



# **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**Tuesday, 12 December 2023**

**10.00 am**

**Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton  
Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT**

## **SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA**

**To: The members of the Scrutiny Committee - Children and Families**

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

**Agenda Item 7 Education, Health and Care Assessment and Plan  
2022-2023 - Progress update**

PowerPoint presentation (Pages 3 - 12)

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# Special educational needs & disabilities (SEND) progress update

- Improvement activity
- Education, health and care plans (EHCP)

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12 December 2023

Rob Hart (Service Director Inclusion)

Claire Merchant-Jones (Head of SEND)



**Somerset**  
Council

# SEND Revisit – December 2022

Ofsted and CQC judged that the area had made sufficient progress in addressing **seven** of the significant weaknesses identified during the 2020 inspection. Ofsted and CQC judged that the area had not made sufficient progress in addressing **two** of the significant weaknesses identified during the 2020 inspection.

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## **Examples of improvements reported:**

- A strong commitment to working together with partners including families to improve area services.
- Sustained improvements to the timeliness and quality of education, health and care plans.
- An improved autism pathway including a pre-assessment pathway that schools can refer into.
- Development of new enhanced SEND provision within some mainstream schools.

## **Examples of further improvement needed:**

- For those children with an EHC plan, too often they do not receive the provision that is set out in their plan.
- The rate of exclusion from schools in Somerset for children and young people with SEND continues to be too high.
- High rates of repeat suspensions and imposition of long-term part-time timetables was reported.

# Accelerated Progress Plan (APP)

- APP signed off by DfE in May 2023
- Monthly progress reports to SEND Partnership Board
- Six month reviews with DfE and NHSE

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Poor assessment and meeting of need caused by inconsistent practice, leading to poor outcomes for children and young people with SEND					
Action	Steps				Overall status
	B	G	A	R	
Improve consistency of identification and support for children with SEND using the Graduated Response Tool	2	3	0	0	G
Engage with education settings and families to assure delivery of provision in EHC (Education, Health, and Care) plans	1	1	1	2	R
Undertake improvement programme to address mental health service gaps and modernise early intervention offer	3	0	0	1	A
Reduce waiting times for autism assessment of and improve support throughout the assessment process	5	1	0	0	G
Improve the identification of need and provision relating to SEND within social care	3	0	0	0	B
Address sufficiency gaps relating to specialist provision for SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) needs	0	0	3	0	A
Too many children and young people not accessing education because of the disproportionate use of exclusion and poor inclusive practices across the area.					
Action	Steps				Overall status
	B	G	A	R	
Develop and roll out foundations of inclusive practice programme	2	2	0	0	G
Identify up to 60 children most at risk of exclusion/care and co-ordinate targeted intensive multi agency support.	2	1	2	0	A
Use Area Inclusion Partnerships to facilitate multi-agency working to prevent disengagement from education.	1	0	4	1	A
Targeted work with 10-20 schools, to improve systems and support children who are vulnerable to exclusion.	0	2	2	2	A

# What has changed?

## Identifying children who need support

- Inclusion **Advice Line** provides timely support and specialist consultations.
- Inclusion **planning meetings** with every school involving EPs & Access to Inclusion to identify pupils needing support
- Weekly Area Inclusion Discussions (**AID**) to ensure joined-up support is targeted in a timely way. >200 children discussed

**AID – out of 90 identified at risk of exclusion, 84 successfully supported to remain in school.**

## Inclusive practice in schools

- **Somerset Inclusion Tool** has 217 schools signed up.
- The percentage of schools referring to the **Graduated Response Tool** in their SEND information reports has increased from 23% to 50% in the past 6 months.

## The right provision for children who need it

- Annual review process used to check where there are difficulties **delivering provision** in EHCP.
- 9 enhanced learning provisions (ELP) and 1 special school satellite open so far.
- Increased **SEMH places** at Sky Academy and new free school opening in Sept 2024

*Identified high levels of SEMH needs and was helpful as an audit tool as it showed potential gaps in provision and things that could be added.*

The school is putting in place an SEMH co-ordinator (starting in September), along with a Behaviour & Inclusion Lead and an EBSA/ Attendance officer.

*Made us think in more depth around the needs and the value of the provision. Gave time for a pause to stop and think about how we are meeting the needs effectively across the school.*

Used Graduated Response Tool to guide teachers on how to support in the classroom with cognition & learning needs.

*Helped to identify the areas that the school need improving in and the types of provision/support we need to put in place at a universal and SEND support level.*

Time for learning walks, modelling of provision, coaching, additional advice and guidance from specialists.

# EHC Assessments and Plans

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- On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, the number of EHC plans maintained for children and young people living in Somerset was **5,545** – an increase from **4,970** as of October 2022, representing a **11% increase** over one year.
- The number of requests for Education, Health and Care needs assessments has increased this year from **1060** requests for assessments in 2021/22 to **1128** in 22/23. This represents a **6%** increase on the previous year.
- Throughout the past academic year there were **3931 Annual Reviews** submitted and this an increase of **11%** compared to previous year (3529 2021/22).
- During the academic year 2022/23, over **60%** (2378) of Annual Reviews reports submitted requested a change to the plan.
- Decrease in the number of tribunals registered from 203 (2021/22) to 133 (2022/23).

# Funding and placements

- Mainstream and Special Settings receive top-up funding for children through a banding process.
- Banding is based on the assessed needs of individual children EHC plan.
- Settings can access additional funding via costed plans.
- Placement costs for independent/ non-maintained special (INMS) schools are set by the school and on average are around £37k more expensive than a maintained special school/ resource base.
- Following funding consultation in autumn 2023, we are developing proposals to allocate more high needs funding to schools without the need for an EHCP and to make banding more equal between mainstream and special schools.

Banding Rates	Special Schools and Resource bases 2023/24	Mainstream settings 2023/25	Early years settings -hourly rate 2023/25
BAND1	£1,876	£0	£1.01
BAND2	£3,846	£1,307	£1.38
BAND3	£7,786	£2,759	£2.90
BAND4	£12,119	£4,356	£4.59
BAND5	£16,059	£5,807	£6.12
BAND6	£19,999	£7,260	£7.64
BAND7	£26,302	£11,325	£11.92

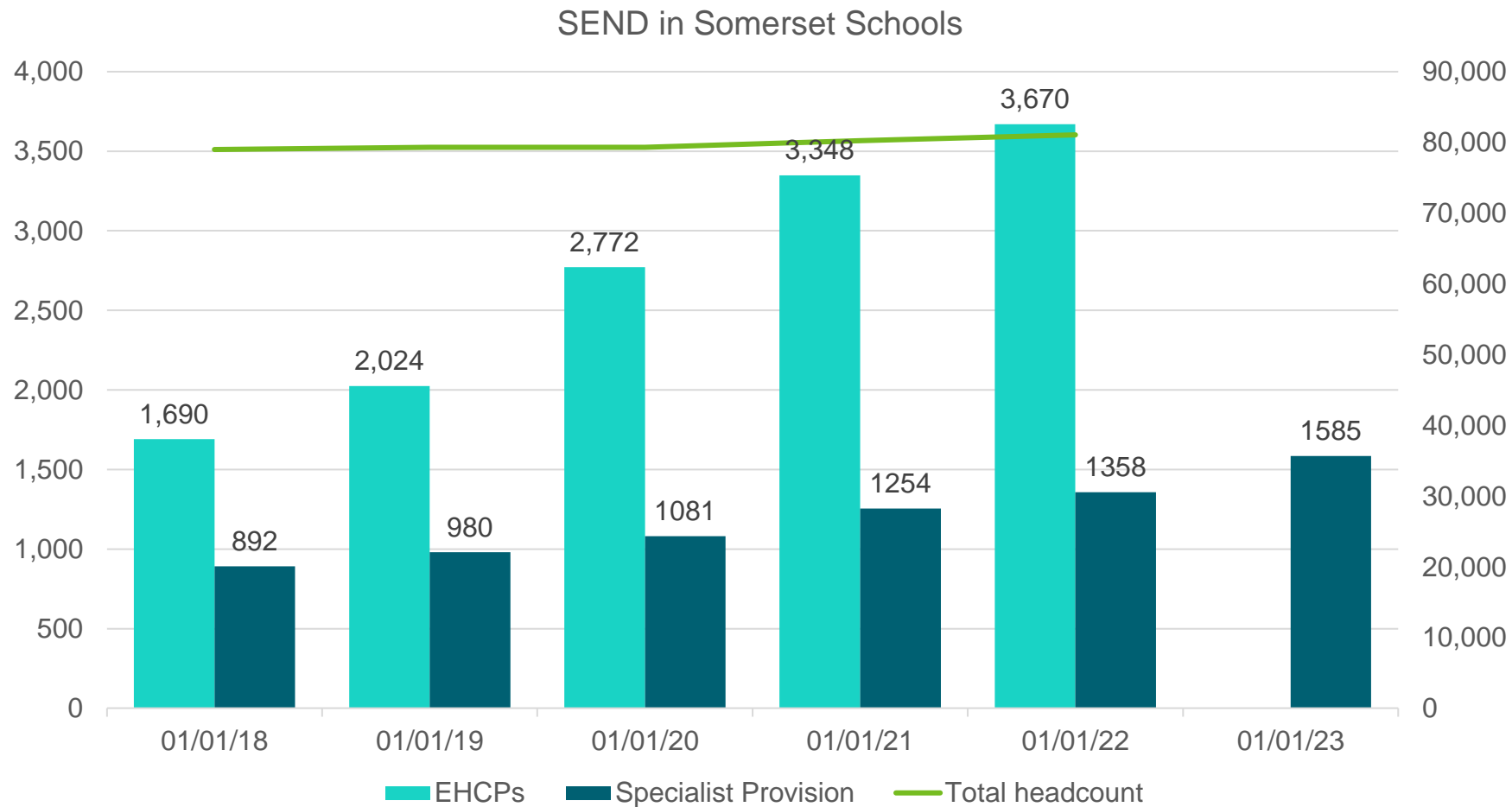


# SEND in Somerset Schools

Since 2018:

- 2.6% increase in total pupil numbers
- 78% increase in pupils in specialist settings

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# LGSCO – Annual Reviews

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In October 2023, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) upheld their complaint in relation to an investigation regarding systemic faults in the Council's administration of annual reviews for pupils with Education, Health and Care plans.

The investigation recognised the exceptional pressure experienced by the service and the difficulty in keeping up with the government expectations but found the Council at fault owing to repeated delays in relation to completing the Annual Review process within the statutory timescales and have issued a set of actions to the Council.

Performance against annual review timeliness will continue to challenge the LA as the number of EHC plans it needs to maintain continues to grow.

## **Activities underway to support improvements:**

- Annual Planning Meetings offered to every school across Somerset to identify children requiring support from specialist LA teams.
- Clarify expectations with schools to ensure that appropriate advice and support in advance of meeting.
- Additional staff in place to process Annual Review reports in a timely way.

# Time for Questions

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