

Wokingham's SEND Strategy 2024-27

Development Update for
O&S Committee

1/11/2023

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Strategy Development Process & Timetable

- Initial Meetings between LA, Schools, SEND Voices and Me2 Club held in April / May 2023
- Agreed data gathering process - through surveys and wider discussion during the spring and summer 2023
- Pulled together initial draft of plan over the Summer - currently collating and incorporating the data
- Data gathered will also inform the SEF and we are planning to hold a SEND Programme refresh in the Autumn term to refine and develop our workstreams
- Final draft of Strategy for approval by October – ready for wider consultation and feedback in the Winter term
- Publication and launch in New Year – Strategy to cover the three years 2024-27

Strategic Vision

- Wokingham is a great place for children and young people to grow up. The area is vibrant and has a strong local economy. Most families in Wokingham benefit from high quality housing and access to good community services. Schools in Wokingham are excellent. Healthcare provision across the Berkshire West area is accessible and high quality.
- ∞ • It must be recognised, however that for children and young people with SEND, that positive picture is not always shared, with a range of barriers preventing and restricting access to opportunities and services.
- The aspiration and vision set out in this Strategy is that **Wokingham should be great place for ALL children and young people, including those with SEND, to grow up with voices that are heard, access to opportunities, and who are well prepared for an independent and fulfilled adult life.**

Principles

Wokingham's SEND Partnership will...

...embed co-production throughout the SEND system

Ensuring that co-production and partnership working are embedded at all levels of planning & delivery and the views of all stakeholders are fully accounted for. We may not always reach agreement, but we will listen to everyone's views in reaching decisions

...embed SEND as everyone's business with all partners playing their part

*Embedding a shared commitment across education, health and social care, to ensure that all services are **supported and challenged** to play their part in meeting the needs of children and families with SEND*

...always be honest

We will listen and work with parents, carers their children and young people to plan and explain what is possible and why things may need to change or happen. We may not always reach agreement, but we will always be honest

What is our Starting Point? SEND Strategy 2021-24

Key issues identified in 2021:

- Growing demand, particularly acute in early years
- Insufficient specialist provision, particularly acute within certain categories of need (ASC, SEMH, SLCN)
- Co-production at the strategic level was lacking
- The quality of management information needs to improve
- Need to strengthen inclusion in mainstream education – increased focus on early intervention
- Timeliness and quality of EHCPs needs to improve
- Joint working and joined up thinking and delivery between professionals across education, health and social care needs to be strengthened
- Need to strengthen transition arrangements particularly with regards to Preparation for Adulthood

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LOCAL CONTEXT

- Across all English unitary authorities, the proportion of pupils with statements or education, health and care (EHC) plans ranges from 2.0% to 6.2%
- Wokingham currently has an EHCP rate of 3.6%, compared to an average of 4.3% in All English unitary authorities - Wokingham is well within the bottom quartile of all Local Authorities
- Historically Wokingham has remained behind the national, local and statistical neighbour average for the number and % of pupils with EHC Plans throughout this period BUT since 2020 growth has been faster than the statistical neighbour average; Wokingham has been 'catching up' with comparable areas.
- Development of maintained special schools and SEN Resource bases or units has not kept pace with the wider growth – this means mainstream schools are working with some complex cases
- The majority of this grow has been absorbed by mainstream schools
- This has been accompanied by significant increases in the use of Alternative Provision and Independent and Non Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) and a corresponding increase in pupils who are Educated Other Than At School (EOTAS)



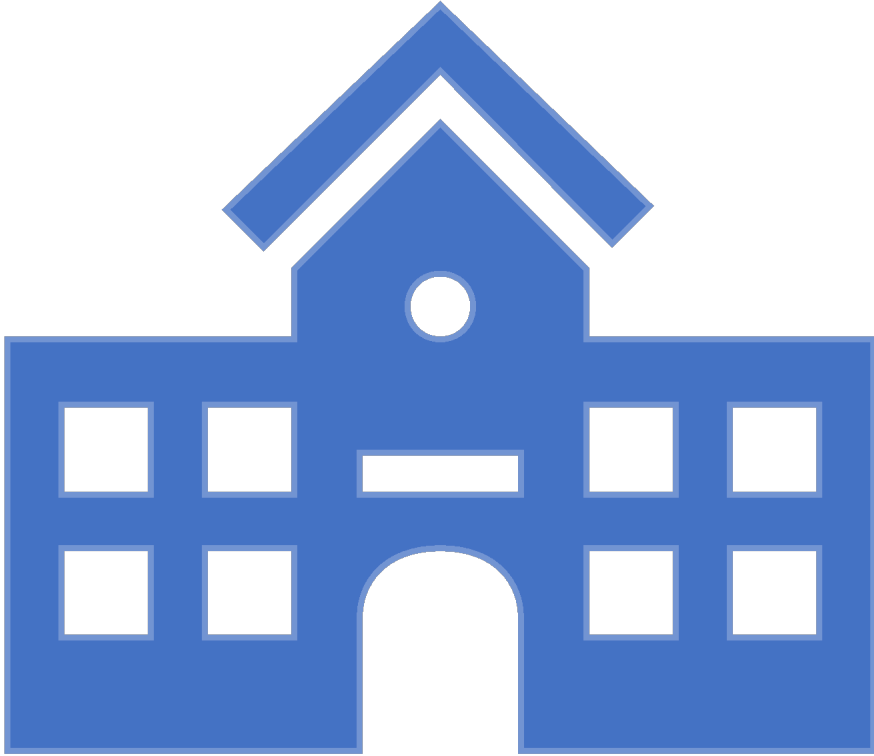
Year	Wokingham	% Increase	Statistical Neighbours	% Increase	South East	% Increase	England	% Increase
2015	730		23,640		39,843		240,183	
2016	756	3.6%	25,519	7.9%	42,828	7.5%	256,315	6.7%
2017	802	6.1%	29,192	14.4%	48,883	14.1%	287,290	12.1%
2018	867	8.1%	32,134	10.1%	54,630	11.8%	319,819	11.3%
2019	934	7.7%	35,902	11.7%	60,860	11.4%	353,995	10.7%
2020	1,078	15.4%	40,274	12.2%	67,602	11.1%	390,109	10.2%
2021	1,270	17.8%	45,439	12.8%	74,438	10.1%	430,697	10.4%
2022	1,488	17.2%	51,423	13.2%	83,307	11.9%	473,255	9.9%
2023	1,685	13.2%	57,324	11.5%	91,259	9.5%	517,026	9.2%
% Change 2015-23		230.8%		242.5%		229.0%		215.3%

FINANCIAL CONTEXT

- Wokingham faces significant challenges in improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, not least of which are the financial pressures upon the SEND system
- In recent years progress on improvements has been difficult in the context of lack of resources
- Safety Valve and Council investment in SEND is helping to change this picture BUT this is an enormously challenging programme and demand continues to grow
- Recent investment secured in additional specialist provision will help reshape the local system – but we also need to retain our focus on inclusion and early intervention

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Feedback from Schools

- Wokingham Council recently ran a survey for schools between 30 June 2023 - 28 July 2023
- It gathered school's views on their priorities for improvement of the local Special Educational Needs and Disability ('SEND') system and Wokingham's new SEND Strategy
- It also gathered feedback on school's experience of accessing local specialist outreach services
- The survey was responded to by a total of 17 schools – 25% of all local schools – made up of 14 primary (82% of total) two secondaries (12%) and one special school (6%).
- 16 of the 17 respondents confirmed they were headteachers.



- **All** respondents confirmed that the Strategy Priorities from 2021 remain relevant – although 19% suggested that Co-production was not a key school priority

Issues and Challenges identified in 2021 Strategy	Remains a significant issue for schools	Not a key priority for schools	Response Total
Growing demand, particularly acute in early years	100% 17	0% 0	17
Insufficient specialist provision	100% 17	0% 0	17
Joint working and joined up delivery needs to be strengthened	100% 17	0% 0	17
Management information needs to improve	94% 16	6% 1	17
46 Strengthen inclusion in mainstream	94% 16	6% 1	17
EHCP timeliness and quality	94% 15	6% 1	16
Co-production at the strategic level is lacking	81% 13	19% 3	16

- A number of additional critical challenges were also highlighted by schools

- **Complexity of need is increasing** and this stretches school's resources and knowledge – particularly the complexity of **mental health difficulties** being faced by pupils (and families as a whole), which has been acute in the wake of the pandemic
 - These sit below the thresholds for CAMHS but are often too complex for preventative services including the Emotional Well-Being Hub
 - There are significant numbers of pupils who have struggled to return to school since the Covid-19 lockdowns – **'Emotionally Based School Avoidance'** is a priority issue for many schools.
 - **Limited access to specialist support** – from Educational Psychologists, S<, Occupational Therapists, CAMHS and specialists in Autism and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties
- 47 • **Limited access to special school places** means that mainstream schools are sometimes supporting very complex cases with increased risk of exclusion
- **Importance of consistency and equality between what schools offer** – every schools need to play an equal part in meeting local needs
- **Particular challenges in the early years** and in identifying and supporting needs in the PVI sector at pre-school
- **Recruitment and Retention of SEND staff is a key challenge** - and to accessing training for new staff given the high turnover.

- Schools were presented with a range of current and proposed spending priorities
- We asked whether these were the right priorities, whether there were any gaps
- 81% of schools supported the identified priorities for investment
- 36% said there were gaps on the list
- The Priority list opposite has been colour coded to identify the high, medium and low tiers of school priority.
- It should be stressed that the items on the lower tier of support may not impact directly on schools; this does not mean they are insignificant.

PRIORITY	Prioritise %	Reduce %	Remove %
Increased specialist outreach support	100		
Increased range of specialist provision	94	6	
Implement Early Years Strategy	94	6	
SEND Team capacity	94	6	
Improving Joint Commissioning with health	81	19	
New High Needs Financial Banding system	67	20	13
New SEND support service	62	38	
Commissioning capacity re: Alternative Provision	53	40	7
Data systems	44	44	12
Commissioning capacity re: Independent Sector	21	64	14
Commissioning capacity re: EOTAS	20	67	13
Improved Local Offer	19	44	38

- Most issues schools raised are already within scope of the programme as it stands (i.e. few surprises)
- There are two clear issues identified in the School Survey that are not addressed through the current programme of improvements:
 - i. Understanding and addressing the identified gap between MHST / Well Being Hub support at the lower tier of mental health support and CAMHS services ... CAMHS is under review locally and we need to ensure the education / SEND system is actively involved in this process
 - ii. Recruitment and Retention of SEND staff were identified as key challenges for schools – we need to explore whether there is more the system-as-a-whole could do to address this challenge in a joined-up way?





Terri Walsh
Joint CEO
SEND Voices
Wokingham

Feedback from Parents and Carers - Annual Wokingham Borough SEND Survey 2023

Highlight Summary

Highlights of What is Going Well?

- **SENDIASS** – families feel supported, heard and able to make informed decisions.
- **ASSIST** – families feel supported and heard.
- **Short Breaks team** – families report the process and contact with the SB team is a positive experience.
- **Support from charities** – Camp Mohawk, Me2Club, BFTF, Parenting Special Children, SEND Voices Wokingham
- **SEND team improvements being seen by families** –some positive feedback for the EHCP and Annual Review process
- **Portage Services, Continence Services, Health Visitors, Priority Dental services** -improving
- **CAMHS and ASD Diagnosis(CAMHS)** - improving

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Highlights of Where Improvements can be made?

Many of the themes remain the same as 2022

General

- Families would like issues to be identified and supported earlier to prevent becoming bigger problems/crisis.
- More information for parents on how to support/help their child.
- Improve services/professionals working together.
- Improve communication.
- Communicate what the Local Offer is and make sure the information on it is correct and easy to find.

SEN Team

- Improve consistency of communication; data showed either very good or very poor communication.
- Lack of provision to meet needs.
- Annual Review process is inconsistent, especially in mainstream settings.
- PFA – is inconsistent and families require more information.
- Improve EOTAS processes including making timely payments.

Education

- Results demonstrate improvements have been made in many aspects but more work is required in an equal offer across the borough. Still a post code lottery. see Slide 7.
- More work to be done to support those in mainstream settings; early support, identifying and meeting needs, inclusion.
- Improve educational progress.
- Mental health/ EBSA support.

Health

- Mental health/ EBSA support.
- Health waiting lists, especially CAMHS, ASD, ADHD, OT and SALT.
- Getting reports from Ed Psych, SALT and OT which are required as part of the EHCP process.
- SALT, Physiotherapy, Community Pediatrician, Hospital services.
- Understanding of SEND across all hospital staff.
- GP services – hard to get appointments.
- GP 14+ health checks.

Social Care

- Although there are some improvements, the identification of needs by Social Care continue to be a concern to families.
- Increase the number of YP 14+ with EHCP contacted by the PfA Team.
- Communicate to families the services offered by the Children with Disabilities Team.
- More (Short Breaks) services required to use DP's.

Transport

- Improve WBC Transport process/service.

Summary of Results

This is the second Annual SEND survey SVW have run and were pleased that we received **408** responses from Wokingham Borough residents across all age groups (0-25), SEND needs, and the majority of educational type settings. The survey aims to cover all aspects of SEND provision in the Borough including education, social care, health, transport, information and parent carer wellbeing. The results of this first survey will act as a benchmark so that improvements in services and areas for improvement can be tracked annually. The questions this year were updated in line with the new Ofsted/CQC Local Area Inspection framework.

Overall Rating for SEND in Wokingham Borough

The overall rating for SEND services in the Local Area, with the majority of respondents saying it is neither good nor bad.

2.86

average rating



(2.84 2022)

NB: Data from this year and 2022 have been provided, all 2022 data is presented in brackets.



Feedback from Children & Young People

Young People's Survey - closing date of 21st Sept.

Please promote the survey with families

The link is:

<https://forms.gle/agouXCDnNKNBU32YA>

Wokingham SEND Strategy 2024-27

Proposed Strategic Priorities

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Priority 1 – Inclusion and Early Intervention:

- *Ensuring that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities feel safe and are included as part of their local communities*
- *Ensuring that their needs are identified and addressed at the earliest available opportunity*
- *Ensuring that every provider plays their part in meeting these needs through positive and proactive inclusion and early intervention*

DISCUSSION POINT

- *How can we ensure this includes access to wider community support and services*

Priority 2 – Sufficiency of SEND Services

- *Ensuring there is access to sufficient high-quality education, health and care provision to address the special educational needs and disabilities of the local 0-25's population.*

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- *Clearly this covers educational provision BUT we need to ensure this also includes a wider scope*

DISCUSSION POINT

- *Do we need to extend our workstreams to ensure this includes sufficiency of 'Ordinarily Available' health provision, Short Breaks, CAMHS, Leisure Services*

Priority 3 – Smart Commissioning

- *Understanding the needs of the local area in every area of provision*
- *This must account for the wishes of local children, young people and families*
- *We must use this information to ensure joint commissioning supports service delivery and we make best use of all available resources*
- *This will include drawing on the strengths and assets available within our local communities*

DISCUSSION POINT

- *We have been rightly focused on sufficiency of education provision – but should we now consider a SEND-specific Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to cover the wider scope?*

Priority 4 – Effective Transitions

Ensuring we are able to target resources and support at key stage transfers and other points of tension and system failure:

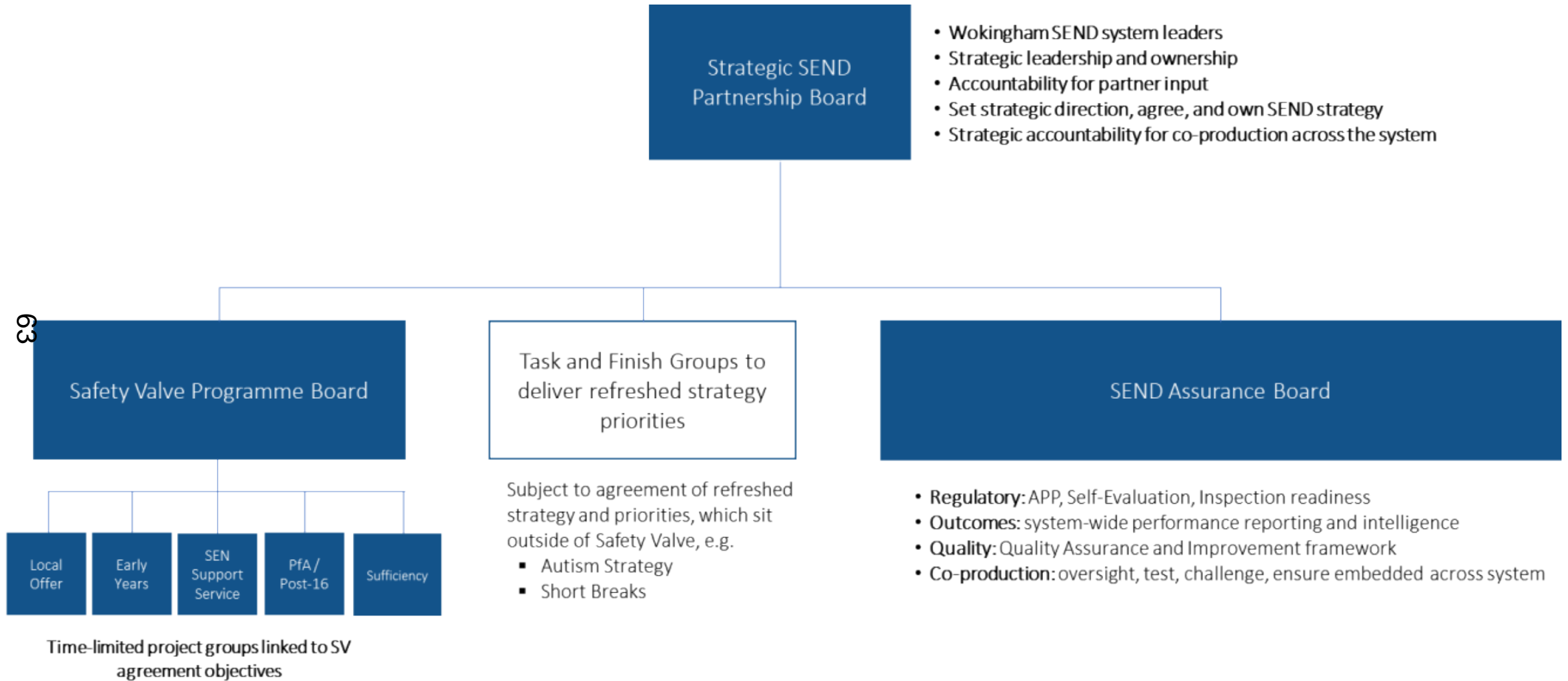
- *Early Years to Primary*
- *Primary to Secondary*
- *Preparation for Adulthood*
 - *Providing high quality information, advice and guidance on preparing for adulthood; support parents, carers and young people to understand their options, make decisions about their future, and seek help where required*
 - *Create a seamless transition into adult social care and adult health services for those who need care and support in adulthood*

Priority	Project
Priority 1 – Inclusion and Early Intervention	1.1 Local Offer Website & Support
	1.2 Early Years Strategy - <i>Enhanced support for PVI settings and earlier identification of need</i>
	1.3 Implement New SEN Support Service / Recommission Specialist Outreach – <i>Developing inclusion in mainstream and good practice</i>
	AREAS FOR ALIGNMENT: Emotionally Based School Avoidance / Links to Autism Strategy / Focus on Community Inclusion / Awareness Raising & Training for Partner Agencies
Priority 2 – Sufficiency of SEND Services	2.1 Resource Base Re-Configuration & New SEND Units
	2.2 Addington Special School Expansion
	2.3 Oak Tree Special School
	2.4 Special School Free Bids and Implementation
	2.5 AP & EOTAS Review
	2.6 Post 16 Commissioning including developing links into employment
	AREAS FOR ALIGNMENT: Short Breaks Commissioning
Priority 3 – Smart Commissioning	3.1 Joint Commissioning of Therapeutic Services & Ordinarily Available Health Provision
	3.2 INMSS Commissioning, QA & Contract Management
	3.3 Review High Needs Banding Framework
	3.4 Digital Improvement - Systems and Data
	3.5 Strengthen Multi-Agency Panel Decision Making
	AREAS FOR ALIGNMENT: CAMHS Review / Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
Priority 4: Effective Transitions	Early Years Strategy
	Transitions Pathway – Focus for new Area SENCO Team
	Preparation for Adulthood Strategy - Including enhancing links into Adult Social Care

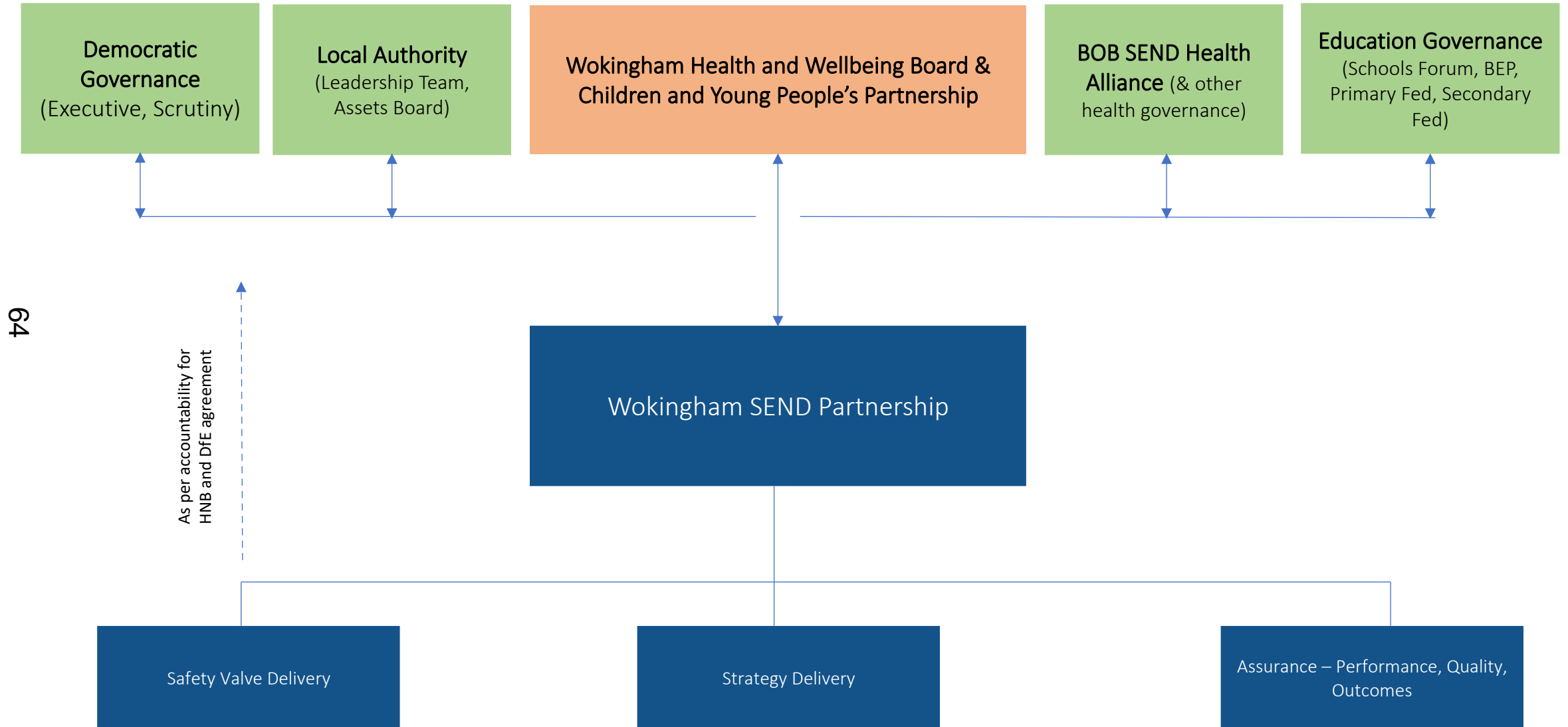
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Governance Arrangements

Review and Co-Redesign of SEND Partnership Arrangements



Outcome 1 – Strengthen governance and performance management



- Building on the Safety Valve programme we need to incorporate areas of the Strategy that sit outside the SV programme – including an update and refresh of the Action Plan
- Focus On C&YP Engagement – *How to build this in as part of business as usual?*
- Close engagement with CAMHS Review & other areas of Mental Health support
- 65 • Embed links with Autism Strategy
- Set date for Programme Refresh – time to update and extend current programme of activity - Identified Gaps in Workstreams:
 - Short Breaks
 - Emotionally Based School Avoidance
 - Recruitment and Retention Strategy – Additional Support for Schools

Do you have any questions?

