

Devon's DSG Deficit Management & Sustainability Plans (Safety Valve proposals)



Challenges the Local Area faces which drives HNB spend

- **SEND cohort:** While the rate of growth of Devon's EHCP cohort slowed in 2022, the County still has a large EHCP cohort as a proportion of its school population (highest when compared to statistical neighbours). This is being driven by an extremely high request rate for EHCPs (6th highest nationally). A high request rate and subsequent high numbers of EHCPs can lead to a vicious cycle. Resources are pulled to the more specialist end of the system to assess, issue, and maintain EHCPs, this limits the resources that can be used to deliver early intervention and ensure effective support is available in mainstream settings. Our focus will be on tipping the system back the other way by developing early support to increase the SEN Support offer and setting clear expectations around Ordinarily Available Inclusive Provision (OAIP).
- **Primary needs:** Devon has a higher proportion of all SEND school pupils with SLCN and SEMH needs compared to England and statistical neighbour averages. Additionally, pupils with ASD and SLCN are more likely to have an EHCP in Devon compared to their peers across England. The secondary school SCLN rate is approx. twice the national average.
- **Sufficiency/school provision:** Devon school pupils with an EHCP were far more likely to be educated in an independent setting compared to their peers in other LAs. In 2023, Devon budgeted £289 per capita for top up funding to independent providers, which is double the England average of £141. This contrasts with the use of Resource Base provision which is significantly lower than SNs and England averages. DCC is also a net exporter of special school pupils, mainly to Torbay and Plymouth, contributing to a large SEND transport budget.
- **Outcomes:** Devon EHCP pupils in both primary and secondary schools had relatively strong levels of attainment. However, this is likely due to the size of the EHCP cohort, as cohorts that are larger tend to include pupils with less complex needs. Devon has high rates of overall absence and persistent absentees for both primary and secondary school pupils and a very high rate of permanent exclusions for EHCP primary pupils. SEN exclusion rates in secondary are significantly higher than England average.

How DCC will control the DSG deficit and reach an in-year balance (Themes)

DCC's strategies and plans to improve the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND and lead to a financially sustainable position, by focusing on the following **themes**:

Inclusion & Early Help

Focus on early intervention so that the majority of children have their needs met within their local mainstream setting, through strengthened universal and targeted support.

Preparation for Adulthood

Developing shared pathways into adulthood across the local system, supporting young people (14-25yrs) to access appropriate education and training and ensure a planned transition into employment, independent living, or identified next step in adult life.

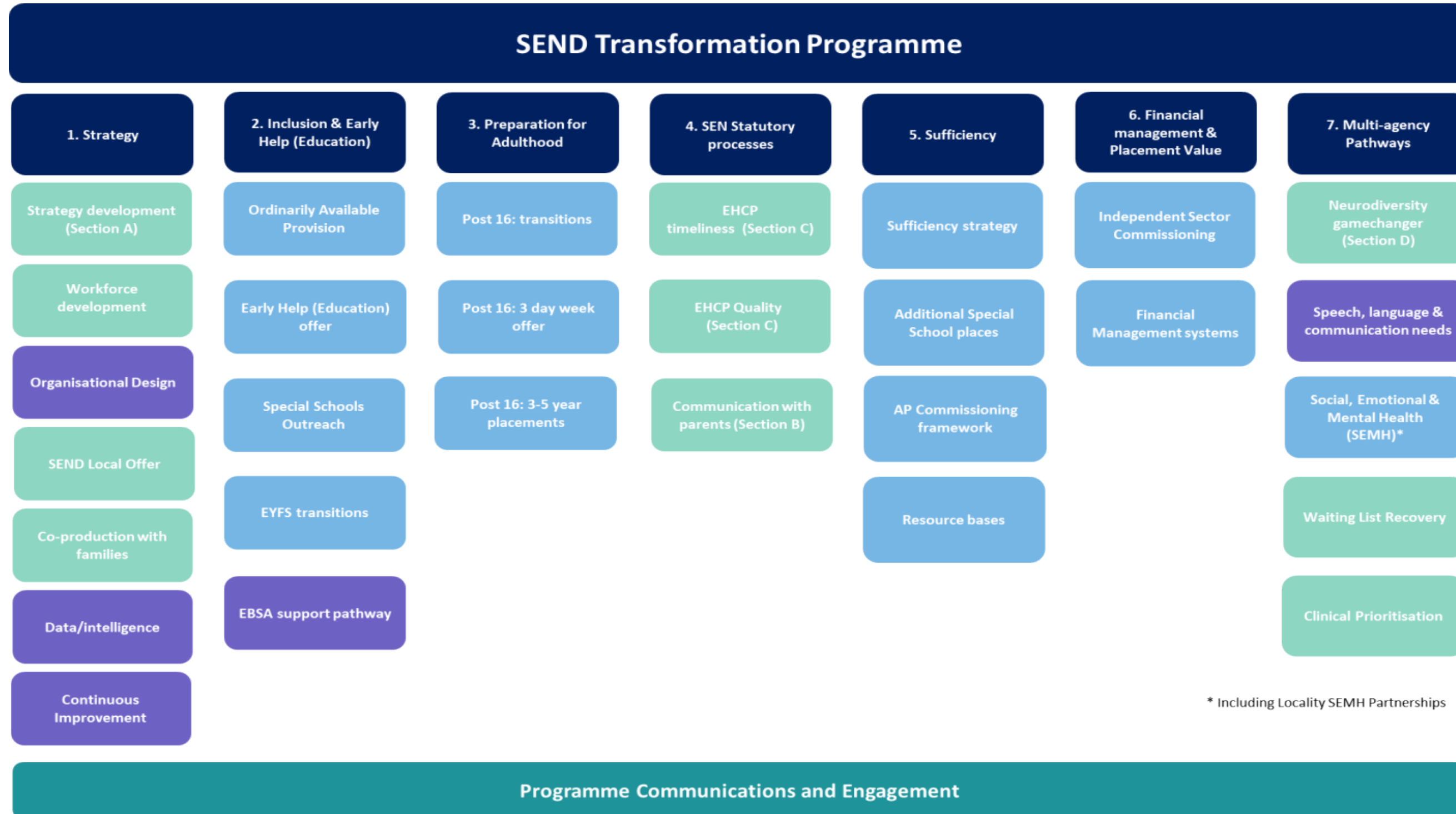
Sufficiency

Appropriate local provision is available to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND across Devon, including sufficient special school places, the establishment of Specialist Resource Provision and improved use of Alternative Provision.

Financial management & Placement value

Improve the use of data to make informed decisions about how the Council spends money to support children and young people with SEND in a timely way. Improving the commissioning of independent placements.

Devon's SEND Transformation Programme



* Including Locality SEMH Partnerships

■ Safety Valve activity
 ■ Post Ofsted/CQC improvement activity
 ■ Project management resources attached

How DCC will ensure that the plan is deliverable and will be managed as it is implemented

- In September 2023, DCC **committed a programme management team** to the SEND Transformation Programme which includes 1FTE Programme Manager, 1FTE Project Manager and 2FTE Project Officers.
- The **SEND Strategic Partnership Board** holds the partnership accountable for the delivery of the deficit management plan and the delivery of the Ofsted/CQC Accelerated Progress Plan (APP). The Board meets monthly and membership includes an independent Chair, DCC and NHS ICB Chief Executives, Senior DCC & NHS Leaders (inc. s151 Officer), Elected Members, Parent Carer Forum Devon, the Chair of Devon Schools Leadership Services (DSL) and the Designated Chair of Devon Special School Heads.
- The **SEND Transformation Programme Board** is responsible for overseeing the detailed delivery of the programme against agreed milestones and delivery plans and holding leads to account for delivery. Membership includes Director of Children's Services, Senior DCC & NHS Leaders, Project Leads, Parent Carer Forum Devon and appropriate representatives across the partnership. The Transformation Board is supported by project groups relating to specific areas of delivery. **Each project has an accountable sponsor** and resourcing, and monthly reporting includes delivery progress, performance indicators and risk and issue management. This Board reports to the SEND Strategic Partnership Board and this structure allows risks and issues to be escalated for resolution by accountable officers.
- DCC will **maintain these governance arrangements**, with potential **adjustments to the reporting and meeting schedule** to align with the proposed DfE Safety Valve monitoring arrangements. DCC is developing a **Safety Valve Dashboard** to support monitoring arrangements.
- Reports into the **DCC Strategic Leadership Team (SLT)** bi-monthly and **Cabinet** approximately 3 times per year
- Regular scrutiny through our **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** at least twice a year