

## **Appendix Two: SEND support programme**

### **The Safety Valve Programme**

In 2020/21, the Department for Education introduced the 'safety valve' intervention programme for those local authorities with the very highest percentage Dedicated School Grant (DSG) deficits, recognising that help would be needed for these authorities to turn things around in a short space of time.

The programme required those local authorities to develop substantial plans for reform to their high needs systems and associated spending, with support and challenge from the department, to rapidly place them on a sustainable footing.

Wokingham is due to take part in the 'safety valve' intervention programme from September 2022.

Delivery of the programme to date has focussed on two principal goals, viewed as critical for local authorities to reach financial sustainability:

- Appropriately managing demand for EHCPs, including assessment processes that are fit for purpose.
- Use of appropriate and cost-effective provision. This includes ensuring mainstream schools are equipped and encouraged to meet needs where possible, whilst maintaining high standards for all pupils.

Initial thinking for meeting the above goals in the Council's improvement journey, based on actions by councils already in the Safety Valve Programme is organised under five key headings:

- Early Intervention Focus
- Increased SEN Support Offer
- Review EHCP assessment process and thresholds
- Culture change and work with school leaders
- Appropriate and thorough provision mapping, with potential development of more local provision

### **Established Key Programme Actions**

This section provides a brief account of agreed actions under current plans, as these set the context for the enhanced programme of activities that will be agreed once the Council enters the Safety Valve Programme.

### **Transitions**

The Council is continuing to deliver against an Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) in respect of the ongoing weakness identified in the SEND Revisit (an Ofsted inspection in 2021, following up on progress since the Local Area SEND Inspection in 2019), in terms of the lack of a developed pathway to enable young people with SEND to make a successful transition to adulthood.

An action plan of six key areas of improvement has been developed with the following key actions:

1. Strengthen governance and performance management of transitions for all children and young people with SEND in Wokingham.
2. Informed by the outcomes from Action 1 above, establish a clear protocol / policy within WBC that defines transitions and the respective roles of professionals including (but not limited to) Children's Services and Adult Social Care.
3. Complete coproduced Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Pathway documentation and guidance for parents, carers, and professionals, which articulates the engagement, roles, and responsibilities of all key stakeholders/partners at each stage of transition to adulthood.
4. To improve transition arrangements through Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust (healthcare) provision.
5. To continue to increase the number of people aged 14+ who are on GP Learning Disability registers and access an LD Health Check.
6. Fully utilise Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET/EET) & September Guarantee (a statutory requirement for local authorities to find education and training places for young people aged 16 and 17) data.

Work is progressing under each of these areas, with some areas now completed. Officers are currently bringing together a range of evidence to support the sharing of impact of the APP.

Officers continue to work closely with the Council's DfE SEND Advisor, and have held an APP review meeting with the DfE and CQC colleagues in July 2022

### **Children and Young People's Integrated Therapy (CYPIT)**

The Council commissions Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy and Physiotherapy for Children and Young People with an Education Care and Health Plan (EHCP) where therapy has been identified in the Education section of the plan (Section F).

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT) currently provide the commissioned service (CYPIT), under a contract which runs to 31 August 2022.

Formal approval was secured to source a provider for these services across Berkshire West, in collaboration with Brighter Futures for Children, Reading and West Berkshire District Council. The subsequent procurement has been led by Wokingham, and tender responses submitted are being evaluated.

The Council will be seeking formal approval to extend the current Wokingham CYPIT contract for a further seven months from 1 September 2022 to 31 March 2023 on current terms and conditions; to accommodate additional time required to complete evaluation and contract mobilisation.

Extension of the Wokingham CYPIT contract until the 31 March 2023, will ensure continuity and sustainability of current service provision and the continued delivery of

statutory services for the duration of procurement, with a new single CYPIT contract across Berkshire West commencing on the 1 April 2023.

### **Foundry Review**

The Foundry College is the Wokingham Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), established to educate children who cannot be educated in a school, normally because of a medical condition or permanent exclusion.

The review, in partnership with Foundry College, has been progressing well with stage 1 now completed. Through the Innovation and Improvement Partnership (IIP), with support from commissioning and Foundry a one-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) will be in place by early summer. This will then further develop into a new SLA with ongoing work to develop a five-year strategic plan and budget setting around need based on the four key deliverables. Permanently Excluded, Medically Vulnerable, Alternative Provision, and Outreach.

During 2021/22, potential funding of £400k has been identified within the High Needs Block to support potential financial activity that may come out of the review and support Foundry on projects of a significant in-year deficit. No funding was drawn down as the actual financial position improved on the school's initial projections. Foundry has set a balanced budget for the 2022/23 financial year, with discussions ongoing around longer-term financial planning.