Inclusion Inquiry

Why did we do this?

In order to make the difference we will undertake the following set of actions:

| Ref	Outcome	Action	Lead	Milestone	Sep - Dec 20	Jan - Apr 21	May - Aug 21	Sep - Dec 21	Y2
6.1	We will have developed an evidence-based understanding of what good inclusive practice looks like that is school- driven, detailed, specific and relevant to the size, type and phase of school	**Secure** agreement across the school community about what good evidence-based inclusive practice looks like	Head Teacher/PRU Representative	A panel of SEND experts is recruited which will include children, young people & families' voices, drawing on families' lived experiences and local and national expertise, for an inquiry into evidence-based practice, particularly in the context of supporting pupils with Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) and behaviours that challenge	COMPLETED				
				Inquiry evidence gathering and site visits which build upon the recent Scrutiny inquiry into the impact of exclusions is completed		COMPLETED			
				Recommendations are drafted and a proposal that includes a framework of indicators for intervention is developed which will be shared with all key stakeholders in order to gain a common understanding of what 'inclusion' means in Somerset			COMPLETED		
				Recommendations are finalised and a commitment is secured from our schools to a Somerset model of inclusion				EMBEDDING	
				Co-produce with School Leaders a framework of indicators that would trigger support and intervention with clearly defined thresholds and escalation stages					IN PROG

What this is and what this isn't?

This is not an audit or and evaluation

It is an opportunity to ask questions about Inclusion in Somerset and gauge the landscape.

Then come up with some suggestions for improvement

Two sources of information
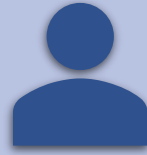
An open gateway

A focused targeted questioning approach

Who – Current Committee membership

Chair –Brian Walton

From SASH -Jen Jacklin (King Arthur's)

From SAPH – Helen Taylor (St Joseph's)

From SEN.SE – Natalie Hanna (Mendip)

PRU - Kim Lawrence (TD Partnership College)

From Inclusion Somerset - Jenny Pearce Riddy

Parent Carer Forum Rep - Tina Emery

Engagement & Participation Officer – Lauren Oliver

Clinical Commissioning Group - Kate Staveley

Critical friend – Prof. Mel Ainscow (Manchester)

Critical friend – Prof. Brahm Norwich (Exeter)

Open Gateway - Spring 21

The 'Open Gateway' took place Spring 21. This was an open invitation for parents, children and young people and professionals to give their views on inclusion in Somerset.

All data was then analysed and formed part of the evidence in developing the Recommendations
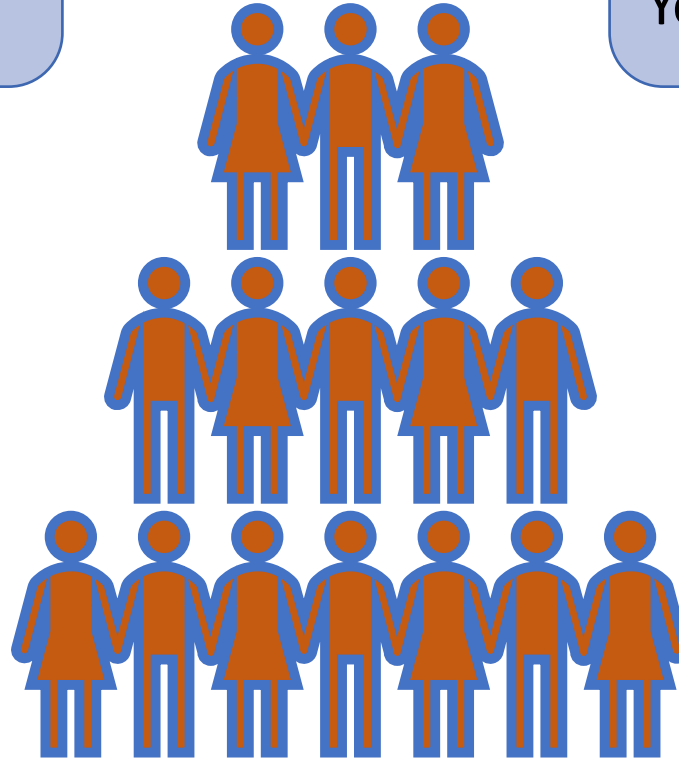
8 school leaders (as panel members)

150+ Children and Young People

95 people in the community (in writing)

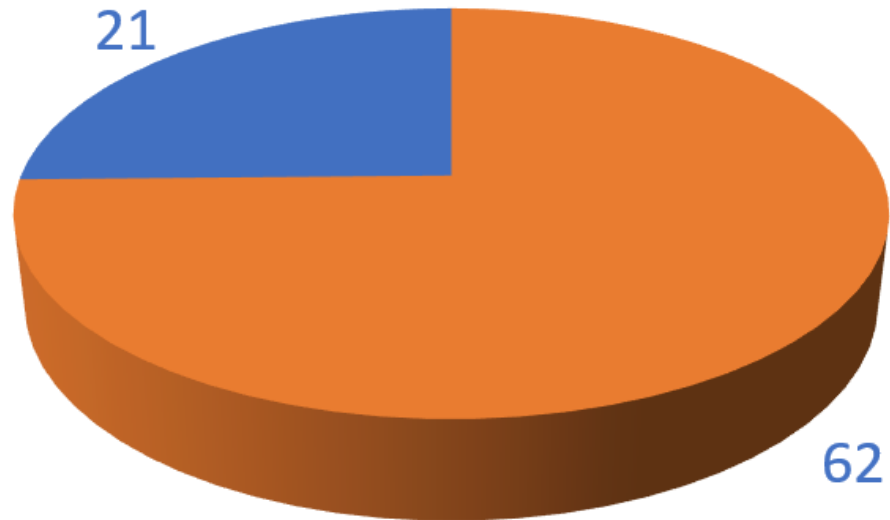40+ parents and carers (listening event)

80 professionals (in writing)

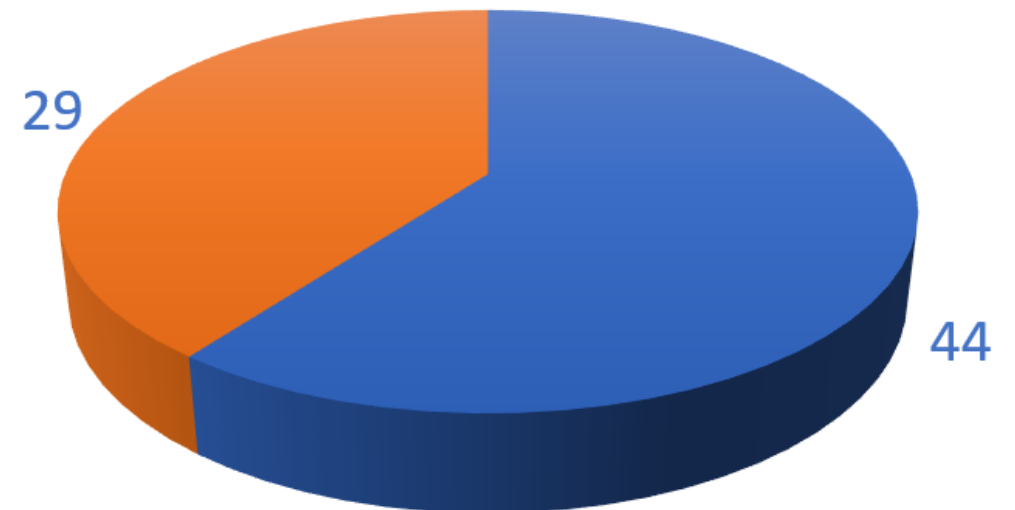1200+ Social Media engagements on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter

Analysis from Inclusion Inquiry – Open Gateway Survey

21% of respondents felt that their school was not inclusive enough

44% of respondents felt that *Somerset* was not inclusive enough

Focused approach - Summer 21

Completion of semi structured school Interviews by Committee members (21 visits)

Further input from Young People via groupwork

Autumn 21- Development of Recommendations

Recommendations drafted by the committee

Recommendations taken to Somerset Improvement board

Recommendations taken to Heads Groups to start process of gaining commitment

Recommendation –
Better Signposting of Support Services

There needs to be clear sign posting to support services across Somerset for all stakeholders to access. A one stop place where support services can be found and where information to get access to this support is clear and transparent.

To map and enhance community support for CYP with SEND and their parents/carers, alongside all CYP who would benefit from Inclusive community support-clubs/respite/CYP with specific needs, parental support groups.

To map Inclusion provision gaps, such as rural areas, and develop an action plan to address this.

Streamline, simplify and quality assure on an on-going basis communication pathways and signposting regarding inclusive practices in schools-school websites and the local offer etc.

These actions aim to ensure parents/carers, CYP and professionals can easily identify the support that is available to them in their local area.

Recommendation - Earlier Intervention

There needs to be better local early intervention strategies in place for identification and support for children and young people:

To develop flexible, small scale provision within and between schools to support inclusive practice. This will complement existing provision such as nurseries, specialist bases, PRUs and Special Schools.

To develop area based structures for earlier intervention that are streamlined and simplified.

To strengthen and streamline formal, area based, mechanisms for multi-agency communication. These will include: problem solving with peers; input from SEND Support services and specialist provision will be strengthened and streamlined.

To consider the development of SEND support for the whole family.

To streamline and coordinate therapy provision for CYP between SCC, Somerset CCG and providers. This may lead to some joint commissioning.

Recommendation – Behaviour Planning and Support Structures

There needs to be better Behaviour planning and support structures within Somerset. This needs to be preventative rather than reactive. Organisations and families need to feel that when they have a developing behaviour need, there is a pathway towards planning and support.

That behaviour issues are discussed and supported at an earlier stage.

To develop systems to support behaviour from external SEND and behaviour professionals where the function of the behaviour is identified, and actions are measured to ensure impact and positive outcomes and systems to support, these actions are made accountable.

For schools, with support from the LA, to develop a system whereby inclusive practice is shared, challenged and celebrated between peers

Recommendation – Inclusion Data Shared with Schools

Inclusion data should be shared on the new Schools Data Dashboard to ensure that evidence based inclusive practice becomes standard. This should allow all schools to look at their inclusive practice within their context and have conversations about how resources are used to support the challenges faced.

Training should be given to governors on how to access this data and further support their schools in developing inclusive practice.

To develop a Somerset Framework of Indicators of Inclusive practice, based on key inclusion evidence developed from the data dashboard and other sources.

To coordinate the annual training offer to schools in relation to Inclusion and Special educational needs-owned jointly by schools and the LA.

To ensure training is given to governors on what the Data Dashboard shows with particular reference to Inclusion Data and the critical questions they should be asking regarding their organisations practice.

To increase and use benchmarking and national and local best practice information with regard to SEND Statutory processes.

Recommendation - Trust Building

The corner stone of our findings found that trust and transparency were central to children, young adults, parents and Somerset staff when seeking advice or support for SEND or inclusion.

Children and Young people did not always feel that their voice was heard at school or within the wider Somerset community. They recommended that schools need to educate themselves and their students about the issues facing students with SEND so that everyone has a better understanding of what it takes to navigate education with additional needs.

Parents felt that they had to fight to get the support and services they needed when in crisis.

Schools and school leaders felt that they were isolated when dealing with challenging behaviour or a family in crisis.

The Local Authority face many challenges in terms of delivering and coordinating services in a complex and fragmented education sector and under financial restraints.

To increase collaborative practices with regard to statutory assessment processes between schools, parents, CYP and the local authority in order to build trust and create shared understandings with regard to EHCP processes and inclusive practice a Somerset Model for inclusion needs to be developed that adheres to the following principles:

Continuous Reflection

This is not a one-off exploration of inclusion in Somerset education. It is the beginning of an ongoing approach to systemic reflection and improvement.

Proactive Engagement

Specific groups were not reached by the Inclusion Inquiry. Their input will be proactively sought as a priority, with all future engagement to proactively seek the perspectives of those who are too often excluded.

Listening

Children and young people's needs are front and centre at all times. Families, young people and children feel listened to and included in school and by the Somerset education system so that everyone can feel like their perspective and experience matters.

Transparency

Making sure everyone has the information they need to understand expectations, the choices they can make and the decisions that are made.

Accessibility

Our understanding of accessibility is expansive, recognising that our language, or environment, our curriculum and our teaching style all have an impact on student's sense of safety and inclusion.

Next Steps

What will ensure Recommendations become a reality?

Establish governance arrangements- where these recommendations will be held and embed them into the work plan of that groups/board/strategy

Continue with repeated communication of the messages and recommendations, sharing and celebrating good inclusive practice

Link the recommendations in with on-going activities across Somerset to identify those recommendations already being addressed and gaps

Start proactively seeking opportunities to speak to SEND, BAME, PRU and other minority groups of students - listening to all the voices

Overview

Purpose: to provide an update on current trends, recent developments and next steps.

- Phil Curd – Strategic Manager, Access & Additional Learning Needs
  - School attendance
  - Exclusions and suspensions
  - Elective home education

- Emily Walters – Head of Virtual School & Learning Support
  - Promoting engagement and achievement of vulnerable learners
  - Supporting consistent, inclusive practice in Somerset

- Rob Hart – Assistant Director, Inclusion
  - Next steps for inclusion

Engagement in education: attendance, exclusion and elective home education

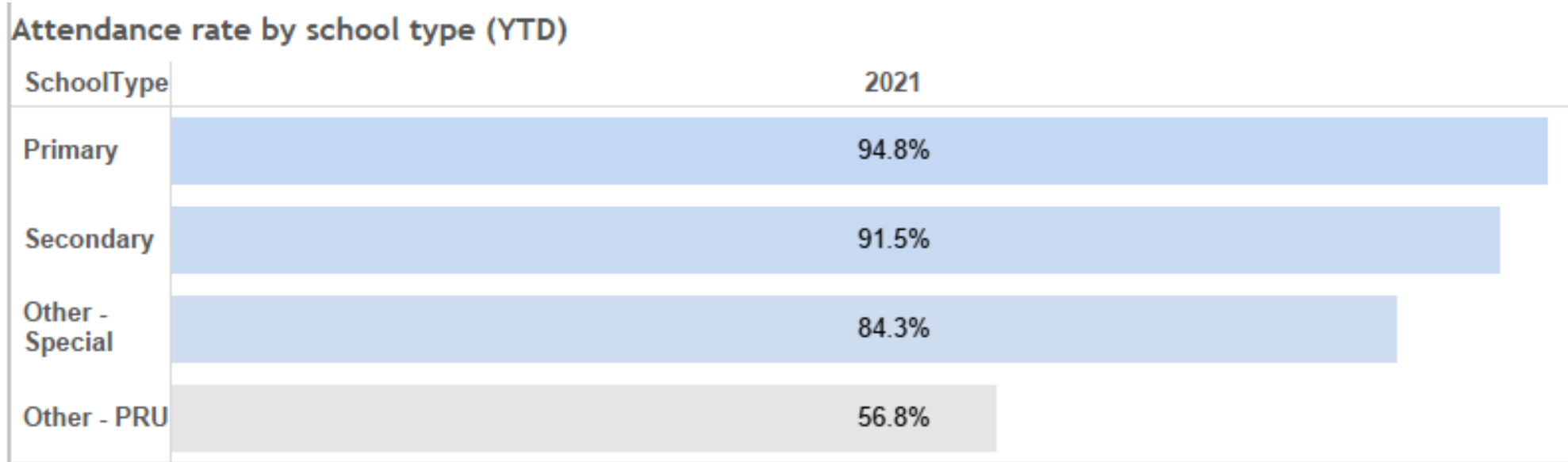Phil Curd – Strategic Manager, Access & Additional Learning Needs

School attendance

ACAD_YE..	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
2019	94.4%	94.5%	
2020	95.0%	92.5%	94.3%
2021	93.0%	93.0%	

- Attendance rates for 2021/22 have been significantly impacted by the Coronavirus Pandemic and related factors.
- Most of the reduced rates can be linked to schools that have had 'outbreaks' and been working closely with Public Health to reduce the risk of transmission.
- In parallel, there are a number of children whose attendance is critically low and schools are asked to refer those cases through Early Help processes to ensure the barriers to engagement are identified and support from the most appropriate agency is secured.
- On occasions, as a last resort, cases are escalated through legal processes and have resulted in significant fines being issued in court.

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Attendance – phase & school type

Attendance rate by school type (YTD)

SchoolType	2021
Primary	94.8%
Secondary	91.5%
Other - Special	84.3%
Other - PRU	56.8%

- The most significant drop has been seen in secondary phase and is around 2.5% points below attendance levels in previous times.
- Pupils Referral Unit numbers are also low, but are partly explained by relatively low numbers of children on roll (following low exclusions in 2020/21) and prescribed timetables for children in medical places.
- To support schools with individual cases, supportive initiatives have been developed, including:
  - Emotion-based school avoidance (EBSA) interventions – led by Educational Psychology Service
  - Coronavirus Attendance Interventions – delivered by Young Somerset and REACH through Inclusion Partnership areas

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LIVES

Exclusions (formerly permanent exclusion)

Data Set	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Permanent Exclusions 2019 - 2020	12	16	15	9	11	11	7	0	0	0	0	0	81
Permanent Exclusions 2020 - 2021	7	1	5	13	1	1	2	7	10	12	8	0	67
Permanent Exclusions 2021 - 2022	9	8	18	14	13	3							65

- The use of exclusion has increased in the 2021/22 academic year and based on current data, numbers are set to exceed 130, and would be Somerset's highest ever annual total.
- Reasons for exclusion mirror previous years with 'Persistent Disruptive Behaviour' being the most prevalent descriptor, followed by 'Verbal Abuse to Adult' and 'Physical Assault Against Pupil'.
- Inclusion Partnerships are being further developed across Somerset with the aim of driving down exclusion and suspension and increasing attendance.
- A key activity of the Partnerships will be to redesign the offer of local intervention, outreach and support based on need and creating a forum to develop and share good practice in relation to Inclusion.
- They will be fully implemented by September 2022.

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Suspensions (formerly fixed term exclusion)

Data Set	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Total
Fixed Period Exclusions 2019 - 2020	568	820	797	665	753	663	639	0	0	3	10	0	4918
Fixed Period Exclusions 2020 - 2021	503	676	825	507	71	70	675	400	887	659	483	0	5756
Fixed Period Exclusions 2021 - 2022	548	576	1109	582	764	135							3717

- The use of suspension has also increased in the 2021/22 academic year and based on current data, numbers are set to exceed 7200, and would be Somerset's highest recorded annual total.
- The reasons for suspension mirror those for exclusion with 'Persistent Disruptive Behaviour' being the most prevalent descriptor, followed by 'Verbal Abuse to Adult' and 'Physical Assault Against Pupil'.
- suspensions and exclusions are two of the indicators reviewed under the School Attendance Monitoring Protocol and where thresholds are met, schools are contacted in order to discuss what additional support they might benefit from.

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Elective Home Education (EHE)

- In September 2020, as happened regionally and nationally, we experienced a significant increase in the number of EHE starts and while we had anticipated an increase, the actual numbers were significantly beyond our expectations. We continued to experience higher than usual numbers throughout the Autumn and Spring terms before settling in the Summer.
- In September 2021, we experienced another burst of EHE starts but since then, numbers of EHE starts have returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- In November 2021 the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) produced the results of its annual EHE [survey](), which reported a 34% increase in the number of children that were EHE at any point during the 2020/21 academic year when compared to 2019/20.
- In Somerset, over the same period, the numbers increased from 1428 (2019/20) to 1875 (2020/21), a 31% increase.

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Elective Home Education

EHE starts had been in decline in Somerset in the 3 years prior to 2020/21, this ran contrary to the national trend. Since then, numbers have increased significantly, as seen regionally and nationally, but have settled over the Autumn term:

2017/18 = 554
2018/19 = 528
2019/20 = 455
2020/21 = 838
2021/22 = 268
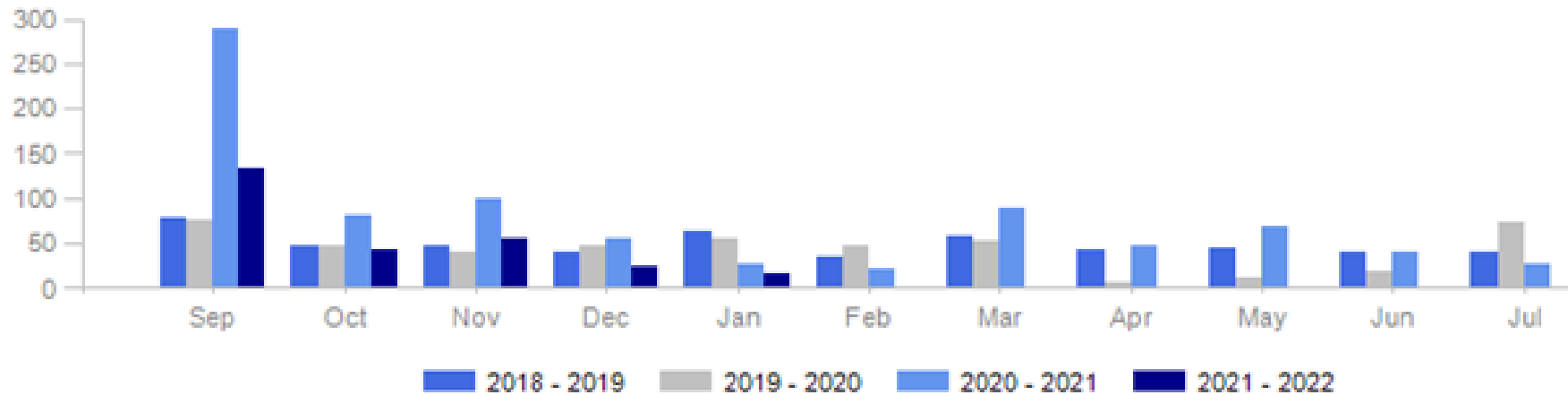
- There are currently 1439 EHE children in Somerset but in the academic year to date, 1569 children have been EHE at some point with 117 having returned to school.
- As a point of interest, the number of EHE children at the end of December 2021 was lower than number at the end of December 2020, only the second time we've seen that comparative reduction happen in our data (the other being June 2020 / June 2019).

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Elective Home Education

Somerset Council continues to have a robust approach to EHE and has developed its processes to be sure that we remain compliant whilst utilising developing technology and releasing staff time where possible.

A new EHE Protocol is being published and was co-produced with EHE parents and professionals and will go live here: https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-safeguarding-service/

The triage of vulnerable children who have become EHE has been significantly improved using the Transform database and enables casework to be allocated in a timely manner.

A new online notification platform for schools went 'live' in January 2022 so information (relating to a range of elements including EHE) can be electronically submitted to the local authority, enable automated data reports for services and streamlining the allocation of work to officers.

The online forms can be found here: https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-safeguarding-service-forms/#Notify-us-of-a-child-commencing-home-education-(EHE)

Improving
LIVES

Promoting the engagement and achievement of vulnerable learners

Emily Walters – Head of Virtual School & Learning Support

Role of the Virtual School: supporting engagement and achievement of vulnerable children and young people

- The Virtual School has responsibility for promoting better educational outcomes for children looked after (CLA) and those who were previously looked after.

- This remit has recently been extended to encompass all children with a social worker.

- In Somerset, the Virtual School also works to promote better outcomes for children with SEND, and those open to the Youth Justice Service. We work with colleagues across Children's Services to achieve this goal.

How do we do this for CLA?

- Children looked after have a named advisory teacher, who oversees their personal education plan on a termly basis.

- The Virtual Head holds a budget for each child, and this is allocated to the school if additional funding is required to support better outcomes.

- The impact of funding and any other interventions are measured.

- Children looked after are tracked to ensure they are making sufficient progress towards their goals.

- The Virtual School now has a team of specialist staff, who can offer support to schools and settings across a broad range of needs.

How do we do this for other vulnerable learners?

- Other vulnerable children we work with:
  - Previously looked after children
  - Young people open to Youth Offending Services
  - Children in need, or children with a child protection plan
  - Children who are SEN support or have an EHCP

- Our work with these groups of children takes the form of advice and guidance for schools and partners and some casework in specific circumstances.

- There is also a package of training which is offered to schools and settings, as well as our partners across children's services.

How do we know we are making a difference?

- The Virtual School and Learning Support Team tracks impact through a range of indicators and measures.

- For children looked after:
    - Attainment and progress
    - Engagement, measured through attendance, exclusions, suspensions and part time timetables

- For wider groups:
    - Evaluation of training or input for schools
    - Schools SSID progress towards actions measured
    - Engagement of SENCos and School leaders in networks and training
    - Quantifiable indicators such as EHE starts, suspensions, attendance

Working towards consistent, inclusive practice for Somerset children

Strategic SEND Inclusion Discussion (SSID)

- The Learning Support Team introduced SSID meetings in Sept 2020 to address some of the issues raised following the Local Area SEND Inspection.

- The SSID meetings are based on the Education Endowment Fund recommendations for inclusive schools.

1
Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils, without exception

- An inclusive school removes barriers to learning and participation, provides an education that is appropriate to pupils' needs, and promotes high standards and the fulfilment of potential for all pupils. Schools should:

- promote positive relationships, active engagement, and wellbeing for all pupils;

- ensure all pupils can access the best possible teaching; and

- adopt a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the EEF's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report.

2
Build an ongoing, holistic understanding of your pupils and their needs

- Schools should aim to understand individual pupil's learning needs using the graduated approach of the 'assess, plan, do, review' approach.

- Assessment should be regular and purposeful rather than a one-off event, and should seek input from parents and carers as well as the pupil themselves and specialist professionals.

- Teachers need to feel empowered and trusted to use the information they collect to make a decision about the next steps for teaching that child.

3
Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching

- To a great extent, good teaching for pupils with SEND is good teaching for all.

- Searching for a 'magic bullet' can distract teachers from the powerful strategies they often already possess.

- The research suggests a group of teaching strategies that teachers should consider emphasising for pupils with SEND. Teachers should develop a repertoire of these strategies they can use flexibly in response to the needs of all pupils.

  — flexible grouping;

  — cognitive and metacognitive strategies;

  — explicit instruction;

  — using technology to support pupils with SEND; and

  — scaffolding.

4
Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small-group and one-to-one interventions

- Small-group and one-to-one interventions can be a powerful tool but must be used carefully. Ineffective use of interventions can create a barrier to the inclusion of pupils with SEND.

- High quality teaching should reduce the need for extra support, but it is likely that some pupils will require high quality, structured, targeted interventions to make progress.

- The intensity of intervention (from universal to targeted to specialist) should increase with need.

- Interventions should be carefully targeted through identification and assessment of need.

- Interventions should be applied using the principles of effective implementation described in the EEF's guidance report *Putting Evidence to Work: A School's Guide to Implementation*.

5
Work effectively with teaching assistants

- Effective deployment of teaching assistants (TAs) is critical. School leaders should pay careful attention to the roles of TAs and ensure they have a positive impact on pupils with SEND.

- TAs should supplement, not replace, teaching from the classroom teacher.

- The EEF's guidance report *Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants* provides detailed recommendations.

The SSID Process

- Schools who sign up to the SSID have a meeting in the Autumn term with their Linked Advisory Teacher – the Headteacher and SEN Governor are strongly encouraged to attend the meeting.

- The SSID meeting focusses on the areas in the poster, particularly areas 1,2, and 3.

- The schools Self-Evaluation, or audit, is discussed, and the school has the opportunity to share their thoughts on strengths and areas for development.

- Three actions are agreed by those in the meeting.

- The school receives a Note of Visit, with the agreed recommendations and actions.

- The School is offered three core staff meeting training sessions, directly linked to the actions identified in the SSID.

- The Link Advisory Teacher completes a termly review with the schools, and assesses their progress towards actions.

Schools' involvement

- The first year of the SSID saw 195 schools sign up to take part in this process with the linked advisory teacher from the Learning Support Team.

- In September 2021, 223 schools signed up to the SSID process – this represents an increase in uptake in all sectors, primary, secondary, and special schools

- One of the key advantages to the SSID, for both schools and our service, is the improved relationships between SENCos, Head Teachers, and Advisory Teachers. Schools are more willing to ask for support and also more receptive to challenge from their linked Advisory Teacher where this is necessary.

Impact

- The SSID is a year long process, so the impact of the first year can be reported on, while the second year is still ongoing.

- Progress is tracked using a RAG rating, so we are able to identify the number of schools who have moved from Red to Amber, or Amber to Green, during the year.

2020-2021	SSID Review
Made progress in the area 'Graduated response'	43
Made progress in 'Early Identification'	48
Made progress in 'Class Teachers inclusive practice'	25

Graduated Response Tool
(formerly Core Standards)

- The Somerset Core Standards have been subject to a detailed review and redesign.

- This is in response to the feedback from SENCos, while also recognising that the original Core Standards were carefully co-produced, and recognised as a strength in the Local Area inspection.

- Somerset Graduated Response Tool has been developed and designed with a range of partners, and continues to be revisited following consultation and feedback.

- Launch events for the Graduated Response Tool will begin in March 2022, with full rollout expected by September 2022

- You can find more information on the New Graduated Response Tool here: [Somerset Core Standards Review](#)

Special Educational Needs and/or Disability

Somerset's Graduated Response Tool

Ordinarily Available Provision for Children and Young People

These webinars will introduce all users to the new co-produced *Somerset's Graduated Response Tool* which replaces *The Core Standards*
The webinar includes:

- Why and how **Somerset's Graduated Response Tool** has been created
- A 'tour' of the document
- How the document will support your role
- The supporting resources available including templates and checklists
- What's next for the document?

1x1 hour 30 minute webinar delivered via MS Teams on the following dates (1 identical session, repeated 3 times).
To book please <u>click</u> your chosen date and time and complete the linked registration form:

<u>Weds 30th March 9.30-11am</u>
<u>Tues 5th April 4.00-5.30pm</u>
<u>Thurs 7th April 2.00-3.30pm</u>

For more information email: virtualschool@somerset.gov.uk with the subject *Somerset's Graduated Response Tool*

The right support in the right place at the right time

NHS — Somerset Parent Carer Forum C.I.C — Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership

Additional inclusive practice workstreams

- Whole Education
- Work with SEND Information and Advice Service (SENDIAS)
- Inclusion database
- SEND Network Development
- SENCo Yammer Page
- Ongoing development of SSID to incorporate Graduated Response Tool

Next steps for promoting engagement and inclusion in Somerset

Rob Hart – Assistant Director, Inclusion

Next steps

- Written Statement of Action (WSoA) has supported working together to address challenges – need to focus on achieving and evidencing impact from these changes
- Inclusion Inquiry recommendations – general alignment with WSoA actions…
- But more is needed – a focus on building confidence and capacity across the system:
  - Between families, schools and inclusion services
  - A system that is easier to navigate and quicker to respond
  - Strengthening partnerships with and between schools

How can we build confidence?

Setting

Family

External Support

Families involved in decisions

Welcoming, solution-focused approach

A system that listens and is responsive

Tangible and timely support available

Able to navigate

Practical, evidence-based advice

Tangible and timely support available

Key worker able to coordinate support
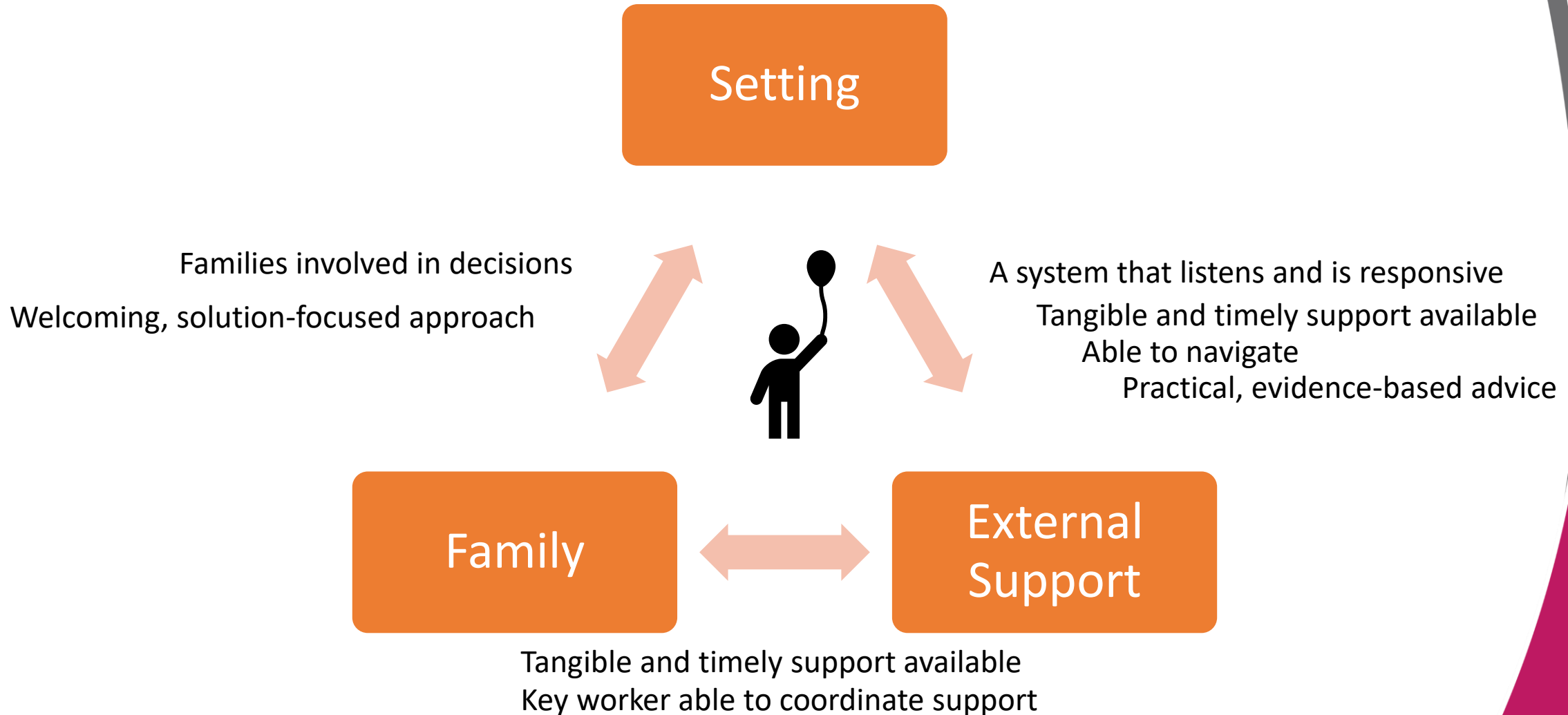
Accessing the right support and advice

Digital offer
- Clear, useful, practical advice and resources

Advice line
- Immediately/ timely response to issues to prevent escalation

Core support offer
- Training
- Resources
- Joint problem-solving

Keyworker Support
- Families have a named keyworker when they need it
- Schools/ settings have a named inclusion lead/ advisor
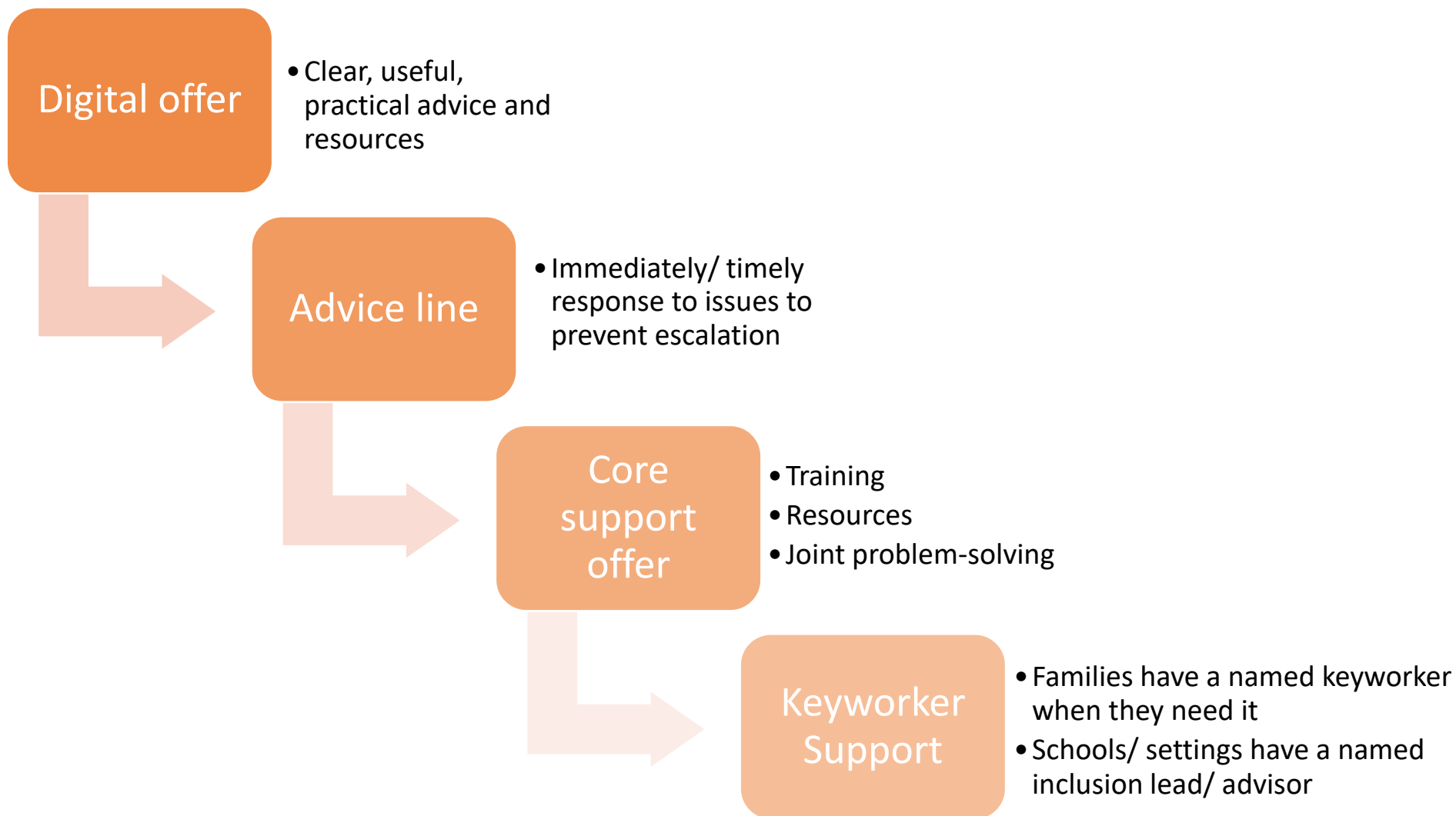
Priorities

- Area **Inclusion Partnerships** – school leaders, LA and other agencies working together to develop an offer that is responsive to local need.

- Investment in **Inclusion Pathfinders** and **Inclusion Hubs** to support schools to develop their own practice, and then support other schools.

- Special schools and mainstream schools working together to design flexible inclusive specialist provision as part of a **Local First Approach**.

- Redesign **LA inclusion offer** to ensure right balance of advice, key-working and direct intervention.

- Align to broader developments – early help, family hubs, mental health and emotional wellbeing.