

SEND & Joint Commissioning



What is Commissioning

- ❑ Commissioning is understanding the need of a particular service and ensure the right service is designed and developed to deliver the best possible outcome and value for money.
- ❑ Ensure the process and structure is established.

- ❑ Analyse
- ❑ Plan
- ❑ Do
- ❑ Review



Commissioning

- ❑ Commissioning services to provide full transparency, strengthen accountability and deliver improved value for money.
- ❑ Commission services based on data and predicted need
- ❑ Ensure sufficient local provision (reducing the need of out-of-area placements)
- ❑ Aligning education, health and social care funding
- ❑ Reducing duplication and inefficiency across services.
- ❑ Procurement compliance, with services commissioned in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules.

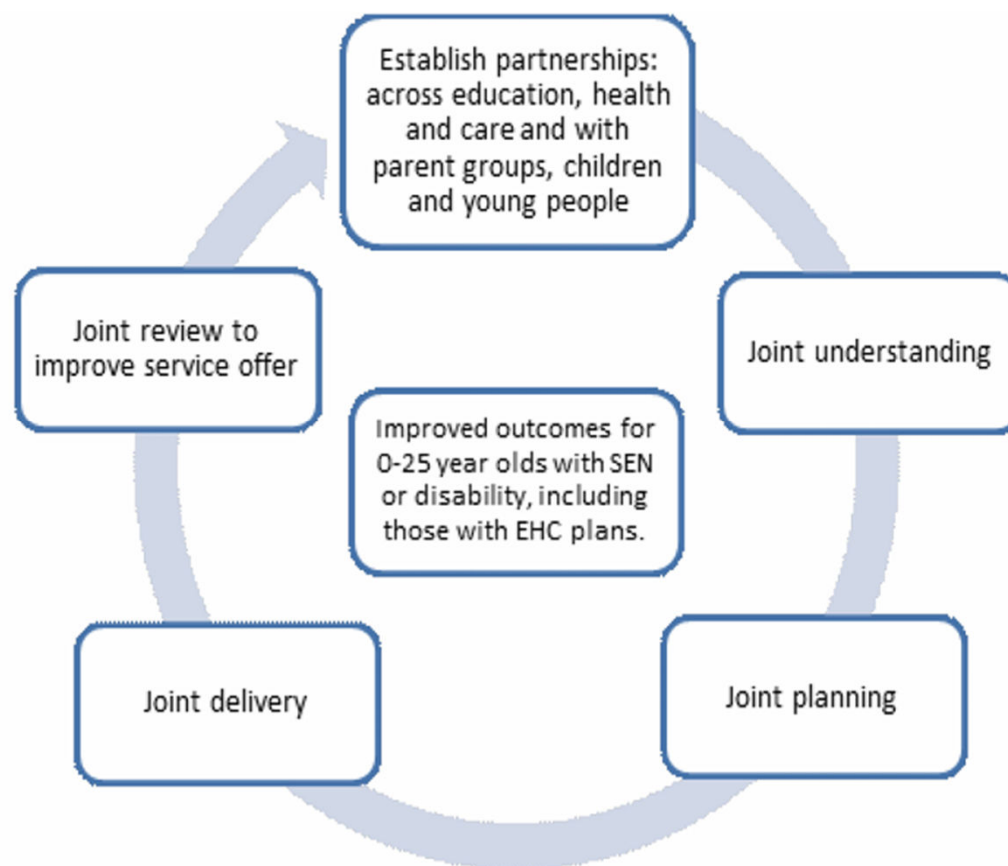
SEND Code of Practice

Local authorities and their partners must develop joint arrangements for commissioning services to improve outcomes for 0 to 25-year-old children and young people.

The five stages on how partners should commission services are:

- ❑ establish partnerships: across education, health and care and with parent groups, children and young people
- ❑ joint understanding
- ❑ joint planning
- ❑ joint delivery
- ❑ joint review to improve service offer

The joint commissioning cycle



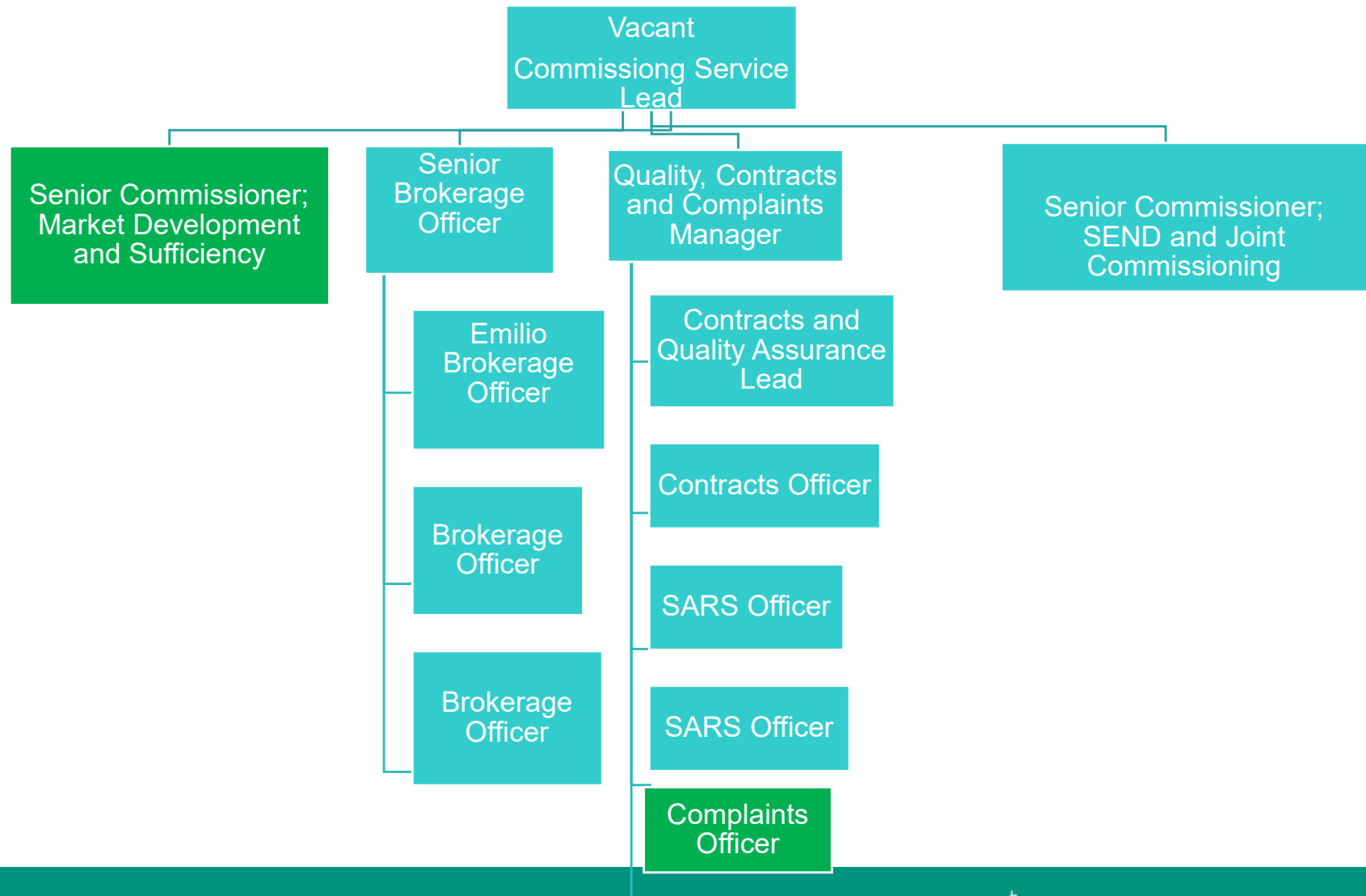
National Expectations

- ❑ Joint Commissioning & Local Offer
 - Local Authorities must create a jointly commissioned "Local Offer" that streamlines support across education, health, and social care.
- ❑ Inclusion in Mainstream Settings
 - A national shift toward educating more children with SEND in mainstream schools.
- ❑ Early Intervention
 - A core focus is on earlier identification and support to reduce the need for last-minute or expensive, distant placements.
- ❑ Improved Accountability & Data
 - Implementation of a new national SEND data strategy to track need, provision, and outcomes, which will be integrated into Ofsted inspections.
- ❑ Strong joint commissioning arrangements (Children & Families Act 2014)

New Children's Commissioning Team

- ❑ A review of Children's Commissioning arrangements took place during 2024.
- ❑ It was proposed a new commissioning team to be created including:
 - Quality Assurance – responsible for leading on the quality assurance of health and educational settings e.g. children's homes, alternative provision.
 - Contracts & Brokerage – contract management and sourcing placements for children's homes
 - Commissioners – Social Care and SEND Commissioners reporting to Children's Commissioning service lead and SEND commissioner having close collaborative working relationship with the SEND Service Lead.
- ❑ The team was established in October 25.

Commissioning Team Structure



Commissioning Work Priorities

- ❑ **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) -**
 - Service provides free, impartial, advice and support to children, young people with SEND and their parents or carers. E.g. support with navigating through the EHCP pathway.
 - This work will begin in September 2026 with the view to have a new service establish on 1st August 27
- ❑ **Resource Base Service Level Agreements (SLA)**
 - SLAs between the West Berkshire Council and schools hosting resource bases, to strengthen and standardise systems, processes, and expectations for resource provision.
- ❑ **Children and Young People Integrated Therapies (CYPIT)**
 - Joint commissioned integrated therapies services – currently a review is being carried out by the Thames Valley ICB and three local commissioning areas (Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire)
- ❑ **Short Breaks & Local Offer** – provides children with disabilities opportunities for social activities and development whilst providing families and carers respite and support.
 - This service is currently being designed and working with families and a providers.
 - New service in place by April 27
- ❑ **Alternative Provision**
 - Developed an internal guidance document
 - Establish a quality assurance framework for internal West Berkshire education colleagues.

Continued...

❑ **Joint Work Across Local Area and ICB**

- Integrated / joined-up care across health, education, and social care
- SEND sufficiency & local provision
- Co-production & family experience

❑ **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMs)**

- Joint commissioned service – commissioned jointly with Thames Valley ICB, Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire.

❑ **Tellmi – App**

- Free mental health support including therapy with no wait times or number of sessions. Schools and organisations can also benefit from free resources and workshops.
- Joint commissioned service – commissioned jointly with Thames Valley ICB, Wokingham, Reading and West Berkshire.

Alternative Provision

- ❑ **Guidance & Quality Assurance**
- ❑ We are currently developing a comprehensive local guidance document alongside a robust Quality Assurance (QA) framework for Alternative Provision (AP).
- ❑ The primary objective is to establish clear, standardised expectations for safety, across all alternative settings West Berkshire works with.
- ❑ We will work closely with our education colleagues to ensure that student outcomes are considered as part of the quality review process.

Alternative Provision

❑ Commissioning & Procurement Routes

- This approach will help us support and explore procurement routes to commission Alternative Provision across the Council.
- By moving toward a structured procurement model: *examples: an Approved Provider List, Framework or a Dynamic Purchasing System.*

Planned Future Commissioning Workplan

- ❑ Supporting the implementation of the SEND Reforms, *Example: Experts at Hand*
- ❑ Analyse spending in high-cost areas such as Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) identify efficiencies and value for money.
- ❑ Working to establish a clear structured approach for commissioning of AP
- ❑ Support the commissioning of any new resource provision led by West Berkshire Council for schools or colleges

Questions

- ❑ What opportunities do you see for us to work more effectively together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND?
- ❑ How can we strengthen partnerships between schools, AP providers and West Berkshire?
- ❑ What improvements would help to strengthen multi-agency working across services?

Thank You

Senior SEND & Joint Commissioner

Get in touch:

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