

Minutes of the Leicestershire Schools' Forum via Teams on Tuesday, 13 February, 2024 at 2pm

Chair / Vice Chair

Martin Towers	Academy Secondary Governor
Suzanne Uprichard	PRU Representative & Maintained Primary Governor

Present

Jane Moore	Director of Children & Family Services
Alison Bradley	Assistant Director for Education, SEND & Commissioning
Deborah Taylor	Lead Member for Children & Family Services
Jenny Lawrence	Finance Business Partner for Schools & High Needs
Rebecca Wakeley	Education Quality & Inclusion Service
Dan Cleary	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Jude Mellor	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Kath Kelly	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Mark Mitchley	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Peter Leatherland	Academy Secondary Headteacher
Ed Petrie	Academy Primary Headteacher
Rosie Browne	Academy Primary Headteacher
Simon Grindrod	Academy Secondary Governor
Alison Ruff	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Jane Dawda	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Jo Beaumont	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Phil Lewin	Maintained Primary Headteacher
Rebecca Jones	Maintained Primary Governor
Rosalind Hopkins	Maintained Special School
Beverley Coltman	PVI Early Years Provider

Apologies

Beth Clements	Interim Head of Service for Education Quality & Inclusion
Felicity Clark	Academy Primary Headteacher
Kelly Dryden	Academy Special Headteacher
Val Moore	Academy Primary Governor
Lauren Charlton	Academy Primary Trustee
Jason Brooks	Maintained Special Headteacher
Robert Martin	Maintained Nursery Governor
Carolyn Lewis	Diocese of Leicester Director
Lisa Craddock	Post-16 Provider
John Pye	RC Representative

1. **Apologies for Absence/Substitutions.**

Apologies provided for Carolyn Lewis, Felicity Clarke, Jason Brooks, Kelly Dryden, and Val Moore. Beth Clements, Lisa Craddock, John Pye, Robert Martin, and Lauren Charlton did not attend.

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 21/11/2023 (previously circulated) and Matters Arising.**

Martin Towers discussed the minutes of the last Leicestershire Schools' Forum with forum members, presenting the opportunity to raise any issues or request amendments to the record. Rebecca Jones has noted that she is incorrectly listed as a Headteacher; she is a Primary Maintained Governor representative.

Martin Towers covered the three action points from the last forum:

1. Martin was to circulate a template to forum members that could be used by schools to address matters of concern with the Department for Education (DfE). **This template was not sent. Martin will send this template to forum members following this meeting.**
2. Martin has issued a letter to the DfE addressing the impact that changes to disapplication may have on smaller schools. The letter to the DfE has been included with the agenda, as well as the DfE's response.

Jenny Lawrence has amended the Growth Policy to reflect timescales in which the LA must provide funding to schools, as agreed in the last forum. This has been circulated to forum members.

3. **De-Delegation for School Improvement.**

The report was presented to the forum by Rebecca Wakeley, Senior Education Effectiveness Officer. The report presented the consultation response on the proposal for de-delegation of funding for school improvement functions for Local Authority (LA) maintained schools.

LA maintained headteachers have been consulted on de-delegation through a 4-week consultation period and a survey (see **Appendix A**). (Special schools are not included in de-delegation and so were not included in the survey.) Throughout this period, LCC Education Quality met with school collaborative committees, individual headteachers, and governors to ensure that all parties were well informed.

The survey had positive results. Of the 73 schools impacted by de-delegation, 61 schools engaged with the survey and offered responses. 37 schools (61%) agreed that the core offer from the LA offered good value for money. Of the proposal to offer £18 per pupil, 50 schools (82%) agreed with the proposal; 3 schools (5%) responded that they did not know if the proposal was good; 7 schools (12%) disagreed with the proposal; 1 school (2%) omitted a response. The responses from this survey have indicated support from headteachers for forum to approve the proposed de-delegation.

The comments provided by the headteachers shared a common theme highlighting the financial challenges faced by schools, although this did not change the positive reception to the proposals.

Recommendation: Schools Forum representatives for maintained schools are recommended to approve continued de-delegation for LA school improvement functions for maintained schools in 2024-25 at a rate of £18 per pupil.

Approved: 6 Rejected: 1 Abstained: 0

4. **2024-25 Schools' Budget.**

The report presented the 2024-25 Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) settlement for Leicestershire and the 2024-25 School Budget. The report highlighted that 2024-25 will be the second year in a row in which the DfE has not funded Leicestershire sufficiently to allow the National Funding Formula to be fully delivered. The County Council's Cabinet agreed on 9 February 2024 that capping gains on schools is the only viable option to close the affordability gap.

Simon Grindrod has asked if Leicestershire is unique in being underfunded or whether other LAs experience similar funding issues. Simon has also questioned whether there is anything the forum can do to push back against insufficient funding. Jenny Lawrence has reported that other LAs are facing similar affordability gaps and have needed to cap funding. Schools and LAs are not funded on the same census data, which means that funding gaps grow as the levels of additionalities increase.

2023-24 is the first year in which schools have accessed more growth funding than what was budgeted, and funding has been drawn down from the DSG reserve.

Recommendation: Schools Forum approves the retention of the budget to fund future school growth.

Approved: 16 Rejected: 0 Abstained: 0

The LA is funded from the schools' block to perform its statutory duties for all schools, as presented in the report. The DfE has guaranteed that funding will be sufficient to meet historic premature retirement costs.

Recommendation: Schools Forum approve the retention of budgets to meet the prescribed statutory duties of the LA and to meet historic costs.

Approved: 15 Rejected: 0 Abstained: 1

The LA receives funding for central early years expenditure. Centrally retained funding must not exceed 5% of the Early Years DSG, meaning a 95% pass rate to providers which is met for 2024-25.

Jane Dawda has inquired whether the LA gains the difference in any funding lag as the Early Years DSG remains subject to change as indicated on Pg. 27 of the agenda. Jenny Lawrence has noted that the LA will not know the funding for 2025-

26 until July 2025. There isn't a direct match between the Early Years requirements and the funding. However, the LA is statutorily required to fund places for eligible children where parents require that provision. This may result in a surplus or a deficit which is carried by the LA until there is an opportunity to address it.

Recommendation: Schools Forum approve the centrally retained early years funding.

Approved: 16 Rejected: 0 Abstained: 0

The DfE will allow funding to be allocated within the funding formula for 2024-25 but requires all lease agreements by the end of April 2024 to continue that approval for 2025-26. Whilst the LA has been doing this for a long time, the DfE wants greater visibility and decision making from the Schools' Forum.

Recommendation: Schools Forum note the DfE approval for use of the exceptional premises factor in respect of schools that incur rental costs for premises and / or sports facilities and the adjustments made in respect of age range changes.

Approved: 15 Rejected: 0 Abstained: 1

To reduce the affordability gap, Paragraph 31 to 38 of the report has set out viable options. All schools receive a minimum funding guarantee from the National Funding Formula (NFF), regardless of caps and scaling restrictions. Whilst capping and scaling have been required all funding allocated to Leicestershire for the NFF has been provide to schools in the 2024-25 funding formula.

Additional funding cannot be utilised to close the affordability gap due to Leicestershire LA's financial position. In addition, providing more funding to the NFF requires approval from Secretary of Education. The LA can reduce the values of the NFF in conjunction with capping and scaling, amending the Leicestershire Funding Formula to match the NFF, which requires consultation and approval by the County Council's Cabinet. This is not possible given the timeline between the receipt funding allocations and the DfE dataset in which school budgets are constructed. These datasets are constructed in late December and the required submission of schools' budgets in mid-January.

Recommendation: Schools Forum note the actions taken by the local authority in applying Capping and Scaling to the National Funding Formula for the purposes of affordability.

Approved: 13 Rejected: 2 Abstained: 1

The LA has informed the DfE of the number of commissioned places for state funded specialist institutions for 2024-25 academic year. Jenny Lawrence has noted that this prediction is difficult as actual numbers are not known until September of the relevant year. The return represents the minimum number of places to be commissioned. The LA can fund for additional places, if necessary, but the LA must fund for the estimated places at a minimum even if those places are not required. LA negotiates with institutions and in conjunction with SENA and providers to agree places to be commissioned (see **Appendix E**). Historically, the LA has always

funded additional places over and above those on the commissioning return. LA is responsible for funding all institutions in Leicestershire, even if those places are being filled by children from other authorities. The numbers provided to the forum in the report are the LA's minimum financial obligation.

Recommendation: Schools Forum notes the number and average cost of commissioned places for children and young people with High Needs.

The Early Year provider rates for 2024-25 have increased by £0.58 per hour for 3- and 4-year-olds and by £1.68 per hour for 2-year-olds. The rates, as delegated through cabinet and the lead member, will meet provider cost but 5% is retained by the Early Years' service, meaning the rate given to the providers will always be less than calculated.

Recommendation: Schools Forum notes the Early Years Provider payment rates for 2024-25.

The Notional SEN budget is a sub-calculation of the NFF; as a result, it has increased in line with the NFF. The LA's actions to meet Special Educational Needs (SEN) where the notional budget remains insufficient remains the same (as outlined in Paragraphs 72 to 74).

Recommendation: Schools Forum approve the action to be taken in respect of schools where the Special Educational Needs (SEN) notional budget is insufficient to meet the aggregated value of High Needs Funding Element 2.

Approved: 16 Rejected: 0 Abstained: 0

The LA has a mandatory requirement to remove funding from schools following the permanent exclusion of a student. The average per pupil funding is calculated with reference to the 2024-25 funding formula and is taken from the excluding school and given to the admitting school.

Recommendation: Schools Forum note the average per pupil funding to be taken into account for recoupment for excluded pupils and other purposes

5. **Any Other Business.**

Jane Moore presented a report that provides an update on the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme. The report details the work taking place so far within programme and references other work being undertaken within the service. There is a disproportionate number of pupils with EHCPs in Leicestershire compared to similar authorities. Spend on placements alone exceed the total funding received through the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Through 2023, TSIL moved into the implementation phase of implementing identified changes. The level of service within SENA was not able to meet the levels of demand. The service has undertaken a reset, including restructuring, and has projected the level of provisional growth needed to deal with the level of demand. This has resulted in SENA receiving additional funding, as well as dedicated teams

for assessments, placements, and reviews. The intention is to improve productivity and timelines and the LA is optimistic of the amended model.

Simon Grindrod has asked what measures are being used to monitor improvements through TSIL and what the timescales are for impending changes. Jane Moore noted that team managers are better equipped to use data to manage their teams; as per Paragraph 30, managers can review weekly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure strong oversight of performance. Paragraph 26 of the report has detailed additional resources to allow SENA to have more meaningful conversations with parents. **Jane will provide a suite of performance indicators of SEN performance to future forums.**

Rosalind Hopkins has questioned whether there is any early evidence to suggest that the TSIL programme's impact is offering value for money. KPIs mentioned in Paragraph 30 does not offer quantifiable results. Rosalind expressed concern that TSIL is not having the required impact and value for money. Jane Moore noted that that investment is mapped across the totality of the programme and that the LA predicted that the investment would not be recouped in savings during the programme's first year. The LA is still confident that it will achieve outcomes as the paper taken to Cabinet sets out reductions in cost. KPIs may not clearly evidence outcomes and experience within the first year of TSIL but the LA expects these impacts to be forthcoming throughout the programme.

The metrics used will be brought to future forum meetings by Jane Moore as the measures for inclusion and publication to schools would be useful to schools' information.

The Inclusion Practice Toolkit should rely less on anecdotal evidence to determine how it has been received by schools. The forum has recommended that a survey be completed for schools. Jane Moore agreed that more work is needed to gain a more in-depth view of what is working.

Simon Grindrod has questioned what the improvements to service will be to overcome regular problems. Simon has raised concerns regarding continued issues and delays in EHCP funding. EHCP funding is for fixed hourly rates despite the rising cost of provision due to inflation. Simon has also raised concerns regarding the delays in funding for EHCPs caused by the LA rejecting an EHCP application, only to accept the application before it is heard at appeal; the cost of this delay is subsidised by the school.

Jane Moore provided assurances that TSIL is looking at how the LA funds EHCPs to allow schools to fund on needs rather than funding on hours. Whilst in a position where LA is funding on hours, this will remain an issue as the LA has no powers to rectify. This is something the LA is working on with schools to resolve and to relieve pressure.

Jane Moore also provided assurances regarding EHCPs that decisions are made on the information provided and what is believed to be right for the child. When rejections are turned to approvals, this is for the better interest of the child and school to not go through the lengthy process of the tribunal. Whilst the tribunal overrules many EHCP decisions made by the LA, it doesn't change the LA

perspective that an EHCP was not required. However, Simon Grindrod suggested that the change in the LA's decision comes too late, resulting in the school subsidising costs throughout the process.

Regarding the 2024-25 Schools' Budget, Beverley Coltman queried the report which stated that funding rates for 2-year-olds increased by £1.68 but the actual figure shows a £0.60 decrease against 2023-24 rates. This was clarified after the meeting by the following:

The DfE introduced a new funding formula to pay Local Authorities for 2-year-olds in 2024-25, as the funded hours would no longer just be covering disadvantaged children. The new hourly rate for Leicestershire providers is lower than the hourly rate received in 2023-24, which included the one-off Supplementary Grant. For 2024-25, providers will also be able to access Disability Access funding and Early Years Pupil Premium for two years olds which they were unable to before.

6. **Actions.**

1. Martin Towers will circulate a template to forum members that schools can use to address matters of concern with the DfE.
2. Jane Moore will present performance indicators to a future Schools Forum.
3. Jenny Lawrence will check the figures in the 2024-25 Schools' Budget relating to 2-year-olds with the Early Years team and provide clarification to Schools' Forum. This clarification has been appended to these minutes.

7. **Date of Next Meeting.**

The date for the next Leicestershire Schools' Forum is **Tuesday, 18 June 2024** from **2pm – 4pm.**

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CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2024

TRANSFORMING SEND AND INCLUSION IN LEICESTERSHIRE (TSIL) PROGRAMME UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme. It sets out the progress since the previous update last considered by the Committee on 7 March 2023, achievements to date and next steps, as well as an overview of the current High Needs Block financial position.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The primary legislation regarding children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is the Children and Families Act 2014. The 0-25 SEND Code of Practice (2015) is the statutory guidance that sets out how local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups must work together to support children and young people with special educational needs.
3. The financial framework for pupils with High Needs and the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) are laid out within the School and Early Years (Finance) Regulations and associated guidance issued by the Department for Education.
4. In December 2018, the Cabinet authorised a consultation on the High Needs Block development plan, including proposed development of enhanced and expanded SEND provision across the County.
5. In October 2019, the Cabinet was advised of the progress of the High Needs development plan. On 5 November 2019, a report was considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, summarising the national and local context relating to SEND along with an overview of the plans to continuously develop and improve services to support children and families who are experiencing SEND.

6. On 21 January 2020, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that provided an overview of the Ofsted and Care and Quality Commission (CQC) SEND Inspection Framework. An update was provided on 1 September 2020, following the local area SEND inspection that took place in Leicestershire in February 2020, resulting in a Written Statement of Action. The report gave an update on the progress of the High Needs Block development programme.
7. On 2 November 2021, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report that provided an overview on progress against the Written Statement of Action. That report also included a further progress report for the High Needs Block development programme.
8. In March 2022, the Government set out its ambitions for changes to the SEND system and opened a period of consultation on the proposals which Leicestershire has responded to. The Green Paper, 'SEND review: right support, right place, right time' proposes some fundamental changes to the SEND system, including:
 - a. A single national SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) System,
 - b. Excellent provision from early years to adulthood,
 - c. Reformed and integrated role for alternative provision,
 - d. System roles, accountabilities, and funding reform,
 - e. A National framework for funding SEND.
9. In September 2022, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee the August 2022 considered an update provided about the commencement of the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme.
10. In November 2022, the Children and Families department was reinspected as a follow up to the local area SEND inspection that took place in Leicestershire in February 2020 by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). A full update on this reinspection was provided to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in a separate report, on 24 January 2023. However, the outcome of the inspection has further informed the progress of the TSIL programme, as detailed below.
11. The Scrutiny Commission received a report in March 2023 regarding the SEND Service and Finance which provided an overview of support to children and young people with SEND, the position regarding provision and the Council's financial position in relation to SEND. The Chairman and Spokespersons of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee were invited to this meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.
12. In March 2023, the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered an update provided about the commencement of the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme.

Financial Benefits and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Position

13. The financial position related to high needs is set out in detail within the 2024/25 MTFS report which is included as a separate report on the agenda.
14. The TSIL programme is focusing on improving outcomes and experiences for children and young people and their families in the belief that significant financial benefits will be delivered as a result (detail of workstreams below). The Pupil as currently formulated delivers £36.5m in cost reductions over a seven-year period to 2028/29 and is on track to deliver these benefits.
15. High Needs expenditure, despite cost reductions arising from TSIL and continued investment in local provision of £41.5m over the new MTFS period 2024/25 to 2027/28, remains significantly greater than the High Needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. For 2024/25 expenditure forecast to be 22% in excess of the grant and is forecast to increase to be 48% in excess of the grant in 2027/28. Over the period of the MTFS there remains an annual funding gap of c£15m per year, and a cumulative high needs deficit over the same period forecast to be £65.5m in March 2025, rising to £110.6m in March 2028.

Increasing Demand in the SEND System

16. Increasing demand in the local SEND System continues to affect the financial position of the High Needs Block of the dedicated schools grant and the ability to deliver assessments within statutory deadlines. As noted previously, between 2016 and 2020, there has been a 54% increase in the number of children and young people requiring an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Leicestershire (from 2,777 to 4,267). This compares to a national increase over the same period in England of 38% and in the East Midlands of 32%. At the same time, funding has not increased in line with this local trend. This trend continued through 2021 and 2022, with a further 38% growth in the number of children supported with an EHCP (from 4,267 to 5,888).
17. This increasing demand continues to create drift and delay in the Special Educational Needs Assessment (SENA) service and means that statutory deadlines, as set out in the SEND Code of Practice (2014) continue not to be met. In turn, this has continued to lead to a large number of complaints being received from parents and carers and concerns raised by local education settings. The number of appeals against decisions and growing number of cases going to tribunal, often leading to the Courts overturning the decision of the Local Authority, also continues to be an issue.

Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) Programme Overview

18. In August 2022, the Department embarked on a new change programme for SEND and inclusion, known as Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL). This programme replaces the former High Needs Block

development programme and whilst it builds on previous activity, it takes a different approach as it focuses on taking a whole-system approach to support inclusion in mainstream wherever possible. In addition, a third-party partner, Newton Europe, has been commissioned to support the programme, provide challenge to the system, and ensure an effective, child-centered delivery.

19. Underpinning the programme has been working collaboratively with a wide range of parents, young people, leaders, and staff across the education system (early years, mainstream, specialist provision and further education) and health, to design and implement an inclusive system that puts independence, outcomes, and educational achievement at the centre. The programme has also been defined by a desire to involve children and young people and their parents/carers and families as much as possible. It is critical that they are at the heart of the programme and plans for the future of the SEND system in Leicestershire and that they are involved in the designing and development of the work.
20. A diagnostic was undertaken in late 2021 to understand the challenges and difficulties in the local SEND system and to inform programme planning for the TSIL programme. Using the evidence and data from the diagnostic, which highlighted the biggest challenges to meeting the needs of children and young people in the right place at the right time, the delivery of the programme has been structured around four key workstreams:
 - i. Inclusive Practice,
 - ii. Service Transformation,
 - iii. Accurate Information,
 - iv. Communication and Engagement.
21. Throughout the programme, these four workstream areas have been connected and underpinned by a set of principles:
 - Maintain a focus on children and young people,
 - No one person or organisation can solve the problems alone,
 - Shift to a mindset of collective responsibility,
 - Work in genuine partnership,
 - Foster good working relationships,
 - Improved and honest communication,
 - Define roles and responsibilities,
 - Set clear expectations,
 - Make transparent and robust decisions,
 - Support children and young people early and close to home.

Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) – Progress

22. During the second half of 2023, the TSIL programme moved into an implementation and sustainability phase – where improvements that were created in the design phase are rolled out with the relevant teams or stakeholders to deliver change. There is a strong focus on ensuring that these

changes are sustainably embedded by tracking and driving measurable progress in each of the areas.

23. With the majority of workstreams having entered implementation at the start of this academic year, the TSIL programme is starting to have an impact (as outlined below for specific areas of work). However, there is still significant improvement to be made for many children, families and education providers – with next steps noted below.

Service Transformation

24. In September 2023, the SENA service underwent a reset, in which the former locality teams were refocused into teams with specific functions – namely Assessments, Reviews, and Placements. Five of the design workstreams were implemented simultaneously through this reset, with significant training and onboarding to new tools and ways of working taking place through the autumn term.
25. Impact on productivity and therefore timeliness – One of the key impacts of the reset is to allow case managers to work in focused teams, and thus significantly increase the productivity for assessments and reviews. This improvement has been seen in the first few months of the reset, with reviews throughput continually increasing week on week, and all aspects of an assessment completed within statutory timeframes excluding the request for advice. This has increased overall assessment timeliness (completed within 20 weeks) from 0% to 11%. Whilst we acknowledge that there are still many children and families with cases overdue, this progress shows that timeliness will continue to improve over time.
26. Impact on outcomes – trials undertaken during the design phase of the programme have highlighted the importance of earlier and meaningful conversations with parent carers and schools during the EHCP process to ensure clarity and consensus on suitable placement options. Accordingly, processes have been reviewed to incorporate these conversations and SENA staff have received appropriate training and signposting to supporting tools such as the Inclusive Practice Toolkit and the SEND Provision in Leicestershire (SPIL) guide and directory. These new processes are already having an impact on a significant number of children and young people.
27. Impact on communication – Improving communication was another key driver of the changes in the SENA reset – with new ways of working focusing on proactive communication with schools and parents around every aspect of the process. Again, this has not been perfect as the ways of working have been embedded and the capacity constraints on the Service continue. However, the quotes below show that these changes are starting to have a real impact for individual schools and families:
 - a. *“On a separate note - your support and communication in letting me*

know what is happening has been excellent. Please feel free to share this with any line manager. This has meant that I can manage parental expectations, support with staffing and recruitment and support staff in knowing what is happening too. As I have said before, I have been part of the TSIL / EHCP / SEND Peer Review etc and so I appreciate the difficulties and how hard you are all working but your communication here has been very much appreciated. It is the not knowing that is difficult.” – School SENCo.

- b. *“Hi, again, thank you so much for the thorough reply/investigating - we really do appreciate all your help with this and your quick responses.” – Parent.*
28. Impact on staff – The pressures within the SEND system have also been felt by staff within LCC, particularly those working in the SENA service. A further focus and benefit of the SENA reset is giving staff greater clarity on roles on expectations, with the majority of staff working in one of the three new teams as opposed to having responsibility across all areas. This is beginning to have a positive impact for staff within SENA (e.g., a case manager spoke passionately at a recent all-system event on the impact for them personally).
29. As part of the programme, the Council has worked with the Leicestershire SEND Hub, school leaders and other stakeholders to develop a guide and directory that allow comparison of different types of educational settings and provision available to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The SPIL Guide explains about the different types of local educational settings and provisions and how they can help to meet the needs and support children and young people with SEND. The SPIL Directory is designed to help parents/carers to choose a certain setting or provision for their child or young person and to be able to compare what they can offer but will also offer other professionals and interested parties a single source of information to refer to. It is intended to be used alongside other sources of information such as the Local Offer and the Inclusive Practice Toolkit. The guide and directory are not legal documents, and it is acknowledged that this directory doesn't constitute the only guide and directory to educational setting types available in Leicestershire.
30. Managers in the SENA Service are now reviewing weekly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure strong oversight of current performance and to identify any concerns or emerging risks and to put in place actions to ensure mitigations or improvements.

Inclusive Practice

31. The Inclusive Practice Toolkit was created because it was clear from design groups that people require more support to navigate the SEND system successfully. It outlines the process of provision for children and young people with SEND within Leicestershire and provides a framework to talk about

provision, as well as roles and accountabilities within the system. The Toolkit has been trained to both staff within Leicestershire County Council and colleagues in the education system, with a focus on SENCos. The toolkit has had significant reach, with the webpages visited over 4000 times during the autumn term, and a sample of SENCos showed that 50% of them had already been using it to support their work.

32. Setting specific planning has also been implemented. This is a process of high support and high challenge for a targeted group of schools and trusts who have data that indicates they would benefit from support with the inclusion of children and young people with SEND. The process involves a multi-disciplinary team of professionals reviewing data internally before meeting with the setting to discuss recommendations and next steps. This process was underway with a cohort of six schools and trusts in the autumn term, with challenging yet constructive meetings having taken place, with next steps in place.
33. Following on from last year's design groups, a refreshed system partnership structure is being set up that will:
 - i) involve groups & partners including the SEND hub, the SENCoNet, the system leadership group & the inclusive practice working group; and,
 - ii) prioritise and deliver on opportunities to develop practice in Leicestershire through a system inclusion survey. The continued shared ownership of challenges and solutions within the SEND system in Leicestershire is a key part of the sustainability and continuous improvement in the coming years.

Accurate Information

34. Workflows have been redesigned and updated in line with the new ways of working, increasing the accuracy of both the operational and financial data being captured.
35. This data is now collated and presented in new dashboards, which are used in many areas of the Service. The focus within SENA is on both case management, ensuring the timely allocation and completion of work; as well as performance – allowing managers oversight of their teams and taking action to drive improvement accordingly.
36. The Business Intelligence team are further developing permanent dashboards to ensure data visibility to meet the statutory reporting arrangements that the Local Authority is responsible for regarding SEND data.

Engagement, co-production and co-design with system partners

37. As noted above, working in collaboration and partnership is a core principle of the TSIL programme. Some of the key activity both to communicate progress through the programme as well as to foster co-production and co-design is

outlined below. A number of activities within the TSIL programme, such as development of the Inclusive Practice Toolkit and the SPIL guide and directory, demonstrate examples of co-production with schools and parent carers.

38. Throughout the programme, there has been a focus on providing regular updates to stakeholders and examples include a series of All System Events (all stakeholders) and internal staff briefings (for Council staff) providing information about Programme progress, next steps and evidence of impact. We have also maintained a System Leadership group with participants from school leaders in Leicestershire who have acted as representatives of the local education system and acted as a critical friend for the programme.
39. The relationship with the local Parent Carer Forum, the Leicestershire SEND Hub, has also been a key focus for activity. This has supported all phases of the programme and has led to a number of co-produced activities, as stated above. Work with the SEND Hub has been aligned to other activity and co-production around the departments Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) and the emerging DfE Change Programme and has contributed to the strengthening and maturity of the Council's relationship with this key strategic partner.

Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) – Next steps

40. Whilst there has been positive progress to improve services for children with special educational needs and disabilities, we know that there is still a lot of work to do, in particular around communication and improving timeliness and quality of Education Health and Care Plans. The TSIL programme will continue to drive and embed current improvements into 2024, as well as considering how the SEND system in Leicestershire can go further with new opportunities to improve and be able to be managed within the grant allocation.
41. Examples of other work that is continuing include work to review and improve internal decision-making processes (including SEND panels) and work to review current funding models. Where appropriate this work is embracing principles of co-production with involvement from Health colleagues, school leaders and the Leicestershire SEND Hub (parent carer forum).

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

42. None.

Background Papers

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 24 January 2023, SEND Reinspection:
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=7190&Ver=4>.

Report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 7 March 2023, Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1043&MId=7191&Ver=4>

Report to the Scrutiny Commission, 15 March 2023, SEND Service and Finance Update:

<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=7099&Ver=4>

The Green Paper, 'SEND review: right support, right place, right time':

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/send-review-division/send-review-2022/>

Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire Website:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/transforming-send-and-inclusion-in-leicestershire#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20Transforming%20SEND,with%20SEND%20and%20their%20families>

SEND Provision in Leicestershire (SPIL) guide and directory:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs-and-disability/education-and-childcare/send-support-in-schools/send-provision-in-leicestershire-spil>

Equalities Implications

43. There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report. Within the report, there is reference to a number of on-going programmes of work and activity and as these develop any potential equalities and human right issues will be addressed in line with the Council's policy and procedure.

Human Rights Implications

44. There are no human rights implications directly arising from this report.

Appendix

Overview of the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme.

Officer to Contact

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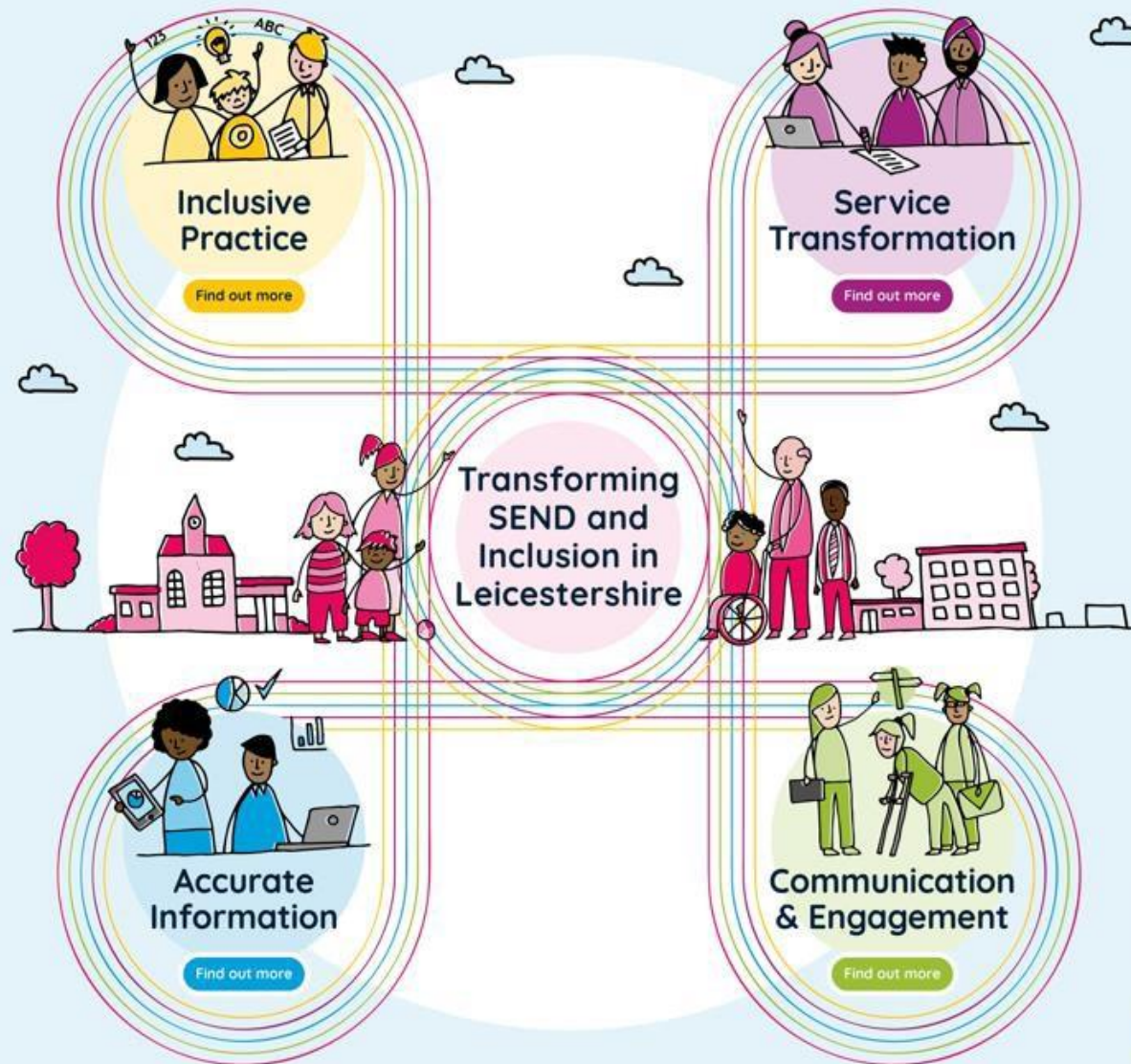
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Appendix - Overview of the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme

Leicestershire children and young people are supported by a system that is fair and transparent, to get the right support at the right time throughout their education

Principles:

- 1 Maintain a focus on children and young people
- 2 No one person or organisation can solve the problems alone
- 3 Shift to a mindset of collective responsibility
- 4 Work in genuine partnership
- 5 Foster good working relationships
- 6 Improved and honest communication
- 7 Define roles and responsibilities
- 8 Set clear expectations
- 9 Make transparent and robust decisions
- 10 Support children and young people early and close to home



For more information:

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 Transforming
SEND and Inclusion
in Leicestershire

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