

CHILDRENS SERVICES TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRATION UPDATEReport of the Director of Children's Services**1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update members on the progress and implementation of the children's services transformation and integration programme. This is a programme of transformational change to put children and families at the heart of service delivery; to realise the Stockport One borough plan with an emphasis on prevention, early help, strengths and asset-based approaches, community capacity building and neighbourhood working and as such draw demand downstream giving the greatest potential for meeting needs earlier and resultant reduction in spend. It is informed and underpinned by two key strategic reviews which have taken place over the last two years:

- A strategic review of Stockport Family and education services to align and focus education and family support with key core essential services including schools, education services, employment and training services, housing support and children and young peoples' community health services to maximise resources whilst reducing overall spend. This review identified areas of best practice, duplication and opportunities for integration.
- A review of the dedicated schools grant (DSG) high needs block to ensure that Stockport has a clear and consistent funding framework, to ensure that spend is sustainable within the DSG high needs budget, to support our understanding of demand and sufficiency and ensure positive outcomes for our SEND young people.

1.2 These reviews are now complete, and this report outlines priorities for the initial phase of implementation as part of the council's medium-term financial planning and DSG ambitions.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The strategic review of Stockport Family and education services carried out in 2019 built on the success of the Stockport Family model which integrated the Multi-Agency Safeguarding and Support Hub, Children's Social Care, Early Years Teams, Early Help and Prevention Teams, Youth Offending Teams, Young People's Drug and Alcohol Services and 0-19 Public Health Teams (Health Visiting, Family Nurse Partnership and School Nurse Teams). The system has responded to the findings of the SEND inspection which highlighted areas needing improvement.

2.2 The priorities that emerged focus on early help and prevention to meet statutory need whilst also aligning commissioning and spend to maximise service performance internally and identifying new ways of working that meet Stockport's residents' needs. This resulted in proposals for a refreshed model for children's services, building on the strong, place-based integrated model of Stockport Family.

2.4 This new delivery offer, reported to members in September 2019 and updated through the portfolio performance reporting, is based on the solid foundation of a

locality based integrated service and was coproduced with a variety of stakeholders including schools and voluntary and community sector partners. It focused on:

- An integrated operational team in each locality with common purpose.
- Co-production with people and communities to ensure the best public service offer for children and families One family plan – a single holistic plan
- A single point of contact for families (key worker/lead professional model).
- All key partners being appropriately trained and informed to support improved outcomes for all children and young people in particular those with SEND.
- Clarified pathways to support families.
- All processes of assessment and sharing of information being conducive to supporting improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Strengthening our inclusion agenda for all vulnerable young people including those with SEND
- Effective earlier intervention for families preventing escalation to high needs placements.
- Appropriate, context specific and (where relevant) joint commissioning for children and young people.

2.5 This model has set the context for a programme of transformational change across the system with the programme of change towards a whole system integrated offer by September 2022. Development of the programme has been underpinned by key elements of work including the further development of an **integrated model** the **DSG review** and implementation plan and the local area's **SEND improvement journey**. These programmes are strategic priorities for the council and children's services (See Fig 1) and a key focus of our response to the increased inequalities starting to emerge because of the impact of the covid pandemic.

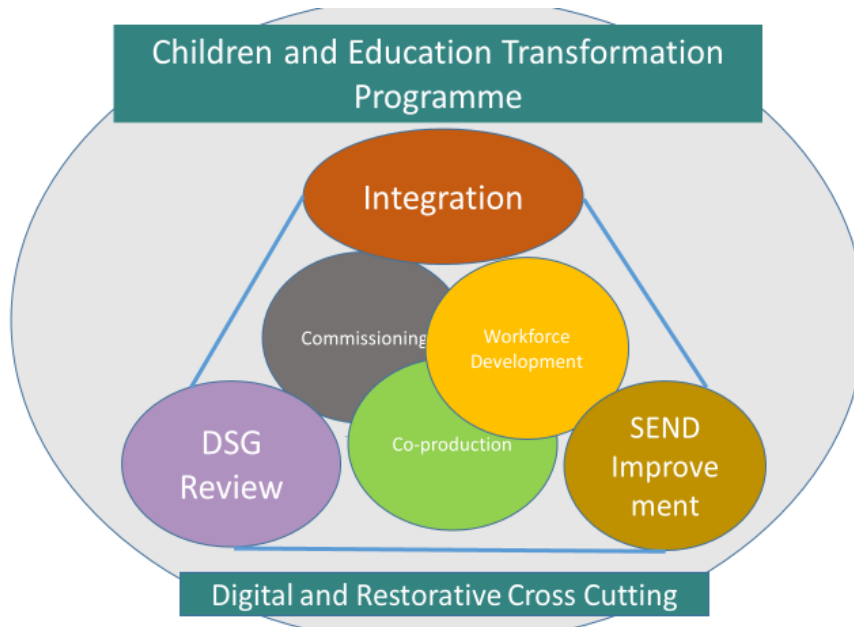


Figure 1 Key Components of Children's Services Transformation Programme

2.6 **Integration** - To drive the integration and transformation of Stockport Family and education services within the context of local neighbourhoods through testing, modelling the approach and providing evidence of impact. The Werneth and Brinnington Enhanced Integration Programme, which was set up at the end of April

2019 was a test bed for new ways of working. This is whole system transformation pilot is based on a neighbourhood collaborative approach. It aimed to affect many areas of activity and spend including improving attendance by having social workers and early help workers based in schools along with other services that provide support to children and families. It has also explored how we collaborate across sectors in the wider neighbourhood to ensure closer working with the community people live in and to support improved outcomes. Proof of concept was gained for this way of working through national evaluation of the social workers in schools programme, local evaluation and audit.

2.7. **DSG review** – A review of the high needs block to understand current spend and outcomes in relation to the local area’s SEND population as commissioned through the Schools Forum and the MTFP programme. The aims of the review were:

- To ensure that the high needs block in the longer term is financially sustainable.
- To ensure that there is transparency to all parties in relation to spend in the block.
- To ensure that the high needs block has the maximum impact in supporting young people with SEND within Stockport to achieve the best outcomes possible.

Following review and consultation this programme has moved to implementation phase with key changes to be realised between April 2022 and September 2022. This implementation phase involves close working with partners and stakeholders.

2.8 **SEND improvement** - To deliver on the areas of improvement identified in the special educational needs and disabilities inspection 2018 and subsequent written statement of action (WSOA) produced by the local area. The DSG review has been informed by the SEND inspection findings and this action plan. The plan has multi agency ownership and is ambitious in relation to areas such as joint commissioning.

2.9 **Post pandemic recovery** -The pandemic has highlighted the resilience and flexibility of the public, the voluntary sector and commissioned services to quickly and effectively adapt to keep the system safe and productive in a period of uncertainty and turmoil. It has brought excellent partnership opportunities such as those with schools, colleges and communities working closer than ever to keep vulnerable children and families safe and supported. During this period, we have been able to work in different ways with communities and with partners. This has brought some clear benefits, for example families have fed back that digital meetings have aided attendance. As we move into the recovery phase, we will need to ensure that this learning becomes part of the future offer.

2.10 Whilst the whole picture of the impact of covid is unclear there are some points of certainty emerging. There are some clear challenges which we now must face in our next stage of recovery. These include:

- Numbers of children in care are increasing locally and nationally.
- An increase in evidence of impact on children living in poverty, those experiencing domestic abuse, increased parental mental ill-health and substance misuse.

Stockport is a polarised borough with significant levels of deprivation in some areas so an increase in need is predicted.

- Impact upon time away from education settings for our young people. We are yet to fully understand this impact, particularly upon our vulnerable learners.

At a time of diminishing resources, a shift to enabling more collaborative, responsive, co-created services is vital to open exciting possibilities for communities to have a greater role in supporting people in need in their community. We also need to refocus on existing individual, family and community strengths and maximise these benefits to support resilience rather than focus on a deficit model. The transformation proposed in this report now needs to be seen with this additional lens and will support the realisation of these opportunities and possibilities to bring a 'communities first' approach rather than professionals solely delivering solutions.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE ON CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Overarching Transformation Programme

- 3.1 The transformation programme is brought together by the [Children's and Young People's Plan](#) which was published in November 2020. It sets out the overarching vision for children and young people in Stockport
- **Our vision is for all children and young people to have the best start in life**, be happy, safe, be able to build and maintain healthy relationships, attend school and learn, be prepared for adulthood and able to achieve their goals. We want families to feel supported, confident, resilient and connected to their community.
 - **Our ambition is for Stockport to be the best place for all children to grow up** happily, healthily, with a good education, confidence, ambition and surrounded by love, care and kindness. We seek to support our children and families to thrive through working together to build nurturing and trusting relationships.
 - **Inclusion is at the heart of our work with children and young people.** Our practice is founded on the belief that every child and young person matters and matters equally. We will nurture, sustain and further develop connections, relationships and mutual support between ourselves and within our communities in Stockport to build a better future, where all children and young people can thrive and no one is left behind.
- 3.2 To realise the ambition and delivery model, based on the solid foundation of a community based integrated service, services will be organised around delivery footprints to be bespoke and specific to respond to need and demand from September 21 onwards. This will involve aligning delivery arrangements for children closer to where they and their families live, and where they learn and play. This is fully in line with the expectation of an [Integrated Care Systems](#) model and neighbourhood delivery approach. This will enable children to receive services and support in the locations that make sense to them; providing better continuity of support and enabling the use of data to gain insight for a fuller picture of need and service provision in each locality.

- 3.3 Within each delivery footprint an enhanced Team Around the School model will be developed as tested in Werneth and Brinnington. Learning from this programme has highlighted the importance of continued collaboration with education settings to problem solve and develop the best conditions for children to thrive in and out of school. Continued learning through working together is at the heart of this model.
- 3.4 The implementation of this model from September 21 onwards will enable the further development of the team around all schools and early years settings across Stockport, to enable the best support to families, who tell us that they are sometimes unclear who the right person or service is to ask advice and work with to support families and avoid escalation.
- 3.4 The development of trusted working relationships across schools and settings with the professionals who are part of their team around the school to allow problem solving together daily. The core team will involve social workers, early help, school nursing, education welfare as well as services to support inclusion and other relevant professionals. The team will involve close partnership working with other public sector organisations including housing, the police and the community and voluntary sector.

Shared Services

- 3.6 Tameside and Stockport have a track record of working successfully together in children's services over the past three years, including through the DfE's Innovation Program and as Partners in Practice and DfE commissioned improvement advisors. We have already established a shared arrangement for the Director of Education role. Through the establishment of the Stockport/Tameside shared services board we will be exploring the opportunities for shared services across both authorities that could support integration further by providing opportunities to do things differently and sharing best practice to improve outcomes for children and families.

SEND and DSG Implementation

- 3.6 The recommendations from the DSG review highlights the need to improve the local offer for children and young people so that they can live and learn locally. Our understanding of children and young people's needs and gaps in provision as well as subsequent consultation have informed a set of priorities for implementation which will enhance this integrated and inclusive approach. The thematic priorities are:
- SEND and inclusion;
 - emotional wellbeing;
 - Inclusion offer including our Pupil Referral Unit offer and specialist sufficiency and resource provision.

These priorities are now being developed into full proposals that will be brought through governance in the Autumn term 2021. These priorities are set out in more detail below:

- 3.7 **SEND and inclusion** - Inclusion is key to the SEND agenda. The focus of this thematic priority is to develop an inclusion strategy and action plan for Stockport This will be supported by an integrated inclusion service that focuses on early

intervention and mainstream education inclusion within a place-based model, building on the work of team around the school. This offer will include core training and support that builds capacity in our schools to support children with additional needs to meet their goals and aspirations within the mainstream education sector.

This will bring a transparent and funded core inclusion offer for all schools that focuses on the expectations outlined within the co-produced [Stockport Entitlement Framework](#). This will further build upon the work undertaken over the last few years on the graduated response and will map and respond to children's services operating model and is overseen by a new offer delivered by Inclusion Co-ordinators who are part of the team around the school.

- 3.9 **Emotional wellbeing** is now more than ever a key consideration that requires a robust offer within our provision. The focus of this work is to strengthen and align the emotional wellbeing offer across the education continuum from early years to post-16 in Stockport and offer targeted. A scrutiny review has recently been carried out (April 2021) looking at the emotional wellbeing offer to school age children with 5 recommendations that support the prioritisation, consolidation and ongoing focus on children's emotional and mental wellbeing. This will be taken forward in the next few months.
- 3.10 This will bring a revised emotional well-being offer for schools underpinned by the [I-Thrive model](#) This is a revised offer across both primary and secondary schools with a clear definition of the core/top up offer for schools linked directly into the community offer aligned to the footprints and teams around the school. The offer will support and work closely with emotional wellbeing leads in schools and the new inclusion service.

The offer will be aligned with:

- [The Mental Health Support Teams](#) a national school and college programme coordinated at a Greater Manchester level and currently being defined for rollout in Stockport
- New VCSE early help and wellbeing offer – led through a partnership with [Beacon Counselling](#)
- Roll out of the [Emotional Literacy Support Assistants](#) programme in Stockport schools.

- 3.11 **Inclusion** - We will be re-framing our Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and alternative provision (AP) offer to support those children who have been excluded, those who are at risk of exclusion and those who are looking for an education outside the mainstream academic offer to ensure that schools are supported to be as inclusive as possible but also have an alternative offer when appropriate. The focus is on developing a cohesive and robust Stockport PRU/AP offer that ensures positive outcomes for Stockport young people.

Stockport PRU/AP provisions will work together as a family of schools, each with a distinct identity as part of a revised inclusion offer. It is proposed that our PRU/AP provisions work collectively to share knowledge, specialisms, resources and

capacity. There will be clear links into the emotional wellbeing offer, Team Around the School and footprint models.

The proposals include:

- Re-modelling Highfields PARE placements
- Moat House young mothers education unit providing support to a wider cohort of vulnerable young people
- Linking the PRU offer into a new restructured inclusion service supporting each Stockport footprint with the inclusion agenda
- Linking into the preparation for adulthood agenda and post 16 offer

3.12 Specialist sufficiency and resource provision - The specialist settings within Stockport support the most vulnerable learners. There are currently significant sufficiency pressures within this sector. This is resulting in the use of external placements which are of high cost, and in some instances at distance from home. This work focuses on ensuring that these placements are appropriate for the level of need and delivering against the [Stockport Outcomes Framework](#) for vulnerable children and young people and to ensure sufficiency of specialist provision within special schools, resourced provisions and alternative provision through place planning strategies for the longer term.

The approach will ensure that SEND/special school place planning and provision is part of a whole Stockport place planning approach for children and young people up to the age of 25 and develop a specialist sufficiency strategy linked to the strategic approach to place planning. It will also develop a clear understanding of what the offer is across special schools, resourced bases, alternative provision and mainstream schools so parents understand the options and the offer.

Next Steps

3.13 The reviews are now complete, and this report outlines priorities for the initial phase of implementation as part of the council's medium-term financial planning and DSG ambitions. The next steps in the implementation of the priorities is summarised below:

- **Integrated locality-based services** – From September 2021 services will start to be organised around delivery footprints to be bespoke and specific to respond to need and demand.
- **Team Around the School** – From September 2021 – The enhanced team around the school model will be expanded into other more delivery footprints. The implementation of this model will enable the establishment of an effective team around all schools and early years settings across Stockport
- **Shared Services** - From June 2021 the Stockport/Tameside Shared Services Board will be exploring the opportunities for shared services across the neighbouring authorities of Tameside and Stockport could support this integration further by providing opportunities to do things differently with less resource and sharing best practice.

- **DSG** - From June 2021 we will be developing the priorities into a detailed set of proposals over the next 3 months involving further consultation and engagement with staff and stakeholders for consideration and sign off by cabinet in September 2021.

This timeline set out below reflects some delay due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic and to ensure enough time to co-design detailed proposals with school senior leadership teams, Service leaders and colleagues in a way that is meaningful. The next stage now will be to develop these priorities into a detailed set of proposals over the next 3 months involving further consultation and engagement with staff and stakeholders for consideration and sign off by cCabinet in September 2021.

Milestone description	Date expected	Output at milestone
Implementation of social workers into schools as initial phase of enhanced TAS roll out	September 2021	First phase of roll out complete
Business case proposals on key areas of change presented through governance cycle	September 2021	Approval received
Consultation period on proposals	October 2021	Feedback considered and final business cases amended accordingly
Final proposals developed and taken through governance including Schools Forum	October -December 2021	Sign of final proposals
Implementation of new structures/service offers	April/September 2022	Implementation of the new structures

4. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1 There were varied and extensive stakeholder engagement on the transformation programme during 2019/20, including insight from the 'listening exercise' with schools, alongside in-depth engagement from the special educational Needs and disability (SEND) review. This informed a set of priorities for a move to an integrated children's and education service.
- 4.2 During 2020/21 stakeholders have been engaged in developing the priorities for children's services integration and transformation and those from DSG review consultation. This engagement has involved:

- Stakeholder input into the initial DSG review and recommendations.
- Regular updates for headteachers through primary/secondary consortia and Directorate and School Forum meetings - Sep 2020 - ongoing
- Interactive workshops with headteachers heads of service and service leads – Feb/March 2021
- Workshops with families with lived experience of supporting children with special educational needs and disability Nov 2020 /Feb 2020/May 2020

4.5 The voices of families, children & young people have also been drawn from specific consultation on the DSG review and complementary conversations undertaken in the development of the Borough Plan (January to March 2020), the SEND Strategy/Priorities (June 2020) and Outcomes Framework (Sept 2019 to June 2020) where key priorities reflect mental health and wellbeing of young people as well as training and employment opportunities and equalities.

We will continue to engage young people following on from the community reporting exercise which underpinned our work on inclusion.

5. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPACTS

- 5.1 Detailed work has been undertaken around the implications of the DSG implementation and this will be presented as we bring through the business cases for service change.
- 5.2 The integration of children's services is already in train with no change to staffing numbers or terms and conditions proposed at present.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 This is an 'invest to save' approach and the next phase of complex service transformation, structure redesign, efficiencies and savings in relation to demand reduction.
- 6.2 The DSG allocation to Stockport is £258.709 million and it is essential that we ensure that the high needs block of £37.810m million has the maximum impact in supporting young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) within Stockport to achieve the best outcomes. This is currently running at a deficit. The outcome of the review requires significant changes to the way services are delivered. These services have maintained a high level of autonomy over the years and the proposals that will be implemented based on the forensic analysis of the DSG budget and delivery mechanism are far reaching. Wholesale cultural change is required to ensure that children and families are achieving their best outcomes.

There is also the need to create enough specialist placements within the borough. A placement sufficiency strategy is being developed aligned to our inclusion strategy to ensure in the longer-term use of high-cost placements is reduced. To mitigate use of external provision we have the following already in train. New council funded 208 place primary level special school. This will replace the current Lisburne school which due to capacity is operating over three sites with currently 116 children on

roll. This will create an additional 92 places. This school is due to open in September 2022. This will support the re-modelling of our resource provision.

New secondary aged special free school in partnership with Prospere Academy Trust. This will create an additional 133 spaces for secondary aged pupils with complex learning disability and autism and will lead to a reduction in use of out of borough placements. This is due to open in September 2023.

The detailed proposals will be subject to further discussion and/or statutory consultation with key stakeholders from late summer/autumn 2021 and therefore any potential re-design, service efficiency and/or cashable savings will only be available from the 2022/23 financial year at the earliest.

The Table below provides a summary of the updated cumulative 2020/21 DSG Deficit position as at 31 March 2021 and the revised figure from 1 April 2021 accounting for the ear-marked funds from within the baseline 2021/22 budget:

Narrative	£m	£m	Notes
2019/20 DSG outturn	1.302		Deficit as 31.3.2020
2019/20 DSG funding adj.	(0.163)		EYB January 2020 census adj.
2020/21 DSG Q3 forecast	2.099		In-year forecast
Adjusted balance		3.238	Cumulative as at 31.3.2021
2021/22 Schools block		(0.870)	SF approved transfer
2021/22 High Needs block		(0.497)	HNB base budget ear-marked
Adjusted est. balance		1.871	Forecast position at 1.4.2021

7. RISKS AND INTERDEPENDENCIES

There are a number of interdependencies across this programme. It is a whole system approach working with and drawing on a wide set of partners and stakeholders. Key to the success of the implementation phase will be to successfully align the delivery against the three programmes mentioned above - integration, SEND improvement and DSG.

As the proposals are developed a full project risk analysis will be undertaken and managed and reported to appropriate governance channels. As we are moving into a recovery phase and we will be mindful that we need to respond to the unknown legacy of the pandemic in our planning and implementation of this programme.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

Key to this transformation is the improvement of the health and wellbeing of children and reduction of inequalities in outcomes as part of an integrated approach to supporting children and families. There is a strong focus on prevention, health promotion and early identification. In particular those who need additional support and targeted interventions which covers all the protected characteristics in particular children with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

More detailed equalities impact assessments will be brought forward alongside the detailed proposals in the autumn.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

There are none.

10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Children and Education Review](#)
[Dedicated Schools Grant Review](#)

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Carolyn Anderson by email

Carolyn.anderson@stockport.gov.uk