

## AGENDA FOR

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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**To: All Members of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

**Councillors :** R Bernstein, D Berry, C Boles, U Farooq, E FitzGerald, S Haroon, G Marsden, L McBriar, M Rahimov, L Ryder and G Staples-Jones

**Co-opted - Independent Member:**

1. H Chadwick, Union Representative
2. A Malik, Youth Representative

Dear Member/Colleague

### Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee which will be held as follows:-

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, 11 July 2024
<b>Place:</b>	Committee Room A&B, Town Hall, Bury, BL9 0SW
<b>Time:</b>	7.00 pm
<b>Briefing Facilities:</b>	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
<b>Notes:</b>	

## **AGENDA**

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of Cabinet are asked to consider whether they have an interest in any of the matters of the Agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

### **3 MINUTES** *(Pages 5 - 10)*

Minutes from the meeting held on 07<sup>th</sup> March 2024 are attached for approval.

### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

A period of 30 minutes has been set aside for members of the public to ask questions on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

### **5 MEMBER QUESTIONS**

A period of up to 15 minutes will be allocated for questions and supplementary questions from members of the Council who are not members of the committee. This period may be varied at the discretion of the chair.

### **6 CORPORATE PARENTING CHAMPION**

Each Committee is required to have a nominated Corporate Parenting Champion; they will receive training from Childrens Services and will be responsible for advocating for Corporate Parenting matters in each committee.

If the representative wishes to also attend Corporate Parenting Boards scheduled for the municipal year 2024-2025 these are:

- 06th June 2024
- 02nd July 2024
- 10th September 2024
- 03rd December 2024
- 09th January 2025
- 04th March 2025.

### **7 BURY LOCAL AREA SEND INSPECTION REPORT** *(Pages 11 - 46)*

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People attached.

**8 EHCP MONITORING AND PROVISIONS** *(Pages 47 - 52)*

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to follow.

**9 EARLY HELP AND SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT JOURNEY UPDATE**  
*(Pages 53 - 58)*

Report of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People attached.

**10 URGENT BUSINESS**

Any other business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair agrees may be considered as a matter of urgency.

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- Minutes of:** CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
- Date of Meeting:** 7 March 2024
- Present:** Councillor Boles (in the Chair)  
Councillors D Berry, C Boles, A Booth, U Farooq, E FitzGerald,  
N Frith, L McBriar, J Rydeheard, L Ryder, G Staples-Jones and  
M Whitby
- Also in attendance:** Helen Chadwick, Unison Representative  
Daniel Lewis, Youth Representative  
Jeanette Richards, Executive Director of Children's Services  
Andrea Stone, Interim Director of Social Care Practice  
Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead  
Stephen Holden, Interim Director of Education and Skills  
Councillor L Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young  
People  
Councillor Lancaster  
Jacqui Dennis, Monitoring Officer  
Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services

**Public Attendance:** No members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:**

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**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies are noted above.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

**3 MINUTES**

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

**4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

One question was received in advance of the meeting and five members of the public were in attendance, two members asked a question and these are appended to the minutes.

**5 MEMBER QUESTIONS**

One question was received in advance of the meeting and this is appended to the minutes.

**6 IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

Further to the publication of the agenda the Chair agreed to change the Improvement Plan to item 6.

Andrea Stone, Interim Director of Social Care and Early Help provided an overview of the Childrens Improvement Plan, the report was provided to members ahead of the meeting.

Members were reminded that Bury Council had an Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) carried out by Ofsted between 25 October 2021 and 5 November 2021, which judged services to be inadequate. Following this an Improvement Board meets every two months to scrutinise and review the performance and quality assurance auditing.

The most recent Ofsted monitoring visit in November 2023 focused on care leavers, and inspectors noted that they did not see the same pace of progress in relation to improvement that they had seen in other areas on previous visits.

Members were invited to ask questions and raised the following themes:

- New internal infrastructure – Heads of Service now complete assurance reports to the Director of Social Care and Early Help to be scrutinised and improve performance.
- Struggles in recruiting to the post of Clinical Psychologist – however, members were informed by Jeanette Richards, Executive Director that there is a successful applicant to take forward to interview.
- Consultation with young people and what they want the service to look like – Members were informed there is regular consultation with the Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Forum and Youth Council.
- Business Support – It was clarified that support is now derived from the Children and Young People Department and not the Corporate Core.
- Liquid Logic – Work is being done to improve the system and a report on outcomes will be produced in the next few weeks.
- International workers – Members were informed twenty two workers were identified, seven have joined and four start on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

It was agreed:

- The update be noted.

**7 UPDATE ON SEND TRANSFORMATION PLANS**

Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead provided an overview of the presentation provided within the agenda pack.

Key points raised were:

- Development of the Education Health Care Team
- Development of SEND support
- Progress on school placements
- Reaching out
- Development of the 14-25 offer and Preparing for Adulthood

Members were invited to ask questions and the following was raised:

- The joining up of the new assessments team and the review team – members were informed both teams have performance meetings with Michael Kemp which have shown performance has improved and they have a single team manager.
- Redesigning of Local Offer – The offer has been redesigned but there are delays currently waiting for the IT system to upload it.
- Autism and Dyslexia awareness – many schools wish to attend these sessions and officers are happy with uptake.
- Graduated approach and early Intervention in lowering EHCP Plans – Members were informed that the approach is not to manage numbers, it is to match need at the right time at the right place.
- Discussions took place regarding the establishment of new Schools and sufficiency.
- Members sought assurance regarding the details of Resource Provision places
- Discussions took place regarding the new Radcliffe School. Members were informed there is a plan for incremental growth which will increase capacity, an update to be provided to members at a suitable future date.

Councillor Farooq and Daniel Lewis, Youth Representative shared support to the SEN Circle of Influence Event that took place on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February and the importance of a child and young person's voice in the delivery of services.

It was agreed that:

1. Helen Chadwick be provided with details of schools who have not progressed in the Resource Provision plan within Project Safety Valve.
2. The report be noted.

## **8 SEND TRANSPORT UPDATE**

Jeanette Richards, Executive Director, Children and Young People gave an update to Committee to provide assurances on progress with the commitment to provide a refresh on home to school transport policy.

During the beginning of the year (2024), the Council has been working with Bury Parent Carer Forum and the policy is out for consultation. The policy is on track to be presented to Cabinet seeking recommendations for implementation following the consultation.

Members were advised that the co-production is being undertaken with Bury's Parent Carer Forum and the consultation has been pushed out to all our stakeholders across the local area including schools and care providers.

The update is due to a response from the Department for Education changes around requirements for home to school transport and the LGO findings.

Councillor Boles raised a matter highlighted in the SEND Task and Finish Group regarding the cost-benefit analysis of lowering the age threshold from five to allow children to start school in the September with their peers. Councillor Smith confirmed that there is consideration to when this age threshold will be varied but this can be advised on following the consultation.

It was agreed:

1. Members should note the verbal update.

## **9 BURY VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT**

Gemma Parkes, Head of Virtual School provided an update in relation to the report. The report was included in the agenda pack to all members in advance of the meeting. The report details and evaluates the work of Bury Virtual School from September 2022 to August 2024 and to set out the key priorities for the academic year 2023-24.

Some highlights from the last academic year were:

- Strong phonics outcomes at KS1
- Secure GCSE outcomes in terms of progress 8 and attainment 8
- Expansion of training offer to schools including trauma informed practice, Speech Language and Communication needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health.
- Now have a dedicated Speech and Language Therapist
- Grant for additional tuition for children under the virtual schools
- Dedicated SEND lead within the team
- PEP Officer in place
- Good quality post 16 Support in place
- Since the publication of the report there is now a post 18 education employment and training lead in place

Members were invited to ask questions and the following was raised:

- Members were assured projected outcomes are looking more positive for this municipal year but results are not yet final.
- Bury School Ofsted rates have improved since the publication of the Bury Virtual School Annual Report and some Children have left schools which required improvement.
- Persistent absence rates have deteriorated from the same time last year but the service is working with some children who are new into care but there is an action plan in place for all these children.



Members sought assurances regarding the accountability of the Virtual School. Members were informed statutory accountability is to the Corporate Parenting Board and Virtual School Governing Board.

Members were advised 25% of Children were unaware of their personal educational plan however this is due to the service dealing with some very young children sometimes children may be frustrated due to lots of professionals being in their lives.

It was agreed:

1. Members to be provided with the total number of children who have had a school move this year.

2. Members of the Committee were invited to inform Gemma Parkes if they wish to be on the Governing Board for Bury Virtual School

3. Jeanette Richards, Executive Director provided an offer to the Committee for Nick Bell, Secondary Inclusion Lead who oversees children in alternative provision settings and undertakes quality assurance exercises to provide a detailed report back to Committee on this work.

## **10 EARLY YEARS SUFFICIENCY**

Jeanette Richards, Executive Director provided an overview of the early years sufficiency report. The report provides information on the work undertaken in the Early Years services since November 2022. The report outlines the progress made in building back the early years offer and the impact of this on the youngest children.

Members were invited to ask questions:

A member highlighted that Early Year's level of development for Whitefield is deteriorating and SEND is at 9.7, around half of the other areas. Members were assured that our SEND cohort of children are slightly below national average (20%) but higher than the Greater Manchester average (15.8%). The focus on early years is to create the best opportunities as possible and rebuild provision with early years providers. Health Visitor capacity has been one of the issues effecting early years checks and the impact of Covid and young children. Stephen Holden, Interim Director for Education and Skills confirmed that the quality assurance team has been investigating the matter highlighted by a member. Work is being undertaken to understand key schools in the Whitefield area to work with excellence schools in the borough to offer peer support.

Members were assured there is a Prestwich Children's Centre in contrary to the published report.

Discussions took place regarding the placement of children with suitable providers, member sought assurances on children being placed in suitable provision. Members were informed by officers that there is not a sufficiency issue but rather preference of providers placing barriers. The Council provides advice to support parents into early years settings but it is a private market. Nurseries are not required to admit all children and alternatively, parents do not have to send their child to nursery provision.

It was agreed:

1. Members note the report.

**11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN CASE - BRIEFING NOTES**

Jeanette Richards, Executive Director for Children's Services presented the report which set out the findings by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) made against the Council following the Council's failure to comply with agreed recommendations following two earlier investigations, and the action now taken by the Council to demonstrate that it has complied with those recommendations.

Members were notified that one complaint related to the Council's failure to provide appropriate free transport and repeated failure to remedy the situation within agreed timescales. The other complaint related to the Council failing to act properly when a child was out of education causing injustice, and the subsequent remedy not being carried out in agreed timescales

In response to questions relating to both reports Jeanette Richards, Executive Director gave assurances that these related to historic complaints and since this time stronger policies and processes had been introduced which clarified staffing leads and practice changes.

It was agreed:

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee noted the reports, decisions made by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the changes that have been made to ensure this does not occur again.

**12 RECRUITMENT OF A DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL CARE PRACTICE**

The Chair agreed to one item of urgent business to discuss the recruitment of a Director of Social Care Practice. Members were informed by Jeanette Richards, Executive Director for Children's Services, that the Council has recently sought to recruit on a permanent basis to the Director of Social Work and Early Help. Members were informed that upon reaching the final part of the process today the panel was unable to recruit to the position.

A Member referenced the original public documentation that stated the interim role will be up to six months and highlighted we are now in month five, if the role is difficult to recruit to why has quicker progress not been made. Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People confirmed that two recruitment rounds have taken place in this time period.

A Member questioned when will recruitment take place due to the high cost per day for the Interim position. Councillor Smith confirmed that discussions have taken place regarding a third round of recruitment and the recruitment of a suitable candidate to provide the best leadership for the service is of highest priority.

A Member highlighted the cost of the interim role is not budgeted for and is an overspend, and sought assurances on what the process is for filling the post on a permanent basis and stopping the overspend. Members were informed that Children are not let down or at risk due to the maintenance of an interim role and a reflection on the second round of recruitment will take place.

Councillor Boles ended the meeting by taking the opportunity to thank members of the Committee for their attendance, involvement and support to the Committee for the municipal year.

**COUNCILLOR BOLES**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9:40 pm)**

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<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Decision Type:</b> Non-Key
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<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> 13 June 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Bury Local Area SEND Inspection Report	
<b>Report of</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People	

### Summary

1. Between the 12th and 16th February, Bury's local area SEND services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. The inspection team identified widespread, systemic failings in services and highlighted the challenge that we need to do more to improve the outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs.

The inspection identifies 6 priority actions which Bury Council and NHS Greater Manchester ICB are jointly responsible for, along with 3 areas for improvement. As a result of the inspection outcome, the local authority will be issued with an Improvement Notice, and we will be subject to monitoring visits followed by a re-inspection in approximately 18 months.

### Recommendation(s)

2. Cabinet is recommended to review the cabinet report and Priority Impact Plan

### Reasons for recommendation(s)

3. To ensure Cabinet Members are sighted on progress of SEND improvement activity following our local area inspection.

### Alternative options considered and rejected.

4. Not applicable.

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### Report Author and Contact Details:

*Name: Beth Speak*  
*Position: Children's Improvement Manager*  
*Department: Children Services*  
*E-mail: B.Speak@bury.gov.uk*

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### 5. Background

In January 2023, Ofsted & CQC launched an updated inspection framework in relation to local area SEND inspections.

The scope of the inspection:

- Extent to which local area partnership arrangements ensure children and young people's needs are identified and assessed correctly, with participation from families in the decision making, leading to them receiving the right help at the right time and are well prepared for their next steps, achieve strong outcomes and are valued and visible in their communities.
- How the local area partners work together to plan and evaluate the SEND system, including the extent to which leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND, actively engage with children and families, have an accurate and shared understanding of local need, commission and plan services to meet these needs, evaluate services and create an environment in which effective multi-agency practice can flourish

There are 3 possible outcomes to a local area inspection:

- 1) The local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.
- 2) The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements.
- 3) There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently.

The inspection framework is also more closely aligned to the ILACS framework, for example:

- Local areas are subject to judgement inspections every 5 years
- Where weaknesses have been identified (or if there are serious concerns), monitoring visits will take place
- Annual engagement meetings between Ofsted and the local area, which will include a review of our self-evaluation (SEF)
- Thematic visits

Of the 33 inspection reports published so far under the 2023 inspection framework, 9 have been found to provide positive experiences, 14 inconsistent experiences and 10 have had systemic failings. There have been 5 inspections in the North West region – 2 were found to have inconsistent experiences (Warrington & Trafford) and 3 had systemic failings (Oldham, Halton & Bury).

## **Development of Priority Action Plan**

As a result of the inspection outcome, the Bury local area is required to produce a Priority Action Plan, which we are locally referring to as our Priority Impact Plan (PIP).

The PIP will by default will become the main strategic plan for SEND, setting out what needs to be delivered in the next 18-24 months with key milestones and key performance indicators.

Co-production has been central to our approach in the development of our PIP. We have made every effort to co-produce this with stakeholders, including parents and carers, however our methods of co-production in this instance have not been as measured nor inclusive as we would normally strive for due to the speed at which the plan has needed to be delivered (deadline for submission was within 5 weeks of the report being published). Timescales have proved challenging, including for our parent carer forum who have been fully committed and engaged in the process and have given up significant chunks of time over the 5-week period to ensure their views and lived experience shaped the plan.

A working group was formed to include key stakeholders from across the local area including our parent carer forum Bury2Gether, representatives from schools and colleges, Council, local Integrated Care Board (ICB), Virtual School, Pennine Care Foundation Trust, our SEND Youth Ambassador and our independent Chair of our SEND Improvement & Assurance Board.

Two workshops were held where we:

- agreed the values and principles which we felt were important in how we worked together, this included curiosity, courage, commitment, confidentiality, confidence and creativity.
- agreed the structure of the priority plan – what was important for us to capture?
- reflected on the priority actions and areas for improvement and through group activity, collected ideas and feedback for the actions needed in each section of the plan.

Following the workshops, we held two further development sessions and included our DfE and NHSE Advisers, to broaden the scope of the feedback. Our Parent Carer Forum (PCF) Bury2Gether have been committed and engaged, present at every workshop and action planning meeting and have provided detailed feedback at every step. To ensure all parents and families have had opportunity to provide feedback, we shared a draft, working copy of the plan on our Local Offer and invited feedback from all stakeholders through an online form.

Our SEND Youth Ambassador and Inclusion Advocate engaged with our children and young people in different group sessions, including:

- Millwood Primary School's school council
- Bury's SEND Youth Voice Network
- Wicked Wednesdays SEND Youth Club
- Bury's Children in Care Council
- Bury's Youth Cabinet

There are parts of the revised Project Safety Valve agreement (agreed in January 2024) that currently sit outside the PIP – particularly the development of new local specialist provision - and we are considering how best to communicate the synergy of the two interventions in our governance arrangements (see below).

As detailed within our Priority Impact Plan, we are also reviewing our performance reporting around SEND improvement so while headline key performance indicators

have been included, there will be a more detailed and robust dataset that will be reported into the SEND Improvement & Assurance Board.

The first action with our Priority Impact Plan is to distil the local area SEND Strategy taking a 'Plan on a page' approach, co-producing this with our parents, carers and young people. This will be written to and for our children, young people and families and will clearly set out the strategy we have taken in Bury in the last 18-24 months which has been to improve early identification and support, improve the availability of resources and improve access to services (including reducing waiting times). We intend to complete this work in draft in June and fully launch in September. A review of the SEND system communications and new Communications Strategy is also a key action within the plan.

### **Governance arrangements**

The newly formed SEND Improvement & Assurance Board (SIAB) is accountable to the Cabinet within the Council, and to the GM Integrated Care Board via the Locality Board, which operates as a sub-committee of the ICB Board. This Board replaces the previous SEND local area partnership Boards.

There are other Boards which are connected to the work of the SIAB but are not part of the formal reporting:

- The Health & Wellbeing Board operates as a standing committee on health inequalities and will be routinely updated on the work of the SIAB.
- The GM SEND Board co-ordinates interventions that require a GM wide commissioning response and is also a mechanism for sharing good practice; our Deputy Place Based Lead is a member of both Boards and acts as conduit
- Children's Strategic Partnership Board focuses on improved outcomes for all children and young people in Bury, and as such will be updated on the work of the SIAB as needed

The SIAB will meet monthly (first meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024), and will be independently chaired by Deborah Glassbrook who has experience of working with other local areas who are subject to intervention in relation to SEND. The Board will include strategic leaders from across the partnership:

- Bury Council
- NHS GM
- Bury2Gether
- Primary School representative
- Secondary School representative
- Special School representative
- FE representative

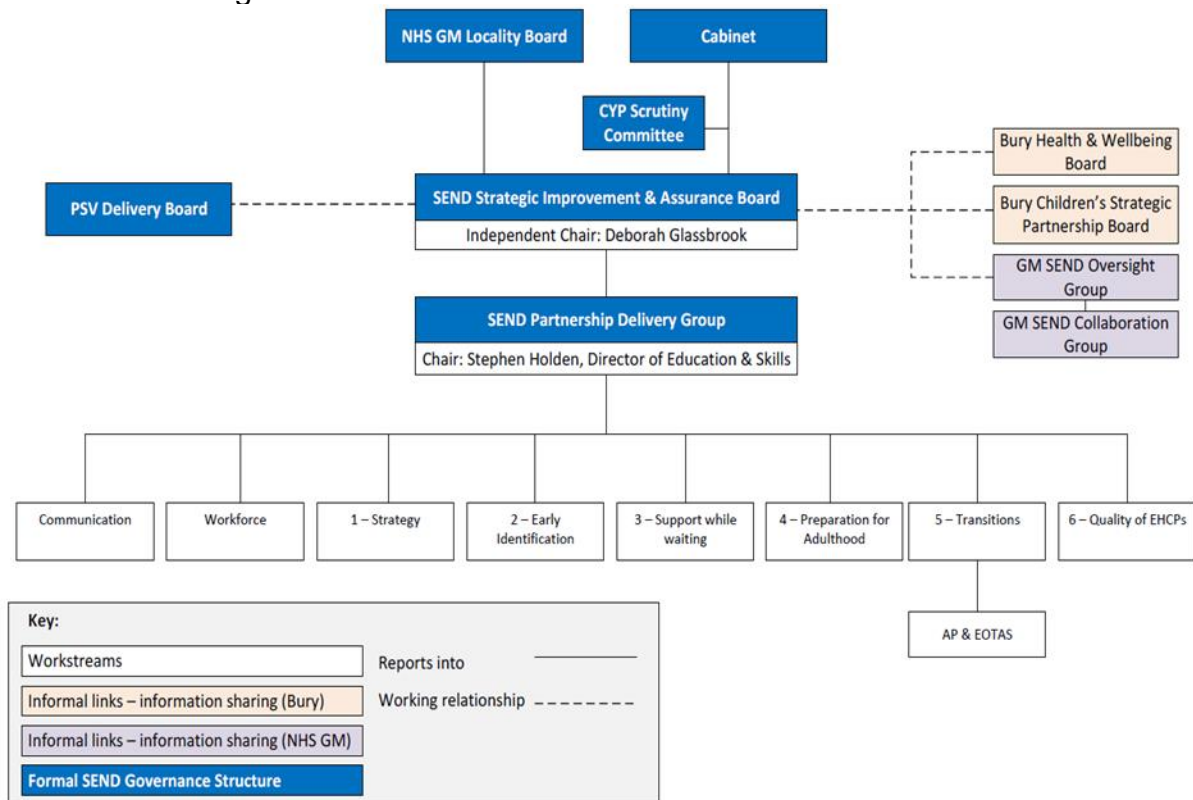
Each Priority Action has a nominated lead officer, who will be a senior officer within their organisation. The Workstream Leads will provide monthly highlight reports to the SIAB, and ensure monthly reviews of the risk register. Reports will be expected to provide updates on activity, performance data and quality assurance findings.

The Priority Impact Plan was submitted to Ofsted & CQC for approval on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024. On 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024, Ofsted confirmed (on behalf of Ofsted and CQC) that the plan has been reviewed and meets the criteria set out within the Area SEND



inspections framework and handbook, which also sets out the requirement for us to publish the plan within 5 working days. The plan was published on our local offer on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

Governance Diagram:



## 6. Links with the Corporate Priorities:

Please summarise how this links to the Let's Do It Strategy.

The proposed actions outlined in this report support key ambitions of the Let's Do It strategy:

- A better outcome for the Children & Young People

## Equality Impact and Considerations:

Please provide an explanation of the outcome(s) of an initial or full EIA and make **specific reference regarding the protected characteristic of Looked After Children**. Intranet link to EIA documents is [here](#).

7. This report is providing an update to the outcome of our local area SEND inspection and at this stage no decisions, actions or activities are being considered therefore no EIA is required.

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**Environmental Impact and Considerations:**

Please provide an explanation of the Environmental impact of this decision. Please include the impact on both **Carbon emissions** (contact [climate@bury.gov.uk](mailto:climate@bury.gov.uk) for advice) and **Biodiversity** (contact [c.m.wilkinson@bury.gov.uk](mailto:c.m.wilkinson@bury.gov.uk) for advice)

8. N/A

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**Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:**

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Local area does not make the needed improvements for children and young people with SEND, and their families	Priority Impact Plan (PIP) SEND Improvement Assurance Board – holding the local area to account on the PIP

A risk register is being developed under the SIAB and will be reviewed monthly by all workstream leads, ensuring that the Board has sight of any risks so issues can be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

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**Legal Implications:**

To be completed by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

9.

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**Financial Implications:**

To be completed by the Council's Section 151 Officer.

10.

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**Appendices:**

Please list any appended documents.

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**Background papers:**

Please list any background documents to this report and include a hyperlink where possible.

Bury Local Area SEND Inspection report:  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80443>

Priority Impact Plan: <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/news/send-improvement-plan>

**Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.**

<b>Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
CQC	Care Quality Commission
FE	Further Education
ICB	Integrated Care Board
NHS GM	NHS Greater Manchester
PCF	Parent Carer Forum
PIP	Priority Impact Plan
SEND	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
SIAB	SEND Improvement Assurance Board

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# Bury Local Area SEND Partnership Priority Impact Plan

June 2024

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Priority Action 2: Leaders across the partnership should work collaboratively and effectively to improve the early identification of children and young people’s SEND as part of the graduated approach. In particular, they should urgently improve: .....	12
Priority 3: Leaders across the partnership should improve the quality and availability of support for children, young people and their families while they wait for specialist assessments. This includes:.....	14
Priority Action 4: Leaders across the partnership should improve preparation for adulthood from the earliest ages for all children and young people with SEND in Bury. This should include a well understood and co-produced strategy to embed preparation for adulthood effectively across the partnership.....	17
Priority Action 5: Leaders across the partnership should establish and implement a strategic approach to high-quality transitions for children and young people with SEND from birth to 25.....	19
Priority Action 6: Leaders across the partnership should further improve the quality of the statutory EHC plan process. This should include: .....	21
Area for Improvement 1: Leaders across the partnership should improve communication to professionals, parents and carers and children and young people so that their strategies, actions and impact are better understood and that trust in the SEND system improves. The partnership should ensure that the local offer is updated regularly to provide parents, carers and other stakeholders with sufficiently accurate information. ....	24
Area for Improvement 2: Leaders across the partnership should continue to develop the range of suitable AP available to children and young people in Bury. Leaders should further embed the improved oversight of AP and EOTAS packages in Bury. They should publish the refreshed policy for EOTAS, providing support so that this policy is clearly understood. ....	25
Area for Improvement 3: Leaders across the partnership should work collaboratively to create a partnership-wide workforce development strategy. This should focus on coordinating training support and guidance to improve health, social care and education professionals’ ability to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, from birth to 25.....	27

## Introduction

In February 2024, Bury's SEND services were inspected by the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. The inspection team identified widespread, systemic failings in services in Bury and highlighted the challenge that we as a partnership know and have heard from our parents – we need to do more to improve the outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

The challenges we face are considerable, with an increasing number of children with special educational needs and disabilities requiring support and increasing costs in delivering services. This has created issues in waiting times and in delivering our services and has also created a significant financial gap that we must also solve, to ensure that we do not have further issues in the future. To achieve this, we are being supported by the Department for Education's Safety Valve programme (PSV), supporting investment in our local system that will enable us to deliver the right services and support to our children, in a sustainable way.

We have worked hard with parent/carer forum BURY2GETHER and our partners to co-produce this Priority Impact Plan for Bury's SEND services. Both our Priority Impact Plan and the Safety Valve programme have one clear ambition: to ensure that we use the resources we have, to best meet the needs of our children with special educational needs and disabilities.

This is not the start of the journey, and along with the support of our schools, parents, carers and partner organisations such as Bury2Gether we have begun to make improvements for the future: building brand new Special Schools and creating more places for children with special educational needs and disabilities in existing schools, to ensure that we can support the children of Bury in Bury. As a local area partnership, we are committed to accelerate the pace and sustainability of improvement of services for children and young people with SEND and their families. We are committed to a genuine model of co-production, working with a children, young people and parents in the development of services and we are committed to ensuring that the lived experience of children and young people with SEND and their families is used to shape our assessment of progress, and impact on outcomes for children.

## Governance

A new SEND Improvement & Assurance Board (SIAB) has been established to provide strategic system and partnership leadership, assurance and oversight of our progress in responding to the priority actions and areas for improvement identified in the inspection.

The SIAB is accountable to the Cabinet within the Council, and to the GM Integrated Care Board via the Locality Board, which operates as a sub-committee of the ICB Board. The Independent Chair will provide 6 monthly reports to the Cabinet and GM ICB on the work and progress of the SIAB.

There are other Boards which are connected to the work of the SIAB but are not part of the formal reporting arrangements:

- The Health & Wellbeing Board operates as a standing committee on health inequalities and will be routinely updated on the work of the SIAB;
- The GM SEND Board co-ordinates interventions that require a GM wide commissioning response and is also a mechanism for sharing good practice;

- Children’s Strategic Partnership Board focuses on improved outcomes for all children and young people in Bury, and as such will be updated on the work of the SIAB.

The SIAB will meet monthly and will include strategic leaders from across the partnership:

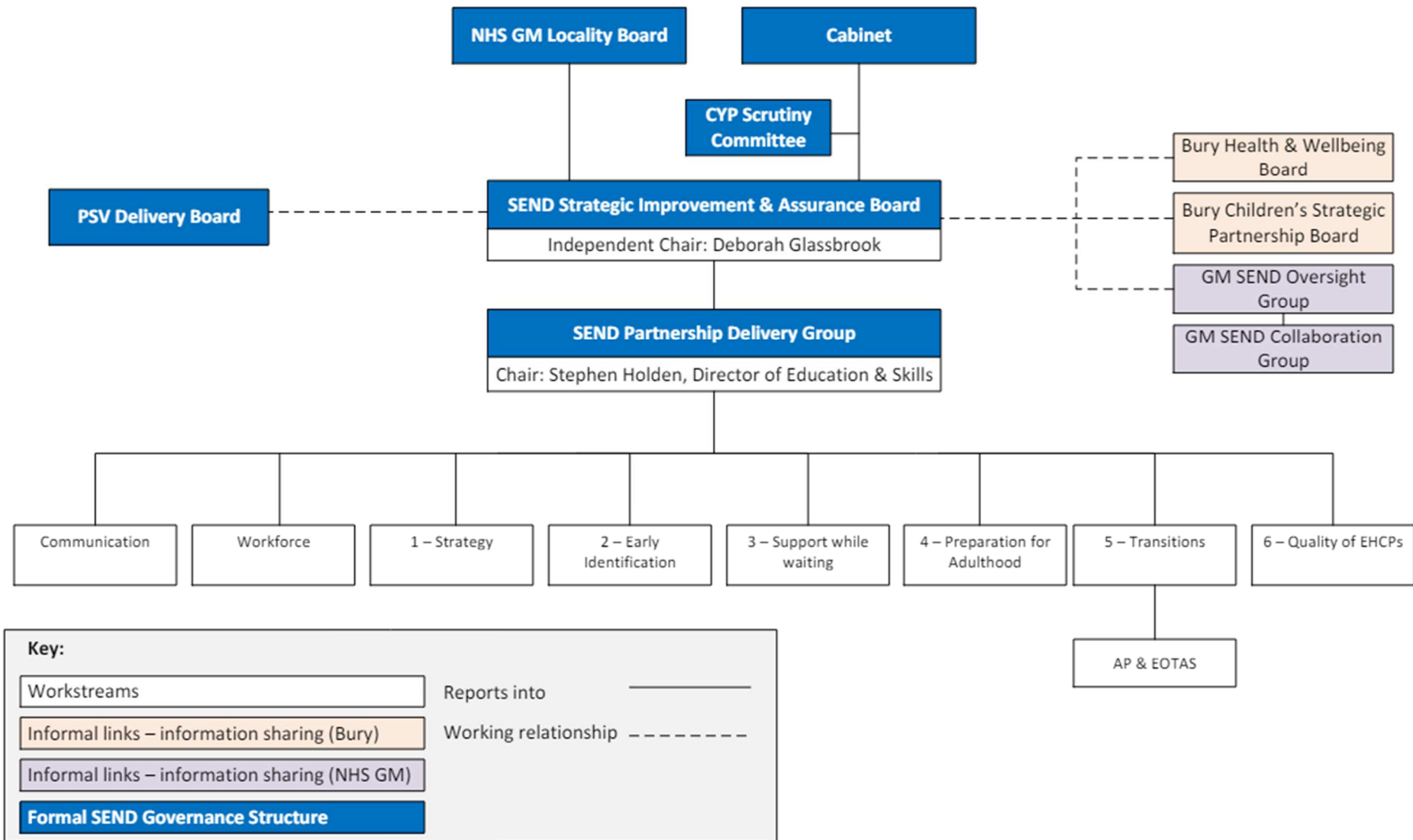
- Bury Council
- NHS GM and NHS provider organisations as appropriate
- Bury2Gether
- Primary School representative
- Secondary School representative
- Special School representative
- FE representative

This Priority Impact Plan is our strategic, high-level plan setting out what needs to be delivered in the next 12-18 months with key milestones and key performance indicators. To support the delivery of this plan, the Workstream Leads will each co-produce detailed operational plans. These operational plans will provide key assurance activity, including performance data and quality assurance findings that will be monitored by SIAB and will provide the tracking mechanism for the progress of actions and impact.

Each Priority Action (and Area for Improvement) has a nominated lead officer, who will be a senior officer within their organisation. They will provide monthly highlight reports to the SIAB, and ensure monthly reviews of the risk register.



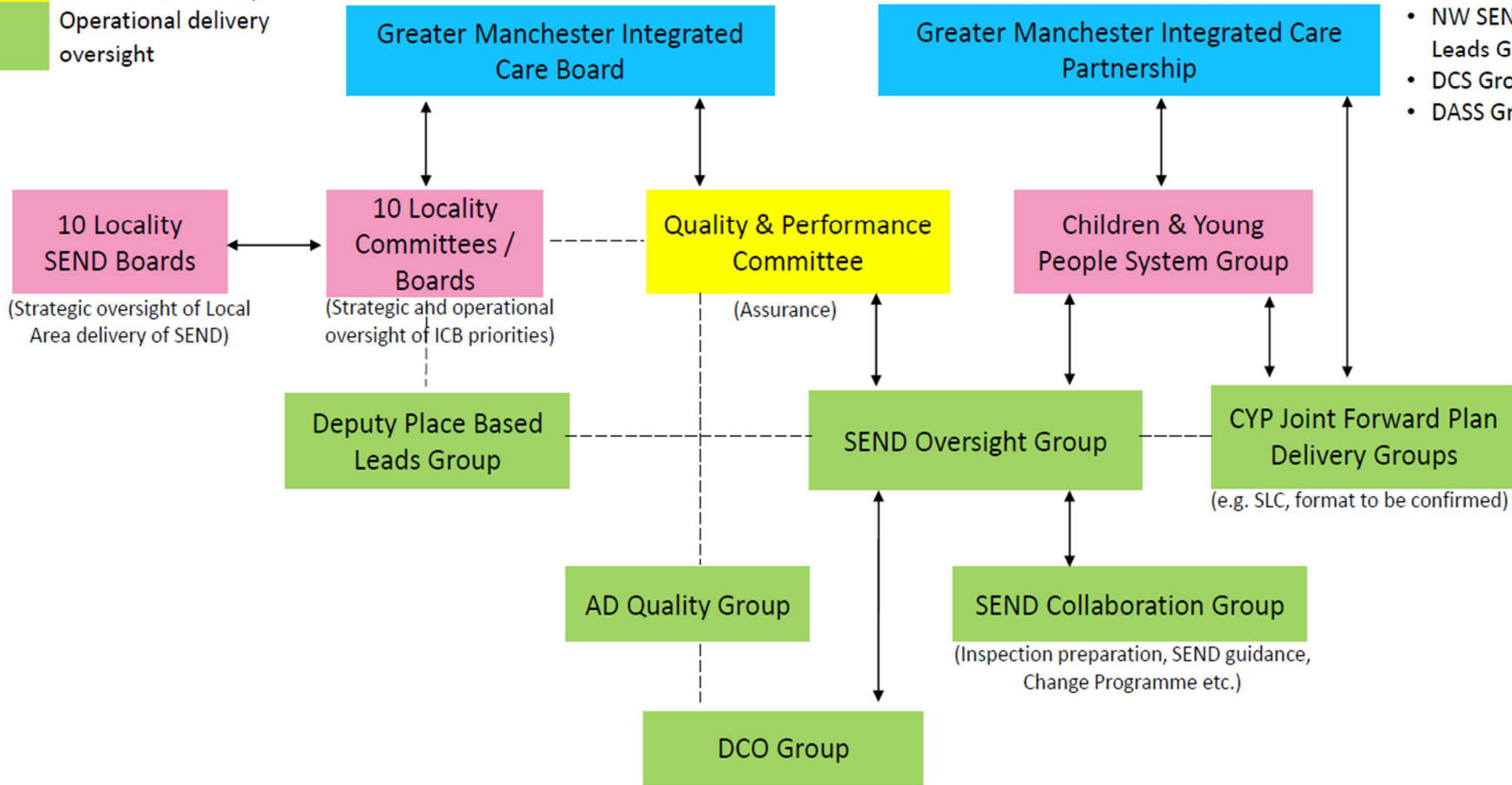
Governance Structure Diagram - Local Area:



- ICB decision making
- Strategic system group
- Assurance/advisory
- Operational delivery oversight

### NHS Greater Manchester – SEND Governance

- GM SEND Board
- NW SEND Leadership Group
- NW SEND Strategic Leads Group
- DCS Group
- DASS Group



Voice of Children & Young People and their families

Voice of Children & Young People and their families

## How will we measure impact?

### Priority Area 1: Strategy

- Number of requests for EHCP assessments (per 10k child population)
- GCSE Attainment 8 score for children with identified SEND, split by EHCP and SEN Support
- KS2 Reading, Writing & Maths at expected standard for children with identified SEND, split by EHCP and SEN Support
- School Attendance rates for children with identified SEND & the overall cohort
- School Suspension rates for children with identified SEND & the overall cohort
- School Permanent Exclusion rates for children with identified SEND & the overall cohort
- Children with SEND who are electively home educated.
- Number of complaints received.
- Increased feedback from a larger number and more diverse range of parents and carers (*also relevant to **Communication***)
- Children/young people, Parents/Carers and professionals tell us that they understand the local area SEND Strategy (*also relevant to **Communication***)
- Children/young people, Parents/Carers and professionals tell us that they agree with the local area SEND Strategy (*also relevant to **Communication***)
- Parents/Carers and professionals tell us that they agree that good progress is being made in delivery of the local area SEND Strategy (*also relevant to **Communication***)
- Parents/Carers and children report that the local SEND services are making a positive difference to their lives (*also relevant to **Workforce\****)

### Priority Area 2: Early Identification

- Numbers of website visitors to the Graduated Approach toolkit (*also relevant for **Workforce\****)
- Number of pages accessed per visit on the Graduated Approach toolkit (*also relevant for **Workforce\****)
- Numbers of website visitors to the Local Offer (*also relevant to **Communication***)
- Number of pages accessed per visit on the Local Offer (*also relevant to **Communication***)
- Proportion of children in mainstream schools supported at SEN Support – split by primary and secondary school. (*also relevant for **Workforce***)
- Proportion of new EHCPs issued for children aged 10 years and over
- Parents/Carers -report that local services identified their children's needs early (*also relevant for **Workforce\****)
- Parents/Carers report that local services support their child's additional needs well (*also relevant for **Workforce\****)

### Priority Area 3: Access to Health Services & Support while waiting

- Waiting list analysis for SLCN, Community Paediatrics & NDP – to be further developed as part of action 3.1f in the Priority Impact Plan
- Families report good access to General Practice (GP) services
- Families and young people agree that they have good access to the health services that their child needs
- Families and young people agree that there is supportive and helpful advice and guidance provided whilst waiting

### Priority Area 4: Preparation for Adulthood

- Percentage of 16- & 17-year-olds with EHCPs in education and training
- Percentage of young people with identified SEND with a level 2 qualification at age 19.
- Young people and their parents/carers report that they feel well supported in their preparation for adulthood (*also relevant for Workforce\**)
- Proportion of EHCP reviews for young people aged 14 with a PfA element in their review

### Priority Area 5: Transitions

- Attendance rate for children with identified SEND in year 7
- Proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of reception year.
- Attendance rate for children with identified SEND in reception
- Suspension rate for children with an EHCP in reception and NC year 1
- Suspension rate for children with EHCPs in year 7
- Permanent exclusion rate for children with EHCPs in year 7
- All relevant professionals contribute to post-16-year-old EHCP reviews.
- Children/young people and Parents/Carers agree that there is good support during transitions into and between early years providers, schools and colleges (*also relevant for Workforce\**)
- Proportion of adults with learning disabilities living independently or with family

### Priority Area 6: EHCP Plans and Reviews

- EHCP issued within 20-weeks
- Number of reviews completed in year which result in an amended plan being issued

- Percentage of annual reviews where an amended plan is issued within expected timescales.
- Proportion of new plans with all appropriate advice provided and within expected timescales (including from children's social care).
- Proportion of reviews with appropriate input from all relevant professionals (including children's social care).
- Children/young people and Parents/Carers agree that the EHCP assessment process supports and helps meets needs.
- Children/young people and Parents/Carers agree that the EHCP review process supports and helps meet needs

### **Area for Improvement 1: Communication**

- Parents, carers and children and young people provide positive feedback on the Local Offer via survey.
- Parents/carers report increased confidence in the local SEN partnership.
- Parents, carers and young people report that they understand the transport options and support available to them.  
*(Also other KPIs listed in other sections are relevant, especially in Priority Action Area 1: Strategy)*

### **Area for Improvement 2: Alternative Provision and EOTAS**

- Number of children on roll at Alternative Provision
- Average length of time that current cohort have been in AP
- Number of children in receipt of EOTAS packages
- Average length of time that current EOTAS packages have been in place
- Parents, carers and young people report that they understand the EOTAS policy and the support available to them

### **Area for Improvement 3: Workforce**

- No separate indicators proposed for Workforce section, there are many indicators across the full list of KPIs that provide a clear view on impact of work with the workforce – indicated with an asterisk \*

## Action Plan

Priority Action 1: Leaders across the partnership should ensure that the SEND strategy continues to be implemented to improve the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND. This should be overseen by shared strategic governance to ensure that the pace of improvement is maintained.

Priority Lead: Jeanette Richards (Executive DCS) & Will Blandamer (Executive Director Health & Adult Care & Deputy Place Based Lead, NHS GM)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
1.1 Improve the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and families and thereby improve their outcomes	1.1a Create SEND Strategy on a page – distil existing strategy, ensuring clear focus on preparation for adulthood, transitions, child voice and a social model of disability	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approval of Strategy by SIAB in November 2024</li> <li>Children, young people, parents/carers and partners tell us that they understand and agree with the local area SEND Strategy</li> <li>Number of requests for EHCP assessments (per 10k child population)</li> </ul>	
	1.1b Working with Bury2Gether, co-produce a mechanism for ensuring parental feedback is gathered about families' experiences and used to inform the Board's analysis of progress	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal quarterly review of progress against the SEND strategy with key stakeholders, including children &amp; young people and families</li> <li>Shared understanding of progress between Board and families</li> <li>Increased frequency of feedback from a larger number and more diverse range of parents and carers</li> <li>Parents/Carers and professionals tell us that they agree that good progress is being made in delivery of the local area SEND Strategy</li> <li>Parents/Carers and children report that the local SEND services are making a positive difference to their lives</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 10

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
	1.1c Ensure clear governance for SEND improvement, including escalation route for SEND Improvement & Assurance Board within the local area	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance structure/mapping shows how SEND is reported and decisions are made</li> <li>• There is greater transparency of governance, with minutes of SIAB meetings published on the Local Offer</li> <li>• Summary review of progress against all priority actions after 6 months</li> <li>• Board self-evaluation after 6 and 10 months</li> <li>• 6 monthly report from SIAB Independent Chair to Council &amp; NHS GM on progress, which is published on the Local Offer</li> </ul>	
	1.1d Review the QA Framework and develop robust dataset to track progress and impact	August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly multi-agency audits</li> <li>• Learning from single and multi-agency audits is shared across the partnership, including SIAB and key actions identified and monitored</li> </ul>	6.1b AFI 1 AFI 3
	1.1e Effective communication of strategy to all stakeholders, professionals, children and families	November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families and partners tell us that they understand and agree with the local area SEND Strategy</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 10

Priority Action 2: Leaders across the partnership should work collaboratively and effectively to improve the early identification of children and young people’s SEND as part of the graduated approach. In particular, they should urgently improve:

- children’s access to support from education, health and social care to improve the early identification of needs
- children, young people’s and professionals’ access to an effective, well-resourced educational psychology service.

Priority Lead: Stephen Holden (Director of Education & Skills)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
2.1 Better access to education, health & social care services to support early identification of children with additional needs	2.1a Improve and embed the use of the Graduated Approach to identifying and meeting need across the local area	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GAT migrated to micro-site</li> <li>• Remaining sections (pre-school and post-16) in place</li> <li>• Impact analysis completed, including use of SEN Support in mainstream schools</li> <li>• Numbers of website visitors</li> <li>• Number of pages accessed per visit</li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3 PSV 3
	2.1b Develop an outreach offer across all settings to support and embed a consistent borough-wide approach to early identification and intervention	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of children in mainstream schools supported at SEN Support</li> <li>• Proportion of new EHCPs issued for children aged 10 and over</li> <li>• Feedback from professionals receiving targeted support</li> <li>• Parents/Carers report that schools and settings identified their children’s needs early</li> <li>• Parents/Carers report that local services support their child’s additional needs well</li> <li>• Successful recruitment to all roles in Outreach Team</li> <li>• Co-ordinated Outreach offer available across Resource Provision (RP), special schools, GAT Champion Schools, Accredited IQM schools and Early Years settings</li> <li>• Increased number of children and young people receiving earlier support</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 3



Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
	2.1c Complete revision of the Local Offer and develop system to monitor ongoing use/access	November 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local offer migration/online refresh complete</li> <li>Numbers of website visitors</li> <li>Number of pages accessed per visit</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 2
	2.1d Increase SEND and wider Health Visitor capacity with new investment	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of SEND Health Visitors (target to be agreed)</li> <li>Increased earlier identification and support for families</li> <li>Children will have increased access to a range of bespoke support in line with their needs</li> <li>Increase in delivery of evidence-based interventions to early years children</li> <li>Feedback from children, YP, parents and carers</li> </ul>	PSV 2 PSV 3
	2.1e Review the allocation and use of top-up funding to ensure equity and quality of support provided to children with additional needs	March 2025		PSV 3
	2.1f Review effectiveness, reach and access routes/pathways of Early Years support	January 2025		PSV 1
2.2 Children & young people have access to an effective Community Educational Psychology (CEP) service	2.2a Work with parents and carers, including Bury2Gether, to co-produce a service specification for a Bury community educational psychology service, with a comprehensive service development plan	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benchmarking exercise to review Bury EP service with other LAs</li> <li>EP Service Development Plan 2024-2028, including pathways to service, published on the Local Offer</li> <li>Feedback from parents/carers/children on effectiveness</li> <li>Settings are able to buy in high-quality support, advice, training &amp; assessments</li> <li>Families can access the CEP service based on need and without needing an EHCP</li> </ul>	PSV 2

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
	2.2b Develop a comprehensive training and consultation offer to Bury educational and community settings, based upon recently carried out surveys with key stakeholders	October 2024		AFI 1 PSV 3

Priority 3: Leaders across the partnership should improve the quality and availability of support for children, young people and their families while they wait for specialist assessments. This includes:

- children and young people waiting for a speech and language therapy assessment and subsequent intervention.
- children waiting for a community paediatric assessment and subsequent intervention
- children and young people on a neurodevelopmental pathway for an assessment of ADHD or autism.

Leaders across the partnership should also ensure that young people aged up to 25 years old have access to a locally agreed neurodevelopmental diagnostic pathway

Priority Lead: Will Blandamer (Executive Director Health & Adult Care & Deputy Place Based Lead, NHS GM)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
3.1 Children, young people & families receive more timely access to services	3.1a Clinical and operational managers will review <i>SLCN pathways</i> and develop implementation plans that will identify opportunities to reduce waiting times from referral and assessment to intervention and the support offered as part of this pathway	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a reviewed service plan to address OFSTED priority actions and areas for improvement</li> <li>• SEND system will better understand service user journey and identify opportunities to offer earlier support whilst waiting</li> <li>• Children, young people and families will have access to a range of quality advice and guidance and support while waiting for specialist assessments</li> </ul>	
	3.1b Clinical and operational managers will review <i>community paediatric pathways</i> and will develop implementation plans that will identify opportunities to reduce waiting times from referral, assessment to	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a reviewed service plan to address OFSTED priority actions and areas for improvement</li> </ul>	

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
	intervention and the support offered as part of this pathway.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEND system will better understand service user journey and identify opportunities to offer earlier support whilst waiting</li> <li>Children, young people and families will have access to a range of quality advice and guidance and support while waiting for specialist assessments</li> </ul>	
	3.1c Clinical and operational managers will review <i>neurodevelopmental pathway</i> pathways (under and over 5) will develop implementation plans that will identify opportunities to reduce waiting times from assessment to intervention and the support offered as part of this pathway.	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a reviewed service plan to address OFSTED priority actions and areas for improvement</li> <li>SEND system will better understand service user journey and identify opportunities to offer earlier support whilst waiting</li> <li>Children, young people and families will have access to a range of support and quality advice and guidance whilst waiting for specialist assessments</li> </ul>	
	3.1d Implement a need led Neurodevelopmental Profiling toolkit for advice and guidance (including support whilst waiting)	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training undertaken across the children system and programme initiated</li> <li>Children, young people and families will have timely access to bespoke quality assured, advice and guidance based on need</li> </ul>	AFI 3 PSV 2
	3.1e Increase the use of evidence-based interventions across all age ranges as part of a growing offer	September - December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health visitor and early years staff trained and delivering evidence-based interventions to support earlier identification</li> <li>Children have improved access to support and quality evidenced based interventions</li> <li>Increase in delivery of evidence-based interventions to early years children</li> </ul>	AFI 3 PSV 2
	3.1f Develop transparent analysis of children waiting and on therapeutic pathways	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly updated information shared across the system, including with parents and carers via the Local Offer</li> </ul>	AFI 1

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System has oversight of the waiting times on pathways and continues to work to reduce waiting times</li> </ul>	
	3.1g Development of 18-25 ADHD and autism diagnostic pathway	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICB-led consultation</li> <li>Provider commissioned Procurement process 2024-2025</li> <li>Pathway agreed</li> <li>People aged 18- 25 have access to ADHD and autism assessments</li> <li>Young people have better access to specialist assessments</li> </ul>	PSV 3
3.2 Children, young people & families receive better access and better quality of support while they are waiting for specialist assessments	3.2a Consult and engage with children and families to gather views on what would help regarding support whilst waiting	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers will shape and influence support whilst waiting information</li> <li>Parents/Carers agree that they have good access to the health services that their child requires</li> <li>Parents/Carers agree that there is good advice available while they wait</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 10
	3.2b Expand the range of support padlets and promote usage via Partnerships and local offer	September-December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Padlets linked to the new local offer and partners websites</li> <li>QR codes widely distributed</li> <li>Printed resources available to the Orthodox Jewish Community</li> <li>Children, young people, parents, and carers will have access to a range of quality assured advice and guidance</li> <li>Families have access to a range of support and quality advice and guidance whilst their children wait for specialist assessments</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 2

Priority Action 4: Leaders across the partnership should improve preparation for adulthood from the earliest ages for all children and young people with SEND in Bury. This should include a well understood and co-produced strategy to embed preparation for adulthood effectively across the partnership.

Priority Lead: Jeanette Richards (Executive DCS) & Will Blandamer (Executive Director Health & Adult Care & Deputy Place Based Lead, NHS GM)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
4.1 Children and young people are well prepared for adulthood	4.1a Complete needs analysis of cohort together with mapping of local provision and its quality, consulting with young people, parents/carers to identify gaps and to inform future commissioning priorities	October 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared understanding of provision in local area and how this is meeting the needs of children and families</li> <li>Commissioning decisions informed by needs analysis</li> <li>A greater understanding of the needs of young people aged 14+</li> </ul>	AFI 1
	4.1b Ensure Local Offer includes Planning for Adulthood provision and information about accessing Higher Education	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Offer will be aspirational and include guidance on all aspects of PfA including support for Higher Education</li> </ul>	AFI 1 PSV 2 PSV 3
	4.1c All EHCPs reference planning for adulthood preparations for all children from the age of 14 and above (at Y9 review) to appropriately identify those who will need the Planning for Adulthood Pathway	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of 16 &amp; 17 year olds with EHCPs in education and training</li> <li>Percentage of children with identified SEND with a level 2 qualification at age 19</li> <li>Young people and their parents/carers report that they feel well supported in their preparation for adulthood</li> </ul>	PSV 9
	4.1d Establish transitions to provide support in preparing young people for adulthood, to progress into employment, training, apprenticeships and supported internships	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team in place</li> <li>All young people with EHCPs receive additional support to ensure they progress into appropriate EET post-16</li> <li>Connexions service screen young people who are at increased risk of NEET to target support – all YP with EHCPs are assessed age 16</li> </ul>	
	4.1e Embed Planning for Adulthood Pathway	February 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14-25 Strategic Board meets regularly</li> </ul>	

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bury 14-25 Strategy reflected in the SEND strategy</li> <li>● Lead professionals are appropriately identified for all children on Planning for Adulthood pathway</li> <li>● Number of Planning for Adulthood plans</li> <li>● Planning for Adulthood Assurance Meetings identify young people who need transitional support and co-ordinates the transition from Children's to Adults' services</li> </ul>	

Priority Action 5: Leaders across the partnership should establish and implement a strategic approach to high-quality transitions for children and young people with SEND from birth to 25.

Priority Lead: Sonja Butterworth (Senior School Assurance Officer)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
5.1 Children & young people have a positive experience of moving between early years settings, schools, colleges and adult life	5.1a Implement electronic solution (“6into7”) to delivering personalised pupil pathways for transition and inclusion between primary and secondary schools	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Bury Schools are accessing 6 into7</li> <li>Improved contributions from schools/SENCOs regarding transitions</li> <li>School report increased consistency across transitions between phases</li> <li>Evaluate impact of 6 into 7 SENCOs, Schools, parents and professionals tell us that transitions from primary to secondary are successful</li> <li><a href="#">Attendance rate for children with identified SEND in year 7</a></li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3 PSV 3
	5.1b Co-produce with parents & carers best practice guidance & tools across the partnership, incorporating a graduated response	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Toolkit in place and easily accessible</li> <li>Schools, parents and professionals tell us that the toolkit is useful</li> <li>Best practice is recognised more widely</li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3 PSV 3 PSV 10
	5.1c Expand 6into7 for use at other points of transition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Years into Primary School</li> <li>Secondary school to college</li> <li>College into adult life</li> </ul>	May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultations have taken place with Early Years and post 16 steering groups</li> <li>Development of the programme links with CPOMS</li> <li>6into7 has a wider scope that includes Early Years so all PVIs, home-based educators and post-16 settings can complete transition information online and an all through system is operating effectively in Bury.</li> <li>Parents/Carers agree that their child was well supported during transitions into and between schools and colleges</li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3 PSV 3

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance rate for children with identified SEND in reception</li> <li>Percentage of children with identified SEND in education and training aged 16 &amp; 17</li> </ul>	
	5.1d Develop an enhanced transition pathway for children supported by SEND Health Visitors transitioning to being supported by the School Nursing Service	May 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition pathway will be in place and easily accessible</li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3 PSV 3
	5.1e Embed MDT meetings for children & young people being supported by the complex needs nurse (CCNT), Epilepsy Specialist Nurse, Continuing Health Care and District Nursing service	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDT meetings taking place</li> <li>Feedback from children &amp; young people and their families</li> <li>Explore expansion of the MDT meetings to incorporate a wider cohort</li> </ul>	AFI 3
	5.1f All Health Services to begin conversations with children & young people at 14 years about transition to adult health services	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence in health records that conversations have taken place</li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3 PSV 10



Priority Action 6: Leaders across the partnership should further improve the quality of the statutory EHC plan process. This should include:

- improving the quality of advice received from professionals as part of the needs assessment process.
- improving the timeliness and quality of updated EHC plans following annual reviews.
- improving appropriate social care contributions to EHC plans so that children and young people’s social care needs are reflected more accurately.
- improving the focus on preparation for adulthood in children and young people’s EHC plans so that their experiences and outcomes improve

Priority Lead: Wendy Young (Head of Service, SEND & Inclusion)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
6.1 Children & young people have better quality, better informed, more focused EHCPs that support their improved outcomes	6.1a Ensuring more timely advice from professionals, particularly social care, through better use of a more robust portal	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portal accessible by health visitors, school nurses, Community paediatricians, Speech and language therapists, Physical therapists, Occupational therapists for EHC Assessments</li> <li>• Test and learn activity to establish if portal can be functional for Annual Review advice</li> <li>• Number of parents accessing portal</li> <li>• Advice provided in response to all requests for assessment and reviews where appropriate</li> <li>• Fit for purpose template for providing advice, which is focused on strengths and needs of young people, including a focus on preparation for adulthood</li> <li>• Notification system in place to advise educational settings, Health and Social Care of upcoming Annual Reviews</li> </ul>	

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
	6.1b Review the QA framework to ensure a robust single and multi-agency approach to audit and assurance and implement actions as required	August 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly audits taking place, including all key stakeholders</li> <li>• Increase the multi-agency involvement and activity of QA work - 10% of EHCPs to be quality assured per year</li> <li>• Assurance mechanisms in place within team to quality assurance plans as part of system and process – analysis of quality assurance built into data dashboard to measure impact</li> <li>• Learning from audit is shared quarterly to ensure continuous learning</li> <li>• Training tools for those carrying out audit &amp; assurance – what a good plan looks like, including use of Tell Us Once</li> </ul>	AFI 3
	6.1c Review how the voice of children & young people is captured in, and used to inform, their plans and reviews and implement necessary actions	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil voice captured as part of the Graduated Approach and EHC Assessment process and proactively shared as part of the EHC Assessment</li> <li>• Pupil voice and aspirations are clear in EHC Assessment/Annual Review documentation from all partners</li> <li>• Pupil voice is evidenced in QA audits</li> <li>• ‘Tell Us Once’ is consistently used by practitioners</li> <li>• Parents/Carers agree that the EHCP assessment process supports and helps meet the needs of their child</li> <li>• Feedback from pupils following EHC Assessment/Annual Review</li> </ul>	
	6.1d Training on how to prepare a high quality EHCP with SMART outcomes	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved quality of plans is evidenced in audit</li> <li>• Positive feedback from children, young people and families</li> </ul>	AFI 1 AFI 3

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of preparation for adulthood outcomes in EHCPs from Year 9 - see Priority Action 4</li> <li>• Training on producing quality advice for EHCPs across the partnership to include Education, Health and Social Care</li> </ul>	
6.2 Improve the timeliness and quality of updated EHC plans following annual reviews	6.2a Review the EHC Assessment and Review Team to ensure there is sufficient capacity for new EHCPs and to review and amend existing EHCPs, including a recovery plan to address current deficits	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of reviews completed in year which result in an amended plan being issued following the LA's decision to amend</li> <li>• Percentage of annual reviews where an amended plan is issued within expected timescales following the LA's decision to amend</li> <li>• Routine sharing and discussion of weekly performance data to track timeliness and statutory compliance</li> </ul>	PSV 9
	6.2b Training for SENCOs on writing EHC assessment requests and delivering person-centred Annual Reviews	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved quality of plans is evidenced in audit</li> <li>• Positive feedback from children, young people and families</li> <li>• LA co-ordination of Annual Reviews</li> <li>• Training for SENCOs on delivering person-centred Annual Reviews</li> </ul>	PSV 3 PSV 10

Area for Improvement 1: Leaders across the partnership should improve communication to professionals, parents and carers and children and young people so that their strategies, actions and impact are better understood and that trust in the SEND system improves. The partnership should ensure that the local offer is updated regularly to provide parents, carers and other stakeholders with sufficiently accurate information.

Priority Lead: Kate Waterhouse (Executive Director Strategy & Transformation)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
7.1 Children, families & stakeholders understand the strategy, impact and progress	7.1a Review local SEND system communications	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co-produce with parents/carers/young people</li> <li>Published timeline for change - parents/carers/young people can see what is meant to happen and see pace of change</li> <li>Clear plan to ensure effective communication with all stakeholders, including understanding of available communication networks</li> </ul>	PSV 10
	7.1b Develop a SEND Communication Strategy, using work to date on the Communication and Engagement Plan	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SEND Communication Strategy approved by Board and published on the Local Offer</li> <li>Partners will be able to articulate the SEND Strategy and vision</li> <li>Co-produced mechanism to routinely gather feedback from parents and carers (via survey)</li> <li>Parents/carers report increased confidence in the local SEND partnership</li> </ul>	PSV 10
7.2 Children, families & stakeholders understand what support is available in Bury	7.2a Complete revision of the Local Offer and develop system to monitor ongoing use/access	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local offer will be available on the Council micro-site and updated frequently</li> <li>Number of visitors to Local Offer website</li> <li>Number of pages accessed per visit</li> </ul>	2.1c PSV 2

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents, carers and young people provide positive feedback on the Local Offer via survey</li> <li>Mechanisms in place to analyse access/use of Local Offer.</li> <li>Friends of the Local Offer meetings feed into ongoing development</li> </ul>	
	7.2b Ensure parents/carers understand the refreshed Transport Policy	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents, carers and young people report that they understand the transport options and support available to them</li> </ul>	

Area for Improvement 2: Leaders across the partnership should continue to develop the range of suitable AP available to children and young people in Bury. Leaders should further embed the improved oversight of AP and EOTAS packages in Bury. They should publish the refreshed policy for EOTAS, providing support so that this policy is clearly understood.

Priority Lead: Stephen Holden (Director of Education and Skills)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact? <i>Milestones/QA</i>	Links & Dependencies
8.1 Children and young people receive good quality Alternative Provision (and EOTAS) that meets their needs	8.1a Develop and finalise AP Strategy 2024-26, including Section 19 responsibilities and EOTAS	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy published on Local Offer</li> <li>Section 19 policy reviewed and revised policy published</li> </ul>	PSV 7
	8.1b Rationalise existing processes to ensure single oversight of pupil placement, commissioning and quality assurance for AP and EOTAS	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System oversight and assurance available to SIAB</li> <li>AP policy in place to ensure coherent systems and processes for placement and monitoring of outcomes</li> <li>Children in good quality AP provision</li> <li>Positive outcomes for young people in AP and EOTAS in terms of reintegration to school, transition to further education</li> </ul>	PSV 7 PSV 6

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact? <i>Milestones/QA</i>	Links & Dependencies
			and training, numeracy and literacy, attendance and engagement	
	8.1c Co-produce and confirm EOTAS Policy	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EOTAS Policy published on Local Offer</li> <li>Parents, carers and young people report that they understand the EOTAS policy and the support available to them.</li> </ul>	PSV 6
	8.1d Improve processes for considering new EOTAS package and reviewing existing ones through the annual review process.	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rigorous and transparent decision-making processes in place to consider EOTAS requests</li> <li>Appropriate and proportionate EOTAS packages in place ensure positive pupil outcomes</li> <li>All new packages are considered by Resource Panel</li> </ul>	PSV 6
8.2 Children & young people have access to a range of suitable Alternative Provision (AP)	8.2a Complete needs analysis	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce demand for longer term AP through identifying AP packages to support early intervention</li> </ul>	PSV 7
	8.2b Renew procurement and update directory with new providers	September 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up-to-date directory with a broader array of providers to better meet need</li> <li>Increased range of provision to provide targeted support on schools and reduction in longer term placements in Alternative Provision</li> </ul>	PSV 7

Area for Improvement 3: Leaders across the partnership should work collaboratively to create a partnership-wide workforce development strategy. This should focus on coordinating training support and guidance to improve health, social care and education professionals' ability to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, from birth to 25

Priority Lead: Will Blandamer (Executive Director Health & Adult Care & Deputy Place Based Lead, NHS GM)

Desired outcome for children & young people	Actions	By When	How will we measure impact?	Links & Dependencies
9.1 Children & young people & families in Bury receive good quality, well informed support from professionals across the partnership	9.1a Map current training offer across the partnership in relation to identification and meeting the needs of children with SEND, and evaluate its effectiveness	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers and young people to share their lived experience in workforce training</li> <li>Attendance at training sessions by different cohorts</li> <li>Positive feedback from attendees about difference made</li> </ul>	PSV 10
	9.1b Develop Partnership Workforce Strategy	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive and enduring CPD programme for schools and settings is established with a focus on Early Identification and Early Intervention to embed the Graduated Approach in all settings, including schools, colleges and early years</li> <li>Induction Plan available for all new staff in SEND roles across the partnership</li> </ul>	
	9.1c Develop Partnership Learning & Development Plan	March 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a comprehensive training and consultation offer to Bury educational and community settings, based upon recently carried out surveys with key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	

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**SCRUTINY REPORT**

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Children's Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>11 June 2024</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Update report on use of independent provision for children with an EHCP and monitoring of that provision.
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Jeanette Richards, Executive Director Children and Young People</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Stephen Holden, Director of Education</b>

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**1.0 BACKGROUND**

Following the BBC Panorama documentary concerning the independent school 'Life Wirral', this update describes the framework for overseeing such schools, Bury's use of this type of school and the national trends in the use and spend on these schools.

Firstly, it is important to note that the responsibility for the quality and oversight of independent schools, such as 'Life Wirral' lies with Ofsted or the Independent Schools Inspectorate and their inspection framework. Ofsted's inspection reports for this provision can be found here: [LIFE Wirral Sports School - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted](#).

The inspection framework for independent schools is described in this link: [Regulating independent schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

All independent schools must be registered by the Department for Education (DfE), and they must meet the requirements of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 in order to remain registered. Ofsted inspects about half of all independent schools in England, which we refer to as 'non-association' independent schools. The rest of the schools belong to independent school associations and are inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), which has been approved by the DfE.

Independent schools, whether overseen by Ofsted or the ISI, are normally inspected once every 3 years. Independent schools lie outside of the oversight of local authorities and it is the DfE that retains this role, which it discharges through Ofsted and the ISI.

This situation is complicated when a local authority agrees to fund an educational placement in an independent school for a child with an Education, Health and Care plan, or even in sometimes for a child without one. In such circumstances, the local authority retains responsibility for ensuring an annual review that provision detailed in the plan is meeting the needs of the child and considering whether that plan needs to change. However, the regulation of the school remains with central government, who discharge that duty through Ofsted or the ISI. In the event of an adverse inspection of an independent school, local authorities will respond by removing children from that school (as Wirral did on this occasion following the TV programme). Section 2 outlines the number of children with EHCPs in Bury of school age and where they are educated. For children in independent special schools, or non-maintained special schools, the total and average cost is provided, together with their Ofsted Grade

**2.0 ISSUES**

Wherever possible the local authority aims to place young people who have an EHCP and require a specialist setting in a local maintained special school and we are able to do this for 70% of children in need of a special school to support their needs. Plans are also in place under the Project Safety Valve agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) to increase the amount of local special school provision over the next 5 years.

	<b>Number of Pupils</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Average cost per pupil</b>
Mainstream	879	6,254,110	7,115
Academy Maintained Special	661	16,168,162	24,460
Non maintained Special	31	2,032,066	65,551
Independent Special	264	11,328,836	2,912
Alternative Provision	66	563,717	8,541

**Independent Special Schools**

The number and costs listed are for the financial year 2023/24

	<b>Ofsted Grade</b>	<b>No. of pupils</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Average cost</b>
Mill School	Good	40	1,824,449	45,611
Aim Habonim	Good	33	1,019,708	30,900
Edstart	Good	26	585,993	22,538
Rosendale	Good	22	1,330,000	60,455
Craig Omerod	Closed	21	383,613	18,267
Cumberland	Good	19	1,173,261	61,751
Belmont	Good	20	831,765	41,588
Westmoreland	Outstanding	13	910,312	70,024
Woodlands	Good	13	609,422	46,879
Bridgeway	Good	12	690,077	57,506
T'Mimei Lev Special	Good	11	286,516	25,047
Talmud Torah Tashbar	Requires improvement	4	46,292	11,573
The Holden School	Good	4	204,825	51,209
Nugent House	Good	3	159,933	53,311
Waterloo Lodge	Good	3	170,540	56,847
Aspire	Closed	2	33,340	16,670
Cedar House	Good	2	63,588	31,794
Mayfield House	Good	2	73,369	36,684
Progress School	Outstanding	2	229,667	114,839
Raise the Youth	Good	2	104,476	52,238
Reddish Hall	Good	2	107,724	53,862
Birchwood	Good	1	72,803	72,803
Brambles	Good	1	27,182	27,182
Bright Futures	Good	1	35,414	35,414
Changing Lives	Good	1	52,000	52,000
Chesham Sch	Good	1	51	51,094
Great Howarth	Good	1	105,000	105,000
High Peak	Good	1	101,380	101,380
Keyes Barn	Good	1	45,074	45,074
<b>Total</b>		<b>264</b>	<b>11,328,836</b>	<b>42,912</b>

**Non maintained Special**

Birtenshaw	Good	23	1,554,872	67,603
Inscape House	Good	6	365,786	60,964
Seashell Trust	Good	2	111,408	55,704
Total		31	2,032,066	65,551

High levels of expenditure on independent and non-maintained special schools (INMSS) is a national issue. Analysis of planned Local Authority and School expenditure in 2023/24 published by the DfE in September 2023 [Planned LA and school expenditure, Financial year 2023-24 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#) shows that the expected spend on INMSS by local authorities in England in 2023/4 was £2.16 billion. This represented an increase of over £1 billion and a doubling in spend since 2018/19 (£1.06 billion).

Some of this increase reflects growth in the number of children attending these schools – a rise of 70% from 17,532 in 2019 to 29,802 in 2024 according to figures published in June 2024 by the DfE [Education, health and care plans, Reporting year 2024 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#), but some of the increase also reflects unit cost rises as well. The increasing cost of places at INMSS and the increasing number of children with EHCPs attending these schools is a key driver for the recent government announcements of new special schools in May 2024, which adds to the 100 new special schools that have been designated since 2010. It is also instructive that establishing new special schools is often a cornerstone of Project Safety Valve agreements between local authorities and the DfE – as is the case for Bury.

**Alternative Provision**

The DfE defines alternative provision as follows: education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; arranged by school on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

Alternative provision is a complex area for regulators as some settings are registered with Ofsted and subject to their inspection framework, while others are not. Ofsted conducted a thematic review of this landscape in early 2024: [Alternative provision in local areas in England: a thematic review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), which made recommendations for increasing the oversight of alternative provision both at an individual child and an area-wide, institution based level. Recommendations in the report are directed to ‘commissioners’ reflecting that individual schools, multi-academy trusts and local authorities are all commissioners of provision to meet the needs of children.

In Bury, children placed in Alternative Provision listed below are provided with temporary, part-time placements to support transition to the next setting. The numbers in this table relate to the total number of young people who have been placed in Alternative Provision across the financial year with children being placed for varying amounts of time. These young people include those with EHC’s and those without a plan who are placed under the local authorities Section 19 duty.

The local authority maintains an Alternative Provision Directory of approved providers. Providers on this directory have been through the LA procurement process which is now run annually. Where pupils are placed with providers, a minimum of one annual QA visit is carried out with additional visits as required. Providers are also required to provide data, including attendance and engagement, for all Bury pupils placed with them including those

placed by schools. Intelligence from the Quality Assurance visits, service feedback and data, is collated for consideration by the Alternative Provision Assurance Board which meets on a monthly basis and identifies any actions required.

Provision	Number	Total	Average cost
Navigators	10	55,395	5,540
Nisia Virtual Academy	8	35,166	4,396
Randstad	8	66,732	8,342
Achieve Training	7	105,928	15,133
Monarch Education	7	27,819	3,974
Hindles	5	24,975	4,955
Dragon	4	15,885	3,971
Heyhead Farm	4	63,720	15,930
MYFP	3	23,152	7,717
Targetted Provision	2	4,794	2,397
The Enterprise Centre	2	13,600	6,825
CVS Specialist	1	3,450	3,450
Flourish Tuition	1	6,800	6,800
Foundation 92	1	25,590	25,590
NTAS	1	34,494	34,494
Outside Education	1	25,155	25,115
Vision for Education	1	31,062	31,062
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>563,717</b>	<b>8,541</b>

### 3.0 CONCLUSION

There has been a substantial increase in the use of independent and non-maintained special schools (and alternative provision) over the past decade. This has been driven by growth in identified need amongst children and young people – for example, the 26% increase in new Education, Health and Care Plans issued by local authorities in England in the calendar year 2023, compared to 2022 - and the difficulty in meeting that need within mainstream schools. This in turn has led to the increasing need for specialist school places; a need that the maintained sector (i.e. central government funded) has struggled to meet.

The result of these trends in England has been a doubling in expenditure on independent and non-maintained special schools over the past 5 years and a 70% increase in the number of children nationally placed in these schools. The report also notes that the independent school sector, by definition, lies outside of the maintained school sector and is primarily overseen by central government itself, with that oversight being discharged through the Independent Schools Inspectorate and Ofsted (as described above), with each inspecting about half of the total number of independent schools. Local Authority relationship with INMSS is as a commissioner of services or places to meet the needs of children. While Local Authority officers will visit these schools, sometimes with parents considering the placement of their child; and will cease placements where concerns arise, or not place children where concerns are known, they are not the responsible body for these schools, even if they are within their boundaries. This reflects the increasing complexity of the educational provider landscape and the growing importance of non-government maintained educational providers in meeting growing child need.

Bury exhibits all of these national patterns and also reflects the approach of central government in addressing these trends – with the projected growth in maintained special school places over the next 5 years. Bury's oversight and monitoring of children placed in alternative provision and residential special schools was one of the areas in which local

practice was deemed to be effective in the recent local area SEND inspection, but there is no room for complacency.

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**List of Background Papers:-**

**Contact Details:-**

*[Report Author]*

Executive Director sign off Date:\_\_\_\_\_

JET Meeting Date:\_\_\_\_\_

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<b>SCRUTINY REPORT</b>
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<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Children's Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>11/7/24</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Children's Services Improvement Plan Update</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Jeanette Richards, Executive Director Children &amp; Young People</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Beth Speak</b>

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## 1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 This report provides an overview on the progress made to date on the Children's Improvement Plan, highlighting areas of progress in the last 6 months, providing an overview of current challenges and our areas of focus for the next 3-6 months. The report is organised into two parts – the first focusing on the enablers of good practice; and the second considering practice improvement in key areas within Children's Services.

## 2.0 ISSUES

### ENABLERS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

#### 2.1 Quality Assurance and Performance

Monthly auditing and dip sampling enables managers to understand auditing as one part of a wider framework around quality assurance. Heads of Service moderate audits and discussion within the service develops a shared view of what good practice looks like. Learning from audit is fed back to staff through our 'Teaching Tuesday' sessions, which continue to be well attended and open to the whole workforce. We are also producing 7-minute briefings every month on topics or areas of practices to share with staff.

The core Quality Assurance framework has been embedded, and we are widening its coverage – ensuring that other services and teams are part of a single, consistent approach – while also beginning to use other types of quality assurance, for example using practice weeks to provide senior managers with regular opportunities to observe practice. Our first Practice Week took place in March 2024.

Discussions about performance, quality assurance and improvement planning are a core part of weekly Children's Social Care Senior Management Team meetings (SMT) chaired by the Practice Director, with SMT Meetings alternating fortnightly between performance and QA one week and general business the next. From May 2024, Team Managers have shared a weekly performance report with their Head of Service to develop a more consistent approach to performance across teams. The report focuses on performance in relation to children seen, statutory visits, assessment timeliness and supervision. Reports also inform discussion in the fortnightly Performance & QA SMT meetings.

#### 2.2 Systems & Support for Workers

In January 2024 we employed an external expert consultant to complete a diagnostic of our Children's Social Care & Early Help management information system and to recommend and design improvements. Following this initial review, we have sequentially implemented changes starting with reconfiguring the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) systems with a refreshed Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) that closely aligns with the Continuum of Need, and a new safety plan – both went live in May. Next steps are to look at the pathway plan, co-producing a form with our young people.

We have also developed a Sharepoint site as a single point of access for all staff to tools, practice guidance and other key documents to support good practice. The site includes refreshed practice standards, guidance, standard templates, useful links to key sites to support practice development such as Research in Practice, training calendars, weekly performance reports and quality assurance briefings. It also includes a new Social Work Career Pathway and Induction by Role matrix developed by the interim PSW, which sets out the support available for new practitioners.

### **2.3 Leadership**

In January 2024, a senior management restructure was proposed following the departure of the Assistant Director for Early Help, with better alignment of services in sympathy with DfE strategy - bringing Early Help services under the remit of the Practice Director for Social Care (supporting the model of family help) and Early Years services under the oversight of the Director for Education. The remodel also strengthened senior management capacity by introducing Service Managers in the three main social care operational areas (MASH/IRT, Family Safeguarding & Corporate Parenting). Responsibilities around assurance, including the Principal Social Worker role, have been combined with those for Learning & Development into a single portfolio under a Head of Service. This restructure was in place from late June.

Our permanent Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help started in post in May, having been in Bury as an interim Head of Service since the beginning of the year and having previously acted in an interim AD role in 2022.

### **2.4 Workforce**

Over the past 18 months, we sought to address social work workforce issues through international recruitment, but this has been much slower than expected, leading to continued dependence on agency workers, especially in frontline teams, where the proportion remains at 40%. We have 12 international social workers in post and 3 more expected in June/July. Delays in Social Work England (SWE) registrations and English language requirements (IELTS) have impacted significantly on our timescales. While the remaining 6 social workers originally recruited remain committed to Bury, we are in discussions with the provider to end the project early and move forward with the 15 practitioners who have or will have joined us by July 2024. We have appointed a new recruitment partner to support a further drive for new workers on a payment by results basis.

## **IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF PRACTICE**

### **2.5 Front Door**

In March 2024, a review of the phase 2 MASH implementation highlighted issues in relation to staffing, capacity and systems that affected the flow of work and decision making. A Rapid Improvement Plan was developed to address the issues and progress is being made – the system changes referred to in 2.2 above in particular support more effective decision making and vacancies within the team have been addressed and remedied.



In addition, the Practice Director established a MASH Strategic Group and Operational Group to provide clear governance:

- Operational Group – which meets fortnightly, chaired by the Head of Service
- Strategic Group – chaired by the Practice Director, currently meeting 4-6 weekly, moving to quarterly in future.

At the end of 2023, following concerns raised in relation to health capacity and its impact on timely decision making within the MASH/EHASH, NHS GM identified additional capacity, providing an additional 2-days of resource. However, there remains intermittent health presence in MASH while the health practitioner moves from a working from home arrangement. Cover during leave has also been an issue – although the Safeguarding Duty Nurse is available for urgent response (when 2-hour response needed).

### **2.6 Early Help Offer**

Our DfE adviser is undertaking a review of our Early Help offer, the quality of practice and the impact of support provided for children and families. We received feedback in the DfE Review in April from partners that highlighted a need to strengthen the Early Help offer and process. There was a consensus view from partners that Early Help is only accessible as a step down from statutory services, with limited capacity available for referring other families for support from the council's Early Help services.

### **2.7 Family Safeguarding**

The Family Safeguarding model formally launched in October 2024. We now have 5 family safeguarding teams with multi-agency practitioners in place (although not the full complement, as Adult Mental Health practitioners remain an unfilled gap). We have secured continued funding from the DfE to enable Hertfordshire County Council to continue their support in 2024-25, with a diagnostic overview planned for later in the year. Hertfordshire will also be providing support to the teams to reinforce the values and principles of Family Safeguarding. Our DfE Review in April identified that partners understood we were now a Family Safeguarding authority but were not aware of wider impact from the change in the social work approach to working with children and families. Practitioners working outside of the Family Safeguarding teams provided similar feedback, so there is a need to revisit the communications plan which has been affected by available capacity in the council's communications team.

### **2.8 Adolescent/Edge of Care Offer**

There have been substantial delays in creating the team because of difficulties in recruiting into the social work roles within the initial team structure. These difficulties led to a re-think of the approach. Our Service Manager for Family Resources has revised the Edge of Care offer based on a youth worker approach. Progress in confirming job descriptions, job evaluations and structures was delayed by the senior management re-structure, which took precedence, but the new structure is expected to be formally agreed and out for recruitment shortly.

### **2.9 Fostering**

We launched our first Mockingbird constellation in March 2024 (a Mockingbird constellation is a network of foster carers, working together and supporting each other, supported by an experienced foster carer). We are aiming for a second constellation to be live by the end of the year. There has been a 7% increase in foster carer payments on top of 12% last year ensuring that we remain competitive in the foster care market within GM and Lancashire. We have approved fourteen new families this year and lost five, which is positive compared to the pattern across the wider region. Fostering Unfiltered has been operational for 12 months across Greater Manchester. Our Head of Service is meeting with others from GM to review its effectiveness and sits on the steering groups driving the project forwards.

### **2.10 Support for Care Experienced Young Adults**

Following an external review in May 2023, the Corporate Parenting Plan was reviewed and appropriately focused on the areas of development. The absence of the Head of Service between August and October 2023 impeded progress in challenging behaviours and practices within the service, resulting in the deficits in performance and outcomes identified in Ofsted’s monitoring visit in November 2023.

In addition, while Corporate Parenting is a key priority for the Chief Executive and the Corporate Parenting Board now has regular oversight of the Corporate Parenting Plan. Key challenges within the plan remain around housing and employment opportunities for care experienced young people. Although the proportion of care leavers in suitable accommodation is consistently above the England and similar authority average there is a shortage of housing in Bury and options are not as good as we would wish for our care leavers – a situation worsened by the general pressure on social housing and private sector housing within Bury. External expert consultants are helping to develop a Housing Strategy and an interim offer that better meets the needs of our care experienced young people. Two key issues that need resolving are the effective planning across the council to support transition into homes as an adult and the development of a wider range of housing options to better support the range of needs of our young people, particularly with supported accommodation.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

The last 12 months has seen many of the building blocks put in place for better practice and better outcomes for children and families – the launch of Family Safeguarding, the Mockingbird model for foster carers, the review of the MASH, the overhaul and revision of the management information system and tighter oversight of performance and support and guidance for practice. Leadership challenges have impeded the pace of improvement, although the return of a former interim Assistant Director into the permanent Director of Practice role, has supported positive changes in induction, refreshed practice standards and a renewed focus on performance and QA.

The greatest impediment to improvement has been difficulty in recruiting permanent staff. Following the necessary restructure and increase in the social work establishment in the autumn of 2022, Bury has struggled to fill those roles with permanent staff and has been chronically dependent on agency staff, which in turn has led to churn and turnover. Turnover significantly compromises the development of strong, consistent relationships with children and families that support positive change.

Addressing the recruitment and retention of permanent staff must be our number one task through the remainder of the year. New, permanent team managers in parts of the service are having a notable impact, but the overall quality of social work practice remains too variable across the service. The next 6 months will see a relentless focus on delivery of the basics of social work practice and a strengthened emphasis on Team Managers as the gatekeepers and guarantors of the quality and timeliness of work undertaken with children and families.

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**List of Background Papers:-**

**Contact Details:-**

*[Report Author]*

Executive Director sign off Date: \_\_\_\_\_

JET Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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