

Changes to the Physical Impairment and Medical Support Team

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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

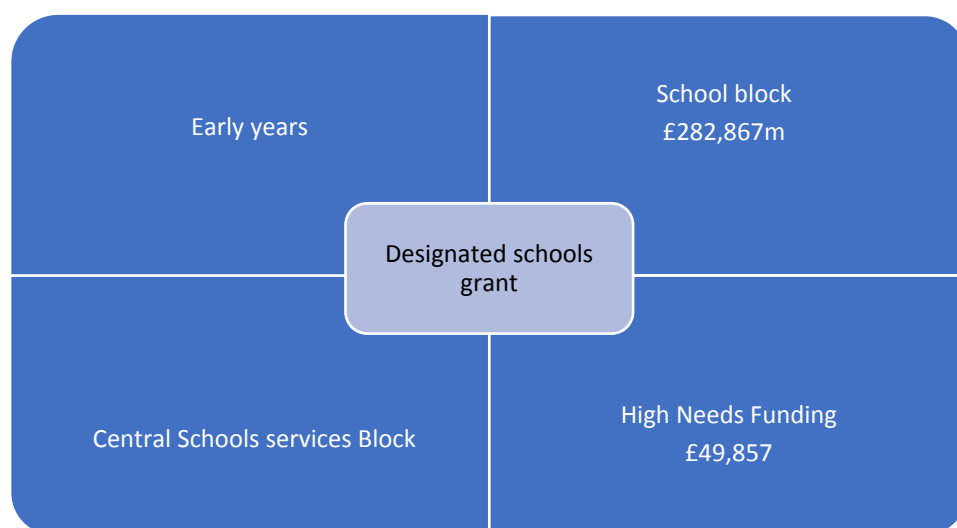
10 April 2018

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, as 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 redundancy 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)

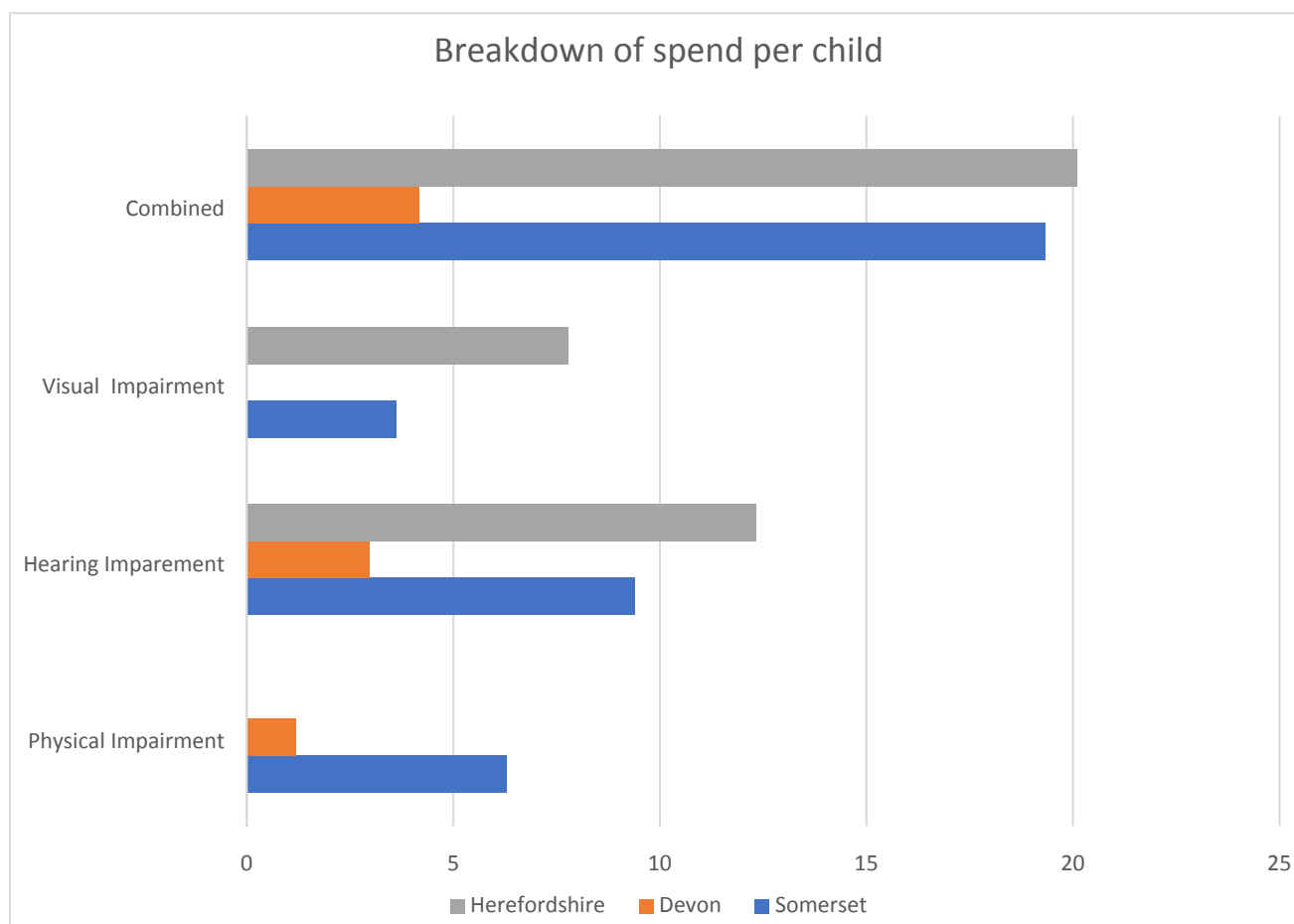
There is no statutory responsibility for the Local Authority to provide support and guidance to schools/settings in relation to physical impairment and/or medical conditions, beyond what may be detailed in an individual's Education, Health and Care Plan. There is no national guidance in place for physical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