

Somerset SEND Improvement Plan – Executive Summary

As part of our ongoing self-assessment of SEND arrangements in Somerset, Somerset County Council (SCC) and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) conducted an intensive review of the SEND system, with key practitioners leads and Parent Carer Forum representatives, between 10 - 14th June 2019. The self-assessment identified seven priority areas requiring urgent action and determined that a "joint written statement of action" for SCC and CCG would be required to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

The seven priority areas for improvement identified by SCC and the CCG are:

1. Governance arrangements in place in Somerset are not effective in holding leaders to account sufficiently to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
2. There is currently limited joint planning and commissioning of services, between education, health and care, to meet the needs of those with SEND.
3. There is inconsistent application of Somerset's strategy for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people at the SEN support stage across the partnership
4. A need to strengthen the Local Offer from providers to address the inconsistency of experience reported by families.
5. The time it takes to issue EHC plans and the variable quality of these plans, the fact that these plans do not consistently capture a child or young person's needs and aspirations and that EHC plans are not able to be used as a valuable tool to support the planning and implementation of education, health and care provision to lead to better lived experiences for the child and their families.
6. Weaknesses in our approach to supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people with SEND who face challenges in relation to their social, emotional and mental health.
7. Weaknesses in the identification, assessment, diagnosis and support of those children and young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The Somerset SEND Improvement Plan represents a joint written statement of action agreed between SCC and CCG. It outlines actions for each improvement priority (IP) and also shows how each SEND improvement priority links to key themes of the Somerset Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and SEND Strategy.

Progress in delivery of improvement and impact will be tracked using the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each improvement priority.

It should be noted that some of the improvements planned are dependent on the successful delivery of connecting projects across schools, the CCG and SCC and these are outlined in Annex 2.

Joint Governance arrangements

The Somerset SEND Improvement Plan is owned by the Local Area Improvement Network (LAIN). Co-ordinating improvement for children and young people with SEND and their families across the Somerset local area means that all relevant partners must work together. Each improvement priority has been assigned a Lead Officer(s) who has overall responsibility for delivery of the identified improvement, with support and challenge provided through the LAIN programme groups. Some priorities have more than one lead. Where this is the case it is because more than one partner is needed to support the improvement priority.

Progress in improvement will be monitored and reported through the quarterly SEND Improvement Board (SEND IB), which will report to the Health & Wellbeing board through the new Safeguarding Partnership arrangements¹. Additional reporting as relevant and required will be in place to the Early Help Strategic Commissioning Board, Schools Forum, Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership and other internal governance arrangements across both SCC and Somerset CCG. SEND Improvement will also be subject to Children and Families scrutiny arrangements.

Figure 1 overleaf shows how delivery responsibility and accountability will work.

¹ Somerset Safeguarding Children Partnership Board, effective 1st Oct 2019

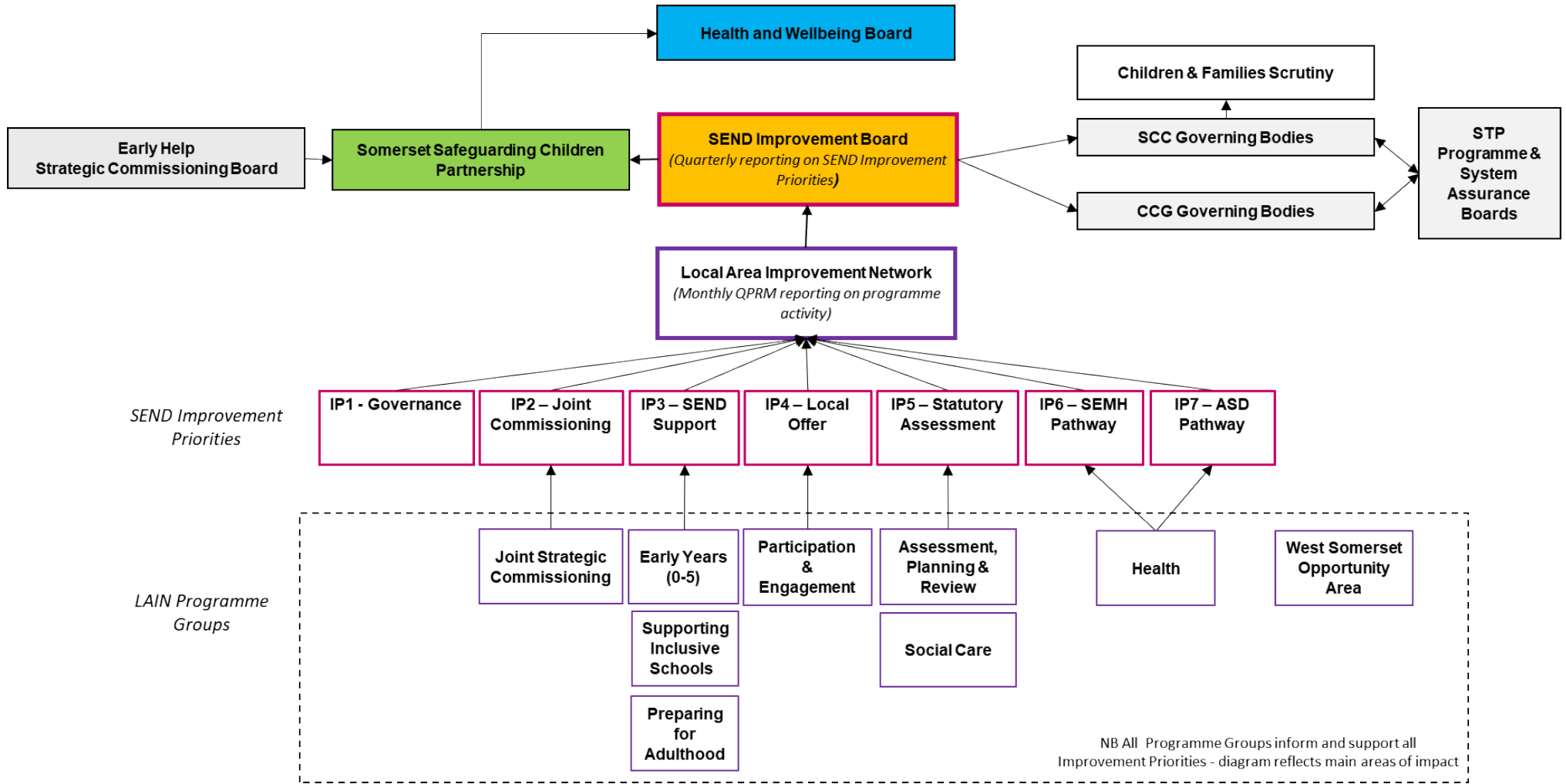


Figure 1: SEND Improvement Governance (as of 01.10.19)

Action Plan – Summary of priorities

<p>Improvement Priority 1 (IP1):</p> <p>Ensure that the Governance arrangements in place in Somerset are effective in holding leaders to account sufficiently to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND.</p>
<p>Owners: Julian Wooster (SCC) / Sandra Corry (CCG)</p>
<p>CYPP Themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people are protected from harm and are well cared for at home wherever possible • Workers will have the skills and knowledge to identify issues early in families and to address those issues quickly and effectively in a Strengthening Families way • Families and communities are thriving and resilient and support each other • Vulnerable young people and their families are directly involved in helping themselves and others
<p>SEND Objective: Building confidence and trust so that parents and carers and statutory partners report a positive experience, having ‘told their story once’, and that all partners understand their duties which are clear and transparent</p>
<p>Outcomes we are aiming for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory responsibilities are well understood across all partners and communicated clearly and transparently • Governance arrangements for joint programmes of work are clear and effective across partners • Co-production can be evidenced as meaningful and contributing to improving outcomes for Somerset children and young people with SEND • Children and young people and their parents have the right support, at the right time and in the right place
<p>Priority actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Publish the annual refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) section for SEND. 1.2 Leaders to review the impact of the SEND Strategy 2016-2019 and co-produce a new SEND Strategy 2020-2022. 1.3 Leaders to embed a culture of co-production and develop joint accountability arrangements across key partners, to agree the development of a joint SEND commissioning plan for children and young people with SEND and their families in Somerset. 1.4 Leaders to oversee the implementation of the SEND Improvement Plan (Year 1 Priorities).

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Publication of SEND Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)
- Clear links to JSNA within SCC and CCG commissioning plans
- Publication of refreshed, co-produced SEND Strategy
- Development of a published joint commissioning plan of services
- SEND Improvement Board receiving quarterly reports on progress and impact of SEND improvement plan
- Evidence of co-production and improved experience of families in the annual customer satisfaction and participation surveys

Improvement Priority 2 (IP2):

Ensure there is joint planning and, where appropriate, commissioning of services to meet the needs of those with SEND across the local area, (education, health and care).

Owners: Annette Perrington (SCC) / Lydia Woodward (CCG)

CYPP Theme:

- Every young person will benefit from a broad range of pathways to further learning and employment for their own achievement and economic independence and for the success of the Somerset economy

SEND Objective: Working together across partners, using our data and feedback as an evidence base for action and for more joint commissioning of services where appropriate.

Outcomes we are aiming for:

- Partners take responsibility for routinely sharing information and there is a shared understanding of need and current impact of provision on outcomes across the local area
- New services are co-produced and, wherever possible, jointly commissioned
- SCC and CCG can evidence positive impact of jointly commissioned services for children
- More children and young people with SEND are accessing support when they need it and have their needs met within their local community

Priority improvement actions:

- 2.1 Develop joint quality assurance arrangements across SCC and CCG to ensure high quality service delivery which demonstrates improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.
- 2.2 Develop protocols across SCC and CCG which reflect the Principles of the Code of Practice, to ensure that pathways of support for children and young people with SEND across the 4 broad areas of need² are in place and clearly communicated with families.
- 2.3 Using the 2018 JSNA and customer satisfaction survey results for 2019, identify priority services for review and co-produce jointly commissioned services for 2020-2022.
- 2.4 Develop a joint workforce strategy across SCC and CCG to support development of a joint offer of CPD.

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Publication of SEND Joint Strategic Needs Analysis
- Publication of refreshed, co-produced SEND Strategy
- Publication of pathway protocols
- Annual customer satisfaction survey results indicate improving positive experiences and improving access to services
- Quality assurance arrangements are embedded and can evidence positive impact on improving service delivery

² Cognition and Learning; Communication and Interaction; Social, Emotional and Mental Health; Sensory and/or Physical.

Improvement Priority 3 (IP3):

Ensure there is consistent application of Somerset's strategy for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people at the SEN support stage.

Owner: Claire Oaten (Schools Headteacher)

CYPP Themes:

- Families receive good quality multi-agency help to support parents/carers so risks to children are reduced, reducing the need for high cost, statutory interventions
- Every child will achieve well above expectations and will not be held back by their social and personal backgrounds, special educational needs or disabilities
- All children get the best start in the early years; all pupils can go to a good school and have high aspirations for their future

SEND Objective: Ensuring our children are in education and receiving their full entitlement by both supporting and challenging our providers more.

Outcomes we are aiming for:

- There is evidence of strong setting to setting support
- Referrals for statutory assessment will be appropriate and show a clear graduated response from providers including evidence of early help and SEND support
- Early years, schools and Further Education (FE) settings have the skills and confidence to support most pupils with additional needs within Early Help and/or SEND Support
- There is measurable improvement in progress for children and young people with SEND in line with their peers or better than their peers
- More children and young people with SEND are in full time, high quality, mainstream provision and are having their needs met local to their community
- Children and young people feel heard and supported with successful transitional planning through all phases of education and into adult life

Priority improvement actions:

- 3.1 Develop and publish the “Effective support guidance for children and young people with SEND and their families”, refreshed Core Standards, practitioner guidance and embed revised Early Help Assessment.
- 3.2 Establish support and challenge arrangements with schools to identify and share best inclusive practice and evidence routine use of a graduated approach in schools.
- 3.3 Analyse and publish results from annual school self-evaluation tool (Inclusion Audit) to support early years, schools and FE settings to identify individual improvement actions and to provide strategic oversight for Somerset local area training and development needs for 2020-2021.
- 3.4 Facilitate development of setting to setting support across the Somerset local area for SENCOs, early years, schools and FE settings and wider partners by mapping and building on existing networks and identifying opportunities for neighbourhood/ community support.
- 3.5 Develop support and challenge arrangements with early years and FE settings which facilitates best practice for setting out provision that is ordinarily available and is published on the Local Offer.

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Number of education, health and care assessments which are refused (reducing)
- Number of parents and carers supported by SENDIAS at SEND support (increasing)
- Number of fixed term exclusions, part time timetables and persistent absence (reducing)
- Number of children with EHCPs attending mainstream school in line with best performing areas (proportion increasing)
- Number of schools participating in annual Inclusion Audit (increasing)
- Number of early years, FE and independent school settings with clear SEND offer listed on the Local Offer (increasing)
- Increased confidence in early years, schools and FE settings, as evidenced from the annual customer satisfaction survey (increasing)

Improvement Priority 4 (IP4):

Strengthen the Local Offer from providers to address the inconsistency of experience reported by families.

Owner: Louise Palmer (SCC)**CYPP Themes:**

- Families receive good quality multi-agency help to support parents/carers so risks to children are reduced, reducing the need for high cost, statutory interventions
- Every child will achieve well above expectations and will not be held back by their social and personal backgrounds, special educational needs or disabilities
- All children get the best start in the early years; all pupils can go to a good school and have high aspirations for their future

SEND Objective: Ensuring our children are in education and receiving their full entitlement by both supporting and challenging our providers more.

Outcomes we are aiming for:

- Children and families report that they have the right support, in the right place and at the right time
- Families and practitioners routinely use the Local Offer as their first point of contact to find about local support and services
- Parents know what arrangements and support is ordinarily available at their local school
- More children and young people with SEND are in high quality mainstream provision in line with statistical neighbours

Priority improvement actions:

- 4.1 Ensure the Local Offer is co-produced and compliant with the Code of Practice and establish an agreed auditing schedule to increase the level of awareness and use of the Local Offer website and alternative ways to access support where required.
- 4.2 Schools to publish a SEND Information report which sets out their arrangements for pupil and parental participation, provision which is ordinarily available and is published on the Local Offer, in line statutory requirements

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Schools with clear SEND offer listed on the Local Offer (increasing)
- 100% Schools websites with SEND Information report, SEND Policy and Accessibility Plan, with clear links to the Local Offer
- Annual customer satisfaction survey results indicate Local Offer awareness (increasing)
- Feedback loop from Local Offer is evidencing partner use.

Improvement Priority 5 (IP5):

Improve the time it takes to issue EHC plans and the quality of these plans, ensuring they consistently capture a child and young person's needs and aspirations. Ensure EHCPs are used to support the planning and implementation of education, health and care provision in order to lead to better lived experiences for the child and their families.

Owner: Claire Merchant-Jones (SCC)**CYPP Theme:**

- Every Child will achieve well above expectations and will not be held back by their social and personal backgrounds, special educational needs or disabilities

SEND Objective: Improving quality and timeliness of assessment and decision making to support effective and appropriate provision for CYP with SEND

Outcomes we are aiming for:

- An increasing number of assessments are completed within the 20-week statutory timeframes
- Parents and providers report positive impact of EHCPs on improving outcomes and these are routinely co-produced with children, young people and their families
- Children and young people feel heard and supported with successful transitional planning through all phases of education and into adult life
- Children and young people and their families know early where they will be going to school and report a positive experience of transitions
- Parents, carers and young people are clear about how to request a personal budget to support them to have greater choice

Priority improvement actions:

- 5.1 Ensure partners have structures and monitoring process in place to provide timely assessment advice for education, health and care assessments.
- 5.2 Establish auditing processes across advice givers to ensure accurate identification of need, specifically in relation to 4 broad areas of need and pathways and IP 6 & 7.
- 5.3 Improve the quality of EHC plans (EHCPs) by establishing monthly multi-agency auditing, incorporating relevant aspects of the customer satisfaction survey report.
- 5.4 Establish EHCP reviewing cycles across all early years, schools and FE settings to improve effective transition planning at key phase transfer points implementing the 'Local First' approach.
- 5.5 Increase use of personal budgets to meet the needs of children and young people within their local community, by developing personalised

commissioning.

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Routine provision of high quality, timely advice to support assessments
- Number of assessments and annual reviews and issuing of EHCPs completed within statutory timescales (increasing)
- Number of disputes into Mediation and number of disputes into Tribunal (reducing)
- Number of personal budgets (increasing)
- Number of individual commissioned packages of support within maintained mainstream sector (increasing)
- Number of EHCPs judged in audit as being 'good' or better and evidenced in annual customer satisfaction survey results (increasing)
- Feedback from parents and carers demonstrates that children and young people are well supported during transitions (increasing)

Improvement Priority 6 (IP6):

Address weaknesses in the approach to supporting the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children and young people with SEND who face challenges in relation to their social, emotional and mental health.

Owners: John Dunning (CCG) / Phil Curd (SCC)

CYPP Theme:

- Young people and families are in control and know where to access help and advice to manage their own health & wellbeing
- More children and young people will have good emotional health and wellbeing, are emotionally resilient and equipped to manage their lives
- Children and young people are able to safely manage their long term physical and mental health conditions and disabilities and are supported to manage the transition to adult services if appropriate

SEND Objective: Children and young people receive the right support, in the right place at the right time.

Outcomes we are aiming for:

- Children and families report that they have the right support, in the right place and at the right time
- Children and young people's needs are accurately identified early and support is available where needed
- Parents and carers feel supported and show a higher level of confidence in mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
- Schools within the Trailblazer programme have identified Mental Health and Wellbeing champions

Priority improvement actions:

- 6.1 Further develop local partnership arrangements between mainstream schools, Pupil Referral Units and special schools to coordinate the outreach offer for early help and SEND support for pupils with SEMH needs.
- 6.2 Develop a programme for building emotional resilience with schools and CCG (CAMHS) to support children and young people with SEMH who may be at risk of missing their educational entitlement.
- 6.3 Complete implementation of Mental Health and Wellbeing Champions ("Trailblazer" project) in schools, developing pathways to support early intervention and ensuring these align with effective SEND support and use of a graduated approach.
- 6.4 Co-ordinate information, advice and guidance (including parenting programmes) which is up to date, easily accessible and available on the Local Offer for parents and carers and practitioners.

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Number of children and young people (CYP) accessing new CYP Individual Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services (increasing)
- Percentage of children and young people waiting for community CAMHS (Tier 3) seen within prescribed timescales (increasing)
- Number of Fixed Term Exclusions for pupils in receipt of SEN support/with an EHCP (reducing)
- Positive impact demonstrated through mental health and wellbeing Trailblazer project (increasing)
- Numbers of schools with a Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion (increasing)
- Annual customer satisfaction survey results demonstrate a higher level of confidence in access to information, advice & guidance (increasing)

Improvement Priority 7 (IP7):

Address weaknesses in the identification, assessment, diagnosis and support of those children and young people with autism spectrum disorder.

Owner: Shona Turnbull-Kirk (CCG)/SENIOR EP (SCC TBC)

CYPP Theme:

- Young people and families are in control and know where to access help and advice to manage their own health & wellbeing
- More children and young people will have good emotional health and wellbeing, are emotionally resilient and equipped to manage their lives
- Children and young people are able to safely manage their long term physical and mental health conditions and disabilities and are supported to manage the transition to adult services if appropriate

SEND Objective: Children and young people receive the right support, in the right place at the right time.

Outcomes we are aiming for:

- Children and families report that they have the right support, in the right place and at the right time
- There is a clear graduated offer of information, advice and support for parents/carers and practitioners, including Early Help and Neuro-developmental Pathway.
- Children and young people's needs are accurately identified early and support is available where needed
- Feedback from parents and carers is more consistently positive and shows a higher level of confidence in mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND

Priority improvement actions:

- 7.1 Co-produce an 'all age' ASD Strategy and develop a Neuro-developmental Pathway for children with ADHD, SPLD and Dyspraxia.
- 7.2 Improve access for ASD diagnostic assessment, providing excellent access to services for children and young people and their families.
- 7.3 Develop a clear SEND Support Pathway for children and young people who have features of ASD and Neuro-development needs and their families.
- 7.4 Support education settings to build capacity to identify and support the needs of children and young people with ASD and Neuro-development needs.

KPI's (evidence of impact measured through):

- Number of schools completing Autism Education Training (increasing)
- Number of children and young people (CYP) accessing new CYP Individual Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services (increasing)
- Percentage of children and young people waiting for community CAMHS (Tier 3) seen within prescribed timescales (increasing)
- Waiting times for Community/Neuro Paediatrics and conversion rates for ASD and ADHD (reducing)
- Annual customer satisfaction survey results demonstrate a higher level of confidence in access to information, advice & guidance (increasing)

Annex 1 - Theme Owners

Theme	Owner	Role (Organisation)
IP1	Julian Wooster	Director of Children Services (SCC)
	Sandra Corry	Director of Quality & Nursing (CCG)
IP2	Annette Perrington	Assistant Director, Inclusion (SCC)
	Lydia Woodward	Associate Director, Woman, Children and Maternity Services (CCG)
IP3	Claire Oaten	Headteacher, Greenfylde First School
IP4	Louise Palmer	Strategic Commissioner, Vulnerable Children & Young People (SCC)
IP5	Claire Merchant-Jones	Strategic Manager, SEND (SCC)
IP6	John Dunning	Children's Mental Health Commissioning Lead (CCG)
	Phil Curd	Strategic Manager, Access & Additional Learning Needs (SCC)
IP7	Shona Turnbull-Kirk Senior EP (SCC TBC)	Designated Clinical Officer (CCG)

Annex 2 - Connecting Projects

Co-ordinating improvement for children and young people with SEND and their families across Somerset local area means that all relevant partners must work together. There are a number of connecting projects which have been identified to support improvement. Some projects form part of regulatory requirements on SCC and the CCG, some are internal projects (led by either SCC, SCC with Schools, or the CCG) and some are joint.

- The **DSG recovery plan** is a requirement from the Department of Education (DfE) and is designed to address financial pressures within funding allocations to early years, schools and FE college settings. The DSG recovery plan outlines the capital investment programme³, the 'Local First' approach⁴, and developing partnerships as part of a wider joint project with the CCG and Public Health known as a whole system approach to "building emotional resilience"⁵.
- **Fit for my Future** is a partnership programme for building health and care services of the future to improve the health, wellbeing and life chances of everyone in Somerset.
- The **Improving Lives** programme is designed to deliver better outcomes for residents, communities and businesses of Somerset through a financially sustainable approach to delivering Council services which enables us to do this more often, faster and more joined up with our partners.
- The **Children & Young People's Plan** (CYPP) is a three-year plan to realise the vision of all partners for our children and young people to be happy, healthy and preparing for adulthood. Its key priorities are strengthening families, providing the tools for families to help themselves and intervening early when needed.

³ A programme of investment and building schools to increase local provision of specialist places and appropriate spaces in mainstream settings

⁴ A developing approach to keeping children in local mainstream and special schools and reducing Somerset's reliance on the independent school and college sector for places

⁵ This includes the Mental Health Trailblazer project funded by NHS England