

SEND IN Oxfordshire February 2021

An update for our community

In 2019 we held stakeholder engagement events an extensive consultation and a series of meetings with schools and settings, parent/carers and partner agencies to co-produce our new Local Area SEND strategy In March 2020, we were in the process of finalising this when COVID struck and we found ourselves in the grip of the pandemic. This has had an unavoidable and significant impact upon our services and communities and we are now planning for a post-pandemic landscape. Oxfordshire needs a Local Area SEND Strategy which reflects these changes.

We give you our assurance that children and young people remain at the heart of our work. During the pandemic, all of our teams continued to work throughout, albeit most staff having to work remotely. All of our strategic work has continued, meetings have taken place virtually and important developments have been ongoing. Some have taken longer than we would have liked, and some have had to be reshaped. Be reassured that the views and perspective we have already gathered remain central to the development of the strategy.

So what of the Local Area SEND Strategy?

We have reviewed our key priorities and would like to make sure that you have the opportunity to see the reshaped strategy and comment. It will be genuinely co-produced with our key partners and stakeholders and provide a clear overview of our vision for improving SEND in Oxfordshire and therefore improving outcomes for our children and young people.

So what is happening in the meantime?

We continue to prioritise the development of services which improve the outcomes for children and young people.

We have begun a SEND Transformation project. This is focuses upon 4 main areas:

- Sufficiency of places – we do not currently have enough places for children and young people with SEND within our specialist provision in Oxfordshire
- SEND continuum – how can we better support all schools and settings to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and young people?
- Commissioning – how can we ensure that we commission appropriate, high quality placements that are value for money and deliver good outcomes for the children and young people who attend?
- Finance – currently Oxfordshire has a £23m deficit on the budget which funds SEND. Like most local authorities in the country, demand pressures have increased significantly and the funding we are allocated does not currently

meet that demand. How can we ensure that all of our services are delivered to meet statutory requirements within the financial limitations we face?

We have an Accelerated Progress Plan. This is the plan which sets out how we will address the areas which were still deemed to require improvement after our SEND Local Area Review which took place in 2019. The Department for Education formally monitor our progress every 6 months and liaise regularly with officers and parents and carers, to make sure that the work is progressing well.

We have a number of governance boards which oversee the progress of all the SEND workstreams.

The revised Local Area SEND Strategy will be finalised to the timeline below:

Activity	Period
Pre-consultation engagement with stakeholders	December 2020 to March 2021
Draft Strategy prepared for initial consultation	April 2021
Initial consultation with education settings and Health	May to July 2021
Strategy prepared for public consultation	August 2021
Public consultation	September to October 2021
Draft Strategy for decision	November 2021
Political decision making	December 2021
Strategy published	January 2022

During the Local Area SEND Strategy consultation process, work will continue on the key areas outlined in SEND Transformation Project and Accelerated Progress Plan with support and involvement from parents and carers and all partner agencies. It is important that our new strategy has been effectively and fully consulted upon and that it reflects the changes needed for the post pandemic landscape for Oxfordshire's children and families.

How can you be involved?

We value hearing from schools and settings about creative solutions to the current challenges you are facing in meeting the needs of pupils with SEND especially post-pandemic.

We want to work with all our settings to ensure that there is equity of resourcing so that we can support CYP staying within their local area.