

# Cambridgeshire Schools Forum SEND Update

December 2023

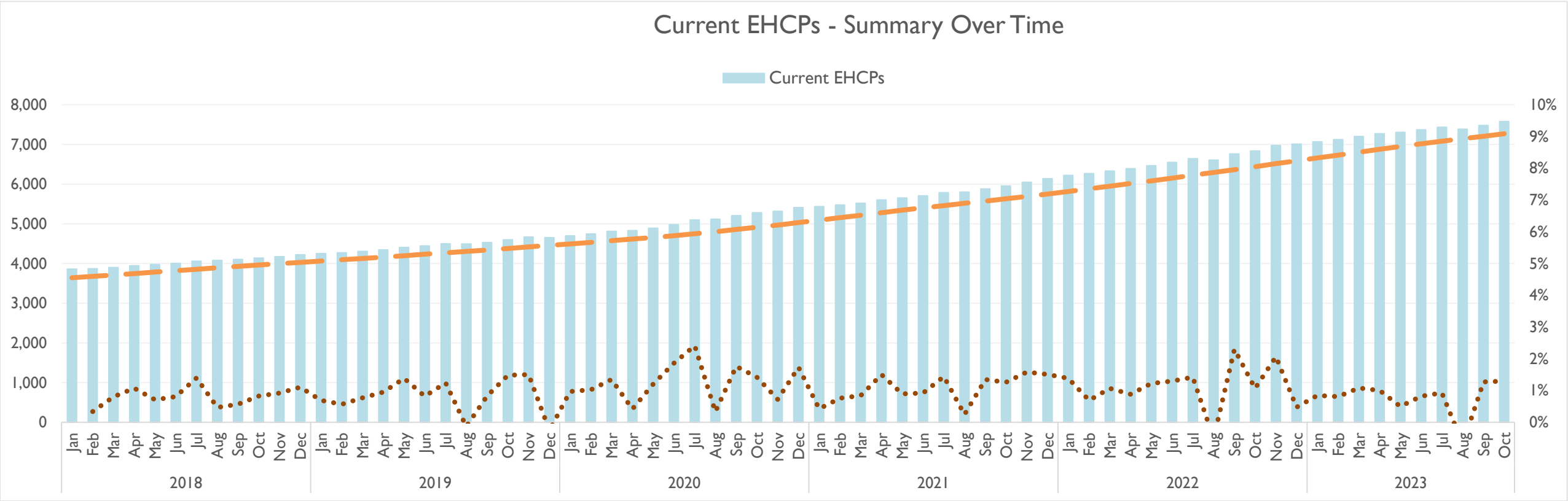


# Demand for SEND

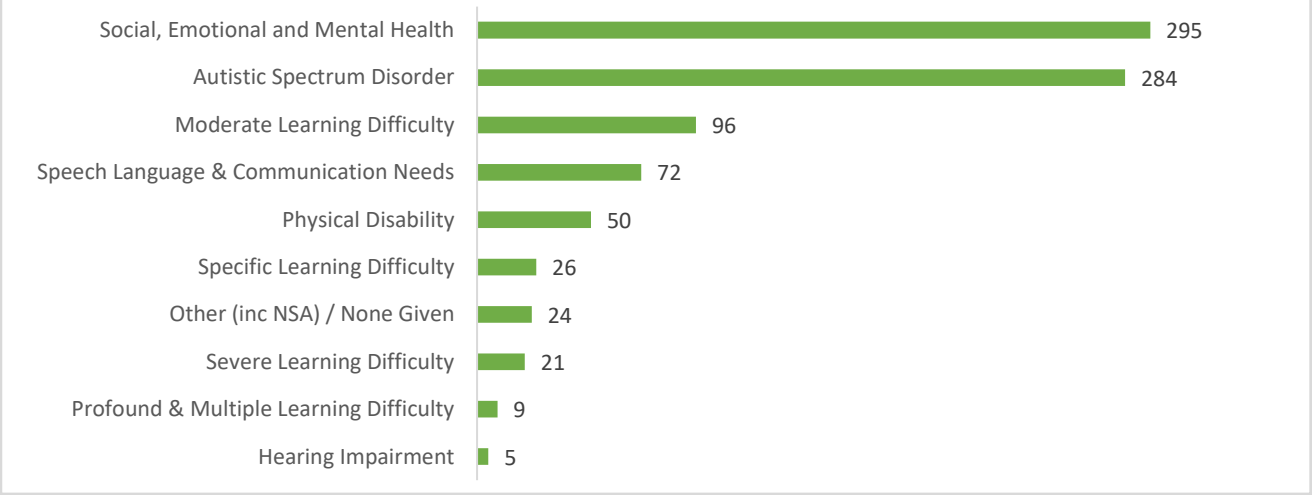
- The 2023 number of open EHCPs are above forecasted pupil numbers, +2.9% (212) above the 2022 estimates and +1.4% (106) above the revised estimates produced in 2023.
- The number of new initial requests received is increasing in comparison to the previous year (+20.5% increase). There has been a slight increase in the proportion of new initial requests received from the 11 to 15 age group, while those from the 5-10 and 16-19 age groups have seen a slight decrease.
- The numbers of new EHCPs issued has fallen compared to previous year (-13.5% decrease). There has been a slight increase in the proportion of new EHCPs issued to the under 5 and 11 to 15 age groups.
- The proportion of new EHCPs issued due to Social, Emotional & Mental Health primary need has increased significantly compared to previous years.
- Timeliness measures have been strong for the first half of the year but we have seen a recent decline due to increased demand, staffing capacity for statutory assessment caseworkers and Education Psychologist. We have also provided significantly more specialist placements with a further 600 places due to be delivered.
- The overall number of EHCP review meetings held has increased by 8.1% compared to the previous year, and the proportion of EHCP reviews being completed in timescale is increasing (70.1%).
- The number of ceased EHCPs has fallen slightly in comparison to the previous year (-3.7% decrease). The proportion of EHCPs ceased due to the young person not wishing to engage in education increased significantly compared to previous years although around 300 notification to cease have been sent in recent months which will mean this figure should be higher than in previous years.

**Current EHCPs by year and month**

Year	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
2018	3,860	3,873	3,904	3,946	3,974	4,006	4,062	4,081	4,104	4,138	4,176	4,222
2019	4,251	4,275	4,308	4,349	4,409	4,445	4,500	4,494	4,531	4,598	4,667	4,655
2020	4,700	4,748	4,812	4,832	4,890	4,981	5,101	5,118	5,208	5,282	5,320	5,412
2021	5,435	5,476	5,522	5,605	5,655	5,707	5,789	5,803	5,881	5,955	6,049	6,140
2022	6,225	6,268	6,335	6,391	6,469	6,553	6,646	6,612	6,764	6,836	6,977	7,010
2023	7,069	7,126	7,203	7,275	7,311	7,371	7,439	7,388	7,482	7,579		

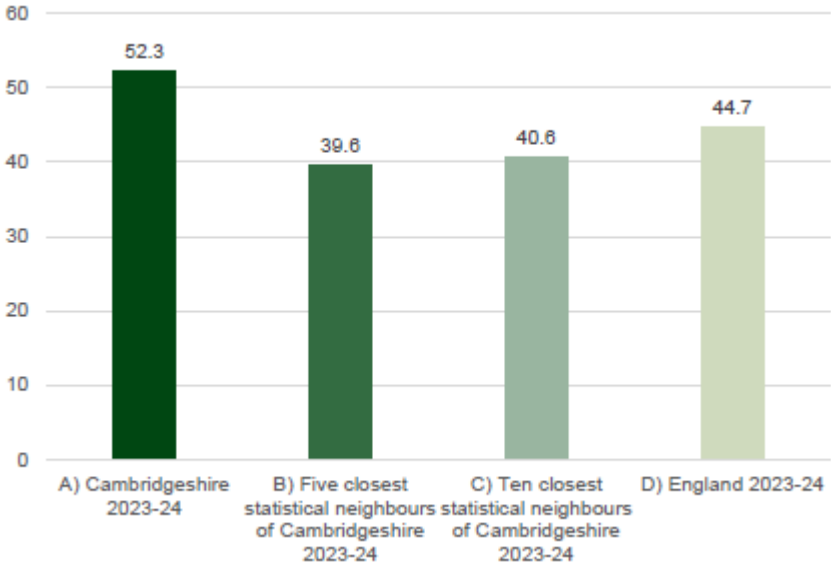
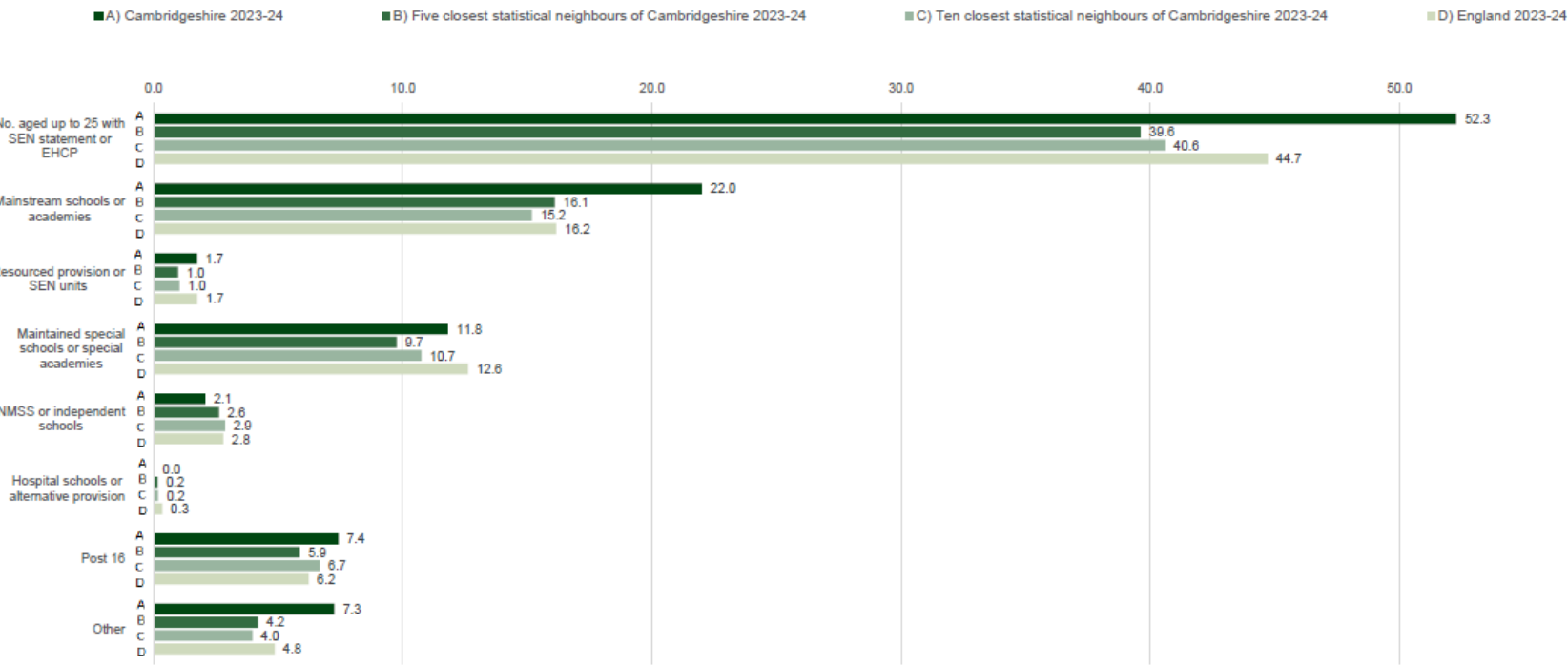


Assessed SEN Primary Need by Year (2023 year to date)



Number of EHCPs

Year	October
2018	4,138
2019	4,598
2020	5,282
2021	5,955
2022	6,836
2023	7,579



# Education Outcomes for SEND Children

- Data shows an improvement in children at SEND support and EHCPs in Key Stage 2.
- We recognise that there is still work to do in terms of improving to meet our statistical neighbours and national results.
- Programme for improvement being developed with Whole Education and SENDCo team has moved to school improvement team. Ongoing challenge to maintained schools and academies.
- Phonics has improved for children with EHCP and those at SEND Support

RWM all SEN	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23
Cambridgeshire	17.5%	17.2%	14.8%	16.3%
Regional neighbours	18.9%	20.2%	16.1%	17.7%
England	21.3%	22.3%	18.1%	20.0%

SEN support % improvement	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
EYFS GLD	-	-	-	-	-	-3.0%
Phonics expected standard end yr 2	-	-4.2%	-	-	-3.6%	3.8%
KS1 RWM combined	-	-1.6%	-	-	-0.1%	-1.2%
KS2 RWM combined	-	-0.2%	-	-	-1.1%	2.0%

SEN support	Cambridgeshire			
	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23
Reading	38.8%	38.2%	41.3%	44.5%
Writing	32.5%	32.0%	25.6%	28.9%
Maths	34.6%	39.1%	36.6%	38.8%
EHCPs	Cambridgeshire			
	2017/18	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23
Reading	18.4%	19.6%	16.2%	17.7%
Writing	13.7%	15.1%	9.9%	10.9%
Maths	17.0%	15.1%	13.3%	13.2%

# Our Transformation Programme

**Investing in early  
years and earlier  
prevention**

**Embedding a  
focus on  
outcomes**

**Developing a system-wide  
view and working with  
partners to shape and  
deliver change**

**Measuring and  
sharing our  
impact**

March 2023 – DfE agreed our Transformation Programme as the basis of our safety valve agreement.



# SEND Transformation Projects and Safety Valve Conditions

## SEND Systems Improvement and Sustainability

SRO – Emma Harkin, Head of SEND

SAT Improvement **1,2,4,5**  
Project Lead –Josette Kennington

Tribunals and mediation **6**  
Project Lead - Kirsten Branigan

Case Management System **1,5**  
Programme Manager - Tim Charge

Data input recording and reporting **5**  
Project Lead – TBC

Service redesign  
Project Lead - Emma Harkin

## SEND School Improvement

*Looking out*

SRO –Kirsten Branigan,  
Head of SEND Transformation

Outreach **3**  
Project Lead - Teresa Grady

SEND Support **5**  
Project Lead - Josette Kennington and  
Becky Salmon

SEND Locality Offer **8**  
Project Lead – Kirsten Branigan tbc

Communication & Engagement  
Project Lead – Josette Kennington

## Demand Management

SRO – Fran Cox,  
Assistant Director

Provision & Placement **3**  
Project Lead – Clare Cox

Increasing Independence Reviews **7**  
Project Lead - Debbie Meadows

Banding and Descriptors **4,5**  
Project Lead - Kirsten Branigan

Developing Capacity (Special  
School / ERBs) **3,4,5**  
Project Lead Clare Cook

SEMH & Inclusion **3,4,5**  
Project Lead Fran Cox

## SEND Local Area Improvement

SRO – Kirsten Branigan.  
Head of SEND Transformation

SEND Strategy  
Project Lead Becky Salmon

Ofsted Readiness  
Project Lead Becky Salmon

Local Area Data  
Project Lead Helen Gregg

Systems Leadership **7**  
Project Lead, Becky Salmon

SEND Information Hub  
Project Lead – Becky Salmon

SEND Governance  
Project Lead - Helen Gregg

## Cambridgeshire Safety Valve Conditions

- 1 Improve decision making on awarding EHCPs.
- 2 Review the Needs Assessment and Post-Assessment process to ensure appropriate and consistent provision is put into place.
- 3 Develop a special school outreach model to facilitate supporting CYP with SEN in mainstream provision.
- 4 Review current tuition packages to ensure appropriate and successful reintegration to mainstream school settings.
- 5 Develop a model of investment in OAP to support schools in meeting need without an EHCP. This will include developing a system for funding which will provide consistent resources and support across a graduated approach to need including those pupils without an EHCP.
- 6 Strengthen processes around mediation and dispute resolution in order to reduce the requirement for tribunals.
- 7 Increase independence of CYP by targeting reviews to ensure provision is appropriate, meets needs and promotes independence.
- 8 Continue offering free access to SEND District Team support to identify training needs, emerging themes and focus less on individualised support and more on upskilling staff knowledge and skills in all areas of SEND.

# SEND Transformation Progress

- Internal processes improvements being developed around tribunals and mediation.
- Coordinated outreach provision from special schools to support mainstream colleagues working with children and young people with the highest SEND needs to be launched Jan 24.
- SEND OAP Toolkit delivered, with launch of sensory and physical section by Dec 23.
- Audit of policies and guidance underway and resource allocated to refresh/develop policies as required.
- Dates scheduled for half termly SEND SWAYs to schools and parent/carers.
- Mainstream bands completed, funding now to be attached, moderation of one secondary school and one primary to inform funding is ongoing. Special school banding to be co-produced with special schools Dec 23.
- System leadership strengths-based training in development for rollout from May 24.
- SAT CWOs undertaking Level 4 Certificate Statutory SEN Officer Duties and Responsibilities training.



# SEND Transformation Progress

- Programme reset and Head of SEND Transformation appointed.
- New Provision and Placement panel, with school representatives, launched Oct 23. Multiple teams drawn together to support effective information sharing and expertise, e.g. Attendance Service, Education Transport, SEND District Team, Place Planning, AP.
- Majority of EHCPs have been reviewed and placement queries resolved. We have reviewed over 500 EHCPs and are working with parents / young people to review future provision.
- Piloting a Time Limited Inclusion Grant with 12 schools, a model of investment in ordinarily available provision to support schools in meeting need without an EHCP.
- Developing a behaviour panel pilot in Huntingdon.
- Implementing improvements to the SEND front door.
- Programme of work developing capacity through ERBs, special school expansion and two new free special schools.
- New case management system (CACI Impulse Nexus) to be implemented by March 24.
- Two new free school special schools progressing with DfE input

# LGA SEND System Peer Review Findings



4-day review with 5 peers from the Local Government Association took place 21st to the 24th November. Key findings -

- Recognition of a period of upheaval and reset for the local area – ‘Strategic intent is articulated, green shoots of implementation emerging’.
- Commitment, drive and energy to serve children with SEND and their families well is apparent at all levels.
- Well constituted SEND Executive Board committed to ‘making SEND everybody’s business’ but further work to make sure all elements of the system are challenging each other.
- Clear lines of accountability and governance evident through HWB and ICB.
- Pinpoint has strong embedded connections with strategic partners – reach is increasing but not all parents are aware.
- Safety Valve currently enables local areas to build capacity to meet need but creates future risk to achieve financial sufficiency and deliver outcome focussed change.
- The limitation of data across the system to inform strategy and direction is a risk – new systems due to be in place in March will alleviate this concern.
- Further work is needed to bring the whole system together through updated local area needs assessment and a unified approach to outcomes including further focus on joint commissioning.
- Capacity is challenging to meet increasing levels of need – both specialist staffing and specialist placement capacity. However, the local area is building new provision / services across the partnership to respond to challenges.
- Action plan being developed and SEF being updated to reflect feedback / areas of strength and weakness.

# Safety Valve Agreement

- Significant financial challenge as demand has exceeded funding increases. £50m accumulated deficit on £108m budget. Unchecked this deficit would have reached £120m by 2026/27.
- CCC signed a Safety Valve Agreement in March 2023 - Revenue contribution of £49m from the DfE to support the repayment of the deficit, supported by a contribution of £9m from the Council's reserves. Two new special free schools for Cambridgeshire to be established in March (opening September 2026) and Gamlingay (opening September 2025) and a further £11.3m for capital funding to support new SEND provision on mainstream school sites.
- On track to deliver all the system reforms required by the DfE but the pressure of demand and inflation means there is a current gap in our position. Working with the DfE to address shortfall.

Safety Valve Conditions	RAG	Progress – November 2023
Improve decision making on awarding EHCPs.		Where needs assessment panel agree to decline an application, the school will be offered a 'SEND District Team assessment'. This will aim for CYP to get support sooner, improve parent confidence and support schools to meet need appropriately. Letter for parents and school redrafted to more clearly articulate decision making.
Review the Needs Assessment and Post-Assessment process to ensure appropriate and consistent provision is put into place.		Panel framework refreshed and relaunched in October creating a single panel for all finalisation and provision decision. Multiagency panel are deciding on appropriate placement and banding to ensure a consistent transparent approach to resources. Banding descriptors are being piloted. Work beginning on logistics of needs assessment to ensure advice writing and family conversation is coordinated.
Develop a special schools outreach model to facilitate supporting children and young people with SEN in mainstream provision.		Following initial outreach pilot 2022-23. Launch of revised model expected by Spring Term 2024. Now fully aligned with the provision and placement function to ensure outreach is focused on most impactful areas.
Review current tuition packages to ensure appropriate and successful reintegration to mainstream school settings.		Data review in relation to provision for open cases including AP and tuition packages is complete and all placements reviewed through provision and placement panel. High level of complexity assessed and majority of YP needs cannot be met in mainstream. Tuition packages will be maintained until specialist places available but fully tracked and monitored.
Develop a model of investment in ordinarily available provision to support schools in meeting need without an EHCP. This will include developing a system for funding which will provide consistent resources and support across a graduated approach to need including those pupils without an EHCP.		Beginning to develop process for distribution of funding and QA. Cambridgeshire Local Inclusion Partnership funding pilot will begin in autumn 2023, using allocated budget. This will include 10 schools in Cambridge and 10 in Huntingdon with a plan to roll out wider in Spring 2024 following evaluation. Aligning to local inclusion strategy to ensure all investment in schools is impactful.
Strengthen processes around mediation and dispute resolution in order to reduce the requirement for tribunals.		Improvement action plan agreed and activity in progress. Commissioning reviewed performance of mediation contract to inform decision regarding any future procurement. Consultation letter/guidance to schools updated to advise how to respond to placement requests. SAT team restructured to provide dedicated team for mediation and tribunals.
Increase independence of children and young people by targeting reviews to ensure provision is appropriate, meets needs and promotes independence.		Planning, prioritisation and mobilisation has commenced. Launch of revised 14-26 Additional Needs Team offer to support increasing independence by end of September 2023. We have identified a number of EHCPs which are in a position to de-escalate.
Continue offering free access to SEND District Team support to identify training needs, emerging themes and focus less on individualised support and more on upskilling staff knowledge and skills in all areas of SEND.		SEND District Team new service offer from Sept 2023. The new offer will upskill specialist school staff to support CYP with SEND. SEND service redesign is taking place will be in place by March 24.

# Impact on Cambridgeshire's Safety Valve Model



Our September return to the DfE showed a £3.6m in-year adverse variance to the SV plan which was projected over the lifetime of the SV deal. The latest revised forecasts are showing an in-year position in excess of £6m off-track as a result of the continuing increase in demand.

As a result of these challenges, the DfE have written to the Local Authority outlining that we will be part of the Enhanced Monitoring and Support Programme with a view to submitting an updated SV plan. A meeting took place in November and it is our intention to reset our model to balance at the end of the period (26/27). A number of the original programmes have been delivered and we have developed further mitigation to resolve.

The challenges around the funding gap –

1. **Growth and Demand** – as outlined in previous section
2. **Inflation** - Inflation on placements is increasing on average by between 5% and 8%. The model submitted, as outlined, did not allow for this level of inflation. There will be a challenge ongoing with a 2.8% increase in funding with a pay award at a minimum of 6.5% (higher for TA roles)
3. **Complexity** - Review of Tuition / AP provision has shown needs cannot be met in mainstream and specialist provision needed. There are also more permanent exclusions in primary than in previous years requiring AP provision especially from rural communities. The proportion of new EHCPs issued due to Social, Emotional & Mental Health primary need has increased significantly compared to previous years.
4. **Delay** –
  - the delay in DfE delivered projects is significant. It is expected that the new special school at Gamlingay will be delayed a year and the delay in the expected opening of the new secondary school in Fenland (DfE led) is leading to requirement for more AP for unplaced.
  - We have also been unable to deliver some of the expected in year savings due to capacity within the LA. Capacity now in place.
  - Additional capacity created through new Head of SEND Statutory Duties / Head of SEND Transformation (started 1<sup>st</sup> December) and Head of Statutory Assessment (January 2024)
5. **System / Data** - Reporting on the safety valve remains a challenge – information produced manually. Delay in implementing new MIS system due to supplier issue – delayed until mid March 2024 and unlikely to be able to report until June 2024.