
SEND High Needs Block & Delivering Better Value

Committee considering report:	Scrutiny Commission
Date of Committee:	24 September 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Report Author:	Susan Tanner, Service Director Delivering Better Value. Neil Goddard, Service Director Education & SEND

1. Purpose of the Report

This report provides information on the High Needs Block (HNB) deficit and outlines the work that is being undertaken through the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme and beyond. It covers:

- The nature and the scale of the HNB challenge.
- The trajectory of overspend that has been unmitigated over time.
- The work that is being undertaken during 2024/25 to address HNB spend and wider activity through the DBV programme.
- How this work will continue post 2024/25.

2. Recommendation

To note and comment on the contents of this report and the varied appendices.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	The current (September 2024) unmitigated prediction for HNB spend is £40,895,301 against a budget of £29,488,313 (including Schools Block transfer). Combined with the existing deficit from previous years of £9,528,516, this gives a potential cumulative deficit of £20,939,248 at the end of 2024-25. Initial projections show this continuing to increase in coming years,

	<p>potentially reaching £65m at the end of the 2028-29 financial year.</p> <p>The DBV programme is supported by a grant of £1m, paid in four quarters from April 2024.</p>			
Human Resource:	<p>The DBV grant has enable West Berkshire to bring in additional resource for a fixed period of up to one year. These posts are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBV Service Director • DBV Programme Manager • DBV Participation and Engagement Officer • DBV Data Analyst. 			
Legal:	Not required at this time.			
Risk Management:	<p>There is significant financial risk to the council as the existing condition that permits a statutory override on balances relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant is due to expire on 31/03/26 thus transferring the forecast deficit on High Needs Block to the council balance sheet.</p>			
Property:	N/A			
Policy:	N/A			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		X		

<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>		X		
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>		X		
<p>Health Impact:</p>		X		
<p>ICT Impact:</p>		X		
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>		X		
<p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p>		X		
<p>Core Business:</p>		X		<p>The DBV Programme is a transformational project, which is expected to have an impact on the delivery of core business.</p>
<p>Data Impact:</p>		X		
<p>Consultation and Engagement:</p>	<p>Key system partners are members of the SEND Strategic Improvement Board and Implementation/ Task groups.</p> <p>School representation on Task Groups provide operational input and regular updates are provided to Schools' Forum and the Heads Funding Group.</p> <p>The Parent Carer Forum is re-established and a representative sits on the SEND Strategic Improvement Board and DBV Task Group and is supported by the Participation and Engagement Manager and Strategy Officer.</p> <p>West Berkshire has sought to work with children, families, and Local Area partners throughout the DBV Programme. It is important to note that the Parent Carer Forum and Youth Forum have recently been reformed and are in the early stages of activity.</p>			

	A Communications Plan has been launched to support the delivery of the DBV Programme and ensure wider engagement with all sectors of the community.
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4. Executive Summary

This report draws together information on the High Needs Block and the work that is being undertaken, through the DfE Delivering Better Value initiative. Future activity is captured in the 'Innovation is SEND' delivery plan which is aligned to the West Berkshire's SEND strategy.

5. Supporting Information

High Needs Block (HNB)

- 5.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced fund that finances expenditure on schools, early years and supporting children and young people with additional needs. It is made up of four elements:
 - Schools Block (SB)
 - Early Years Block (EB)
 - Central Schools Services Block (CSSB)
 - High Needs Block (HNB)
- 5.2 Should a Local Authority finish the financial year with an overspend or underspend in the DSG, this is carried forward and offset against future allocations.
- 5.3 Further detailed information on the High Needs Block can be found in the briefing at Appendix 1 of this paper.
- 5.4 There is a High Needs Block Deficit Management Plan, produced for the DfE, that can be found at Appendix 1a of this paper.

6. Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV)

- 6.1 West Berkshire is one of 55 local authorities that are part of DBV. The aim of the programme is to support local authorities and their local area partners to improve the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability.
- 6.2 Further detailed information on the work of the DBV programme can be found in the Corporate Board update for September 2024 at Appendix 2 of this paper.

7. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024-29

71. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-29 sets out the priorities WBC will be focussing on over the next five years. This is attached at Appendix 3.
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- 7.2 There is a robust delivery plan – covering the work set out in the SEND and Inclusion Strategy incorporating the work required through the DBV Programme (this combined work is referred to as Innovation in SEND). This plan sets out the actions we will take, when we will take them and the improvements we expect to see as a result. This is attached at Appendix 4 of this paper.
- 7.3 The Delivery Plan for Innovation in SEND is intended to be a dynamic document and will continue to be updated each year, with new actions and timescales. It will be the vehicle through which we continue to manage and mitigate the pressures on the HNB.

8. Other options considered

The Council was required to engage in the Delivering Better Value Programme. It is not an option for WBC to fail to address the HNB deficit recovery given the consequences relating to the removal of the statutory over-ride

9. Appendices

- HNB Briefing – Appendix 1
 - HNB Deficit Management Plan – Appendix 1a
 - DBV Progress Report 3 Corporate Board September 2024 – Appendix 2
 - WBC SEND and Inclusion Strategy – Appendix 3
 - Innovation in SEND Delivery Plan – Appendix 4
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West Berkshire High Needs Block Pressures

Dedicated Schools Grant

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ringfenced Department for Education (DfE) grant that funds local authorities for their expenditure on schools, early years and supporting children and young people with additional needs.

The DSG is made up of four elements as follows (2024/25 West Berkshire allocation for each element shown in brackets):

- Schools Block (SB) – Funding that is passed directly to schools based on a nationally mandated formula. Maintained schools funding comes to the local authority to distribute, academies funding is top sliced by DfE and distributed centrally (£134.019m)
- Early Years Block (EYB) – Funding for Early Years settings and providers, local authorities can retain a maximum of 5% for early years support services (£17.977m)
- Central Schools Services Block (CSSB) – Funding for LAs to conduct central functions on behalf of pupils in state-funded maintained schools and academies, for example school admissions (£0.961m)
- High Needs Block (HNB) - Funding to support provision for pupils and students with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) who require additional resources to participate in education and learning (£29.081m)

Should a Local Authority finish the financial year with an overspend or underspend in the DSG, this is carried forward and offset against future allocations.

High Needs Block Pressures

In recent years, many local authorities have found that the funding provided through the HNB element of the DSG is insufficient to meet the assessed needs of children and young people in their areas. As a result, over half of all local authorities are reporting a deficit in their HNB, and the total deficit held by local authorities is projected to be more than £3.6bn by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.

There are many contributory factors that have led to this pressure, these include:

- Level of Needs - The rate of increase in identified need is significantly higher than the increase in budgets made available to local authorities across the country.
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- Complexity of Need - The complexity of high needs services demanded by more and more children and their parents has increased significantly in recent years.
- Supply of Places - The provision of places that can meet the needs of increasingly complex cases is insufficient, with investment in the creation of new places not keeping pace with demand.
- Increased use of Independent Provision – Due to the insufficiency in the number high needs places, local authorities are having to make increasing use of costly independent providers
- Post-16 Extension to 25 – National policy changes expanded the age range of pupils with SEND who must be supported from 18 to 25. The funding identified to support this change has proven to be insufficient.
- Impact on Exclusions – More children, both primary and secondary, are being excluded from school due to behavioural issues. There is an inconsistent approach to inclusion across schools and academies, with a small numbers of schools accounting for high numbers of exclusions.
- Mental Health and links to Health Service – The Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) that sets out a pupil needs, should be jointly owned by education, social care, and health services. Due to the level of budget and other pressures in the NHS, services such and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are unable to keep up with demand. Local authorities have also struggled to secure contributions from health services towards meeting needs.

Government Response

The previous Government recognised the pressures that local authorities faced in relation to the HNB, and put in place a number of interim measures that offer support:

- Statutory Override - The Local Authorities Capital Finance and Accounting (England) Regulations that became law at the end of November 2020, allowed councils to hold the accumulated HNB deficit in a negative reserve that is disregarded in terms of financial sustainability.

These arrangements were put in place initially for a period ending 31st March 2023, however, in December 2022 these were extended for a further one-off period of three years up to 31 March 2026.

Many councils (51%) are now in a position where, if the statutory override were removed, and the HNB deficit returned to their balance sheet, they

would immediately become insolvent.

- Delivering Better Value (DBV) – DBV aims to help local councils and partners improve their support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and to ensure these are sustainable.

The programme does this by:

- identifying changes that will make the biggest difference in getting better outcomes
 - supporting the council to use their resources in the most efficient way
 - providing limited additional grant funding to support this work
 - regular monitoring of progress by DfE to assess impact.
- Safety Valve Agreements (SVA) – SVA are used in areas where the HNB deficit has grown to an unsustainable level. These formal agreements are made between DfE and the council, with DfE providing additional funding on the basis that the council take immediate actions to reduce future costs.

The scope and scale of the actions required has come under scrutiny due to the impact these could have on local schools and the medium to longer term impact these may have on services.

A number of SVA have been suspended as the actions that have been taken have either not delivered the level of savings anticipated or have been undeliverable due to the wider impact on the system.

The new Government is yet to make a formal comment on how it intends to address the ongoing pressures in the HNB. It is anticipated that any proposals will be included in the Autumn 2024 budget statement.

West Berkshire Position

West Berkshire ended the 2023/24 financial year with an accumulated HNB deficit of £9.5m.

A further deficit of £5.5m is projected for the financial year 2024/25, increasing the accumulated deficit to £15m.

Initial projections show this continuing to increase in coming years, potentially reaching £65m at the end of 2028/29 financial year.

The pressures that have led to this position are very much in line with the national issues highlighted above. These include an increase in the number of pupils requiring support, an increase in the complexity of the needs being identified and insufficient specialist-maintained places to accommodate all pupils requiring support.

The number of children with an EHCP has increased by almost 50% since 2020, from 1032 to 1538. Over the same period, the number permanent exclusions schools made annually have almost tripled. However, funding through the HNB has increased by just 34%.

West Berkshire is fortunate to have high quality local provision to meet the needs of pupils with SEND in the form of two outstanding maintained special schools and a high quality, innovative maintained Alternative Provision (AP) provider. There are also ten resourced units attached to mainstream schools providing specialist placements. However, despite increases in capacity in recent years, all these places are currently full.

Many schools are inclusive and collaborate effectively with the local authority to ensure the needs of all children are met. However, a small number of schools are generating a disproportionate number of exclusions, with one secondary academy accounting for almost half of all permanent exclusions

The provision for pupils not in a formal school place is limited, too many pupils are not receiving a full-time education and are waiting too long for a suitable place to become available.

Services have been developed to support schools to be inclusive and meet higher levels of need without requiring additional support. However, these have come under pressure due to staffing shortages, most notably a reduction in Educational Psychology capacity from 11FTE to 1.6FTE. More broadly, the increased pressure on services has not been reflected in increased capacity and so work is having to be prioritised, with some services paused or ceased.

There is currently limited specialist commissioning capacity available to support SEND services. This has a significant impact on the council's ability to plan effectively and engage with the market, leading to increased costs and further lack of sufficiency.

A permanent senior staffing structure has now been implemented, and a full review of structures and capacity is being undertaken with an expectation of a full implementation in April 2025.

Beyond this, a range of actions are being taken to address the current pressures, these include:

- Further targeted investment to increase local SEND place numbers in both mainstream and specialist settings, through effective sufficiency planning.
 - Review of pupil funding banding arrangements
 - Maintained investment in services to support inclusive approaches in schools
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West Berkshire Council

- Increased scrutiny of placement decisions to ensure value for money
- Scrutiny of health contributions to placement costs
- Increased challenge to schools where exclusions could be avoided, and the provision of mental health support to all schools to support them in avoiding exclusions

The council has also entered the DfE DBV scheme. This has provided resource to review current practices and the outcomes that are delivered, to identify ways in which resources could be deployed more effectively. The areas of focus of DBV include:

- Development and implementation of a SEND and Inclusion Strategy
 - Development of a detailed SEND sufficiency Strategy
 - Increase in participation and co-production activity, including a co-production charter
 - Definition and design of an effective commissioning function for SEND
 - A banding review
 - Transitions support (to prevent need for EHCPs at key education transitions)
 - Mental Health support for schools
 - High-cost Placements Review and a resetting of the process and systems in place to oversee such placements.
 - A detailed review of the services and support available to children and families below statutory levels, to enhance support and reduce requests for statutory assessment. This includes services and support provided by health services and other partnership agencies.
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HNB Deficit Management Plan

High needs recoupment place figures

All the below relate to the SEN/special schools column only

Resourced provision or SEN units placements

		outturn data	outturn data	outturn data
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1.0.2	1.0.2 High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget (Primary)	£101,783	£108,092	£111,750
1.0.2	1.0.2 High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget (Secondary)	£631,052	£672,575	£707,750
1.0.2	1.0.2 High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget (Early years)	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure		£732,834	£780,667	£819,500

Maintained special schools or special academies placements

		outturn data	outturn data	outturn data
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1.0.2	1.0.2 High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure		£0	£0	£0

Hospital schools or alternative provision (AP) placements

		outturn data	outturn data	outturn data
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1.0.2	1.0.2 High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget (AP/PRUs)	£0	£0	£0
Total expenditure		£0	£0	£0

Post-16 and further education (FE) placements

Please note, this is not included in line 1.0.2 but the recoupment amount is in 1.10.2 recoupment figure

		outturn data	outturn data	outturn data
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
1.10.2	High needs place funding within Individual Schools Budget (Post-16 and FE)	£810,000	£798,000	£782,000
Total expenditure		£810,000	£798,000	£782,000

Total High Needs Recoupment

		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total expenditure		£1,542,834	£1,578,667	£1,601,500

DBV Progress Report 3 Corporate Board September 2024

Delivering Better Value Programme Update

Committee considering report:	Corporate Board
Date of Committee:	10/09/2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Heather Codling
Date Head of Service agreed report: <i>(for Corporate Board)</i>	AnnMarie Dodds 03/09/24
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	03/09/24
Report Author:	Susan Tanner, Service Director DBV Hester Collicutt, DBV Programme Manager
Forward Plan Ref:	

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report is to provide the **third** update on the Delivering Better Value Programme (DBV) and its impact on the SEND system in West Berkshire to Corporate Board.

1.2 The report is updated regularly so that the Board is informed of progress in the delivery of the programme and its impact in improving outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs/Disabilities and the programme's contribution to successfully reducing the High Needs Block deficit by transforming the delivery of SEND support in West Berkshire.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 It is recommended that Corporate Board notes the progress made.

3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary													
<p>Financial:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DBV Programme is supported by a grant of £1 million paid in 4 quarters, from April 2024. • Each DBV grant payment is subject to a detailed quarterly report being submitted to the DfE measuring progress against key milestones. • West Berkshire has received the first two quarters of funding – Quarter 1 - £262,499 <div style="text-align: center;">Quarter 2 - £262,499</div> <p>DBV Projected Savings: Jan 2024</p> <p>The figures below come from the DSG Management Plan 2023-2024, submitted to the DfE on 19 Feb 2024 and signed off by Section 151 Officer, Joseph Holmes. They show the anticipated cost savings between 2025-2028. (N.B. DBV cost savings are not accounted for in the year 2024-2025 as this will allow time for programme implementation and evaluation).</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Description of DBV Diagnostic initiatives*</th> <th rowspan="2">What it involves</th> <th colspan="3">Potential in-year financial impact (£'000s)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>2025-6</th> <th>2026-7</th> <th>2027-8</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <p>1.GAP analysis to inform Local Provision /Need</p> </td> <td> <p>Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child can be achieved without the need for an EHCP.</p> </td> <td style="text-align: center;">-£72,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-£123,000</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-£123,000</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Description of DBV Diagnostic initiatives*	What it involves	Potential in-year financial impact (£'000s)			2025-6	2026-7	2027-8	<p>1.GAP analysis to inform Local Provision /Need</p>	<p>Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child can be achieved without the need for an EHCP.</p>	-£72,000	-£123,000	-£123,000
Description of DBV Diagnostic initiatives*	What it involves			Potential in-year financial impact (£'000s)										
		2025-6	2026-7	2027-8										
<p>1.GAP analysis to inform Local Provision /Need</p>	<p>Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child can be achieved without the need for an EHCP.</p>	-£72,000	-£123,000	-£123,000										

	2 Ensuring Sufficiency	Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in INMSS at a more effective average unit cost	-£54,000	-£93,000	-£93,000
			-£21,000	-£37,000	-£37,000
		Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child through Alternative Provision rather than INMSS			
	3 Financial Sustainability	Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in MSS at a more effective average unit cost	-£311,000	-£533,000	-£533,000
	4 Supporting Inclusive Practice	Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in a Mainstream setting rather than MSS	-£214,000	-£367,000	-£367,000
		Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in a Mainstream setting rather than INMSS	-£292,000	-£500,000	-£500,000
		Potential in-year financial impact (£'000s)	Potential in-year financial impact (£'000s)	Potential in-year financial impact (£'000s)	

		2025-6	2026-7	2027-8
	TOTAL	-£964,000	£1,653,000	£1,653,000
	<p>The revised DSG plan (July 2024) indicates that there are two key updates since February:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) 23-24 outturn figures confirmed 2) 24-25 budget confirmed <p>The DBV team reviewed the clawback request presented to the Schools Forum in December 2023 and recommended that this be re-considered by the Schools Forum meeting in June 2024. Balances over 10% have been agreed (subject to scrutiny by finance/audit/education) to be clawed back from schools, excluding current commitments. The value of this is to be confirmed but will be added to the deficit management template once confirmed.</p> <p>However, the estimated mitigated deficit by the end of 27-28 has increased from £61.4m to £65.9m.</p>			
Human Resource:	<p>The DBV Programme is delivered by staff under contract for up to 1 year, funded by the DBV grant. All HR resourcing is supported by Rebecca Hopkins, Talent Attraction Business Partner, and reviewed by Lisa Potts, Finance Manager.</p> <p>Fixed term interim staff in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBV Service Director • DBV Programme Manager • DBV Commissioning Consultant • DBV Data Analyst • DBV Participation and Engagement officer <p>All these roles were identified in the bid submission and are key for the successful delivery of the project.</p> <p>DBV spend on HR is reviewed quarterly by Finance and the DfE to ensure costings remain within budget.</p>			

Legal:	This is not required at this time.			
Risk Management:	Please see section 5.5-5.10			
Property:	Not applicable			
Policy:	<p>The DBV Programme is a national policy, involving 55 Local Authorities. The aim of the programme is to support local authorities and their local area partners to improve the delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability.</p> <p>The DBV Programme is a core element of the overall SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 in West Berkshire.</p> <p>It focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing statutory spend through early identification of need and targeted intervention whilst at SEND support. • Reducing the requirement for EHC assessments as presenting needs will be better addressed in a timely way. • Developing increased capacity in specialist-maintained school provision and alternative provision thereby reducing the need to place CYP in Independent non maintained special schools with the associated high unit cost of placement. 			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	X			The DBV Programme is required to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

<p>B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?</p>	<p>X</p>			<p>The purpose of the DBV Programme is improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND by improving timely access to services, interventions, and appropriate levels of funding.</p>
<p>Environmental Impact:</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<p>Health Impact:</p>	<p>x</p>			<p>Health, are involved in co-commissioning activities, including contributions to high-cost placements. The Chief Nursing Officer- Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, ICB Director for Berkshire West Place, and the Designated Clinical Officer are members of the SEND Strategic Improvement Board.</p>
<p>ICT Impact:</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<p>Digital Services Impact:</p>	<p>x</p>			<p>Digital services are being reviewed and systems updated as part of the DBV Programme e.g. Refreshing of Local Offer and SEND data management systems</p>

<p>Council Strategy Priorities:</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority: 1. Services We Are Proud of – goals and key milestones/initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1.1. Good quality public services for all (compared to similar local authorities in England) – <i>ensuring SEND statutory services continue to be delivered effectively - positive.</i> - 1.5. Strong budgetary control, use of resources and initiatives to maximise financial efficiency -<i>close accountability of High Needs Block and management of Deficit Management Plan - positive</i> - 15.1. Always aiming for investments that save money / generate revenue and provide a benefit to our community – <i>Capacity development in Local provision – positive impact.</i> • Priority: 2.A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2.5.1. Prioritise funding to reduce wait times for children’s mental health services - <i>Targeted support on all schools to support Mental Health – positive impact.</i> - 2.5.2. Conduct a full review of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) capacity and model in West Berkshire - <i>Development of Sufficiency Strategy – positive impact.</i>
<p>Core Business:</p>				<p>The DBV Programme is a transformational project, which is expected to have an impact on core business.</p>

Data Impact:				The programme includes significant activity to create a SEND data dashboard which facilitate better oversight of performance.
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>Key system partners are members of the SEND Strategic Improvement Board and Implementation/ Task groups.</p> <p>School representation on Task Groups provide operational input and regular updates are provided to Schools' Forum and the Heads Funding Group.</p> <p>The Parent Carer Forum is re-established and a representative sits on the SEND Strategic Improvement Board and DBV Task Group and is supported by the Participation and Engagement Manager and Strategy Officer.</p> <p>West Berkshire has sought to work with children, families, and Local Area partners throughout the DBV Programme. It is important to note that the Parent Carer Forum and Youth Forum have recently been reformed and are in the early stages of activity.</p> <p>A Communications Plan has been launched to support the delivery of the DBV Programme and ensure wider engagement with all sectors of the community.</p>			

4. Executive Summary

- 4.1 The DBV Programme is beginning to have an impact on the outcomes for children and young people with SEND (in the longer term this will impact the overarching Deficit Management Plan to reduce spend of the High Needs Block) ensuring a sustainable service delivery for SEND provision in West Berkshire.
 - 4.2 This is a transformation programme that will support systems reviews of SEND activities and ensure that SEND Commissioning is effective in meeting the current and future demands of the local population, and in doing so, improve long term outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The DBV programme provides the first year's focus of activities to address the six propriety areas of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy, "**Innovation in SEND**", which will be delivered between 2024 – 2029.
 - 4.3 This paper highlights progress being made towards this, and in addition, the current risks to delivery and the mitigations in place.
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- 4.4 The current risks and mitigations are identified in section 5.5 to 5.10. If there is a delay in implementation of the DBV Programme, then there will be an impact on the High Need Block Deficit Management Plan.

5. Supporting Information

5.1 Introduction

This report outlines the progress of the DBV Programme since confirmation of funding from the Department for Education (DfE) in April 2024.

5.2 Background/Progress to date

Since April the DBV Programme and its governance has become fully aligned and incorporated into the new SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 to 2029 to ensure the overarching delivery of the “Innovation in SEND” programme in West Berkshire

West Berkshire is required to provide formal quarterly progress update to the DfE. The quarterly reporting cycle to the DfE is as follows: -

- **April to June by 5th July – submitted and approved by the DfE.**
- July to Sept by 4th October
- October to December by 10th January
- January to March by 4th April

The four working Groups of the DBV Programme meet monthly during term time and tasks have been instigated according to the DBV Programme Plan and incorporated into the SEND and Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan 2024-2029.

- a) The Parent and Carer Forum is engaged at a strategic level, sitting on the **SEND Strategic Improvement Board (SSIB)** which is chaired by the Executive Director of Children’s Services, and whose membership includes the Chief Executive for West Berkshire, the Lead Member for Children’s Services and Education, Chief Nursing Officer for the ICB and the ICB Place Director (Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire -BOB).
 - b) To further support communication with parents and carers, West Berkshire has invested in the **Coram Parent Champion Programme**. The Parent Champion programme extends our ability to engage with parents and carers during the remaining months of the DBV programme supporting the Gap Analysis /SEND Local Offer and the Inclusive Practice workstreams.
 - c) A **SEND Strategic Communications Plan** has now been adopted. It encompasses both work under the DBV Programme and the wider SEND and Inclusion Strategy under the collective strapline: “**Innovation in SEND**”. The draft Communications Plan includes an ‘[Innovation in SEND](#)’ blog / web page where we host all updates on DBV.
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- d) DBV working groups meet monthly in term time to scrutinise the delivery of the programme and regular reports are submitted to Schools Forum and Heads Funding Group.
- e) Key temporary posts have been filled to manage the delivery of the programme, increasing the capacity of the existing teams whilst system changes are implemented. However, some recruitment has been more difficult and has caused delay e.g. the “**Whole School Mental Health Project**” where the project has been delayed by 5-6 months. The DfE has agreed DBV grant funding can be used beyond 31 March 2025 until July 2025 on delayed projects.
- f) The “**Whole School Mental Health Project**” has been redesigned as it was reliant on Educational Psychologists (EPs) to deliver the programme. Due to retention challenges Educational Psychology time is limited and must be prioritised in other areas. A revised, evidenced based programme has been commissioned from an external provider. The delivery of the programme will be led by the Virtual School Team and will work closely with 10 schools to develop a pilot. The pilot, if successful, can be expanded and will complement the current provision available for schools.

The programme is designed to meet West Berkshire’s aims to:

- Develop the capacity of schools to support children and young people through whole school and targeted approaches to emotional well-being.
- Improve outcomes for all children in mainstream schools and particularly the most vulnerable
- Reduce permanent exclusion and suspension
- Increase attendance
- Reduce the need for alternative provision and use of out of area high cost placements

In addition, all mainstream schools will have access to an online learning platform to support Mental Health identification and good practice.

- g) The **Transitions Support Programme** Summer Term 2024 supported Early Years transition into Foundation 2, for September 2024. This will be continued into the Autumn Term 2024 to ensure vulnerable children are successfully supported into their mainstream placement. It is expected that it will build the confidence of receiving schools in their ability to meet need. An **Early Years Transitions Guidance** into mainstream schools will be published in the Autumn.
 - h) The Key Stage 2/3 Transitions Programme has been co-produced with schools (Primary and Secondary SENCOs and Year 7 teachers). A **West Berkshire Schools’ Guidance for a Successful Primary to Secondary Transition** will be published in October 2024. This is a good practice guide for schools to adopt when supporting transitions for vulnerable children moving between primary and secondary mainstream.
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- i) Pupil level data has been reviewed to enable the identification of mainstream Year 6 pupils most likely to require additional support at transition. Targeted interventions will be available for these children to ensure as many as possible successfully transition into their secondary mainstream school.
- j) The first months of the DBV Programme have focused on ensuring systems are in place to drive sustainable, evidenced based improvements in supporting children and young people with SEND, delivering cost effective solutions that meet SEND needs locally and that are co-produced with local partners and families. Work on SEND Data Management has informed the development of a **Sufficiency Plan, data dashboards** and a clearer financial overview of placements in Independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS). This is bringing together teams from within the Council to align their work and is informing sufficiency, financial scrutiny, and commissioning developments. This will be an area of focus over the coming months.
- k) Phase 1 of a SEND funding review focussing on levels of funding available for children and young with SEND was completed at the end of August 2024 (a paper on this will come to a future Corporate Board). This was a desk top exercise to understand and benchmark current practices. Phase 2 will commence in September and will establish a working group of school leaders and Local Authority officers to co-develop a revised funding system. The working group will develop:
- a shared understanding of the range and levels of needs across West Berkshire settings and schools and how that compares with other areas
 - a clear and consistent graduated approach to meeting needs across the local area
 - a transparent and equitable system of SEND funding and resource allocation across West Berkshire
 - identification and development of changes to the current SEND system
 - improvement in the quality and clarity of EHCPs
 - evidencing the impact of resourcing on children and young people's outcomes
- l) A review of statutory decision-making processes has been undertaken to ensure transparency, consistency, and value for money. Any changes in process will be managed through consultation and updated on the local offer. A High-Cost Placement Review has been undertaken and is informing work around joint decision making in relation to Social Care, Education and Health Placements.
- m) A cross-agency gap analysis has been completed in relation to the Universal and Targeted Offer in West Berkshire in conjunction with health colleagues – e.g. review of the support available around Autism, pre and post diagnosis. “A plan on a page” for available services will be published on the Local Offer.
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This is in response to issues raised by parents and practitioners regarding clarity of support available and referral pathways published on the Local Offer. Gaps in offers are being identified and will be commissioned or co-commissioned as necessary. The Local Offer will be updated to reflect these developments. However the changing of the Local Offer platform and the limited resourcing of Local Offer administration may delay this.

- n) An audit of schools' training needs has been undertaken and an evaluation of current LA support services is being completed to ensure evidence-based impact can be demonstrated.

Next Steps

The Sufficiency Plan will be finalised and will inform SEND school place capacity development. This is a priority as it will reduce the need to place children and young people in Independent Non-Maintained high-cost placements. Capital bids have been submitted for 2025 – 2035 and a request has been made to ensure flexible funding is secured for future capital development to meet SEND requirements over the next 10 years.

Through a review of SEND systems, it is evident that there is reduced capacity in the SEND Team to undertake timely Annual Reviews or prioritise Annual Reviews at points of transfer. A previous council request to fund this activity was declined. The absence of annual reviews does not meet statutory requirements and directly impacts on children's and young people's outcomes, placement requests, tribunal outcomes and demand for high-cost Independent non-maintained placements. A business case will be submitted for additional resources to support the business-as-usual processing of Annual Reviews.

The Local Offer needs updating and ongoing monitoring to ensure that it continues to meet service user requirements. Current resourcing is not adequate to address this in a timely fashion. It is hoped that DBV grant can be used to provide some additional resource in the interim, whilst an assessment is made of the longer-term requirement for additional resource.

Challenges

Co-production is at the centre of this programme; however, the Parent Carer Forum consists of very few parents and therefore continues to have very limited capacity to engage with the DBV programme. However, through the work with Coram Parent Champion Programme, a wider group of parents and carers is being engaged.

Relationships with some schools have been more challenging whilst the "claw back" process for excess balances is being reviewed. Restoring these relationships will be a priority for officers in Autumn 2024 to ensure schools feel supported whilst undergoing Part 2 of the Banding Review. This will be co-produced with school heads and senior management, which will support understanding and engagement as we move forward with the process.

Significant staff changes in the SEND Team have added additional capacity pressures in the service. A restructure is scheduled and there are arrangements in place to ensure limited disruption in line management etc. whilst the review is being undertaken.

6. Other options considered.

No other options are currently being considered at this time.

7. Conclusion

The DBV Programme is proceeding at pace and is broadly in line with the delivery schedule, but the anticipated risks will impact on delivery time and the Programme may run beyond March 2025 in certain areas, with DfE agreement.

8. Appendices

None

SEND & Inclusion Strategy

West Berkshire Council SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 Innovation in SEND



Children with SEND receive the right support, adjustments, and interventions, at the right time, to thrive in childhood and to prepare well for adulthood.



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Foreword

It is our privilege to introduce West Berkshire's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and Inclusion Strategy. This document represents a commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and equitable environment for all children and young people in our community. It is grounded in our belief that every child, regardless of their abilities or needs, deserves access to high-quality education and support affording them the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Over the past year, we have engaged in extensive consultations with families, educators, healthcare professionals, and community organisations. Their insights have been invaluable, and we are grateful for the time and passion they have invested in shaping this strategy. It is through these collaborative efforts that we can truly understand and address the diverse needs of our children.

The strategy outlines a clear vision: to create an inclusive landscape where barriers to success are removed, and all children feel valued and supported. It is not just about meeting statutory obligations; it is about embracing a culture of inclusion that permeates every aspect of our support and education system. This means ensuring that our schools are equipped with the resources, training, and support necessary to provide tailored educational experiences. It also means fostering a community where differences are celebrated, and every child's contribution is recognised.

Our approach is underpinned by a set of core principles: collaboration, early intervention, person-centred planning, supporting children close to where they live and maximising independence. By working together across all sectors, we can identify and respond to needs more effectively, ensuring that children receive the right support at the right time. Early intervention is crucial in preventing difficulties from escalating and helping children achieve better long-term outcomes.

This strategy builds on the priorities of West Berkshire in its Council Strategy 2023-27;

- Services we are proud of
- A fairer West Berkshire with opportunities for all
- Tackling climate and ecological emergency
- A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire
- Thriving communities with strong local voice.

We are confident that this strategy accompanied by its delivery plan will serve as a robust framework for enhancing the experiences of children with SEND. It is a living document, designed to evolve as we learn and grow together. We urge all stakeholders to engage with it actively and work in unison to bring our vision to life.

Thank you for your dedication to this vital work.



Cllr. Heather Codling

Portfolio Holder – Children, Education and Young People's Services



AnnMarie Dodds

Executive Director (People - Children's Services)



What the Council and Local Area must do for children and young people with SEND

In West Berkshire, we believe that Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is everyone's business, which means that everyone has a key role to play to ensure that children and young people with SEND, and their families, receive the support they need. Our vision for what we would like SEND Services to look like in West Berkshire is:

Children with SEND receive the right support, adjustments, and interventions, at the right time, to thrive in childhood and to prepare well for adulthood.

The SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 outlines the priorities we will be working on over the next five years and has been written in response to the information gathered as part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme (a programme run by the Department for

Education (DfE) to support Local Authorities, and their partners, to improve the delivery of SEND Services for children and young people whilst working to ensure that funding remains available to deliver these services) and the SEND Review which took place in 2023 (where we completed a review of the provision in West Berkshire, met with parents/carers, schools nurseries and voluntary providers and completed a young person's survey)

Why do we need a SEND & Inclusion Strategy?

The Children and Families Act (2014) applied major changes to the way in which Local Authorities and their partners (e.g. education, health and care) help and support children and young people with SEND and their families.

Part 3 of the Children and Families Act (2014) outlines the legal responsibilities of Local Authorities, Education, Health and Care providers in relation to the provision of care and support for children and young people with SEND and their families, it also details the formal processes which must be followed in providing this care and support.

Under the Equality Act (2010), education providers have a legal duty to ensure they do not discriminate against children and young people with SEND; ensuring that all pupils, including those with SEND, are involved in every aspect of school life and that adjustments should be made to the way settings teach pupils to allow for this.

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) is legal guidance which organisations who work with children and young people with SEND and their families must follow. It outlines core principles and provides guidance on how to work within legal frameworks to best support children and young people with SEND.

Having a SEND & Inclusion Strategy is important because it:

- Allows us to clearly see the impact our work is having on children and young people with SEND and their families.
- Clearly shows what our co-produced priorities are which supports with decision making.
- Gives direction within the local area, ensuring stakeholders are working together within the legal frameworks to deliver the identified priorities.
- It provides a focus for leaders.
- It allows us to monitor our progress against what we said we would do.

Governance


West Berkshire's SEND & Inclusion Strategy will be delivered in partnership by the Council, the Integrated Care Board (ICB), health providers, schools and other voluntary and community services and will be implemented using the principles of co-production.

The Council has overall responsibility for the delivery of the strategy and progress will be monitored by the SEND Operational Partnership Board and SEND Strategic Improvement Board.


Each priority area will have a delivery group created where colleagues from education, health, care and other services will become members, agree projects and project leaders, agree timescales and success criteria so we know we have been successful.

The strategy is supported by a Delivery Plan which outlines in more detail, under each priority, the actions we will take, when we will take them and the improvements we expect to see as a result. This will be updated annually.

Key Facts




****52%**
rise in the total
number of EHCP's in
West Berkshire over
the last 5 years
from 1032 to 1566.



*****17.2%**
of children in West
Berkshire schools have
SEND.
compared to the
England average
of 17.3%

*****4.7%**
CYP in West
Berkshire have an
EHCP compared
to the England
average of 4.3%

***41%**
of open cases in
Children's Services
have **SEND** (age 0-18)



***13.3%** of children
in Primary Schools and
8.7% in Secondary
Schools have English as an
Additional Language (EAL)

**At SEN Support:	**At EHCP:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) most identified Primary Need.• Autism & SEMH next most identified Primary Need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50% have the Primary Need of Autism.• SEMH next most identified Primary Need.• Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN) are increasing.



*School Census
**as end of financial year
***2023 DfE Published Data

What you told us: What we have done & what needs to improve

Throughout its development, the SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029 has been informed by feedback, from across the Local Area Partnership, gathered as part of the DBV programme and as part of the SEND Review which took place in 2023. Feedback was gathered in several ways including:

- Case Review Sessions.
- Listening Forums.
- Coffee Mornings.
- SEND Advice Sessions.
- SEND Youth Survey.

This coproduction with children & young people, families, and key partners, will remain a focus during the delivery of our SEND & Inclusion Strategy. Feedback highlighted that there are things we are doing well, and things we need to improve.

What we have done well:

- New educational settings have been built.
- Specialist teams have been created or expanded including; Early Development & Inclusion (EDIT) Team the Autism Team and the Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Team.
- A new model of therapeutic practice has been introduced.
- Clear standards of SEND provision in schools have been set.
- Neurodiversity Service created with peer support available whilst awaiting assessment.
- 'Through My Eyes' project has helped develop the skills of staff working with children and young people with SLCN.

What needs to improve:

- Early identification and support of SEND needs.
- Improved transition, including transition to adulthood.
- Additional local provision required to meet need; particularly for SEMH, Autism and acute anxiety.
- More consistent access to employment related activity.
- Additional short break and respite provision, including increasing access to extracurricular activities for those children and young people with EHCPs.
- Continued upskilling of the workforce to ensure confidence in identifying and working with children and young people with SEND needs.
- Increased family confidence in school's abilities to meet SEND needs including in mainstream provision and without the need for an EHCP.
- Ensuring support is available throughout West Berkshire, reducing family's needs to travel to access the support they need.

Schools are struggling to meet the emotional and mental health needs of their learners, while parents are struggling to access the right services at the right time – Case Review completed as part of DBV programme.

SENCOs and Parents/Carers both said they didn't believe the schools had the right resources to meet SEN Learners' needs – Listening Forums as part of DBV Programme.

The overwhelming sensory environment and inflexibility of school policies in mainstream secondary schools means many SEN learners are unable to access mainstream learning - Case Review completed as part of DBV programme.

I think that the key area that would be useful in delivering improved SEND provision in mainstream schools would be additional funding so that sufficient staffing can be in place to meet children's needs. – SENCo feedback as part of DBV programme.

Individual teaching staff and support staff are very receptive to my child's needs -and seek to be proactive but the need and demand is too great for them to be able to offer the level of support my child needs. – Parent feedback as part of DBV programme.

SEMH take up so much classroom time. Those children who don't necessarily need EHCPs then end up becoming an EHCP child because they don't have support earlier on...Some children need ASD unit. These children could be supported in mainstream without EHCP if they have somewhere to go and calm down during the day – SENCo's describing the challenges and support provided for children and young people with increasingly complex SEMH and Autism needs as part of DBV programme.

My teachers know that I am different from a lot of the other children and are trying to help me learn how to play and communicate better with the other children – Young Person feedback, via parent/carer/professional as part of SEND Review (2023)

A quiet space helps me to learn and to focus like the HRB [Hearing Resource Base]. I enjoy Sensory Circuits because it helps me warm up for the day ahead of me – Young Person feedback, via parent/carer/professional as part of SEND Review (2023)

Everything is good at the moment. More career advice in the next few years would be good as well as a variety of work experience. – Young Person feedback, via parent/carer/professional as part of SEND Review (2023)

Having some clubs or places i can go to meet people and friends like me - Young adult feedback as part of SEND Review (2023)



Our Approach and Priorities.

The Purpose of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy is to ensure:

Children and young people with SEND receive the right support, adjustments, and interventions, at the right time, to thrive in childhood and to prepare well for adulthood.

Our Approach:

Co-production with children, young people & families

Early Help & Prevention

Maximising independence for children and young people with SEND

Person-centred & trauma informed approaches

A joined-up approach to meeting children and young people's needs

Supporting families as close as possible to where they live

Our Priorities & Goals:

The priorities & goals of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy

<p>Priority 1: Early Years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the take-up of the Early Years entitlement, particularly for our most vulnerable families. • Support parents, settings, partners, and practitioners to identify emerging needs in children under 5, with systems and processes in place to support this. • Make sure we have the right expertise, in the right place, to meet emerging needs of children under 5. • Ensure our schools and practitioners are well prepared for meeting the needs of our children transitioning from the Early Years to school, with the right systems and processes in place, including effective collaboration between settings/practitioners
<p>Priority 2: Early Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure an appropriately trained and confident workforce, able to promote inclusivity and identify needs early. • Identify, and where possible close, gaps in service delivery for children with emerging needs or at SEN Support. • Increase our mental health support to schools to enable them to better meet the needs of children and young people early. • Work with colleagues across the health system to develop, and implement, a needs-led approach to neurodiversity.
<p>Priority 3: Inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the capability of our local schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. • Support our local schools to reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND. • Develop systems and processes to support children and young people with SEND moving successfully from primary to secondary education. • Work with school partners to identify opportunities for the provision of specialist outreach support into mainstream settings. • Support our local schools with the early identification of EBSA and a consistent implementation of provision.
<p>Priority 4: Developing local specialist provision & support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the current, and future, needs of children and young people with SEND to ensure their needs can be met locally. • Work with our local mainstream provision to identify opportunities to develop additional SEMH, Autism, MLD and SLD provision. • Work with our local maintained special schools to identify opportunities for expansion and exploring with partners opportunities for additional specialist provision. • Develop bespoke packages of support for children and young people who are not attending school for health or other reasons. • Work with stakeholders to develop an enhanced short break offer to better meet the needs of children & young people with SEND and their families locally

<p>Priority 5: Strengthening Alternative Provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver high quality Alternative Provision locally operating alongside mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of our pupils for some, or all, of their education. • Undertake a needs analysis to ensure that we understand demand and can meet need. • Further develop short- and medium-term Alternative Provision to enable students to re-engage with education and return to mainstream schools. • Develop short- and medium-term emergency alternative provision for children and young people who have no educational setting.
<p>Priority 6: Preparation for Adulthood</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to high quality information regarding preparation to adulthood for young people with SEND and their families. • Increase opportunities for young people with SEND to secure employment, including the development of Supported Internships and Apprenticeships. • Work with local mainstream and specialist FE providers to improve provision for work-related learning. • Work with Adult Social Care to ensure opportunities for young people with SEND to meaningfully engage and participate in their local community. • Ensure pathways from children’s to adults’ health services work smoothly and are clearly understood.

Enabling the delivery of our priorities

- To develop a digital strategy which enables us to collect, use & share data more effectively; and to develop a digital dashboard to enable leaders’ effective oversight.
- Work with Public Health, and other partners, to improve the SEND content of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to enable the local area to better meet need in the future.
- To explore opportunities to digitise Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Development of a commissioning and quality assurance resource and function to support the placements of children and young people with SEND.
- To work effectively with our partners to improve governance and oversight of SEND provision.
- Supporting the development and expansion of the newly created West Berkshire Parent/Carer Forum ensuring that leaders are able to respond to the views of children & young people and their families.
- Enhancing the work to support the SEND Youth Forum, ensuring that leaders are able to respond to the views of children and young people.
- To ensure the most efficient use of limited financial resources in the High Needs Block of funding.

Delivery Plan

There is a detailed delivery plan covering the period April 2024 – March 25 supporting this strategy. It will be reviewed and updated annually. A summary of the plan for 24/25 is provided below.

Summary - ONE Plan: DBV Programme & SEND and Inclusion Strategy

INNOVATION IN SEND

ONE PLAN : DBV Programme & SEND and Inclusion Strategy

	Priority 1: Early Years	Priority 2: Early Intervention	Priority 3: Inclusion	Priority 4: Developing local specialist provision & support	Priority 5: Strengthening Alternative Provision	Priority 6: Preparation for Adulthood	YEAR
DBV Workstream 1 - Clear communications with families and wider local area partners to support access to services and the SEND system when they need it. <i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of the communications strategy and parent champion programme to improve engagement, especially of our most vulnerable families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mapping of existing services to ensure clear pathways for referral and this will be communicated on an updated co-produced Local Offer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing decision making processes to ensure transparency, consistency, and value for money. Decision making processes to be updated, where necessary, on the Local Offer 		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improve access to high quality information regarding preparation to adulthood for young people with SEND and their families. Increase opportunities for young people with SEND to secure employment, including the development of Supported Internships and Apprenticeships. 	2024-5
DBV Workstream 2 - Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP. <i>Activities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the Early Development and Inclusion Team (EDIT) to enable the team to take direct referrals from early years settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit of schools' additional SEND training needs and create a plan to meet identified gaps. Ensure existing SEN support teams work in a coordinated way and provide a single point of referral/ access. Explore opportunities to provide outreach support to mainstream schools from our special schools and the Specialist Inclusion Support Service (ISS) Whole School Mental Health Project to be expanded and offered to all mainstream schools in West Berkshire, to be evaluated after one year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From our gap analysis identify any gaps which are barriers to inclusive practice in our mainstream schools, identify mechanisms by which these gaps can be addressed (through commissioning or co-commissioning) to further support our schools and settings. Developing and sharing a best practice guide to support schools and settings on the most effective use of funding Element 2 Review to the use of element 2 to promote targeted intervention at SEN support through early identification of need and timely access to appropriate resources. Develop a Transitions Support Programme, to be led by schools and co-produced in clusters, to ensure that children and young people are appropriately supported to successfully transfer into their next mainstream provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand better the needs of the current and future cohorts of children with SEND in order to ensure the availability of the type of education provisions required to meet need, the development of a SEND Sufficiency Strategy. Undertake a banding review of unit costs of mainstream, maintained special and alternative provision to ensure parity and alignment with local and national funding arrangements. Reviewing and updating of Strategic and Operational commissioning and procurement practices, in relation to placements and Alternative Provision - including brokerage and contract management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go out to the market to develop a range of alternative provision available in West Berkshire to meet individualised needs of our children and young people. Establish commissioning and quality assurance processes in relation to alternative provision 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local mainstream and specialist FE providers to improve provision for work-related learning. Work with Adult Social Care to ensure opportunities for young people with SEND to meaningfully engage and participate in their local community. Ensure pathways from children's to adults' health services work smoothly, and are clearly understood. 	2024-5
SEND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2024-2029 <i>Priorities</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the take-up of the Early Years entitlement, particularly for our most vulnerable families. Support parents, settings, partners, and practitioners to identify emerging needs in children under 5, with systems and processes in place to support this. Make sure we have the right expertise, in the right place, to meet emerging needs of children under 5. Ensure our schools and practitioners are well prepared for meeting the needs of our children transitioning from the Early Years to school, with the right systems and processes in place, including effective collaboration between settings/practitioners. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure an appropriately trained and confident workforce, able to promote inclusivity and identify needs early. Identify, and where possible close, gaps in service delivery for children with emerging needs or at SEN Support. Increase our mental health support to schools to enable them to better meet the needs of children and young people early. Work with colleagues across the health system to develop, and implement, a needs-led approach to neurodiversity. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the capability of our local schools and settings to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Support our local schools to reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND. Develop systems and processes to support children and young people with SEND moving successfully from primary to secondary education. Work with school partners to identify opportunities for the provision of specialist outreach support into mainstream settings. Support our local schools with the early identification of EBSA and a consistent implementation of provision. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the current, and future, needs of children and young people with SEND to ensure their needs can be met locally. Work with our local mainstream provision to identify opportunities to develop additional SEMH, Autism, MLD and SLD provision. Work with our local maintained special schools to identify opportunities for expansion and exploring with partners opportunities for additional specialist provision. Develop bespoke packages of support for children and young people who are not attending school for health or other reasons. Work with stakeholders to develop an enhanced short breaks offer to better meet the needs of children & young people with SEND and their families locally. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver high quality Alternative Provision locally operating alongside mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of our pupils for some or all of their education. Undertake a needs analysis to ensure that we understand demand and can meet need. Further develop short- and medium-term Alternative Provision to enable students to re-engage with education and return to mainstream schools. Develop short and medium term emergency alternative provision for children and young people who have no educational setting. 	2024-9	
Enabling the delivery of our priorities.							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a digital strategy which enables us to collect, use & share data more effectively, and to develop a digital dashboard enabling leaders' effective oversight. Work with Public Health, and other partners, to improve the SEND content of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to enable the local area to better meet need in the future. Explore opportunities to digitise Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Develop a commissioning and quality assurance resource and function to support the placements of children and young people with SEND. Work effectively with our partners to improve governance and oversight of SEND provision. Support the development and expansion of the newly created West Berkshire Parent/Carer Forum ensuring that leaders can respond to the views of children & young people and their families. Enhance the work to support the SEND Youth Forum, ensuring that leaders can respond to the views of children and young people. Ensure the most efficient use of limited financial resources in the High Needs Block of funding. 							

Glossary

Abbreviation	Word(s)	Meaning
AP	Alternative Provision	Settings which provide an education to children and young people who are unable to attend a mainstream school.
CYP	Children and young people	The children and young people being thought about.
DBV	Delivering Better Value	A programme run by the Department for Education (DfE) to support Local Authorities, and their partners, to improve the delivery of SEND Services for children and young people whilst working to ensure that funding remains available to deliver these services.
DfE	Department for Education	The DfE have responsibility for children's services and education (including Early Years, Schools, Further and Higher Education Policy, Apprenticeships and wider skills) in England.
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant	A ring-fenced amount of money from the Government which pays for individual budgets in maintained schools, academies and free schools.
EBSA	Emotional Based School Avoidance	This is when children and young people, who want to attend school, have a reduced, or non-attendance at school due to emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues.
EHCNA	Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment	A joined-up assessment of a child or young person's Education, Health and Social Care needs completed by the Local Authority.
EHCP	Education, Health & Care Plan	A plan which details the Education, Health and Social Care support provided to a child or young person with SEND.
HNB	High Needs Block	The budget within the Dedicated Schools Grant that is used to pay for support for children and young people with SEND.
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) looks at the current and future health and care needs of the local area which then informs the planning and buying of health, well-being and social care services within that local area.
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulty	This is when children and young people find it much harder than their peers to develop the skills to understand concepts.
PCF	Parent/Carer Forum	A group of parents or carers of children and young people with SEND who work with the Local Authority and other providers to make sure that the services they provide meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families.

PfA	Preparing for Adulthood	The support provided to children and young people with SEND which helps them to improve the independence and life skills they will need as an adult.
Census	School Census	An electronic collection of pupil data from Primary, Secondary, Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units.
SEMH	Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs	A type of special educational need in which children and young people can find it hard to manage their emotions and how they behave.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities	A learning difficulty or disability which requires special educational provision to be made for a child or young person.
SEN Support	SEN Support	This is what schools and similar settings use to find, and meet the needs of, children and young people with SEND.
SLCN	Speech, Language and Communication Needs	This is when someone finds it hard to communicate, both communicating with others, but also understanding what others are communicating to them.
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty	This is when someone finds it hard with certain parts of learning for example; they may have Dyslexia or Dyscalculia.

Innovation in SEND: DBV Programme & SEND and Inclusion Strategy

DRAFT DELIVERY PLAN 2024/25 v.6

Innovation in SEND combines both the DBV Programme and SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029.

The two workstreams of the DBV Programme in 2024 -2025:

- a) Clear communications with families and wider local area partners to support access to services and the SEND system when they need it.
- b) Enabling settings, schools and colleges to meet the diverse needs of their communities locally including complex emotional and mental health needs of CYP.

From April 2024 to March 2025 these are delivered by four task groups: -

1. GAP analysis to Inform Local Provision/Need
2. Supporting Inclusive Practice
3. Financial Sustainability
4. Ensuring Sufficiency

The DBV Programme is incorporated into the overarching priorities and enablers of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy.

There are six priorities and eight enablers identified in the Strategy:

- Priority 1: Early Years
- Priority 2: Early Intervention

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- Priority 3: Inclusion
- Priority 4: Developing Local Specialist Provision and Support
- Priority 5: Strengthening Alternative Provision
- Priority 6: Preparation for Adulthood
- Enablers:
 - Digital Strategy
 - JSNA
 - Digitising EHCPs
 - Commissioning and QA assurance resource and function
 - Improved Governance and Oversight
 - Supporting the Parent Carer Forum
 - Supporting the SEND Youth Forum
 - Effective use of the High Needs Block of funding.

This delivery plan sets out the **tasks that will be undertaken against each priority for the period April 2024 – March 2025**. The delivery plan will be reviewed annually in February, and new tasks (and enablers) will be identified for the following 12-month period.

 = DBV Workstreams

Priority 1: Early Years						
No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance 1 April 2024- 31 March 2025	RAG Status *	Commentary
1.1	Ensure the take-up of the Early Years education entitlement; particularly for our most vulnerable families.					

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1.1.1	Deliver the Communication Strategy and Parent Champion Programme to improve engagement, especially of our most vulnerable families.	September 2024 (DBV)	Beth Kelly	DBV Task group: GAP analysis to Inform Local Provision/Need		
1.1.2	Ensure that the Local Offer clearly directs users to the information they need regarding support for children in the Early Years, including information on Early Years settings, and that this is publicised with Health Visitors, and other relevant colleagues, to improve take up of the Early Years entitlement.	October – November 2024 (DBV)	Beth Kelly/ Jessica Monteith - Chachuat	DBV Task group: GAP analysis to Inform Local Provision/Need		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EY Take up data. • Increase in visits to EY Local Offer pages. 						
1.2	Support parents, settings, partners, and practitioners to identify emerging needs in children under 5, with systems and processes in place to support this.					
1.2.1	Establish a multi-agency pre-school triage system to identify children in need of support as early as possible.	September 2024	Karen Bartlett	DBV: Task Group Supporting Inclusive Practice		
1.2.2	Review referral routes for occupational therapists and paediatricians.	TBC (DBV)	TBC - Ask ICB	DBV Task Group: Gap analysis to		

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				inform Local Provision/Need		
1.2.3	Enhance the Early Development and Inclusion Team (EDIT) to enable them to respond to the concerns of Early Years Setting for both referred and non-referred children.	May 2024 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
1.2.4	Increase the take up of health visitor 2-year checks.	TBC	TBC (Public Health)	DBV Task Group – Gap Analysis to Inform Local Provision /Need		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of children whose needs are identified at pre-school. • Health visitor 2-year check take up data. 						
1.3	Make sure we have the right expertise, in the right place, to meet emerging needs of children under 5.					
1.3.1	Develop clear guidance for early years settings on what should be ordinarily available for children with SEND.	In place September 24 (DBV)	Sarah Whatmore / Beth Kelly	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice –		
1.3.2	Audit training needs of early years settings and revise the SEND training offer to meet identified needs.	May/ June 2024 (DBV)	Sarah Whatmore	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take up of Early Years Inclusion Fund. • Take up of Early Years Training Offer by settings. 						

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1.4	Ensure our schools and practitioners are well prepared for meeting the needs of our children transitioning from the Early Years to school, with the right systems and processes in place, including effective collaboration between settings/practitioners.					
1.4.1	Introduce a transitions partnership agreement between early years settings and primary schools.	September 2024 (DBV)	Beth Kelly	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice –		
1.4.2	Review funding mechanisms for children under five with SEND in pre-school settings and maintained nursery and primary schools to ensure children have continuity of support on transition.	September 2024 (DBV)	Jane Seymour	DBV Task Group: Financial Sustainability		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of settings signed up to transitions partnerships agreement. Packages of support in place for children transitioning into primary schools. Numbers of statutory requests at Early Years/ Reception/ Yr1. 						
<p>Priority 2: Early Intervention</p>						
No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance	RAG Status *	Commentary

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2.1	Ensure an appropriately trained and confident workforce, able to promote inclusivity and identify needs early.					
2.1.1	Audit schools additional training needs and create a plan to meet identified needs.	May/ June 2024 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
2.1.2	Develop accredited training for teaching assistants who work with children with SEND.	July 2026	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
2.1.3	Adapt the West Berkshire SEND Identification Handbook for secondary schools.	Dec 2024 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
2.1.4	Promote use of resources developed by the CYP Integrated Therapy Service (CYPIT) to support children with speech and language, sensory and motor difficulties.	Sept 2024 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
2.1.5	Review the results of the pilot of SPENCER 3D (an identification tool for schools) and roll out more widely if there is evidence of effectiveness.	TBC	Mairi Evans (Berkshire Healthcare)	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
Measures of success (how will we know?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training offer take up. • Survey on practitioners confidence in meeting SEND needs (Jan/ Feb). • Requests for therapy assessments data. • Reduction in requests for EHC Needs Assessments with needs being met at an earlier stage. 						

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of SPENCER 3D profiles being completed allowing for analysis of pilot and a decision as to whether to roll out more widely. 						
2.2	Identify, and where possible close, gaps in service delivery for children with emerging needs or at SEN Support					
2.2.1	Improve awareness and take up of early help services	March 2025	Stephanie Coomber	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
2.2.2	Map existing services to ensure clear pathways for referral. This will be communicated on a revised and updated Local Offer.	June 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: GAP analysis to inform Local Provision/Need		
2.2.3	Ensure existing SEN support teams work in a more coordinated way and provide a single point of referral/ access.	August 2024 (DBV)	Jane Seymour	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take up of Early Help Services. Hits on Early Help Local Offer. Reduced education placement breakdown, reduced exclusions/ suspensions, increased attendance. Survey on practitioners' confidence in meeting SEND needs (Jan/ Feb). No of schools accessing additional support service. 						

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2.3	Increase our mental health support to schools to enable them to better meet the needs of children and young people early.					
2.3.1	Implement a whole School Mental Health Project, delivered through the Education Psychology team, to be expanded and offered to all schools in West Berkshire, to be evaluated after one year.	September 24 – August 2025 (DBV)	Kate Pike	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of mental health surgeries undertaken. • No. of CYP discussed at surgeries. • Evaluations of training delivered for workshops. • Staff confidence in applying learnt strategies within the classroom. • Pre and post group interventions RCADS (revised children’s anxiety and depression scale). 						
2.4	Work with colleagues across the health system to develop, and implement, a needs-led approach to neurodiversity.					
2.4.1	Raise awareness amongst parents and practitioners of services for neurodiverse children which can be accessed without a diagnosis and increase take up of those services.	July 2024	Beth Kelly/ Miranda Walcott	DBV Task Group: GAP Analysis to inform local provision		
2.4.2	Work with colleagues in the health system to review access criteria for the Autism service, to explore increasing capacity to meet demand for earlier intervention through a revised service offer.	July 2024 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett/ Miranda Walcott	DBV Task Group: Analysis to inform local provision		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p>						

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- TBC – confirm with DCO.
- Increased take up of pre-diagnosis offer.
- Improved waiting times from referral to treatment for children aged 8+ and under 8.

Priority 3: Inclusion

No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance	RAG Status *	Commentary
3.1	Increase the capability of our local schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in a mainstream setting.					
3.1.1	Identify schools which have the capacity and will benefit from the creation of additional SEND inclusion spaces (including resource bases) and support the development of capital bids.	June/ July 2024 (DBV)	Mark Lewis/ Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
3.1.2	From our gap analysis identify any gaps which are barriers to inclusive practice in our mainstream schools, identify mechanisms by which these gaps can be addressed (through commissioning or co-commissioning) to further support our schools and settings	July 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane	DBV: Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
3.1.3	Developing and sharing a best practice guide to support schools and settings on the most effective use of funding Element 2 Review the use of element 2 to promote targeted	August 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Financial sustainability		

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	intervention at SEN support through early identification of need and timely access to appropriate resources.					
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in no. of inclusion spaces/ resource bases, including in planning stage. • Reduction in number of statutory assessment requests from schools. • Fewer requests for statutory assessments in Early Years and KS1. • Schools confidence in ability to meet needs at Element 2 (SURVEY). 						
3.2	Support our local schools to reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND.					
3.2.1	Develop a Delivery Plan to support schools in reducing the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND.	TBC	SM SEMH / Nicola Ponton	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
3.2.2	Review communication and information sharing processes across teams within education, and more broadly, to ensure information is shared at the earliest opportunity.	TBC	SM SEMH / Nicola Ponton	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
3.2.3	Develop a sharing of best practice guide to support schools in effectively implementing the therapeutic approaches training they have received.	TBC	SM SEMH / Nicola Ponton	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
3.2.4	Review how grants of support are applied for, and allocated, to ensure sustainability and positive impact.	TBC	SM SEMH / Nicola Ponton	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		

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Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions. • Increase in number of behaviour polices which reflect the therapeutic approaches training schools have received. 						
3.3	Develop systems and processes to support children and young people with SEND moving successfully from primary to secondary education.					
3.3.1	Develop a Transitions Support Programme, to be led by schools and co-produced in clusters, to ensure that children and young people are appropriately supported to successfully transfer into their next mainstream provision.	May/ July 2024 Implementation August 2024– March 2025 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions. • No. of children with an EHCP in a phased transfer year group remaining in mainstream. • No of children on SEN Support in a phased transfer year group transferring without recourse to an EHC assessment request. • Reduction in placements at AP and INMSS made at secondary transition. 						
3.4	Work with school partners to identify opportunities for the provision of specialist outreach support into mainstream settings.					
3.4.1	Review and develop special school outreach service, with identified funding and revised Service Level Agreement.	August 2024 (DBV)	Karen Bartlett	DBV Task Group; Supporting inclusive practice		

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3.4.2	Review and develop Pupil Referral Unit outreach service, with identified funding and revised Service Level Agreement.	January 2025	Nicola Ponton/Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of schools accessing outreach support. Satisfaction with SISS (SURVEY) Satisfaction with PRU outreach service (SURVEY) Reduction in suspensions/ exclusions and increased attendance. 						
3.5	Support our Local Schools with the early identification of EBSA and a consistent implementation of provision.					
3.5.1	Establish a community of practice group to gain an understanding of how children and young people with EBSA are being supported locally and to disseminate good practice, ensuring there is a shared understanding across the local area.	TBC	SM SEMH	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice – EBSTA T & F Group		
3.5.2	Develop a programme of learning for our schools to ensure our workforce is confident in supporting children and young people with EBSA.	TBC	SM SEMH	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice -EBSA T & F Group		
3.5.3	Explore increasing capacity within the EBSA service to meet demand for earlier intervention.	TBC	SM SEMH	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice -EBSA T & F Group		

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3.5.4	Review, and re-launch, our EBSA guidance.	TBC	SM SEMH	DBV Task Group: Supporting Inclusive Practice -EBSA T & F Group		
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Measures of success (how will we know?)

- Reduction in number of pupils absent from school due to EBSA.

Priority 4: Developing Local Specialist Provision & Support

No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance	RAG Status *	Commentary
4.1	Identify the current, and future, needs of children and young people with SEND to ensure their needs can be met locally.					
4.1.1	Understand better the needs of the current and future cohorts of children with SEND to ensure the availability of the type of education provisions required to meet need, the development of a SEND Sufficiency Strategy	July 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane/ Azim Mohamed	DBV Task Group; Ensuring Sufficiency		
4.1.2	Undertake a banding review of unit costs of mainstream, maintained special and alternative provision to ensure parity and alignment with local and national funding arrangements	May-August 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane / Helen Redding	DBV Task Group: Financial Sustainability		
4.1.3	Review and updating of Strategic and Operational commissioning and	June 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group:		

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	procurement practices in relation to placement and Alternative Provision - including brokerage and contract management			Ensuring Sufficiency		
4.1.4	Review decision making processes to ensure transparency, consistency, and value for money. Decision making processes to be updated, where necessary, on the Local Offer.	May-August 2024 (DBV)	Jane Seymour	DBV Task Group: Financial Sustainability		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of unit costs with statistical neighbours and national benchmarking. • Reduction in requests for EHC Needs Assessments. • Clear and transparent decision-making processes published on the Local Offer. • Reduction in unit costs for placements in IMNS and AP. • Reduction in price increase in current high-cost placements in IMNS and AP. • Increase in sustainable AP provision. • % of children placed in good, or outstanding, provision. 						
4.2	Work with our local mainstream provision to identify opportunities to develop additional SEMH, Autism, MLD and SLD provision.					
4.2.1	Develop a 12-place provision in the west of the Authority for primary age children with Autism / SEMH (an equivalent provision to Kennet Valley Primary School Autism / SEMH provision in the east of the Authority)	Longer term 5 years (in place 27/28)	Jane Seymour / Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
4.2.2	Explore opportunities to develop MLD resourced provision in secondary mainstream schools	2026/27	Jane Seymour / Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		

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4.2.3	Develop primary MLD /SLD units in a network of primary schools (the total number of units to be determined by the Sufficiency Strategy)	2026/27	Jane Seymour / Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
4.2.4	Work with our Resource Provisions to review, and amend, their admissions criteria, supporting them to meet the needs of more complex children.		Jane Seymour / Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of available local specialist placements in mainstream provision. Reduction in INMSS use and spend. 						
4.3	Work with our local maintained special schools to identify opportunities for expansion and exploring with partners opportunities for additional specialist provision.					
4.3.1	Build additional classrooms at The Castle School to create additional places by 2025	By 2025	Hannah Geddert / Jane Seymour	DBV Task Group: Ensuring sufficiency		
4.3.2	Determine whether the long term need for special school places for children with learning difficulties can be met through expansion of existing local special schools or whether an additional special school needs to be developed, in partnership with neighbouring Local Authorities.	Sept 2024 (sufficiency strategy required)	Mark Lewis	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of specialist local provision places. Reduction in INMSS use and spend. 						

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4.4	Develop bespoke packages of support for children and young people who are not attending school for health or other reasons.					
4.4.1	Review Local Authority policy on education of children not attending schools for health or other reasons (S19)	July 2024 (AMD asked for by September)	Melissa Perry/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
4.4.2	Determine what additional resources are needed to ensure that the duty to make suitable provision for children not attending school for health or other reasons is fully met	July/ September 2024	Melissa Perry/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group : Ensuring Sufficiency		
4.4.3	Ensure that there is the capacity to create and monitor bespoke educational packages for children who are not attending school (including through the use of personal budgets)	September 2024	Neil Goddard (AP Co-ordinator post – costed in HNB) talk to AMD	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in Complaints (Stage 1 and Stage 2) & Local Government Ombudsman cases. • Reduction of cases in which children are not in receipt of education (S19), and a reduction in the time that they are out of education. 						
4.5	Work with stakeholders to develop an enhanced short break offer to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families, locally.					
4.5.1	Conduct an audit of short breaks available locally and measure take up.	September/ October 2024	Hannah Geddert/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency - Short Breaks Task Group		

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4.5.2	Work with local providers to support the development of services to address gaps, e.g. after school and holiday provision in the East of the Authority, post-16 short breaks and short breaks for children with complex health needs	October 2024	Hannah Geddert/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency - Short Breaks Task Group		
4.5.3	Review the support available for families through Parent Carer Needs Assessments and the criteria for accessing support through Parent Carer Needs Assessments.	October 2024	Hannah Geddert / Catherine Kane / Adult Social Care	DBV Task Group; Gap analysis to inform Local Provision/Need		

Measures of success (how will we know?)

- Increased offer for assessed and non-assessed short breaks, including in the East.
- Satisfaction rates (SURVEY).

Priority 5: Strengthening Alternative Provision

No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance	RAG Status *	Commentary
5.1	Undertake a needs analysis to ensure that we understand demand and can meet need.					
5.1.1	Develop and deliver an appropriate strategy for Alternative Provision in West Berkshire; co-produced with our schools, children and young people, their families.	July 2024	SM SEMH / Nicola Ponton/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		

Measures of success (how will we know?)

- TBC.

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5.2	Deliver high quality Alternative Provision locally operating alongside mainstream and special schools to meet the needs of our learners for some, or all, of their education.					
5.2.1	Go out to the market to develop a range of alternative provision available in West Berkshire to meet individualised needs of our children and young people	January 2025 (DBV)	SM for SEMH	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
5.2.2	Develop guidance for schools on commissioning and monitoring the enhanced alternative provision offer	September 2024	Hannah Geddert/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
5.2.3	Establish commissioning and quality assurance processes in relation to alternative provision	September 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane / Brokerage	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
5.2.4	Create and embed the AP directory into the Local Offer website	August 2024	Brokerage	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased AP offer. • Fewer mainstream placement breakdowns. • Reduced INMSS. • Reduction in second chance mainstream placements and AP and specialist placements, from mainstream. • Regular QA reports provided. 						
5.3	Further develop short- and medium-term alternative provision to enable students to re-engage					

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	with education and return to mainstream schools (iCollege).					
5.3.1	Quantify the level of demand for short- and medium-term alternative provision (to inform revised AP implementation plan)	July 2024 (DBV)	SM for SEMH/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
5.3.2	Develop additional KS3 capacity for medium term in-reach turnaround placements	Sept-Dec 2024 (in place for Jan 2025)	SM for SEMH/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of AP places at iCollege. • Increased AP placements from other providers. • Reduction in INMSS. • Reduction in exclusions and managed moves. • Overall increased attendance data. 						
5.4	Develop short- and medium-term emergency alternative provision for children and young people who have no educational setting.					
5.4.1	Ensure that there are short term education placements available for children with high level needs moving into the area (for example Children in Care returning to or placed in West Berkshire; Pupils with a special school named on their EHCP who have recently moved into area), or at risk of PEX from specialist placement, whilst alternative permanent placements are identified.	July 2024	Melissa Perry/ Catherine Kane	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
Measures of success (how will we know?)						

Innovation in SEND

- Reduction in numbers of children without a school place (target 0).
- Reduction in time out of school placement.

Priority 6: Preparation for Adulthood- Not DBV

No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance	RAG Status *	Commentary
6.1	Improve access to high quality information regarding preparation for adulthood for young people with SEND and their families.					
6.1.1	Work with the Parent Carer Forum to plan and deliver transition themed workshops for young people with SEND and their families	Jan/ Feb 2025	Beth Kelly/ Lucy Manners	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
6.1.2	Review and improve the Preparation for Adulthood content of the SEND Local Offer website	October – November 2024	Lucy Manners/ Jessica Monteith-Chachuat / Beth Kelly/ Elisha Stephens	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
<p>Measures of success (how will we know?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased hits on P4A page of Local Offer. • Increased satisfaction (Survey). • Reduction in NEET. 						
6.2	Increase opportunities for young people with SEND to secure employment, including the					

Innovation in SEND

	development of Supported Internships and Apprenticeships.					
6.2.1	Seek Council accreditation as a Disability Confident Employer	January 2025	HR	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
6.2.2	Explore opportunities to reinstate the Council's work experience programme for young people with SEND	March 2025	HR/ Lucy Manners	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
6.2.3	Work in partnership with 'Ways into Work' to offer supported internship placements at the Council	March 2025	HR/ Lucy Manners	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
6.2.4	Work with Newbury College and 'Ways into Work' to increase the number of supported internships available locally	September 2024	Lucy Manners/ Jane Seymour	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
6.2.5	Explore opportunities to procure a joint children and adults' supported employment service, in place of the two separate services which currently exist	October 2024	Catherine Kane	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
Measures of success (how will we know?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of young people with SEND in supported internships. Increased numbers of young people with SEND in supported internships with WBC. 						
6.3	Work with local mainstream and specialist FE providers to improve provision for work-related learning.					
6.3.1	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and FE Providers setting out the expected uses of Element 3 funding.	October 2024	Lucy Manners	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		

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6.3.2	Introduce transition guidance / checklist to support successful transition from school to FE College	December 2024	Lucy Manners / Kirsty Jinks	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
Measures of success (how will we know?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEET data. • Consistent offer across settings. • Destination measures. • Decrease in number of ISP placements. • Increased number of ceased EHCPs. 						
6.4	Work with Adult Social Care to ensure opportunities for young people with SEND to meaningfully engage and participate in their local community.					
6.4.1	Create and promote a directory of services which offer meaningful opportunities for young people who may not be able to access paid employment.	October - November 2024	ASC - Magda Hove/ Hannah Geddert	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
Measures of success (how will we know?) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in ISP placements. • Reduction in residential placements for 18-25 year olds. 						
6.5	Ensure pathways from children to adults' health services work smoothly and are clearly understood.					
6.5.1	Promote take up of Learning Disability health checks	TBC	Miranda Walcott	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		

Innovation in SEND

6.5.2	Map transition pathways for all health services accessed by young people with SEND and provide information to families in an easily accessible format	TBC	Miranda Walcott	Preparation for Adulthood Working Group		
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Measures of success (how will we know?)

The ICB are currently developing a data dashboard which will include measures of success and impact. Data is sent quarterly.

7. Enablers

No.	Task & Actions	Timeline	Owner	Governance	RAG Status *	Commentary
7.1	Develop a digital plan which enables us to collect, use & share data more effectively; and to develop a digital dashboard enabling leaders' effective oversight.	Dashboard – July 2024 Longer term Plan – September (DBV)	Azim Mohamed	DBV Task Group; Gap analysis to inform Local Provision/Need / Data T & F Group		
7.2	Work with Public Health, and other partners, to improve the SEND content of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to enable the local area to better meet need in the future.	TBC	Public Health/Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group; Gap analysis to inform Local Provision/Need / Data T & F Group		
7.3	Explore opportunities to digitise Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs).	July 2024	Nicola Ponton/ Azim Mohamed	DBV Task Group: Data T & F Group		
7.4	Develop a commissioning and quality assurance resource and function to	August 2024 (DBV)	Catherine Kane/ Nicola Pontin	DBV Task Group:		

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	support the placements of children and young people with SEND.			Ensuring Sufficiency		
7.5	Work effectively with our partners to improve governance and oversight of SEND provision.	July 2024	Susan Tanner/ Hester Collicut	DBV Task Group: Ensuring Sufficiency		
7.6	Support the development and expansion of the newly created West Berkshire Parent/Carer Forum ensuring that leaders can respond to the views of children & young people and their families.	On-going (DBV)	Beth Kelly	DBV Task Group; Gap analysis to inform Local Provision/Need/Communication and Engagement T & F Group		
7.7	Enhance the work to support the SEND Youth Forum, ensuring that leaders can respond to the views of children and young people	On-going	Elisha Stephens/ Hannah Geddert	DBV Task Group: Gap analysis to inform Local Provision/Need/Communication and Engagement T & F Group		
7.8	Ensure the most efficient use of limited financial resources in the High Needs Block of funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clawback • Banding exercise • Use of Element 2 • Review of HNB spend 	Schools Forum July 2024 (Clawback) (DBV) August – September 2024 (Banding Exercise)	Helen Redding / Susan Tanner	DBV Task Group: Financial Sustainability		

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*RAG Status			
Not started	Started – delayed, or unresolved issue	Started – on track	Completed