code of Conduct requirements

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at: <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

3. Minutes of the Meeting

Details of the issues discussed and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the Minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

4. Public Question Time

If you wish to speak, please tell the Committee's Administrator by 12 noon the (working) day before the meeting.

At the Chairman's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been signed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the Agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chairman. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chairman will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chairman may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the Agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, normally to two minutes only.

5. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the Agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

6. **Committee Rooms & Council Chamber and hearing aid users**

To assist hearing aid users the following Committee meeting rooms have infra-red audio transmission systems (Luttrell room, Wyndham room, Hobhouse room). To use this facility we need to provide a small personal receiver that will work with a hearing aid set to the T position. Please request a personal receiver from the Committee's Administrator and return it at the end of the meeting.

7. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings and a designated area will be provided for anyone wishing to film part or all of the proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the relevant Chairman can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

We would ask that, as far as possible, members of the public aren't filmed unless they are playing an active role such as speaking within a meeting and there may be occasions when speaking members of the public request not to be filmed.

The Council will be undertaking audio recording of some of its meetings in County Hall as part of its investigation into a business case for the recording and potential webcasting of meetings in the future.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol should be on display at the meeting for inspection, alternatively contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting in advance.

SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee held in the Luttrell Room - County Hall, Taunton, on Friday 16 March 2018 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr L Redman (Chairman), Cllr J Lock, Mrs Eileen Tipper, Cllr N Bloomfield, Cllr A Bown, Cllr M Dimery, Cllr N Hewitt-Cooper, Ruth Hobbs, Cllr M Pullin (Vice-Chair) and Cllr N Taylor

Other Members present: Cllr A Govier, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr T Munt and Cllr G Verdon

Apologies for absence: Ms Helen Fenn, Mr Richard Berry and Cllr J Williams

1 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2

Eileen Tipper declared an interest as a member of the Community Council for Somerset.

Cllr Leigh Redman declared an interest as a Governor at The Willowdown Primary Academy.

2 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 26 January 2018 - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the last meeting held on 26 January 2018 were accepted as being accurate and signed by the Chair.

3 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4

There were 8 Public Questions in relation to Item 10. The questions largely expressed concern regarding the effect that staff redundancies would have on the provision of services within SSE teams, particularly the PIMMS team. Concern was expressed over how valuable services could continue to be provided with less staff and over the lack of consultation with service users and young people. A verbal response was provided from Children's Services Commissioning. Those present were reassured that no change can be made to a child's Education Health Care Plan without a review with parents and the young person. The overall funding allocated to support children with SEND is increasing, although there may be changes as to how it will be spent. HN Top-up Funding will go directly to schools but children with higher level needs will continue to be supported by the specialist service teams within SSE.

All questions will receive a written response.

There was also a question regarding the school admission code for summer born children. The question will receive a written response.

4 **Scrutiny Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee considered and noted the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in forthcoming months.

The Committee considered and agreed its own work programme and the future agenda items listed. In addition was requested:

- An update on changes to SSE services (20 April)
- SEND Peer Review Update (20 April)

The Committee noted the outcome tracker and the Scrutiny Manager provided updates and it was agreed this would be reviewed at the next pre-meeting.

5 **SEND Peer Review Update - Agenda Item 6**

The Committee considered and agreed a request to defer this item to the 20 April meeting.

6 **Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2019 - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee considered this report that provided the Committee with details of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) a three year plan that had started in April 2016 that set out the actions the Council and its partners were taking to continue and sustain improvements in Children's Services. The Plan followed a multi-agency approach, and was overseen by the Somerset Children's Trust and had 7 improvement programmes, each managed by a relevant Board to ensure improvement in each area.

The Partnership Business Manager – Children's Services, introduced the report and provided a very thorough overview of its contents, explaining the CYPP's origins after the Council received a Direction Notice from the Secretary of State for Education in November 2015 requiring a three year CYPP to be developed and implemented which the Department for Education could then use to judge how effective and sustainable improvements in children's social care functions had been.

It was noted that 'Children and Families' were a key theme within the County Plan 2016-20, recognising the importance of providing the information and advice families need to help themselves and of focusing our help early and effectively when needed. The key priorities were to improve children's safeguarding services; to improve exam results, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils; and to improve children's health and wellbeing.

The CYPP was reported on a quarterly basis and this report focused on activity of the third quarter (October to December 2017) of Year 2 and provided a summary of activity and progress, supported by each of the 7 programmes' highlight reports. Members heard that work during this quarter had been impacted by the month long OFSTED single inspection of Children's Social Care and the subsequent required activity to effect improvements ahead of the published report in January 2018. Six out of 7 of the programmes are rated green; meaning they are on track to achieve the actions by the target date.

Work will need to begin shortly to evaluate the current CYPP in order that this can feed into the development of the Plan after 2019.

Highlighted achievements included: the consultation of Family Support services; preparation for the SEND joint inspection; multi-agency work to reduce self-harm in children and work on how to establish permanent social workers. The report also highlighted challenges causing slippage to the action plans including: recruitment difficulties and increasing non-attendance and exclusion rates.

With regard to programme 1, it was clarified that the rise in exclusions is a complex issue with no one root cause. The issue is not unique to Somerset and is due to reviewed nationally.

With regard to programme 2, members asked to be provided with more detail about the Gp pilot in the next report.

A report for programme 6 was not provided because of the recent Ofsted judgement report. An action plan has been put in place reflecting the outcomes of the judgment.

Regarding programme 7, it was confirmed that social worker caseloads have increased. This is partly due to an increase in quality and partly due to difficulty in recruiting locums. Staff turnover is lower than national average but there is more work to do. The number of people applying for social worker posts has increased but the impact of this will not be felt for three or four months.

The Committee agreed to accept the report.

7 Changes to Education Travel Policy - Agenda Item 8

The Committee considered this report that provided an overview of the biennial review of the Council's Education Travel policy to ensure it complied with legislation and statutory guidance. Appendix A was tabled at the meeting. In addition to ensuring the revised policy provided more clarity and flexibility in terms of service provision, efforts had been made to reduce the size of the document.

It was reported that during this 2 yearly review Officers had also taken the opportunity to remove the final few discretionary elements from the policy, in order to enable the Council to deliver the required statutory elements within a pressured budget. In a verbal update, the Committee was informed that the proposal regarding late applications for school admissions has been withdrawn. 'Legitimate Expectation' requires policy changes to only affect new pupils starting school for the first time and those children who are changing schools.

It was clarified that any changes will be put in place for new service users. Those already accessing services will not be affected unless they change address or school, when they will be re-assessed. It was highlighted that there is a diminishing market in public transport and a shortage of bus operators.

A Member raised that the changes need to be carefully managed as some children may have behaviour difficulties due to additional needs. It was also raised that some situations may need to be judged on an individual, case-by-case basis. The Committee was reassured that individual needs of children would be considered where appropriate.

The Committee agreed to accept the report.

8 School Performance 2017 - National Curriculum Test and Public Examination Results - Agenda Item 9

The Committee considered this report that provided a summary of the Somerset outcomes through Ofsted inspections and performance data for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Assessments, KS1 and KS2 Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), GCSE and A Level results for 2017. It was noted that also the report included comparisons of performance against national data, where available, and included details of performance of vulnerable groups against each Key Stage. It was explained not all the data had been validated, so caution needed to be given to the accuracy of results as some national comparative data was unavailable for some indicators. To aid comparison the report also included information for statistical neighbours.

It was highlighted that KS4 outcomes present the greatest area of challenge.

It was clarified that under performance is taking place across academies and LA controlled schools with no emerging pattern. Individual academies can be more difficult to hold to account but there are no schools in Somerset that don't engage with the LA.

It was clarified that the LA is not involved with re-brokering Collaborative Academy Trusts; this is done through the Regional Schools Commissioner.

The Committee requested more information at a future meeting regarding KS4 outcomes, particularly for children with SEND. They accepted the report.

9 Update on Support Services for Education - Agenda Item 10

The Committee considered this report which explained SSE was an internal trading unit within the Council's Commercial and Business Services Directorate that provides a wide range of 24 support services to schools and other education providers, with a turnover of approx. £19m and 400 staff. The report was supplemented with a presentation which provided: a highlight/overview of the service to date; priorities for the future – services, financials and customers; and an update on commissioning of SSE SEND services.

The Committee were informed that SSE has achieved a break even position and that there is consistent buy back across SSE services. SSE has developed a one-stop shop website and introduced customer service reviews to improve feedback and help shape future services. SSE is currently collaborating with North Somerset Council to provide services that North Somerset Council is unable to support. It is also currently developing new

traded services, including those to meet the needs of large academies and Multi Academy Trusts. A £210k surplus is currently forecast for 2018/19 and this will be reinvested in services.

The Committee heard that SEN Advisory Support Services are being re-designed. A joint service review was required as a result of pressures on the High Needs Funding. The current proposals primarily affect Hearing, Vision and Physical Support teams.

The debate focussed on the causes for concern raised during Public Question time. It was clarified that only SSE staff had been consulted and that redundancy notices had already been issued. It was confirmed that there would be no impact from staff redundancies until May. The Committee expressed concern that the changes could result in a significant change to services and that they had been implemented with no consultation of service users or the Committee.

The Committee agreed a Member proposal that an urgent position statement was required on the implementation of staffing changes within SSE services. In addition, the Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member that any planned changes be paused and requested that a full report be presented to the Committee at the next meeting (20 April 2018).

10 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 11

There were no other items of business and the Chair thanked all those present for attending and closed the meeting at 13:05.

(The meeting ended at 1.05 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Public Question Time – Record of Questions and Answers (in bold font)

In respect of Item 10 – SSE Update

Mr & Mrs Potter

Our daughter has a rare progressive illness which has slowly taken away her mobility, speech and motor skills. She has always been in mainstream school. When she was in primary school she didn't need much help at first but as her condition declined she needed more help to record and communicate with her peers and teachers. The Physical Impairment & Medical Support team (PIMMS) have been instrumental in supporting her, the schools and us as parents for many years which we are extremely thankful for. Without the help that the PIMMS team have given our daughter would not have been able to continue in mainstream school and her world would have been made a lot smaller. She is now 12 and goes to Heathfield Secondary School. The PIMMS team helped with the transition to secondary school and have always been there for her and the school staff so that she can stay part of a normal school life. She is seen nearly every week by one of the PIMMS team and they are continuing to support her and the school with training on her communication aids along with the school curriculum. Without the support of the PIMMS team we don't think it would be possible for her to stay in mainstream school so she will have to start all over again in a specialist school. We have found out that the cuts proposed by Somerset County Council (SCC) will mean that most of the PIMMS team will be made redundant. If this happens, then who will be the specialist support for not just our daughter but for all of the children that depend on their expert help and advice because we have seen first-hand that the schools rely on this heavily. By cutting this valuable service you will be excluding my daughter and other children from what has been a normal school life. The SEND Code of Practice, which is a legal document, states that the child or young person should be at the heart of every decision that relates to them. It recognises that in the past children with SEND or a learning disability have been done unto. It states that this should no longer be the case and that every child or young person should have a voice and be consulted every step of the way. So who has consulted my daughter about the cuts to this vital service?

A number of staff within the Physical Impairment and Medical Support team have requested voluntary redundancy. As a result it is inevitable there will be some changes in the support for families. For all children who have an EHCP the Local Authority will continue to provide the support outlined in the Plan. The Annual Review process will ensure that your daughter's views are captured. Additionally Somerset Parent Carer Forum are offering engagement sessions with parents to allow the opportunity to discuss the changes. Please follow the link for more information <https://somerseparentcarerforum.org.uk/> Further communications will be sent from Somerset County Council in relation to the changes.

Mr & Mrs Lorey

Our son is currently supported by the PIMMS team. Without this team of experts, our son would be unable to stay in mainstream school. He currently uses the Eye Gaze which is a very complex piece of equipment, he also has a Statement of Educational Needs. Who is going to meet my son's support requirements written in his Statement? I know that 3 members of the PIMMS team that currently work with my son have been made redundant. If these are removed he will be unable to remain in mainstream school.

A number of staff within the Physical Impairment and Medical Support team have requested voluntary redundancy. As a result it is inevitable there will be some changes in the support for families. For all children who have an EHCP the Local Authority will continue to provide the support outlined in the Plan.

1) Who has asked our son how he feels? And every other child relying on the Staff? **The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Annual Review process will ensure that your son's views are captured. Additionally Somerset Parent Carer Forum are offering engagement sessions with parents to allow the opportunity to discuss the changes. Please follow the link for more information <https://somerseparentcarerforum.org.uk/>**

2) Who is going to assess what communication aid our son needs? **The Local Authority have retained support from the Special Educational Needs Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS). This role specialises in assessing children and young people's communication needs, to ensure schools/settings know which communication aids are suitable to support children and young people to access the curriculum. This role also provides training and guidance to schools/settings in using communication aids such as Eye Gaze, Clicker 6/7 etc. Schools are able to use the funding they receive for the children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to request support from the SENATAS Adviser. Additionally, where a child or young people has support from a Speech & Language Therapist from health, the Speech & Language Therapist can refer to the Bristol Communication Aid Service (BCAS) for an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) assessment, subject to their criteria. Additionally there remains 4 Advisory Teachers within the service until the end of the academic year who will continue to provide advice and guidance to schools on how to support CYP to access the curriculum. From the Autumn term onwards there will be 3 Lead Advisory Teachers and the SENATAS adviser. The team are working on a transition plan to ensure they reshape the service to focus on those with the highest level of need.**

3) Who is going to train parents and schools how to use the equipment and update it to child's requirements and needs?

4) Who is going to program the Software?

5) What happens when communication aid fails?

Within the Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team, the Special Educational Needs Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS) role will be able to provide training and guidance to school staff in how to use specialist communicative equipment. The role is also looking to develop a helpline which would be available for schools to use their funding to access this support if they needed to. Across the wider Support Services for Education team, there are staff who will be able to support with a range of equipment.

6) Who will carry out safe systems of work?

Within the Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team, there will remain 4 Advisory teachers until the end of the school year. Beyond this there will be 3 Advisory Teachers who will be able to support Schools and settings.

7) How are his communication needs in statement section F going to be met?

All provision identified within his plan will continue to be met. A review of the EHC Plans for children and young people who are supported by the Physical Impairment and Medical Support team will be undertaken. A meeting will be arranged within the summer term for any families who may be affected by the changes.

8) Who is going to support my son in transition to secondary school?
There will continue to be support provided to schools and settings from Advisory teachers who can support with transition.

9) Who is going to ensure that my son is safe at school?
School staff who work with your son on a daily basis are responsible for ensuring his safety whilst at school.

Mrs Ford (not present at meeting)

I am writing in disgust on hearing that three main people from the PIMMS team who support myself and other members of staff working alongside a boy in main stream school with severe medical needs, using an eye gaze are being made redundant by September.

These cut backs are a disgrace and who will support us with continuing updating this eye gaze so the child can learn to his full potential. Things like updating, visits to the school to see how the child and staff are getting on and if the machine fails there was always someone on the end of the phone to come over and sort it out. Sue Green and Kate Holloway were fantastic with supporting both staff and the child. Who will be over seeing this now? Also, Matt France he was great support and always done our safe systems of work and done site visits for school outings to make sure everything was in place and safe.... Who will be doing this now?

There will continue to be support and advice available from the Advisory Teachers who will continue to work with schools and settings to support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to access the curriculum, moving and handling, safety assessment and other key areas of support.

Support will also be available from the Special Educational Needs Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS). This role specialises in assessing CYP communication needs to ensure Schools know which communication aids are suitable to support the child to access the curriculum. The role also provides training and guidance in using communication aids such as Eye Gaze, Clicker 6/7 etc. Schools are able to use the funding they receive for the Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to request support from the SENATAS Adviser, which is moving to a traded model. Additionally, where a child or young person has support from a Speech & Language Therapist from health, the Speech & Language Therapist will still be able to refer to the Bristol Communication Aid Service (BCAS) for an Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) assessment, subject to their criteria.

Mrs Emery, Somerset Parent Carer Forum

Somerset Parent Carer Forum has been approached by several members with questions around the changes to Support Services for Education (Item 10). Due to their caring roles they are unable to attend today, and we are therefore asking on behalf of those families the following questions.

1 - How will SSE support AAC (Alternative and Augmentative communication) users and children and young people who were supported by the specialist speech and language advisor and her team who have all been made redundant?

A review of Children and Young People supported by the Specialist Communication Advisor has taken place. There are 18 pupils currently being supported and the Specialist Communication Adviser has advised that 4 of these pupils can now be discharged. Of the remaining 14 pupils, 8 of these pupils attend a special school which receives significant funding to meet the needs of the children on their roll. A letter is being drafted to send to the Special Schools in relation to this. The Specialist Communication Adviser will work with schools/settings for the remaining 6 pupils to train and support them on the first half of the summer term and/or will refer to the Speech and Language Therapist if needed in order to refer to the AAC.

2 - How quickly will the support be available to the children and young people who use the service now and will there be a gap in service delivery?

A transition plan for the summer term is being created to ensure there is no gap in service delivery.

3 - What other areas in SSE are staff being made redundant and what plans are in place to support children and young people in those service areas?

Within the Hearing Support Team, 1 Specialist TA has requested Voluntary Redundancy and this is being progressed. 4 Teachers have additionally requested Voluntary Redundancy however no decisions have been made about these posts at this time. An engagement survey/consultation is underway with service users and settings in relation to potential changes in the service.

4 - Why have parent not been consulted about the impact of these cuts or informed about the imminent redundancy and changes to service?

The impact of the changes continues to be reviewed and an engagement process is now in place. Any families significantly affected will be offered a meeting within the summer term and further communications will be sent to staff.

In addition, the forum would like to know

5 - Was an impact assessment undertaken?

Yes. This has been completed, and continues to be reviewed/updated.

6 - How have the results of this been shared with staff?

Through the staff consultation, the Equalities Impact Assessment was shared with staff. An updated version has been shared with the team recently, and when reviewed and updated this copy will also be shared.

7 - The children's and families Act 2014 places a duty on Local authorities to have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of the child or the young person; and the importance of the child or the young person, participating as fully as possible in decisions. Is the Local Authority confident that the reduction in these services areas will still enable these duties to be carried out effectively?

Yes, the service will retain 4 Lead Teachers over the summer term and 3 Lead Teachers beyond this date. Additionally the Physical Impairment and Medical Support team will retained support from the Special Educational Needs

Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS). This role specialises in assessing children and young people's communication needs. The LA is therefore confident that it can maintain its responsibilities in accordance with the Children's and Families Act 2014.

Mrs Watters, St Michael's C of E First School & St Dubricius C of E First School – Not present at meeting

I would like to know how schools, particularly small schools whose budgets are being squeezed yet again this year, are supposed to meet the needs of their SEND children with the reduced levels of funding and raised criteria to gain funding if advisory services are also cut to the extent that is being planned?

How it is that there are raft of highly paid people at the top in County Hall whose salaries appear to be covered, as do the costs of expensive consultants, when we will be failing a group of extremely vulnerable SEN children due to lack of finance and profession expert advice?

Why is that that those people making these decisions never seem to make visits to schools to see how it is in reality?

Why do Consultation periods never seem to be that in reality it always seems that decisions have already been made?

A letter will be sent to Mrs Watters at St Michael's School. In addition staff making such decisions are having to make some difficult decisions due to the overspend on the High Needs budget. Such decisions are made in light of the SEND code of practice and responsibilities on the Local Authority and that of schools. The staff making the decisions have significant experience of working in schools and meet with SENCOs through the SENCO network meetings and gain feedback on concerns from these meetings. All SENCOs were also written to in February informing them of the planned changes and seeking feedback on services.

Mrs Wynn

I'm here to represent my son. He is six years old and attends a mainstream environment at a Bridgwater School. He currently uses the Eye Gaze system supported by the PIMMS team, which apparently now no longer exists. The part of this that I don't understand is that there has been no consultation with any of the families that are directly affected. It seems that there has been no information handed to any of these families and decisions have been made regardless. I would also like to know, in this environment in the 21st century when we're supporting disable people in all the ways we're supposed to be, the increase in council tax is supposed to save these services but we're already getting cuts. What sort of legacy does this leave when we are a County now cutting back on the most vulnerable in society? We have the Paralympics which the government is ploughing money into and the death of the most amazing physician who was non-verbal and he's shown what any disabled person can do or better than the rest of us. As a County we just seem to be turning our back to it. What comes next? Wheelchair services into institutionalisation. It's a sad state of affairs and I'm ashamed to be someone living in this County right now. Other counties are not doing this. A consultation would have been great with a plan for the future. What do we tell our kids when they are not getting the support coming into the school anymore? I've spoken to my son's school and they haven't got the slack in the system to pick up the work of the PIMMS team.

The LA continue to provide support from the Physical Impairment and Medical Support team. There is a need to review the team due to funding pressures, but the team will retain Lead Advisory Teachers and have retained support from the Special Educational Needs Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS). This role specialises in assessing children and young people's communication needs, to ensure schools/settings know which communication aids are suitable to support children and young people to access the curriculum. Families who are most affected by the changes will be offered a meeting in the summer term, so that the changes can be explained and discussed.

Mrs Baker

I have two questions today. Firstly in reference to the collaborative academy trust mentioned on page 80. Otherwise mentioned by the media as "fat CAT" for the large sums of money the CEO and management team receive, and now under the eye of the Department of education for not having good ofsted inspected school. Sadly restricted funds into one of the schools resulted in 20 members of staff of excellence left in the term before the summer holiday. This school is also the safe haven for many, many children who have been pushed out of education in other our local schools, who simply do not deliver GOOD inclusive education. The second school is seeking a replacement head teacher on a low stepping stone salary.

Could the LA considering the example of other local authorities and pull back these schools under into the LA's remit? ... just think how that £250,000 could be spent appropriately on services.

(A detailed letter has been sent to Mrs Baker) The responsibility for the re-brokering of the current CAT schools sits with the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the South West and the Department for Education. If you have any concerns about the process that is being followed in relation to the re-brokering we suggest you contact the RSC at rsc.sw@education.gov.uk.

The LA is not able to pull back these schools under the LA remit.

Question 2 in relation to the SSE reshaping of the service, in which I understand this morning a state person for the local authority contradicted the letter in which Mrs Walters sent out a few weeks ago "With the LA's new requirements and reduced level of funding this may mean a reduction in support directly to schools".

The teacher advisory service is actually doing what social care can never do although are supposed to. We need an independent audit and impact assessment of these changes, on the human rights of our children, for their rights to an education...and to be themselves

An equalities impact assessment has been completed and a transition plan in being finalised.

In respect of agenda item 9 – School Performance, there was also a question regarding the school admission code for summer born children. (The response below has been anonymised)

Thank you for your question at the public meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Children & Families Committee for which you requested a written response. As you are aware, if a child is summer born (1 April - 31 August) parent/carers may request that he/she can start reception a year later. This is called delayed admission. The DfE Advice on the admission of summer born admission states the following key points:

- School admission authorities are required to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday, but flexibilities exist for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school before they reach compulsory school age.**
- Where a parent request's their child is admitted out of their normal age group, the school admission authority is responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to. They are required to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned.**
- There is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal age group, but parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group.**

In line with the School Admissions Code statutory guidance para 2.17A the Admission Authority must take account of the views parents; the views of the Headteacher; information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; where relevant medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. If a request is refused, the child will still be considered for admission to their normal age group.

I can confirm that Somerset Local Authority, acting as the Admission Authority for voluntary controlled and community schools, consider applications for delayed entry on a case by case basis and in line with the statutory guidance described above. The parent/carer is required to make an on-time application for the child's normal age group but can submit a request for admission out of the normal age group at the same time. The Admission Authority will ensure the parent is aware of whether the request for admission out of age group has been agreed before National Offer Day and the reason for any refusal. If a request for delayed admission is agreed, the school place application may be withdrawn before a place is offered and a new school place application will need to be made as part of the normal admissions round the following year. If a request for delayed admission is refused, the parent must decide whether to accept the offer of a school place for the normal age group, or to refuse it and make an in-year application for admission to year one for the September following the child's fifth birthday. The DfE make no provision in the School Admissions Code for a right of appeal against the decision not to allow a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group. In the case of foundation and voluntary aided schools, academies and free schools, parents may make a complaint using the school's complaints procedure – because the governing body or academy trust is the admission authority. In the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, they may complain to the local authority – because they are the admission authority. Somerset Local Authority complaints procedure can be found at <http://www.somerset.gov.uk/have-your-say/complaints-comments-and-compliments/complaints-comments-compliments/>

In your child's case the application for delayed entry was received on 15 January 2018. The information provided on the application form and the supporting letter from the pre-school were carefully considered. However, in the opinion of the Admission Authority for the school (Head Teacher and the Local Authority) the information provided did not give sufficient evidence that your child would benefit from a delayed entry. The Local Authority's view was that your child would not benefit from a delayed entry for the following reasons;

- There was no information or supporting evidence to show that your child is below the expected levels for his age group.
- The letter provided by the pre-school confirmed the views of your child's parents and gives general information but does not give detailed specific reasons why your child would benefit from a delayed entry.
- Although your child still needs a nap and isn't potty trained there was still 9 months for this to be resolved by September and there is also the option of deferred entry or part-time schooling.

As is standard practice and a requirement of the School Admissions Code the Head Teacher was consulted for her views. The Head Teacher had already discussed the request with your wife and Miss C (a class teacher who has met your child). The school could see no reason why your child should not join the school in September 2018 and informed us that the EYFS/KS1 teacher and the LSA's are experienced at managing successful transitions into school and are expecting to help your child develop the necessary maturity to cope with full time school when he is ready. The school also pointed out that the EYFS children have a play-based curriculum as recommended by the DfE and they are certain that your child will settle at school. I gather that your application stated that your child suffers with separation anxiety but acknowledges that he now settles well at the pre-school which was a view echoed by the pre-school in the accompanying letter.

Due to the reasons above the decision was made not to agree a delayed entry for your child and you were informed of this decision by letter on 6 February. I understand you have been informed that it is appreciated that children develop at different rates and therefore if you are able to provide more detailed information by 1 July, from for example the preschool, that demonstrates your child is not making expected progress we are happy to re consider the position with the Head Teacher. We are aware that preschools provide parents with progress reports and you may wish to consider supplying this. As you are aware you can choose to defer your child's entry to school and he could start in January or April at the beginning of the Spring or Summer Term. He could also attend school part-time up until the end of his reception year. I appreciate this is not the outcome you are looking for but the Local Authority has complied with the requirements of the School Admissions Code. As mentioned, we will of course consider any further information supplied.

Yours sincerely,
Jane Seaman – Admissions and Entitlements Team

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Somerset County Council Forward Plan of proposed Key Decisions

The County Council is required to set out details of planned key decisions at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken. This forward plan sets out key decisions to be taken at Cabinet meetings as well as individual key decisions to be taken by either the Leader, a Cabinet Member or an Officer. The very latest details can always be found on our website at:

<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>

Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 defines a key decision as an executive decision which is likely:

(a) to result in the relevant local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the relevant local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or

(b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards or electoral divisions in the area of the relevant local authority.

The Council has decided that the relevant threshold at or above which the decision is significant will be £500,000 for capital / revenue expenditure or savings. Money delegated to schools as part of the Scheme of Financial Management of Schools exercise is exempt from these thresholds once it is delegated to the school.

Cabinet meetings are held in public at County Hall unless Cabinet resolve for all or part of the meeting to be held in private in order to consider exempt information/confidential business. The Forward Plan will show where this is intended. Agendas and reports for Cabinet meetings are also published on the Council's website at least five clear working days before the meeting date.

Individual key decisions that are shown in the plan as being proposed to be taken "not before" a date will be taken within a month of that date, with the requirement that a report setting out the proposed decision will be published on the Council's website at least five working days before the date of decision. Any representations received will be considered by the decision maker at the decision meeting.

In addition to key decisions, the forward plan shown below lists other business that is scheduled to be considered at a Cabinet meeting during the period of the Plan, which will also include reports for information. The monthly printed plan is updated on an ad hoc basis during each month. *Where possible the County Council will attempt to keep to the dates shown in the Plan. It is quite likely, however, that some items will need to be rescheduled and new items added as new circumstances come to light.* Please ensure therefore that you refer to the most up to date plan.

For general enquiries about the Forward Plan:

- You can view it on the County Council web site at <http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=134&RD=0&FD=1&bcr=1>
- You can arrange to inspect it at County Hall (in Taunton).
- Alternatively, copies can be obtained from Scott Wooldridge or Michael Bryant in the Democratic Services Team by telephoning (01823) 357628 or 359500.

To view the Forward Plan on the website you will need a copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader available free from www.adobe.com
Please note that it could take up to 2 minutes to download this PDF document depending on your Internet connection speed.

To make representations about proposed decisions:

Please contact the officer identified against the relevant decision in the Forward Plan to find out more information or about how your representations can be made and considered by the decision maker.

The Agenda and Papers for Cabinet meetings can be found on the County Council's website at:
<http://democracy.somerset.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=134&Year=0>

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p>NON-KEY DECISION First published: 28 December 2017</p>	<p>Not before 16th Apr 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director</p>	<p>Issue: Strategy for the Management of the County Farms Estate Decision: To approve the publication of the strategy for the management of the County Farms Estate in accordance with existing policies, taking into account the recommendations from Scrutiny Committee Policies & Place</p>			<p>Claire Lovett, Head of Property Tel: 07977412583</p>
<p>FP/17/12/02 First published: 14 December 2017</p>	<p>Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport</p>	<p>Issue: Contract for Provision of Bus Lane Enforcement Infrastructure Decision: To award the contract for the enforcement of bus lane enforcement infrastructure</p>		<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Bev Norman, Service Manager - Traffic Management, Traffic & Transport Development Tel: 01823358089</p>
<p>FP/18/02/01 First published: 6 February 2018</p>	<p>Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure, Director of Finance, Legal and Governance</p>	<p>Issue: Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Superfast Extension Programme (SEP) Phase 2: decision to accept further grant funding and introduce additional funding into the contract for Lot 4 Decision: To accept additional grant funding from DCMS to invest in broadband infrastructure in Lot 4. To introduce the additional funding into the contract for Lot 4 to deliver more broadband infrastructure in that area</p>			<p>Katrina Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873</p>

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/18/02/112 First published: 1 March 2018	Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Connecting Devon and Somerset - Completion of Phase 1 Decision: To authorise the Lead Commissioner for ECI to complete the Phase 1 contract		Part exempt	Katriona Lovelock, Economic Development Officer Tel: 01823 359873
FP/18/01/03 First published: 5 January 2018	Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families	Issue: Heathfield School, Taunton - Award of Contract for the Proposed ASD Base Decision: To seek approval to award the contract for the delivery of the propose dnew base			Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962
FP/18/03/06 First published: 13 March 2018	Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Corporate and Community Services, Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Community Leisure Services Post 2019 Decision: Agree that SCC does not extend or renew the current contract for community leisure provision. Sites will be made available for disposal to the schools were possible.			Barry James, Strategic Commissioning Manager – Community Infrastructure Tel: 01823 356659
FP/18/03/04 First published: 12 March 2018	Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Procurement for the construction of traffic signals improvements at the Rowbarton junction in Taunton Decision: To commence the process to secure a contractor to deliver the scheme to improve the traffic signals at Rowbarton junction in Taunton			Sunita Mills, Service Commissioning Manager Tel: 01823 359763

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p>FP/18/03/07 First published: 20 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Issue: New Bridgwater Special School - Bower Lane Site Decision: Approval to appoint consultancy services for RIBA Stages 0-7 for the delivery of the proposed new school</p>			<p>Carol Bond, Project Manager, Property Programme Team Tel: 01823 355962</p>
<p>FP/18/03/05 First published: 12 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development</p>	<p>Issue: Disposal of County Farms Decision: Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus farm and lands including those disposals to be conducted via public auction as appropriate</p>			<p>Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325</p>
<p>FP/18/03/02 First published: 12 March 2018</p>	<p>Not before 23rd Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Issue: Capital Investment Programme 2018/19: Early Years Building Conditions Decision: 1. Approves the allocations for capital funding to enable the building condition project to be commissioned and delivered at appropriate points between 2018 and 2020. 2. Authorises appropriate officers under delegation to decide on the most appropriate means of procurement in each case</p>			<p>Charlotte Wilson, Service Manager Early Years Commissioning Tel: 01823 357386</p>

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p>FP/18/03/09 First published: 23 March 2018</p>	<p>23 Apr 2018 Cabinet Member for Children and Families</p>	<p>Issue: Capital Investment Programme 2018-19 : Early Years Sufficiency Basic Need Decision: That the Cabinet Member for Children and Families: 1. Approves the allocations for capital funding to enable each of the following early years build projects to be commissioned and delivered at appropriate points during the 5-year period between 2018 and 2022: Early Years – Basic Need; 2. Authorises the appropriate officers under delegation to decide on the most appropriate means of procurement in each case.</p>			<p>Charlotte Wilson, Service Manager Early Years Commissioning Tel: 01823 357386</p>
<p>FP/17/01/04 First published: 11 January 2018</p>	<p>2 May 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Award of contract for the provision of Temporary Labour Decision: To approve the award of the temporary labour contract to the preferred supplier under ESPO MSTAR2 framework, as detailed in the appended confidential report</p>		<p>Part exempt</p>	<p>Paul Skuse, Service Manager, Commercial & Procurement - Business</p>
<p>Fp/17/08/12 First published: 6 November 2017</p>	<p>2 May 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: County Vision 2017-2021 Decision: to consider the proposed County Vision to recommend to February's Full Council</p>			<p>Simon Clifford, Customers & Communities Director Tel: 01823359166</p>

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p>FP/18/02/07 First published: 13 February 2018</p>	<p>2 May 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: LTP Implementation Plan adoption and approval for publishing Decision: To agree to a 1 year LTP Implementation Plan to fulfil SCC's statutory obligations. The current one covers 2013-17.</p>			<p>Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465</p>
<p>FP/18/02/11 First published: 26 February 2018</p>	<p>2 May 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Capital Investment Programme 2018/19 + Decision: To report on Government grant announcements and recommend capital approvals for 2018/19 and subsequent years to deliver key capital projects</p>			<p>Elizabeth Watkin, Service Manager - Chief Accountant Tel: 01823359573</p>
<p>FP/18/04/03 First published: 9 April 2018</p>	<p>9 May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director</p>	<p>Issue: Insourcing and re-procurement of Hard FM arrangements for Corporate Estate only Decision: The Council is required to arrange replacement planned and reactive maintenance services (Hard FM) for when the current contract comes finishes at the end of September. The Council proposes to create an in-house team to deliver the core electrical, mechanical and fabric maintenance and procure a suite of contracts to cover specialist maintenance works.</p>			<p>Claire Lovett, Head of Property Tel: 07977412583</p>

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/17/09/04 First published: 11 September 2017	Not before 14th May 2018 Director of Finance, Legal and Governance, Director of Commissioning and Lead Commissioner for Economic Community Infrastructure	Issue: iAero (Yeovil) Aerospace Centre (2,500 sq m) Acceptance of ERDF Funding Decision: The acceptance of the offer of ERDF funding (£3.5 million), for the iAero (Yeovi) Aerospace Centre			Lynda Madge, Commissioning Manager – Economy & Planning Tel: 01823 356766
FP/18/04/01 First published: 3 April 2018	Not before 14th May 2018 Commercial & Business Services Director	Issue: County Hall Priority 1 Enabling Works approval Decision: SCC Full Council approved funding for Priority 1 works at County Hall in Feb 18. This decision seeks the approval of the first tranche of this funding which ensures enabling works to unlock the full project proceed at the right time			Commercial & Business Services Director
FP/18/02/08 First published: 13 February 2018	Not before 14th May 2018 Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport	Issue: Taunton Transport Strategy Decision: To agree to adopt the joint (with TDBC) Taunton Transport Strategy			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
FP/17/08/01 First published: 9 August 2017	Not before 4th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Resources and Economic Development	Issue: Disposal of Surplus Land at Castle Cary Decision: Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus (former) farm land (13 acres, land only) at Castle Cary. Authority to conclude negotiations for the disposal of surplus (former) farm land (13 acres, land only) at Castle Cary.	Disposal of Surplus Land	Part exempt	Charlie Field, Estates Manager, Corporate Property Tel: 01823355325
FP/18/02/09 First published: 13 February 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Road Safety Strategy Decision: Adoption of the Road Safety Strategy			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/18/02/06 First published: 13 February 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Rail Strategy Decision: To agree to proceed to public consultation			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/18/02/05 First published: 13 February 2018	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Public Transport Strategy Decision: To agree to proceed to public consultation			Lucy Bath Tel: 01823 359465
FP/17/11/05 First published: 16 November 2017	13 Jun 2018 Cabinet	Issue: Customer Feedback Annual Reports 2017/18 Decision: Consider the annual customer feedback report and Ombudsman report for 2017/18			Rebecca Martin Tel: 01823 356257

Weekly version of plan published on 3 April 2018

FP Refs	Decision Date/Maker	Details of the proposed decision	Documents and background papers to be available to decision maker	Does the decision contain any exempt information requiring it to be considered in private?	Contact Officer for any representations to be made ahead of the proposed decision
<p>FP/18/03/08 First published: 20 March 2018</p>	<p>13 Jun 2018 Cabinet</p>	<p>Issue: Somerset County Council Business Plan Decision: Agree the new Business Plan whihc outlines what SCC will do over the next 3 years to deliver the new County Vision</p>			<p>Alastair Higton, Executive Assistant - Policy and Research</p>
<p>FP/18/04/02 First published: 3 April 2018</p>	<p>Not before 25th Jun 2018 Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>	<p>Issue: Shaping the future models for Support in Sheltered Housing in Somerset Decision: SCC's contract for support in sheltered housing schemes is due to end in October 2018, a consultation is taking place between 3rd April – 30th may to seek the view of a wide range of people to discuss the different way which the council could provide these services in the future. This decision is to agree the outcome of that consultation.</p>			<p>Vicky Chipchase, Senior Commissioning Officer Tel: 07775 406590</p>

Scrutiny for Policies Children and Families Committee Work Programme

Committee meetings	Link to CYPP	Lead Member & Officer
20 April 2018		
Changes of SEND advisory support services		Emily Walters/Vicky Thomas
Pathways to Independence (P2i)		Louise Palmer
SEND Peer review update		Rowina Clift-Shanley
18 May 2018		
West Somerset Opportunity Area		Julia Ridge
Young Carers Update		Tom Whitworth/Wendy Jenner
Response to Ofsted		Claire Winter
15 June 2018		
CYPP 2017/18 –Year 2 Q4 Update		Philippa Granthier
20 July 2018		
Children’s Social Care Statutory Customer Feedback report		Rebecca Martin
14 September 2018		
CYPP 2018-19 – Year 3 Q1 Update		Philippa Granthier
19 October 2018		
16 November 2018		
CYPP 2018-19 – Year 3 Q2 Update		Philippa Granthier
Drug & Alcohol safeguarding concerns in families		Amanda Payne
7 December 2018		

Note: Members of the Scrutiny Committee and all other Members of Somerset County Council are invited to contribute items for inclusion in the work programme. Please contact Jamie Jackson, Governance Manager Scrutiny, who will assist you in submitting your item. jajackson@somerset.gov.uk 01823 359040.

(What impact does that have on Children in Somerset?)

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Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

Agenda items	Link to Former Imp Plan	Action owner	Agreed Outcome	RAG Status
13 May 2016	Link to CYPP			
Focus on the education of vulnerable children (To include Children Looked After, Special Educational Needs and Free School Meal recipients)	All	Julian Wooster	The update was accepted and it was suggested that to help improve information available for and communications with all service users a decision tree (visual aid in the form of a diagram/flow chart) for the benefit of service users be considered.	Pending
27 January 2017				
Impact of proposed financial changes to Schools	All	Julian Wooster	The Committee encouraged Officers to continue to lobby for these proposed changes to be made so the higher funding materialised.	Pending/On-going
10 March 2017				
Addressing drug and alcohol safeguarding concerns in families		Amanda Payne	The update was accepted and it was suggested that an update report be provided at a future meeting in 12 months.	Pending May 2018
20 October 2017				
West Somerset Opportunity Area		Julia Ridge	The Committee noted the report and it was agreed that an update on this would be given in 6 months.	Pending for May '18
17 November 2017				
Children's Services Commissioning		Louise Palmer	It was requested that an update report on Pathways to Independence (P2i) be considered at a future meeting.	Pending April '18 meeting
Young Carers update		T Whitworth + W Jenner	It was requested that an update report be prepared for the 16 March 2018 meeting.	May '18 meeting
8 December 2017				
SEND Peer Review Update		Rowina Clift-Shanley	The report and presentation were accepted and the Chair expressed thanks on behalf of the Committee for the progress made so far. It was suggested and agreed that a further update be provided in the Spring.	Completed April meeting
Family Support Services		P Granthier	To receive an update report at the January 2018 meeting	Pending

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

26 January 2018				
Family Support Services		Philippa Granthier	The Committee agreed to provide the Cabinet with its conclusions for its next meeting.	Completed
Overview of Family Based Care (Fostering) -		Louise Palmer	The Chair asked if consideration had been given to producing a flow-chart or a form of easy to follow guide to show the overall process and the Director of Children's Services noted that this had been raised by others and was being progressed. The update was accepted and it was agreed to request an update in a further 6 months.	Pending
16 March 2018				
Public Question time			There were 8 questions in relation to item 10 – Support Services for Education, and there was also a question regarding agenda item 9 and school performance and the school admission code for summer born children.	Completed
School Performance 2017 - National Curriculum Test & Examination Results		Neal Chislett	The Committee requested more information at a future meeting regarding KS4 outcomes, particularly for children with SEND.	Pending
Update on Support Services for Education			The Committee agreed a Member proposal that an urgent position statement was required on the implementation of staffing changes within SSE services. In addition, the Committee recommended to the Cabinet Member that any planned changes be paused and requested that a full report be presented to the Committee at the next meeting.	Completed

The CYPP has been produced following a multi-agency process, overseen by Somerset Children's Trust. Seven improvement programmes have been identified – our work is focused on ensuring progress and achievement within these 7 programmes:

1. Supporting children, families and communities to become more resilient
2. Promoting healthy outcomes and giving children the best start in life
3. Improving emotional health and wellbeing
4. Building skills for life
5. Providing help early and effectively

(What impact does that have on the Children in Somerset?)

Scrutiny for Policies Children & Families Committee Outcome Tracker

6. Achieving effective multi-agency support for more vulnerable children and young people and developing an excellent children's social work service
7. Embedding a think family approach across the workforce

Key:

Completed	Action complete and will be removed from tracker for next meeting.
Pending	Action on-going or plans in place to address.
Incomplete	No action currently in place with a minimum of 3 months since action agreed.

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Somerset County Council
Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee -
20 April 2018

Changes to the Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team

Lead Officer: Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services
Author: Emily Walters, Lead SEND Advisor
Contact Details: ewalters@somerset.gov.uk
Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson, Member for Children and Families
Division and Local Member:

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report is provided at the request of the Chair of Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee.

In light of the changes to the way that the Local Authority and schools are funded, a review of the Physical Impairments and Medical Support (PIMS) Team has started. This review seeks to explore opportunities for joint funding with statutory partners in Health and Children's Social Care whilst maintaining good educational outcomes for those pupils with Special Education Needs and Disabilities & Complex Medical Needs.

The general expectation is that the role of centrally funded services is to support schools in meeting the needs of pupils through an advisory role, with the direct support to pupils falling under the remit of schools. National guidance exists to support the delivery of hearing and visual impairment services. This is not the case for the PIMS, there is no statutory requirement on the local authority to fund this service in its current form.

Scrutiny Members are asked to consider whether there are other ways to secure improved outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities within the new National funding guidelines and reduced resources.

2. Issues for consideration/ Recommendations

- 2.1. Why are we making these changes now?

Whilst central government funding of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has seen a cash increase for Schools in Somerset of 3%, the High Needs funding element, which funds this service, has been increased by less than 1%, and the available funding is not keeping pace with rising needs or costs. Government changes also require that in the future the amount of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is spent on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will be ring fenced alongside the requirement which sees more of the schools' budget given directly to schools, rather than allocated by councils on central services.

Schools are usually best placed, with input from parents, to organise the most effective support. Where significant additional support is necessary for pupils with Education, health and Care plans the Local Authority continue to have a responsibility for providing funding or services.

Currently Somerset is spending more on these services than currently allocated in the schools' budget (DSG), in 2016/17 an additional £2.9m was spent, with a further overspend projected for this year of £2.3m (£5.2m in total). If this overspend is not addressed this shortfall will either have to come from individual school budgets and/or other essential council services.

- 2.2. Scrutiny Members are asked to consider whether there are other ways to secure improved outcomes for children with reduced resources.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team (PIMS Team) provides educational support for any child who may have a physical impairment and/or medical requirements in response to a school request). It is currently a team of Advisory Teachers, a Specialist Communication Advisor and Support Assistant Advisors. The Special Educational Needs Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS) is an integral part of PIMS and offers an assessment and advisory service for all children and young people who require alternative recording methods or communication aids.

The funding for the PIMS team comes from the High Needs block and the threshold for involvement is linked to individual children's needs and whether high needs funding is required. Currently 479 children are supported and analysis of the current caseload has shown that almost 45% of these children do not meet the PIMS threshold. This means that schools are able to meet the needs of these pupils within their notional SEN budget.

No national best practice guidance exists for the PIMS Team, as this is not a statutory function. Somerset is unusual when compared to other Local Authorities, many do not have a dedicated team. In Cornwall the service is delivered by Health, in Dudley it is solely providing training to school staff in the understanding of their duties, and in Worcestershire, support is provided through Special School Outreach.

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. The SEND Code of Practice states in section 6.9 that schools **must** make reasonable adjustments, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services for disabled children.

The proposal is that the local authority continues to centrally fund and maintain support for schools to enable them to carry out their statutory duties, however this will be at a reduced level as schools are in receipt of funding through Notional SEN funding (element 2) and high needs top up funding for individual children. Schools will be able to access the retained central support from the LA, and may choose to supplement this with the funding provided for the pupil.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1. Consultation and engagement with families has taken the form of:

- All families received a letter before Easter about the proposed changes

and 6 responses were received. (Please see attached Equalities impact assessment EIA).

- Further individual meetings with families and schools are planned during the Summer Term to facilitate new ways of working and ensure that no child who meets the criteria for support is disadvantaged by any change.
- Engagement sessions with parent/carers through the Parent carer forum are taking place this month. These sessions will capture parent's views on how the new service could be structured and what it will deliver. All views will be considered however the final decision remains with the Local Authority.

Consultation with staff:

- Formal consultation in line with Somerset HR policies has been undertaken with staff in the PIMS Team.

4.2. Implications

That children who are not in receipt of high needs funding will be supported directly by their schools and some children and families may have a change of staff. Please see Equalities impact assessment

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

Equality Impact Assessment Form and Action Table 2017 - 2019

(Expand the boxes as appropriate, please see guidance (www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment) to assist with completion)

"I shall try to explain what "due regard" means and how the courts interpret it. The courts have made it clear that having due regard is **more than having a cursory glance** at a document before arriving at a preconceived conclusion. Due regard requires public authorities, in formulating a policy, to give equality considerations the weight which is **proportionate in the circumstances**, given the potential impact of the policy on equality. It is not a question of box-ticking; it requires the equality impact to be **considered rigorously and with an open mind.**"

Baroness Thornton, March 2010

What are you completing the Impact Assessment on (which policy, service, MTFP reference, cluster etc)?

The impact of the LA decision to reduce funding to Support Services for Education (SSE), resulting in the reduction of delivery of additional educational support.

Version

4

Date

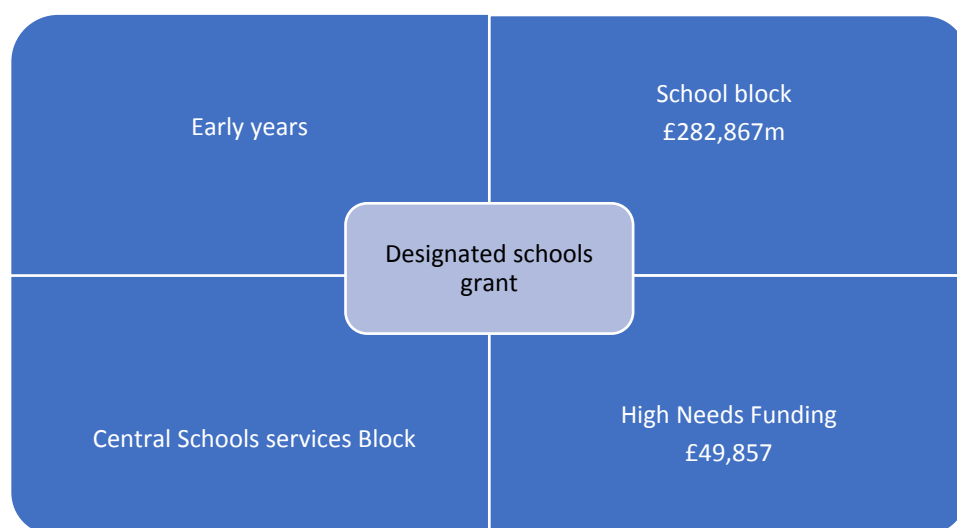
10 April 2018

Section 1 – Description of what is being impact assessed

Background

Central government has changed the way funding is provided to support Children and Young People (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The School Funding Reforms (2013) transferred funding for support for CYP with SEND directly to schools. There is also a change to the national funding formula which will be introduced within Somerset in 2018. Previously, the LA were providing central funding in the form of commissioned services to support CYP with SEND. This arrangement is now in the process of changing, with increased funding being provided to the schools or settings to use specifically for the purpose of ensuring CYP with SEND receives the appropriate support.

Funding for schools comes directly from central government and is split into 4 blocks shown below.



Until this financial year, the LA have been able to move money between the School block and the High Needs block. SCC can now only move up to 0.5% of funding without approval from the Secretary of State.

There have also been changes to legislation through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice which became effective in 2014.

The proposed changes in funding arrangements aim to address changes which should have been put into place shortly after the introduction of the SEND Code of Practice in 2014. The Code of Practice states:

- 6.95 All mainstream schools are provided with resources to support those with additional needs, including pupils with SEN and disabilities.
- 6.96 Schools have an amount identified within their overall budget, called the notional SEN budget.
- 6.97 It is for schools, are part of their normal budget planning, to determine their approach to using their resources to support the progress of pupils with SEN. The SENCO, Headteacher and governing body or proprietor should establish a clear picture of the resources that are available to the school. They should consider their strategic approach to meeting SEN in the context of the total resources available.
- 6.99 Schools are not expected to meet the full costs of more expensive special provision from their core funding. They are expected to provide additional support which costs up to a nationally prescribed threshold per year. The responsible local authority, usually the authority where the child or young person lives, should provide additional top up funding where the cost of the special education provision required to meet the needs of an individual pupil exceeds the nationally prescribed threshold.

As a result, the LA have been working with schools and educational settings for over a year in relation to these changes.

Staff Consultation – November 2017 – January 2018

In October 2017, the LA proposed to reduce funding to the Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team by a 30%, reducing the budget from £596k to £418k. The PIMS team delivers additional educational support to CYP in settings who have SEND.

It was initially proposed to remove 5 posts from the PIMS team which were being completed by non-qualified teaching staff, including 3 Support Assistant Advisors and 2 specialist posts. This formed the basis of a staff consultation which took place between 30 November 2017 and 24 January 2018, to gain feedback in relation to the proposals and to consider any other ways of finding the necessary savings. Through the consultation, staff requested that the opportunity of voluntary redundancy be extended to other staff within the PIMS team including managers and advisory teachers. This was actioned and resulted in 2 voluntary redundancies requests from the wider team.

As a result of the staff consultation, it was agreed to commence with the redundancy of 4 of the 5 original posts placed at risk and to agree to the voluntary redundancy request of the advisory teacher.

Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee – 16 March 2018

Following Scrutiny on 16 March 2018, the LA have agreed to review the redundancy positions, review recently updated data and to engage with service users. All families who receive support from the PIMS team have been written to by Julian Wooster (Director of Children's Services) to explain the current situation with the reductions to the PIMS team. Somerset Parent Carer Forum are holding engagement sessions for parents/carers to attend to provide accurate information about the reductions to the PIMS team.

The PIMS team are finalising a transition plan which will demonstrate what support the PIMS team will provide over the summer term and into the 2018/19 academic year. This impact assessment assesses the impact on PIMS service users and their parents/carers and considers how to mitigate against this.

Current Proposal

At this stage of the review, it is proposed that the PIMS team will no longer work with any CYP who does not have HN funding or a statement/EHCP. Parents and carers should contact their child's school or setting to find out if their child has got HN funding or a statement/EHCP.

In addition, it is proposed that the PIMS team will no longer carry out any home visits, as support should be provided to the school setting.

Support which is currently provided around specialist communication will be considered through the LA Speech Language and Communication Strategy Group and provided by the Autism and Communication team, SENATAS and PIMS Advisory Teachers.

Section 2A – People or communities that are **targeted or could be affected** (taking particular note of the Protected Characteristic listed in action table)

The proposed reduction in funding will potentially affect CYP who have a physical impairment or medical need who are currently receiving support from these services.

PIMST supports 479 Children and Young People.

Section 2B – People who are **delivering** the policy or service

Prior to the changes being implemented the PIMS team is delivered by:

- 1 x Manager
- 4 x Advisory Teachers
- 2 x Specialist posts
- 3 x Support Assistant Advisers

Of the 10 members of staff, 20% are male and 80% are female.

The proposed changes would see support provided in the future by:

- 1 x Manager
- 3 x Advisory Teachers
- 1 x Specialist post

In addition the Specialist post will receive support from Higher Level Teaching Assistants from the Hearing and Vision support teams to deliver training on communicative technology.

Section 3 – **Evidence and data** used for the assessment (Attach documents where appropriate)

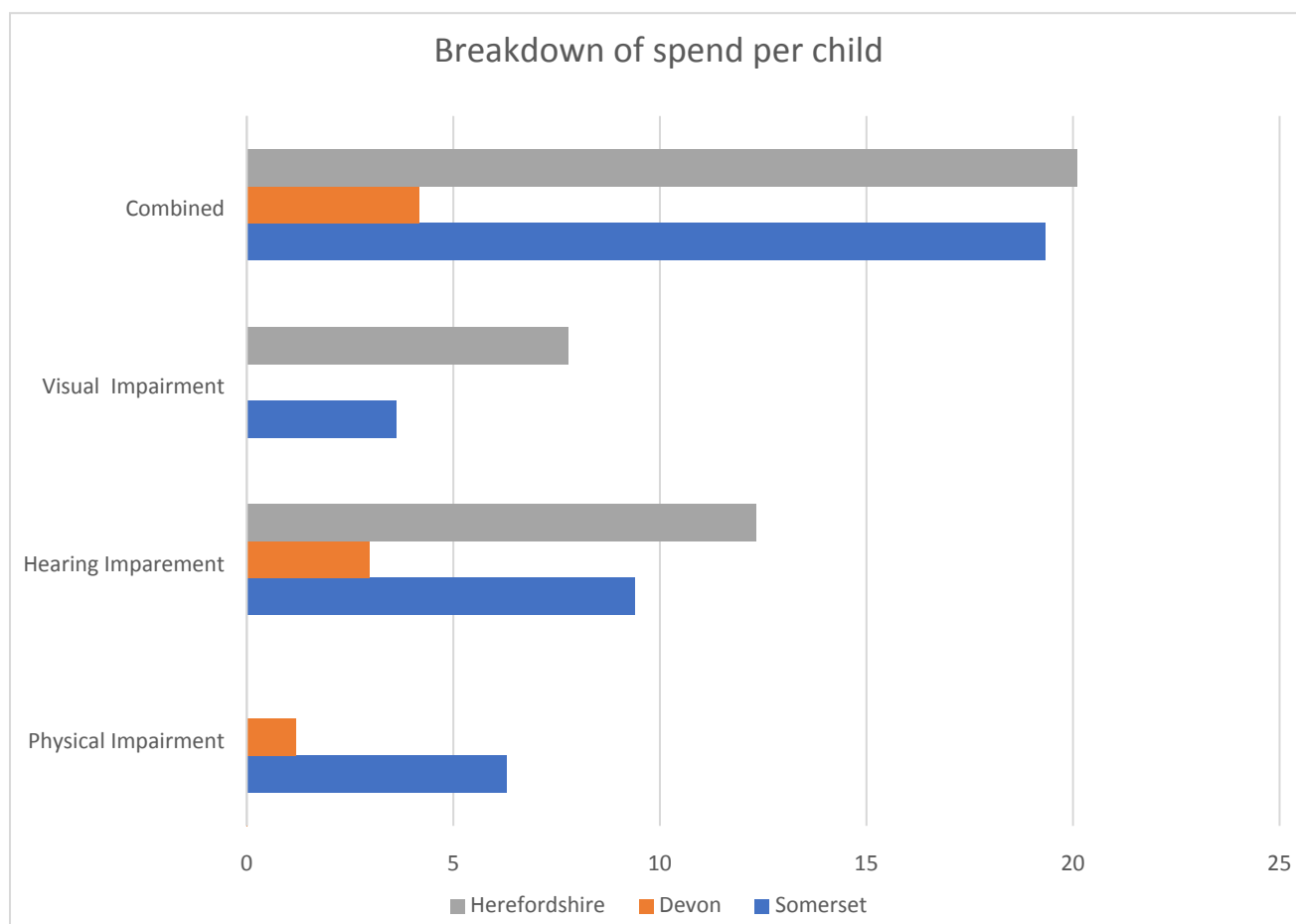
There is no statutory responsibility for the Local Authority to provide support and guidance to schools/settings in relation to physical impairment and/or medical conditions, beyond what may be detailed in an individual's Education, Health and Care Plan. There is no national guidance in place for physical impairment services.

Wider analysis of support provided by physical impairment teams in other authorities has taken

place during the staff consultation. As there is no statutory responsibility, and through review of provision of support by other LAs this in an area where many other local authorities have reduced or removed this support or deliver support in different ways. Cornwall’s physical impairment support is provided through health, Dudley provides training to school staff to ensure they understand duties and can implement them, and Worcestershire provide support through outreach from special schools.

LA Data

Local Authority	Somerset				Devon				Herefordshire			
	2015/16		2014/15		2015/16		2014/15		2015/16		2014/15	
Financial Year												
No of DSG funded Pupils	68758	£ Per pupil	68365	£ Per pupil	92562	£ Per pupil	92108	£ Per pupil	22567	£ Per pupil	22582	£ Per pupil
Section 251: SEN Support Services 1.2.5												
Total Spend	£5,014,800	£72.93	£4,854,300	£71.01	£5,872,000	£63.44	£5,798,000	£62.95	£1,169,765	£51.84	£1,382,761	£61.23
Breakdown of Total Spend across Service Areas												
Physical Impairment	433,500	£ 6.30	433,500	£ 6.34	111,000	£ 1.20	84,000	£ 0.91				
Hearing Impairment	645,700	£ 9.39	645,700	£ 9.44	275,000	£ 2.97	275,000	£ 2.99	277,989	£12.32	294,719	£13.05
Visual Impairment	249,500	£ 3.63	249,500	£ 3.65					175,618	£ 7.78	210,685	£ 9.33



The limited data suggests Somerset are spending more to support CYP with a physical impairment than other authorities.

SSE have requested additional data from six LAs relating to the spend associated with SEN support services from S251 budget statements. Unfortunately, there has been no data provided by these LAs.

Review of PIMS Caseload

To mitigate against the potential changes, a review of all CYP currently supported by the LA has been completed to determine who will be affected the most by the changes. Parents/Carers have been written to and advised of the changes and for affected by the changes, a meeting will be arranged with Advisory Teachers to meet with Parents/Carers to explain and discuss the changes.

Table showing breakdown of CYP supported by the PIMS team by High Needs Funding

	Number of pupils	Percentage of Caseload	Notes
Can't Find Child on Capita	6	1.3	* additional work to be completed with team
EHE	2	0.4	
Special School	10	2.1	
No HN Funding	223	46.6	* 8 of these pupils have an EHCP or statement
EY Provision	44	9.2	
MSBM	29	6.1	
MSB1	22	4.6	
MSB2	31	6.5	
MSB3	39	8.1	
MSB4	33	6.9	
MSB5	19	4.0	
MSB6	11	2.3	
MSB7	10	2.1	
TOTAL PIMST CASELOAD	479		

PIMS should be supporting the educational setting a CYP attends to ensure they are able to access the curriculum:

- if they have been allocated High Needs Funding, and/or
- a Statement of SEN or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) states specific support is required by the PIMS team.

The data shows that almost half of the pupils being supported do not have High Needs Funding or a Statement/EHCP.

There is not a national matrix system in place for CYP with a physical need. The PIMST have recently established their own matrix system which is based upon the National Sensory Impairment Partnership matrix allocation for hearing and vision however it appears there is inconsistency in what support is provided to the CYP who are supported by PIMS.

Information gathered from the staff consultation

When the consultation started it was considered that the Support Assistant Advisers provided 1:1 support to CYP. Feedback through the consultation has clarified that these roles are more diverse and demonstrated that support staff also implement specialist software and provide wider support

to schools/settings.

The Special Educational Needs Assistive Technology Advisory Service (SENATAS) provides assessments of a CYP communicative needs to advise on technology which would support the individual.

The Specialist Communication Adviser role, who is a qualified speech and language therapist, advises on different communication strategies to schools and settings, implements specialist equipment within schools and homes and accepts referrals from health colleagues for support. This role provides support to CYP as part of the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) hub and spoke model which is a Health initiative.

The consultation identified that the PIMS team are delivering areas of support which should not be funded or provided by Education which includes home visits to families. There are also overlaps with Health responsibilities.

The changes to the funding arrangements has been discussed with schools over the past 12 months in the following ways:

- Schools Forum.
- High Needs Funding Group.
- Somerset Association of Primary Headteachers.

Section 4 – Conclusions drawn about the equalities impact (positive or negative) of the proposed change or new service/policy (Please use **prompt sheet** in the guidance for help with what to consider):

By nature of the CYP who are supported by the PIMS team all children will have a disability. This assessment will consider this in as much detail as it can, but recognises that these changes will have an impact on them.

Communications about the changes

Parents/Carers of CYP who are supported by the PIMS team have been written to advising them of the changes to the service. As at 5 April 2018:

- 479 letters were sent which resulted in 4 telephone calls from parents and 2 emails.

As a result of scrutiny the LA has responded to 7 families. This equates to direct communication with parents and carers from less than 3% of PIMS families about the changes.

Somerset Parent Carer Forum have arranged 4 meetings, to be held in April, to meet with parents and carers to help to explain the reasons for changes.

Reduction in service

It is anticipated that reducing the funding and the reduced PIMS team would have minimal impact upon the children, as support will still be provided by PIMS through the smaller service to continue to build capacity within school/settings. Additionally schools and settings have funding which they receive which they can use to purchase any additional support/training they may want, to ensure they are in a position to meet the needs of the CYP on their roll.

However, to mitigate against the proposed changes SSE will implement a transition plan over the summer term, to allow schools time to ensure suitable arrangements are in place.

This transition plan would include discussions with schools to ensure the CYP are aware of the changes and are supported through the process by class teachers, ensuring that the staff who are leaving provide a handover to school staff or colleagues as necessary. Redundancies will be managed in a phased way, across the late spring term and over the summer term to allow for the transition to take place in a managed and supportive way.

Support from the LA

The LA have routes of accountability to ensure that schools are using their resources appropriately to support children and young people with SEND. This includes:

- Somerset Education Partners (SEPs) who work closely to support schools.
- EHCPs – for those children who have an ECHP, the statutory document clearly outlines what support must be provided, and the LA have responsibility to review this and ensure the Plan is being met.
- For children with SEN support, the LA engage with schools at consultation meetings with professional support from Educational Psychologists and Advisory Teachers from the Learning Support Service, who provide professional advice and guidance and challenge to ensure schools are supporting pupils through the graduated response.
- Schools Forum, where challenge is provided at a higher, strategic level to ensure schools are supporting children and young people with SEND appropriately.
- The LA also has access to attainment/progress levels for children and young people for all vulnerable pupils to ensure progress is being made.

The impact of the proposed changes to members of staff will adhere to LA redundancy and redeployment policies. These have previously had an impact assessment completed.

If you have identified any negative impacts you will need to consider how these can be mitigated to either reduce or remove them. In the table below let us know what mitigation you will take.

Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed – can you mitigate the impacts? If you can how will you mitigate the impacts?	Who is responsible for the actions? When will the action be completed?	How will it be monitored? What is the expected outcome from the action?
Age			
We don't foresee any impact on this protected characteristic, but will continue to review it.			
Disability			
<p>There is a greater likelihood that the CYP may have a greater risk of anxiety.</p> <p>As and when communications with parents take place, some parents may have a disability.</p>	<p>Transition plan during the summer term. The LA to communicate with the schools/ settings about the changes in order for the class teacher to discuss with the CYP to ensure they understand the process and are supported.</p> <p>All families who will be affected by a change in service delivery can request an individual meeting with the school SENCO and an Advisory Teacher.</p> <p>Parent Carer forum will continue to hold engagement sessions to provide additional information and support about the changes.</p> <p>Communications will be in an accessible format and in plain English.</p>	<p>SCC Commissioner & SSE Strategic Manager.</p> <p>SCC Commissioner & SSE Strategic Manager.</p>	<p>Holding meetings will minimise the potential anxiety the changes may cause.</p> <p>This will be reviewed through Schools Forum and SAPHTO meetings to review how the changes have taken place – Autumn 2018.</p> <p>Communications to be reviewed by Parent/Carer Forum.</p>

Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed – can you mitigate the impacts? If you can how will you mitigate the impacts?	Who is responsible for the actions? When will the action be completed?	How will it be monitored? What is the expected outcome from the action?
Gender Reassignment			
<p>It is not known but is unlikely that any child is undergoing gender reassignment. We do not feel that any parent/carer who may be undergoing gender reassignment will be disproportionately affected by this.</p> <p>This will continue to be reviewed.</p>			
Marriage and Civil Partnership			
<p>We do not feel that any parent/carer who is currently in a marriage or civil partnership will be disproportionately affected by this.</p> <p>This will continue to be reviewed.</p>			
Pregnancy and Maternity			
<p>We do not feel that any parent/carer who is currently pregnant or has recently had a baby will be disproportionately affected by this.</p> <p>This will continue to be reviewed.</p>			
Race (including ethnicity or national origin, colour, nationality and Gypsies and Travellers)			
<p>We do not have data to determine families who have English as an Additional Language or their literacy skills.</p> <p>This will continue to be reviewed.</p>	<p>Communications will be accessible and in plain English.</p> <p>Further information can be provided to English as Additional Language organisations as requested.</p>	<p>SCC Commissioner & SSE Strategic Manager.</p>	<p>Communications to be reviewed by Parent/Carer Forum.</p>

Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed – can you mitigate the impacts? If you can how will you mitigate the impacts?	Who is responsible for the actions? When will the action be completed?	How will it be monitored? What is the expected outcome from the action?
Religion and Belief			
<p>We do not feel that any parent/carer or CYP's religion or beliefs will be disproportionately affected by this.</p> <p>This will continue to be reviewed.</p>			
Sex			
<p>There is no disproportionate impact identified at this time. This will continue to be reviewed.</p>			
Sexual Orientation			
<p>There is no disproportionate impact identified at this time. This will continue to be reviewed.</p>			
Other (including caring responsibilities, rurality, low income, Military Status etc)			
<p>Caring Responsibilities and Low Income & rurality – there may be an impact to the families of the CYP who feel more isolated due to the changes.</p>	<p>Somerset Parent Carer Forum are able to signpost families for additional support if requested.</p>	<p>SCC Commissioner & SSE Strategic Manager.</p>	<p>To ensure this information is included within the communications to parents.</p>

Section 6: How will the assessment, consultation and outcomes be published and communicated? For example, reflected in final strategy, published. What steps are in place to review the Impact Assessment

Further communications will be sent to schools and parents/carers following Scrutiny on 20 April 2018. PIMS staff will arrange to meet with families most affected by the changes over the summer term. This assessment will be published and will be shared with Somerset Parent/Carer Forum.

Completed by:	Gemma Reeves
Date	10 April 2018
Signed off by:	Emily Walters
Date	11 April 2018
Corporate Equality Manager sign off date:	
To be reviewed by:	Gemma Reeves
Review date:	26 April 2018

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Proposed changes to Support services for Education

A parent carers view



Proposed changes to Support Services for Education

A parent carers view

Summary

This independent report has been prepared following the Children's & Families Policies scrutiny meeting in March 2018. The report outlines the feedback from parents on proposed changes to Support Services for Education. The report will show how many families feel that their voices have not been heard and they have not been able to influence the move forward to a new look service. It will demonstrate that currently there is a lack of clarity around the role of the services, particularly in connection to the delivery of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC). It will also evidence the negative effect that has resulted from accurate information not being shared in a timely and appropriate manner and how this has been detrimental to the opportunities for parent carers, children and young people to influence changes which will impact on their lives. The report will conclude with recommendations to help move forward in a productive way.

Introduction

2014 brought changes for children, young people with Special Education Needs and or disabilities and their families. The Children and Families Act 2014 placed duties on Local Authorities to involve children, young people with Special Education Needs and or disabilities and their families in decisions about individual provision. There was also a requirement that children, young people with Special Education Needs and or disabilities and their families should be involved in the shaping of services through, participation, engagement, consultation and co-production. The SEND Code of Practice (2015) similarly placed duties on partner agencies so they "must work together in local Health and Wellbeing Boards to assess the health needs of local people, including those with SEN or who are disabled".

This is further supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC 1989) article 12, namely that every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. It is against this backdrop that the following report aims to share the views families hold on the current proposed changes to Support Services for Education, referred to as SSE in this document.

Background

In November 2017 the forum were advised by the Support Services for Education that an internal consultation was taking place with staff within SSE. They were further advised that an impact assessment had been undertaken on proposed changes and this had revealed there would be minimal impact. Following HR guidelines the consultation with staff would take place until the end of January and then a series of engagement events would take place with families.

Within 24 hours of this happening, staff from within those teams contacted the forum expressing concerns. Furthermore, information from the confidential internal consultation was shared on social media. In addition to this on the 20th December 2017 information from the “confidential internal consultation’ was shared by the Union on their website page. This caused concern and upset for many families and therefore Somerset Parent Carer Forum approached SSE and Somerset County Council for clarification and issued a statement on their social media (Appendix A).

Lots of information continued to be circulated; some accurate, some not. A report on SSE was presented to scrutiny on 16th March 2018 and 7 families rightly asked for further clarification.

Following the scrutiny meeting, Somerset Parent Carer Forum met with representatives of Somerset County Council, to discuss engagement events for parents carers who currently get support from the Support Services for Education. Due to time pressure of needing to report back to scrutiny on the 20th April, it was proposed we held 4 events around the county and provided an online platform for parents to be able to feed back. Simultaneously, Somerset County Council staff would meet with families on an individual basis and families would receive a letter explaining the current situation and reassurance around transition arrangements.

Section 19 of the Childrens and Families Act (2014) identifies “the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions”. Due to a substantial proportion of information being shared being factually incorrect (e.g the Autism and Communication Team being disbanded), part of the sessions would involve presenting a clear and transparent picture of the proposed changes (please see SPCF website for presentation). We felt for parents to be able to comment on the proposed changes they needed to be able to picture what the service would like before and after (see appendix B).

Proposed changes

Somerset County Council provided the forum with data on the current structure and the proposed changes. We were also provided with data which contributed to the proposals that had been made. The data was then put into a format which we felt may be easier to understand and analyse. This was supported by national data and examples in other areas to give a bigger picture. See also Appendix B.

AREA OF SSE	Structure beforehand	Proposed structure
Autism and Communication service	6.8 FTE	7.4 FTE
Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team	6.9 FTE	2.4 FTE
SENATAS	1 FTE	1 FTE
Learning Support Service	9.4 FTE	9 FTE
Vision Impairment Team	4.67 FTE	4.74 FTE
Hearing Impairment Team	13.2 FTE	11.38 FTE

Engagement events

The forum ran events in Bridgwater, Taunton, Frome and Yeovil also attending the Bridgwater parent support group. An online option for parents to feed back their views was set up as not everyone could get to the events. The events were split into the following 3 sections based on questions families had been asking.

1. Providing background Information on Local And National changes that impacted on the proposed changes.
2. Discussion on the current situation and the proposed changes
3. Opportunity to reflect on the information, share thoughts, feelings, experiences and ask any further questions.

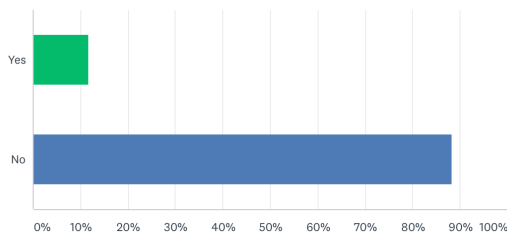
In addition the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) were invited to attend all the sessions to help support families and provide independent advice and suggestions on next steps.

In total 79 families fed back their views. Of these, 28 attended the engagement events, 44 completed the survey (only 1 of these had attended an event) and 7 contacted us via social media. Collectively they have experience of all the SSE services (Please see Appendix C)

Parent carer views

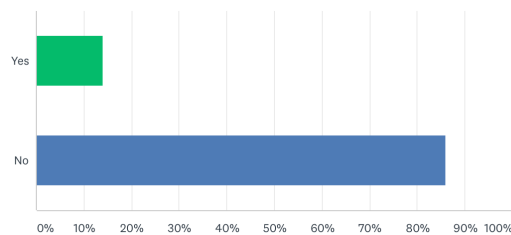
The importance of listening to and having regard for the views, wishes and feelings of the child and his or her parent, or the young person and their participating as fully as possible in decisions relating to them is underpinned by UK and International law.

The Childrens and Families Act 2014, makes it clear that the Local Authority, in carrying out their functions under the Act, in relation to disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs (SEN), must have regard to: the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child's parents.



We asked parents if they felt this has been achieved regarding the SSE proposed changes? 88% of the survey respondents felt this had not been achieved.

Do you feel that you have been able to participate? 86% responded No and 14% Yes



Nobody has met my son to see him and what his needs truly are.

My child hasn't been asked anything

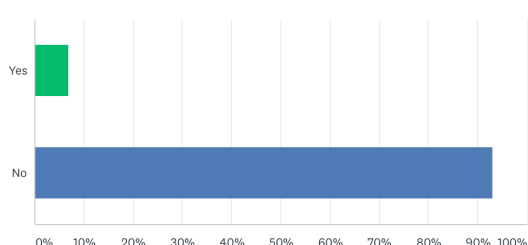
These views were in the majority supported by families who attended the engagement events. Families expressed concerns asking how an impact assessment could be done fairly and accurately without speaking to parents and children who use the services? The overwhelming feeling of families was that the decision had been undertaken before engagement had started.

"Unfortunately, the decision has already been made to reduce the PIMST so why the consultation. What meaningful contribution can any of us make to a decision that has already been made?" A Parent.

We've had some information and views from county.

Section 19 of the Childrens and Families Act (2014) identifies “the importance of the child and his or her parent, or the young person, being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions”. Families were asked their experience of the current changes through the online survey and at the beginning of events.

“I don't feel very informed about what's been going on its only been because of social media but county really haven't said much”



Do you feel that you have had enough information about the proposed changes to Support Services for Education?

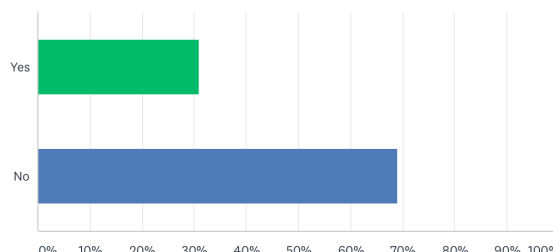
93 % No

7% Yes

Do you feel the information has to been clear and timely?

31% Yes

69% No



Parents agreed that when sharing information there cannot be a one style fits all approach, and that various media should be used (see appendix D). Parents are very keen to be informed from an early stage. This was evidenced by a lot of families that attended the events interest, in how the funding structures work, the changes in policy at a national level and how this had a knock on effect to Somerset. For a lot parents it was the first time they had seen this level of detail and they found it enlightening. They were pleased to hear that Somerset in analysing the impact of services and making sure the money spent is getting positive outcomes for children and young people. They also were surprised at how much of the high needs budget can be taken by independent schools, with many suggesting more support should be given to our own schools to help keep our children local. Families are very understating that budgets are shrinking and that we need to make the most of what resources we have; they just want to be involved in the choices.

The following 2 sets of data were the most discussed at the engagement events. The data which revealed that 46% of the caseload of PIMS (a service funding from high needs block) consisted of children who do not have high needs funding raised concerns (please see comments). As a forum this raised the following queries for us-

1. Have these children not had their needs clearly identified?
2. Should these children be receiving high needs funding and schools have not applied or failed to get this?
3. If the child should have high needs funding and does not, are they being denied the protection of an Education Health and Care plan?

	Number of pupils	% of caseload
Can't Find Child on Capita	6	1.3
EHE	2	0.4
Special School	8	1.7
No HN Funding	224	46.8
EY Provision	45	9.4
MSBM	29	6.1
MSB1	22	4.6
MSB2	31	6.5
MSB3	39	8.1
MSB4	33	6.9
MSB5	19	4.0
MSB6	11	2.3
MSB7	10	2.1
TOTAL PIMST CASELOAD	479	

Parental comments and questions

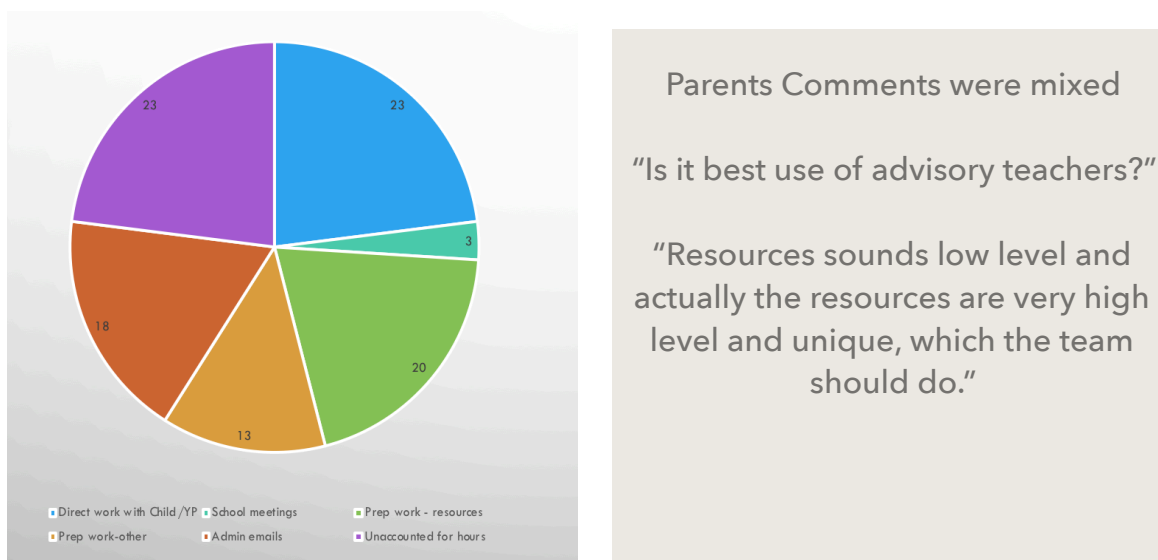
“Why are they working with children who do not meet the threshold?”

“There appears to be a lack of governance in the service”

“If the 6 kids are in independent why are we paying twice?”

Snap shot of use of time

This slide represents the data collection over 1 term within the PIMS team as shared by Support Services for Education. The information was to give a flavour of how staff were currently deployed. Families expressed that they felt the preparing resources was vital and should not be undervalued as this enables children to be able to access the curriculum with their peers. Others felt these highly experienced staff could be used more effectively. They also expressed concerns that people making the decisions did not have a clear understanding of what the staff do or how complex the needs of the children are.



One of the key messages that came from the survey and the engagement events was how highly the individual staff within the PIMS team were valued. We heard how they liaise with schools, the Bristol communication hospital, act as advocates for families and show school staff how to support the children. Parents are worried about the cuts and feel these individual members of staff and the expertise cannot be replaced. One of the things frequently asked was who was staying and who was going, the feeling was this was not about roles but individuals. There is a great fear that children will be forced out of mainstream schools. Although the forum shared the relevant information and the reassurance from Somerset County Council that this was not the plan, there was a sense of lack of trust by some families; others were clearly relieved.



One of the things that became very evident during the engagements was that it was not clear who did what. Many families were surprised that In April 2013, NHS England became responsible for commissioning services for those with the most complex communication needs. This has seen developments in the way

specialist services are commissioned and funded, with a national service specification for AAC and the identification of 15 specialised centres including Bristol.

“If SSE had been able to produce something like this at the outset, it would have saved some families from stress and worry because their children's services aren't being cut at all, and would have given a more honest picture of what it means for PIMs service users.” Parents view of SPCF graphics

Families also were unaware that under the Department for Education guidance on support children with medical needs, the schools governing body should ensure that medical plans are reviewed at least annually, or earlier if evidence is presented that the child's needs have changed. They should be developed with the child's best interests in mind and ensure that the school assesses and manages risks to the child's education, health and social well-being and minimises disruption. This is reinforced under the SEND code of Practice 2015 which places duties on schools to ensure they meet these needs. The general expectation is that the role of centrally funded services is to support schools in meeting the needs of pupils through an advisory role, with the direct support to pupils falling under the remit of schools.



There are concerns that if the PIMS team were no longer going to do some of the things they had previously covered, that come under the health remit, and could not see how that would work. Families repeatedly stated that health were unable to supply Occupational therapists and speech and language therapists due to capacity issues. Another area discussed was access to support all year round. If PIMS, a term time only service (39 weeks a year), are delivering all the support, how do families managed outside of term time. Families felt a more joined up service across agencies could help to address this.

The service currently covers children up to the age of 16 and we heard multiple accounts of families waiting for a diagnosis for it to come too late for them to access the service. There was a high level of frustration around this especially as the SEND Code of Practice cover 0 to 25.

Within Somerset the vision is that “is for the 110,000 children and young people in Somerset to be safe, healthy, happy, ambitious for their future and to develop skills for life” (Somerset County Council 2016).



We ask you to read through the following case studies and learn about the world from the view of our young people. There is a lot of information but these stories deserve to be heard.

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
Contact for enquiries	help@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk
CASE STUDY	
Summary	The Support Services for Education is a service that combines lots of teams together. It encompasses the Hearing Impairment Team (HI), Visual Impairment Team (VI), Autism Communication Advisory Team, SENATAS, Learning Support and the PIMS (which encompasses the AAC) Team. There is a continual overspend and the team were asked to make savings across the board.
Issue to be resolved	<p>The issue is that High Needs Funding is currently £5.2 million over spent and savings need to be made across the whole range of services. Other projects like banding for example are already taking place in other areas. It is against this backdrop that Somerset County Council have requested SSE make necessary reductions in budget.</p> <p>The objective? To reduce overspend now that money cannot be moved between the funding blocks, due to government guidelines, unless permission is sought by the LA to central government.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
Insight - Ettie, Max and Gracie.	<p>Ettie - To give you some insight to the use of technology and Ettie, please see her video that was filmed 2 years ago by Somerset’s SEND Participation Team - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJTRUCyKrsM&feature=youtu.be</p> <p>Ettie is 13 years old and now attends a special school over the border in BANES. She lives with her Mum, Alison and her Dad. Her mum is a secondary school English teacher and her Dad works in IT. Alison thinks that Ettie is extremely lucky as they are in a position to function (update etc) the technology, which usually is carried out by the AAC.</p> <p>She was born, after a normal pregnancy but was subject to a traumatic birth where the labour was not monitored and Ettie was starved of oxygen, as the cord was wrapped around her neck. Due to her brain being starved of oxygen, she was diagnosed with Athetoid Cerebral Palsy, which means that she has very little control of her whole body, because all her muscles are affected, including swallowing. She still cannot sit upright, unsupported by herself. In her early life, she was unable to feed, but fortunately the nurse that was looking after the family in special care baby unit, gave the family a special bottle, normally used for babies with a cleft palette and this enabled her to start to learn to swallow.</p> <p>As she grew up, she attended the Frome Opportunity Playgroup and it was they who started the process, firstly with MAISEY. Through MAISEY meetings Ettie was able to start a mainstream school within her community. There was a really good handover because of the support that MAISEY gave.</p> <p>PIMS involvement started when she started school.</p> <p>Speech and language was initiated, though this wasn’t right for Ettie. Because she couldn’t speak or form words, this was when PIMS team were involved. Parents were concerned that cognitively Ettie may not be able. So when the PIMS started their work via a Specialist communication adviser, who then started introducing symbols on cards, like yes and no, giving her choices to be able choose. Ettie responded really well by touching the cards, giving Ettie communication for the first time in her life at the age of 4. It then progressed to a communication booklet, which included photos of her peers in the classroom, which gave her choices to play with her peers and make friends, this was the first time that Ettie was fully included in her school life.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
	<p>Her sentences in the book were made more complex as she grew older. These books then were developed to differentiate her learning. As she grew up the booklets became books and were developed to a 70 page laminated book. As Ettie grew the books became more complicated and were coloured with coloured references and the TA was essential to sit next to Ettie, so she could be able to communicate.</p> <p>The electronic device was initiated in year 2/3 with a trial. This caused issues, as for the first time Ettie had found her true voice, where she could press a button and it would speak whenever she pressed the button. The issues arose where it was new, and it was used inappropriately by Ettie, so AAC were instrumental in teaching her of when to use the device within school. This made a huge difference, made it more inclusive. A high-tech device was then introduced, but again, due to the involuntary movements, the device had to be started with 8 tiles and over time the AAC have initiated more and more tiles. It took weeks for the parents and PIMS team to develop the tiles, so she could communicate, using her arm and the device, this can cause issues over time with her shoulder as the movements are repetitive.</p> <p>So an OT needs to be there when they progress to an eye gaze, to make sure that she is sat in the right position.</p> <p>The communication books become more complicated when Ettie has to sit her SATS etc, as they are specific to what they are learning, so that she can be included within her classroom environment, giving her the same opportunities as all her other classmates, which is essential to Ettie, as she likes to be the same as everyone else.</p> <p>Year 6 SATS she achieved a level 2 in science, only because the papers were accessible and the TA from PIMS came in and met with Ettie and the school and she took a typical SATS paper and made it accessible to Ettie, so she could take part.</p> <p>If another child like Ettie came into the service, they will benefit from the work that they did with Ettie, however, curriculums change as do the children's needs.</p> <p>PIMS were able to devise an AAC users of IT book, so she could communicate emails etc.. so that she could start to send emails, another way to communicate and another thing we take for granted.</p> <p>5 sentences in an email can take Ettie 40 mins.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
	<p>Another issue that Ettie also faces:</p> <p>Gators - for sitting a long time, body gets deformed, Ettie has a physio in school and health are supposed to provide it as it's in her EHCp in her health section. The Physio, is based in Mendip, is the only one who is based there and is supposed to attend one session per half term in her plan, she's not been attending. Parents have now resorted to paying for her to have a private physiotherapy and has now discovered that because she had no physio and that Ettie is growing, her hamstrings have shortened. This could quickly end up to her having surgery to cut her hamstrings and ligaments. Out of desperation they borrowed some gators as they were £80-£90 to buy them online, as it was going to be 3 months to get an orthotics appointment and potentially be 6 months for these gators to arrive through the NHS.</p> <p>By having the AAC /PIMS team involved they have realised that Ettie has capacity to decide and the cognitive potential to learn and develop in her own right. There is a possibility now that Ettie can live a fulfilled life doing what she wants to do, whatever that may be. Ettie wants to go somewhere her parents aren't and she loves the idea of going off and doing things and have opportunities without her parents. She wants to live by the sea and would love to go to university and wants to do sports too, so watch out special Olympics! Without these devices and the people (including her amazing parents) who support them, Ettie would not be where she is!</p> <p>It is a lengthy process. The systems change as does language and it is very time consuming, but the commitment from the team and the parents has made it worthwhile as without them Ettie would not have a voice.</p> <p>There are real concerns that the service stops at 16 and may need to be re-issued post 16.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
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Max’s Story: Please look at this video to give you an insight into what it means to say the word Daddy:



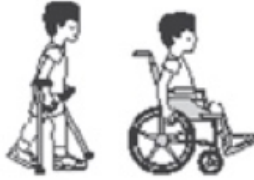


<https://1drv.ms/v/s!Aks7iPjVJ4Dh3EtABWUIAXL-wont>

Max is 10 years old and is the eldest child in his family with Mum Gemma and Dad Adam, He has a 6-year-old sibling. Mum went into labour at 26 weeks, where she stayed in hospital for a week after they tried to stop labour. He was born at 27 weeks and 4 days - although breathing they ventilated him straight away, and he was diagnosed with dystonic cerebral palsy at about 5 months.

They were told that Max wouldn’t be able to talk, move his arms, or walk and that there was no hope. The doctors couldn’t predict his future and he is a level 5.

GMFCS for children aged 6–12 years:

Descriptors and illustrations

	<p>GMFCS Level I Children walk indoors and outdoors and climb stairs without limitation. Children perform gross motor skills including running and jumping, but speed, balance and co-ordination are impaired.</p>
	<p>GMFCS Level II Children walk indoors and outdoors and climb stairs holding onto a railing but experience limitations walking on uneven surfaces and inclines and walking in crowds or confined spaces.</p>
	<p>GMFCS Level III Children walk indoors or outdoors on a level surface with an assistive mobility device. Children may climb stairs holding onto a railing. Children may propel a wheelchair manually or are transported when traveling for long distances or outdoor on uneven terrain.</p>
	<p>GMFCS Level IV Children may continue to walk for short distances on a walker or rely more on wheeled mobility at home and school and in the community.</p>
	<p>GMFCS Level V Physical impairment restricts voluntary control of movement and the ability to maintain antigravity head and trunk postures. All areas of motor function are limited. Children have no means of independent mobility and are transported.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
	<p>To get some answers, the parents paid to attend a private clinic that specialises in CP in London and the tests found that Max is cognitively aware, and his biggest strength was his communication. Max was referred to a speech and language advisor and it was deemed that Max's communication needs are as such that it was deemed not appropriate and this was when they referral to AAC.</p> <p>Max attended TOG and then he attended a mainstream pre-school where he had portage. PIMS, along with the AAC were involved before the transition to primary school. He was using the books/ cards upon entering school. He was assessed for an eye gaze and was given one in the January 2014 year 1. All instigated by AAC</p> <p>Kate (AAC) has done the reading assessments and he can read with pictures - he uses eye gaze. As part of this training and assessments he played games and then he built up his time and then it was built where he has families and different screens allowing him to build up his words to have a massive resource like a dictionary but unique and important to Max.</p> <p>Certain pages in the machine has subjects that is unique to his learning, i.e. all his science topics that he is doing in that term is loaded by AAC and then is subsequently changed by the AAC</p> <p>If the computer breaks parents ring the suppliers.</p> <p>Gemma is concerned that the TA's are already trained as Gemma states that Kate has already trained them.</p> <p>Max cannot speak so the only way he can communicate is through the eye gaze device.</p> <p>These children are so few with the most needs, that although PIMS is a big service, actually those people who support them are so unique, that Gemma feels that Max would be better supported if he were blind...as the visual impairment team or hearing team are yet to be affected by the cuts and feel that using staff from VI or HI to support Max is short sighted. Communication should be a statutory service as everyone has the right of a voice, and Gemma feels that it is equalities act.</p> <p>Needs to be kept as it is - doing what it does best as it has changed lives - training needs as this is a short</p> <p>Transition to secondary will he be accepted? Without this support? He is due to go to BCA a mainstream in Bridgwater.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
	<p>Gracie's Story:</p> <p>Gracie is 12 years old and lives with her Mum, Dad and her older brother.</p> <p>Mum had a normal pregnancy, and at one point, due to a blood test they thought Gracie had Down Syndrome, mum and dad refused a amniocentesis. It progressed to a normal birth and she came at her due date.</p> <p>The first they knew that something wasn't right was when she kept falling over and wasn't walking by one. Her brother was more advanced, but they thought that she was a late developer and it wasn't until she was in pre-school at 18 months that they agreed that something was wrong. She went to GP as he thought it was her hips and then went to see paediatrician in Musgrove, who then sent her to Bristol and it was then backwards and forwards for lots of trips. and eventually she was diagnosed in 2008 at the age 3, with ataxia 18 xia telangiectasia, a genetic condition.</p> <p>Children with this condition do not normally live past their teenage years and whilst they have periods of time well, they also have phases where the condition progresses and something else is lost.</p> <p>PIMS were involved once she started at TOG and MAISEY were involved when she was about to start school.</p> <p>Gracie was able to speak and could move around without a wheelchair, however in year 4 she went to the toilet and what looked like she lost focus, there was nothing. They called mum and because this was part of the progressive nature of the condition, however she lost her ability to speak and to walk permanently, because of another progressive disease called cerebellar dysarthria associated with anarthria, this is a neurological condition.</p> <p>Pam was the key worker who helped Gracie use clicker and an iPad etc, until another progression episode meant that these communication aids were not enough. They brought Kate in, as it became apparent that Gracie's communication was as such that AAC was needed.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
	<p>Symbols and STC were used and the iPad was used with speaking apps. At transition to mainstream secondary, Kate made a referral to Eye gaze (who are based in Bristol) and the referral was made in July and the appointment came through in December. Gracie started mainstream secondary in September and unfortunately the WIFI wasn't given and the work that Gracie did on the iPad couldn't be printed off.</p> <p>She didn't sit her SATs at primary school but is doing assessments at secondary, with a reader.</p> <p>Gracie had issues at the start of the secondary years as she didn't have the eye gaze and so was unable to communicate properly.</p> <p>She is currently under review with the eye gaze with a joystick on her wheelchair and she is really getting on with it. Kate and Pam need to be present with the review as Pam goes into School and Kate knows the equipment more than Pam.</p> <p>The family are in limbo as they are unsure if the staff will remain.</p> <p>Pam is currently going into the school nearly every week to support both Gracie and the school, as this is new to Gracie and with her progressive condition, every time she has an episode, it is almost as if a whole new communication aid is put in for her.</p> <p>Without the support the school have already said they are unsure of how they are going to cope or how Gracie is going to cope. The secondary school education is with many teachers and to train every single one in Gracie is going to be costly and time consuming.</p> <p>Sheryl has said why...we fight for our kids every day, why are we fighting for their communication, their ability to speak. This is what everyone takes for granted.</p>

Name of Company	Somerset Parent Carer Forum
Next Steps	<p>It is hard for parents and the children to visualise this service without the key members of the AAC team that sit within the PIMS team. They have a mammoth amount of knowledge that has been learnt over the years along with their TA's. They understand that cuts need to be made, however, the AAC and her team have such a unique set of skills, they cannot be learnt quickly by anyone else. These unique sets of skills, help, support and give something that we take for granted to a unique set of people. How would we feel if we were unable to talk? Speech and language hasn't worked with all of these children and so a unique service is needed for these unique and individual children.</p>
Other Information	<p>For more information on Alternative and Augmentative Communication can be found here:</p> <p>http://www.inclusive.co.uk/articles/alternative-and-augmentative-communication-aac-a280</p> <p>And in the words of Stephen Hawking -</p> <p>"Without the ability to say what we are thinking we lose our dignity, our independence and the very essence of what makes us human. But with the gift of communication, there are no boundaries to how we can influence and participate in the world around us. With a voice, we have the power to be who we are."</p>

Areas of Concern

"Parent carer participation is when parents and professionals work together, recognising each other's expert knowledge, to make informed decisions about children's services that make the best use of people's time and money"(Contact 2018). The feedback from families indicates that they do not feel this has taken place. Over half also feel the information provided was not transparent and easy to access. The engagement events and graphics have enabled families to understand better, information has alleviated much anxiety.

While acknowledging that this has been an upsetting and challenging time for all involved, it could be argued that the unprofessional behaviour of some staff

members has led to misinformation being shared and parental anxiety being raised; a lot of which has been unnecessary. Peoples lives have been affected and some families including children, have experienced extremely high levels of distress. This has also impacted on parents and young people having a full opportunity to engage in shaping the service as this has been a barrier to effective coproduction.

There is no national guidance around the PIMS service. Our research as a forum has identified that the delivery across England is very variable. Some areas are funded by education, some from health and others do not have a service at all. This makes it very challenging for commissioners and families when trying to shape a service. The report Bercow Ten years on (2018, p.18), highlights good practice in Liverpool where the council and CCG have jointly commissioned the service for children needing Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC). The SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 3.46 states “The **DMO** provides the point of contact for local authorities, schools and colleges seeking health advice on children and young people who may have SEN or disabilities,... The DMO can support schools with their duties under the ‘Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions’ guidance”. Within all the reports, impact assessments and presentations there has been no indication that the DMO has been involved or consulted in the changes. While we appreciate the service is an education service provided by Somerset County Council under the spirit of the Children and Families Act (2014) and the SEND Code of Practice there is an expectation that this would have taken place. Our concern is echoed by parents.

Nasen (2014) have published excellent guidance on effective adult support. This highlights research into the danger of over reliance and some of the negative impacts this can have on confidence and resilience within children and young people. As mentioned previously parents placed an overwhelming value on the expertise of the individual staff within the services. While we whole heartedly agree they are very dedicated and highly skilled members of staff this does not come without risk. This is a relatively small team and at some point those staff may retire or choose to move on. We need to ensure we are building the resilience in children, young people and their families to manage these transitions effectively while maintaining an appropriate level of support. As an area we need to value this expertise and grow it in others to ensure the sustainability and equal access moving forward.

It appears that the Impact assessment has been completed without full regard to the feeling of families and the emotional impact changes may have. We would have like the assessment to have taken into consideration the impact on the social interactions of the children and young people who are using the services that are being proposed to change. Although the services focus on the education of the child or young person this is not something that only happens at school and impacts on the whole family.

Conclusion

The highest level of concern has come from families who have children with complex needs who require access to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ACC).



It is evident that the Human Resources constraints and the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 do not necessarily align. Balancing these 2 areas is a challenge that needs to be managed moving forward to mitigate any risks this brings.

Ten years ago a review of speech, language and communication needs was undertaken, led by RT HON. John Bercow MP. This acknowledged that “the most fundamental life skill for children is the ability to communicate. It directly impacts on their ability to learn, to develop friendships and on their life chances (ICan 2018, p. 4).” Support Service For Education is an essential service that supports schools to differentiate the curriculum and adapt to support the needs of a wide range of children. They support children and young people to be able to communicate and try to allow them to access the world as their peers do. As an area we need to value the support and expertise these staff have and ensure this is shared, empowering and enabling schools to support the needs of all children and young people with SEND.

It has been clearly evident that everyone who has been involved in these proposed changes be it parents, support staff, teachers, SENCO’s, commissioners or senior leaders with the council, they are all endeavouring to support children to get the best outcomes. Each group has different experiences, priorities and pressure to manage while doing this and many have lost more than a few nights sleep trying to see a way through. While there are lessons to be learned and changes need to be made, we must endeavour to do so together.

Recommendations

In light of this report and discussion with families we would like to make the following recommendations.

1. A workshop is held between Human resources, the SEND department, commissioning and Somerset Parent Carer Forum. We need to find a way forward which will allow the duties of HR to be preformed while enabling meaningful participation on parents at the earliest point. Without this there is a risk we could experience this again.

2. There is a multi agency group to look at the impact of the proposed changes and to explore how this service can be jointly funded. Drawing on examples of good practice such as Liverpool.
3. There is a renewed commitment to the refreshed SEND Engagement and Participation strategy (appendix E) which places the voices of children, young people with Special Education Needs and/or disabilities and their families at the heart of decisions.
4. Scrutiny have oversight of the strategy on at least an annual basis and monitor its implementation
5. There is a review of the information services. Families who attended the events were unfamiliar with procedures, their rights and what to do when things are not going as planned. There also needs to be more clarity around the roles and powers of boards and committees with Somerset County Council and the Clinical Commissioning group.
6. Engagement events take place 6 months after the changes to measure the impact.

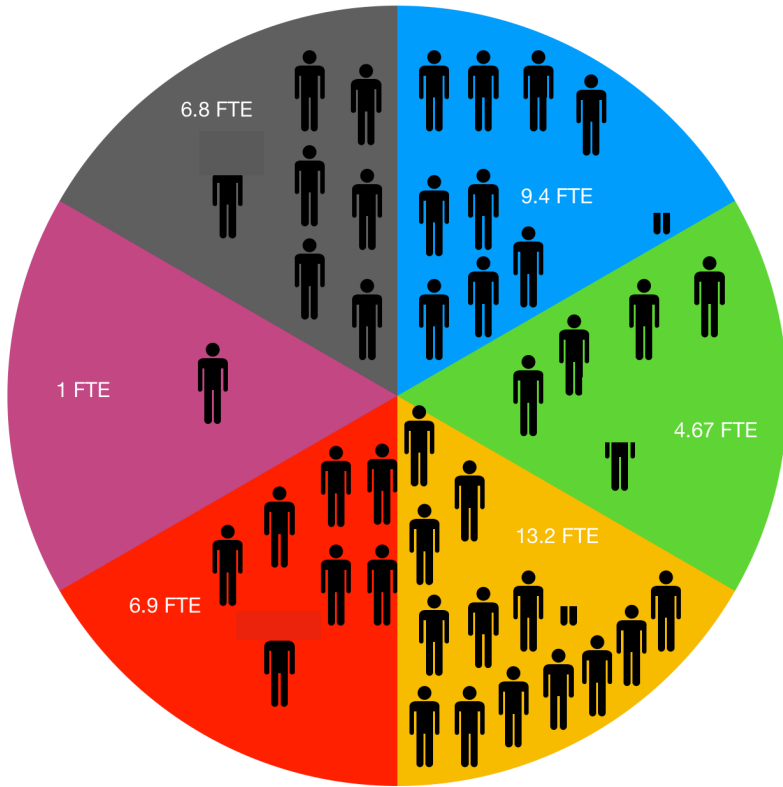
Appendix A

Statement shared On Somerset Parent Carer Forums social media December 2017

We have been contacted by members concerning information that has been shared recently on social media regarding Support Services for Education. As a forum we are not involved in any consultation regarding SSE, and we know there are no public consultations taking place currently, so have approach Somerset County Council on behalf of our members. The following is their statement which hopefully will clarify the situation for families.

"SCC is currently in consultation with some of their staff regarding potential changes which may affect some of their staff within Support Service for Education (SSE). This is an internal staff consultation which is necessary due to the likely reduction in funding due to budget pressures. SCC is facing significant financial pressure and must respond to this. The need to reduce the overspend has been outlined to schools over the past academic year and is in relation to the wider SEND review taking place to ensure pupils in Somerset with SEND receive consistent support."

Appendix B



Support Services for Education before proposed changes.

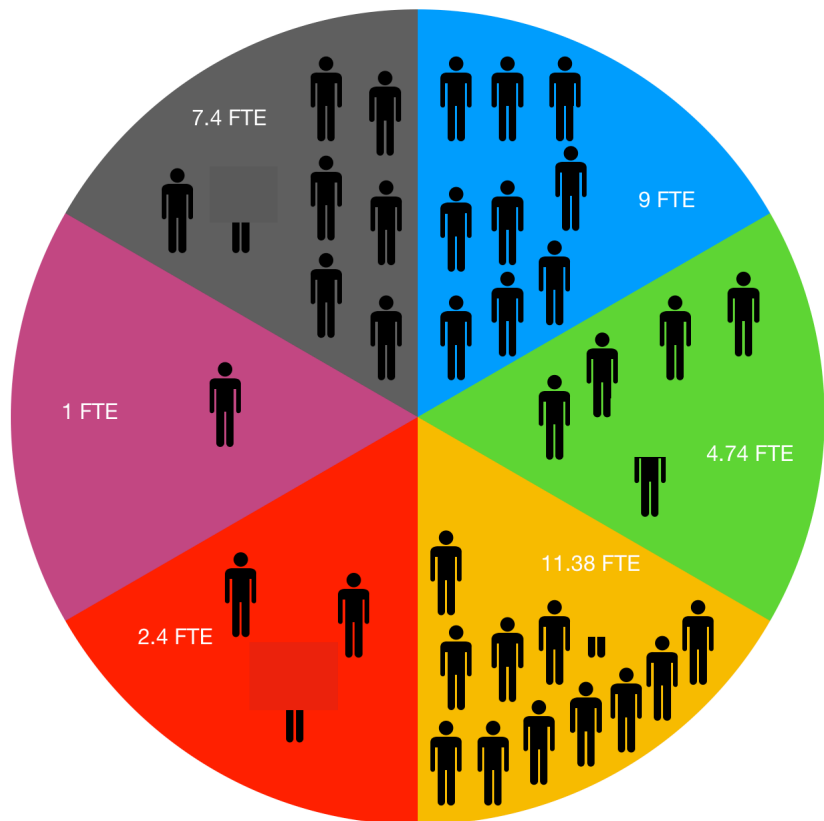
FTE = Full time role.

Support Services for Education after proposed changes.

The manager from Learning Support services has left. Moving forward the manager of the Autism and communication team will cover this role.

Hearing impairment and Vision impairment (statutory services) are currently under consultation with families who use the service.

Higher Level teaching assistants from Vision and Hearing will support the PIMS team under the proposed new structure.



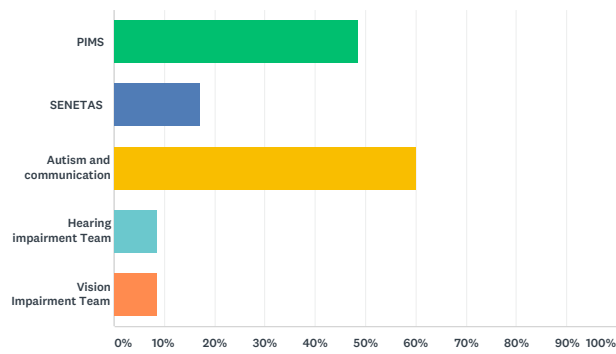
- Learning support
- Vision Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- PIMS
- Sen assisted technology advisory service
- Autism and Communication team

Appendix C

PIMS Engagement Survey

Q1 Which of the following Support Service for Education does your child use or has used previously

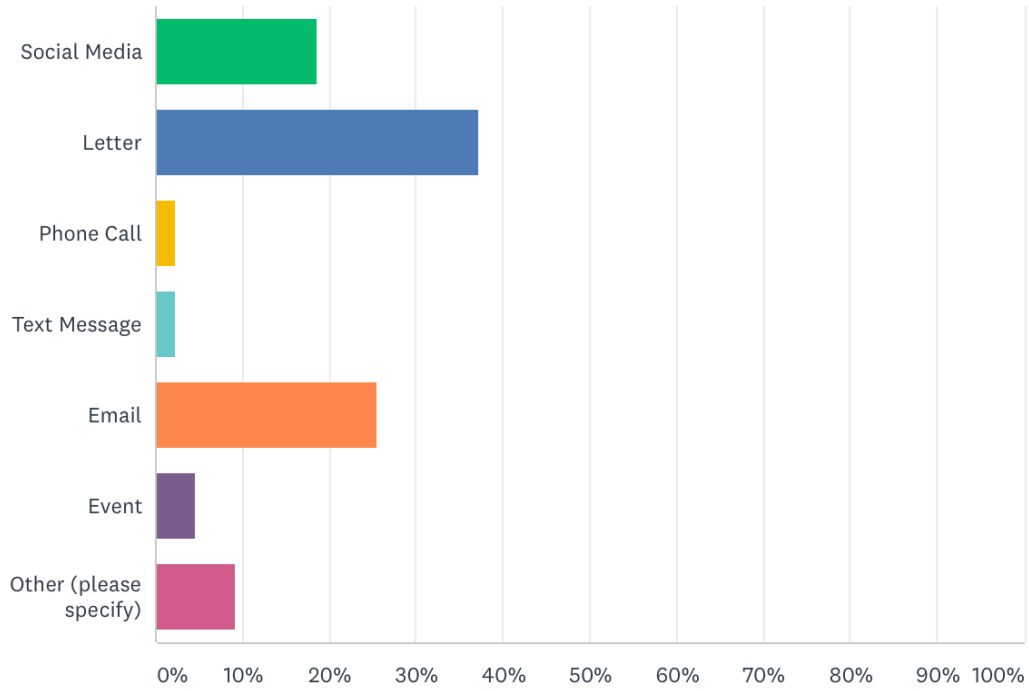
Answered: 35 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
PIMS	48.57%	17
SENETAS	17.14%	6
Autism and communication	60.00%	21
Hearing impairment Team	8.57%	3
Vision Impairment Team	8.57%	3
Total Respondents: 35		

Appendix D

Best ways to share information.



Appendix E

Somerset Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Engagement and Participation strategy 2018-2020

What is participation and why do we do it?

Participation is involving children and young people and their parent carers in the decisions that affect them. Every child and young person has the right to be involved in decisions . Some might need more help than others.

Vision

We want every child and young person to have the greatest possible opportunity to be the best they can be, to be happy and have choice and control over their lives.

SEND strategy 2016-2019

Why are we here?

In Somerset, we believe that there should be no decision made about you without your involvement.

The law also tells us that we must listen to the views wishes and feelings of a child and his or her parent or the young person.

How are we going to do it?

- ⇒ Make sure there are tools to support participation.
- ⇒ Good quality, simple information that everyone can use so that people can make decisions.
- ⇒ Create opportunities and a safe space for people to share their views.
- ⇒ Good feedback- "you said we did"- people can see what happens as a result of their feedback.
- ⇒ Things that are working well are shared– We celebrate success!
- ⇒ Share information between services to make changes.
- ⇒ Involve children, young people and their families in planning and reviewing services.
- ⇒ Enable people to communicate their views in the way they want to.

Priorities

Children Young People and families are encouraged to participate in decision making about their own lives.

Services are designed with people for people.

Working together– Education, health and social care .

How will we know its working?

- ⇒ Children and young people will feel safe and happy at home, college, school and work.
- ⇒ Children, young people and their families are happy to speak up and feel that views are valued.
- ⇒ Children and young people have the skills they need to be as happy and independent as possible in these five areas:

How can I choose my next school or college?

How can I find a job and keep a job?

How can I live more independently?

How can I find things to do in my spare time?

How can I stay safe and healthy?

- ⇒ Services are designed with the families that use them leading to better outcomes.
- ⇒ Strong communities that are able to support themselves and each other.

References

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Special Education Needs and Disabilities 0 – 25 (SEND 0-25) – Progress Report

Lead Officer: Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services

Contact Details: jwooster@somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Frances Nicholson

1. Context

1.1. The SEND Strategy 2016 and SEND Priority Action Plan (following a Gloucestershire led Peer Review held in May 2017), set out to address a number of key issues, including:

- An historic set of arrangements with schools which mean that the number of pupils' subject to formal SEN assessment and planning is significantly lower than other areas.
- Improving the capacity of the partnership to ensure high quality Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) are in place where needed.
- Supporting the capacity of Somerset schools to support pupils with SEND to achieve improved outcomes.
- Increasing the capacity of the SEND casework team to meet the numbers of children who are assessed as needing an EHCP.

These areas for development are set in the context where Somerset has a number of strengths including:

- The strategic participation of the Parent Carer Forum and the 'Unstoppables' continues to be a strength of the Somerset partnership.
- Many examples of outstanding practice from schools and specialist services across the partnership.
- Well-resourced specialist support and outreach support to schools.
- A strong partnership between schools and the LA leading the improvements outlined below.

Planning for revising the Somerset's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0-25 2016-2019 is to begin in 2018.

2. Issues for consideration/Recommendation

2.1. To consider progress in addressing the SEND challenges in Somerset.

Key aspects of the Plans achieved include:

- Health colleagues have stepped up their engagement the health aspects of the SEND strategy and priorities, with support from the Council for Disabled Children (CDC). The CDC is also assisting in improving joint commissioning between the CCG and the Council.

- A series of SEND 0-25 multi-agency practitioner conferences were delivered across Somerset during 2017 with the aim of improving understanding of Somerset's SEND strategy, identifying barriers and strengthening partnership working in localities across Somerset.
- Improved guidance has been issued, at the request of School SENCO's, in relation to using Early Help arrangements to support children with SEND.
- The capacity of the SEND team continues to increase, with improved timeliness and the team is now on track to complete the transfer of Statements to EHCPs, in line with statutory timescales. Further work across the partnership is taking place to improve the quality of assessments and plans.
- The first phase of a new banding system for pupils with SEN Support, set out in the SEND Strategy, has been implemented across all schools in the autumn term – allowing for better identification and targeted support for those children most in need.
- The new banding system combined with improved data matching with children's social care systems has enabled improved identification of those children to be prioritised for assessment for an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- Plans have been agreed for investing in the sufficiency of Special School & Resource Base places to enable more children's needs to be met within the Somerset state school system.

2.2 Governance and Leadership

- The commitment and active engagement of the Council's lead for Children's Services in drawing together the SEND strategy to ensure every child and young person in Somerset have the best possible opportunities.
- The Director of Children's Services (DCS) regularly attends Headteacher meetings and since May 2017 leads the High Needs group reporting to Schools Forum and the Strategic SEND Board.
- Commitment from Somerset Council to deliver the statutory SEND work. This can be demonstrated by the financial and resource commitment to improve the information management systems; increase the number and quality of case work officers; a programme of development and training for SEND.

2.3 Parents

Somerset has a strong and active Parent Carer Forum (PCF). The PCF is well organised and have the skills and knowledge required to fully participate in meaningful co-production of strategies, policies and service development. Membership has increased significantly over the last two years and is becoming representative of the wider community of families who have children and young people with SEND.

2.4 Children and Young People

The Unstoppables forum is a group of young people aged 13-25 with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND). They, with the support of Somerset County Council, aim to increase the voice of children and young people with SEND in Somerset. They work with a range of projects to help young people develop their skills and better prepare to fully participate in the SEND agenda. This includes the multi-platform initiative “Access to Community” campaign to help people feel more confident to go out and take part in activities in their local area delivering training and support sessions or taking an active part in making important decisions about funding for groups who support children and young people with SEND. Their Annual Report is attached for information (appendix A).

Representatives of the young people’s forum attend and take an active part in formal meetings and events. Examples include the steering group meetings for the Local offer, Somerset EHCP moderation events and regional SEND events.

2.5 SEND Financial Context

The Government has decided that in the future the amount of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which is spent on pupils with special educational needs and disabilities will be ring fenced. Currently Somerset is spending more on these services than currently allocated in the schools’ budget (DSG), in 2016/17 an additional £2.9m was spent, with a further overspend projected for this year of £2.3m (£5.2m in total). If this overspend is not addressed this shortfall will either have to come from individual school budgets and/or other essential council services.

The Government is also requiring more of the schools’ budget to be given to schools directly rather than allocated by councils on central services, as schools are usually best placed, with input from parents, to organise the most effective support.

These changes are in the context of a challenging funding environment. Whilst central government funding of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) has seen a cash increase for Schools in Somerset of 3%, the High Needs funding element, which funds SEND central services and specialist provision, has been increased by less than 1%, and the available funding is not keeping pace with rising needs or costs.

2.6 SEND Strategy

Key Outcomes include:

- A clear strategy for the development of specialist placements in all four geographical areas of Somerset to ensure equity of access and clarity of pathways for SEND.
- Realignment of resources to create additional capacity to address need.
- Publication and implementation of core standards in all educational settings across all age groups 0-25 on how to support children with SEN at SEN Support.
- Increased clarity for parents on what they can expect from educational

settings in relation to support for SEND.

- Review of High Needs top-up allocation to ensure fair and transparent decision making and sustainability of resources ahead of the national funding formula.

2.7 Areas we are working to improve

Over the past two years the LA has led a thematic review to develop and deliver a complete system around SEND. This included a review of the sufficiency of places in special schools and resource bases (completed); a review off provision of SEN support and High needs funding for pupils with the most complex needs (completed); a review of SEND support services (in progress).

For Information:

Engagement and Participation Annual Report



Annual Report
April 2017 - March 2018 WWW.SOMERSET.GOV.UK



Introduction

This report has been created by the Engagement and Participation Team for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (referred to as SEND for this report).

The team have created this report to document their journey from April 2017 - March 2018, focusing on some **key events** that have taken place over this year.

This report contains embedded documents which can be accessed by clicking on the links in the key evidence column.

If you would like any more information please contact:

SENDParticipationTeam@somerset.gov.uk



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jemma Lang'.

Jemma Lang

Engagement and Participation
Officer for Special Educational
Needs and Disabilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke Foster'.

Luke Foster

Young Person's Champion for Special
Educational Needs and Disabilities

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Tucker'.

Nicole Tucker

Young Person's Champion for Special
Educational Needs and Disabilities

The team categorise each meeting they attend as:

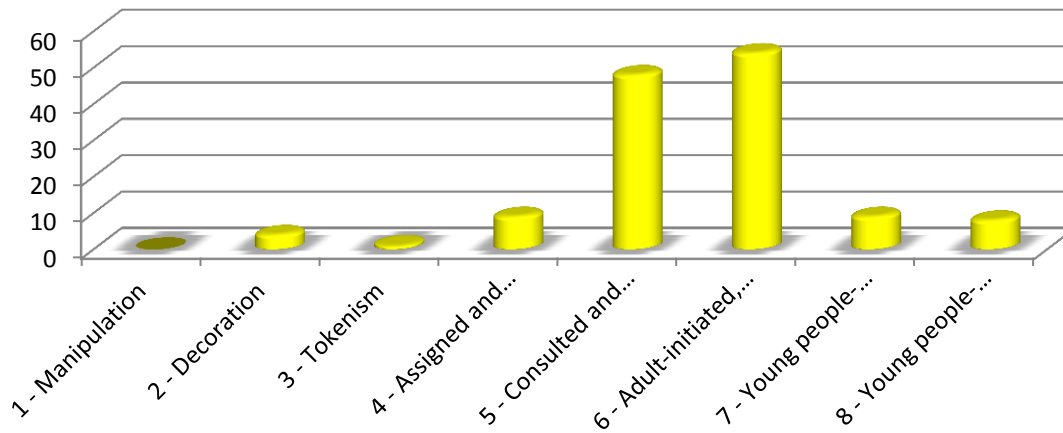
Co-production- If a resource, plan or event is created with young people directly from the start.

Engagement – When children, young people and their families take part in activities and meetings and work alongside others.

Introductions- When the team are introducing themselves to new people.

Participation- When young people actively work alongside others and take part in decision making, contribute to plans and developments. Young people rate their involvement using Roger Harts ladder of Participation, if they feel that their involvement wasn't meaningful, they will feed this back to chairs of meetings and suggest what could be better.

The graph below shows how the Young People's Champions (YPC) have rated their involvement in the meetings that they have attended between April 2017 and March 2018. YPC's felt that they were consulted and informed and shared decisions with adults during the majority of meetings that they attended.



1 - Manipulation	0
2 - Decoration	4
3 - Tokenism	1
4 - Assigned and informed	9
5 - Consulted and informed	48
6 - Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people	54
7 - Young people-initiated and directed	9
8 - Young people-initiated, shared decisions with adults	8

During this report you will see the number of occasions that the team have been involved in these various activities each month shown in the boxes below:

Meeting logbook	
Participation	
Co-production	
Engagement	
Introductions	

During the year, the team attend a variety of meetings to share the views of children and young people with SEND. These regular meetings include:

- **SEND Intervention Group and priority meetings-** contributing to strategic decisions.
- **The Local Offer Steering Group-** shaping the Local Offer in Somerset.
- **The Participation Network-** regular meetings with participation leads across Somerset to share best practice and link to a broader network of participation.
- **SEND Information and Advice Network-** ensure that information is user friendly.
- **Autism Strategy Board and Children and Young People's Sub Group-** representing children and young people.
- **Somerset Parent Carer Forum Steering Group-** partnership working.

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April 2017

Activities

In April, the team worked in partnership with Somerset Parent Care Forum (SPCF) to deliver a participation workshop to 12 Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCO's) from the Mendip area.

The team took part in an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) Moderation meeting to review some plans to determine whether the child/young person's voice was reflected in the plan.

The team visited interns at Project SEARCH in Musgrove Park Hospital to promote the upcoming YPC opportunities.

The team worked in Partnership with Somerset's Leaving Care Council to take part in an Early Help consultation run by Somerset Safeguarding Childrens Board to talk about what good, effective early help should look like.

The Unstoppables

8 young people attended to start planning for the Short breaks fun day on July. Each member took a lead on a different activity to engage with children, young people and their families at the event. Kiah and Harry- 2016-2017 YPC's- talked about the Young People's Champion roles and the upcoming opportunities within the team. The forum also agreed their priorities for the year 2017-2018.

Mendip Group

The Mendip group did not run in April.

Meeting logbook April 2017

Participation	3
Co-production	5
Engagement	6
Introductions	2

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May 2017

Activities

In May, Harry delivered his experience of participation to 30 SENCO's at a training session.

Gloucester County Council visited Somerset County Council (SCC) to undertake a peer review in readiness for the local area inspection. The team took part in peer review meetings to talk about their involvement in participation and transitions.

The Participation Network met to update on different areas of work and discuss plans for developing shared resources.

The team worked with Somerset Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) and Public Health to film videos for an online resource for a parent toolkit.

The Unstoppables

3 of the forum members worked with two young people who have signed up to take part in a volunteer buddy project to support young people with SEND to access their local communities. The young people worked together to talk about what a buddy matching profile should look like and design a working agreement.

Mendip Group

4 young people and 3 parent carers met at Vallis Youth Centre in Frome and took part in a variety of activities including a food budgeting activity to develop their independence skills and an aspiration activity where young people were tasked with creating their "dreams for the future" using arts and crafts and presenting to the rest of the group.

Meeting Logbook May 2017

Participation	4
Co-production	2
Engagement	7
Introductions	2

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June 2017

Activities

9 young people who applied for the YPC roles came in to County Hall for taster sessions to find out about the role and meet the team.

Harry and Jemma attended the “Finding your Way” parent carer support group in Bridgwater to promote the work of the team and the POET surveys for families to have their say on the EHCp process.

The team attended parent carer roadshows across the county to promote the forum and ask families how involved they felt in individual decision making.

The Unstoppables

8 young people were filmed talking about their experiences of work and the benefits and barriers to employment. The group also gave their views on work experience opportunities which will contribute to the Council for Disabled Children’s “Hot Topics” project.

You can watch the film here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDCVTSYkTLY&feature=youtu.be>

Mendip Group

8 young people and 4 parent carers met at Hullabaloo soft play centre in Shepton Mallet. The young people took part in arts and craft activity with the topic “what I like about me” to improve self-esteem and confidence. The group played a variety of team games in the soft play area.

Meeting Logbook June 2017

Participation	5
Co-production	3
Engagement	7
Introductions	1

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July 2017

Activities

In July, the team attended an employment workshop, where Kiah spoke about her experiences of employment, some of the barriers, and the benefits that work has had.

The team attended a regional conference on “Strengthening Partnerships across Health and Local Authorities” in Bristol. Harry spoke about the participation initiatives within Somerset and how the team represent children and young people at strategic meetings.

Harry and Kiah delivered a presentation on co-production to SCC departments on the activities that young people have been involved in which are guiding the SEND agenda.

The Unstoppables

6 young people attended the Short Breaks fun day at Brookside school in Street to promote the forum and engage young people in a variety of activities.

Mendip Group

The Mendip Young People’s Group did not run in July.

Meeting logbook July 2017

Participation	3
Co-production	2
Engagement	10
Introductions	1



August 2017

Activities

The team attend 3 of the 9 SEND Priority meetings; these include **Transitions, Participation** and the **Ofsted Inspection Readiness** group. The team also attend the Intervention Board where each of the 9 priority groups report back so that they have an over view of what the groups are working on.

On the 17th August the team facilitated a Participation Network day, where groups of young people and practitioners came together from UK Youth Parliament, Children Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Somerset's in Care and Leaving Care Councils to develop a toolkit of resources for practitioners across Somerset to be better able to get the views of children and young people.

Unstoppables

8 young people attended and discussed the buddy project in more detail and used role play to make sure that young people would be able to fill in the paperwork that the group created in May. The group had a Greek themed lunch where they made tzatziki from scratch!

Mendip Group

The Mendip group met independently from the team during August. Parent's networked and young people were able to use the soft play equipment at the Hullabaloo.

Meeting logbook August 2017

Participation	3
Co-production	2
Engagement	2
Introductions	2

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September 2017

Activities

During September, the team visited Fairmead Special School in Yeovil and Sky College in Taunton to talk about how the schools capture the voice of their students to help build a toolkit of resources to be shared amongst practitioners in Somerset.

Luke and Nicole attended a Sharing Stories Workshop and spoke with 30 Adult Social Care Practitioners to support SCC's approach to promoting independence for our customers. Nicole and Luke talked about their experience of health and employment and offered insight of their own unique stories.

During September, the Unstoppables and Mendip Young People's Group took a break from meeting.

Meeting logbook September 2017

Participation	0
Co-production	4
Engagement	1
Introductions	3



October 2017

Activities

In September, the team supported multi-agency SEND conferences across the county. There were presentations about the work of the team and how they participate at a strategic level as well as information on the Unstoppables young people's forum. The team also hosted a display stand with information which was available throughout the events.

The team attended the county wide careers fair at Junction 24 in Bridgwater and hosted a stand where young people who attended the event could get information about the Unstoppables forum. During the morning and afternoon session, Nicole and Luke presented the importance of working for young people with SEND to 30 employers to try and improve employment opportunities for young people within Somerset.

Unstoppables Meeting

In October, the Unstoppables joined forces with representatives from Somerset Parent Carer Forum to start co-producing a transitions guide for young people and their families. The day was a great success with young people and parent carers using their own experiences to say what they think is important to include in the guide.

Mendip Group

During the meeting, young people took part in an activity to identify ways of finding help when they need it, this information will support the early help and family support service consultation.



Meeting logbook October 2017

Participation	1
Co-production	2
Engagement	6
Introductions	1

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November 2017

Activities

The team had a busy month attending special school council meetings, the South Somerset Choices for Life event as well as sitting on the interview panel for the Children's Commissioning Officer roles.

The team attended the South West regional "Making Participation work" conference in Bristol, where they were able to learn and share good practice for involving children and young people with SEND in decision making. Other areas were impressed with Somerset's approach and have asked if we could visit in the new year.

The team also attended the British Youth Council awards ceremony in London where they were shortlisted for an award in the "Celebrating Diversity" category for their work with Short Breaks on the buddy project. The team didn't win but were privileged to have been shortlisted from 70 nominations.

Unstoppables

The Unstoppables were joined by young people from UK Youth Parliament Advisory Group (UKYPAG) and both groups were able to talk about what they do and how their campaigns and work feeds into each other. The Unstoppables told UKYPAG all about the developments of their "access to the community" campaign.

Mendip Group

7 young people and 6 parent carers met at Hullabaloo in Shepton Mallet and took part in creating a poster for transitions- "What help and support do you need for your future".

Meeting logbook November 2017

Participation	3
Co-production	1
Engagement	6
Introductions	4



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December 2017

Activities

In December, the team attended a Short Breaks workshop with Somerset Parent Carer Forum to consult on the current offer and opportunities for the future.

Jemma spoke to 85 tutors at Bridgwater and Taunton college about the buddy project to promote the scheme so that tutors can encourage their students to become a buddy.

Nicole and Luke presented their experience of employment to job centre staff in Wells to promote the importance of work opportunities for people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Unstoppables Forum

In December, the Unstoppables met at the Harvester in Taunton for their Christmas celebration. The members came up with a variety of Christmas games and discussed their proudest achievements of 2017, which included new jobs, completing apprenticeships and live performances.

Mendip Group

Young people and their families met for a final Christmas celebration at Hullaballo in Shepton Mallet. The group enjoyed party games, Christmas related arts and crafts and some delicious party food.



Meeting logbook December 2017

Participation	1
Co-production	1
Engagement	6
Introductions	1

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January 2018

Activities

January was a busy month for the team. The Young People's Champions took part in interviews for new Assistant Director roles within Somerset County Council.

Cole was asked to take part in some filming with the BBC as part of the Ofsted report that was published at the end of January. Cole spoke about her role as a Champion and the forum's involvement in decision making.

Luke took part in a Short Breaks funding panel where he worked with parent carers and practitioners from the Short Breaks service to make decisions on funding allocations for holiday activities for children and young people with SEND.

The team were asked by Devon County Council to go and talk about their experience of setting up the Unstoppables forum. Young people with SEND in Devon would like to set up their own forum and listened to a presentation delivered by the team about the process of setting up and delivering the forum including top tip and promotion.

Unstoppables Forum

The forum didn't meet in January as it was so close to the New Year.



Meeting logbook January 2017

Participation	4
Co-production	5
Engagement	4
Introductions	1

February 2018

Activities

During February, the team worked with the directors of Somerset Parent Carer Forum to review the Engagement and Participation Strategy. The group worked to develop a strategy on a page so it is simple and clear for young people and their families to understand how they can be involved in decision making.

The team travelled to Birmingham to attend the first SEND young people's conference on Participation run by the Council for Disabled Children. Luke and Nicole attended workshops discussing some of the barriers to participation for young people and how to develop a campaign. The team came away with lots of ideas for their own participation and also shared some good practice with other teams across the country.

Somerset Children's Trust Participation Network came together with young people to work on a set of resources which promote and support emotional health and well-being for young people. The Public Health team in Somerset commissioned the group to review and update the Lifehacks resources along with a graphic designer.



Young people from a raft of different groups spent the day together looking at the resources to make sure they were young person friendly and engaging. The revised 'Lifehacks' resources will be shared amongst schools, colleges and young people's groups across Somerset.

Unstoppables Forum

This month the forum looked at the Short breaks service and consulted on what they knew about the service, what they liked, what could be better and blue sky thinking. The group suggested more activities for those over the age of 18- including weekends away. The group also took part in problem solving activities and talked about Young Citizens Advice Service.

Meeting logbook February 2018

Participation	3
Co-production	4
Engagement	2
Introductions	2

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March 2018

Activities

In March the team attended a workshop alongside parent carers and colleagues across Education, Health and Social Care to review the information that is on the Local Offer website with regards to preparing for adulthood- **Choices for Life**. The group reviewed feedback from other young people to make sure that this section of the Local Offer is useful and relevant for young people and their families.

The team attended the “Grand Day Out” event which was hosted by the Department for Work and Pensions with the aim to encourage more employers to recruit people who have disabilities. The Young People’s Champions worked alongside another young person to develop activities that would raise awareness of the support that is available both for employers and employees. 186 people attended the event and worked in teams to take part in a variety of activities throughout the day. The 3 young people formed a judging panel and asked each team what they would do differently as a result of the day and awarded their top 3 pledges at the end of the event.



Jemma and Nicole attended Taunton and Bridgwater College’s volunteer event, where organisations came together to promote a variety of volunteering opportunities to the students at the college. Jemma and Nicole talked about the Unstoppables Forum and promoted the “Buddy Project”, where young people can support a young person with SEND to access their local communities.

Unstoppables Forum

The forum meeting was cancelled in March due to the snow. The group will be meeting again in April to plan for the year ahead.

Meeting logbook March 2018

Participation	0
Co-production	5
Engagement	3
Introductions	0

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More Information

If you would like any more information about the team and the work they have done then please contact:

SENDParticipationTeam@somerset.gov.uk

<https://www.facebook.com/sendparticipationteam/>

If you would like more information about services in Somerset please visit:

<https://www.somersetchoices.org.uk/family/>

If you would like more information about Somerset Parent Carer Forum please visit:

<http://www.somersetpcf.org.uk/default.aspx>



If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact the SEND Participation Team on SENDParticipationTeam@somerset.gov.uk



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Pathways to Independence (P2i) Update

Lead Officer: Philippa Granthier, Assistant Director – Commissioning and Performance

Author: Rowina Clift-Shanley, Strategic Commissioner – Children’s Services

Contact Details: rclift-shanley @somerset.gov.uk

Cabinet Member: Cllr Frances Nicholson, Lead Member for Children

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1. Pathway to Independence (P2i) is an innovative partnership project between Somerset County Council, the five district councils (Sedgemoor, South Somerset, Mendip, Taunton Deane and West Somerset and two major housing providers for young people across Somerset, YMCA Somerset Coast and YMCA Mendip and South Somerset.

The P2i service offers support for homeless and vulnerable young people aged between 16 to 25 years (inclusive). The service meets some of the statutory duties for local authorities under current homelessness legislation in relation to homeless 16 to 17 year olds and care leavers up to the age of 25. The service covers an assessment of needs, family mediation, housing advice, emergency accommodation, supported housing, floating support and signposting to other services as appropriate.

- 1.2. Each district has a P2i ‘Hub’ providing a single point of access in each district area. Staffing for the hubs is being provided by County and District Council Employees. The Hubs are the first point of contact for young people when they are faced with housing issues, and provide advice, guidance and support.

Hub workers carry out assessments of need using the Early Help Assessment (EHA) to understand in more depth the support required, complete a risk assessment for any service provision and after the assessment process, each young person entering the Pathway will have an integrated and holistic independence plan agreed with them.

The mediation service provision is currently staffed within the County Council Targeted Youth Service (TYS).

- 1.3. The contract and specification for the Accommodation and Support Provision is outcomes based and expects the providers to meet the young people’s needs in a holistic way. Young people should progress along a pathway of targeted interventions, through the creation of a multi-agency person-centred plan, to ensure they are able to achieve agreed outcomes relevant to their needs and aspirations. It is designed to ensure that all young people leaving the pathway are able to sustain independent living, including economic independence and build and maintain positive supportive friendships with friends, family and colleagues.

In order to achieve this the young people will achieve improved outcomes across five outcomes areas:

- Achieving economic wellbeing
- Make a positive contribution
- Be healthy
- Enjoying and Achieving
- Staying safe

The providers will work in partnership with other agencies and provide opportunities for education, employment and volunteering. The providers are embedded within their communities and provide added and social value initiatives.

The service contributes to meeting improvement priorities within the Children and young Peoples plan 2016-2019 and also meets the requirement stated in the County Plan to continue to prioritise the vulnerable children and adults who need our help most.

2. Issues for consideration/Recommendations

- 2.1. This report is for information only, however the Committee are asked to consider and comment on Section 5 of the report – Challenges and Next Steps.

3. Background/Update

- 3.1. The P2i contract commenced on 1st January 2017 and initially runs until 31st December 2019 with an option to extend for up to 2 years (in one year increments). Regular monitoring of contract performance is undertaken in the form of weekly information from panels and accommodation plans; monthly and quarterly data returns and an annual self-assessment and review process. Reports are presented to the Board on a quarterly and annual basis.
- 3.2. The providers have worked very hard to ensure that there are sufficient units of accommodation available in all district areas and that every young person is transitioned appropriately according to their needs. The outcomes based contract management framework provides a fully rounded picture of the services and identifies areas of improvement and success.
- 3.3. From January to December 2017, a total of 542 Young People were supported by the P2i service.
 - 40% South Somerset
 - 26% Taunton
 - 19% Mendip
 - 11% Sedgemoor
 - 4% West Somerset
 - A total of 235 young people were accommodated by the service.
 - 85% of departures from accommodation based services were positive and planned
 - 28% of service users are Children's Social Care statutory responsibility with the other 72% supported under other statutory duties.

- 3.4. The P2i Coordinator role is now a permanent post within Somerset County Council.
- 3.5. The P2i Mediation service has four full time TYS workers to cover the county. The Mediation service is working with families and young people offering a quick response to try to make sure the young person can go home if it is safe to do so. They also work with the young person to show them the reality of the types of accommodation options available to them and also in finding out if there are any other solutions open to them e.g. staying with extended family or finding private rented accommodation.

This service received 146 referrals up until the end of December 2017 with 103 of those allocated for mediation. 43 inappropriate referrals were received in the first year. Success rates were at 50% for quarter 4 (Oct-Dec 2017). Commissioners are considering how we can increase the performance and effectiveness in this area in particular and also need to work through the impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act (new duties wef 1st April 2018) and the impact this has.

- 3.6. The P2i service allocation and review panel meets weekly for collective decision making, with a strong process and robust chair. It has excellent attendance by all partners, with creative solutions found for more complex cases. Commissioners will be attending a panel meeting as part of the annual review process.
- 3.7. The Annual Review process for the first year of the contract is underway. Somerset County Council Commissioners are visiting the P2i providers in March and early April to carry out the Annual Review visits. This will include consideration of a self-assessment completed by providers, a spot file audit, consultations with staff, a peer review and visits to hubs and accommodation.

We are working with Health and Social care students to provide the peer review of the service through our Young Commissioners Project. Students are carrying out visits to the P2i provision, talking to residents about how they find the service and answering specific outcome related questions from the outcomes framework. They will produce a report which will be fed back to the P2i Board and form part of the annual review.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1. Consultation and feedback are inherently built into the contract management framework as part of continuous improvement. Feedback gathered so far as part of the annual review process has been positive.
- 4.2. Young Commissioners have undertaken a peer review of both providers and we are waiting for the report.
- 4.3. Commissioners have consulted with P2i provider staff in South Somerset, Mendip and Sedgemoor as part of their annual review visits.

5. Challenges/Next Steps

- 5.1. There are still challenges with providing suitable accommodation for a small

number of very high needs young people including those with undiagnosed and diagnosed mental health issues as well as offending/re-offending behaviour. The P2i Commissioner is keen to work with other agencies, Police, Leaving Care, Adult Social Care, and Public Health and District Councils to try to address some of these issues and find alternative solutions.

- 5.2. The number of host families is falling short of the contract, only 17 are being provided as at December 2017. All areas except Mendip are struggling to recruit families to join the scheme and are finding it increasingly hard to place young people within a family environment due to increasingly complex needs and behaviour issues particularly mental health. This is also an area that needs a deep dive review in the next quarter.
- 5.3. The accommodation in Taunton has been falling short of contracted levels; however, the provider had been working on a plan to rectify this by the end of April 2018. YMCA Somerset Coast is in the process of developing a social enterprise Hotel in Taunton which will provide some units of accommodation for P2i as well as work and training opportunities for young people based on the successful model in West Somerset.
- 5.4. The recruitment of a psychologist has not been successful due to a national shortage of clinical psychologists. This means the service and P2i staff are not receiving the level of expertise or professional supervision that was part of the original service model. Commissioners are considering an in-house option and are in dialogue with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) service through the Commissioning Academy. However, one year into the contract we can now provide greater clarity to our assumptions and are consulting with providers about their need during the annual review.
- 5.5. Consideration needs to be given to extending the contract beyond the current end date of 31st December to the end of the financial year, as should there be any changes in accommodation as a result of contract arrangements; we know this time of year is not good for individuals who may move.

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Act fundamentally changes the homelessness legislation by introducing a statutory duty to intervene at earlier stages to help prevent homelessness and requiring action to help secure accommodation for applicants who are homeless. It places new legal duties on local authorities so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they are eligible for assistance.

These include:

1. An enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days
2. A new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation
3. A duty to provide appropriate advice and information
4. A duty to carry out an assessment and develop personalised housing plans

5. Care leavers will have more choice on local connection
6. A duty on public bodies to refer service users

Although Guidance for local authorities has been issued, the guidance for 16 -17 year olds has been delayed. Commissioners have contacted Anna Whalen, Youth Homelessness Advisor for the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to understand the implications for care leavers and P2i services.

Commissioners have attended a training event and are still considering the impact of the legislation on the P2i contract and partner duties with district council colleagues and Adults Commissioning.

The challenges identified so far:

- Increase in duties and workload for local authorities
- New MHCLG data collection requirements
- All care leavers under the age of 21 will be considered as having a local connection with an area if they were looked after, accommodated or fostered there for a continuous period of at least two years
- Increase in caseload for frontline staff
- Partners must be involved, Housing authorities cannot do this alone
- There is a need to change the system-wide culture, this is everyone's business.

6. Background papers

6.1. None.

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P2i Somerset

Pathways to Sustainable Independence



YMCA MENDIP



YMCA SOMERSET COAST

SEDGEMOOR / NORTH SOMERSET /
WEST SOMERSET / TAUNTON DEANE

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Who are we?

Vienna Ashley-Watts – Former resident of P2i

Jonica Walkinshaw – Director of Training and Education – YMCA Coast

Andrew Pearce – Housing Director - YMCA Coast

Rowina Clift-Shanley – Strategic Commissioner Children’s Service (SCC)



What will we be discussing?

1. An overview of the contract and how this has been implemented, including next steps
2. Feedback from Vienna on her experience of the P2i pathway
3. Summary of our aspirations for independence and skills
4. Housing and accommodation for independence
5. Questions

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Background

- Somerset County Council and 5 District Councils across Somerset Commissioned Pathways to independence (P2i) during 2012/2013
- New contract from 1st January 2017 – runs until 31st December 2019
- Multi agency Homeless prevention Service for 16-26 year olds
- Designed to prevent homelessness through targeted prevention methods (Mediation)
- Recognised by Ofsted in most recent inspection as good practice
- Feedback from MHCLG – our model is an exemplar

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Guiding Principles

- Equity of pathways for all young people
- Focus on prevention and mediation
- Outcomes focussed – skills and resilience for independent living
- Transitions to sustainable independence
- Wherever possible smaller units of accommodation, prevention focussed and preparation for sustained independence



Partner Contributions 17/18

Financial Contribution

Wholly Somerset County Council

Staffing Contribution

Sedgemoor 1 FTE

Mendip 1 FTE – post currently vacant

Taunton Deane 1 FTE

South Somerset 0.5 FTE – due to be withdrawn wef 23/04

Somerset County Council staffing to hubs – 4 x 1FTE per district hub



The Providers

YMCA Somerset Coast

Sedgemoor

Total:	52 units
Core:	10 units
Cluster:	30 units
Emergency:	2 units
Host Families:	10 units
Accommodation sustainment:	21 units

Taunton Deane and West Somerset

Total:	61 units
Core:	12 units
Cluster:	36 units
Emergency:	4 units
Host Families:	14 units
Accommodation sustainment:	27 units

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The Providers

YMCA Mendip

Mendip

Total:	50 units
Core:	10 units
Cluster:	28 units
Emergency:	2 units
Host Families:	10 units
Accommodation sustainment:	21 units

South Somerset

Total:	55 units
Core:	10 units
Cluster:	32 units
Emergency:	3 units
Host Families:	10 units
Accommodation sustainment:	21 units

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Accessing the Service

South Somerset P2i Hub
Petters House/Housing Advice Centre
Petters Way, Yeovil BA20 1AS
01935 462462
southsomersetp2ihub@somerset.gov.uk

Mendip P2i Hub
Shape, Mendip District Council,
Cannards Grave Road, Shepton Mallet BA4 5BT
0300 303 8588
mendipp2ihub@somerset.gov.uk

Sedgemoor P2i Hub
New Prospects, Westonzoyland Road
Bridgwater TA6 5HT
01278 451204
sedgemoorp2ihub@somerset.gov.uk

Taunton & West Somerset P2i Hub
Youth People Somerset,
Belvedere Trading Estate, Taunton TA1 1BH
01823 326731
tauntonp2ihub@somerset.gov.uk

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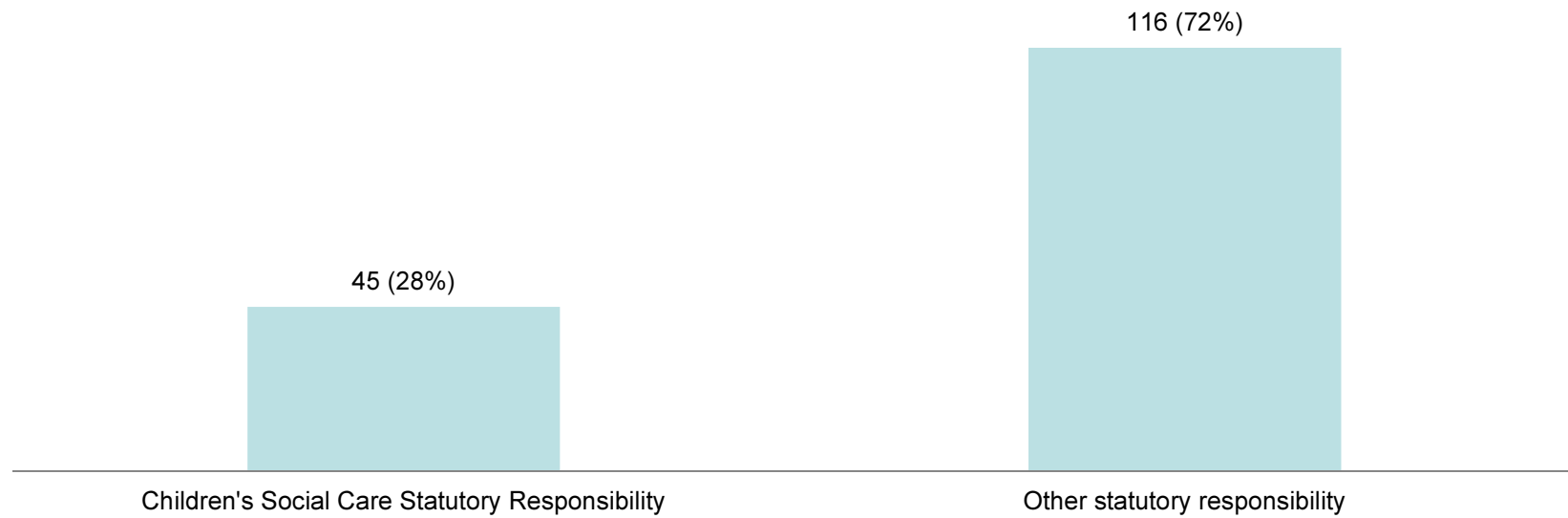


Decision Making

- Weekly multi-agency panel meetings and collective decision making
- Excellent attendance by all partners
- Creative solutions found for complex cases
- Strong process that all attendees report on positively
- 30% of cases that go to panel are offered a P2i placement
- 19% Mediation
- 16% Floating Support



Service User Profile



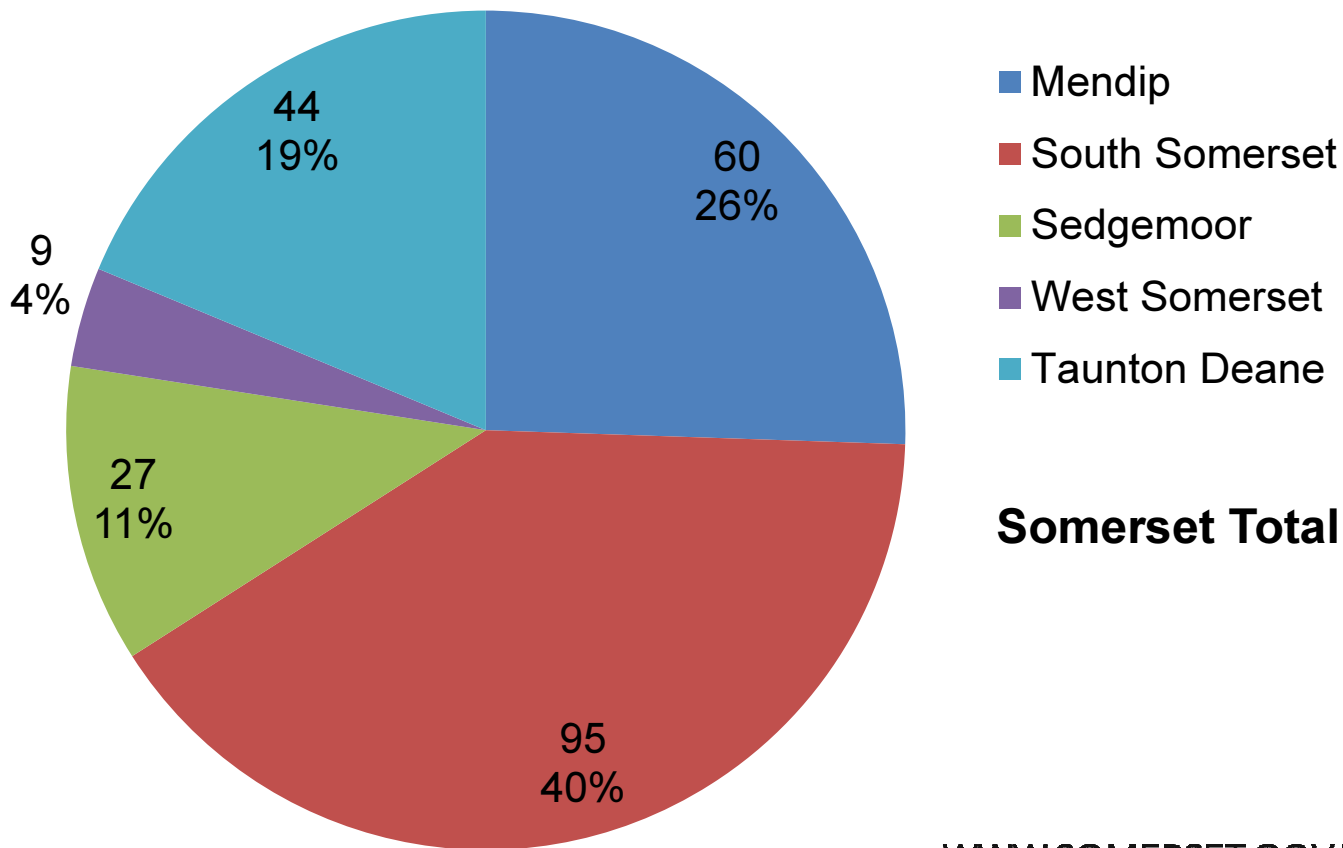


Monitoring the Contract

- **Weekly:**
 - Information from P2i Panels
 - Accommodation Plans
- **Monthly:**
 - Data reports (key indicators)
- **Quarterly:**
 - Monitoring Review Report
 - Continuous Improvement Plan
- **Annual:**
 - Self-assessment (report and evidence)
 - Consultation meetings (staff, managers, partners)
 - File audit
 - Young commissioners (co-produced peer consultation)



Number of people placed in accommodation based services (Jan – Dec 2017)



Somerset Total: 235

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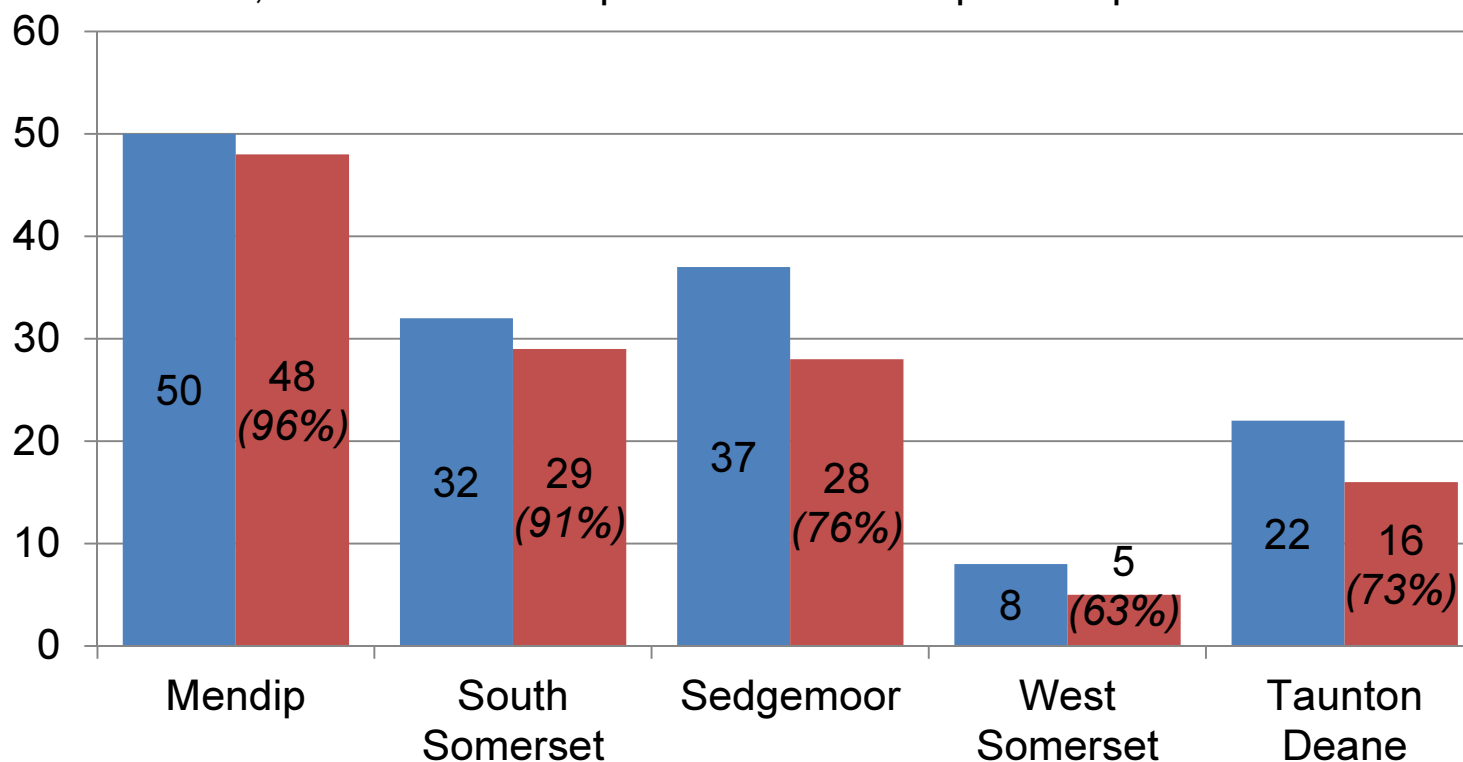




Key Performance Indicators

Planned positive moves (Jan – Dec 2017)

- Number of departures from accommodation based services
- Of these, the number of departures that were positive planned moves



Somerset Total: 126/149 (85%)

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Next steps and Future Challenges

- P2i provider Annual review process and Annual Report (including action plan for improvements – prevention hearts and minds)
- Consider lessons learned from contract end date and time of year
- Homelessness Reduction Act impacts session with Districts and County Council facilitated by Homelessness Prevention Adviser from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Supported Housing changes 2020 onwards
- Better connectivity with Adult's contracts such as 'Complex Lives'
- Inform system wide discussions around gaps in Mental Health provision

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Preventing **Youth** Homelessness

A personal experience of the P2i pathway

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Preventing **Youth** Homelessness

Skills and Education for Independence – update from a provider

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Preventing **Youth** Homelessness

Housing and Accommodation for Independence – update from a provider

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Any Questions?

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