

## SEND STRATEGIC REVIEW: FIRST-STAGE THEMES & VIEWS (WINTER 2018)

The following table is a collection of broadly-representative views on SEND provision in Sheffield as expressed by stakeholders including schools, professionals, and families and collected together as part of the first stage of a strategic review of this area. This is a live document and is being regularly updated to include the latest views and reflections.

### 1. PUPIL GROUPS

	GAPS/ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS
<b>Communication &amp; interaction – focus on Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More and earlier support for mainstream schools could help avoid a breakdown in the placement that can lead to home education/exclusion/alternative provision</li> <li>• Concerns about the capacity of the Autism Team – thresholds for getting involved feel too high</li> <li>• Very complex and challenging behaviour – could there be more support for pupils in mainstream and special schools?</li> <li>• Developing an offer that looks beyond education: i.e. support for high levels of anxiety, sensory issues, occupational therapy</li> <li>• Additional training for school staff re ASC, PDA, Behaviour management, anxiety, sensory.</li> <li>• Link and overlap with pupils with ASD and SEMH – how can we join up support?</li> <li>• Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) is an increasing need</li> <li>• How can we develop greater understanding of sensory issues relating to communication &amp; interaction?</li> <li>• High functioning and academic ASC children – gap between mainstream and special</li> <li>• Geographical spread – could there be secondary special provision for ASC in the North of the city?</li> <li>• Recognition that strategies and issues for CYP with ASD are often equally applicable to those without a diagnosis as many CYP share some of the characteristics of ASD</li> </ul>
<b>Social, Emotional, &amp; Mental Health (SEMH)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to develop quick/accessible support for mainstream schools for children with SEMH</li> <li>• Feeling that SEMH numbers are underestimated</li> <li>• Small nurture groups can work well</li> <li>• Support for children with complex/severe SEMH and non-school attenders</li> <li>• Improve the join up between education/health such as specialist SEMH schools and CAMHS</li> <li>• Links to children at risk of exclusion and joined up support/provision for this group of children</li> <li>• Availability of intensive support e.g. 1hr day SOVA</li> <li>• Developing greater understanding of anxiety, transgender, mental health in young people</li> </ul>
<b>Sensory &amp; Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical environments need to be more mobility friendly and need more breakout/small spaces in schools</li> <li>• Better physical access in some schools – what is the geographical spread?</li> </ul>
<b>Cognition &amp; Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional small-group nurture offer</li> <li>• Gap in support and provision between mainstream and special school</li> <li>• No IR provision at secondary level</li> </ul>
<b>Children at risk of exclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Links to SEMH support and provision</li> <li>• Gap in provision between schools/exclusion and PRU – not the only route for all excluded pupils</li> <li>• How can we smooth the route for reintegration and step back into mainstream school? Phased move and different options for individual needs</li> <li>• Youth groups and pastoral care - need a wider more wrap-around offer of activities beyond the school day</li> <li>• Need clear routes of support for pupils/schools when ongoing placement issues</li> <li>• There doesn't always seem to be enough tolerance/understanding of behaviour before exclusion - need to look at the underlying issues</li> <li>• Areas for time out</li> <li>• Ability to access alternative provision or differentiated curriculum such as PE/ART</li> <li>• Need to improve the consistency staff/techniques around transition points to reduce anxiety and smooth the journey</li> </ul>

<b>High cost/High need-Complex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough places for high needs children</li> <li>• No local authority residential school offer in Sheffield</li> <li>• High number of high cost placements out of city</li> <li>• Could we develop a graduated step between our local specialist schools and colleges and out-of-city providers to reduce need for out of city placements?</li> <li>• Pressure on Sheffield special schools – many of our specialist settings do not have the space that they would need to accommodate the most complex students.</li> </ul>
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## 2. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

<b>Early Intervention and Prevention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More cohesive approach in the early years where children are tracked and interventions managed earlier to stop escalation</li> <li>• LA champion key points like EYs early identification</li> <li>• Offer to family not just about education but about early help/mental health and family therapy</li> <li>• Need to respond early to developing crisis, e.g. attendance issues due to anxiety.</li> <li>• Need clear and consistent referral pathways, e.g. lack of clarity on who/how CYP referred to Portage</li> <li>• Children’s needs not recognised or investigated at early stage.</li> <li>• Improving behaviour support - MAST workers don’t necessarily have the skills/experience to support children with complex needs and look beyond more generic strategies such as parenting support.</li> </ul>
<b>Early Years</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better links and offer across school settings and private settings</li> <li>• Better use of data and planning early for school readiness</li> <li>• Not enough nursery / assessment places for children with complex needs at special schools.</li> <li>• Some parents report that nurseries are not sufficiently aware of their duties under the Equality Act e.g. may refuse to take disabled children who are still in nappies, or those with high levels of need.</li> </ul>
<b>Support for mainstream schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent provision</li> <li>• More support for mainstream schools could help avoid a breakdown in the placement that can lead to home education/exclusion/alternative provision</li> <li>• Need for more evidence that schools can and are consistently meeting needs in mainstream, particularly large secondary schools</li> <li>• Lack of option for flexi-schooling – combining school and home education</li> <li>• Reports of rigid approaches and inability/unwillingness to make reasonable adjustments</li> <li>• Need to increase the flexibility of the curriculum offer in mainstream schools e.g. improved differentiation in teaching, greater range and alternatives to GCSEs, independence and life skills training</li> <li>• Moves to address peer education and relationships - particularly social isolation, bullying and the potential for supportive peer relationships to be a huge positive.</li> <li>• Issues with the physical environment, e.g. lack of physical access, lack of breakout spaces / quiet areas / space for personal care, buildings that are not secure, sensory environment not suitable.</li> <li>• Improving physical environments – e.g. larger schools particularly secondary in school yards - ‘blind spots’ where children can’t be seen</li> </ul>
<b>Post 16 &amp; adulthood</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to develop transition planning, skills towards independence, specialist careers advice</li> <li>• Need for a greater range and choice at post-16, particularly developing a broader offer beyond catering, retail, horticulture, animal care or construction</li> <li>• Foundation Learning and Personal Progress courses are not always adapted to take account of students’ individual needs, e.g. lack of 5-day provision</li> <li>• Need better support in post-16 around speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, specialist support for those with vision impairments, or high levels of medical/personal care.</li> <li>• Need to continue support when students move on to level 3</li> <li>• There are gaps in provision for specific groups of students, e.g. those with high levels of anxiety who are capable of level 3 qualifications, and those with severe autism / severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour</li> <li>• Improve joined up approaches with social care/health on transition to post-16 and adulthood</li> </ul>

<b>Transition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current issue particularly on transition from primary to secondary and family confidence – pupils with SEND in mainstream primary seeking a special school on the move to year 7 - need for more evidence that schools (in this case secondary) can meet needs and are welcoming to families.</li> <li>• Need to improve the consistency staff/techniques around transition points to reduce anxiety and smooth the journey</li> <li>• Need to establish consistently good planning and information sharing with individual transition pathways – staff training ahead of the move, sharing staff to before and after the move</li> <li>• Parents found relationships with school harder as their children moved up through school into juniors and then on to secondary school.</li> </ul>
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### 3. SYSTEM ISSUES

<b>System, Funding &amp; Framework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair and consistent funding model needed for special/IRs</li> <li>• Overall view of a lack of specialist places and a need for more specialist capacity</li> <li>• Partnership model for sharing accountability across schools/LA/health etc.</li> <li>• Better planning and understanding of cohorts coming through, particularly expected in-year moves</li> <li>• Funding to follow child</li> <li>• More flexible access to teaching resources for children who function below their chronological age</li> <li>• Clarity about access to support such as locality funding for 1:1 support</li> <li>• Insecurity of provision e.g. fear that support/strategies will be withdrawn as soon as the child appears to be coping, fuels demand for EHCP</li> <li>• Local authority, whilst promoting more mainstream inclusion as the solution to the unsustainable demand for specialist placements, has not taken a lead role in trying to address these often very practical issues.</li> <li>• Integrated Resources: Parents have differing views as to whether IRs and hubs are inclusive or not. Some parents feel that having to travel across the city to attend an IR is not inclusive, while others think that the IR model works well and enables children to be included who wouldn't cope with full-time mainstream education. Recently, parents have been raising concerns that IRs have become too rigid in % time child spends in IR. No overall consensus as to whether IRs should specialise in specific types of need or be more generic. There is a gap in IR provision for Key Stage 1, and a lack of secondary IRs for students with learning disabilities.</li> <li>• There is a lack of transparency and accountability for the use of SEN funding. Some parents feel that by delegating High Needs funding to localities, the local authority has relinquished the few remaining levers that it had over schools.</li> <li>• The LA and CCG should consistently monitor whether provision set out in EHC plans is actually made.</li> <li>• Provision not flexible and fluid enough, for example by offering more split placements and trial placements.</li> </ul>
<b>Joint commissioning &amp; links with health/social care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better joined up commissioning of services and support between LA/health around areas like mental health</li> <li>• How do we increase and better target capacity of Speech and Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, CAMHS etc</li> <li>• Referral pathways to mental health services are too complicated, and this can lead to long delays in accessing support</li> <li>• Need better joint working with social care re. residential provision</li> </ul>
<b>Communication &amp; information sharing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication between LA/schools/parents not always joined up</li> <li>• Ensuring the Local Offer is clear, up to date, and user-friendly</li> <li>• Infrequent or ineffective communication with parents – how can we make better use of parents' knowledge</li> <li>• Perception that schools are worried that a reputation for good inclusive practice would make them “magnets” for pupils with SEND.</li> <li>• Schools not always welcoming to pupils with SEND – e.g. parents report being told the school hasn't got enough funding to meet their child's needs</li> <li>• Feeling that the allocation process for specialist placements is not transparent, with decisions made by anonymous panels, and rumours of head teachers “cherry picking” children.</li> <li>• Clarity and advice on provision - parents report that they struggle to find information about the type of needs that special schools and IRs are able to support, and that professionals can be reluctant to offer advice on placements. There is also a lack of information about mainstream schools that offer more specialist provision, such as nurture groups.</li> </ul>

#### EARLY POTENTIAL OUTCOMES: what could this mean for developing provision in the future?

A consistent theme is the development of a more fluid and flexible approach – a continuum of provision all the way from mainstream schools to the highest cost out of city places. This could mean looking at developing the following areas:

- *MAINSTREAM SUPPORT: Strategic joint commissioning of support for schools to support maintaining mainstream places, including staff training and development, short-term placements, therapeutic offer, sharing examples of good inclusive practice*
- *INTEGRATED RESOURCES & SPECIAL-LED HUBS: Strategic commission of integrated resources and/or hubs led by special schools to support local access to support, specialist/mainstream curriculum*
- *OUT OF CITY: Strategic joint commissioning with partners and neighbouring local authorities of places for the most complex needs*
- *PHYSICAL ACCESS: Identification and potential resource to address cold spots around physically accessible mainstream provision*

There are broader issues raised that go beyond the provision that is available including transition, assessment, communication, consistency and accountability, clarity for schools, the need to garner the mutual trust and confidence of all partners. These are crucial to reducing pressure, improving the system and ultimately improving the outcomes for pupils with SEND. These wider issues will be addressed through the city's draft Inclusion Strategy and the Inclusion Improvement Board.