

Schools Forum

Item No. 3

Report title:	Local First Inclusion
Date of meeting:	17 May 2023

Executive summary

We have made a commitment to provide a regular report on the Local First Inclusion programme to Schools Forum at all meetings across this new six year programme.

Within the May 2023 report we are providing an update on:

- Local First Inclusion report to NCC Cabinet
- The process of tri-annual reporting and selection of KPI's for Schools Forum to enable it to track activity
- A summary of activity across the programme, with a particular focus on SEND Sufficiency and Capital (Workstream 5)

Tri-annual reporting to the DfE starts in June and will take place in September and December as well each year.

Schools Forum are asked to confirm agreement on:

- 1. The approach being planned for regular reporting to Schools Forum, i.e. overview of progress in previous period and focus on key parts of the programme across the year**
- 2. The sub-set of KPI's to be used for regular tracking and reporting within Schools Forum**
- 3. How best to influence the education system to assist the aims of Local First Inclusion programme, e.g., in relation to ongoing EHCP referral rates and associated Element 3 funding**

1. Introduction

The Local Authority has made a commitment to provide a regular report on the Local First Inclusion programme to Schools Forum at all meetings across this new six-year programme. To date, we have briefed Schools Forum members on the negotiations with the DfE as part of the safety valve process, we have set out the formal funding agreement and, at the previous meeting, we started the process of providing more detailed information on aspects of the programme with a focus on the School and Community Teams. These briefings to date have been via presentation and subsequent sharing of PDF slide-decks.

We will now be providing a written report in advance of each meeting as we 'mainstream' Local First Inclusion into the core business of Schools Forum forward plan.

Within the May 2023 report we are providing an update on:

- the Local First Inclusion reported to NCC Cabinet

- the process of tri-annual reporting (including copy of DfE reporting template) and selection of KPI's for Schools Forum to enable it to track activity and also to enable it to assist in influencing the system on key behaviours, for example referrals for EHCP and requests for Element 3 funding
- activity during the second half Spring Term across the five workstreams, with a particular focus on SEND Sufficiency and Capital (Workstream 5)

2. Governance update

Report to NCC Cabinet

NCC Cabinet received a report on Local First Inclusion programme on 10 May 2022¹, within the context of the conclusion of the DfE safety valve negotiations and the confirmed impact on resolving the cumulative and in-year deficit to the High Needs Block within the overall Dedicated Schools Grant. Extracts of that report are provided here for Schools Forum for ease of reference and to ensure consistency of reporting:

This agreement will enable the DSG to be brought back into an in-year balanced position by 2027/28 and for a cumulative deficit to be repaid by 2028/29.

This agreement is the outcome of negotiations between Norfolk County Council and the DfE that started in June 2022 and culminated in Secretary of State approval for our plan in March 2023. The term 'safety valve' is a DfE phrase which describes a series of agreements that they have entered into with a range of local authorities, however, in Norfolk this programme of work is now known as 'Local First Inclusion'.

Local First Inclusion is Norfolk County Council's next stage SEND Improvement Programme covering the period 2023-29. It marks the end of the first phase of our improvement planning, through the completion of the initial SEND & Alternative Provision Programme and our Written Statement of Action, having built the initial special schools and specialist resource bases and having a positive experience within the Ofsted/CQC inspection revisit in November 2022.

Local First Inclusion is directly linked to our negotiation with the DfE as part of their 'safety valve' programme, to provide both DfE and NCC investment to return the High Needs Block to in-year balanced budget and address the cumulative overspend.

In addition to revenue elements the DfE are also considering capital bids from NCC for two more special schools alongside the council's ongoing £120 million SEND capital investment. Local First Inclusion will continue the expansion of specialist provision, to reduce our reliance on high-cost lower quality independent sector provision but will have a renewed focus on mainstream inclusion and a reduction in the reliance on Education Health and Care Plans.

Local First Inclusion is all about improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND ensuring, wherever possible and appropriate, they can attend school close to their home/in their community with the support they need to make progress in their learning alongside other children of the same age.

¹ 10 Ma 2023 Norfolk County Council Cabinet Agenda, Item 9

<https://norfolkcc.cmis.uk.com/norfolkcc/CalendarofMeetings/tabid/128/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/496/Meeting/2048/Committee/169/Default.aspx>

We are improving support to schools/school leaders and increasing funding to schools to ensure they have the resources and expertise to provide the right support for children and young people with SEND.

We anticipate fewer EHCPs will be issued to children and young people because there will be better support available in the mainstream system.

In the majority of cases, children and young people with SEND will have better life chances if they are supported to remain in mainstream education rather than attending special schools with a more limited cohort of children and young people, and often a significant distance from their homes/communities

Our state-funded special schools offer an excellent and high-quality education for children and young people with higher needs SEND and we're investing in more state specialist provision for those children and young people with higher needs.

Confirmation of the total additional funding from the DfE, and the profile of the DfE additional contributions, was not known by NCC until March, just prior to publication:

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
DfE agreed contribution	£28m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£6m	£12m

As a result of the agreement with the DfE, the Council NCC will need to commit to contribute £5.5m pa towards mitigating the deficit for the next 6 years, and this has been included within the 2023-24 Revenue Budget and MTFS.

This agreement will enable the DSG to be brought back into an in-year balanced position by 2027/28 and for a cumulative deficit to be repaid by 2028/29.

Without any agreement with the DfE, Norfolk was forecast to carry a cumulative deficit of £75.976m at the end of the 2022-23 financial year. On the basis of the accounting treatment introduced in 2020 by the Government:

- the DSG is a ring-fenced specific grant separate from the general funding of Local Authorities;
- any deficit an authority may have on its DSG account is expected to be carried forward and is not required to be covered by the authority's general reserves;
- the deficit should be repaid through future years DSG income.

Throughout the negotiations the DfE reminded the Council that liability for the full cumulative deficit was, within the regulations, an NCC not DfE risk once the current account treatment referred to [above].

Norfolk's plan met those requirements and the multi-year plan submitted in January, combined with the additional DfE funding now agreed, is provided below. It should be noted that this is prepared prior to the 2022-23 outturn and aligns with the High Needs Block budget, and Dedicated Schools Grant budget as a whole, set by Cabinet on 30 January 2023. Additionally, the Council's revenue budget included £5.5m contribution per annum as agreed by Full Council on 21 February 2023.

The Council's £120m capital programme committed to investing in SEND and Alternative Provision state-funded provision remains fully active and is aligned to the multi-year revenue plan to bring the HNB back into balance and to repay the cumulative deficit. This includes activity to further expand special school places and specialist resource base provision that is anticipated to deliver over 1000 additional places, including the opening of two new special schools funded by the DfE through the Free Special School programme and the relocation of the Fred Nicholas school to a new site enabling the expansion of provision.

Financial monitoring reports will continue to report to Cabinet on the DSG in-year and cumulative positions. Further reports on the overall strategy, i.e. the Local First Inclusion plan, will be taken to Select Committee with regular updates of progress and implementation and Scrutiny as appropriate.

Under the plan, the Council will need to continue to consult maintained schools each year on the Fair Funding consultation request block transfers from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block. Norfolk Schools' Forum will be required to vote on any request for a block transfer on a regular basis and block transfers above 0.5% will continue to require approval from the Secretary of State.

As part of the monitoring required, Officers have established significant, system-wide governance including the involvement of Norfolk's Schools Forum to monitor progress towards the plan, which is vital given the commitment required of the wider system to deliver the plan.

Note: The outturn for DSG (including the HNB) for 2022-23 is set out in a separate paper to May Schools Forum elsewhere on this agenda

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
High Needs Block DSG Income	-120.578	-135.212	-141.484	-145.175	-148.682	-152.865	-157.846
1.5% Schools Block transfer	-8.529	-9.015	-9.196	-9.380	-9.567	-9.759	-9.954
Total income	-129.107	-144.228	-150.680	-154.555	-158.249	-162.623	-167.800
Maintained / Academy / Free Special Schools	46.878	53.584	56.351	58.883	62.115	64.828	67.038
Specialist Resource Bases & Deaf Resource Bases	6.314	7.966	10.466	14.291	17.959	19.497	19.887
Independent Special Schools	42.771	47.424	41.437	29.825	16.910	7.427	6.908
Alternative Provision	2.133	2.110	2.007	1.894	1.783	1.662	1.552
Short Stay Schools	8.400	8.831	8.203	7.578	6.957	6.339	5.726
Post-16 (Further Education)	8.173	8.631	8.864	8.620	8.386	8.160	7.960
Other Provisions	5.027	4.238	3.866	3.514	3.133	2.793	2.393
Inclusion fund (including mainstream SEN / EHCP support)	20.176	23.265	25.118	26.533	27.310	27.589	27.370
Speech & Language, Sensory, Youth Offending and Child & Adolescent Mental Health support & contributions	3.551	3.680	3.744	3.841	3.940	4.042	4.146
High Needs Inclusion Infrastructure, cluster teams including parent link workers	2.680	6.098	7.466	7.346	7.323	6.163	5.289
Other, including TPG/TPECG, H&SC levy and new school start-up costs	2.641	2.519	2.591	2.655	2.734	2.804	2.856
Investment contingency including Inclusion Fund	0.000	1.030	1.000	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total Expenditure	148.744	169.376	171.112	165.479	158.549	151.303	151.125
In-year +deficit/-surplus	19.637	25.149	20.433	10.924	0.300	-11.320	-16.675
Cumulative Balance without contribution	73.613	98.762	119.194	130.118	130.418	119.098	102.423
DfE Contribution	-28.000	-6.000	-6.000	-6.000	-6.000	-6.000	-12.000
NCC Contribution		-5.500	-5.500	-5.500	-5.500	-5.500	-4.923
Cumulative Balance	45.613	59.262	68.194	67.618	56.418	33.598	0.000

3. Tri-annual Reporting and KPIs

The process of tri-annual reporting (including copy of DfE reporting template)

The DfE have now confirmed the process for tri-annual reporting within their safety valve programme for Norfolk's Local First Inclusion Programme. A copy of the template is provided at Appendix 1.

In addition to narrative reporting within the template we are also required to submit a set of KPI's and updated DSG plan. A copy of these spreadsheets are provided at Appendix 2.

We are currently preparing the baseline information for each of these KPI's to include within the initial tri-annual monitoring report to the DfE (June 2023) and we will be providing the first set of tracking information for the second tri-annual report (September 2023).

Set out below are the key elements from the DfE's letter to NCC, received in April 2023, setting out the process of monitoring:

DSG 'SAFETY VALVE' AGREEMENT MONITORING

Following the publication of your Dedicated Schools Grant 'Safety Valve' agreement in March 2023, this letter sets out the arrangements for the tri-annual reporting on Norfolk's progress. The agreement committed Norfolk to report to the Funding Policy Unit (FPU) at the department in writing on the progress towards the savings targets and conditions set in the agreement.

Purpose

The department will use this tri-annual reporting to monitor the progress of all local authorities with Safety Valve agreements. The agreement also commits Norfolk to highlight to FPU any difficulties in carrying out the agreement as soon as they arise.

The tri-annual reports will also be used to trigger the release of funding to be put towards eliminating Norfolk's historic deficit. The total amount of funding for your authority in each financial year is stipulated in your agreement. As you know, payment of this funding will be subject to satisfactory progress towards the savings targets and conditions. Funding will be split into three payments across the financial year, and triggered by satisfactory progress reports.

Content

Tri-annual reports should cover the following questions:

Is the LA still on track to meet the deficit control and reduction targets as set out in the agreement?

What progress has been made towards implementing the conditions set in the agreement, and are the timelines set in your detailed proposals still on track?

What are the current risks to implementation, and how are you mitigating these?

Have there been any unforeseen difficulties or setbacks in implementing the agreement? How have you mitigated these?

Please also provide the department with:

- Any relevant Schools Forum papers.
- Details of any substantial changes to the senior staff at the LA responsible for implementing your agreement.
- In addition, we are keen to be able to increase our reporting on the positive impacts of Safety Valve agreements on local areas, and share learning where appropriate. One area we wish to explore in more detail is how each LA has responded to being involved in the Safety Valve programme by making improvements to its service delivery for children, young people, and their families. We ask therefore that you consider the positive impacts your DSG management plan is having on the experiences for children and young people, and ways in which your future monitoring reports could share these insights. If you could provide us with some information with future monitoring reports, such as an example case study, piece of narrative or contribution from your Parents Carer Form, that would be very helpful.

Schedule

Please provide your tri-annual update reports by the following dates:

- Report 1: 16 June
- Report 2: 15 September
- Report 3: 15 December

We will process the release of Safety Valve payments upon receipt and assessment of these reports. Assessment of the reports may require additional meetings, but we will not expect to meet with you every quarter. Without receipt of a progress report, we will be unable to arrange allocation of funding.

Selection of KPI's for Schools Forum to enable it to track activity and also to enable it to assist in influencing the system on key behaviours, for example referrals for EHCP and requests for Element 3 funding

At the previous Schools Forum meeting we set out a sub-set of these KPI's that we proposed providing specific updates on to each meeting, these were:

Norfolk County Council

Local First Inclusion : KPI's

LFI Programme KPI's

Ref		Prog	Measure most aligned to workstreams:				
			1	2	3	4	5
1	Actual EHCPs	Yes	Yes	Yes			
2	% change in EHCPs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
3	Net EHCPs Projected	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
4	New EHCPs	Yes	Yes				
5	Movers and other pupil flow including incomers into county	Yes					Yes
6	% of EHCP per head of population	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
7	% of pupils with SEN support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
8	HNB surplus / deficit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	HNB spend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10	HNB spend - direct (includes recoupment and future demand)	Yes					Yes
11	HNB spend - central	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
12	In Year DSG surplus/deficit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13	Cumulative DSG surplus/deficit - before safety valve funding	Yes					
14	Cumulative DSG surplus/deficit - after safety valve funding	Yes					
15	Funding gap as % of HNB allocation	Yes					
16	HNB DSG allocation	Yes					
17	Block transfers	Yes					
18	General Fund (Councils core budget)	Yes					
19	Savings/mitigation < 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
20	Savings /mitigation > 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
21	Average cost - all HNB 2 - 18	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
22	Savings /mitigation - all HNB	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Extract lines 8-17 for regular SF reporting

Norfolk County Council

Local First Inclusion : KPI's

LFI Programme KPI's

Ref		Prog	Measure most aligned to workstreams:				
			1	2	3	4	5
23	Average placement cost < 16s	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
24	Average placement cost > 16s	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
25	Average cost of in county special school < 16	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
26	Average cost of in county special school > 16	Yes				Yes	
27	Average cost of maintained / academy special school place - in county	Yes					
28	Average cost of maintained / academy special school place - out county	Yes					
29	Average cost of in county FE college place	Yes					
30	Average cost of in county Independent special school place > 16	Yes				Yes	
31	Average placement cost - alternative provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	
32	Savings / mitigation - alternative provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	
33	Ratio of placements, Independent vs Maintained special school	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
34	EHCP referral rates from schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
35	EHCP referral rates from parents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
36	EHCP referral rates from other professionals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
37	PEX numbers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
38	Number of independent providers	Yes				Yes	Yes
39	Number of independent providers with >1 place commissioned	Yes					Yes
40	Number in independent provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
41	% of SEMH independent provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes
42	Number in school based AP	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes
43	Average cost of new independent <16	Yes				Yes	
44	Average cost of new independent >16	Yes				Yes	
45	Average cost of ceased independent <16	Yes				Yes	Yes
46	Average cost reduction from independent placement renegotiations	Yes				Yes	

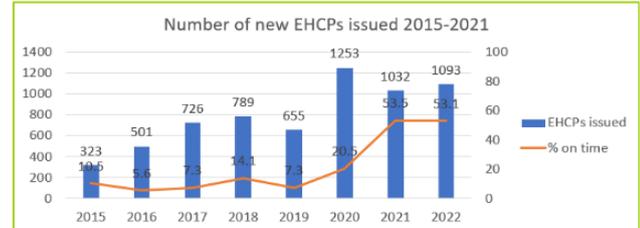
Extract lines 33-37 for regular SF reporting

Schools Forum are asked to confirm which sub-set of KPI's will be included within this regular report to SF.

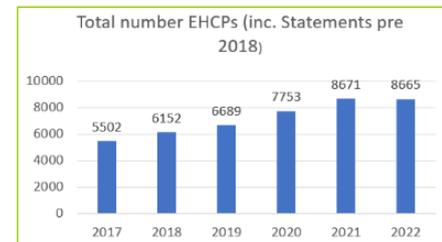
In confirming these KPI's we want Schools Forum to consider the current, ongoing, rise in Education Health and Care Plan Referrals and ongoing rise in requests for Element 3 funding. We believe these are effective proxy indicators for the status of the programme and want Schools Forum's support in addressing the underlying issues within the role of system leadership. For example, below is an overview of current EHCP demand.

Schools Forum need to be aware of the ongoing high rates of referrals and to work with us in influencing changes in line with the Local First Inclusion (workstreams 1 and 2) programme as we increasingly provide access to funding, support, advice and guidance within SEN Support.

Overview: EHCP Demand



- There has been a growing demand for EHCP assessment
- During the first Covid-19 lockdown there was a drop in requests for EHCP which also enabled an increase in the issuing of plans.
- Capacity is in place for 2023 to maintain the level of demand seen in 2019, and to clear the backlog of cases who have built up.
- It is crucial we manage demand at an appropriate level, so that resource is targeted where it is needed.
- The total number of EHCPs has reduced as more plans for 18-25 year olds have been reviewed and ceased.



Activity during the second half Spring Term across the five workstreams, with a particular focus on the SEND Sufficiency and Capital (Workstream 5)

The Local First Inclusion programme has been fully established during the initiation stage (November 2022 to March 2023) with progress within each of the five workstreams:



Each workstream is led at Assistant Director level within Children's Services and has dedicated project manager support.

A summary of progress / latest activity within these workstreams is as follows:

Workstream 1: Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice

- Strengthen the ability of the mainstream sector to work effectively with children with SEND needs, including investment in a range of new schemes, e.g., specialist lead teachers, school to school support, enabling further Special School outreach support, system-wide and targeted Continuous Professional Development, introduce therapies in schools accreditation, strengthen SENCO network, increase SEND advisory team, incentivise inclusion with better funding e.g., through revised mainstream top-up funding bandings to recognise increased level of funding required to support inclusion for those with the most complex needs.
- Continue and develop inclusion helpline, target termly engagement to focus on risk and performance, expand annual conversation with all Trusts, agree Inclusion Charter with every school, increase accountability for children's progress
- Improve systems and processes - review EHCP front door to assessment including promoting that all action has been taken at SEN support level prior to application, improve guidance and expectations for annual reviews, ensure systematic approach to identifying and supporting risk,
- Engage widely and very directly with school leaders, one to one with HTs/ Principals/ CEOs, with key groups e.g., HT Associations, Regional School's Director, Governors, Trust Boards, Teaching Schools, Education Improvement Area and other stakeholders, Tribunal Judges, Primary Care, build on strong relationship with the ICS
- Work closely and strategically with the Norfolk Learning Board and Schools Forum to ensure consistent communication, ambition, expectation and accountability

Progress Update:

- 380 mainstream schools (90%) now signed up to / using Norfolk's INDES & IPSEF models (Individual Needs Descriptors & Inclusion and Provision Self Evaluation Framework) to help schools consistently evaluate the needs of children and their ability to meet them. Additionally, INDES and IPSEF enable the LA to support and challenge schools regarding their SEN Support offer and to determine the level, if any, of top-up funding to mainstream schools.
- Revised top-up funding for mainstream schools bandings and guidance launched

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Norfolk Graduated Offer for SEND - Clarity of the current NCC offer will be shared with schools by May half-term
- Norfolk Commitment & Culture Change - school engagement activity is taking place during summer term. A "Norfolk Commitment" shaped by this consultation will be launched with schools in September 2023
- Alignment of Inclusion & SEND pathways - Clarification of pathways will be confirmed and published in advance of the School & Community teams roll out (see workstream 2)
- Development of support for SEND triage - based on feedback from schools, new school referral processes will be piloted in Autumn Term 2023
- Best practice support for SEND planning guidance - guidance, resources and case studies will be launched with schools in September 2023.

Workstream 2: Early Help and Inclusion

- Establish School & Community teams to provide support and proactive early help to CYP, families and professionals – providing support to groups of schools, predominantly in geographical groups in hub and spoke model. These teams represent a substantial new investment in additional specialist capacity to help mainstream settings include and succeed for children with special educational needs. As well as supporting special educational needs, the model is intended to link to wider early help services, e.g., reduction in parental conflict/ support around trauma, substance abuse, domestic violence, family networking, health support
- Build on our existing locality model, also linking with the national Family Hub model) to create a new infrastructure across the County of multi-agency services, school and community zones with SEND focused services to enable early support, challenge and intervention to schools and critically a relationship with families to build confidence in their local provision.
- Working directly with schools using data and information to form a profile of schools at the heart of their community to understand the determinants of need
- The new model will be underpinned by a new preventative approach to the identification of need. We will bring together data from a range of sources to identify children and families with emerging needs and to target early support. We will meet school leaders in every school on a regular basis to discuss these cohorts and to agree the appropriate steps for relevant children.
- Hold schools to account for working with children, families and multi-agency professionals to meet needs early and effectively

Progress Update:

- School leaders and Children's Services Teams have been briefed on the geography and purpose of the 15 School & Community Zones.
- Recruitment to the 15 School & Community Teams completed in March 2023 with staff induction scheduled for May/June 2023 for first phase teams leading to all teams established within first half autumn term 2023.
- Due to concerns raised by school leaders of the potential impact of current school-based staff leaving posts to take up these new roles we have analysed the profile of successful candidates and, where necessary, phased the set-up of teams to enable schools to back-fill to mitigate risks.

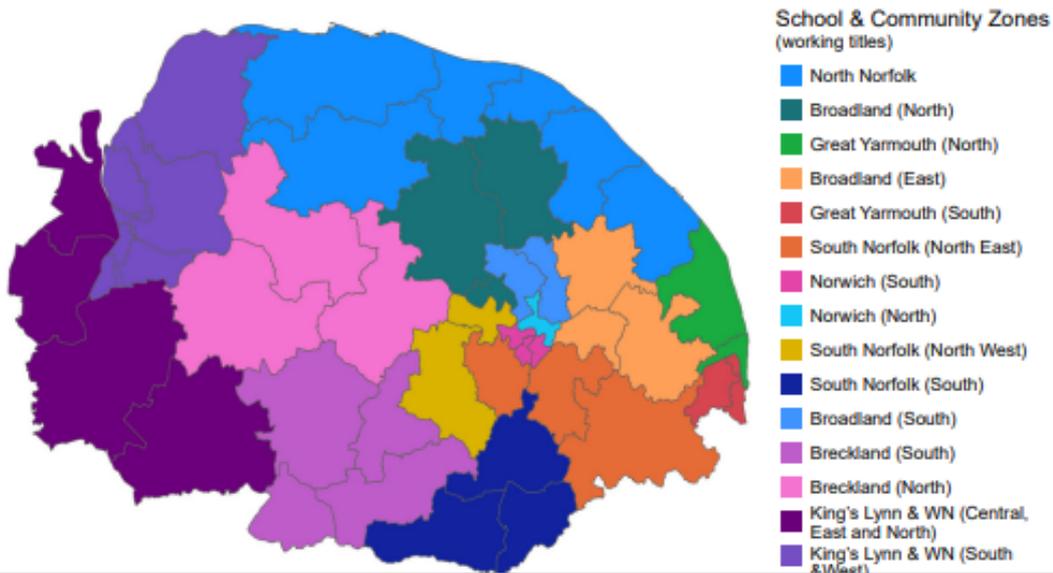
Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Ways of Working/ Community of Practice - feeding into the induction/training process to understand how to develop enhanced joint working between NCC staff and school-based staff, building on positive engagement leading to headteachers expressing interest in involvement of this next stage
- 2nd round of recruitment targeting June interviews for August start date
- Induction of first phase of new staff from June, including newly appointed Team Mangers

School and Community Zones/Teams are a key foundational element of the overall Local First Inclusion programme. These herald a new way of working and we have an ambition, beyond the Local First Inclusion programme, to develop zone working within an associated Learning Strategy. Further, we are actively considering ways in which other services within Children's Services and our key partners in the health system can consider locality working within these zones in a way that will bring multi-agency benefits to our work with education providers and communities.

Below are extracts from a recent communication to early years settings, schools and colleges setting out this ambition for school and community teams and zones:

Zone map



There are

15
School &
Community
Zones...

...with an
average
of **26**
schools...

...around **40**
Early Years
settings and
childminders...

...and
around
11500
children &
young people
per zone.

Each zone will have a **new team with an initial focus on children with SEND** and other emerging needs – to support inclusion in mainstream and prevent escalation. These teams will be a significant new element of the SEND / early help landscape.

Over time the offer for each zone will **expand to incorporate more services**. These zones will also be a key geography to engage schools and early years settings and support collaboration.

Overview

A key component of both the Local First Inclusion Programme and the new Learning Strategy is thinking about how the schools, early years settings, colleges, services and communities in different geographical areas of Norfolk can come together in the interests of children.

We are going to establish 15 'zones' across Norfolk to facilitate that joined-up approach and to act as our primary organising geography for strategic action.

For the Local First Inclusion programme:

We will deploy new teams into each zone, providing additional capacity to work with local schools and early years settings to support children with SEN and other emerging needs and help them succeed in mainstream education.

Over time, more teams from the Council and its partners will start to operate in or align with the zone footprint so that the system of early help is more coherently organised around groups of schools and settings.

As part of the Learning Strategy:

We hope zones will develop over time to support the creation of a truly collaborative, self improving system. In each zone we hope to see schools, early years settings and colleges coming together to look at their collective impact for children in their community and how they can learn from, challenge and support one another.

Over time, education leaders in a zone can join with wider services to look at collective needs, establish partnerships to drive improvement and to shape the zone offer.

Workstream 3: School Led Alternative Provision model

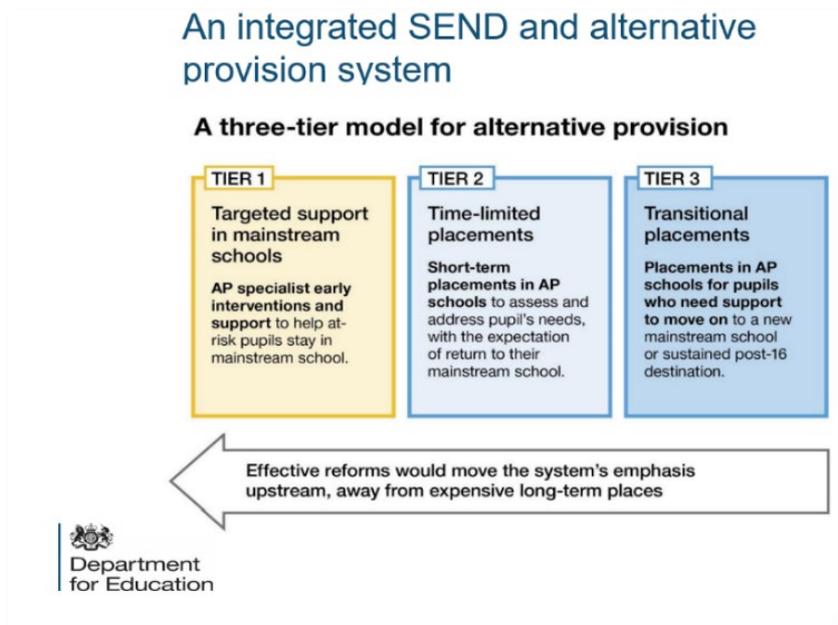
- Prevent exclusions and escalation to variable quality / high-cost alternative provision by developing local school-led provision in schools across Norfolk.
- New provision will be designed to support re-integration to mainstream as appropriate.
- Develop consistent thresholds for in-school inclusion support by developing further LA and peer support models
- Embed the principles and expectations of a 'responsibility-led' model so that schools adopt collective responsibility for all children and young people in their locality
- Reconfigure existing spend on alternative provision to enable school and community clusters to plan and arrange provision for pupils at risk of exclusions through delegating budgets which reflect the needs of local areas.
- Change admissions procedures for accessing alternative provision as a preventative strategy, so that schools can access specialist support earlier and successfully reintegrate into mainstream, preventing, whenever possible, the need for an EHCP or specialist placement

Progress Update:

- The test and learn approach within the Kings Lynn area has focussed support resulting in continuing to reduce suspensions and permanent exclusions. This learning will be utilised to implement change more widely.
- Independent Alternative Provision (AP) consultant secured to provide a position statement on current LA and AP Provider(s) to inform next stage of workstream.

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Anticipate outputs from DfE SEND & AP improvement plan pilots to ensure coherence between DfE AP 3 Tier Plan and Norfolk's Local Inclusion Programme for AP:



- Plan for an AP stakeholder group with external representation will be confirmed and shared
- Plan for school engagement activity will be confirmed and communicated with schools, as well as engagement activity with parents/carers and children to support workstream

Workstream 4: Commission/use Independent differently

- Introduce a revised commissioning / brokerage approach to deliver efficiency savings for all new placements
- Utilise an external negotiation tool to undertake a desktop review of contracts and to negotiate with providers for new, high-cost placements.
- Adopt the Gloriously Ordinary Lives (GOL) approach to the design of care packages – focussed initially on high-cost, existing packages and embedding of this approach across Norfolk for all new placements. This approach champions creative solution that enables independence where possible.
[gmhscp-gloriously-ordinary-lives-doc.pdf](#)
- Engage the independent sector in revised contract management, inc. 'groundwork' for SEND national policy paper in relation to tariffs/bandings
- Carefully and proactively manage the re-shaping of the market and in particular the reduction in the reliance on the independent sector – using additional leverage to more robustly challenge on cost and quality whilst maintaining sufficiency

Progress Update:

- Targeted communications and face to face briefings with all independent schools during the Autumn term 2022 to set out context for Local First Inclusion programme and scale of impact on independent sector.
- Offer of follow up 1:1 meetings with individual schools during Spring Term 2023 to begin process of impact at individual school level. Some schools have already undertaken meetings with us that have resulted in agreement to work together within concept of 'open book' discussions and noting, in particular, a desire of these schools to understand the staffing structures and operating models within

state funded special schools to determine their ability to move towards the average funding range.

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Continue engagement with individual independent schools to determine their response to implications for this sector
- Develop a framework for comparison of state-funded special school funding / staffing models with independent schools
- Continue to communicate with parent-carer forums and individual families to provide reassurance of commitment to vast majority of current placement continuity

Workstream 5: SEND Sufficiency Capital Programme

- Continue to invest £120m capital to expand special schools and specialist resource bases (SRB)
- Further expansion of the programme with a particular growth in SRB place numbers from 420 to 1132 with a focus on SEMH, ASD and with other expansion of SLCN and Cognition & Learning
- Ensuring growth plans into new special schools deliver as soon as possible
- DfE capital bid for 4th and 5th new special schools enabling the remaining NCC capital investment to be primarily focussed upon SRB and school-led AP expansions
- Deliver capital elements of school-led Alternative Provision model
- Remodelling current 'short stay school' enabling the creation of additional SEMH special school capacity

Progress Update:

- The third new special school - from phase 1 of NCCs SEND sufficiency capital programme - opened in January 2023 (170 place Complex Needs School in Easton) alongside the continued growth of cohorts within the first and second new special schools developed in recent years (100 place Social Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties School in Great Yarmouth and 100 ASD school in Fakenham).
- Expressions of Interest process completed for new (Phase 2) Primary Specialist Resource Bases with a very strong response exceeding expectations. Now proceeding to feasibility study and school organisation public consultation process to enable opening dates from spring term 2024 onwards.

Next period activity within this workstream is:

- Continue feasibility studies with individual schools expressing interest in hosting SRBs to determine viability and the capital plan for each scheme – summer term
- Progress 'school organisation' formal consultation at individual school level including Regional Director decision making for academies – summer / autumn term
- Provide final information to DfE regarding bids for two new special schools to enable decision in principle to be confirmed as final agreement –

anticipated June

- Prepare for Expressions of Interest stage for Secondary School ASD Specialist Resource Bases

This workstream has responsibility to ensure that the sufficiency strategy for SEND in Norfolk is refreshed annually and the key elements of capital are delivered, for example specialist resource bases and special schools. The current plan is based upon the final safety valve submission (October 2022) and this will have its first revision in spring 2024. The current capital delivery plan is a combination of schemes that were underway within the previous SEND & AP Transformation Programme (Phase 1) and those that have been agreed as part of Local First Inclusion (Phase 2).

Below is an extract from the most recent highlight report setting out all current and future schemes:

Phase 1 SRBs and Special Schools

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
5	31	Primary Complex Needs				
5	32	Primary Complex Needs				
phase 1, WSB	3.1	New Special School #1				
phase 1, WSB	3.2	New Special School #2				
phase 1, WSB	3.3	New Special School #3				
phase 1, WSB	3.7	Fred Nicholson New School plus expansion +45				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 1	New ASD SRB				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 2	New ASD SRB				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 5	New SRB +20				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 7	New SRB +8				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 7	New SRB +8				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 9	New SRB +16				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 10	New SRB +20				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 11	New SRB +20				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 12	New SRB possibly SLCN +10				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 13	New SRB SEMH +8				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 14	New SRB SEMH +8				
phase 1, WSB	Lot 15	New SRB ASD +20				
phase 1, WSB	EX 1	Primary ASD +8				
phase 1, WSB	EX 2	New SRB ASD +6	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc
phase 1, WSB	EX 5	Infant ASD +8				
phase 1, WSB	SRB Expansion	SRB expansion ASD +10				
phase 1, WSB	SRB Expansion	SRB expansion ASD +5				
phase 1, WSB	SRB Expansion	SRB expansion ASD +5			tbc	tbc
phase 1, WSB	SRB Expansion	SRB expansion ASD +10			tbc	tbc
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	John Grant School expansion +10				
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	Churchill Park expansion +20				
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	Sheringham Woodfields expansion +50				
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	DfE Sidestrand +30				
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	Fen Rivers Academy (new school being populated over 4 years) (opened as a primary school prior to Transformation Programme and the extension was for a secondary base)				

Phase 2 SRBs and Special Schools

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name
5	1	New Special School #4
5	2	New Special School #5
5	3	Secondary SEMH
5	4	Secondary SEMH
5	5	Secondary SEMH
5	6	Secondary SEMH
5	7	Secondary SEMH
5	8	Secondary SEMH
5	9	Secondary SEMH
5	10	Secondary SEMH
5	11	Secondary SEMH
5	12	Secondary SEMH
5	13	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	14	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	15	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	16	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	17	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	18	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	19	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	20	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	21	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	22	Secondary MLD/ASD
5	23	Primary SEMH
5	24	Primary SEMH
5	25	Primary SEMH
5	26	Primary SEMH
5	27	Primary SEMH
5	28	Primary Complex Needs
5	29	Primary Complex Needs
5	30	Primary Complex Needs
5	31	Primary Complex Needs
5	32	Primary Complex Needs

We are currently progressing the primary SRB's and received a very positive response to the recent Expressions of Interest stage. A total of 13 'lots' were available for primary phase SRBS (Complex Needs, SEMH, SLCN) and a total of 23 schools submitted EOIs. This is a very positive response to this first wave of specialist provision development within Local First Inclusion.

Following a moderation process we are now undertaking feasibility studies with individual schools alongside discussion of the detail of the operating model and this will complement the formal consultation as part of School Organisation regulations.

Within subsequent reports to Schools Forum, and the tri-annual reporting to the DfE, we will be able to update the delivery schedule to set out how many SRB's could be opened from our initial target date of February 2024 and the sequencing of growth from first intake to full capacity.

In addition to specialist resources bases we continue to monitor the growth plans of the latest new special schools built in Norfolk alongside additional provision across existing special schools:

Fen Rivers

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	Fen Rivers Academy (new school being populated over 4 years) (opened as a primary school prior to Transformation Programme and the extension was for a secondary base)				

Fen Rivers School opened as a SEMH special primary school in June 2018 through refurbishment of an existing site prior to Transformation Programme. An extension was built for a secondary base, completed for January 2022 to expand the overall capacity to 96 by 2024-25 through incremental increases over a 4 year growth plan.

DfE Sidestrand Re-build

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	DfE Sidestrand +30				

DfE led project, currently in feasibility stage, with up to 30 additional places available 2025/26.

The Bridge Easton

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
phase 1, WSB	3.3	New Special School #3				

Pupils with higher needs have been placed at the School and the Trust now proposes a ghost audit to confirm the Specification profile. This is planned for May with a possible revision in September when 40 more children will join the school. If there is agreement that the level of need is higher than specified, a change control will be requested.

The Duke of Lancaster

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
phase 1, WSB	3.2	New Special School #2				

3-year growth plan from January 2022 (21-22) to July 2023 (23-24). As at 4th April 23, currently at 76 on roll, 9 placed already for Sept and working to 98 as things currently stand. Admissions are confident will be filled as planned.

Bure Park Specialist Academy

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
phase 1, WSB	3.1	New Special School #1				

On completion of the ghost audit and discussions with the Trust and Academy Head, a project Change Control Request will be submitted for approval. The changes include a reprofile of bandings with associated revenue costs and an extended growth plan to capacity. The CCR will be reviewed by the Sufficiency Delivery Group in May

Sheringham Woodfields Expansion

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
phase 1, WSB	School expansion	Sheringham Woodfields expansion +50				

On completion of the Refurbishment & Expansion project, SWS proposed further works to create approximately 40 additional places. The project is currently in feasibility due to complete end of April. The project is currently due to complete 2025, with pupils joining between September 2025 – January 2026.

New Special School #4

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
5	1	New Special School #4				

Following the in-principle approval from the DfE for 2 new special free schools as part of the Safety Valve Programme, we can proceed in developing the project, documents and arrangements for both of these schools. Full approval will be subject to providing more detailed evidence about the proposals, which will be further assessed by the DfE. The project will provide a 170-place all-through school, catering for cognition and severe learning difficulty (complex needs) based in Great Yarmouth. Pupils will be age 4 – 19, with 6th Form

New Special School #5

Workstream	Project Number	Project Name	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23
5	2	New Special School #5				

Following the in-principle approval from the DfE for 2 new special free schools as part of the Safety Valve Programme, we can proceed in developing the project, documents and arrangements for both of these schools. Full approval will be subject to providing more detailed evidence about the proposals, which will be further assessed by the DfE. Provision of a 100-place all through school, catering for communication and interaction and ASD, based in the Downham Market area. Pupils will be age 4 – 16. Primary, Secondary, with no 6th Form

Communication to the Whole System

All Norfolk early years settings, schools and colleges have received a communication from Sara Tough, Executive Director Children’s Services, (May 2023) setting out an ambition for a new Learning Strategy for Norfolk alongside the Local First Inclusion programme. Below is an extract that provides the Local First Inclusion high level summary and a link to a video aimed at all staff within schools to ensure that, in particular, the programme of work within workstreams 1, 2 and 3 develop with engagement of those professionals who will be key in achieving the required transformation.

Local First Inclusion

Local First Inclusion is a six-year (2023-29) Norfolk County Council Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) improvement programme focused on improving educational support for children and young people and their families and providing earlier help. It builds on the county council's £120 million five-year SEND transformation programme which ran from 2018 to 2022.

The video below explains our approach to delivering Local First Inclusion, which you can watch by clicking the image:



Click to watch the explainer video

Workstream 1: Mainstream school inclusion, culture and practice

Workstream 2: School and community teams

Workstream 3: Modelling/funding/commissioning for secondary school Alternative Provision (AP)

Workstream 4: Using independent special schools differently

Workstream 5: SEND sufficiency and capital

Working with the team

If you have any questions about the programme, specific workstreams or projects, if you'd like to join in, or if you just want to provide your thoughts and feedback, you can send us an email at LFI@norfolk.gov.uk to start the conversation.

Chapters:



LFI Overview



Workstream Descriptions



How to have your say



bit.ly/NCCELFI

4. Schools Forum are asked to confirm agreement on:

1. The approach being planned for regular reporting to Schools Forum, i.e. overview of progress in previous period and focus on key parts of the programme across the year
2. The sub-set of KPI's to be used for regular tracking and reporting within Schools Forum
3. How best to influence the education system to assist the aims of Local First Inclusion programme, for example in relation to ongoing EHCP referral rates and associated Element 3 funding

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper, please get in touch with:

Officer Name:	Tel No:	Email address:
Michael Bateman	01603 307502	michael.bateman@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Appendix 1: DfE Safety Valve Tri-Annual Report Template

Appendix 2: DfE Local First Inclusion DSG & KPIs Spreadsheets

Appendix 1: DfE Safety Valve Tri-Annual Report Template

Safety Valve Tri-annual Monitoring Report – within NCC’s Local First Inclusion Programme*- June 2023

DfE Tri-annual report requirement elements	‘Executive Summary’
<u>Content</u>	
Is the LA still on track to meet the deficit control and reduction targets as set out in the agreement? Please demonstrate evidence of your answer.	
What progress has been made towards implementing the conditions set in the agreement, and are the timelines set in your detailed proposals still on track?	
What are the current risks to implementation, and how are you mitigating these?	
Have there been any unforeseen difficulties or setbacks in implementing the agreement? How have you mitigated these?	
<u>Additional Information</u>	
Any relevant Schools Forum papers.	
Details of any substantial changes to the senior staff at the LA responsible for implementing your agreement.	
In addition, we are keen to be able to increase our reporting on the positive impacts of Safety Valve agreements on local areas, and share learning where appropriate. One area we wish to explore in more detail is how each LA has responded to being involved in the Safety Valve programme by making improvements to its service delivery for children, young people, and their families. We ask therefore that you consider the positive impacts your DSG management plan is having on the experiences for C&YP, and ways in which your future monitoring reports could share these insights. If you could provide us with some information with future monitoring reports, such as an example case study, piece of narrative or contribution from your Parents Carer Form, that would be very helpful.	

*note: the term safety valve is not used within Norfolk to describe the programme of work and is instead known as **Local First Inclusion** and all of our engagement with schools, parent/carers groups, health and other professionals uses the term Local First Inclusion.

Safety Valve Monitoring template

Date Submitted	Target dates: 15 June (final submitted to DfE) 12 June (final signed off by Executive Board) 26 May (draft to Delivery Group)
Signed off by S151 Officer / Director of Children's Services	

Summary:

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 1: Develop further the culture and practice of mainstream school inclusion by improving the support offer to schools, enabling inclusion with enhanced inclusion support funding, and agreeing an Inclusion Charter with schools;	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 2: Improve the systems and processes for annual reviews	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 3: Develop a more robust and inclusive communication strategy, targeting school leaders, key groups, and working closely with the children and young people Strategic Alliance, Norfolk Learning Board and Schools Forum	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 4: Develop the early help and inclusion agenda by establishing School & Community Teams and Zones to provide proactive early help to children and young people, families, and professionals	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			

Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 5: Implement a school-led Alternative Provision (AP) model as a strategy to prevent exclusions and the need for an education health and care plan (EHCP) or specialist placement. This new provision should support reintegration to mainstream as quickly as possible and be funded through reconfiguration of existing AP spend;	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 6: Ensure that the needs of children and young people can be addressed earlier and more effectively, thereby leading to the 'stepping down' to special educational needs (SEN) support and 'stepping-back' from the over-reliance on the independent sector, by enabling local mainstream schools to support a greater complexity of need and increasing access to state-funded specialist provision	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 7: Revise the process for commissioning independent sector placements and review existing contracts	Q1	Q2	Q3
	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 8:	Q1	Q2	Q3

Revise the design of care packages in line with the local authority's (LA's) "Gloriously Ordinary Lives" approach, prioritising and investing in family, friends and community when building support	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			
Agreement Condition	Assurance Level		
Condition 9:	Q1	Q2	Q3
Implement Phase two of the LA's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency Capital Programme, which centres around capacity in special schools and specialist resource bases (SRB) and the construction of two new special schools	RAG	RAG	RAG
Progress Update:			

Emerging risks:

Any support required:

Summary of Appendices

Appendix 1	Specialist Resource Base and Special School Growth Plan
Appendix 2	Schools Forum PDF presentation March 2023
Appendix 3	Schools Forum Forward Plan FY2023/24

LFI Programme KPI's									
Ref			Measure most aligned to workstreams:					Data Source	Regularity
		Prog	1	2	3	4	5		
			▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		
	EHCP								
1	Actual EHCPs	Yes	Yes	Yes				Synergy	Termly
2	% change in EHCPs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Synergy	Termly
3	Net EHCPs Projected	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			SEN2	Annually
4	New EHCPs	Yes	Yes					SEN Key headlines	Annually
5	% of EHCP per head of school age population	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			school census	Termly
6	EHCP referral rates from schools	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			manual/Synergy	Termly
7	EHCP referral rates from parents	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			manual/Synergy	Termly
8	EHCP referral rates from other professionals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			manual/Synergy	Termly
9	% of pupils with SEN support	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			school census	Termly
10	Movers and other pupil flow including incomers into county	Yes					Yes	NR spreadsheet	Annually
	HNB								
11	HNB surplus (+) / deficit (-)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly
12	HNB spend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly
13	HNB spend - direct (includes recoupmnt and future demand)	Yes					Yes	My Oracle	Termly
14	HNB spend - central	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			My Oracle	Termly
15	Average cost - all HNB 2 - 18	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly
	DSG								
16	In Year DSG surplus/deficit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	My Oracle	Termly
17	Cumulative DSG surplus/deficit - before safety valve funding	Yes						My Oracle	Termly
18	Cumulative DSG surplus/deficit - after safety valve funding	Yes						My Oracle	Termly
19	Funding gap as % of HNB allocation	Yes						My Oracle	Annually
20	HNB DSG allocation	Yes						My Oracle	Annually
21	Block transfers	Yes						My Oracle	Annually
22	General Fund (Councils core budget)	Yes						My Oracle	Annually
	Savings/mitigation								
23	Savings/mitigation < 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
24	Savings /mitigation > 16	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
25	Savings /mitigation - all HNB	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
26	Savings / mitigation - alternative provision	Yes			Yes	Yes		manual	Termly

LFI Programme KPI's									
Ref			Measure most aligned to workstreams:					Data Source	Regularity
		Prog	1	2	3	4	5		
			▼	▼	▼	▼	▼		
	Average Costs								
27	Average placement cost < 16s	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
28	Average placement cost > 16s	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
29	Average cost of in county special school < 16	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
30	Average cost of in county special school > 16	Yes				Yes		manual	Termly
31	Average cost of maintained / academy special school place - in county	Yes						manual	Termly
32	Average cost of maintained / academy special school place - out county	Yes						manual	Termly
33	Average cost of in county FE college place	Yes						manual	Termly
34	Average cost of in county Independent special school place > 16	Yes				Yes		manual	Termly
35	Average placement cost - alternative provision	Yes			Yes	Yes		manual	Termly
36	Average cost of new independent <16	Yes				Yes		manual	Termly
37	Average cost of new independent >16	Yes				Yes		manual	Termly
38	Average cost of ceased independent <16	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Termly
39	Average cost reduction from independent placement renegotiations	Yes				Yes		manual	Termly
	Independent								
40	Number of independent providers	Yes				Yes	Yes	manual	Annually
41	Number of independent providers with >1 place commissioned	Yes				Yes		manual	Annually
42	Number in independent provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Termly
43	% of SEMH placements in independent provision	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Termly
44	Ratio of placements, Independent vs Maintained special school	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	SEN2	Termly
	Alternative Provision								
45	PEX numbers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes			Fex/Pex dashboard	Termly
46	Number in school based AP	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes	manual	Annually