

**EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

**Day:** Tuesday  
**Date:** 16 January 2024  
**Time:** 3.30 pm  
**Place:** Teams

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> To receive any Apologies for Absence from members of the Board.	
2.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> To receive any Declarations of Interest from members of the Board.	
3.	<b>MINUTES</b> To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 17 October 2023.	1 - 8
4.	<b>SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION (WSOA) UPDATE</b> To receive a report from the Assistant Director of Education.	9 - 86
5.	<b>VIRTUAL SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORT</b> To receive a report from the Assistant Director of Education.	87 - 110
6.	<b>SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING</b> To receive a report from the Head of Access Services.	111 - 150
7.	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> To note that the next meeting of the Education Attainment Improvement Board is scheduled for 12 March 2024.	

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From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Charlotte Forrest, Senior Democratic Services Officer, [charlotte.forrest@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:charlotte.forrest@tameside.gov.uk) or 0161 342 2346, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

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# Agenda Item 3.

## EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

17 October 2023

**Commenced:** 3.30 pm

**Terminated:** 5.05 pm

**Present:** Councillors Feeley (Chair), Boyle, Fairfoull, Newton, Roderick, Colbourne, Elizabeth Turner and Melanie Wicks

**In Attendance:**

Sandra Stewart	Chief Executive
Jane Sowerby	Assistant Director of Education
Kate Campbell-Green	Head of School Music and Library Services
Mhairi McDonald-Junor	Head of SEND
Catherine Moseley	Head of Access and Inclusion
Jo Pearson	Head of Education Improvement and Partnerships

**Apologies for Absence:** Paul Jacques

### 9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 10. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board held on 20 June 2023 be approved as a correct record.**

### 11. TAMESIDE MUSIC AND LIBRARY SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report from the Head of Access services, which outlined the role and output of the Music Service, including its statutory obligations, and the School Library Service.

It was reported that Tameside Music Service was part of the Greater Manchester Music Education Hub along with 9 other regional Music Services and 18 partner organisations. It was a traded service that received a grant from the Arts Council England, which accounted for approximately 36% of the annual budget. Attached to the grant were several conditions, which formed the basis for the output of the service, such as ensuring that all students had the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. The School Library Service was a traded service and was committed to providing support and advice to schools to engage students in reading. Both services supported every school in the borough during the 2022-23 Academic Year, working with approximately 8000 children across all schools in Tameside.

The Board were made aware that although engagement with the School Library Service had increased during 2022-23, the buy in had decreased. On the other hand, the Music Service continued to grow and thrive and realised a small surplus in 2022-23. The Music Service had seen a growth in both engagement and buy in and it was likely that this would continue to increase in 2023-24 due to the new National Plan for Music Education coming in to force during this academic year, which made it clear that schools and Music Hubs should be working closely to realise its aims.

With regards to the Music Service, Board members were informed that the focus had been on consolidating and developing their offer to ensure it was reflective of the needs of young people within the borough, as articulated in the corporate vision. Trauma informed nurture groups had

been established within several primary schools, Birch Lane was used as an inclusion centre for students receiving education outside of mainstream education and a dementia choir was commissioned by the NHS.

Members were notified that students from 15 different main and special schools were given the opportunity to play and sing with the Halle Orchestra in June 2023 and more primary schools were invited to sing at the Bridgewater Hall as part of the Greater Manchester Music Hub's Celebration concert in July 2023. The Music Service held a fest at Manchester Academy in July 2023, which was an opportunity for young artists from around Tameside to experience performing in a high quality, nationally-renowned venue.

Information was provided on Birch Lane Centre, which was established as an exam centre for both the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Trinity Music College exams. The Centre was used for ensembles, bands, groups and individual students to receive tuition on an extra-curricular basis. Several play days were also offered to new and emerging young musicians at weekends over the school year, which were all well attended. The Virtual School utilised the centre as a location for students facing social isolation to attend with their tutor, receive music tuition and, in a few cases, sit their GCSE exams.

It was reported that the service worked with Great Academies Education Trust to establish a Music Subject Network for their secondary and primary schools. This was then opened up to all primary and secondary schools within the borough for CPD and professional learning. They had also worked with local and regional partners to extend the offer available to young people within the borough. Highlights included working with The Vale in Mossley and the Royal Northern College of Music Pathfinder's scheme, which was open to any student who faced a barrier to music making whether economical, social or logistical. Officers were pleased to report that students from Tameside had gone on from Pathfinder to be accepted in to the Royal Northern College of Music, Chetham's School of Music, Salford University and beyond.

It was further reported that the service worked with established vocal experts to provide a Singing Festival at St Peter's Church, Ashton in June 2023, which was attended by 6 different primary schools. The festival was the last event in a series of 'Big Sings', which saw primary schools coming together to sing in Dukinfield, Denton, Mossley, Stalybridge, Hyde and Droylsden.

With regards to the School Library Service, it continued to support schools with a comprehensive offer including School Library Audits, Reading Champion scheme, Junior Librarian Training, World Book Day resources, Rolling Library offer, Project Loan Scheme and Nurture Group sessions. The Reading Champions Celebration took place at Dukinfield Town Hall in July 2023 where pupils from 17 schools were represented at the event who had all been involved in encouraging their school to engage in reading for pleasure. A survey was sent to all Tameside schools in November 2022 to gauge the impact that the service was having; 25 schools completed it and the responses were all positive.

Board members commented that the collaborative projects with the Halle Orchestra and Royal Northern Ballet had been outstanding and it was wonderful for children from disadvantaged areas to experience it. Members requested that the information provided be broken down into primary and secondary schools and also by the type of educational establishment.

A discussion ensued on the changing trend of the School Library Service due to increased online activity and the changing landscape of reading material. Officers agreed that investment was needed in digitalisation and an informative briefing had been held on the topic in September 2023 with a school intranet currently under development.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the contents of the report be noted by the Board**

## **12. SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS AND ADMISSIONS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Access Services, which informed the Board of the successful school allocations for Reception and Year 7 earlier in the Year as well as in-year transfers and children placed under the Fair Access Protocol. The annual report to the School Adjudicator was also shared.

It was reported that the Council was the admission authority for all community and voluntary controlled schools in the borough and was also responsible for coordinating the school admissions system for all schools in the borough. The coordination scheme was published on an annual basis and was the agreed way that all applications for Reception, Year 3 (Stalyhill Junior School) and Year 7 places were allocated. This was a statutory responsibility of the local authority and the scheme also provided information on how in year transfers were dealt with. All school admissions in England were guided by the School Admissions Code. As part of the responsibility, every local authority was required to submit an annual report to the School Adjudicator at the end of June each year on how effectively the admissions systems worked in their area.

Board members were told that admissions to school could be complex with a number of different admission authorities in the borough; there were 16 Secondary schools with 11 admission authorities and 80 Primary schools with 36 admission authorities.

The Board were informed that Tameside's primary school offer day was Monday 17 April 2023, due to the national offer date of 16 April being on a Sunday. There had been 2650 applications for a place in Reception for September 2023, which was similar to last year and in line with the predictions based on birth rates in the borough.

It was explained that 2656 places were allocated, which was 17 less places than last year reflecting the prevailing low birth rates in the borough over recent years. 91.9% (2440) of applicants received their first preference school, which was less than last year and reflected a reduction in the number of places available. Overall 98.3% of applicants were allocated one of their preferences compared with 99.1% last year and only 46 applicants did not receive any of their preferences. It was noted that the England average in 2023 for applicants getting their first preference primary school was 92.5%.

With regards to Secondary schools, the offer day was on 1 March 2023 and 3374 applications had been received compared to 3231 last year. It was reported that 3315 places were offered, which was over 100 more than last year (3207) and in line with predictions. It was noted that this was the last of the large year groups coming through from primary schools and numbers would begin to drop from this point forward.

Members were notified that the policy of adding places into secondary schools continued to pay off with a significant number of pupils offered their first preference with a slight increase in the percentage from last year. It was reported that 85.9% of applicants (2846 places) were offered their first preferences, which was an increase compared to 85% (2725) first preferences last year and 129 pupils did not receive one of their preferences. The England average receiving their first preference school in 2023 was 82.6%.

The process for in-year transfers was outlined and Members were made aware that all but one school had opted into the local authority administered admissions scheme as outlined in the School Admission Code. It was explained that this process had been streamlined, which had speed up the process of being able to offer places, particularly for those children moving onto the borough without a school place. However, an unintended consequence of that was schools could be unaware that a parent wished to move their child from a school until after the transfer had occurred, which denied them the opportunity to work with the family to try to persuade them to remain at their school. This had been highlighted as an issue for some schools and the School Admissions Team were looking to see if there was anything that could be done from within current resources to mitigate this issue.

The Board were advised that the School Admissions Team aimed to process in-year transfers within 20 school days and there had been a significant increase in requests compared to data from the previous year - there were approximately 33,000 pupils in Tameside schools meaning that around 7% of pupils were moving schools annually.

The Fair Access Protocol was explained to Members, alongside the criteria for consideration under this scheme. Members were informed that, during the last school year, 115 children had been allocated school places under Fair Access (71 primary and 44 secondary), an increase of 40 compared to the previous year.

The Annual Report for the Schools Adjudicator was presented to Members, as appended to the report, which highlighted that the school admissions system in Tameside was effective at placing pupils, particularly the most vulnerable. Members were told that the School Adjudicator used the information submitted by all local authorities as the basis for their annual report.

A detailed discussion ensued around the significant issues the high number of in-year transfers was creating, especially given that some schools were full whilst other schools had vacancies. Members commented that schools could be part of the solution if they were made aware and could intervene prior to a move taking place and suggested that a strategy be developed to deal with the issue. Officers confirmed that the Headteachers Group had recently agreed some changes and Officers would look into a solution and feedback suggestions in an attempt to resolve the problem.

Members requested that the data be broken down into different categories for first choice preferences for secondary schools and extra information be provided to schools regarding Year 7 admissions.

The Chair commended the tremendous piece of work and achievement of placing a high percentage of Tameside children with their first preference Primary and Secondary schools.

#### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the Education Attainment Improvement Board noted the contents of the report; and**
- (ii) That the contents of the 2023 annual report be agreed, submitted to the Office of the School Adjudicator and published on the Tameside Council website, as required by the School Admissions Code**

### **13. SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION (WSOA) UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director for Education that provided an update on progress in implementing Tameside's Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action, which was gathering pace. A number of actions had already been completed and would be monitored to ensure that change and transformation needs were identified and actioned and that the actions remained valid and dynamic. Some actions had been revisited where further assurance was required and recovery plans put in place, such as around annual reviews and health waiting times.

It was reported that between 18 and 22 October 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of Tameside to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the SEND reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The findings were received on 11 January 2022 and a [Written Statement of Action](#) was required, which was signed off by Ofsted on 1 July 2022. Progress in implementing the Written Statement of Action was overseen by the SEND Inclusion and Partnership Board, chaired by the Assistant Director for Education, with updates provided to the Education Attainment Improvement Board. Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England's SEND Advisors meet monthly with Council and Health Officers to monitor progress and agree priority actions. So far, five formal monitoring meetings have been held in September and December 2022; March, June and September 2023.

Three documents were appended to the report and considered by the Board, as follows:

1. The report compiled for DfE and NHS England Advisors at the September 2023 monitoring meeting, which provided a detailed overview of progress;
2. The presentation given to DfE and NHS England Advisors at the September 2023 monitoring meeting; and
3. The Written Statement of Action Highlights Tracker given to DfE and NHS England Advisors at our September 2023 monitoring meeting.

Board members were advised that since the last update at the meeting in June 2023 the following actions had been completed:-

#### **Communication**

- The new Local Offer website would be launched in December 2023.
- A new SEND system quarterly newsletter was published in July 2023.

#### **Capacity and resource in the right areas**

- The SEND Assessment Team restructure was now complete with some ongoing external recruitment.
- New leaders were now in post providing oversight and direction for SEND improvement. These posts were Head of SEND, Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) and SEND Programme Lead.
- The Health Navigator Service had supported 664 new families since July 2022.

#### **Increasing inclusion to meet need as early as possible**

- A significant amount of diagnostic and planning work had been undertaken as part of Delivering Better Value, including analysing data from across the system, a diagnostic of root causes of pressures, focus on ideal outcomes and a plan to change the approach in inclusion and transitions had been completed and a £1 million bid from the Council had been agreed by the DfE.
- 'Impactful Leadership in SEND' schools training took place in June and July 2023; Starling training for Autism Awareness; financial support had been secured from the DfE's Research and Improvement for SEND Excellence (RISE) programme.

#### **Improved focus and self-evaluation**

- DfE reporting processes had been reset and agreed with DfE to focus on impact.
- New modelling had started for CAMHS initial assessments for core and neuro-developmental needs with a view to enhancing the number of assessment pathways.
- A new BRAG rating had been developed to give a more pragmatic and accurate view of progression.

Members were informed that 46% of actions were complete, 46% of actions were on track (green or amber) and 3% of actions were red, which reflected a reset of the BRAG to focus on impact and the wider picture. Clarification was sought and provided on the red areas in Priority 1 and Priority 5. It was confirmed that these related to timeliness of Education Health Care Plans and waiting times and would be an area of focus for the next DfE meeting and at the SEND Inclusion and Partnership Board on 19 October 2023.

The next steps were outlined that included, a diagnostic review of SEND with work currently underway whose recommendations would be brought to a future meeting of the Education Attainment and Improvement Board. Practice and resource needed to be focused on getting the basics right for children and adopting the Children's Services, 'Brilliant at the Basics' principles. Ensuring significantly improved performance around multi-agency attendance at annual reviews and completing reviews in full, was a key priority to improve outcomes for children and young people. The SEND Inclusion and Partnership Board would continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the Written Statement of Action as well as providing a wider view of improvement and provision.

Members were pleased to hear of the progress and to learn that priorities were being met. They commended the good governance framework that had been established and the learning that had taken place over the past 12 months. Members requested more detail on the timeliness of Education Health Care Plans and what the main obstacles were and how they were being addressed. In response to questions on Priority 10, it was confirmed that the Transition Protocol and Pathway would be published by the end of October 2023

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the update be noted;**
- (ii) That the recommendations of the SEND diagnostic review be brought to a future meeting of the Education Attainment and Improvement Board; and**
- (iii) That further information be provided in the next SEND Written Statement of Action update report on Education Health Care Plans.**

## **14. EDUCATION UPDATE - END OF KEY STAGE OUTCOMES 2023**

Consideration was given to a report of the Assistant Director of Education, which set out the headline figures for Tameside at each assessment point, the issues arising, and how these issues needed to be addressed.

It was reported that Summer 2023 was the second year of national testing at all key stages following the pandemic of 2020. At GCSE level there was a return to pre-pandemic grading in England after the mitigations that were in place in 2022 were removed. It was therefore most meaningful to compare results to 2019, the last summer exam series before the pandemic in terms of grading. It was noted that all figures and averages were provisional and subject to change following the validation of data by the Department for Education (DfE).

With regard to Early Years and Key Stage 1, Members were advised that 61% of pupils in Tameside had achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD) on the revised profile. It was highlighted that the provisional North West average was 64% and the provisional national average was 67%, though it was noted that this would be subject to change.

It was explained that the gap between boys in Tameside and boys nationally had widened from 5% to 9% when compared to 2022, whilst the gap between girls in Tameside and girls nationally has narrowed from 5% to 4%. The provisional national average for girls had increased by 2% from 72% to 74% and, for boys, the provisional national average has also increased by 2% from 59% to 61%. 70% of girls achieved a GLD, a 3% increase on 2022, compared to a provisional national average of 74%, and 52% of boys achieved a GLD, a decrease of 2% on 2022, compared to the provisional national average for boys of 61%.

When looking at Key Stage 1 data, 75% of pupils were working at the expected standard in Tameside for phonics, – an increase of 3% compared to 2022. In reading, 66% of pupils were working at the expected standard in Tameside– an increase of 2% compared to 2022. The provisional national average had also increased by 2% and was 69%. In writing, 56% of pupils were working at the expected standard in Tameside– a 1% increase compared to 2022. The provisional national average had increased by 3% and is 60%.

With regards to Key Stage 2 data, 57% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2022/23 – the same as 2021/22. The national average was 59% - the same as 2021/22. When broken down by gender, 60% of girls achieved the expected standard in each subject in Tameside, a decline of 4% on 2021/22, compared to 62% of girls nationally with girls in Tameside now being 1% below national average. In contrast, 54% of boys in Tameside achieved the expected standard in each subject, an increase of 3% on 2021/22, compared to 56% of boys nationally, with the gap between boys in Tameside and boys nationally narrowing from 4% to 2%.

In relation to Key Stage 4, in Tameside:-



- 40% of pupils achieved a strong pass in English and maths compared to 44% in 2021/22
- 61% of pupils achieved a standard pass in English and maths compared to 65% in 2021/22
- 56% of pupils achieved a strong pass in English compared to 59% in 2021/22, whilst 72% of pupils achieved a standard pass compared to 74% in 2021/22
- 47% of pupils achieved a strong pass in maths compared to 50% in 2021/22, whilst 68% of pupils achieved a standard pass compared to 70% in 2021/22
- Attainment 8 was estimated to be 43.2 compared to 45.2 in 2021/22, and
- English baccalaureate (Ebacc) Average Points Score (APS) was estimated to be 3.8 compared to 3.9 in 2021/22.

It was highlighted that comparison to previous years would only be possible once the DfE published their GCSE statistical first release, which would enable national and regional comparison, and the local authority had received the pupil level data during the autumn term that would also contain Progress 8 scores. This analysis would be reported to Members in the spring.

Members were advised that Early Years outcomes continued to remain a high priority for Tameside. Whilst there had been a small increase in the percentage of children attaining GLD the gap to national averages had increased. Early Years, phonics and outcomes at GCSE in maths and English were the key areas that would be targeted via the Priority Education Investment Area funding. In addition, other work in Early Years was being supported via the Early Years Quality Team support transition between the Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years Settings and Schools and between primary and secondary schools from year 6 into 7.

A discussion ensued around the data with a particular focus on the issues concerning Early Years reading, writing and phonics and Key Stage 3 literacy. Issues surrounding school attendance, in particular for boys was discussed in addition to engagement. It was confirmed that further work would be done once the data was available at a pupil level to identify other contributing factors such as attendance, exclusions, SEND and disadvantage in order for further targeted interventions to be identified and supported.

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the report be noted.**

#### **15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the date of the next meeting of Education Attainment Improvement Board be held on 16 January 2024.**

**CHAIR**

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# Agenda Item 4.

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD</b>
<b>Date:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jane Sowerby, Assistant Director for Education
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>SEND UPDATE</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report provides a SEND update to Education Attainment Improvement Board on progress in addressing Tameside's areas of weakness, as identified in the Ofsted inspection in 2021, and explains a recent reset to ensure that progress is delivered at pace through a single prioritised Local Areas SEND Improvement Plan.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the Board note and support: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Summary of progress;</li><li>2. That work streams currently detailed in the WSOA action plan are now included in the SEND Self Evaluation Framework and SEND Improvement Plan. Going forward, progress will be reported to the Education Attainment Board against the Improvement Plan and Self Evaluation Framework (SEF).</li></ol>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	The recommendations support the Council's SEND Strategy and starting well priority. Furthermore, they will ensure the Council is better able to meet its statutory obligations.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	There are no policy implications in this report.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	<p>The report provides an update on progress against the Written Statement of Actions (WSOA). There are no direct financial implications arising from this update report with any spend referred to in this report, being subject to separate governance process for approval.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that there is a significant and increasing deficit on the High Needs block, as reported to Schools Forum, which is funded through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Implementing the WSOA is vital to improving practices and to support managing the deficit on the DSG.</p>
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	There are no legal issues arising from the report. The report describes the Improvement Plan to address weaknesses identified by Ofsted in 2021 and which demonstrates that the Council is addressing the issues raised and to ensure compliance with its statutory obligations.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>Failure to meet statutory obligations in relation to SEND could result in poor outcomes for children and young people and significantly increase the risk of poor inspection outcomes for the Borough.</p> <p>To mitigate this risk, a refreshed improvement approach has been developed to strengthen oversight and delivery.</p> <p>The SEND Improvement Group has been reset as the SEND Local Area Partnership Board and will continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the Written Statement of Action within the SEND</p>

Improvement Plan and SEF. In addition, formal oversight is provided by the Education Attainment and Improvement Board (EAIB) and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

**Background Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between 18 and 22 October 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Tameside to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The outcome of the inspection was that a [Written Statement of Action](#) (WSOA) was required because of 10 significant areas of weakness in the area's practice. The WSOA was signed off by Ofsted on 1 July 2022.
- 1.2 Progress in implementing the WSOA was previously overseen by the SEND Improvement Group which has been reset as the SEND Local Area Partnership Board, and is chaired by an independent chair, with updates provided to this committee. The Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England's SEND Advisors meet monthly with Council and Health Officers to monitor progress and agree priority actions. So far, five formal monitoring meetings have been held (September and December 2022; March, June and September 2023).

## 2. UPDATE ON THE WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION PROGRESS

- 2.1 To provide an update on progress, two documents are attached as appendices to this report:
- The SEND Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) (**Appendix 1**).
  - The presentation that was given to Ofsted Advisors at the SEND Ofsted Engagement Meeting in November 2023 (**Appendix 2**).
- 2.2 A diagnostic review of the SEND service has been completed and this work directly informed our SEND SEF. Recommendations have been reported to the DCS and actions to address these recommendations and the impact they will make are included in the SEND Improvement Plan.
- 2.3 Since our last update to the EAIB the following actions have been completed:

### **Communication**

- The new Local Offer website will launch in January 2024 after extensive consultation with parents, carers, children, young people, partner agencies and stakeholders. The Local Offer website will provide clear, detailed, accessible, and up-to-date information about the provision available and how it can be accessed.
- The SEND system newsletter, 'SENDing You News', was published in December 2023 and will be sent out every term.

### **Quality Assurance**

- To reduce the backlog of annual reviews, an interim backlog team has been recruited and is implementing the Annual review recovery plan. This will address the annual review backlog and establish rigor, accountability, transparency and moderation of decision-making in-house including a more consistent approach to casework.
- A new multi-agency placement, provision and transport panel has been established to ensure a transparent, multi-agency approach to placement, provision and transport decisions and panel meetings commenced in November 2023.
- A review of Statutory Assessment Panel commenced in October 2023. This panel will give greater scrutiny and autonomy of statutory assessments.
- EHC Quality Assurance Protocol has been completed in. The purpose of the Quality Assurance Protocol is to improve the experiences of children, young people and families, and to ensure high quality plans which have impact on outcomes of children and young people. This protocol was presented at the SEND Local Area Partnership Board meeting in December 2023 for comment and approval.
- Post-16 Multi-Agency Panel has been established and held the first meeting in December 2023. This panel will give a greater understanding of what parents, carers

and young people feel about their final EHC plan, and their experiences in the process. This will be crucial feedback on our quality improvement journey.

- Monthly Quality Assurance sessions of EHC Plans commenced in October 2023 and will ensure that all staff are responsible for the plans they produce.

### **Improved focus and self-evaluation**

- After constructive discussions a new reporting method has been agreed for the WSOA. New workstreams are being developed to support this new way of working. This new approach will focus on the impact that improvements are having on children, young people, parents and carers.
- The SEND SEF has been presented to Ofsted in November 2023. The SEF focuses on the ten areas of weakness identified by Ofsted in the WSOA and will form the basis of the SEND Improvement Plan.
- A new SEND Improvement Plan and SEND Scorecard is being developed to support and drive the improvements identified in the SEF and ensure that we have a robust plan to provide the best outcomes for the children and families.
- The SEND Improvement Group has been refreshed and the SEND Local Area Partnership Board has been established and includes an independent Chair and Multi-Agency representation. The first meeting was on 6 December 2023. Terms of Reference and Improvement planning were discussed and agreed. The Board will meet bi-monthly as will an Executive Board meeting. DfE and CQC representatives attend Board and meet with key Area leads in between meetings to offer support and challenge.

## **3. NEXT STEPS**

- 3.1 The SEND Improvement plan and Performance Scorecard will be completed in January 2024 implementation on actions identified in the SEF is already underway.
- 3.2 Practice and resource will be focused on getting the basics right for children and adopting the Children's Services 'Brilliant at the Basics' principles. A cycle of learning and continuous improvement will be embedded through the implementation of our Performance Management Framework, due to be finalised in January 24.
- 3.3 This will see the implementation of a detailed delivery plan, overseen by the Directorate Management Team (DMT) via a set of performance management and quality meetings. These centre around a monthly Brilliant at the Basics (BAB) Meeting and Performance and Accountability Meeting (PAM) linked to our scorecard and SEND Local Area Partnership Board bi-monthly. The monthly performance cycle of meetings and actions will create a methodology of ensuring a shared focus and accountability regarding performance management to ensure children's best outcomes from all levels across the Service. The cycle operates as a 4-weekly cycle, informed by key performance data for each service area. This will support a high standard of service delivery and performance, via a review, analysis, learn, plan and action methodology.
- 3.4 The SEND Local Area Partnership Board will continue to provide oversight of the delivery of the SEND Improvement Plan.
- 3.5 Advanced multi-agency preparation for any upcoming Ofsted visit has already commenced. This will incorporate reflection and learning from the recent Children's Social Care Inspection. Annex A information is being finalised and completion prioritised.
- 3.6 The next formal DfE Monitoring Meeting will take place in January 2024.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The creation of the SEND Area Partnership SEF has allowed us to refocus on the ten identified areas of weakness. The Improvement Plan will allow us to continue our improvements at pace ensuring that we are better able to evidence the impact our changes are making to children and young people and their families and carers.
- 4.2 The SEND Local Area Partnership Board and EAIB will focus on rapid improvement of outcomes and experiences for children and their families and evidence and evaluate quality and impact.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 As set out at the front of the report.

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# Tameside Local Area Partnership

# SEND Self-Assessment

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• The limited oversight of the quality of SEND provision for children and young people's education	33
• The inconsistent application of a graduated approach across different settings, leading to weaknesses in meeting needs across the area	36
• The poor transition arrangements across all stages of education	41
• The lack of strategic direction in the support for children and young people to prepare them effectively for adulthood	44

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# 1. Introduction: Our Vision, Journey, Priorities and Summary

**Our Vision as outlined in our SEND strategy is that we want children & young people with SEND to have the opportunity to be the best they can be and to have choice and control over their support. We want to enable Tameside's children and young people to have better education, health and emotional wellbeing outcomes.**

Tameside's corporate plan [Transforming Tameside – Our People – Our Place – Our Plan](#) prioritises Tameside children and families with priorities focussing on starting and living well:

- Very best start in life
- Aspiration & hope through learning
- Resilient families & supportive networks
- Opportunities for people to fulfil their potential

This is underpinned by the [Children's and Young People's Plan 2023-6](#) which identifies the key priorities for children and young people in Tameside as:

- Supported Families
- Healthy Lives
- Positive Lives
- Building Skills For Life.

Our current SEND strategy [SEND-Strategy-SEPT2020.pdf \(tameside.gov.uk\)](#) sets out our outcomes, guiding principles and values. It focus our work into 4 key priorities.

- Increasing & Improving Inclusion
- Increasing Confidence of
- Involving children & young people
- Improving accuracy & timeliness



This self-assessment provides evaluation of the local area approach to meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND and others who may be vulnerable, including those children and young people who access Alternative Provision. There is a refreshed approach by new senior leaders who are focusing on the impact of local area arrangements on outcomes for children and young people.). This self-evaluation will include information about improvements to areas of weakness identified by Ofsted and the CQC in our previous inspection.

To ensure there is a clear focus on the impact of local area arrangements on outcomes for children and young people, an experienced independent Chair has been appointed to oversee the refreshed SEND Partnership Board, an independent diagnostic review has been commissioned, and there is investment in enhancing skilled management.

## Our Journey

In **October 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area** to judge the effectiveness of the Local Area in implementing the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The outcome of the inspection was that a **Written Statement of Action (WSOA)** was required because of significant areas of weakness in the area's practice, the outcome of which there has been a Written Statement of Action developed.

Tameside Council and Tameside and Glossop Integrated Care are jointly responsible for the WSOA. The WSOA action plan was accepted by Ofsted and the CQC on 1 July 2022. The Department for Education (DfE) has been monitoring progress against the plan for the last 12 months. The new leadership is keen to approach the targets in the WSOA in a more strategic way, ensuring that there is focus on outcomes for children and young people, and this impact would determine the measure of improvement.

Following the Inspection in 2021, we reviewed our improvement priorities, to ensure they align with areas for improvement identified in the Inspection Report.

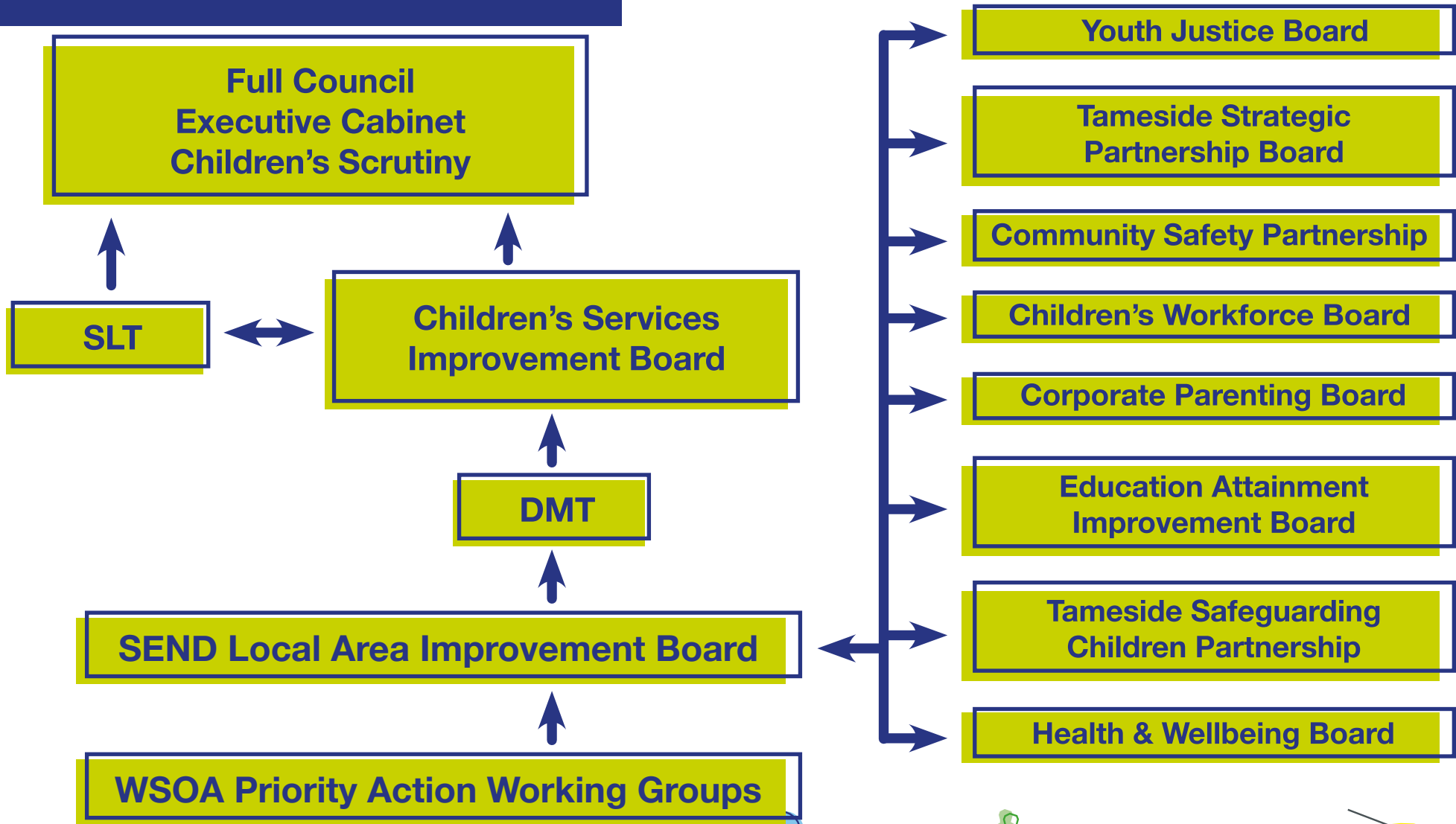


In **December 2022**, Tameside Council was invited to participate in the DfE's **Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV)** support programme with intensive activity taking place between March and June 2022. The DBV programme sits alongside and complements existing and ongoing improvement work. In particular, to improve inclusion in mainstream schools-especially as Ofsted had identified the lack of a graduated response, inappropriate placements, and lack of oversight over SEND provision.

Tameside involved parents and carers, schools / settings, local partners and our front-line staff when designing our plan, whilst ensuring the programme is underpinned by a comprehensive data-driven and evidence-led diagnostic. The process has led to two key areas being identified as priorities 1) inclusion and 2) transitions. Our plan to address these priorities is outlined in this SEF.



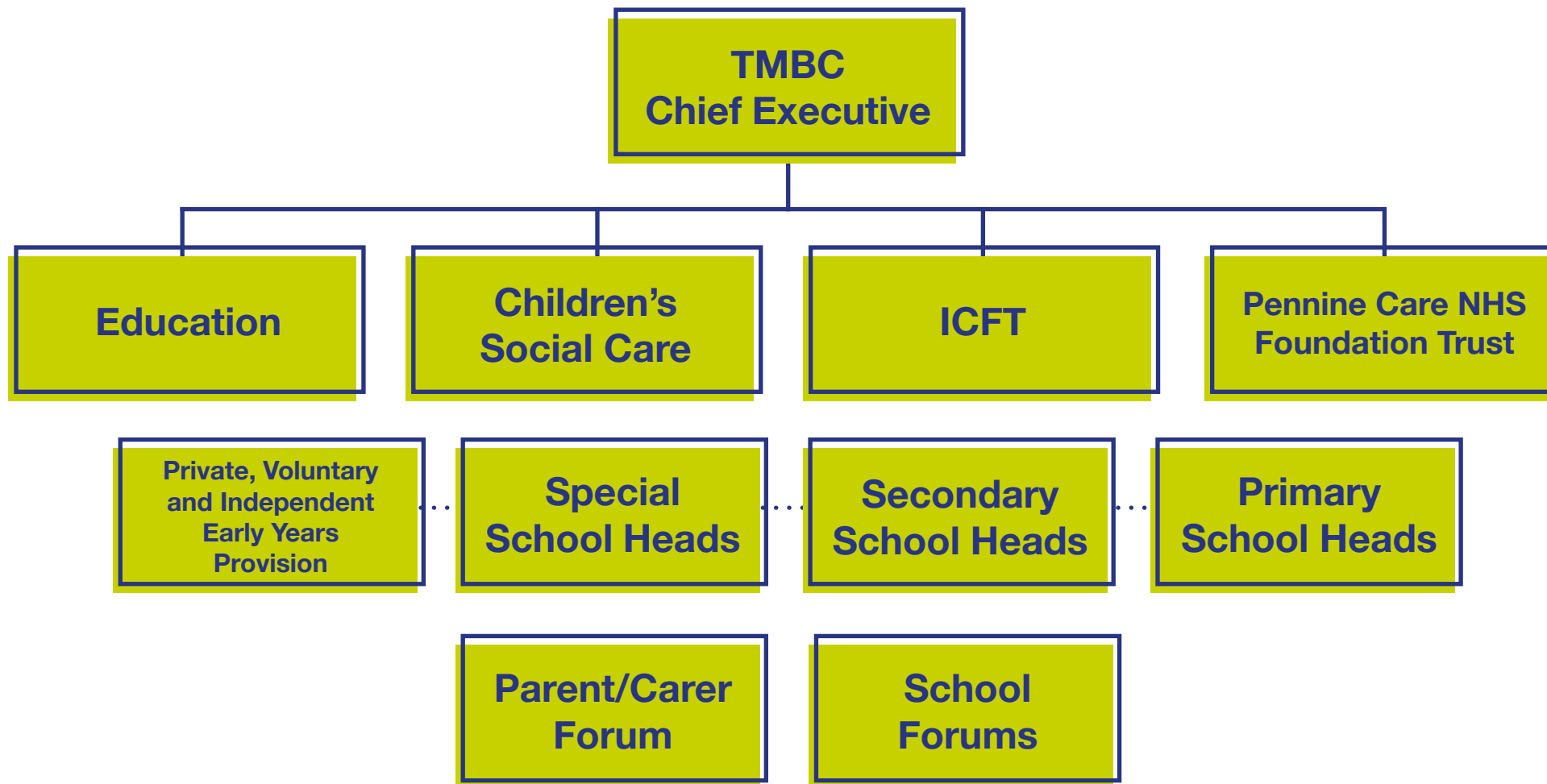
# Governance Framework



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# SEND Local Area Partnership Structure



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## 2. Contextual Information

Leadership and accountability for performance across SEND has been strengthened through a refreshed SEND Local Area Partnership Board which is now independently chaired by a former Director of Children's Services with experience of leading improvement successfully.

The focus on the SEND Improvement journey is considered via a dedicated Children & Families Scrutiny Committee. There are also now monthly SEND performance sessions with the Leader, Chief Executive, Lead Member and the DCS to share progress and identify barriers and solutions. Meetings have been refreshed to enable a greater degree of scrutiny and challenge of the effectiveness of the area's SEND improvement journey. There have been some delay in establishing new arrangements at the ICB but the strengthened partnership will support greater working together for the benefit of children and families.

We have taken steps to ensure we have robust Local Area governance over SEND. There have been some recent changes to staffing and leadership in Tameside and the new leadership commissioned a diagnostic review of SEND practice and is bringing order and rigour to the work to be done, the priorities for implementation, and to area governance. Communication with parents, carers and partners about the changes, and establishing relationships is a priority. Senior leaders continue to liaise with Headteachers to share the self-evaluation and get feedback and ownership across the area.

We expect these changes to deliver rapid change for children and their families and to bring further clarity to the strategy going forward. The strengthened governance and oversight, joint quality assurance and commissioning, will ensure that plans are able to deliver the outcomes required and that pace is tracked and challenged across the partnership.





## BIRTH RATE



In **2020** there were **2,475** babies born in Tameside with the borough's birth rate being **higher than the national average**. The birth rate in under 18s is **significantly higher than England**.

## POPULATION



**30%** of the Tameside population are **aged 0-24 years**. The number of children and young people living in Tameside has increased year on year for the last 10 years. The forecasted growth of our young population will need to be considered in local plans.

## PROTECTING CHILDREN



Tameside Faces significant challenges in protecting children who experience neglect, family breakdown or crisis, and has **significantly higher numbers of children who are cared for than the England average**.

## POVERTY



Deprivation has an important impact on children's lives and health. Continuing to tackle child poverty, improve educational attainment, boost jobs and local economy will be crucial to improving the health of our children.

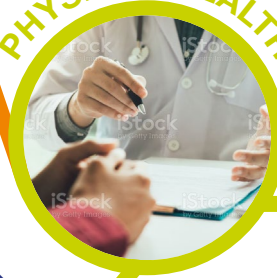


Children growing up in poorer families emerge from school with substantially lower levels of educational attainment. This is a major contributing factor to patterns of social mobility and poverty. We therefore need to be committed to improving the life chances of children from all income backgrounds, and increasing opportunity for the children growing up in poorer families.

## EDUCATION



## PHYSICAL HEALTH



High rates of childhood obesity and poor oral health demonstrate the need for focused work to improve children's diet and levels of physical activity across the borough. High levels of urgent care hospital admissions for asthma should also be a focus to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

## MENTAL WELLBEING



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Tameside has high levels of deprivation, inequality and variable attainment in school. These are risk factors to the poor mental health in our children so needs a sustained focus of work.

## SEXUAL HEALTH



Poor sexual health can lead to unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. We need to ensure our children and young people grow up with a positive attitude to their sexual health and develop healthy relationships with others.





Number of children in Tameside aged 0-17

**51134**

Number of young people in Tameside aged 18 - 24

**16524**

Percentage of children classed as BME

**21.5%**

Primary pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals

Tameside  
**31%**  
England  
**24%**

Secondary pupils eligible for and claiming free school meals

Tameside  
**28.7%**  
England  
**22.7%**

Number of young people that are not in education, employment or training

**265**

Percentage of young people that are not in education, employment or training

**5.3%**



Number of pupils with a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care plan

**2951**

All communication and language early learning goals (Communication and Language Area of Learning) is

**76%**



Percentage of children in low income families

Tameside  
**24.2%**  
England  
**19.1%**

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School readiness

**61%**

of reception children reach the expected level of language and literacy skills

Number of children who are cared for by Tameside

**648**  
Rate\* - **127**



Schools OFSTED good or outstanding

**Primary 96%**  
**Secondary 63%**  
**Special 80%**

Number of children receiving SEN support

**5229**

Care Leavers

**416**

\*Rate per 10,000 0-17 population is given where appropriate



### 3. Improvements in areas of weakness identified by Ofsted and next steps

#### The 10 priority areas of weakness identified in inspection were:

1. The endemic weaknesses in the quality and, due to the pandemic, timeliness of EHC plans, which lead to poor outcomes for children and young people with SEND across education, health and care
2. The high level of dissatisfaction among parents and carers with the area's provision
3. The local offer not being well publicised and not providing parents with the information that they need
4. The placement of some children and young people in unsuitable education provision
5. The unreasonable waiting times, which lead to increased needs for children and young people and their families
6. The lack of contribution from social care professionals to the EHC plan process
7. The limited oversight of the quality of SEND provision for children and young people's education
8. The inconsistent application of a graduated approach across different settings, leading to weaknesses in meeting needs across the area
9. The poor transition arrangements across all stages of education
10. The lack of strategic direction in the support for children and young people to prepare them effectively for adulthood.

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# 1. The endemic weaknesses in the quality and, due to the pandemic, timeliness of EHC plans, which lead to poor outcomes for children and young people with SEND across education, health and care.

## 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

### Statutory Assessment and EHC Plans

As of October 2023, there are 2,951 children and young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan in Tameside. The number of EHC Plans has risen exponentially in Tameside. Whilst demand has increased nationally, Tameside's growth exceeds demand in other areas. There was a 32% increase in requests for assessments between 2021 and 2022 calendar years in Tameside compared to 23% nationally and 27% across the North West.

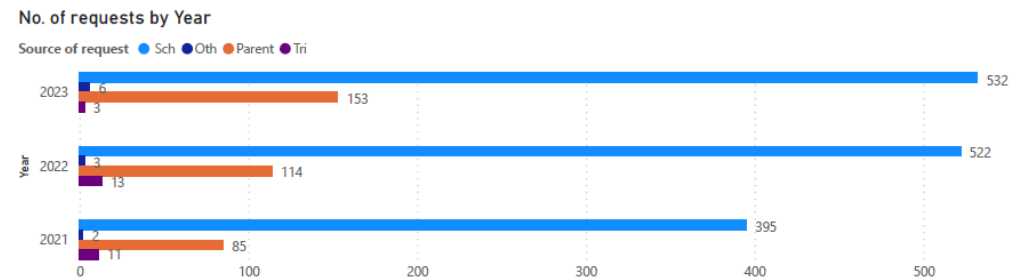
The increase in demand for EHC needs assessment were by 22.7% nationally and by 32.3 % in Tameside<sup>1</sup>:

	2021	2022	+/- on 2021	% increase
England	93302	114457	21155	22.67%
North West	12795	16302	3507	27.41%
Tameside	492	651	159	32.32%

<sup>1</sup>Data source-SEN2 Tameside SEND Data

Since January 2023 there have been 620 requests for assessment and 447 EHCs issued. The majority of requests for assessments come from schools (77%). Of the 620 requests, there have been 78 refusals to assess (8%) and 5 refusals to issue. Sustaining the improvement in the timeliness of statutory assessments is at risk due to the continued increase in requests for EHC needs assessment and the pressures faced by our education, health and care colleagues to submit statutory advice within the specified timeframes.

Breakdown of requests for assessment - September 2023



% breakdown of requests

Year	Sch	Oth	Parent	Tri	Total
2019	72.6%	0.6%	25.2%	1.6%	100.0%
2020	74.7%	1.1%	22.6%	1.6%	100.0%
2021	80.1%	0.4%	17.2%	2.2%	100.0%
2022	80.1%	0.5%	17.5%	2.0%	100.0%
2023	76.7%	0.9%	22.0%	0.4%	100.0%



A high number of plans are being issued at key transition points: going into primary school and going into secondary schools. The most common age for issuing plans in Tameside is 4 to 5 years old followed by 11 years old. The high number of plans in the Early Years is due to the impact of the pandemic on young children and their language and social development.

The rise in referrals demonstrates the need to ensure there is greater impact through implementation of the graduated approach and more effective use of specialist services to step up earlier identification and support for children and young people's needs, as well as service realignment. The current graduated approach needs to be strengthened and improved and we are addressing this through working with schools to develop a clear understanding of the graduated approach (e.g. SEND Conference 8 November); relaunching the 'Thrive' toolkit; and supporting best practice through a new Inclusion Outreach Quality offer/team.

Since our SEND Inspection in 2021, we have continued to improve the number of EHC needs assessments completed in the 20-week timescale, despite the increasing number of statutory requests for assessment and pressures on workforce capacity. In September 2023 the completion of EHCPs (with exceptions) was 54% and 49.4% (without exceptions), this is just above the national average. In 2021 only 34.8% of EHCPs were completed (with exceptions) and 39.1%

(without exceptions). The average number of weeks to issue a final EHCP has also reduced from 23 weeks in 2021 to 21.4 weeks in 2023, demonstrating improvement in this area. Although there is an improvement in timeliness of issuing EHC Plans there is still work to do to ensure that children and young people are not waiting for plans after the 20 week statutory period. Leaders also recognise that timeliness improvement alone is not enough, and we need to address quality through our Quality Assurance Framework.

### Annual Reviews

Tameside is responsible for monitoring and reviewing EHCPs annually and every 6 months for children under the age of 5. There is a backlog of annual reviews currently sitting at 1,333 of EHCPs where an annual review process has not been completed in full, meaning a current completion rate of 29.46%. Leaders know that the local area's arrangements for annual reviews needs to improve, and this is a high priority to ensure the right support at the right time. A robust and ambitious recovery plan is now in place with a backlog team starting work and continuing over the next five months to recover the position fully. This is complemented by a clear plan to ensure business as usual once the backlog has been cleared. Plans and progress will be monitored by the workstream delivery group and the Local Area Partnership Board.



## 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

### Complaints:

In the period September 2022 to August 2023, a total of 90 Stage 1 complaints concerning pupil support services were received and 26 Stage 2. The most commonly recorded category of complaints related to service failure to do something followed by delays in the EHCP process. This is a significant increase in complaints from the previous year, Sept 2021 to Aug 2022, where there were 32 stage 1 complaints and 17 stage 2 complaints.

### Tribunal and Mediations:

Between September 2022 and August 2023 there were a total of 56 mediations. Our mediation data shows us that refusal to assess is the most common reason for going to mediation, of which 66% are overturned. Where decisions are overturned at mediation this is usually due to additional information and evidence being provided that wasn't available when the original decision was made at our multi-agency statutory assessment panel. In the previous academic year, between September 21 and August 22 there were 35 mediations. 29 due to refusal to assess, 19 of which were overturned.

Leaders will know the impact of new SEND arrangements through evidence that more children and young people's needs are met earlier, locally and in mainstream settings- i.e.

- A. so that there is less escalation to EHC needs assessment,
- B. less demand for specialist placements (local and out-of-borough),
- C. decrease in exclusion and
- D. better outcomes overall for the SEND children at all levels.
- E. This will also be demonstrated through increased confidence from stakeholders -specifically young people, families and educational settings-through focus groups, surveys and active participation.
- F. Annual reviews are completed and judged to be of a quality and timely, (through the local area's quality assurance protocol) and children and young people's needs are met appropriately. Stakeholder confidence through focus groups, participation workshops and surveys. Placement panel decision-making.
- G. Quality assurance at local area and service level demonstrated where the local area is regarding EHC Plans and annual reviews, alongside evidence of stakeholder confidence.



### 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

Leaders are focusing on:

- A. The implementation of a robust graduated offer and specialist service realignment**, including support to schools, at pace, to ensure early identification. This will include realignment of our family hubs to ensure a step up in focus on improving school readiness, and a more holistic approach to meeting the additional needs of children and young people (61% of children currently reach a Good Level of Development at the end of Reception in Tameside which is well below national average). Consequently, escalation to EHC needs assessment would only be for those children and young people with more complex needs.
- B. Realigning the statutory service**, focusing on a more relational approach to working with schools and families, and ensuring greater capacity and skills. A restructure of the SEND assessment, review and monitoring Team is being implemented as from 1 October 2023. In part, this aims to further develop our quality commitment to re-shape the team roles to bring ownership and improved quality.

It will also provide a single point of contact for families and schools, aligned with Social Care neighbourhood working and school clusters to provide consistency and support to families and young people. This includes developing capacity and skills.

- C. Ensuring there is local area governance and leadership over statutory decision-making.** The multi-agency statutory assessment panel meets weekly and there is a re-launch of the invite for active participation of senior education leaders from schools and academies in the assessment moderating process. This will be crucial in ensuring robust decision-making in determining whether a child/young person meets the criteria for statutory assessment and whether the education setting has put in place provision which could reasonably be expected from its own SEND support resources, along with the best use of the support available at a universal and targeted level to address needs.
- D. Establishing a backlog team** of experienced interim case officers (virtual) to take forward a recovery plan for children and young people's annual reviews, ensuring that there is the right support in place. Recruitment to this team is due to be completed by mid-November 2023 and a recovery plan has been produced.
- E. Setting up a placement panel**, which is multi agency and involves the active participation of education leaders, and transport service representatives- to address the area of improvement raised by





Ofsted that some children are in inappropriate placements. This panel will make sure there has been and is the right support for the child or young person in the mainstream setting before making any decision to change placement. This panel will put robust scrutiny and decision-making into placements in specialist provision in and out of borough-for both those with new EHC Plans, and those children and young people for whom, following review, there is a request for placement change.

**F. Developing a Local Area quality assurance framework**, to oversee quality of EHC Plans, advices for assessment, and quality of annual reviews. We are committed to establishing an improved Quality Assurance protocol around EHCPs. Following our previous inspection an internal QAF developed and agreed with all stakeholders, including our parent carer forum. A framework had been completed; however, implementation of this was not executed in a timely manner. A working group has been established to review the framework and draft term of reference. This will sit under governance of the SEND Local Area Partnership Board.

**G.** The SEN team was previously separated into a statutory function and review and monitoring team. This brought challenges around cases split across workers and resulting issues with case load monitoring. From October 2023, a new SEN Assessment Team

structure has been implemented with the purpose of creating a more effective operating model.

- To increase the number of SEN caseworkers to ensure they have the focus on children and families needed to be Brilliant at the Basics – communicating with and supporting children and families and timely plan and review completion
- A structure which complements our neighbourhood model working more closely with Family Hubs and Early Help
- To enable caseworkers to be assigned to schools and education settings so that there is consistency for partners, children and their families
- To enable better working relationships between caseworkers, education, health and social care partners
- More in built supervision with the creation of two new Senior Case Officer posts to ensure that there is no drift and delay. This will enable caseloads to be monitored
- To address the increase in demand in EHCPs (we are now maintaining 2,951 plans in Tameside which is above the national average).



## Annex A 2.2. Approach to EHC Plans

### Evaluation Criteria:

- Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely way.
- Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support.
- Children and young people receive the right help at the right time.
- Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND

*Area of weakness 1 section end*



## 2. The high level of dissatisfaction among parents and carers with the area's provision

### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Since the last OFSTED inspection, we know that we have improved engagement with schools, parents and carers, young people and multi-disciplinary partners as we have introduced more rigour around our engagement processes with multiple arenas for consulting with and involving partners and children/families.

OKE reports that communication with parents and carers and with schools has improved but we know this still needs to be better. There is still frustration in the system for too many parents. The Local Area Partnership needs to respond in a coordinated way using the feedback to improve our service.

There has been an increase in parental participation:

- A SEND Local Offer Day was led by OKE in April and supported and attended by over 140 parents/carers, local authority and health services at the request of the parents via the Parent Carer Forum. Parental feedback was collated and used to inform future events and Local Offer Days. Whilst the number of children and parents engaging with us is positive, considering the high number of children receiving SEN support / with an EHCP we need to increase this further to ensure a wide range of views and needs are captured.
- Increase in Parent/carer participation due to meetings being held daytime and evenings, face to face and virtually to accommodate working parents and those parents/carers who have their own mental health issues/anxieties/neurodiverse etc or have difficulties physically attending meetings.
- Parent Carer Forum reps attend strategic meetings. -OKE has attended team meetings across all services to encourage flow or communication with the workforce, to share what is working well for parents, identify any issues and to share up to date information with the teams on the latest support available to families they work with, such as parent workshops, short breaks, and coffee mornings.



## 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

There is evidence of strengthening relationships with services and organisations across health, education and social care. Tameside's Parent Carer Forum Our Kids Eyes (OKE), reports that the Parent/Carer Drop-In sessions with the SEND Team, CAMHS, Pupil Outreach Service, and SENDIASS have been successful at sharing information and that parental feedback was 100% positive.

OKE has also reported that the SEND Local Offer Days and the Parent/Carer Drop-in sessions have begun to strengthen relationships with parent/carers and increase confidence and awareness of local services available to families, but we know there is still some way to

There is evidence of a good working relationship with Senior Leaders and managers across all partners. There has been co-production of a Transition Protocol - currently draft - This has been well received with no negative comments from parents/carers.

The Parent Carer Forum has reported that there is more publicity, and widely shared information and updates cascaded throughout services to enable professionals to direct families to the right support at the

right time. More families know where to go for help and support. OKE report that there has been a significant reduction in 'ping-ponging of parents' around services and that parent/carers are more knowledgeable about services and where to go for help.

The Parent Carer Forum has reported an increase in and wide range of regular SEND activities in Tameside for SEND children and young people that covers all ages and abilities, such as: Mencap 0-5; OKE 0-18; TOG MIND 8+; Anthony Seddon 7+; Active 5+; TASCA 3+; FACT 3+; T21 0+; and HOPE 0+

OKE reports an increase in schools hosting SEND Coffee Mornings to support parents and share information on other services available to them and their families which shows an inclusive culture and awareness raising driven by senior leaders.

The Parent Carer Forum is reporting that the 'culture' is changing and there has been a shift and an increase in awareness raising and activity across all services, including education settings and other community groups across the VCSE. SEND is everybody's business now and a real priority which is driven by senior leaders. OKE no longer struggles to find an activity or support for parents/carers who contact the service for advice & information.



The Parent Carer Forum report that there are improved channels of communication with parents and professionals, such as the new 'SENDing You News' newsletter which the Forum contribute to, and the Local Offer website which has had a revamp until the new website is launched.

### 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- Strengthen multi agency involvement which has already commenced through the refresh of the SEND Partnership Board and introduction of an independent chair to embed leadership and accountability for performance by senior leaders across all partners.
- Improve the graduated approach so that children and young people receive the right support at the right time.
- Review joint commissioning arrangements underpinned by a shared approach to outcomes for children and young people.

- Establish a holistic approach to meeting needs, linking up with Family Hubs, early years and schools and education settings.
- Improve the local area approach to statutory duties in relation to EHC Plans.
- Create and implement a co-produced communication protocol across the Local Area partnership.
- Engage more widely with parents and carer groups beyond the Parent Carer Forum.
- Further develop co-production practice with parents and carers, and young people, specifically the EHCP process, annual reviews and SEN support in response to parent feedback.
- Embed voices of children and families in our Local Area Quality Assurance Framework and Performance Management Cycle.
- Young people, families / carers and professionals will have access to clear and accessible information including the Transition Pathway and Protocol that accurately reflects the transition journey.

**Area of weakness 2 section end**



### 3. The local offer not being well publicised and not providing parents with the information that they need

#### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We know parents, carers and young people are not aware of the services and support available through our local offer and those that have accessed the local offer find it hard to navigate, therefore this isn't having the impact we would hope for on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

Parent/Carer Drop-In sessions with the SEND Team, CAMHS, Pupil Outreach Service, and SENDIASS have been successful and are having a positive impact. We know this because OKE report that parental feedback has been 100% positive. We are planning more dates throughout the year ahead.

- Established a multi-agency, co-production ownership board for the Local Offer responsible for the implementation plan for Priority 3 of the WSOA
- Held 'Meet the Local Offer' virtual and in-person events
- Cornerstone were commissioned as the company to complete the design and build of the new Local Offer website
- A consultation exercise with all key stakeholders including TMBC teams, partner organisations, parents/carers and young people

- Steering Group and Task & Finish Groups established
- Content for the new website has been completed by all key stakeholders.

The annual information Day on SEND and short breaks has allowed data to be collated on the impact of our arrangements for young people with SEND as Parents have provided feedback via parent's forum-OKE.

#### 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

Parents and carers feedback that the Local Offer was not easy to use. We will know if the new arrangements are successful when families are aware of and use the local offer and it helps them to find the information they need.



### 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- We have established a multi-agency, co-production ownership board for the Local Offer, which will develop an implementation plan
- We have commissioned a re-design and new Local Offer website
- A consultation exercise with all key stakeholders including TMBC, partner organisations, parents/carers and young people has taken place to agree what content we need on our new website
- Training to be provided for staff to ensure they know our local offer.
- Roll out of multi-agency youth voice group

- Cornerstone are now completing some final design additions and adjustments based on feedback from the Local Offer Steering Group. The key elements of these final revisions are around incorporating an accessibility toolbar to maximise inclusion and ensuring that the design and colours are appropriate for neurodivergent visitors to the site
- Training for staff to update and upload content for the Local Offer website is being organised. This training will be completed by a core group of stakeholders/partners and we will also be provided with a training tool to train other staff as required using a train the trainer model
- Following go-live we will deliver an ongoing marketing plan which promotes the current offer, and the relaunch of the offer following this improvement work
- Resource and time required for the upkeep of the Local Offer website will be monitored in order to future-proof it.

*Area of weakness 3 section end*



## 4. The placement of some children and young people in unsuitable education provision

### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

Ofsted identified that some children and young people are not suitably placed. The DBV programme research confirmed this.

*“Among the cases surveyed during the DBV project, 57% of Maintained Special School placements and 56% of INMSS placements were non-ideal”.*

DBV did an analysis of the reasons for gaps in service offering, including behind non-ideal placements:

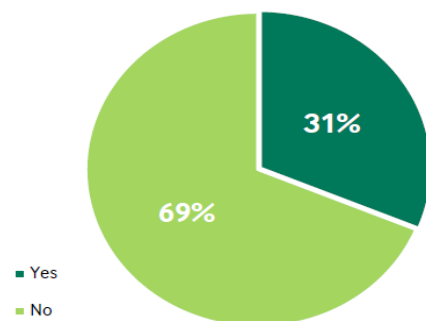
We are also aware that currently there are over 70% of children and young people to review, which would function to help understand suitability of their placement, as well as support provision.

#### Lack of MDT response and gap in service offering were the biggest barriers to achieving ideal outcomes

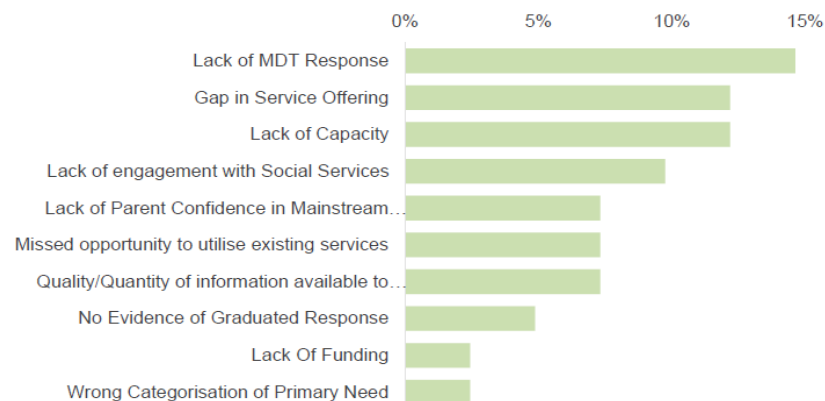


We completed 6 case review workshops in April 2023 with participants from across a range of disciplines, reviewing 32 unique cases to understand whether we delivered an ideal outcome to a CYP with SEND. We reviewed cases of CYP with a range of primary support needs a mainstream, maintained special schools and INMSS.

Did we achieve the ideal outcome for the CYP and enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations?



What themes contributed to achieving a non-ideal outcome?





## 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

It is through annual reviews, as well as robust casework that we will understand the impact of our arrangements in this case. It has been identified that in addition to stepping up skills and capacity to oversee annual reviews, we also need to carry out strategic multi-agency case reviews which will inform suitability of placement.

## 3. Our plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

As detailed in the Diagnostic Report, we have established an annual review backlog team of experienced case officers to take forward a recovery plan, answerable to a multi-agency panel to moderate decision-making.

We will establish rigor and accountability/transparency and moderation of decision-making in-house (including a more consistent approach to casework which underpins current realignment of the team)-through:

- Robust placement decisions in an accountable placement panel.
  - We will establish a Multi-agency Placement Panel, to support the placement process to mainstream specialist provision, Special schools and independent/non-maintained. To include school leaders and specialist teachers, the Designated clinical Officer, Designated Social Worker, representatives from Early Help, Early Years and attendance -and a representative from the Transport service:
    - “It is important that local authorities take travel costs into account when planning the supply of school places. Capital expenditure, revenue costs and travel costs need to be considered together to ensure financial sustainability”<sup>2</sup>.*
    - The panel would oversee:
      - o New EHC Plans
      - o Request for placement change from annual reviews.
    - Caseworkers to present:
      - o Reasons for need of placement change.
      - o The graduated response-has it been implemented? Evidence - Advices given and implemented and impact of implementation. Voices of parent/child/young person.

<sup>2</sup>Travel to school for children of compulsory school age Statutory guidance for local authorities, DfE June'23



- o Ensure financial rigour-attendance and tracking from finance.
- o Admin tracking of decisions and rationale.
- o Panel to report to DCS after each meeting-movement of children/ young people into such placements with rationale. And panel spend.
- Reviewing provision and placement through robust annual reviews. (Ofsted pointed out that there is not oversight of SEND provision. There is now in place a backlog team of experienced interim caseworkers and lead, and a recovery plan.
- Establishing a multi-agency panel (including school leaders) to carry out strategic reviews of:
  - Placements presented as ‘unsuitable’.
  - High-cost placements
  - Mainstream placements with bespoke packages.

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- Ensuring strategic and systematic oversight of vulnerable children and young people through:
  - o Establishing a tripartite placement panel to have oversight of those children/young people with very complex needs who require joint specialist placement.
  - o Ensuring there is joint working and a prompt responsive process for children/young people in care who need urgent placement, to ensure quality and suitability of their education.
  - o Developing greater inclusive capacity within mainstream schools and settings through robust pedagogy as part of the wider Sufficiency Strategy.
  - o Continue the promotion of short breaks survey’s to be undertaken with parents, carers, and young people to gain feedback to impact, alongside the annual information day on SEND.

## *Area of weakness 4 section end*



# 5. The unreasonable waiting times, which lead to increased needs for children and young people and their families

## 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

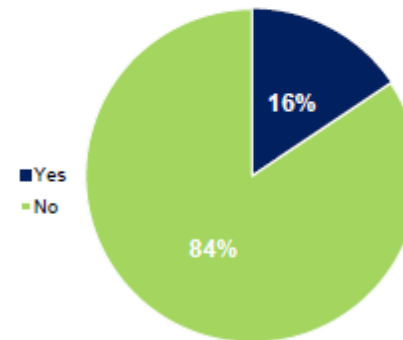
Ofsted identified that some children and The DBV project identified that the timing, (at 78% of cases) as well as the support of the setting (at 59% of cases), were key factors in impacting on outcomes for children:

Overall, lack of multi-agency response, gap in service offering and lack of capacity led to non-ideal outcomes of children and young people. These factors would contribute to waiting times:

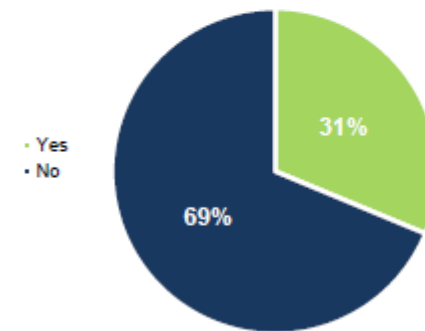
The wait times to access health professionals, and the support to families, on the neuro-developmental pathway is too long and has a negative impact on children's education and on families. The Health Navigator Service (OKE) has had a positive impact on communication with parents and carers accessing the information they need. Work is underway to improve the access to specialist support for children and families, and settings, whilst waiting for health appointments and to reduce wait times by reviewing the pathway.

Prioritising the provisions, ages and primary needs from Module 1, 32 cases were reviewed by a range of professionals across the Tameside SEND system including parents, headteachers, SENCOs and health, to understand if those CYP were receiving the ideal support for them to achieve their goals and aspirations.

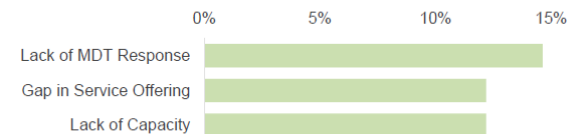
Could the support required to meet the child's needs be accessed without an EHCP?



Did we achieve the ideal outcome for the CYP and enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations?

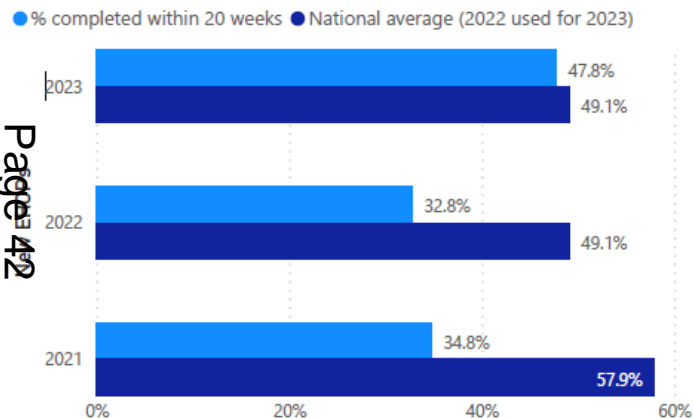


What themes contributed to achieving a non-ideal outcome?



Families access our children's centre offer and take up the Free Early Education Entitlement, but not enough children are achieving a Good Level of Development at the end of Reception, meaning they are not yet school ready. We know that weakness in the timeliness (and quality) of EHC plans impacts on those children and young people moving onto the next stage of education.

% EHCPs completed within 20 weeks



We know that there are delays in annual reviews for 70% of children and young people. Annual Reviews should be used to inform how well pupils are progressing towards their agreed outcomes. Leaders know that measures to implement this in a robust way are required.

Children in Tameside referred for Therapies are seen within a timely fashion (September 2023 Data: Physiotherapy 98%, Occupational Therapy 100%, SALT Assessment 99%, Dietetic Assessment 94% - September's data) but there are long waiting times for Neuro-developmental diagnosis. In the meantime, children are supported whilst waiting and can access a number of different interventions e.g. TOG Mind.

A SEND health family survey was carried out in March 2023, where we had 120 responses. The feedback from the survey told us that waiting times are too long; families feel they need more support around sensory processing; families do not feel like they understand the process and the responsibilities of the schools, for pathway of EHCP; and that information is not consistent or easy to access.

There are more opportunities for children and young people and parent/carers to 'Drop-In' to services for advice and help e. g. TOG MIND drop ins for children aged 8+, Family Hubs, Early Help and the OKE parent-drop ins.

Children and young people with SEND have to wait for respite as there is limited provision of short breaks which has resulted in an increased demand for statutory social work intervention.



## 2. *How we know* what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

We would know the impact of our arrangements where:

- Waiting times reduce evidenced by data
- Children and young people achieve positive outcomes- performance measures including exclusion rates.
- Fewer children and young people are escalated to EHC needs assessments.
- Fewer children and young people would be placed in the independent and non-maintained sector.
- Stakeholder feedback demonstrates confidence in the local offer and the graduated approach
- We will know we have improved when: families report they know that there are services to access while waiting for diagnosis and families will be more satisfied with the support they receive. The survey will be circulated again in March 2024 so that we can understand what impacts our improvements have had.

## 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

The statutory SEND Service has undergone a restructure to focus on locality/neighbourhood working. When fully resourced, the new structure will reduce caseloads from approx. 600 to approximately 230. (38%). This will support greater co-production, timeliness and quality, and overall, more robust casework and supervision. The increased capacity (the annual review backlog team working to complete all reviews up until October 31st '23), alongside the ongoing refresh of processes and practices, responding to the voices of children, young people, and their families, would facilitate improved experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

An annual review backlog team is being recruited - one lead and six additional experienced case officers to oversee annual reviews due until October 31st, 2023. This would relieve workload pressure on the permanent team who will be able to focus on business as usual.

There is focus on family hubs to be part of a wider strategic approach to meet needs earlier, linking up with schools and education outreach services, as well as with social care.



Following on from the feedback, a number of actions have been created to improve support. Key professionals have met with families to share the feedback:

- Increase support for families while they are waiting for diagnosis. Offering advice, signposting to activities and peer support, and help with parenting strategies.
- Pathway guidance to be developed to outline school, parent, professional responsibilities
- Develop info packs for SENDCOs and professionals including GPs so that they know what health support is available to access

Children and Young People Voice Co-Production Project – this will focus on bringing all the co-production work together across Tameside.

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- By developing the choice of short break care providers to meet the needs of our most complex and vulnerable children we will prevent escalation into crisis. Further liaison with Fostering Services regards recruitment of Foster Cares for disabled children to develop short break support alongside the completion of a new build 9 bedded in house short break residential unit.
- Develop the Local Offer market with more locality based short breaks provision across Tameside. By stimulating the market we would hope to see an increase in choice of short break care providers to meet the needs of our most complex and vulnerable children, preventing escalation into crisis.
- Explore with Fostering Services the recruitment of Foster Cares for disabled children to develop more targeted overnight and short break support.
- Commence works on the new nine bed residential short break facility for children with disabilities with increased capacity.

## *Area of weakness 5 section end*



## 6. The lack of contribution from social care professionals to the EHC plan process

### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

The appointment to the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) role has strengthened the relationships between Education and Social Care by further developing social care input into EHC plans and promoting better communication and joined up working between SEND, Virtual School and Social Care Teams.

We know that social care input into EHC plans needs to be developed. That there is correlation between children and young people with EHC Plans who are CIN, on CP plans, and may be escalated to an EHC needs assessment and have unidentified needs.

The DBV project identified that lack of engagement of social services accounted for negative impact of children and young people, i.e. this made a significant contribution towards children/young people with EHC Plans having a 'non-deal' outcome.

Training has been delivered at regular intervals to support the knowledge with regards social care advice which is being further developed in partnership with education partners and is in the process of being rolled out online as well as in person.

The mandatory training offered rolled out to new members of the workforce will ensure that SEND is everyone's business.

There are currently 24.1% of Children in Care with an EHC Plan, and 14.7% of children and young people with Child in Need Plans also have an EHC Plan.

### 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

- That there is evidenced oversight of children and young people with EHC plans who access support from early Help and social care (Data is collated)
- The DSCO is working towards a robust contribution from social care professionals which is timely and of good quality into the EHC plan which is of a quality and ensures appropriate understanding of needs and appropriate provision. Evidenced through a robust Quality Assurance process.
- That children and young people who have EHC Plans access the right support and are therefore empowered to achieve positive outcomes as set out in their plan. Evidenced through review.



- A system has been developed whereby we are able to monitor the requests for social care advice, this dashboard allows us to monitor timeliness of the Social Care Advice Returns has continued to improve management oversight Quality Assurance to ensure advice is child centred.
- The compliance of Social Care Advice Returns has continued to improve which is evidenced by the development of a data dashboard, management oversight has been built into the process which is supporting the Quality Assurance of Social Care Advice and sought to ensure advice is child centred. Ensure EHCP plans and reviews are input on Social Care Electronic Recording System when a child is known to Social Care. Develop a process to inform SEND Team when changes to plans in social care occur ensuring plans are regularly updated and ensure SEND Team ensure review schedules are distributed to promoted joined up care planning for children and young people.

### 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- We are developing a quality assurance framework to sit under governance of the SEND partnership Board which will include review of quality of advice from social care professionals.
- There will be a simple process based on a set script to make informal contact with families and assess level of care needs who have been referred for EHC needs assessment.
- There is training planned for all social care teams.
- The assessment panel is multi agency and includes representation from social care.
- Develop a workforce training and development plan for SEND, which forms part of any mandatory and induction training for all social care staff across children's Social Care and Early help and children's and adult's social care.
- The mandatory training offered to social workers will be rolled out to new members of the workforce will ensure that SEND is everyone's business.

## Area of weakness 6 section end





## 7. The limited oversight of the quality of SEND provision for children and young people's education.

### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

We have now developed robust Local Area governance and oversight over the SEND offer through establishing the Local Area Partnership Board and Improvement Plan Delivery Groups, appointing an independent chair of the Board, undertaking an external diagnostic review of SEND, and developing a clear Improvement Plan.

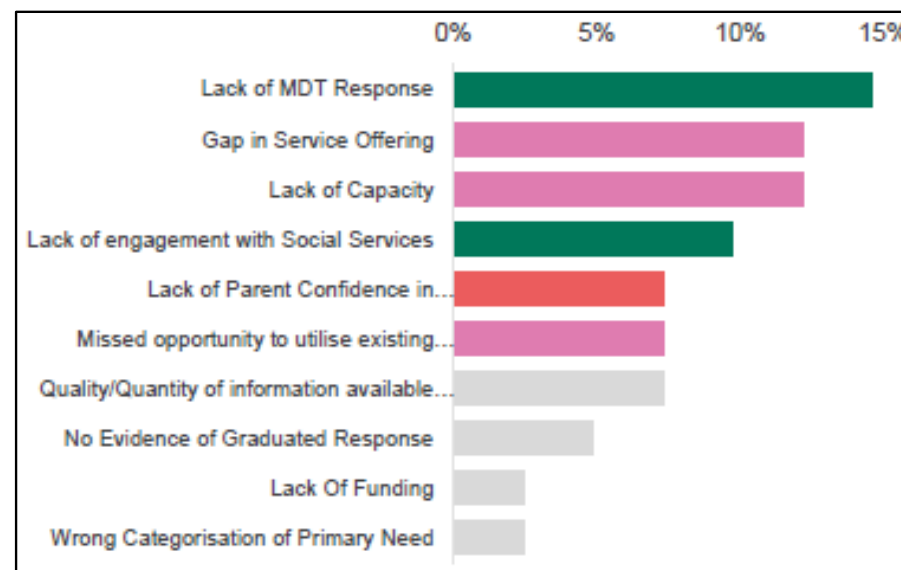
Just under one third of children and young people with EHC Plans have timely annual reviews and the review of the quality and the input of the voices of children, young people, and their families has not been systematic. Of those where review has not been completed, most schools have held review meetings. This is being addressed through the Annual Review Backlog team and the business-as-usual planning. Vulnerable cohorts are being prioritised and it is anticipated that this team will be working for five months to recover the position.

We have completed a review of our SEND Sufficiency, using both child-led and financial data to plan for the needs and demands on our specialist placements. Need for specialist places has grown beyond available capacity despite an increase in special school and resource provision.

A Local Area co-produced and agreed quality assurance framework for EHC Plans/annual reviews is currently being produced.

The DBV project identified some themes which lead to poor outcomes for children and young people-and these are linked to lack of oversight:

#### Themes contributing to children and young people achieving 'non-ideal' outcomes:



## 2. *How we know* what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

- Strengthening the Local Area Partnership will ensure there is better oversight and knowledge of impact for children/young people with SEND
- Understanding the impact of the graduated response on outcomes for children and young people will ensure oversight at universal, targeted and specialist levels of support
- Scrutiny and quality assurance of annual reviews will be vital to understand the impact of local area arrangements for provision for children and young people on EHC Plans. Currently there is a need to redress this
- The voices of children, young people and families will portray well the impact of the Local Area's SEND arrangements.

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## 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- The refreshed SEND Partnership Board will take forward strategic oversight of across the Local Area, not just for the areas of improvement required since the local area inspection, but across universal, targeted and specialist services.
- The leadership and governance over data evidence has recently been improved following diagnostic review, and systems are being put in place to ensure there is scrutiny -there will be regular reporting to the SEND Partnership Board.
- We are developing measures to ensure a robust multi-agency approach to decision-making about placements and developing a new SEND sufficiency strategy. This strategy includes a focus on inclusion in mainstream schools.
- An annual review backlog team is being established to take forward over 70% of delayed annual reviews. This team will report to a multi-agency panel so that decisions are moderated in a robust way and there is clear understanding of the impact on outcomes of the Local Area's arrangements for children and young people with SEND.



- There will be established multi-agency strategic reviews of casework, involving head teachers, SENCos, as well as health and social care professionals.
- We will establish a quality assurance framework to ensure there is improvement in the quality of EHC Plans and annual reviews, including robust oversight of provision in relation to impact on outcomes for children and young people.
- We will ensure rigour and accountability/transparency and moderation of decision-making through **robust placement decisions in an accountable multi-agency Placement Panel**, made up school leaders and specialist teachers, the Designated Clinical Officer, Designated Social Worker, representatives from Early Help, Early Years and attendance **-and a representative from the Transport service:** *“It is important that local authorities take travel costs into account when planning the supply of school places. Capital expenditure, revenue costs and travel costs need to be considered together to ensure financial sustainability”<sup>3</sup>.*

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This panel will consider whether the graduated approach has it been implemented. Evidence - Advices given and implemented and impact of implementation. Voices of parent/child/young person.

- We will establish rigour in Local Area governance and oversight of children/young people who have needs across more than one service--education, health, and care needs, through addressing gaps in governance, performance, and data systems.
- We are focusing on exercising rigorous governance/oversight over the statutory processes (casework for annual reviews and EHC Plans).

## Area of weakness 7 section end

<sup>3</sup>Travel to school for children of compulsory school age  
Statutory guidance for local authorities, DfE June'23



## 8. The inconsistent application of a graduated approach across different settings, leading to weaknesses in meeting needs across the area

### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

The graduated approach is not currently embedded across the Local Area. There is significant demand for EHC needs assessments, and lack of confidence in SEN Support evidenced by the increase of EHC needs assessment referrals.

The DBV project identified that lack of evidence of children, young people accessing the graduated response accounted for a negative impact on outcomes-i.e. a non-ideal outcome'. Also the need to increase inclusion in schools: *'The objective is to increase inclusion in mainstream schools, which has been identified as the biggest driver of non-ideal (outcomes that could have been achieved differently e.g. without an EHCP or without a place in MSS) outcomes across the LA, where 57% of cases reviewed during case reviews were found to have non ideal outcomes as a result.'* It was identified that there is a need to *'address the perception that mainstream schools cannot meet the child's needs'*.

The number of permanent exclusions slightly reduced in the 2022/3 academic year as in 2021/2 (71 and 73 students respectively) but did not reduce further due to the impact of the post-pandemic landscape. Comparison data is lagged but informal sharing of outcomes across

Greater Manchester suggests that this represents progress for our ranking position. This means that more vulnerable children are staying in mainstream education rather than being excluded. This is as a result of the local authority promoting a 'culture of inclusion'. Consequently, OKE reports an increase in parents contacting them about part-time timetables.

The majority (18 out of 21) of our pre-16, high-cost Independent and non-maintained schools placements are for children with a primary need of SEMH.

Health partners have a data dashboard that allows us to know what help and support is being provided to families and information and feedback from families on what the impact is on families from these services.

We know what our parents think about our services. Families are accessing advice, support and gaining help earlier to support them to navigate the system. Parent/Carer drop-in session with CAMHS practitioners have been established for parents and carers who would like to access advice, support or have questions relating to the CAMHS pathway. This represents our strategy of providing support whilst waiting.



SEND Family Support (Active Tameside): Tameside young people have worked with SEND Participation Officers to put on new activities within the community, providing support whilst waiting. The Mencap Family Engagement Project Tameside, is in place for parents and carers of children aged 0-5, 1-1 and peer support for families. We organised a festival to showcase Active Tameside's 'Everybody Can' Service and raise awareness of what children and families with SEND can access in their local community.

ISCAN Therapies receive compliments and feedback.

SEND support sessions have been rolled out into the locality's and run by the children's centres to address specific issues for Children and Young People with SEND and promote mental health and well-being of families.

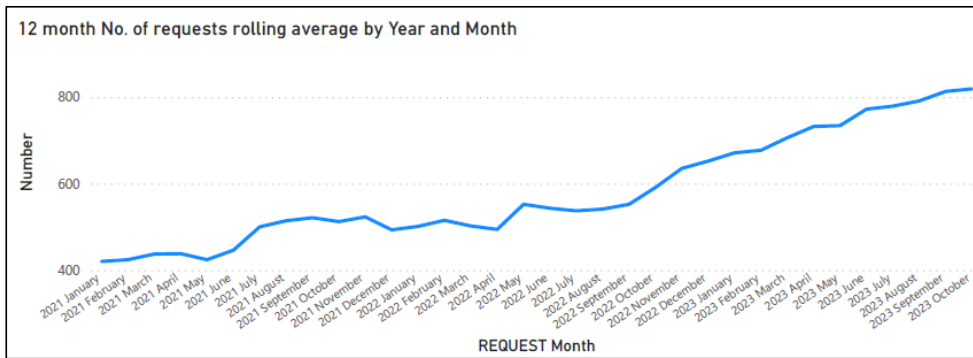
## 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

There is a perception that mainstream schools cannot meet the needs of children with plans. DBV diagnostics confirm the need to increase inclusion in mainstream schools as the biggest driver of 'non-ideal' outcomes (as opposed to good or 'ideal' outcomes) for children across the area, with 57% of cases reviewed, by multi-agency panels, having 'non-ideal' outcomes in special schools and 60% of children with plans in mainstream not needing them, according to multi-agency case review. In these 'non-ideal' scenarios, the main reasons are lack of multi-disciplinary responses, service offer gaps and use of existing services.

The increase in demand for EHC needs assessment demonstrates that there needs to be greater support earlier on for children and young people.

The DBV project found that there has been 'Rapid escalation in referrals for EHCPs pre 2023 particularly for age 4 and 5 year olds with SCLN', but that evidence suggests needs could have been met differently or within a time-limited programme of specialist support.





The Neuro-diversity pathway needs strengthening with a more holistic approach being taken, to improve the graduated offer and support timely and appropriate diagnosis and/or intervention.

The rate of exclusion and the increased demand for specialist places is also indicative of the need for greater support in mainstream settings.

Exclusion information for 2021/22 shows increasing rates of exclusions and suspensions for SEN support pupils, with figures up for permanent exclusion and for 1+ fixed-term suspensions (though 2020/21 were slightly lower due to COVID-19). Tameside is 5th amongst statistical neighbours and 9th amongst GM for permanent exclusions, and is 8th amongst statistical neighbours and 5th amongst Greater Manchester authorities for pupils with 1+ FTE.

For EHCP pupils, exclusion information for 2021-22 shows a small decrease in the rate of permanent exclusions but an increase in suspensions. Tameside is 7th amongst statistical neighbours and 9th amongst GM authorities for permanent exclusions and is 8th amongst both statistical neighbours and Greater Manchester authorities for pupils with 1+ FTE.<sup>4</sup>

96% of our primary schools are judged good or better by Ofsted, and there is inclusive practice in many schools, however there are still too many schools who are not providing a strong enough ordinarily available offer. Our Graduated Response is not clearly articulated and the THRIVE Matching Provision to Needs toolkit is not always helping schools to deliver appropriate SEN Support in schools and needs to be disseminated more robustly. Pupil outcomes are improving in some areas for SEN Support and EHCP students especially at KS1 but outcomes still need to be better.

This demonstrated that there needs to be improvement in the graduated approach so that children and young people have their needs met earlier. Also that there are appropriate curriculum pathways. Feedback from the SEND support sessions in the localities has shown that the sessions are positively regarded by those who have used them.

<sup>4</sup>SEND Scorecard July '23



### 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- The 'Thrive' document "which matches provision to need for school age children" will be re-launched and rebranded, demonstrating the graduated approach and that Tameside has done work on this under governance of senior education leadership. --To sit under the SEND Partnership Board and therefore Local Area governance. This work has been led by the Educational Psychology Service "in consultation with schools, settings and services." -- The Delivering Better Value project identified that 'feedback from SENCO's and other professionals varies substantially in terms of awareness and confidence to use'.  
Page 53  
There is the need to further involve and co-produce with stakeholders -- parent carers and young people, as well as the education, health and care workforce to ensure this is commonly owned, easily understood, and practical (able to be implemented).-- The implementation of a robust graduated response will be a good opportunity to include more children/ young people in mainstream schools as well as a robust approach to placement.

- We plan to ensure that the expectations embedded in Thrive and developed from there as appropriate are reflected in the creation of any new provisions, including any Service Level Agreement for specialist mainstream specialist provision-- resource provision, Satellite class or SEN Unit.
- There will be clear communication and establishment of expectations with senior school leaders-including CEOs and chairs of governors.
- A training package for Thrive will be developed for and with schools and settings that relates to expectations of the school inspection framework -e.g., adaptive teaching/ sequencing, -to contribute for example towards the 'quality of education' judgement, moreover, all areas-including behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership, and management.
- Outreach services will be aligned to disseminate and train on the graduated approach.
- We will map education, health, and care provision across the Local Area, identifying and addressing gaps in relation to meeting needs of children and young people with SEND, through an improved graduated approach, and clearly communicate this.



- Leaders have identified the need to step up support for children and young people identified with SEMH and have begun work here which will continue.
  - The Education service and the refreshed statutory assessment team will focus on mitigating the use of reduced timetables except in very exceptional circumstances.
  - A review of the Specialist Support Service Offer has been completed and we will act on recommendations to design a revised offer that supports schools and settings to embed the graduated response and meet the needs of learners at an earlier point.
- Page 54 Work is ongoing around exclusions with a partnership task and finish group to tackle the number of suspensions and exclusions in KS1 as analysis shows that children are SEND.
- We will implement our DBV programme to increase inclusion in mainstream schools. This will improve the proportion of children and young people who could be effectively supported to achieve their best outcomes in a mainstream school.

- We will work with OKE to provide support for parents/carers to understand SEN Support in schools and the graduated response.
- WE will ensure there is communication and establishment of expectations with senior school leaders-including CEOs and chairs of governors.
- Align services to disseminate and train on the graduated offer-including ensuring recruitment and retention of the Educational Psychology service and support ongoing work with review of the specialist teaching services with this focused direction.
- Work through the SEND Partnership Board to involve senior health partners in Thrive and include this in the rebranded and re-launched work.
- Review and redefine a joint commissioning strategy co-producing priority based on a good understanding of local need and local spend.

## Area of weakness 8 section end





## 9. The poor transition arrangements across all stages of education

### 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

As referred to in section 1, a high number of plans are being issued for children at key transition points: at entry to primary school and then into secondary schools. The most common age for issuing plans in Tameside is 4 to 5 years old followed by those children at 11 years old. The high number of plans in the Early Years is due to the impact of the pandemic on young children and their language and social development.

‘Children at ages 4,5,10,12,13 have been identified as the most significant ages for requests for new EHCP Plans. Those children starting in Maintained Special Schools accounts for half of the current total spend on school places and top-up within the High Needs Block. The consequence of the increased strain on Maintained Special School places is that children and young people are educated away from their local community in high cost out of borough independent non-maintained special schools places.’ (DBV project).

Phase transfers are prioritised and in accordance with the statutory transfer deadlines. In 2023 we completed 97% of our transition from

primary to secondary placements on time. This was an improvement from 2022. However, only 55% of post-16 transitions were completed on time in 2023.

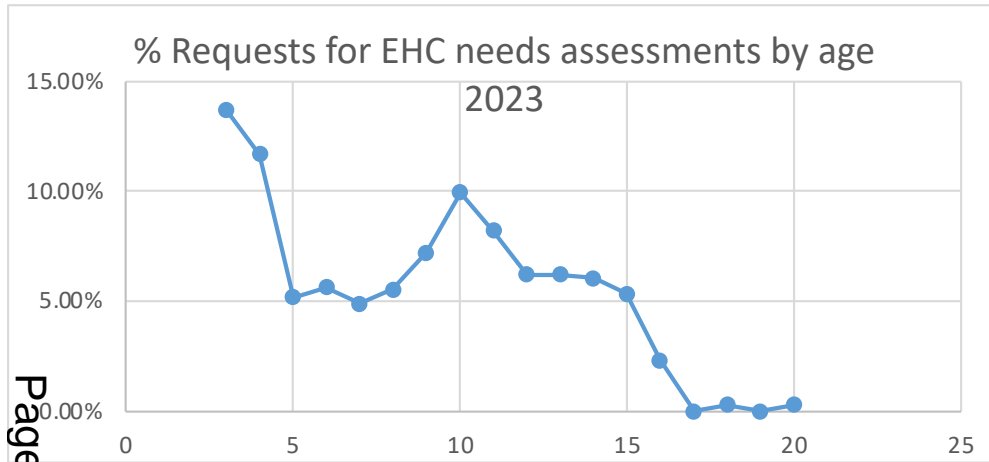
The Schools Outreach Service supported transitions with schools for children with Autism. The Early Years Quality Team supported the transition of children with EHCPs and SEN Support from private nurseries to primary school for the first time this summer. The impact is yet to be understood and will be based on progress of those children during the academic year.

### 2. How we know what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

Analysis through the DBV project identifies a significant number of children with new EHC Plans start in Maintained Special Schools (MSS) at ages 4 and 5 which puts pressure on MSS capacity and ultimately a potential flow to the independent and non-maintained school sector. The results from the impact of SENIF funding indicate that children are able to access mainstream school after short intensive work and without the need for an EHC Plan but a good SEN Support Plan.



Tameside data on EHC needs assessment shows:



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**3. Our plans** for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- Leaders will be focusing on improving school readiness of children, so that there is prompt support to meet needs, the impact of which would be that they have better opportunities to achieve positive outcomes.

- There is current work focusing on family hubs and linking services to these to provide a more holistic offer for early support and ensure improvement in school readiness (Data needed).
- The DBV project sets out that ‘The objective is to improve the effectiveness and confidence in key transitions’. One of the goals identified is as follows:

**Effective transition at early years and Primary to Secondary:**

Improve the assessment at early years ages to ensure the best chance of transition to a mainstream setting rather than maintained special and other transition activities/funding to improve the effectiveness of transition and parentel/school confidence in transition to mainstream settings, therefore reducing demand on maintained special schools and use of INMSS.



- The DBV project work will be taken forward by the new leadership, aligned to the recent diagnostic report and the need to ensure that there is value for the spend of the grant –The aim is to reach and impact on outcomes for many children /young people as possible.-The outcome would be ‘Greater parental and mainstream confidence in transitions. Improved multi-agency working to improve the support and confidence at key transition points’
- Delivering the now established recovery plan for annual reviews through a focused backlog team of experienced interims, where decision-making is accountable to a multi-agency panel, are arrangements which will improve outcomes and experiences of children and young people at key transition points.
- Health leaders will ensure GPs are alerted at year 9 annual EHCP review so that transition is planned early enough / GPs are aware of young people who are entitled to the annual health check.

## *Area of weakness 9 section end*



# 10. The lack of strategic direction in the support for children and young people to prepare them effectively for adulthood.

## 1. What we know about the impact of our arrangements for children and young people with SEND?

There is currently a higher demand in referral for children and young people at transition stages of education as set out in section 9. This has led to an increase in placing young people post-16 in the independent and non-maintained sector (hence the budget variance of over £1 million. The spend on post-16 provision is higher than statistical neighbours. The diagnostic review has identified the need to have robust review for these young people.

There is an increase in EHC Plans for post-16 young people. There are currently 630 young people with Tameside maintained EHC Plans (compared to 467 in 2022 and 306 in 2021).

Preparing for Adulthood is not currently a common theme or focus on Tameside EHC Plans.

There has recently been completed a co-produced draft of a Multi-agency Transitions Protocol, Supporting Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities from aged 12 years into adulthood.

For young people post-16 with an EHC Plan, the increase in SEMH has continued with 37.0% now having this as their primary need.

This is up from 33.8% in 2022 and 20.6% in 2021. MLD is the second largest primary need at 25.2% having been 26.3% in 2022, 26.8% in 2021 and 33% in 2019. ASD has remained at a similar level to 2022 at 19.5% (19.9% in 2022).

Children's and Adult Social Care have a clear commitment to work in partnership, funding the transitions social worker is a joint role funding equally. This has improved the quality of young people's transitions. Preparation for adulthood training has supported.

- NEET figures as of August 2023 were 6.34% the Education Employment and Skills team have secured funding from GMCA to deliver a place based approach to supporting young people aged 15-18 years of age, and those aged up to 24 years with an Education & Healthcare Plan (EHP) or aged to 21 years if care experienced, who are at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET); who are already NEET; or who are in the group referenced as 'Unknown' where the current education, employment or training situation is not recorded.
- We have growing numbers of 14-25 year olds who have an EHCP and we know that this trend will continue (1,141 this year 2202/23 increasing to 1,818 by 2027/28). There are a number of young people with complex needs in high costs placements that will transition into Adult Social Care (22 over the next 5 years).



Last year we missed our target for annual health checks for young people. Our final end of year figure was 65%, which is an improvement on 2021/22 but still below our target of 75%. To improve the transition to adulthood and start the conversation at the right time, we have a dedicated transitions social worker who is co-funded by Adults and Children's Services who links in with young people and families preparing for adulthood. They are currently working with 25 young people.

- A Tracker is in place and has been developed between Children's Services, Health, Adult Services and Finance. The Tracker is available to key stakeholders while ensuring information governance is followed. The Tracker highlights young people coming through transitions and who should be invited to our Transitions Panel. Transitions Panel meet monthly to support starting early conversations to well prepare young people and those supporting them to ensure they are sign posted appropriately.
- The Education Employment and Skills team, hold biannual jobs fairs, the last of which was 11 October 2023 and over 300 people attended. A Supported Internship offer is in place in Tameside with a partnership model between Active Tameside, Tameside Hospital and Tameside College.

- OKE also reports that there are more SEND inclusive events happening across Tameside for children and young people with SEND e.g. the Tameside Jobs Fair, which included organisations that can help SEND young people get into employment or training, such as Routes to Work.

## 2. *How we know* what impact our arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having

- Strategic and operational oversight has been strengthened which will lead to greater clarity around the impact of arrangements identified by senior leaders through a recently commissioned diagnostic.
- There is clearer information available for children and young people and their parents to understand the different options open to them when they reach key milestones (14+ 16+ 18+) including the new PfA factsheets. There is a reduction in parents feeling like they have 'fallen off a cliff edge' when their child turns 18.



### 3. *Our plans* for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?

- The draft Transitions Protocol to be taken forward under Local Area Governance, reviewed as appropriate and implemented. The vision is 'of a SEND and alternative provision system which supports children and young people to successfully move through education and into adulthood, regardless of whether they have an EHCP, through the wide variety of routes available'.

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We will implement the annual review recovery plan through the experienced backlog team. Two of the case officers in the Backlog team will be experienced post-16 case officers and accountable to a SEND lead and a multi-agency panel to ensure there is a robust Preparing for Adulthood Approach. This panel will include health, social care, Education and Skills, as well as post-16 setting representatives.

- The diagnostic has identified the following actions to ensure there is robust approach:
  - o Establish a bespoke post 16 of SEN caseworkers and leader.
  - o Establish clear strategic leadership across education, health, and care.

- o Multi-agency audit of post-16 young people. Education, Adult social care and health partners to identify and realign capacity.
  - o Ensure proactivity in planning for those young people a. aged 14 to ensure appropriate pathways and b. those aged 18 plus in settings.
  - o Post-16 pathways to be part of the graduated approach.
  - o Post-16 placements to be accountable to a bespoke multi-agency post-16 moderating placement panel.
  - o Consolidation of ensuring all Children and Young People referred through to the Transitions Social Work team, are allocated a key worker when they reach 17 and for more complex children, when they are 16 to support preparation for adulthood and smooth transitions.
- Further plans are in place to ensure that the opportunities offered by the new Co-op Live Arena are accessible to our young adults, as well as other residents who benefit from additional support.
  - Plan to develop better ways of working in order to identify learners ahead of EHCP review process and bring the referrals back to LA control.
  - We intend to continue our current offer but also to add additional provision for young people with EHCP in supported internships.



- We know that feedback from our parent carer survey in December 2022, that preparing for adulthood and key information needed updating. Our PfA factsheets have been launched in May this year, these were co-produced and have received positive feedback but it is too early still to see the impact that this is having on young people's experience.
- The parent and carer survey in December 2022 showed that people viewed transitions and preparing for adulthood as confusing and unclear. As a result of this feedback, and in consultation with our Parent Carer Forum, we have co-produced PfA Factsheets that are now live on the council website. We want to embed the use of the PfA factsheets for the early conversations around preparing for adulthood in key stage 4 education and training settings and link with SENCO network.
- Transitions lead to attend SEND young people's Council.
- Further expansion by transitions lead across wider education and training sessions.
- Work is also being undertaken with the SEND Team and Education Employment and Skills team, to develop and increase the Supported Internship offer and this will be taken forward with the National Development Team for Inclusion.

## *Area of weakness 10 section end*



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# SEND Local Area Partnership Engagement Meeting

15 November 2023





## Agenda

- Introductions
- Current Context of the Local Area Partnership.
- Recent changes to the local SEND system.
- Plans for the next 12 months.
- Planned Improvements and key activities.
- Any other outcomes / questions about leaders' self-evaluation.





## Current Context of the Local Area Partnership

There is now established a refreshed **SEND Partnership Board** with an experienced independent chair.

The focus is on **strengthening partnership across the local area** . Key seniors are already engaged.

The purpose is

- to ensure SEND and Alternative provision arrangements are improved to achieve better outcomes for children and young people and that
- there is robust leadership and governance, scrutiny and accountability through the board.
- This will be the focus of all improvement work.

There has been a **diagnostic review** and some of the recommendations are already being taken forward and will be accountable to the Board.





# Recent Changes in the SEND System

## Housekeeping-statutory duties: EHC Plans

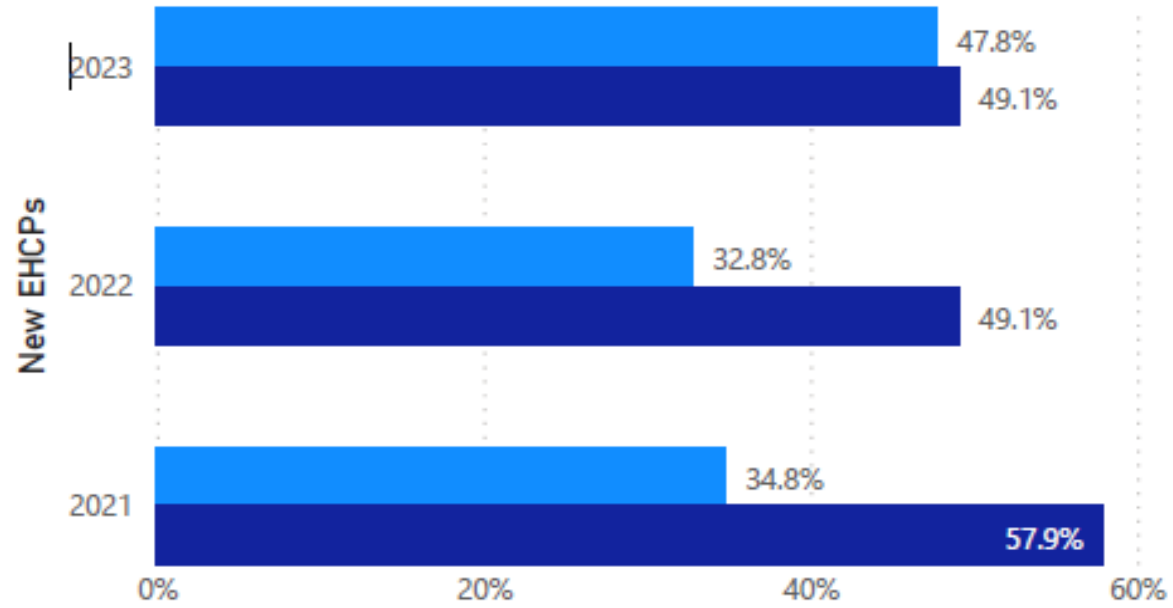
- **Quality assurance** protocol framework drafted-to be presented to the SEND partnership Board
  - Local Area QA group convened to QA plans-agreement on QA process
  - In-service QA implemented on regular basis(has already begun).
- **Timeliness** - System to establish timeliness of advices.
- Recruitment underway to have more leadership oversight within the team.





### % EHCPs completed within 20 weeks

● % completed within 20 weeks ● National average (2022 used for 2023)





# Recent Changes in the SEND System continued.

## Housekeeping Statutory Duties: Annual Reviews

- Recovery Plan developed to address the backlog of Annual reviews.
- Work on data completed to ensure a robust account of the current situation – 70% of annual reviews are in the backlog.
- Backlog Team currently being recruited-experienced interims who have done this work before (Team of 6 plus lead-2 will oversee post-16 casework).





## Recent changes to the Local SEND System

- Recent significant changes to staffing and leadership: **new leadership** in Children's and ICB changes. We expect these changes to deliver rapid change for children and their families and to bring further clarity to the strategy going forward.
- An **independent diagnostic review** has been commissioned and investment has been agreed to prioritise improvements in key areas. This will bring order and rigour to the work to be done, the priorities for implementation, and to area governance.
- **Leadership and accountability** for performance across SEND is being strengthened. Significant investment in SEND leadership and casework.
- To ensure there is a clear focus on the impact of local area arrangements on outcomes for children and young people, an **experienced independent Chair** has been appointed to oversee the refreshed SEND Local Area Partnership Board.





## Current Context of the Local Area

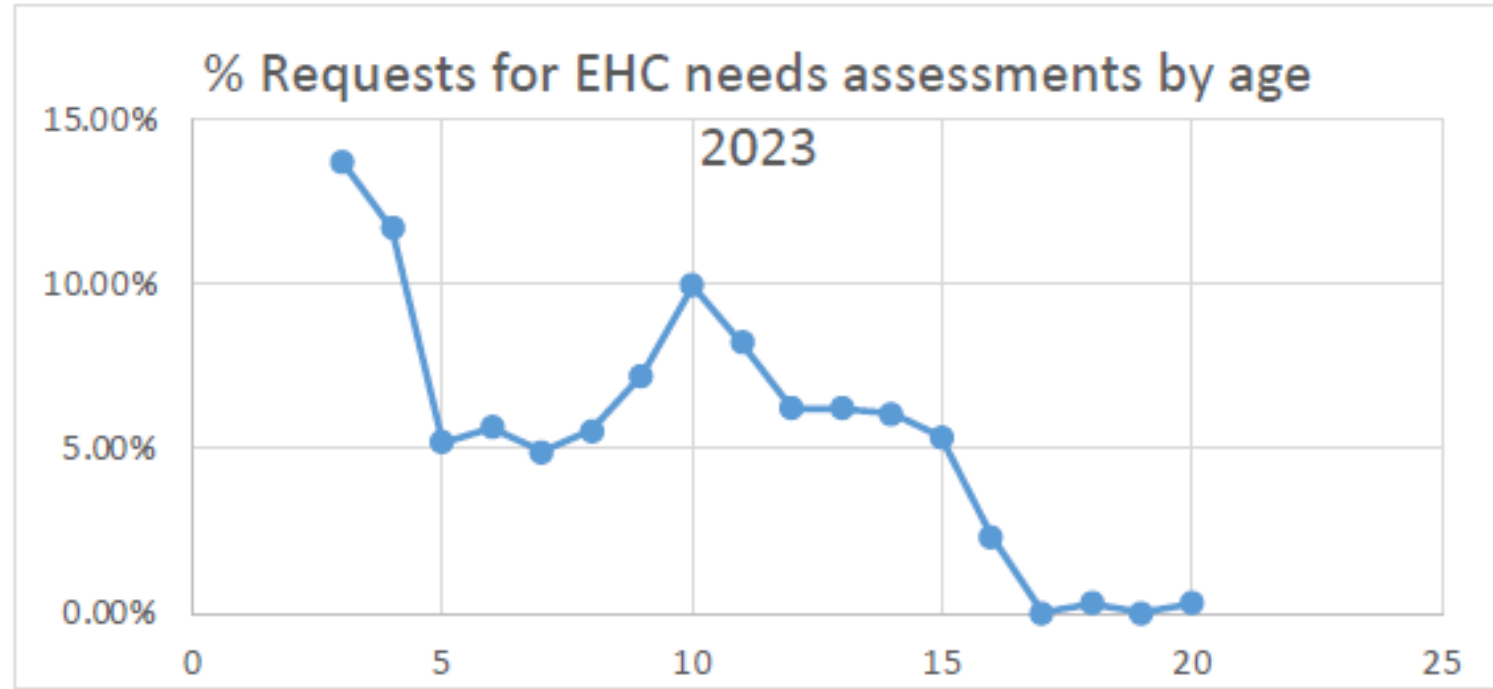
- Significant **increase in plans** especially at age 4 and 11. DBV case studies show a number of children with plans could have achieved their outcomes without a plan or in a mainstream school if in special (*'non-ideal outcomes'*). The **lack of MDT and gap in service offering are the main reasons** for this. The graduated approach is not currently embedded across the Local Area. There is a **lack of confidence in SEN Support evidenced by the increase of EHC needs assessment referrals**. We are working with schools and partners to redefine and promote the graduated response: showcasing practice; outreach support.
- There is focus on **family hubs** to be part of a wider strategic approach to meet needs earlier, linking up with schools and education outreach services, as well as with social care.







Tameside data on EHC needs assessment shows:



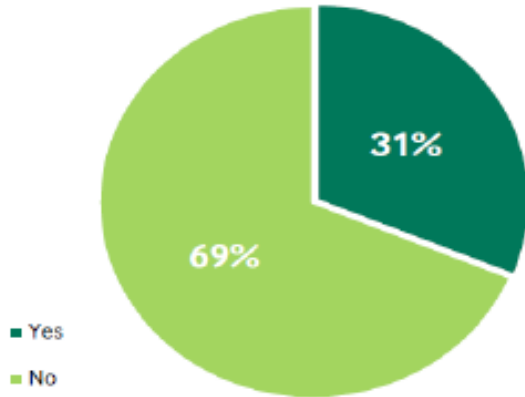


## Lack of MDT response and gap in service offering were the biggest barriers to achieving ideal outcomes

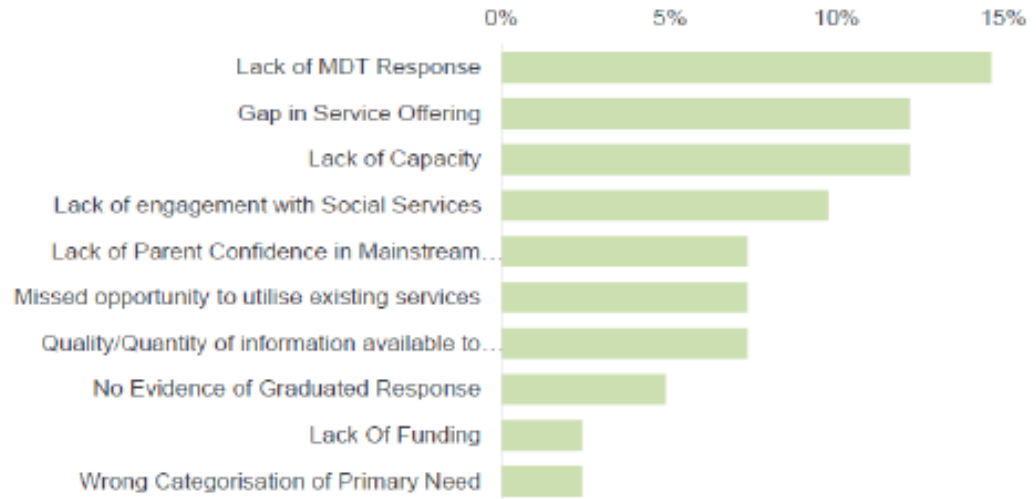


We completed 6 case review workshops in April 2023 with participants from across a range of disciplines, reviewing 32 unique cases to understand whether we delivered an ideal outcome to a CYP with SEND. We reviewed cases of CYP with a range of primary support needs across mainstream, maintained special schools and INMSS.

Did we achieve the ideal outcome for the CYP and enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations?



What themes contributed to achieving a non-ideal outcome?





## Current Context of the Local Area continued.

- **Parental participation and satisfaction is improved**, as reported by the Parent/Carer Forum, but there is still some way to go. We are working on reviewing **joint commissioning** arrangements underpinned by a shared approach to outcomes for children and young people. We are also establishing a **more holistic approach to meeting needs**, linking with Family Hubs, early years, schools and education settings.
- The refreshed Local Offer website has been co-produced and is overseen by a multi-agency operational group but not yet live. **Meet the Local Offers days** have been very successful and well attended.

For young people post-16 with an EHC Plan, the increase in SEMH has continued with 37.0% now having this as their primary need. This is up from 33.8% in 2022 and 20.6% in 2021. MLD is the second largest primary need at 25.2% having been 26.3% in 2022, 26.8% in 2021 and 33% in 2019. ASD has remained at a similar level to 2022 at 19.5% (19.9% in 2022).



## Current Context continued.



- Children's and Adult Social Care have a clear commitment to work in **partnership**. The quality of young people's transitions into adulthood has improved due to the **joint funded Transitions Social Worker** role.
- The appointment to the **DSCO** role has **strengthened the relationships** between Education and Social Care by further developing social care input into EHC plans and promoting better communication and joined up working between SEND, Virtual School and Social Care Teams.
- Strengthening AP strategy and QA are key next steps. **Robust Headteacher Advice** is widely shared and understood; the same approach is implemented for directly commissioned AP but needs to be more secure. The **NW Framework** has been adopted.





## Priority Actions

- Housekeeping
- Turning off the tap
- Closer working across the partnership





# Plans for the next 12 months

## Area of Weakness 1

- The implementation of a robust graduated offer and specialist service realignment.
- Realigning the statutory service.
- Ensuring there is local area governance and leadership over statutory decision-making.
- Establishing a backlog team.
- Setting up a placement panel.

## Area of Weakness 2

- Improve the graduated approach.
- Review joint commissioning arrangements underpinned by a shared approach to outcomes for children and young people.
- Embed voices of children and families in our Local Area Quality Assurance Framework and Performance Management Cycle.
- Young people, families / carers and professionals will have access to clear and accessible information including the Transition Pathway and Protocol that accurately reflects the transition journey.





# Plans for the next 12 months

## Area of Weakness 3

- We have established a multi-agency, co-production ownership board for the Local Offer, which will support in the development of an implementation plan.

## Area of Weakness 4

- We will establish rigor and accountability/transparency and moderation of decision-making in-house (including a more consistent approach to casework which underpins current realignment of the team).

## Area of Weakness 5

- An annual review backlog team is being recruited - one lead and six additional experienced case officers to oversee annual reviews. This would relieve workload pressure on the permanent team who will be able to focus on business as usual.





## Plans for the next 12 months

### Area of Weakness 6

- We are developing a quality assurance framework to sit under governance of the SEND partnership Board which will include review of quality of advice from social care professionals.
- There will be a simple process based on a set script to make informal contact with families and assess level of care needs who have been referred for EHC needs assessment.
- There is training planned for all social care teams.

### Area of Weakness 7

- The refreshed SEND Partnership Board will take forward strategic oversight of across the Local Area, not just for the areas of improvement required since the local area inspection, but across universal, targeted and specialist services.







## Plans for the next 12 months

### Area of Weakness 8

- The implementation of a robust graduated response will be a good opportunity to include more children/young people in mainstream schools as well as a robust approach to placement.
- We will map education, health, and care provision across the Local Area, identifying and addressing gaps in relation to meeting needs of children and young people with SEND, through an improved graduated approach, and clearly communicate this.

### Area of Weakness 9

- Leaders will be focusing on improving school readiness of children, so that there is prompt support to meet needs, the impact of which would be that they have better opportunities to achieve positive outcomes.
- There is current work focusing on family hubs and linking services to these to provide a more holistic offer for early support and ensure improvement in school readiness.





# Plans for the next 12 months

## Area of Weakness 10

- The draft Transitions Protocol to be taken forward under Local Area Governance, reviewed as appropriate and implemented. The vision is 'of a SEND and alternative provision system which supports children and young people to successfully move through education and into adulthood, regardless of whether they have an EHCP, through the wide variety of routes available'.
- Establish a bespoke post 16 of SEN caseworkers and leader.
- Establish clear strategic leadership across education, health, and care.
- Post-16 pathways to be part of the graduated approach.
- Post-16 placements to be accountable to a bespoke multiagency post-16 moderating placement panel.

## Other actions:

Develop AP strategy and oversight; finalise the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.





# DBV Planned Improvements and Key Activities

## Summary of DBV opportunities and workstreams (excluding LA mitigations)



Opportunity / Findings:

Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child can be achieved without the need for an EHCP

Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child through Resources/SEN Unit setting rather than MSS

Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in a Mainstream setting rather than MSS

Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in MSS setting rather than INMSS

How will the workstreams target this opportunity:

**Effective Inclusion:**

- Creation of an Inclusion and Outreach Team linked to / managed by existing Special Schools and Resource Provisions
- Identification of best practices and communication across the system

The grant will support the creation of the Inclusion and Outreach Team which aims to stabilise mainstream placements and ease the pressure on maintained special schools hence reduce the need for INMSS

**Effective Inclusion:**

- Training of SEND teams and partners as appropriate and developing workforce development opportunities (including parents and carers) to enhance parental confidence across the SEND system and therefore trust the right support is being provided in the right provision at the right time.

The grant will support the delivery of new training programmes and the creation of joint workforce development opportunities

**Effective transition at early years and Primary to Secondary:**

- Improve the assessment at early years ages to ensure the best chance of transition to a mainstream setting rather than maintained special and other transition activities / funding to improve the effectiveness of transition and parental / school confidence in transition to mainstream settings, therefore reducing demand on maintained special schools and use of INMSS.

The grant will support the creation of an Early Years assessment centre and 6 into 7 transition activities and funding.

# Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care Foundation Trust



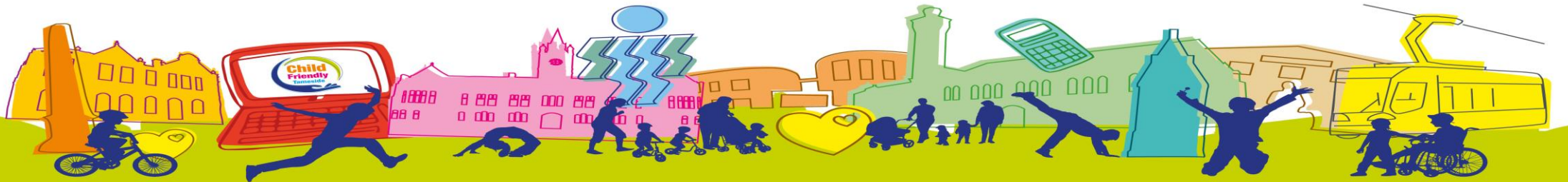
- £1.2m investment for therapies.
- SALT, OT and Physio – are all seen within 18 weeks for initial assessment ( 2yrs plus at time of inspection)
- Clinical pathways have been reviewed and aligned to the graduated response.
- SALT have been involved with the ‘Balance approach’ which is a GM initiative.
- SALT are working closely with the LA Early Years Quality Team and have developed a set of SLC standards which are being implemented in the Early Years settings.
- New Children’s communication standard launched in Tameside – aimed at improving communications skills in young people <https://www.tamesideandglossopicft.nhs.uk/news-and-events/latest-news/new-childrens-communication-standard-launches-tameside>
- OT are currently working to develop a similar set of sensory standards.
- EHCP tracking team has been implemented which has forged close links with the SEN Team and has improved the EHCP process and timeliness of advice responses. (Paed advice response at inspection 17% within 6 weeks, Sept 23 92% returned within 6 weeks).
- ISCAN Microsite sharing information about the service: [Home :: Tameside Children and Young People](#)
- CYP Voice Project – mapping out the current offer in place, focusing on bringing all of the co-production work together across Tameside.



# CAMHS



- An additional investment of £1.5m for CAMHS which includes a comprehensive CAMHS service up to age 18.
- Two new leads in post May 2023 - RMH autism lead nurse pathway lead and Clinical psychologist and Psychology lead.
- Several new posts recruited to ADHD leads, LD nurse with PBS training.
- Undertaking thorough review of processes to improve quality and efficiency. Revamping paperwork to ensure neuro-diversity affirmative language is routinely used. This is in response from parental feedback
- Full pathway reviews due in December 2023 to re-launch in Jan 2024 with new and more efficient processes implemented
- Training of 9 CAMHS staff in ADOS since July 2023 plan to increase
- Reviewing staff with SLT to ensure appropriate MDT and staffing within MAAT
- Joined up working with ISCAN and better communication between services - inclusion of OT and SALT in ND formulation panels.
- Parent/Care Drop-In Sessions with CAMHS – for families to gain advice, support and ask questions relating to the CAMHS pathways for autism and ADHD.
- Community CAMHS: Capacity, Demand and Waiting List Analysis (Q1, Evidence 10 SEF).



- Active Tameside – Voice of the Young People, support offered to 499 young people, and 221 families (September 22 – September 23). The development of services across Tameside have allowed a wider range of activities and sessions to be developed for young people with SEND to access. (Refer to Q1, Evidence 2 in SEF for Storyboard).
- Active Tameside have developed a new directory of services to share the support they offer. The SEND Participation Officer has also partnered with CAMHS to ensure parents and children are aware of the local offer and the activities and engagement opportunities within Tameside.
- Active Tameside – Delivered a ten-pin bowling festival to share the Tameside’s Everybody Can service and raise awareness of what children and families with SEND can access in their local community. (Refer to Q1, Evidence 7 in SEF).

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MECAP Family Engagement Project – Parents/carers with children ages 0-5, offering peer support groups and information sessions on EHCPs and DLA Awareness sessions. 45 parents and caregivers registered with the project. Engaged with 300 parents and caregivers through local events, outreach into the community and at peer support groups/information sessions. (Refer to Q1, Evidence 4 and 5 in SEF).

- OKE – Family activity events and workshops, families aware of other support available whilst on long waiting lists, 7 days a week contact. Currently 2000 families registered. Increase in parents confidence, self esteem, awareness, understanding and knowledge. Peer support and friendships form between parents and siblings. Massive reduction in duty calls to CAMHS once OKE started up. (Refer to Q2, evidence 6 in SEF).
- Bella’s Journey – Case Study, a young person in Tameside being supported by the Family Nurse Partnership supported by Starling Training. Starling introduction to Neurodiversity Training. (Refer to Q2, Evidence 7 and 8 in SEF).



# Challenges and Solutions

- **Recruitment and retention of staff remains an on-going challenge –providers have been imaginative & proactive in recruitment campaigns but this remains a national issue.**
  - Teams are in a healthier position as far as recruitment is concerned with a number of pivotal posts recruited to.
- **Long waits for ND appointments/diagnoses. This is a GM wide issue – demand far exceeds capacity. This has been escalated to GM.**
  - Services are committed to a ‘Supported while waiting model’ using the graduated response to ensure CYP’s needs are met whilst waiting for a diagnosis. There are no services in Tameside that a CYP cannot access without a diagnosis (apart from Riding the Rapids)
- **Data collection has been inconsistent and unreliable.**
  - Health SEND data dashboard has been developed and is monitored monthly at the Health SEND WSOA and Health Strategic meeting.
- **Parental Dissatisfaction with long waits for services**
  - Parent/carer survey completed. Due to be redone March 2024
  - Oke – health navigator service implemented - Since July 2022 when the Health Navigator Service began to August 23: 664 New families are now receiving support. 10,399 contacts have been made to the Health Navigator Service.
  - MHST – 30% schools access this now, intention to extend across the borough
  - There is a range of VCSE support for families waiting for diagnoses
  - Barnardos, Kooth, Mencap 0-5, OKE 0-18, TOG MIND, 8+, Anthony Seddon 7+, Active 5+, TASCA 3+, FACT 3+, T21 0+, HOPE 0+



# Feedback (A snapshot)

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93.55% said that the OKE Health Navigator service is helpful – October Health Navigator Survey

*OKE have been amazing with helping me move forward with my daughters pathways and giving me useful information they have supported me throughout this tough time – October Health Navigator Survey*

Had a lovely visit to see AS and his parents this morning. His parents were very appreciative of all the work from our service who are helping with A. His parents said they have previously had bad experiences, and they can see all the hard work and support A is getting with us. They were really lovely and were really happy to hear about the progress he has made. – ISCAN Compliment

*"Thank you so much for the chat, and making me feel so welcome. I'm so very glad that I went today, and I will not miss the next one. I found it very helpful." - Mencap*



# Agenda Item 5.

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD</b>
<b>Date:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jane Sowerby, Assistant Director of Education
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>VIRTUAL SCHOOL AND COLLEGE ANNUAL REPORT</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	A summary of the activities and outcomes of the Virtual School and College 2022/23 and improvement plans for 2023/24.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That the contents of the report and improvement priorities be noted and supported.
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	<p>The contents of this report links with the following elements of the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>Starting and Living Well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aspirations and through learning and moving with confidence from childhood to adulthood</li><li>• Resilient families and supportive networks to protect and grow our young people.</li></ul> <p>Opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise.</p>
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	There are no policy implications.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	<p>The work of the Virtual School and College team is funded by a ring fenced Pupil Premium Plus grant, Virtual Heads Grants and Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus. The allocations for the financial year 2023/24 are:</p> <p>Pupil Premium Plus £1.290m</p> <p>Virtual Heads Grants £0.148m</p> <p>Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus £0.068m</p> <p>For the 2022/23 academic year grant funding was received for Covid Recovery Premium of £0.136m and the National Tutoring Programme of £0.044m. The expenditure against these grants is in line with grant conditions.</p> <p>The work and team costs will be contained within this financial envelope.</p>
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	None.
<b>Risk Management:</b>	There is a risk that our cared for children will not achieve their potential if statutory functions are not carried out.
<b>Access to Information:</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NON-CONFIDENTIAL</b></p> <p>This report does not contain information, which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.</p>

**Background Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Rachael Weeden – Virtual School and College Head Teacher



Telephone: 0161 342 4057



e-mail: [Rachael.Weeden@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:Rachael.Weeden@tameside.gov.uk)

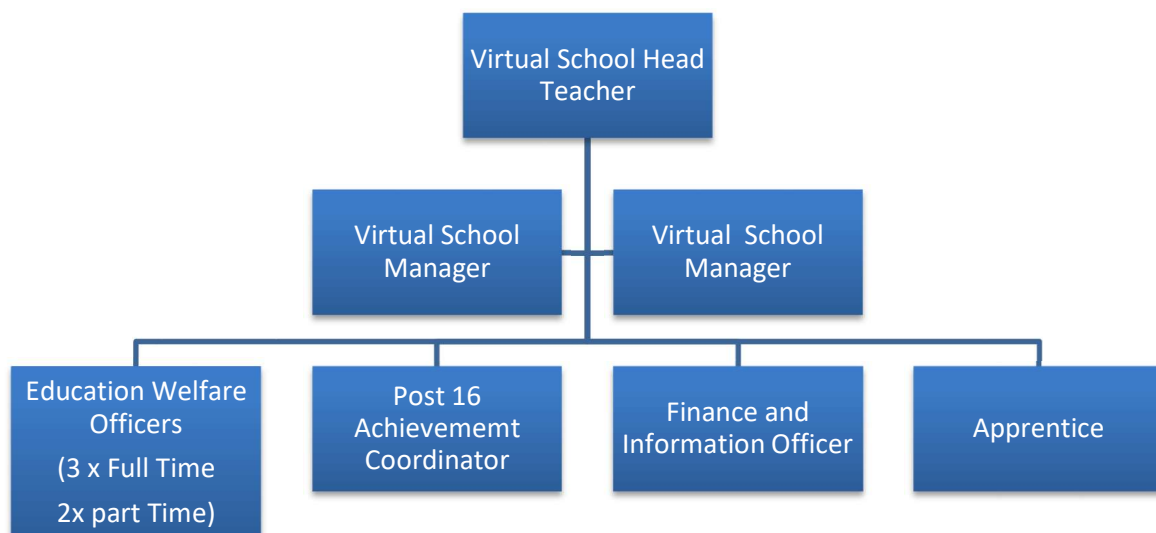
## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report summarises key changes that have taken place within the Virtual School and College in the last academic year and sets out plans and priorities for the forthcoming year. The data contained within is drawn from Looked After Call, Children's Social Care Systems, Capita One and internal reports. The data is accurate but unvalidated and is therefore subject to change.

## 2. VIRTUAL SCHOOL CONTEXT AND OFFER FOR CARED FOR AND CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN

2.1 The Virtual School and College launched a new team structure in April 2022. This was as a result of a full service review and redesign, which was undertaken in light of the introduction of the extended duties of the Virtual School Head Teacher to include strategic oversight for children with a social worker. In order to be able to complete these duties, additional capacity was required. The recruitment process to fill the additional roles created by this restructure was completed in September 2022. In addition, in March 2023 the Virtual School experienced a change in leadership with a new Virtual School Head Teacher being appointed. The academic year 2022/23 was, therefore, characterised by the identification and implementation of new systems, made possible due by the expansion of the team and by responding to staffing and leadership changes.

2.2 The below graphic provides an overview of the team structure. There is a wide variety of experience offered by the post holders in the team, from both social care and education fields. The Virtual School Head Teacher is a qualified Teacher and SENDCo. There are two other qualified teachers within the team; three team members with experience working within attendance at both school and LA level and a member of the team with varied experience across social care. Our post 16 achievement coordinator role is a post hosted by Tameside College. More detail of this role is laid out later in the report, however this post holder has a wide range of experience within further education. Our apprentice role has recently been filled, providing additional administration capacity. The experience within the team ensures that there is a high level of expertise available to offer both support and appropriate challenge to partners.



2.3 Casework is allocated across the team with all members able to support a range of needs at all key stages, however key priorities are monitored and tracked by team members with expertise in that area. This has allowed the forging of key relationships with services and

schools and the development of procedures to support our key initiatives. Members of the team are thus allocated to monitor and have oversight of:

- Attendance
- Exclusions
- SEND
- Post 16 and care leavers
- Training and development

2.4 Members of the team are also allocated to specific schools where additional support or challenge is required. Team members provide both educational support for young people and bespoke training for staff and leaders at these schools.

2.5 The Virtual School Head Teacher reports directly to the Assistant Director for Education and is a member of the Education Management Team and Directors Management Team. This provides a good platform for influencing strategic planning. It also promotes close working relationships with Heads of Service within both Education and Social Care.

2.6 Our work to support cared for and care experienced children and young people is varied. Our team acts as a key link between social care colleagues and schools offering advice and guidance on a range of educational issues. The team support social workers and schools by attending PEP and other child-centred meetings and providing advice and strategies to address educational concerns, such as attendance, suspension, attainment, SEND needs to name but a few. We have an open-door policy, with excellent connections with both our social work colleagues and schools, who have ready access to our support. We provide suggestions and signposting for initiatives to support children and young people to access education and be successful and support and challenge schools to make the most of the Pupil Premium Plus Grant that is allocated to them. The Virtual School also facilitates access to professional support services, such as Educational Psychology, tuition and mentoring and therapeutic coaching approaches via partnerships with providers both in and out of the local authority. We take an active role in quality assuring alternative provision accessed by cared for children and support schools to ensure this is used appropriately. We facilitate a wide variety of training, which is detailed later in this report and have extended this offer over this academic year. Our training reaches social care colleagues, foster carers and schools and has been available as online training sessions, face to face networking meetings, e-briefings and newsletters and is delivered in partnership with the educational psychology service. More details of all these initiatives and plans for their development is laid out later in this report.

### **3. OUR COHORT**

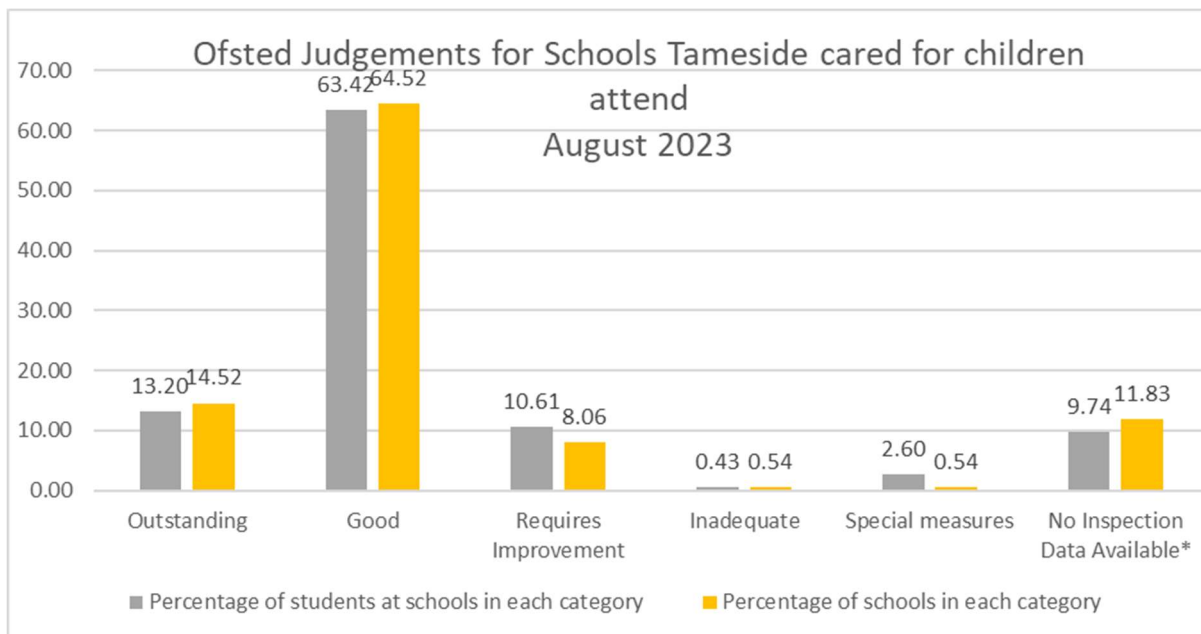
3.1 At the end of 2022/2023 academic year there were 515 cared for children on Tameside's Virtual School roll from Reception to Year 13. At the end of the academic year there were 466 cared for children in Reception to Year 11 attending 191 separate schools across 41 local authorities. The table below summarises the type of education provision attended by Tameside cared for pupils. 83% of pupils attend a mainstream setting, 15% attend a specialist setting with a further 2% attending provision at Tameside PRU, which is also the LA specialist SEMH provision for KS4. 33% of pupils attend school in other local authorities.

Cohort Data	Autumn Term 2022	Spring Term 2023	Summer Term 2023
	Total at 3.1.23	Total at 3.4.23	Total at 7.8.23
Cared for Children in Total (R – Y11)	419	405	466
Cared for Children in Total (Y12 – 13)	122	120	49
Totals	541	525	515
Number of individual schools (during each term)	170	176	191
Pupils attending Tameside schools (during each term)	295	301	316
Number of local authorities (not including Tameside) (during each term)	39	39	41
Pupils attending schools out of borough (during each term)	133	144	155
Pupils not on a school roll (on the day data was generated)	9	5	10
Number of pupils in mainstream schools	359	368	386
Number of pupils within Pupil Referral Service (White Bridge College PRS is the LA Specialist SEMH provision)	7	12	11
Number of pupils in specialist provisions	58	60	68
Number of pupils in schools attached to residential placements	6	5	4

#### 4. OFSTED GRADING

- 4.1 At the end of the 2022/2023 academic year, 79% of Tameside's cared for children in reception to year 11 attended 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools. 13% of Tameside's cared for children attended schools rated to be 'Outstanding'. The Virtual School team prioritises attendance at termly PEP meetings for those children and young people who attend a school rated less than good. We have one school, which received a special measures Ofsted grading during the last academic year, and one with an existing inadequate judgement, both of which had children and young people already on roll at the time of judgement. These schools are allocated named members of the team to attend PEPs where needed and support with any educational concerns. Additional training and resources have been provided to both schools, by their named Education Welfare Officer, to ensure the support available to children who attend is of a high quality. One of these schools has since been re-inspected and is no longer inadequate. The other is undergoing a sponsored academy order.
- 4.2 Where a child already attends a school which is judged to be less than good before becoming a looked after child or the school receives a lower grade at inspection whilst the pupil is already at the school, the Virtual School Head must consider whether a fall in Ofsted grading would

justify disrupting a child's education with a school move. Progress of pupils attending schools rated less than good is monitored through PEP QA and the placement of new pupils at these school is carefully considered, in collaboration with social care colleagues, to ensure a child centred decision is made. Schools rated RI are also offered additional training and support by Virtual School team members and the Virtual School Head Teacher, who works closely with the Head of School Improvement and Partnership to monitor and support schools rated as less than good where cared for children attend.



\*Schools that are awaiting inspection due to being a new school or academy conversion or schools with no grade that are based in Scotland or Wales.

## 5. TAMESIDE CARED FOR CHILDREN ATTENDANCE

5.1 The average attendance last year for all our cared for children was 87%. For children who were cared for 12 months+, the average attendance was 89%. For children who were cared for less than 12 months, the average attendance was 76%.

Average attendance by Key Stage		
	Whole Cohort	In care 12 months +
Early Years	95%	97%
KS1	94%	95%
KS2	95%	95%
KS3	88%	91%
KS4	70%	73%
Average attendance by Phase		
Primary Phase	95%	96%
Secondary Phase	79%	82%
<b>Pupils specialist provisions (all)</b>	78.9%	
<b>Pupils in Tameside Specialist provision (exc PRS)</b>	91.9%	

## 5.2 Persistent Absence (PA) Severely Persistently Absent (SPA)

The overall Persistent Absence rate for all Tameside compulsory school age cared for children for the year 2022-2023 was 24%. This is slightly above the national average from academic year 2021-22 PA rate, which is reported to be 22.5%. However this is the average for all children, not just cared for children, suggesting the PA rate for Tameside cared for children is broadly in line with national averages. However, we do recognise that there is a greater difference than with the Tameside PA average (reported at 20.1%). For this reason, addressing PA and SPA continues to be a priority with details later in the report on specific measures to address this.

<b>Total Number of PA pupils</b>	<b>113</b>
Primary	15
Secondary	98
<b>Total Numbers of SPA pupils</b>	<b>33</b>
Primary	2
Secondary	31

## 6. ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN FOR 2023-2024

- 6.1 Tameside Virtual School has strong practice around attendance and the team holds a wide range of experience in this field. However, we recognise that absence from school is a significant issue and poor attendance presents the biggest barrier to good attainment. As a result addressing the issue of persistent and severely persistent absence is a core focus for the Virtual School.
- 6.2 Our 2022/23 data analysis has highlighted a number of key priorities for the next academic year and as a result we have strengthened our processes for monitoring attendance and providing timely intervention when attendance is an identified concern, as well as increasing our multi-agency approach to promoting school attendance by working closely with Education Welfare on the Tameside Attendance Strategy. Priorities and actions for the next academic year include:
- Timely intervention:
    - A refined attendance procedure for the Virtual School has been produced for September 2023. This outlines how the Virtual School monitor and track attendance to ensure concerns are identified rapidly. Regular attendance triage by managers and follow up by Education Welfare Officers.
    - Multi agency practice tool with graduated approach produced to ensure all practitioners are aware of roles and responsibilities with regards to attendance.
  - Attendance at secondary phase:
    - Lower than in Primary and continuing to drop over the course of the secondary phase. Work needs to be done to ensure good attendance habits are maintained in KS3 and to understand the reason for the significant difference.
  - Attendance at KS4:
    - This is significantly lower than in other key stages. This will act as a barrier to academic attainment and EET post 16. Work needs to be done on ensuring good attendance habits are maintained into KS4.
  - Attendance in specialist provision:
    - This is lower than in mainstream provision. Recent practice guidance, which is being launched with all practitioners across education and Children's Social Care, will support in ensuring attendance is a key feature of all plans, including

EHCPs and that attendance concerns are addressed via SEND reviews as well as PEPs.

- The Virtual School and College has a close working relationship with the SEND team and meets weekly to monitor children with Education Health and Care plans, those who are under statutory assessment and those with emerging concerns. Attendance concerns and support to address these is a feature of these discussions.
- Data for Tameside specialist provision indicates better attendance (above 90%). This suggests that work must be done to monitor more closely the attendance of pupils in out of area specialist provision.
- Significantly higher numbers of PA/ SPA in secondary:
  - Multi agency practice tool has been developed to support ensuring attendance is at the heart of all plans and a multi-agency approach is taken. Increased triage of attendance and scrutiny of termly attendance data to identify emerging attendance issues and address them before they become embedded.
- Continuing close work with Educational Psychology to ensure that the Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) toolkit is utilised when supporting children and young people who may be experiencing EBSA and raising awareness of this amongst social care teams and schools via our training offer.
- Monitoring of term time holidays:
  - A number of requests for term time holidays have been noted in the last academic year. A new procedure for term time leaves of absence has been implemented which reflects the LA attendance pledge. The VSH and Head of cared for children will be monitoring this closely and ensuring requests for term time leave of absence are minimal and fall within the DfE guidance of exceptional circumstances. The issue has been raised in training for social workers and the new policy will be included in commissioning arrangements.
- The impact of school and placement moves on attendance:
  - Placement and school moves have an impact on a child's attendance, particularly when there is a delay in securing new school provision.
  - Academic year 2023/24 sees the launch of a new procedure to ensure that the Virtual School are involved at the earliest opportunity in school transfers and that these are avoided if possible. This will aim to ensure, where a school transfer is needed, it is expedited quickly and gaps in provision are minimised.
- Understanding of factors which affect attendance:
  - We intend to develop the analysis of our attendance data to identify absence patterns and contributory factors to allow for more targeted support and to inform future action plans.
  - Analysis of data to understand the needs of the cared for cohort to help ensure interventions are targeted.

### 6.3 Attendance of children with a social worker:

- Systems to track the attendance of this cohort need to be developed and data used to help identify and understand the factors affecting attendance, which are specific to this group.
- The Virtual School have launched a link worker scheme for safeguarding, duty and assessment teams, which provide a weekly drop in session for social work colleagues to access education advice for children and young people with a social worker.

## 7. SUSPENSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

- 7.1 There were no permanent exclusions in 2022/23, but there were several cases where the Virtual School Head and members of the team intervened, in line with the national guidance



on exclusions, to support or co-ordinate an alternative package of education to avoid a permanent exclusion. This included addressing the reasons for the risk of permanent exclusion, supporting both pupil and school and ensuring access to full time education, which could meet the needs of the pupils. In all cases such as this, pupils have enhanced support and monitoring, as well as an allocated Virtual School link, to address concerns and prevent the risk of exclusion reoccurring. This has been supported by positive relationships with the schools we work with and a practice of schools contacting the Virtual Head or link workers within the team prior to considering exclusion and suspension to discuss alternatives, plan packages of support and seek professional advice where needed.

- 7.2 One case study, which demonstrates the positive effect the intervention of the Virtual School achieved is below:

*Student A received a number suspension in quick succession as a result of dysregulated behaviour in school. The Virtual School became aware that student A had been subject to a suspension via our attendance monitoring system which provides instant notification of suspension. An Education Welfare Officer was allocated and immediately contacted school to discuss and plan ways to prevent this from reoccurring. A multi-agency meeting was held with school, Virtual School, social worker and carers to discuss concerns and strategies to support. The Virtual School Education Welfare Officer became the key link for school and agreement was made that school would contact them directly if A present with dysregulated behaviour and if further support was needed. Pupil Premium Plus funding was directed to allow school to commission specific support for student A. Regular meetings held with all involved to keep a close eye on progress and make adjustments to provision. Voice of the child was obtained and a key worker was identified who helped to support student A and prevent suspension if they were presenting as dysregulated in school, by offering reasonable adjustments. Additional funding was provided to school to allow them to commission Military Mentoring for student A. This was very successful and the number of incidents of dysregulated behaviour decreased in school and there were no further suspensions.*

- 7.3 Nevertheless, despite many examples such as the above, during the academic year 2022/23 a total of 413 days were lost to suspensions. Unfortunately our data shows a continuing rise in suspensions for cared for children with 76 pupils within 43 schools received a suspension last year. Reducing suspensions is a key priority for the Virtual School and we will continue to work closely with schools with the aim of reducing suspensions where possible.

7.4 **Moving forward – Suspension action plan for 2023/24**

- Refined and strengthened processes for monitoring suspension within the Virtual School to ensure suspensions are communicated to us promptly and support if offered to reduce their length and seek alternatives.
- Virtual School Head Teacher attends Tameside Secondary and Primary Heads' networking and the subgroups, which focus on suspension and exclusion reduction.
- The Virtual School Head actively works to encourage heads to raise concerns at an early stage so that support can be proactive.
- Virtual School Education Welfare Officers are allocated to schools with high levels of suspension to promote close collaboration and swift intervention to avoid suspension.
- Continue the close working relationship with the Tameside Head of School Improvement and the Executive Head of the Tameside Pupil Referral Service who has made the reduction of suspensions and PEX a key priority.
- Virtual School Head has undertaken training for New Heads about the role of the Virtual School with a focus on our role in preventing suspension and the impact of trauma on education.
- Continuation of training on trauma and attachment in collaboration with the Education Psychology (EPS) Service.

- Specific training for governors has been planned for this academic year around the impact of suspension and exclusion of vulnerable pupils. The first of these sessions was delivered in November 2023.
- Commissioning of LEGO Think Bricks- Therapeutic Coaching Approaches Course to build capacity in schools to implement therapeutic work to support emerging need.
- Continued close working with EP service to identify need and implement support for pupils at high risk of permanent exclusion or suspension and working with schools with particularly high suspension rates.

## 8. ALTERNATIVE PROVISION AND PART-TIME TIMETABLES

- 8.1 Over the last academic year, part-time timetables and alternative provision were used in exceptional circumstances where it was in the pupil's best interests to support their presenting needs and in accordance with DfE guidance.
- 8.2 In the academic year 2022/23, the Virtual School supported schools to ensure use of alternative provision was appropriate and matched to need and also monitored the use of alternative provision and reduced timetables through the attendance monitoring system. Where a reduced timetable or alternative provision was identified, a Virtual School Education Welfare Officer was allocated to follow this up and offer support to ensure provision was appropriate and steps were taken to increase learning time. The Virtual School team managers maintained a tracker of all pupils the Virtual School team were monitoring and attended regular review meetings for all these students to offer ongoing advice and guidance.
- 8.3 Over the course of the last academic year processes to monitor, evaluate and quality assure alternative provision have been strengthened, as well as the tracking of cared for children with reduced timetables. This includes a QA and Safeguarding process for provisions known to the Virtual School and attended by cared for children. The Virtual School and College has worked collaboratively with Access Services to update teacher guidance with respect to the use of alternative provision and reduced timetables. Specific steps in relation to cared for children have been included in this. In addition, the Virtual School Head has led on developing a multi-agency practice tool, which has been launched in the Autumn Term and lays out the expectations of all professionals when a reduced timetable or alternative provision is utilised. It is the expectation that, if a school wish to implement a reduced timetable or alternative provision as part of a package of support, an immediate education meeting takes place so that it is clear that all agree the provision is appropriate. The Virtual School also requests that copies of the LA alternative provision check list and or reduced timetable form are completed and returned to us. It is expected that this type of provision is reviewed at least 4 weekly and the Virtual School are involved in this process. This practice guidance has been launched with services and schools in the Autumn Term.

## 9. PEP COMPLETION

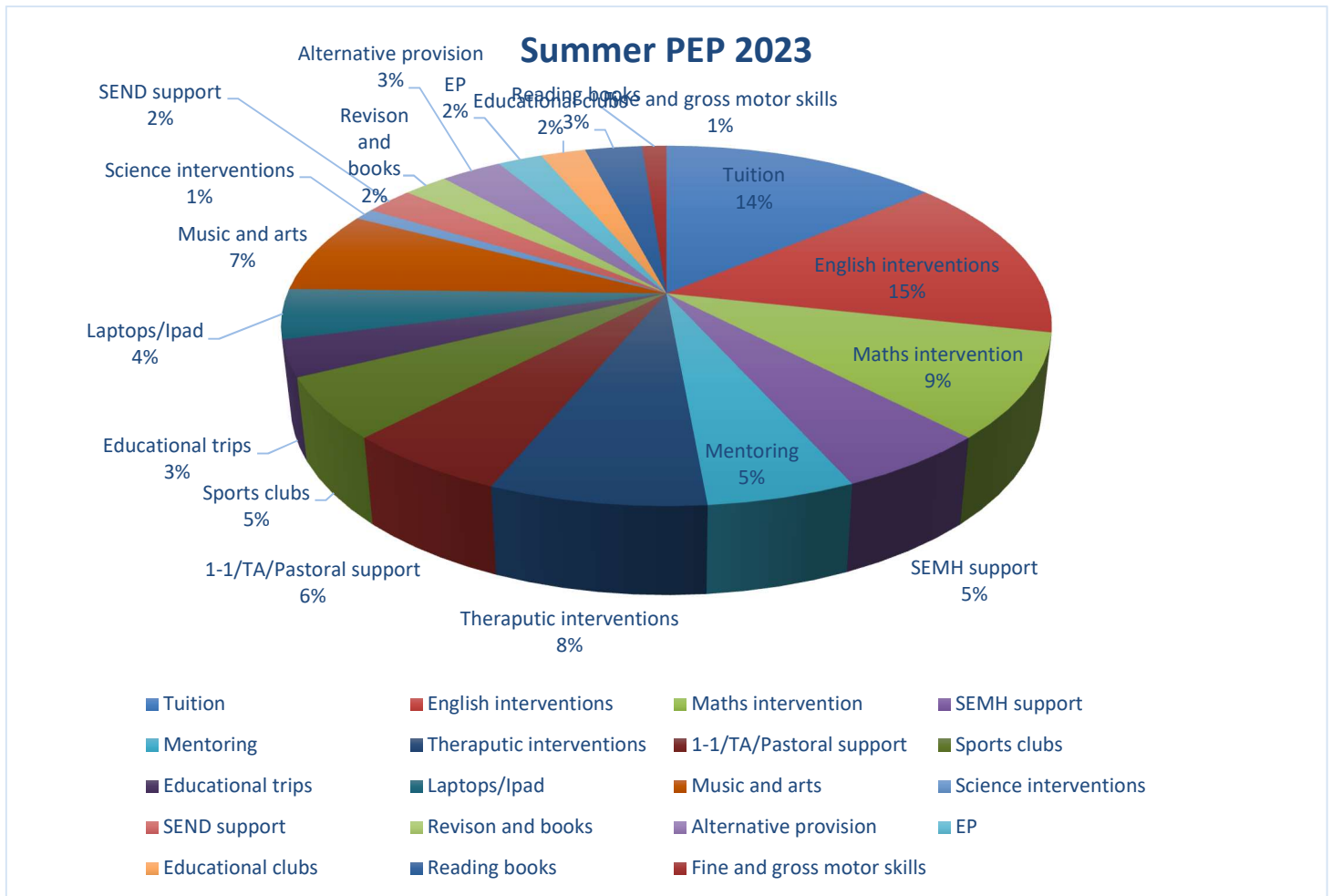
<b>PEP COMPLETION RATES 2022/23</b>	<b>Percentage of PEP meetings taken place</b>	<b>Percentage of PEP documents returned</b>
<b>Autumn Term 2022</b>	100%	95.3%
<b>Spring Term 2023</b>	99.3%	97.9%
<b>Summer Term 2023</b>	99.6%	97.3%

- 9.1 Data shows us that PEPs take place consistently with a consistently high number of meetings being confirmed and documents being received. QA data shows that the Virtual School team were recorded as attending 22% of PEP meetings to offer advice, guidance and support to schools, social workers and carers. Team members also attended a much higher number of additional education meetings to support with emerging concerns and offered advice prior to meetings where our attendance was not possible. Attendance at PEPs and analysis of QA information has shown us the wide variety of innovative ways that support is offered to our young people. This includes academic, emotional, pastoral support and extra-curricular opportunities. In 2022/23 PEPs were completed using a hybrid model with in-borough schools using a PDF document and returning via emails and out of borough schools using an e-PEP system.

## **10. PUPIL PREMIUM FUNDING**

- 10.1 In 2022/23 schools continued to be able to claim up to £1800 per year for each looked after child on roll. It was expected that school demonstrate their intended use of this funding within the PEP and breakdown costings, linking them directly to SMART targets within the PEP document. If a child or young person required support which necessitated funding above this amount, designated teachers and social workers were encouraged to discuss these requests with the Virtual School so that they could be considered on a case-by-case basis. This approach has allowed us to ensure that funding is directed appropriately and timely to meet emerging needs. The Virtual School has also actively promoted schools utilising Pupil Premium Plus to provide cared for children with enriching experiences beyond the classroom. Some of our young people this year have accessed exciting extracurricular and residential experiences, such as visits to Barcelona, school Ski trips, regular horse riding and music lessons and access to programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh. We have also engaged in a successful partnership with the Tameside Music Service and accessed bespoke music offers for young people struggling to attend school, with academic tuition

10.2 The following table provides an overview of the summer term pupil premium spend.



## 11. PEP QUALITY ASSURANCE

11.1 In the summer term of 2022/23 the Virtual School Head reviewed our PEP and quality assurance processes in order to continue to improve practice in this area. A quality assurance framework has been introduced and shared with designated teachers, which provides clear expectations for PEPs and has them categorised by the Virtual School as Red, Amber and Green. Where PEPs are designated as less than Green, actions to address this are implemented, via continued communication with schools and social workers. It is planned to carry out a dynamic review of this framework in the next academic year. A variety of training sessions for social workers, designated teachers and carers were delivered over the course of the academic year, all of which focused on the importance of quality PEPs. A revised training programme has already commenced for academic year 2023/24 with an aim to build on the number of training opportunities made available to all partners. Bespoke training has also been offered to new designated teachers to support them in excelling in their vital role. Feedback from this offer has been positive and has further strengthened the Virtual School’s relationship with schools in Tameside.

### 11.2 Moving forward – PEP Completion and Quality Assurance 2023/24

For academic year 2023/24 a new e-PEP has been launched with all schools, both in and out of borough. The new system, which is hosted by our attendance monitoring system Looked After Call, will be rolled out for all PEPs from pre-school to post-16 over the course of the Autumn Term. This year will see us continue to review and amend the layout of our PEP to ensure it is fit for purpose and an effective tool for recording and supporting academic progress

of our cared for children. The move to an e-PEP marks an exciting change in our PEP process and initial feedback from schools and social care using the system has been positive. This system will also support our drive to improve the quality of feedback given to designated teachers about PEPs and in-turn, support improvement in the overall quality of PEPs submitted.

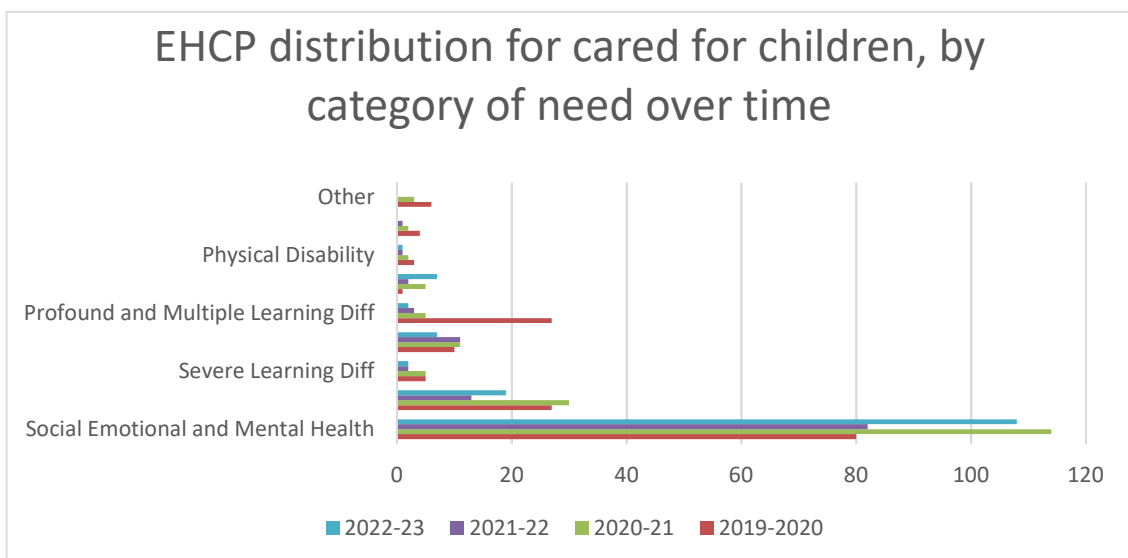
### 11.3 PEP Quality Action Plan 2023/24

- Work with schools and social care partners to continue to review and improve our quality assurance framework to allow us to reach a shared understanding of what a “Good” PEP is.
- Deliver an enhanced training packaged for schools, social workers and carers around how to hold a quality PEP.
- Scrutinise PEP quality assurance data to target areas which require further support and to inform the focus for training sessions.
- Audit our quality assurance to ensure consistency of judgement within the service and implement training where needed.
- Add a specific quality assurance section to our PEP to ensure feedback is clear and robust, demonstrating how individual PEPs could be improved.
- Continue to offer bespoke training and support for schools and obtain feedback on this.

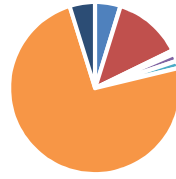
## 12. THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL AND SEND

12.1 Data from July 2023 shows that 146 school age cared for children were in receipt of an EHCP. Meaning 31% of our Summer Term school age cohort have an EHCP. A further 91 school age children, 19%, have been reported to us by schools as being supported at SEN support. The means approximately 50% of our cared for children have been identified as having a Special Educational Need.

12.2 As the graphics below shows, the vast majority of cared for children in Tameside identified as requiring an EHCP have a primary need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH). This has been the trend over a number of years. The Virtual School has increased its efforts to offer further support and training for schools on SEMH and strategies to support SEMH presentation in schools. This has included specific training commissioned by the educational psychology service.



## Distribution of Category of Need for cared for children Summer 2023



- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Moderate Learning Difficulty
- Physical Need
- Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulty
- Severe Learning Difficulty
- Social Emotional & Mental Hlth
- Speech,Lang or Comm Diff

12.3 The Virtual School continues to have a close working relationship with Tameside SEND and has also forged links with SEND teams in other local authorities where our children reside. This has allowed us to be more proactive in preventing delay for children with SEND when they are placed out of area. A Virtual School member attends statutory assessment panel and meets with SEND managers weekly to monitor and review our SEND children and promote multi agency and collaborative working to support these young people.

12.4 In the academic year 2022/23 Virtual School Education Welfare Officers accessed training delivered by the Tameside Educational Psychology service to increase our team’s confidence in offering advice to schools supporting children and young people presenting with SEMH, trauma and attachment needs. This training was also offered to schools and designated teachers were encouraged to attend. The Virtual School continues to work closely with Tameside Educational Psychology Team and utilises an SLA with the service to help ensure cared for children in need of Educational Psychology support receive this in timely way. Further details of this arrangement are described below.

### 12.5 **Moving forward – The Virtual School and SEND 2023/24**

The Virtual School will continue its close working partnership with both the SEND team and Educational Psychology team. Inclusion and support for vulnerable pupils with identified SEND needs is a key priority. This was a focus for the Inclusion conference held in the Autumn Term 2023, with the Virtual School Head Teacher having a key planning role. The Virtual School will continue to be represented at statutory assessment panel and hold regular operational meetings with SEND managers to review cared for children who are also known to SEND services. A key area we are looking to further improvement is the existing communication between out of area SEND teams and the Virtual School, where pupils have EHCPs which are maintained out of area. This has been identified as a key reason for delay for securing our pupils appropriate provision and systems are being developed to improve this, including reaching out to Virtual School colleagues in other LAs to ensure communication lines are open, and offering challenge where delays are apparent. The Virtual School Head Teacher is working within children’s services and with education colleagues to develop more joined up information sharing with regards to SEND.

## 13. EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

13.1 Tameside Virtual School have a strong working partnership with the Tameside Educational Psychology service. Via an SLA, we utilise grant funding to pre-purchase Educational Psychology time to allow us to offer timely advice and interventions for cared for children who require this. 39 cared for children received individual Educational Psychology input in the last

academic year. The Assistant Principal Educational Psychologist for Tameside is a key link for the Virtual School providing both advice on cases and formal consultation, both with professional groups and as part of wider assessments. The Educational Psychology service has also supported in providing training for schools, foster carers, social workers and the Virtual School on trauma and attachment and emotionally based school avoidance to help promote inclusivity for our children who face these barriers.

- 13.2 The following case study demonstrates an example of how the Virtual School Head has utilised their close partnership with the educational psychology service to support a young person with significant emotionally based school avoidance.

*Upon entry into year 10 student B's attendance at school rapidly declined. The Virtual School became aware of this both as a result of attendance monitoring and via contact from the student's social worker, who raised their concerns. The Virtual School began attending regular education meetings, with school, and social care to try and unpick the reason for the attendance decline and support with implementing strategies to support. Pupil Premium Plus was used to implement a variety of strategies which were regularly reviewed and evaluated. It became apparent that strategies suggested were not achieving the desired result and educational psychology advice was sought. The allocated EP began with consultation with professionals and offered guidance on support in utilising the EBSA toolkit. It was identified that a personalised learning offer was needed which built on B's interests and was rooted in a strong 1:1 relationship. The allocated EP completed direct work with B to discuss their concerns about school and what their ideal schooling would look like. A multi-agency request for statutory assessment was made and B was issued with an EHCP. Following consultation, specialist education was secured for B whose attendance has risen from 22% (all tuition) in academic year 2022/23 to 78% so far this academic year.*

**13.3 Moving forward – Educational Psychology**

The Virtual School will continue the close working partnership with the Educational Psychology service and, in academic year 2023/24, has already begun extending our joint training offer to incorporate other key areas, such as preventing suspension and exclusion. We also plan to utilise grant funding to expand capacity to provide easier access to Educational Psychology time for children and young people who are being supported at early help, CP and CIN.

**14. ATTAINMENT OF TAMESIDE CARED FOR CHILDREN 2022/23**

**14.1 Early Years and Key Stage 1**

The data below shows the outcome data for cared for children, who had been in care for more than 12 months. Analysis of this compared to 2021-22 shows that outcomes in the academic year 2022/23 were improved.

- 14.2 There has been an increase in the number of children achieving the expected standard in phonics, reading writing and maths at the end of year 1 and achieving Good Level of Development at the end of early years and foundation stage.

- 14.3 The following tables summarise the attainment data for cared for children in Tameside at different key stages

KS1 % at expected standard	Reading EXS+ 2022/23	Writing EXS+ 2022/23	Maths EXS+ 2022/23
	53.3% (2021-22 -47%)	46.7% (2021-22 – 35%)	66.7% (2021-22 – 35%)

Y1 Phonics working at Expected %	72.2% (2021 -22 – 64%)
% achieving a good level of development EYFS	50.0% (2021-22 – 18%)

#### 14.4 Key Stage 2

The following data summarises published outcomes for KS2 for the academic year 2022/23, compared with 2021-22 and 2018-19. It suggests that at KS2, children who had been in care for more than 12 months performed better in reading writing and maths, than the same cohort last year. This is both individual subjects and combined scores. Analysis of this data suggests that while we are seeing a recovery from Covid in this area, outcomes have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels.

% RWM EXS+			% Reading EXS+			% Writing EXS+			% Maths EXS+		
2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23
56%	18%	40.0%	63%	48%	60.0%	67%	36%	48.0%	74%	42%	56.0%

Reading progress			Writing progress			Maths progress		
2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23	2018 - 19	2021 - 22	2022 - 23
+3.38	+1.72	+0.40	+0.63	-0.38	-1.09	3.01	0.46	+0.09

#### 14.5 Key Stage 4

The following data summarises the GCSE outcomes reported from summer 2023 for cared for young people who had been in care for more than 12 months. These results represent the hard work and dedication of our young people and the people who support them, despite facing difficult personal circumstances. Last academic year saw an increase in the number of pupils achieving at least 1 higher grade (6 or above). There has also been an increase in the number of pupils achieving grade 4 or above in English and Maths. In addition to these pleasing cohort results, we saw several of our young people gaining excellent individual achievements and we wish them all the very best for their post 16 endeavours.



	2023 12 month +		2022 12 month +	
	Number	%	Number	%
Number of year 11s cared for 12 months +	56		48	
At least 1 grade 1-9	40	71	28	58.3
at least 1 grade 4+	23	41	26	54.2
at least 1 grade 5+	13	23	12	25
Grade 4+ Eng or Maths	19	34	18	37.5
Grade 4+ Eng & Maths	14	25	10	20.8
Grade 5+ Eng or Maths	12	21	9	18.8
Grade 5+ Eng & Maths	5	9	4	8.3
1 or more grade 6+	11	20	6	12.5
1 or more grade 7+	5	9	1	2.1
EHCP	29	52	22	45.8
Number not entered to sit GCSE exams	17	30	17	35.4

#### 14.6 Moving Forward - Attainment and Progress

Analysis of KS2 outcomes show that a large proportion of cared for children are not meeting the expected standard at KS2. This is placing them at a further disadvantage at KS3 and KS4. As a result of this trend, over the coming years, a focus needs to be on promoting the use of Pupil Premium Plus at KS3 to close gaps in learning for those pupils not meeting the expected standard at Key Stage 2. It also needs to be a focus to ensure those pupils at risk of not meeting the expected standard at KS2 are identified early and schools are supported to ensure interventions are precisely and swiftly targeted to address this.

14.7 Following a review of our PEP and QA processes in 2021-22, it has become clear that the quality of data we receive about in year attainment and progress is inconsistent and incomplete. QA shows us that while progress towards academic targets is discussed at meetings, it is not always recorded in such a way to allow cohort analysis. As a result, for 2022/23, we have planned further developments in our QA and data gathering processes to allow us to monitor the reported attainment and progress of cared for children in year more effectively. This includes amending the PEP to allow us to more easily identify children not making expected progress during the year and then work with schools to target existing or additional Pupil Premium Plus spend more effectively if needed. The move to an e-PEP will also provide a more accurate data picture and reporting of progress is a planned focus for designated teacher network and training. A further review of the quality and quantity of data

obtained will be undertaken in the spring term, after a full cycle of the e-PEP process has been completed.

## 15. POST-16 EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

- 15.1 The following data summarises the further and higher education, employment and training activities of our post 16 cared for young people and care leavers as recorded at the end of the summer term.

<b>POST 16 EDUCATION CFC AND CARE LEAVERS (16-18)</b>	<b>2022/2023 (Summer Term)</b>
Enrolled in Further Education provision	66
Enrolled within FE in Tameside	37
Enrolled in FE out of area	29
Enrolled in Higher Education	20

<b>Cared for children and care leavers that are NEET, in Work or Work Based Training (16-18)</b>	<b>2022/2023 Summer Term</b>
<b>NEET</b>	20
<b>WORKING</b>	12
<b>WORK LEARNING SCHEME &amp; APPS ) (YES)</b>	12

- 15.2 Academic year 2022/23 saw a continuation of partnership working between the Virtual School and Tameside College to promote the achievement and engagement of cared for and care experienced pupils post 16. The position of Post 16 achievement coordinator has continued, which provides the Virtual School and College team with invaluable experience and expertise of post 16 offers. Over the course of the academic year, this member of staff has worked increasingly closely with social workers, personal advisors, young people and members of the employment and skills team to identify opportunities for young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training and support them to progress. The post 16 achievement coordinator also leads the attendance at PEPs for year 11 pupils to offer support in identifying next steps and planning post 16 pathways, as well as offering support at enrolment at Tameside College where appropriate. A tracker is maintained of year 11 intended destinations, which is cross referenced with young people on results day, when results data is collected. The Post 16 Achievement coordinator then works, through the enrolment period to record all known enrolments in college and offer support where needed. This support includes personalised meetings during enrolment to encourage a positive start to post 16. In addition to this, the Virtual School Post 16 Achievement Coordinator also attends the dedicated drop in for young people, which is run by the Economy, Employment and Skills team, to provide specialised support for cared experienced young people seeking employment opportunities.

- 15.3 One example of support offered to one of our cared for young people is described below:

*Student B did not wish to engage with any form of education or employment. Carers, social worker and Virtual School met regularly to discuss Student B's needs and wants as well as their interests. Virtual School post 16 coordinator researched different provisions that were available to her which would meet their wishes. Student B did not want to go to a big college with lots of people but did show interest in a short course/traineeship with a view to gain employment. Virtual School identified a suitable provision which offered 16 week rolling courses for plastering, brickwork & groundwork. At the end of the 16 week the provision offer employment on a working site for them. The post 16 coordinator arranged for a tour and meeting for Student B and carer. Student B was very positive and enjoyed the look around. She is now fully engaged in a course offered at this provision and is on track to gain qualifications which will offer a pathway into work.*

- 15.4 Academic year 2022/23 saw our highest number of students entering into university. These include students studying at Cambridge University, Huddersfield University, Manchester Metropolitan University, University of Liverpool, University of York and Salford University, to name a few. Courses being accessed include, Paediatric Nursing, Computer Science, Biomedical Science and Business Law. Personal advisors are aware that the Virtual School and College can be approached for support for our students at university if needed and our Post 16 link worker makes regular contact with the team to offer this service.
- 15.5 Tameside MBC also commits to providing opportunities for care leavers within the Tameside family. We have 4 of our care leavers currently accessing employment within the family firm. We have a corporate pledge which ring fences 5 apprenticeship opportunities within the Council for care leavers. 3 of these are currently filled, with 2 others in recruitment stage. We also have included the protected characteristic of 'Cared for Children and Care Leavers' as part of the [Equality-Strategy-2023-27 1.pdf \(tameside.gov.uk\)](#) which adds to the existing protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010 thereby ensuring guaranteed assessment to candidates who declare this and meet the essential criteria of job roles advertised.
- 15.6 **Moving forward - Post 16 2023/24**  
The number of pupils who are not accessing Education, Employment or Training remains a key focus and 2023/24 sees a renewed and increased focus on multi-agency working to address this. Current data shows that 54% of 17- 18 year olds and 48% of 19-21 year olds are accessing EET opportunities.
- 15.7 In order to strengthen outcomes the Virtual School partnership with Tameside College is continuing and has been extended in the academic year 2023/24 to further increase expertise in post 16 in the Virtual School team. A new contract has been agreed with Tameside College and recruitment to this position will be completed in December. This contract has been extended to include a 52 week post, as opposed to a term time only position, and the new post holder will work closely with an existing team member with post 16 experience.
- 15.8 Early data for the Autumn term 2023/24 sees more post 16 PEP's completed than in previous terms. A dedicated member of the team tracks and hosts PEPs for cared for young people up to the age of 18. Where a student is accessing college, this is carried out by the designated teacher at the institution and submitted to the Virtual School for QA. Our achievement coordinator attends these meetings where support is needed. Where a young person is NEET the Post 16 achievement coordinator hosts the PEP and works collaboratively with social workers and PAs to support young people to accessing appropriate services. This includes supporting them to access the young person's drop in, hosted by the Economy, Employment and Skills team, or supporting them to identify appropriate pathways. The increased capacity described earlier, will support with further improving the number and quality of post 16 PEPs received.
- 15.9 Furthermore, the extension of the Pupil Premium Plus for post 16 has allowed an e-PEP and attendance monitoring system for post 16 pupils to be introduced. This is being rolled out in the Autumn Term. This will allow for more accurate data on the EET activities of 16-18 year olds and swifter intervention for young people accessing college, who are at risk of becoming NEET by providing us with the means to identify concerning attendance patterns more swiftly.
- 15.10 In addition to this, both the Virtual School Headteacher and the Post 16 Achievement coordinator attend a newly established EET panel. This meets twice per month with representatives from Leaving Care, Cared for Children, Economy, Employment and Skills, Youth Justice and Education to review and advise on next steps for young people identified as NEET. Cared for children and care leavers are a specific focus group at this panel.

Representatives from the staying close project, which is a further channel of support for our post 16 young people to access EET opportunities also attend this panel.

- 15.11 One example of the effectiveness of this panel, work with staying close and evidence of improved support as a result of these initiatives is detailed in the case study below:

*Student C successfully completed year 1 at college however expressed the wish to move into a more practical based course. She tried a number of apprentices, however was unhappy with these offers. The availability of a ring fenced, L3 apprenticeship opportunity within the council was discussed at EET panel. Staying close representatives, who were aware of C's desire for this kind of opportunity supported her to apply for the role and attend an initial interview and work trial. This was successfully completed and C has commenced her employment as a L3 apprentice within the council. She is well supported by members of the team she works for and has continued support from staying close if needed.*

- 15.12 The is also a dedicated project manager, with the Economy, Employment and Skills, with a directive to lead on NEET work. Supporting care experienced young people who are NEET is key to this work and this project matches opportunities to young people via the Young Person's Drop in which takes place weekly. This project manager also attends EET panel to offer advice and suggestions to PAs and social workers, presenting young people to panel who are seeking support.

- 15.13 Other plans for this academic year include introducing a dedicated drop in time each week from the Virtual School where social workers and PAs of post 16 students can access support for education, employment and training queries. It is also planned for a portion of Pupil Premium Plus to be retained to allow for targeted support and interventions as identified in post 16 PEPs. So far this has included targeted access to tuition to support exam re-sits, specific equipment and access to training related courses as part of a planned route into work. This work is in its infancy and a full review of post 16 Pupil Premium Plus and its impact will be reported at the end of this academic year. It is also intended to work with the Economy Employment and Skills to seek other corporate commitments to support our young people into work, employment or training.

- 15.14 A cross Directorate team, of which Virtual School are a part, has also been created to provide additional NEET support to all young people but with a key focus on our Leaving Care cohort. Previously, NEET support has been commissioned to external providers with little impact on the Tameside NEET position. Utilising UK Shared Prosperity Fund People & Skills work stream monies, via GMCA, an internal team has been established to link with young people directly and via existing contact with professionals such as Virtual School, social workers and Youth Justice team. The aim is for better engagement and, therefore, more impact on our young people.

## **16. SCHOOL-LED TUITION GRANT**

- 16.1 As in previous years, during 2022/23 Tameside Virtual School was able to utilise the School Led Tutoring Grant (which is part of the National Tutoring Programme) to provide tutoring intervention to support catch-up for lost education due to the pandemic for Tameside cared for children. Tuition was sourced by schools directly and also by Tameside Virtual School through a tuition partner agency. One to one and group tuition was provided in a range of subjects to help pupils catch-up with their lost learning. Use of the School Led Tutoring Grant was demonstrated in the termly PEPs for cared for children, which are quality assured by managers in the Virtual School.

- 16.2 The following table summarises the number of students who benefitted from school led tuition and the number of hours received. The Virtual School managers and Education Welfare

Officers promoted the use of this grant with designated teachers throughout the year and 2022/23 saw an increase in the number of pupils receiving tuition and in hours delivered.

	Total No of CF pupils (Mainstream)	Total No of CF pupils (Specialist)	Total No of CF pupils	Total No of Hours (Mainstream)	Total No of Hours (Specialist)	Total No of Hours
<b>Autumn Term</b>	71	8	79	1079	100	1179
<b>Spring Term</b>	93	4	97	1697	55	1752
<b>Summer Term</b>	68	3	71	1595	104	1699
<b>Totals for 22/23</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>4371</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>4630</b>

**16.3 Moving forward - School Led Tuition 2023/24**

As this grant will continue to be available, the Virtual School will continue to promote its use and value and to use information gathered from PEP QA process to target specific students where data suggests this may be of benefit.

**17. OTHER INITIATIVES FUNDED VIA PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS AND COVID RECOVERY GRANT**

17.1 2022/23 saw the Virtual school offer a revised reading initiative for cared for children to encourage reading at home, either independently or with carers. This included two year groups – Year 5 and Year 7 – receiving a book each term. In the Spring Term, the Year 5 cohort received the book ‘Twitch’ by M.G. Leonard and Year 7 received ‘The Marvellers’ by Dhonielle Clayton. We worked with Madeleine Lindley, receiving some recommendations for books suitable for two year groups, which helped us choose each one. A letter was included in the parcel that was sent home, which included an overview of the new scheme. To make the initiative more interactive, the children were asked to write a book review after they had finished reading the book, in which they sent in to us for a reward. The children who submitted a book review received a certificate from the Virtual School team. The image shows one example of a book review we received in the Spring Term.



17.2 In the Summer Term another book for each cohort was carefully selected and sent out for students to read over the summer holidays – children have been encouraged to write a book review again. We chose the book ‘The Good Turn’ by Sharna Jackson for the Year 5 cohort and the Year 7 group have been sent ‘Tyger’ by SF Said.

17.3 Alongside this scheme, a recommended reading list for all age groups was created and distributed to carers/parents for support, as a starting point to help them choose suitable books for their children and young people. A ‘Virtual School Reading Support Page’ was also created this year, which includes useful resources and advice for parents/carers to support children with reading at home.

17.4 In addition to this reading initiative the Virtual School also purchased and sent home transition packs for year 6 children moving to year 7. These packs contained key equipment and useful academic materials to support our new year 7s. They were also provided with a further reading book and a personalised good luck message.

17.5 The Virtual School have plans to provide a similar pack for year 11 students at the beginning of the spring term, to support their revision activities in the run up to GCSEs.

## 18. TRAINING

18.1 2022/23 saw the Virtual School provide a comprehensive calendar of training opportunities for schools, social workers, foster carers and governors. The Virtual School also deliver training as part of the corporate induction program for new employees. The 2022/23 training calendar can be viewed here:



Training  
calendar.docx

18.2 This plan has been built upon and extended for the new academic year with training opportunities already delivered for social workers, schools and governors on key themes. Sessions delivered and commissioned so far this year have included:

- Designated teacher training and networking
- How to use the e-PEP for schools and social workers
- Weekly drop in sessions on the new e-PEP
- The role of the Virtual School for social workers
- The impact of suspension and exclusion for governors
- DSL update from the Virtual School
- Briefing for Primary Heads on the role of the Virtual School and our offer
- Briefing for new Heads on the Tameside Virtual School offer
- Bespoke 1:1 training for individual designated teachers who are new to the role or require additional support
- Promoting good attendance
- Introduction to multi agency practice guidance – promoting full time education.
- LEGO Think Bricks - Therapeutic Coaching Approaches Course.

18.3 A full calendar of training is under development and is designed to be flexible and responsive to need as well as accessible. Training for Foster Carers and further networking events are planned for the new year, with scoping exercises carried out to inform their focus. We are also exploring opportunities to commission external training in accordance with needs of partners.

## 19. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEAD TEACHER EXTENDED DUTIES

19.1 Academic year 2022/23 saw a continuation of the Virtual School Head Teacher's extended duties for children with a social worker or involved with the youth justice system and Tameside Virtual School continued to offer both training opportunities for wider social care colleagues on educational matters and advice and guidance to social work teams facing educational challenges. Access to this support has been extended this year with Virtual School Education Welfare Officers being linked to individual social work teams with a dedicated time slot each week to drop in for advice. A review of this initiative will be undertaken later this academic year. In addition the Virtual School Head Teacher has continued to work with access services to promote school attendance for vulnerable students and has collaborated across services to produce a multi-agency practice tool, aimed at supporting colleagues to work together to ensure all students are accessing an appropriate full time education offer. This guide provides

expectations of challenge and support of all professionals who are working with children who are not attending school full time, be that through the use of alternative provision, reduced timetables or as a result of persistent or severely persistent absenteeism.

## **20. CELEBRATING SUCCESS**

20.1 The Virtual School is committed to celebrating the success of our young people and are keen, in this academic year to increase opportunities to do this on a more systematic basis. This will include recognising attendance, progress and achievements. Designated teachers are encouraged to share student's successes with us via the PEPs and also email and certificates and praise post cards are sent in recognition of this. Plans are in place to send certificates to recognise students achieving 100% attendance from the autumn term.

## **21. CONCLUSION**

21.1 As outlined in this report, the Virtual School has been through a period of change in the last academic year and work is ongoing to continue to improve and develop our service to meet the needs of the young people with whom we work.

21.2 For academic year 2023/24 we will continue to:

- develop our offer for care leavers and work to reduce NEET,
- improve the quality of PEPs,
- promote good outcomes,
- reduce suspensions,
- improve attendance,
- develop our offer to fulfil our wider duties for children with a social worker or involved in the youth justice system.
- develop our wider support for cared for children and our means of recognising their achievements.

## **22. RECOMMENDATIONS**

22.1 As set out at the front of the report.

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# Agenda Item 6.

**Report to:** EDUCATION ATTAINMENT IMPROVEMENT BOARD

**Date:** 16 January 2024

**Reporting Officer:** Catherine Moseley – Head of Access Services

**Subject:** SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

**Report Summary:** The report sets out the proposed admission arrangements for Tameside community, and voluntary controlled schools for admission in September 2025. There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for September 2024. The latest information on school place planning is presented, which concludes that there are currently sufficient places to meet expected demand for mainstream primary and secondary schools with rising levels of surplus capacity in primary schools due to the current birth rate pattern in the borough. The report concludes that there is a need to continue to develop capacity for specialist places given the predicted continuing rise in demand set out in the SEN Sufficiency Strategy.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that the Board note the contents of the report.

**Corporate Plan:** The proposals contained within this report will support the delivery of the Community Strategy, through the delivery of sufficient and suitable places in 2025/26.

**Policy Implications:** No change in policy is proposed.

**Financial Implications:** All schools places are funded from the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant, which must be fully allocated to all schools and Academies in the borough.

**(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)** The Council's DSG for 2023/24 is £257.273m. The table below demonstrates the forecast outturn position as at Month 7 reporting.

<b>DSG Funding Block</b>	<b>DSG 2023-24 (before recoupment and incl. block transfer) £m</b>	<b>Forecast Distribution/ Expenditure 2023-24 £m</b>	<b>Forecast (Surplus) / Deficit 2023/24 £m</b>
Schools Block	(200.358)	200.349	(0.010)
Central School Service Block	(1.249)	1.249	0
High Needs Block	(37.604)	43.480	5.876
Early Years Block	(18.062)	17.511	(0.550)

<b>Total</b>	<b>(257.273)</b>	<b>262.589</b>	<b>5.317</b>
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The current DSG reserve balance is a deficit position of £3.306m. The four-year forecast to 2027/28 is for the deficit to grow to £66.842m without intervention.

Mainstream Schools and Academies are funded on a per pupil basis, any schools with falling numbers of pupils on roll face financial pressures, which will need be managed. Where mainstream schools are sponsored to academise, the school balance is offset against the DSG reserve. Where sponsored schools transfer with a deficit balance it worsens the position, this is a risk to the Council's General Fund as a Priority Education Attainment Area meaning Academisation is accelerated in the borough.

The continued demand for Specialist Provision is creating further financial pressures on the High Needs budget that is already significantly in deficit, as highlighted in the table above, and subject to a deficit recovery plan. The Local Authority is working with the Department of Education as part of the Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme to seek to address the deficit.

Without the DBV programme, the deficit by 2027/28 would be £72.409m. There is a statutory override on the DSG to 2026. At this point, without DBV, the deficit is forecast to be £33.967m. If this is not extended, the deficit will be a call on the General Fund, i.e. reserves. The Council holds £30m of unallocated reserves of the £160m earmarked alongside the General Fund Balance of £27m. The DSG deficit would therefore reduce reserves to an unsustainable level requiring significant and difficult decisions around financial retrenchment and other service cessations.

**Legal Implications:  
(Authorised by the  
Borough Solicitor)**

The Council has statutory obligations to consult upon its coordinated admission scheme and admissions arrangements pursuant to The School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2012 and made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and section 29(5) of the Education Act 1996. The report provides appropriate detail of the arrangements proposed pursuant to the legislation.

**Risk Management:**

Failure to determine admission arrangements and a coordinated admissions scheme by 28 February 2024 could result in the Secretary of State imposing admissions arrangements on the Council and lead to the displacement of children from community high schools

**Access to Information:**

**NON-CONFIDENTIAL**

**This report does not contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the Press or members of the public.**

**Background Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Catherine Moseley, Head of Access Services



Telephone: 0161 342 3302



e-mail: [catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:catherine.moseley@tameside.gov.uk)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 All admission authorities are required to consult on their coordinated admission scheme and on changes to admission arrangements. Where no changes are proposed to the coordinated admissions scheme or admission arrangements, there is no requirement to consult. Admission authorities must ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory requirements of the School Admissions Code 2021.
- 1.2 Admission authorities must consult once every seven years as a minimum. They must also determine their admission arrangements on an annual basis by 28 February and must be published on websites by 15 March each year.
- 1.3 Tameside Council last consulted on amendments to the admission arrangements for September 2024. These were determined by Executive Cabinet on 8 February 2023.

## 2. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS IN COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

- 2.1 For entry to community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools in September 2025, no changes were planned and therefore consultation was not necessary.
- 2.2 Admission arrangements must be determined by 28 February annually and must be published by 15 March. Following determination of the admission arrangements objections to those arrangements must be made to the Schools Adjudicator by 15 May.
- 2.3 The proposed admission arrangements for entry in September 2025 for community or voluntary controlled primary, junior and secondary schools are set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 The admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools will be considered and determined by Executive Cabinet on 14 February 2024.

## 3. SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

- 3.1 School place planning in the borough is reviewed on an annual basis and forms part of the annual report on admission arrangements that is reported to Executive Cabinet in January. **Appendix 2** sets out the latest information.
- 3.2 School place planning is a complex process that requires almost constant review to ensure that the Council is able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient places.
- 3.3 By being proactive and working in partnership with all our schools over a number of years, the Council has been able to meet the demand for places in spite of significant variations in pupil numbers.
- 3.4 After the sustained period of growth, data indicates the need to consider reducing levels of surplus that are predicted to increase in primary and secondary schools over the next few years.
- 3.5 There is a need to engage in dialogue with primary school leaders to begin to consider options to reduce projected levels of surplus capacity. Whilst levels of surplus in secondary schools are not expected to increase significantly for a number of years, dialogue will begin to ensure that temporary places added to cope with the increase in pupils over recent year are removed first.

- 3.6 Whilst there are currently sufficient places to meet expected demand in mainstream provision, this is not the case for specialist places. The draft SEN Sufficiency Strategy is important to understand the supply and demand issues for specialist places and to drive plans to meet identified need in a systematic way.
- 3.7 The school place planning process must continue to be dynamic particularly in view of significant housing development and predicted increases in children and young people requiring support for their additional needs within the borough and the impact that will have on demand and travel to learn patterns.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 As set out at the front of the report.

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# APPENDIX 1

## PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR TAMESIDE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2025/26 ACADEMIC YEAR

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 These arrangements apply to the admission of children to Tameside community and voluntary controlled primary schools in the normal admissions round for the academic year 2025/26. Tameside will operate an equal preference scheme. These arrangements do not apply to those being admitted for nursery provision including nursery provision delivered in a co-located children's centre;
- 1.2 Children in Tameside are eligible for a Reception place from the beginning of the school year in which they become 5 years old. However, they do not become of compulsory school until the start of the term after their fifth birthday. Parents may therefore request that their school place be deferred until later in the school year and if they do this the place will be held for the child. However, they cannot defer entry beyond the beginning of the term after the child's fifth birthday or for children born between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August, not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year for which the offer is made. Parents can also request that their child attend on a part time basis until the child reaches compulsory school age.
- 1.3 Parents of summer born children can request that their child is placed outside their age range if they feel that their child will not be ready for school. (See Section 6. Admission of Children outside their normal age group)
- 1.4 Parents of children who are admitted for nursery provision must apply for a place at the school if they want their child to transfer to the reception class; attendance at a nursery or co-located children's centre does not guarantee admission to the school.

### 2. APPLYING FOR A PLACE IN A TAMESIDE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2025

- 2.1 If you are a Tameside resident you must make your application online to Tameside Local Authority, even if you wish your child to attend a school in another Local Authority area.
- 2.2 You should use your application to apply for any primary school, whether this is in Tameside or in another Local Authority area. Application details may also be obtained from the School Admissions Section at Tameside MBC. Starting Out will be available on Tameside's website. NB: Only one application may be submitted for each child.
- 2.3 The local authority may verify information you provide on your application, which could involve contacting other departments of the local authority. In instances where the information provided is different from that held by them, they may use the information on the application to investigate further. If false or misleading information is given, Tameside local authority has the right to withdraw the offer of a school place.
- 2.4 If you are not a Tameside resident you must make your application to the Local Authority where you live, even if you wish your child to attend a Tameside school. Applications must be returned in accordance with your own local authority's specific instructions and not to Tameside.

### **3. THE PROCESS**

- 3.1 The application will invite parents to indicate a preference for up to 6 schools, and then to rank the schools in order of preference, parents will also be able to give reasons for each preference.
- 3.2 Your online application must be submitted by the closing date of **15 January 2025**, with any supporting information / evidence if appropriate.
- 3.3 The council will follow the timetable set out in the coordinated admissions scheme. Late applications will be dealt with as late and ranked after all applications received by the deadline.
- 3.4 Changes to preferences, ranking order, or pupil details, will not be allowed after the closing date of **15 January 2025**, except in exceptional circumstances, for example, if the family has recently moved address. Evidence must be provided to support the request. An intention to change address cannot be considered by the local authority until the move has actually taken place and proof is available, or parents may provide a solicitor's letter confirming an exchange of contracts on a property, or a tenancy agreement and proof of disposal of current property. No changes can be considered even where there are exceptional circumstances, once information has been exchanged with other admission bodies because the allocations process has commenced. In the case of primary schools, this cut-off date is the **23 January 2025**.
- 3.5 Notification of offers of a single school place will be sent out to parents on **16 April 2025**. These notifications will also inform parents of their right of appeal, and who to contact, if an application has not been successful.
- 3.6 Parents will not receive multiple offers.

### **4. PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR TAMESIDE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

- 4.1 A list of all Tameside community and voluntary controlled primary schools, with their respective Published Admission Numbers, can be found here: <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/admissions/2025>
- 4.2 Where applications for admission to any school exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit.

### **5. CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATING PLACES TO OVERSUBSCRIBED SCHOOLS**

- 5.1 Children with an Education Health and Care Plan where the school is named will be allocated places before the oversubscription criteria are applied. The criteria for over-subscription for community and voluntary controlled primary schools are:

- 1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order**

A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see



the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

## **2. Children and families with exceptional medical or social needs**

Written evidence must be provided by a suitably qualified professional – e.g. a GP or consultant for medical needs, or a social worker for social needs – the information must confirm the exceptional medical or social need and demonstrate how the specified school is the only school that can meet the defined needs of the child. A panel of officers from Tameside MBC will make a decision as to whether to admit a child under this criterion, using the evidence provided. Parents/carers are responsible for providing all information in support of an application by the closing date, officers of the Council will not ask for additional information. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

## **3. Sibling**

This will apply where there are brothers or sisters attending the school or the linked junior school as at the closing date for applications, who will still be attending at the time of admission, i.e. in the September when a pupil is admitted to Reception. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

The sibling criterion includes; natural sisters/brothers; half sisters/brothers; step sisters/brothers; adopted sisters/brothers; sisters/brothers of fostered children; children of the parent/carer's partner, and in each case living at the same address. This allows for the admittance of children whose siblings will still be attending the preferred school.

## **4. All other applications on distance**

Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

Distance will be measured as a straight line from the child's home address, using the address point assigned by the National Land and Property Gazetteer, to the main gate to the school property. Measurements will be made using the local authority's school admissions data mapping software, which uses a Geographical Information System based on Ordnance Survey.

5.2 Where oversubscription occurs in applying either criteria 1, 2 or 3, priority will be given to those pupils living nearest the school, measured as a straight line (as above).

5.3 The address from which distance will be measured will be the permanent residential address, as at the closing date for applications, of the parent with whom the child is normally resident. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address is the address from which the parent receives the child benefit.

5.4 In the event of distances being the same for 2 or more applications where this distance would be the last place/s to be allocated, the place will be allocated to the pupil that is nearer using walking distance as measured using the local authority's school admissions data mapping software.

In the event of two or more applications with distances, which are exactly the same competing for a final place, e.g. blocks of flats, the place will be decided by drawing lots, the first name drawn will be offered the place.

5.5 An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangement order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person

with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

- 5.6 In cases where twins, triplets, or other multiple birth siblings are split when allocations take place, they will be allocated a place over the Published Admission Number and will remain excepted pupils for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

## 6. ADMISSION OUTSIDE NORMAL AGE GROUP

- 6.1 Parents may seek a place for their child outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

- 6.2 School admission authorities are required to provide for the admission of all children in the September following their fourth birthday, but flexibilities exist for children whose parents do not feel they are ready to begin school before they reach compulsory school age.

- 6.3 Summer Born (1<sup>st</sup> Entry to School), A parent who chooses not to send their summer born child (those born between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August) to school until they have reached compulsory school age may request that their child is admitted outside their normal age group - to reception rather than year 1.

- 6.4 Where a parent requests their child is admitted out of their normal age group, the school admission authority is responsible for making the decision on which year group a child should be admitted to. They are required to make a decision on the basis of the circumstances of the case and in the best interests of the child concerned.

- 6.5 There is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal age group, but parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group.

- 6.6 Admission authorities **must** make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and on the basis of evidence provided from appropriate professionals where relevant, for example educational psychologist. Parents will be informed of their statutory right to appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the school.

- 6.7 Application process for Summer Born/Admission Outside Normal Age Group

Parents requesting their child to be admitted outside of the normal age range should submit reasons for the request together with their application. The online application provides space to do this and you should also submit views of medical professionals as necessary. A decision will be made taking account of parents' wishes, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; and whether they have previously been educated outside their normal age group. Each request will be treated on an individual basis having regard to the views of an educational professional who will be involved in educating the child.

- 6.8 Each request and the evidence provided will be considered by a panel of officers from Tameside MBC who will make a decision on the parental request, using the evidence provided. Parents/carers are responsible for providing all information in support of an application by the closing date, officers of the Council will not ask for additional information. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

- 6.9 Please note that one admission authority cannot be required to honour a decision made by another which means where multiple applications are being made to different schools, you may receive differing outcomes.

## **7. ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OF UK SERVICE PERSONNEL**

- 7.1 The council acknowledges that service families are subject to movement within the UK and from abroad. Although the council is not able to reserve places for blocks of pupils we will consider requests, if accompanied by an official MOD letter declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address. For in year admissions places will be allocated, subject to a place being available in the relevant year group, prior to moving. If we are unable to allocate a place at that time, parents will be offered the right to appeal.

## **8. IN YEAR TRANSFERS**

- 8.1 Parents wishing to apply for an in year transfer to a school in Tameside should apply using the online School Transfer Request Form. The School Transfer Request Form can be completed online from the Tameside Council website: [www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions)
- 8.2 Forms should be fully completed and submitted electronically with any additional/supplementary documentation/evidence to the School Admissions Team to enable their application to be considered as quickly as possible.
- 8.3 If you want to transfer your child to a school in Tameside, you must apply through Tameside Council even if you live in another area. If you want to apply for a school in another area, you will need to contact that area for further details of what you need to do.
- 8.4 If a place is available in the requested year group, parents will normally be offered that place but there are some exceptions (see Fair Access Protocol section).
- 8.5 Parents will receive an offer of a school place through Tameside Council and this can take up to 15 school days.

## **9. IN YEAR FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL**

- 9.1 All local authorities have a Fair Access Protocol for in year transfers that ensures the speedy admission of pupils who may experience difficulty in being allocated a school place, for example, if they have been out of school for a long period of time. With specific short-term exceptions, all schools in Tameside are participants in the protocol, which may result in schools admitting pupils over their published admission number. Full details of the In Year Fair Access Protocol can be found on the Council's website <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/primarytransfers>

## **10. WAITING LISTS**

- 10.1 If any school is oversubscribed the Council will maintain a waiting list. The waiting list will operate until the end of the relevant school year. Parents, who have expressed the school as a preference and have not been offered a place at the school, or at a higher preference school, will automatically be placed on the waiting list. All pupils on the waiting list will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. When a place becomes available children who have been referred under the local authority's Fair Access protocol or who is the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit will be given precedence over any other children on the waiting list. Then any places will be offered to the highest ranked application received by the date the place becomes available. If new or late applications have a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria, they will be ranked higher than those who have been on the list for some time. If the circumstances of children on the waiting list change, (eg they move house) they should inform the Council immediately and provide appropriate supporting evidence.

- 10.2 A place from the waiting list will only be held for two school days. Tameside Council will use the information provided on the original application to contact parents, it is the responsibility of parents to change their details with the School Admissions Team if they move house or change their phone number. If no response is received from a parent who has been offered a place from the waiting list within the 2 school day limit, it will be offered to the next child on the ranked list and so on until the place is filled.
- 10.3 If a parent is offered a place from the waiting list and rejects it or does not respond to requests by email or answerphone message to contact the School Admissions Team, they will be removed from that waiting list.

## **11. APPEALS**

- 11.1 Any parent who is refused admission to a preferred school has the right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. For pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan, an appeal can be made to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (details are included in the plan).
- 11.2 Parents, who wish to appeal against the decision of the local authority to refuse admission to a preferred school, should do so in writing, setting out clearly why your child should go to that particular school. Information about appeals will be sent out with the allocation letter and can also be found on the School Admissions webpage <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/admissions..>
- 11.3 The Appeals Panel will:
- be independent of the school and the LA;
  - give the appellant, who may be accompanied by a friend or be represented, the opportunity to make oral representation;
- 11.4 The Local Authority will:
- give the appellant at least ten school days notice of the time and place of the hearing;
- 11.5 The clerk will:
- send the appeal papers to the appellant at least seven working days before the hearing.
- 11.6 The appeal shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast, the chair of the panel having a casting vote.
- 11.7 The decision of the Appeals Panel and the grounds on which it was made shall be communicated by the Clerk in writing to the appellant. That decision shall be binding on all parties. Subject to the above conditions, all matters of procedure shall be determined by the local authority.

**PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR  
TAMESIDE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS  
2025/26 ACADEMIC YEAR**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 These arrangements apply to the admission of children to Tameside community high schools in the normal admissions round for the academic year 2025/26. Tameside will operate an equal preference scheme.

**2. APPLYING FOR A PLACE IN A TAMESIDE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2025**

- 2.1 If you are a Tameside resident you must make your application to Tameside Local Authority, even if you wish your child to attend a school in another Local Authority area.
- 2.2 Tameside primary schools will forward details of children eligible to transfer to secondary school in September 2024 to the Local Authority Admissions Team, who will send out details of how to apply in September 2024. The pack will contain details of where to view Moving On and a letter explaining how to make your application. You should use your application to apply for any secondary school, whether this is in Tameside or in another Local Authority area. Application details may also be obtained from the Admissions Section at Tameside MBC. Moving On will be available on Tameside's website. NB: Only one application may be submitted for each child.
- 2.3 The local authority may verify information you provide on your application, which could involve contacting other departments of the local authority. In instances where the information provided is different from that held by them, they may use the information on this form to investigate further. If false or misleading information is given, Tameside local authority has the right to withdraw the offer of a school place.
- 2.4 If you are not a Tameside resident you must make your application to the Local Authority where you live, even if you wish your child to attend a Tameside school. Application forms must be returned in accordance with your own local authority's specific instructions and not to Tameside.

**3. THE PROCESS**

- 3.1 The application will invite all parents to indicate a preference for 6 schools, and to rank the schools in order of preference, giving reasons for each preference. In allocating places, Tameside will operate an equal preference scheme.
- 3.2 Your application must be submitted by the closing date of 31 October 2024, with any supporting information / evidence if appropriate.
- 3.3 The council will follow the timetable set out in the coordinated admissions scheme. Late applications will be dealt with as late and ranked after all applications submitted after the deadline.
- 3.4 Changes to preferences, ranking order or pupil details, will not be allowed after the closing date of 31 October 2024 except in exceptional circumstances, for example, if the family has recently moved address. Evidence must be provided to support the request. An intention to change address cannot be considered by the local authority until the move has actually taken place and proof is available, or parents may provide a solicitor's letter confirming an

exchange of contracts on a property, or a tenancy agreement and proof of disposal of current property. No changes can be considered even where there are exceptional circumstances once information has been exchanged with the other admission bodies by the Council, because the allocations process has commenced. In the case of secondary schools this date is the 7 November 2024.

3.5 Notification of offers of a single school place will be sent out to parents on 3 March 2025. These notifications will also inform parents of their right of appeal, and who to contact, if an application has not been successful.

3.6 Parents will not receive multiple offers.

#### **4. PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR TAMESIDE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS**

4.1 A list of all Tameside community high schools, with their respective Published Admission Numbers, can be found here: <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/admissions/2025>

4.2 Where applications for admission to any school exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit.

#### **5. CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATING PLACES TO OVERSUBSCRIBED SCHOOLS**

5.1 Children with an Education Health and Care Plans where the school is named in the plan will be allocated places before the oversubscription criteria are applied. The criteria for oversubscription for community secondary schools are:

- 1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order**

A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

#### **2. Children and families with exceptional medical or social needs**

Written evidence must be provided by a suitably qualified professional – e.g. a GP or consultant for medical needs, or a social worker for social needs – the information must confirm the exceptional medical or social need and demonstrate how the specified school is the only school that can meet the defined needs of the child. A panel of officers from Tameside MBC will make a decision as to whether to admit a child under this criterion, using the evidence provided. Parents/carers are responsible for providing all information in support of an application by the closing date, officers of the Council will not ask for additional information. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

#### **3. Sibling:**

This will apply where there are brothers or sisters attending the school as at the closing date for applications, who will still be attending at the time of admission, i.e. in the September

when the pupil is admitted to Year 7. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

The sibling criterion includes; natural sisters/brothers; half-sisters/brothers; step sisters/brothers; adopted sisters/brothers; sisters/brothers of fostered children; children of the parent/carer's partner, and in each case living at the same address. This allows for the admittance of children whose siblings will still be attending the preferred school. In cases where twins, triplets, other multiple birth siblings, or other siblings whose date of birth falls within the same academic year, are split when allocations take place, siblings will be offered a place at the same school which may not be a preference school named on the common application form.

**4. Children attending the named partner primary school on the closing date for applications. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.**

**5. All other applications on distance**

Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

5.2 Distance will also be used as a tiebreaker where oversubscription occurs within any of criteria 1 to 4. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

5.3 Distance will be measured as a straight line from the child's home address, using the address point assigned by the National Land and Property Gazetteer, to the main gate to the school property. Measurements will be made using the local authority's school admissions data mapping software, which uses a Geographical Information System based on Ordnance Survey.

5.4 The address from which distance will be measured will be the permanent residential address, as at the closing date for applications, of the parent with whom the child is normally resident. Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address is the address from which the parent receives the child benefit.

5.5 In the event of distances being the same for 2 or more applications where this distance would be the last place/s to be allocated, the place will be allocated to the pupil that is nearer using walking distance as measured using the local authority's school admissions data mapping software.

In the event of two or more applications with distances, which are exactly the same competing for a final place, e.g. blocks of flats, the place will be decided by drawing lots, the first name drawn will be offered the place.

5.6 An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangement order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).

**6. ADMISSION OUTSIDE NORMAL AGE GROUP**

6.1 Parents of gifted and talented children, or those who have experienced problems or missed part of a year, for example due to ill health, can seek places outside their normal age group. Admission authorities **must** make decisions on the basis of the circumstances of each case and on the basis of evidence provided from appropriate professionals, where appropriate for example educational psychologist. Parents will be informed parents of their statutory right to appeal. This right does not apply if they are offered a place in another year group at the

school.

- 6.2 There is no statutory barrier to children being admitted outside their normal age group, but parents do not have the right to insist that their child is admitted to a particular age group
- 6.3 Parents requesting their child to be admitted outside of the normal age range should submit reasons for the request together with their application. The online application provides space to do this and you should also submit views of medical professionals as necessary. A decision will be made taking account of parents' wishes, information about the child's academic, social and emotional development; and whether they have previously been educated outside their normal age group. Each request will be treated on an individual basis having regard to the views of an educational professional who will be involved in educating the child. Parents should complete the online application and include details of their request to defer entry for their child. They may also contact the School Admissions Team for further information.
- 6.4 Each request and the evidence provided will be considered by a panel of officers from Tameside MBC who will make a decision on the parental request, using the evidence provided. Parents/carers are responsible for providing all information in support of an application by the closing date, officers of the Council will not ask for additional information. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.
- 6.5 If a child was admitted to reception class outside age group and has continued on this basis throughout primary school, on application for secondary education, it is anticipated that the child will continue to be educated outside of age range. However please note a decision by Tameside MBC, does not bind another own admission authority school (VA's and Academies) and you may need to reapply or seek further permission.
- 6.6 Important Note: If your child has been taught out of year group, he/she will no longer be of compulsory school age during Year 11 of secondary school and will therefore be able to leave school before completing examinations. However, young people are required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday.

## **7. ADMISSION OF CHILDREN OF UK SERVICE PERSONNEL**

- 7.1 The council acknowledges that service families are subject to movement within the UK and from abroad. Although the council is not able to reserve places for blocks of pupils we will consider requests, if accompanied by an official MOD letter declaring a relocation date and a Unit postal address or quartering area address. For in year admissions places will be allocated, subject to a place being available in the relevant year group, prior to moving. If we are unable to allocate a place at that time, parents will be offered the right to appeal.

## **8. IN YEAR TRANSFERS**

- 8.1 Parents wishing to apply for an in year transfer to a school in Tameside should apply using the online School Transfer Request Form. The School Transfer Request Form can be completed online from the Tameside Council website: [www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions)
- 8.2 Forms should be fully completed and submitted electronically with any additional/supplementary documentation/evidence to the School Admissions Team to enable their application to be considered as quickly as possible.
- 8.3 If you want to transfer your child to a school in Tameside, you must apply through Tameside Council even if you live in another area. If you want to apply for a school in another area, you will need to contact that area for further details of what you need to do.



- 8.4 If a place is available in the requested year group, parents will normally be offered that place but there are some exceptions (see Fair Access Protocol section).
- 8.5 Where a child is currently being educated outside of age range, any previous decision is not binding on another Admission Authority. Decisions on whether or not a child transferring schools is educated out of year group will be made by the admission authority of the school in question, e.g. Tameside MBC or via own admission authority schools e.g. Voluntary Aided Schools and Academies.
- 8.6 Parents will receive an offer of a school place through Tameside Council and this can take up to 15 school days.

## **9. IN YEAR FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL**

- 9.1 All local authorities have a Fair Access Protocol for in year transfers that ensures the speedy admission of pupils who may experience difficulty in being allocated a school place, for example, if they have been out of school for a long period of time. With specific short-term exceptions, all schools in Tameside are participants in the protocol, which may result in schools admitting pupils over their published admission number. Full details of the In Year Fair Access Protocol can be found on the Council's website <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/primarytransfers>

## **10. WAITING LISTS**

- 10.1 If any school is oversubscribed the Council will maintain a waiting list. The waiting list will operate until the end of the relevant school year. Parents, who have expressed the school as a preference and have not been offered a place at the school, or at a higher preference school, will automatically be placed on the waiting list. All pupils on the waiting list will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. When a place becomes available children, who have been referred under the local authority's Fair Access protocol or who is the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit will be given precedence over any other children on the waiting list. Then any places will be offered to the highest ranked application received by the date the place becomes available. If new or late applications have a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria, they will be ranked higher than those who have been on the list for some time. If the circumstances of children on the waiting list change, (e.g. they move house) they should inform the Council immediately and provide appropriate supporting evidence.
- 10.2 A place from the waiting list will only be held for two school days. Tameside Council will use the information provided on the original application to contact parents, it is the responsibility of parents to change their details with the School Admissions Team if they move house or change their phone number. If no response is received from a parent who has been offered a place from the waiting list within the 2 school day limit, it will be offered to the next child on the ranked list and so on until the place is filled.
- 10.3 If a parent is offered a place from the waiting list and rejects it or does not respond to requests by email or answerphone message to contact the School Admissions Team, they will be removed from that waiting list.

## **11. APPEALS**

- 11.1 Any parent who is refused admission to a preferred school has the right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. For pupils with an Education Health and Care plan, an appeal can be made to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (details are included in the plan).
- 11.2 Parents, who wish to appeal against the decision of the local authority to refuse admission to a preferred school, should do so in writing, setting out clearly why your child should go to that particular school. Information about appeals will be sent out with the allocation letter and can also be found on the School Admissions webpage <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/admissions>.
- 11.3 The Appeals Panel will:
- be independent of the school and the LA;
  - give the appellant, who may be accompanied by a friend or be represented, the opportunity to make oral representation;
- 11.4 The Local Authority will:
- give the appellant at least ten school days notice of the time and place of the hearing;
- 11.5 The clerk will:
- send the appeal papers to the appellant at least seven working days before the hearing.
- 11.6 The appeal shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast, the chair of the panel having a casting vote.
- 11.7 The decision of the Appeals Panel and the grounds on which it was made shall be communicated by the Clerk in writing to the appellant. That decision shall be binding on all parties. Subject to the above conditions, all matters of procedure shall be determined by the local authority.

## **PROPOSED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR STALYHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL 2025/26 ACADEMIC YEAR**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 These arrangements apply to the admission of children, currently attending an Infant School, to Stalyhill Junior School in the normal admissions round for the academic year 2025/26

### **2. PUBLISHED ADMISSION NUMBER FOR STALYHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL**

- 2.1 The Published Admission Number for entry in September 2025 is 60.

### **3. APPLYING FOR A PLACE AT STALYHILL JUNIOR SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2025**

- 3.1 If your child attends Stalyhill Infant School, you will receive a letter in October 2024 from School Admissions advising you to apply online - using the online Application Form.  
NB: Only one online application may be submitted for each child.
- 3.2 The Local Authority may verify information you provide on the form, which could involve contacting other departments of the Local Authority. In instances where the information provided is different from that held by them, they may use the information on this form to investigate further. If false or misleading information is given, Tameside Local Authority has the right to withdraw the offer of a school place.

### **4. THE PROCESS**

- 4.1 The online application form will open from 1st November 2024 and will invite parents to indicate a preference for a place at Stalyhill Junior School, or at another Tameside primary school.
- 4.2 Forms must be submitted online by the closing date of 15 January 2025. Parents/carers are responsible for providing any supporting information / evidence if appropriate by the closing date.
- 4.3 Late applications will be dealt with as late and ranked after all applications received by the deadline.
- 4.4 Changes to pupil details, such as a change of address, cannot be considered after the closing date, 15 January 2025.
- 4.5 Decision letters in respect of places at Stalyhill Junior School will be sent out to parents on 16 April 2025. These letters will also inform parents of their right of appeal, and who to contact, if an application has not been successful.
- 4.6 If parents indicate that they wish their child to be considered for a place at another Tameside primary school for September 2025, they will need to complete an online application on Tameside's website [www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions) from June 2025.

### **5. CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATING PLACES IF THE SCHOOL IS OVERSUBSCRIBED**

- 5.1 Where applications for admission to the school exceed the number of places available, the following criteria will be applied, in the order set out below, to decide which children to admit.

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan where the school is named will be allocated places before the oversubscription criteria are applied. The criteria for over-subscription are:

- 1. Looked after children and all previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order**

A 'looked after child' is a child who is (a) in the care of a local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of their social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time of making an application to a school. A child is regarded as having been in state care outside of England if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

- 2 Children who attend Stalyhill Infant School as at the closing date for applications.**

- 3 Children and families with exceptional medical or social needs**

Written evidence must be provided by a suitably qualified professional – e.g. a GP or consultant for medical needs, or a social worker for social needs – the information must confirm the exceptional medical or social need and demonstrate how the specified school is the only school that can meet the defined needs of the child. A panel of officers from Tameside MBC will make a decision as to whether to admit a child under this criterion, using the evidence provided. Parents/carers are responsible for providing all information in support of an application by the closing date, officers of the Council will not ask for additional information. All information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence.

- 4 Sibling:**

This will apply where there are brothers or sisters attending the school at the time of application, who will still be attending at the time of admission, i.e. in the September when a pupil is admitted to Year 3. Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

The sibling criterion includes; natural sisters/brothers; half sisters/brothers; step sisters/brothers; adopted sisters/brothers; sisters/brothers of fostered children; children of the parent/carer's partner, and in each case living at the same address. This allows for the admittance of children whose siblings will still be attending the preferred school.

- 5 All other applications on distance**

Preference will be given to pupils living nearest to the school.

Distance will be measured as a straight line from the child's home address, using the address point assigned by the National Land and Property Gazetteer, to the main gate to the school property. Measurements will be made using the Local Authority's school admissions data mapping software, which uses a Geographical Information System based on Ordnance Survey.

- 5.2 Where oversubscription occurs in applying either criteria 1, 2, 3 or 4, priority will be given to those pupils living nearest the school, measured as a straight line (as above).
- 5.3 The address from which distance will be measured will be the permanent residential address, at the time of application, of the parent with whom the child is normally resident.

Where a child lives with parents with shared responsibility, each for part of a week, the home address is the address from which the parent receives the child benefit.

- 5.4 In the event of distances being the same for 2 or more applications where this distance would be the last place/s to be allocated, the place will be allocated to the pupil that is nearer using walking distance as measured using the local authority's school admissions data mapping software.

In the event of two or more applications with distances, which are exactly the same competing for a final place, e.g. blocks of flats, the place will be decided by drawing lots, the first name drawn will be offered the place

- 5.5 An adoption order is an order under section 46 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002. A 'child arrangement order' is as an order settling the arrangements to be made as to the person with whom the child is to live under section 8 of the Children Act 1989. Section 14A of the Children Act 1989 defines a 'special guardianship order' as an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian (or special guardians).
- 5.6 In cases where twins, triplets, or other multiple birth siblings are split when allocations take place, they will be allocated a place over the Published Admission Number and will remain excepted pupils for the time they are in an infant class or until the class numbers fall back to the current infant class size limit.

## **6. IN YEAR TRANSFERS**

- 6.1 Parents wishing to apply for an in year transfer to a school in Tameside should apply using the online School Transfer Request Form. The School Transfer Request Form can be completed online from the Tameside Council website: [www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/admissions).
- 6.2 Forms should be fully completed and submitted electronically with any additional/supplementary documentation/evidence to the School Admissions Team to enable their application to be considered as quickly as possible.
- 6.3 If you want to transfer your child to a school in Tameside, you must apply through Tameside Council even if you live in another area. If you want to apply for a school in another area, you will need to contact that area for further details of what you need to do.
- 6.4 If a place is available in the requested year group, parents will normally be offered that place but there are some exceptions (see Fair Access Protocol section).
- 6.5 Parents will receive an offer of a school place through Tameside Council and this can take up to 15 school days.

## **7. IN YEAR FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL**

- 7.1 All local authorities have a Fair Access Protocol for in year transfers that ensures the speedy admission of pupils who may experience difficulty in being allocated a school place, for example, if they have been out of school for a long period of time. With specific short term exceptions, all schools in Tameside are participants in the protocol, which may result in schools admitting pupils over their published admission number. Full details of the In Year Fair Access Protocol can be found on the Council's website <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/primarytransfers>

## **8. WAITING LIST**

- 8.1 If the school is oversubscribed the Council will maintain a waiting list. The waiting list will operate until the end of the relevant school year. Parents who have expressed the school as a preference and have not been offered a place at the school, or at a higher preference school, will automatically be placed on the waiting list. All pupils on the waiting list will be ranked according to the oversubscription criteria. When a place becomes available children who have been referred under the local authority's Fair Access protocol or who is the subject of a direction by the local authority to admit will be given precedence over any other children on the waiting list. Then any places will be offered to the highest ranked application received by the date the place becomes available. If new or late applications have a higher priority under the oversubscription criteria, they will be ranked higher than those who have been on the list for some time. If the circumstances of children on the waiting list change (eg they move house) they should inform the Council immediately and provide appropriate supporting evidence.
- 8.2 A place from the waiting list will only be held for two school days. Tameside Council will use the information provided on the original application to contact parents, it is the responsibility of parents to change their details with the School Admissions Team if they move house or change their phone number. If no response is received from a parent who has been offered a place from the waiting list within the 2 school day limit, it will be offered to the next child on the ranked list and so on until the place is filled.
- 8.3 If a parent is offered a place from the waiting list and rejects it or does not respond to requests by email or answerphone message to contact the School Admissions Team, they will be removed from that waiting list.

## **9. APPEALS**

- 9.1 Any parent who is refused admission to a preferred school has the right of appeal to an Independent Appeals Panel. For pupils with an Education Health and Care plan, an appeal can be made to the SEN and Disability Tribunal (details are included in the plan).
- 9.2 Parents, who wish to appeal against the decision of the local authority to refuse admission to a preferred school, should do so in writing, setting out clearly why your child should go to that particular school. Information about appeals will be sent out with the allocation letter and can also be found on the School Admissions webpage <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/schools/admissions..>
- 9.3 The Appeals Panel will:
- be independent of the school and the LA;
  - give the appellant, who may be accompanied by a friend or be represented, the opportunity to make oral representation;
- 9.4 The Local Authority will:
- give the appellant at least ten school days' notice of the time and place of the hearing;
- 9.5 The clerk will:
- send the appeal papers to the appellant at least seven working days before the hearing.
- 9.6 The appeal shall be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast, the chairman of the panel having a casting vote.

9.7 The decision of the Appeals Panel and the grounds on which it was made shall be communicated by the Clerk in writing to the appellant. That decision shall be binding on all parties. Subject to the above conditions, all matters of procedure shall be determined by the local authority.

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## TAMESIDE SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING ANNUAL REPORT JANUARY 2024

### 1. FUTURE SCHOOL PLACES REQUIREMENTS IN TAMESIDE

#### Context

- 1.1 All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet demand in the area. These may be school places available at provision maintained by the local authority, academies, or other non-maintained schools. In order to carry out this statutory duty, Councils need to carry out school place planning and forecasting.
- 1.2 Planning for fluctuations in demand for school places is an important function which needs to be carried out at a local level and will differ depending on the phase of learning, for example, pupils will travel further to secondary schools than primary schools. The compact geography of the borough and the mix of types of school eg single sex means that place planning happens at a level higher than wards or towns.
- 1.3 School place planning is a complex process, that takes account a range of factors including the number of births in the borough, in year movement and cohort survival rates as well as parental preference and planned housing development. With rapid shifts in economic conditions for families and changing patterns of migration, planning for basic need for school places requires a proactive approach to best respond to both short and medium-term demand for places.

#### Strategic Planning

- 1.4 Planning school places is a dynamic process. Tameside Council has taken the view that, in the current situation of fluctuating demand for places, our strategy needs to be refreshed on a regular basis to be responsive to fluid and contemporaneous data. In order to do this, the Council's Executive Cabinet receives recommendations on an annual basis through the annual determination of admission arrangements process. The annual report highlights current issues and potential solutions in advance of the annual consultation on admission arrangements that includes consultation on changes to published admission numbers.

#### Factors affecting demand

- 1.5 The main factors affecting demand for school places are birth rates, in year movements within and without the borough, travel to learn patterns of pupils into schools in other local authorities, and equally pupils travelling to schools in Tameside from other boroughs, housing developments and availability of social housing and parental preference. Many of these are subject to quite short-term uncertainty and are difficult to plan for on a long-term basis.
- 1.6 In October 2023, the Department for Education published its latest national projections for the number of pupils in schools. The table below gives the headline figures for primary and secondary age children. Similar to the pattern in Tameside, the overall trend is down for primary age pupils but the rate of increase for secondary age pupils is slowing down. The population in special schools has been increasing and is projected to peak around 2025 before starting to slowly drop. This is primarily driven by the decrease in the overall population from the same point.

	Actual population in 2023	Projection for 2028
Primary age children	4,593,497	4,180,930
Secondary age children	3,193,260	3,191,441
Source	DfE national pupil projections 2023	

#### Factors affecting supply

- 1.7 The main factors affecting the supply of school places are the availability of capital funding, land and premises. Expansion of existing schools is affected by the capacity of premises, the

size of sites as well as wider considerations of their location. Establishing any new schools requires a longer lead in time through the competition framework. Equally, additional places can be introduced into the system through expansion proposals by governing bodies or admission authorities and the establishment of Free Schools that receive approval by central government. When numbers are falling it is important to consider mitigations for high levels of surplus capacity that can lead to inefficiencies and budget management issues with less pupil led funding coming into schools.

### Challenges affecting planning to meet demand

- 1.8 The main issues that can affect the Council's strategic plans are late applications and in-year admissions that complicate planning both at school and at local authority level. Previously well-understood trends are changing and are proving difficult to predict, including short term tenancies, mobile populations and other changes in the housing market. Patterns of parental preference are also difficult to predict.

### Tameside track record

- 1.9 The Council has been proactive in tackling the issue of rising births over the last 15 years. The Published Admission Number (PAN) increased by almost 18% in primary and 14% in secondary schools to accommodate increased demand. The number of places available is now beginning to decrease as illustrated in the table below.

Tameside primary school places – total places for reception entry								
16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
3195	3175	3175	3160	3145	3140	3110	3065	3065
Tameside secondary school places - total places for Year 7 entry								
16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
2806	2818	3035	3080	3172	3269	3224	3199	3074

- 1.10 By being proactive, the Council has been able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places. This has been done whilst also managing to maintain high levels of meeting parental preference and usually, at a higher level than the national average.

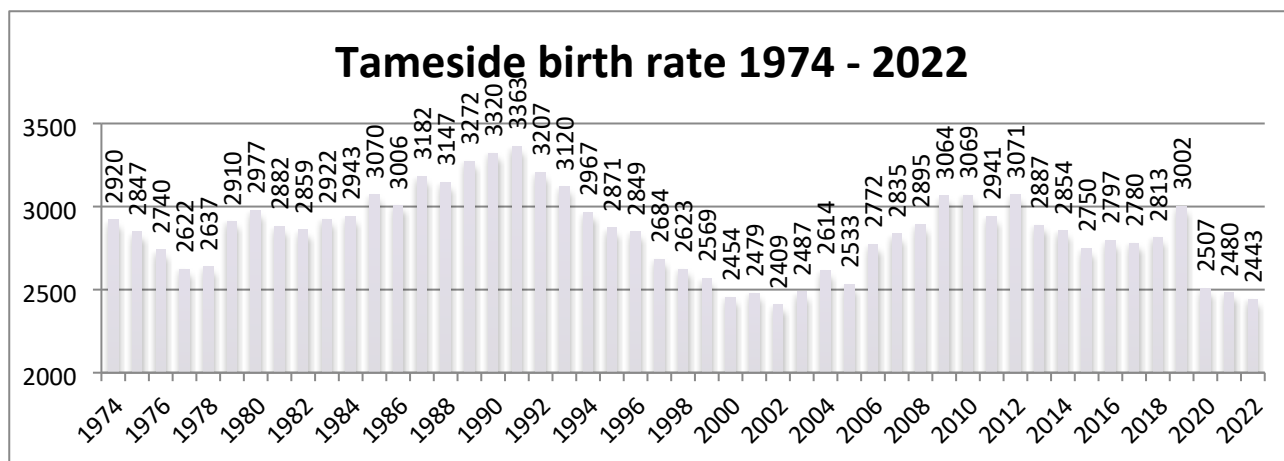
Preference allocations on national offer day	2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL</b>									
	T'side	Eng	T'side	Eng	T'side	Eng	T'side	Eng	T'side	Eng
% 1st preference	83.9%	80.9%	85.6%	82.2%	85.4%	81.1%	85.0%	83.5%	85.9%	82.6%
% any preference	95.8%	94.9%	96.9%	95.6%	95.8%	95.5%	95.7%	96.4%	96.1%	95.6%
<b>PRIMARY SCHOOL</b>										
% 1st preference	91.5%	90.6%	91.5%	90.2%	94.3%	91.8%	93.3%	92.2%	91.9%	92.5%
% any preference	97.8%	98.0%	97.9%	97.8%	98.5%	98.5%	99.1%	98.5%	98.3%	98.6%

## 2. Current demand

- 2.1 In common with many areas of the country, Tameside experienced a surge in births between 2002 and 2012. The birth rate rose from a low of 2,409 in 2002 to a high of 3,071 in 2010, a 27% increase. The birth rate fell by 9% from 2010 to 2018 with a blip increase in 2019 but fell significantly again to 2443 births in 2022. This decrease has been sustained for three years.

- 2.2 As can be seen from the graph below, over the last 48 years, the birth rate in the borough has followed a distinct cycle which appears to repeat over a 25 year period. Birth rates form the basis for any school place planning model. To manage the fluctuations in numbers the

Council has adopted a practice of having a mix of permanent and temporary places when increases were needed to try and avoid significant levels of surplus places when the birth rate decreased.

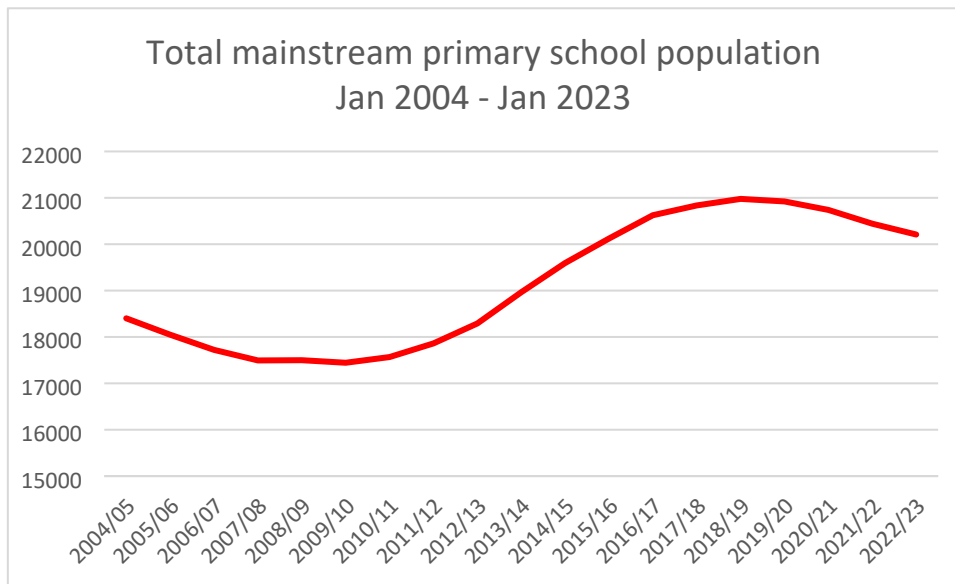


2.3 A number of factors are used to predict how many year 7 places will be needed in the borough and to some extent planning to meet secondary needs is easier as pupils are in primary schools already. These include birth rates, the number of pupils in primary schools, in year pupil movement and planned housing developments. These factors give a range within which demand for school places need to be assessed. For many years, the Council has used an average of Year 6 numbers plus 5% to give an indication of demand; however, this increased to 6% for several years but has now fallen back to less than 4%.

**In year transfers**

2.4 The School Admissions Team in the Council deal with approximately 3,000 transfer movements every year. Around 2,000 are primary school movements and 1,000 are secondary. This is in common with most areas of the country where house moves are the commonest reason for moving schools. The tables below shows pupil numbers in each year group from 2010 onwards. As can be seen the number of children in Tameside primary schools reached a peak in 2018/19 but is now decreasing. The overall number of children in secondary schools is increasing steadily as the numbers feed through from primary schools and is expected to peak in January 2024.

January census numbers – primary schools								
	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	TOTAL
2010/11	2681	2549	2600	2453	2414	2397	2473	17567
2011/12	2760	2690	2574	2581	2467	2420	2369	17861
2012/13	2908	2770	2701	2544	2544	2430	2394	18291
2013/14	2926	2953	2773	2699	2567	2581	2465	18964
2014/15	3104	2929	2931	2761	2692	2597	2580	19594
2015/16	3002	3128	2929	2942	2790	2725	2606	20122
2016/17	3066	3029	3127	2936	2951	2789	2727	20625
2017/18	2998	3089	3009	3118	2917	2926	2779	20836
2018/19	2873	3012	3094	3027	3110	2923	2938	20977
2019/20	2878	2894	2993	3088	3024	3127	2918	20922
2020/21	2787	2874	2896	2982	3073	3008	3119	20739
2021/22	2792	2804	2891	2901	2988	3062	3004	20442
2022/23	2705	2796	2847	2899	2914	2978	3070	20209

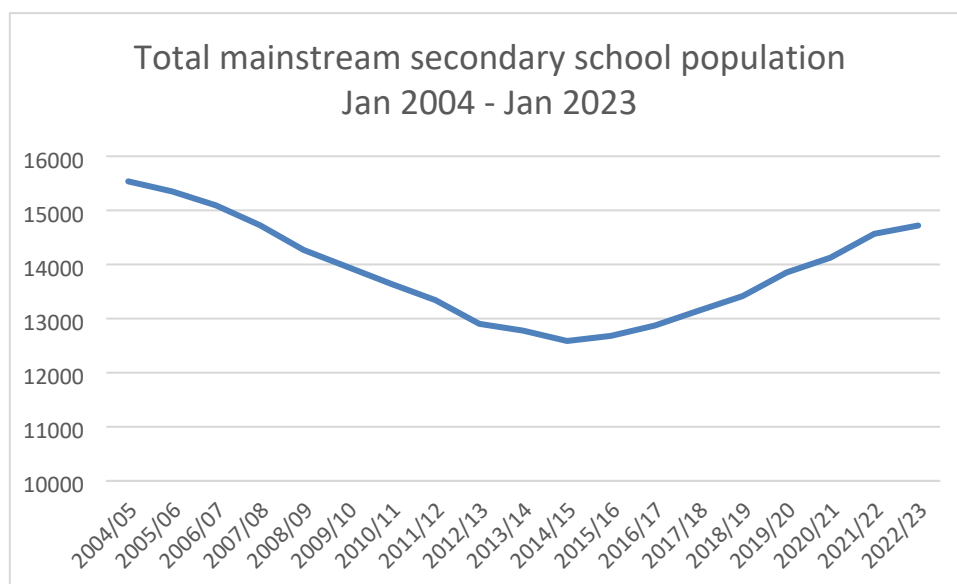


2.5 The table below shows the percentage change in numbers due to in year transfers from one year to the next in Tameside. This shows that, despite the significant amount of in year transfers that occur each year, the numbers in each year group remain relatively stable as they progress through the year groups.

Change in numbers year to year									
	R	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Overall R to Y6	Overall % change
2004/05									
2005/06		12	-12	-2	-3	-6	6		
2006/07		-1	-9	3	7	-4	-11		
2007/08		-22	33	-6	-18	21	6		
2008/09		10	16	-2	13	1	-2		
2009/10		3	36	11	-23	-9	-5		
2010/11		0	11	-46	3	-7	12	13	0.5%
2011/12		9	25	-19	14	6	-28	-28	-1.1%
2012/13		10	11	-30	-37	-37	-26	-12	-0.5%
2013/14		45	3	-2	23	37	35	12	0.5%
2014/15		3	-22	-12	-7	30	-1	-6	-0.3%
2015/16		24	0	11	29	33	9	57	2.4%
2016/17		27	-1	7	9	-1	2	46	1.9%
2017/18		23	-20	-9	-19	-25	-10	19	0.7%
2018/19		14	5	18	-8	6	12	30	1.2%
2019/20		21	-19	-6	-3	17	-5	-8	-0.3%
2020/21		-4	2	-11	-15	-16	-8	15	0.5%
2021/22		17	17	5	6	-11	-4	2	0.1%
2022/23		4	43	8	13	-10	8	4	0.1%

2.6 For secondary schools, the overall pupils numbers are as follows:

January census numbers – secondary schools						
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	TOTAL
2010/11	2582	2712	2713	2813	2819	<b>13639</b>
2011/12	2519	2582	2710	2721	2809	<b>13341</b>
2012/13	2438	2504	2581	2697	2683	<b>12903</b>
2013/14	2538	2445	2528	2580	2686	<b>12777</b>
2014/15	2538	2553	2431	2513	2551	<b>12586</b>
2015/16	2677	2552	2548	2429	2475	<b>12681</b>
2016/17	2694	2701	2549	2517	2411	<b>12872</b>
2017/18	2791	2680	2674	2506	2496	<b>13147</b>
2018/19	2870	2778	2648	2646	2474	<b>13416</b>
2019/20	2957	2888	2747	2620	2640	<b>13852</b>
2020/21	2960	2949	2889	2724	2604	<b>14126</b>
2021/22	3141	2957	2912	2850	2707	<b>14567</b>
2022/23	2999	3125	2924	2868	2804	<b>14720</b>



2.7 The table below shows the percentage change in numbers due to in year transfers from one year to the next in secondary schools in Tameside. This shows that, again, even with high levels of in year transfers, the numbers in each year group decrease as they progress through the year groups.

Change in numbers year to year							
	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Overall Year 7-11	Overall % change
2004/05							
2005/06	172	-7	-11	-28	-62		
2006/07	138	-3	-1	-25	-26		
2007/08	179	-7	-20	-27	-27		
2008/09	95	-13	0	6	-14	-49	-1.7%
2009/10	97	-7	-32	-21	-25	-42	-1.5%
2010/11	51	-2	8	-16	-11	-39	-1.4%

	Change in numbers year to year							
2011/12	46	0	-2	8	-4		-65	-2.3%
2012/13	69	-15	-1	-13	-38		-29	-1.1%
2013/14	144	7	24	-1	-11		-28	-1.0%
2014/15	73	15	-14	-15	-29		-31	-1.2%
2015/16	97	14	-5	-2	-38		-44	-1.8%
2016/17	88	24	-3	-31	-18		-27	-1.1%
2017/18	64	-14	-27	-43	-21		-42	-1.7%
2018/19	91	-13	-32	-28	-32		-64	-2.6%
2018/20	19	18	-31	-28	-6		-37	-1.4%
2020/21	42	-8	1	-23	-16		-90	-3.3%
2021/22	22	-3	-37	-39	-17		-84	-3.0%
2022/23	-5	-16	-33	-44	-46		-66	-2.3%

2.8 The data in the tables shows that whilst there might be a large number of transfers in any given year, the overall change in pupil numbers is relatively small.

### Cohort survival rate

2.9 When taken together, all of the above factors give a cohort survival rate. This is the ratio of the relationship of number of pupils from one point in time to another, for example, the birth rate number compared to the number of pupils allocated a place in Reception or the number of pupils in Year 6 in a Tameside school compared to the number of pupils allocated a place in Year 7.

2.10 In order to effectively plan for changes to school places in secondary schools, which starts two years in advance of entry into Year 7, a cohort survival rate based on year 4 numbers is also calculated. A five year rolling average of this ratio is the method used in Tameside to predict the number of places needed in any particular intake year.

2.11 Planning for primary school places is somewhat harder than secondary school place planning as the only constant source of data are the ward level birth rate information. A five year rolling average of birth rates to primary intake is calculated but unlike secondary schools where seven years of data are available from primary schools, only two years of data are available prior to planning commencing.

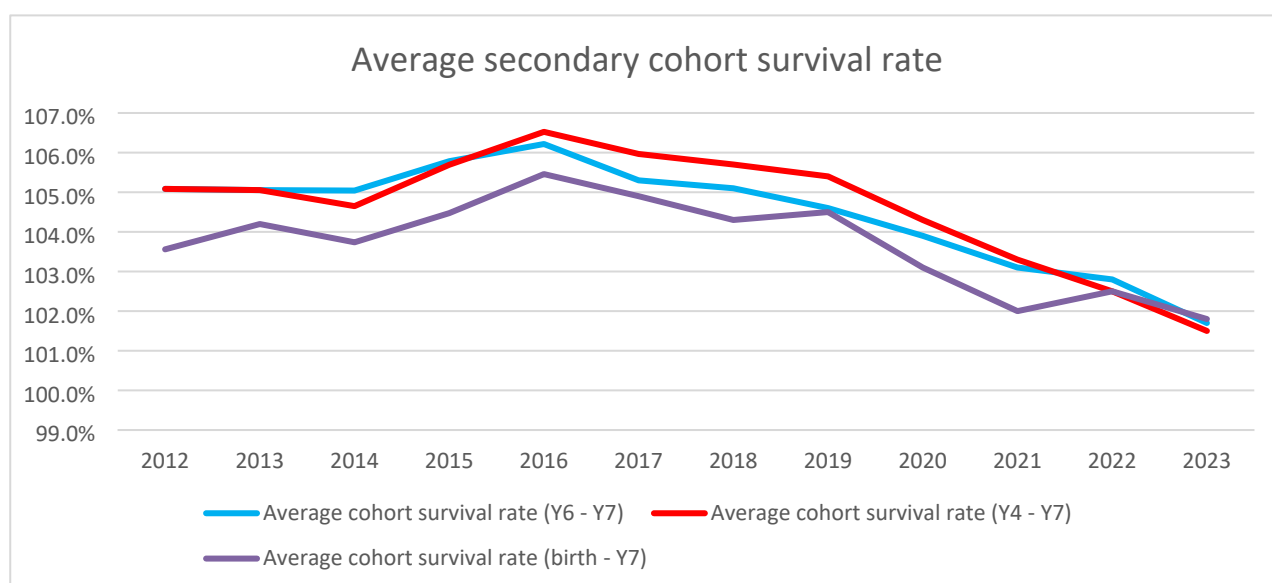
2.12 The cohort survival rate for Year 7 is shown in the table below:

	Year 7 actuals				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total on time applications	3148	3173	3396	3231	3374
Tameside schools 1st preferences inc SEN	2948	2982	3396	3231	3374
Tameside resident out of borough 1st prefs	200	191	168	211	209
Out of borough 1st prefs for Tameside schools	304	318	309	293	262
Total allocated - Sept	3247	3260	3466	3392	3315
Total allocated for Tameside schools - Sept	3001	3004	3190	3059	3038
Total allocated to out of borough and independent	237	170	190	195	241
Primary school Year 6	2938	2918	3119	3004	3070

Year 7 actuals					
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cohort survival rate (Y6 - Y7)	102.1%	102.9%	102.3%	101.8%	99.0%
Primary school Year 4	2951	2917	3110	3024	3073
Cohort survival rate (Y4 - Y7)	101.7%	103.0%	102.6%	101.2%	98.9%
Birthrate	2895	3064	3069	2940	3071
Cohort survival rate (birth - Y7)	103.7%	98.0%	103.9%	104.0%	98.9%

2.13 The five-year rolling cohort survival rate for entry into secondary schools over the last six years can be seen to have declined to its present level of 102%. The decrease in the birth – Y7 cohort survival rate mirrors the in-year changes to primary numbers.

Five years rolling average to	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Average cohort survival rate (Y6 - Y7)	105.3%	105.1%	104.6%	103.9%	103.1%	102.8%
Average cohort survival rate (Y4 - Y7)	106.0%	105.7%	105.4%	104.3%	103.3%	102.5%
Average cohort survival rate (birth - Y7)	104.9%	104.3%	104.5%	103.1%	102.0%	102.5%



2.14 As can be seen from the graph above, the cohort survival rate is at its lowest level for many years and is currently at 101.5%. Taking a five-year rolling average of the cohort survival rate from Year 6 to Year 7; from Year 4 to Year 7 and from birth to Year 7 is very similar and so current secondary school place predictions are based on 104% of Year 4 pupils. The additional 2% gives some surplus capacity for in year transfers. This may need to be revised given the downward trend for the last few years.

2.15 The five-year rolling cohort survival rate for entry into primary schools over the last nine years can be seen to have fluctuated between 104% and 85% in the last year. The downward trend mirrors the changes in the birth rate nationally. As birth rates drop in Tameside and neighbouring boroughs, less non-Tameside resident applicants are being allocated places as they are able to secure places in their own boroughs but equally, Tameside residents are able to secure places in other boroughs. The significant downward trend warrants further investigation before the next place planning report is completed.

Average Reception intake to birth rate	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Ashton	92%	88%	92%	85%	95%	85%	85%	72%

Average Reception intake to birth rate	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Audenshaw	137%	198%	109%	132%	137%	154%	145%	109%
Denton	104%	100%	118%	127%	105%	116%	115%	93%
Droylsden	96%	113%	103%	111%	131%	104%	89%	95%
Dukinfield	132%	130%	111%	133%	113%	119%	112%	110%
Hyde and Longdendale	91%	103%	93%	95%	86%	90%	89%	75%
Mossley	80%	82%	86%	89%	82%	93%	89%	79%
Stalybridge	104%	101%	97%	105%	96%	105%	93%	85%
Average	100%	104%	99%	104%	101%	101%	91%	85%

### Housing development

- 2.16 Another core factor in planning school places, is the amount of new housing development being planned in the borough. Tameside's Local Development Scheme is the key document. The purpose of the Local Development Scheme is to inform the public about the current planning policies for Tameside as well as to set out timescales for preparing new policy so that people are aware of the main opportunities to be involved in the plan making process.
- 2.17 The Council undertakes a housing yield analysis on a regular basis. The analysis looks at ten new development sites and matches new housing development postcodes to new pupil data from the annual school census together with housing information from the Land Registry and Royal Mail to give intelligence on house move statistics and geographical distribution of the population movement into new development postcodes.
- 2.18 The ten development sites have been categorised based upon the type of housing present at each location, with pupil yield statistics generated for each category. The categorisation is as follows:
- Category A: Market housing, mostly semi-detached and terraced properties
  - Category B: Market housing, larger proportion of detached properties
  - Category C: Social housing
- 2.19 The estimation of the number of pupils resulting from new housing developments is a key element of the school place planning process for Tameside Council.
- 2.20 Planning for school places will also need to take account of significant areas of proposed new development including sites in Hyde South and Godley Green and work has been undertaken to determine the level of need for additional school places in these areas.
- 2.21 Using all of the above, pupil yield is anticipated to be:
- **Category A: Market housing, mostly semi-detached and terraced properties**  
The school census data suggests a primary pupil yield of 0.15–0.36 per new home and a secondary pupil yield of 0.07–0.12 per new home. An estimated 44% of moves to these developments originate from outside Tameside.
  - **Category B: Market housing, larger proportion of detached properties**  
The primary pupil yield averages 0.33 per new home. The secondary pupil yield averages 0.12 per new home. An estimated 45% of moves to these developments originate from outside Tameside.
  - **Category C: Social housing**



The school census data suggests a primary pupil yield of 0.41 – 0.60 per new home and a secondary pupil yield of 0.26 – 0.34 per new home. However, it is estimated that only 20% of moves to these new developments originate from outside Tameside.

2.22 As an overall model for calculating pupil yield and developer contributions, the Council uses a pupil yield per new home of 0.23 for primary aged pupils; 0.1 for secondary aged pupils and 0.01 for specialist places. This is predicted to lead to the following number of additional pupils:

	Housing numbers	Primary Places	Secondary Places	Specialist places
22/23	522	120	52	5
23/24	537	124	54	5
24/25	540	124	54	5
25/26	421	97	42	4
26/27	247	57	25	2
27/28	352	81	35	4
28/29	336	77	34	3
29/30	656	151	66	7
30/31	513	118	51	5
31/32	336	77	34	3
32/33	189	43	19	2
33/34	198	46	20	2
34/35	301	69	30	3
35/36	552	127	55	6
36/37	409	94	41	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6109</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>61</b>
			Source 2022 SHELAA	

2.23 Taking all the above into consideration, projected demand for places is shown in the tables below:

### Primary school places

Primary school planning area		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
357001 (Ashton, Droylsden, Mossley)				
Actual intake	Predicted intake	924	913	896
Places available		1140	1140	1140
357002 (Audenshaw/ Dukinfield / Stalybridge)				
Actual intake	Predicted intake	755	680	669
Places available		855	855	855
357003 (Denton / Hyde/ Longdendale)				
Actual intake	Predicted intake	898	878	896
Places available		1070	1070	1070
<b>Total</b>				
Actual intake	Predicted intake	2577	2471	2461
Places available		3065	3065	3065
Surplus capacity		<b>488</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>604</b>

## Secondary school places

SECONDARY SCHOOL PREDICTIONS 4% COHORT SURVIVAL 2024 - 2033 (JAN 23 PUPIL CENSUS)										
	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Sep-27	Sep-28	Sep-29	Sep-30	Sep-31	Sep-32	Sep-33
Primary numbers	2993	2894	2878	2763	2792	2890	3107	2578	2496	2461
Predicted intake	3113	3010	2993	2874	2904	3006	3231	2681	2596	2559
Places available	3074	3074	3074	3074	3074	3074	3074	3074	3074	3074
Balance of places	-39	64	81	200	170	68	-157	393	478	515

### 3. SUPPLY

#### Primary places supply

- 3.1 The Council plans primary places using three geographical planning areas. The planning areas are based on linked towns, specific geography and travel to learn patterns. The number of primary school places increased substantially through a mixture of permanent and temporary places to take account of increasing pupil numbers. As numbers coming into Reception have decreased over recent years, the number of places has reduced but even so, there are large levels of surplus capacity predicted over the coming years and this will need to be addressed.
- 3.2 As shown in 2.23 above, taking into account the demand for primary school places combined with a predicted declining birth rate there are sufficient school places for another 10 to 15 years even taking into account significant levels of new housing in the Hyde / Godley Green area. Consideration needs to be given to the increasing levels of surplus capacity in some areas of the borough and in particular to significant surplus predicted from 2024 onwards. Action needs to be taken to reduce admission numbers and therefore surplus capacity for future years.
- 3.3 As there is an increasing diversity of types of school in the borough, it is imperative that colleagues in Education begin to work with primary headteachers to identify opportunities to reduce Published Admission Numbers in the borough. Large amounts of surplus capacity will impact on the financial viability of schools and could lead to increased levels of deficit budgets for schools.
- 3.4 There have been a number of awareness raising sessions with primary headteachers in the borough to alert them to the issues of rising levels of surplus places. Further support has been offered to geographical clusters to identify where surplus capacity can be reduced. As yet, no proposals to reduce admission numbers have come forward for consultation in future years. This will be kept under review annually through the report to Executive Cabinet.

#### Secondary places supply

- 3.5 The Council plans secondary school places in a single borough wide planning area. The demographics of the borough are complicated with 16 high schools of which:
- 12 out of 16 are voluntary aided or academies
  - 11 out of the 16 being on the outskirts of the borough leading to high levels of cross local authority area travel to learn patterns
  - three Roman Catholic high schools
  - two single sex boys schools
  - one single sex girls school

- a free school

- 3.6 All of these factors mean that ensuring sufficient places for secondary schools is challenging.
- 3.7 Due to the rise in numbers of pupils in primary schools, the focus of increasing places over the last few years has been on the secondary phase. Tameside has used a mixture of permanent and temporary places in primary schools to accommodate the increase in population. Being proactive in discussions with secondary headteachers has resulted in an increased number of secondary places being available and has increased by 16% from its lowest point of 2796 in 2010 to 3239 in September 2021.
- 3.8 The peak of secondary school numbers was reached for September 2021 and the second largest year group has just gone into Year 7 in September 2023. There is still some surplus capacity in current Year 7.
- 3.9 The increased places that have been determined and /or agreed with our secondary schools means that supply was able to meet predicted demand. However, similarly to the primary phase, schools and academy trusts are now beginning to look at removing the temporary surplus places that have been created to avoid schools facing financial pressures with falling numbers coming into schools.
- 3.10 Secondary place numbers will be kept under review annually through the report to Executive Cabinet.

#### **4. SPECIALIST PROVISION**

- 4.1 A SEND Sufficiency assessment has recently been completed and is currently being consulted upon.
- 4.2 The SEND Sufficiency Strategy takes a whole system approach and it is important that schools, health and social care take shared ownership of a SEND system that is inclusive, provides the right support at the right time and ensures children with SEND attend a local school. Attending a local school provides life long benefits through staying close to networks of family and friends, connections to local community and local opportunities for training, employment, volunteering and social inclusion.
- 4.3 The aim is to focus on the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND whilst making effective use of resources. When the whole system doesn't work, schools become less confident of their ability to manage need, parents and carers lose confidence in the system and an EHCP becomes the default. The consequence also sees a drive for more specialist places and ultimately a pressure on maintained special school places and the over use of independent non-maintained special schools, at high cost and out of borough (away from home community and significant travel distances).
- 4.4 The SEN Sufficiency Strategy aims to take action where needed over a three year period to achieve the right balance of mainstream schools with a Resource Provision and maintained special school places / structure of key stage catered for. This will allow inclusion, support / resources and system confidence to grow in tandem.
- 4.5 The number of specialist school places has increased by 48% in the last three years:  
Resource Provision – 57 places to 122  
Special School – 625 places to 890
- 4.6 Although SEN specialist place capacity has increased over the last three years, the steps taken did not follow an agreed strategy and the whole system context in which SEND Sufficiency fits was not evident. No one element, whether that be sufficiency or inclusion

culture, works in isolation and the strategy aims to ensure over-capacity of places does not occur. This could result in the wrong children in the wrong setting and lead to non ideal outcomes and in-effective use of resources.

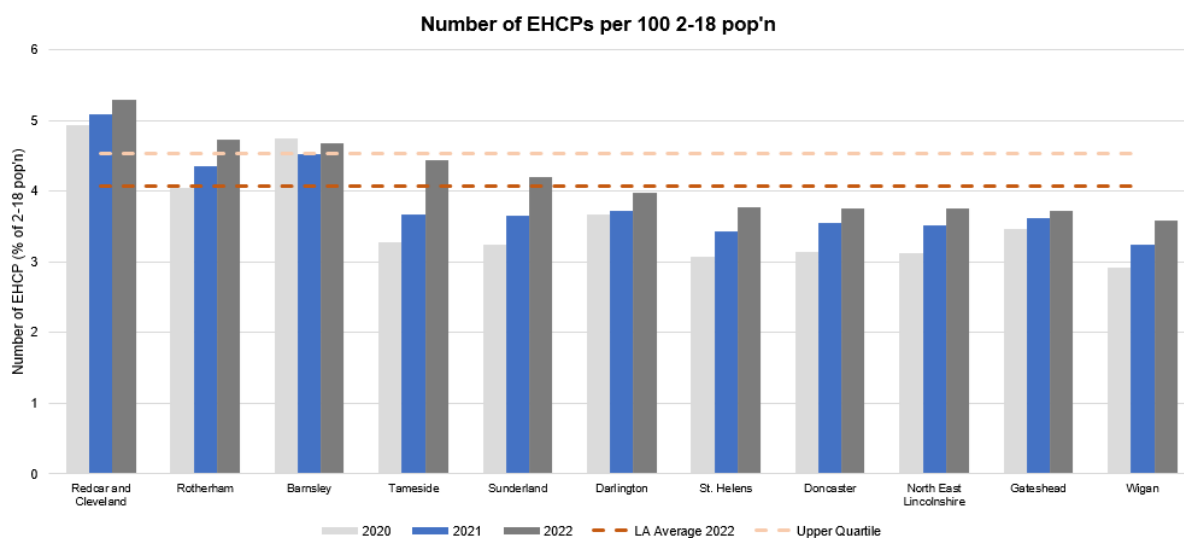
4.7 The new SEND Sufficiency Strategy benefits from Tameside’s involvement in the DfE’s Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme over the 8 months from January to August 2023. This provided the opportunity to identify sustainable changes to the local SEND system that can drive high quality outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Through detailed analysis and triangulation via case reviews, surveys and various deep dives, the subsequent root cause analysis identified Inclusion and Transition as the two high impact areas for our DBV Plan to focus on. Tameside’s evidenced based DBV Plan was approved by DfE in September 2023 and £1m of revenue funding was agreed to assist the implementation of those changes.

4.8 The SEND Sufficiency Strategy will follow the structure of an effective commissioning cycle:

- Analyse – Data analysis, DBV diagnostic, travel maps
- Plan – 3 year action plan
- Do – implementation of projects, tracking impact of whole system initiatives
- Review – Refreshing base position, Annual Reviews, SLA between LA and Schools providing specialist places, Quality Assurance framework

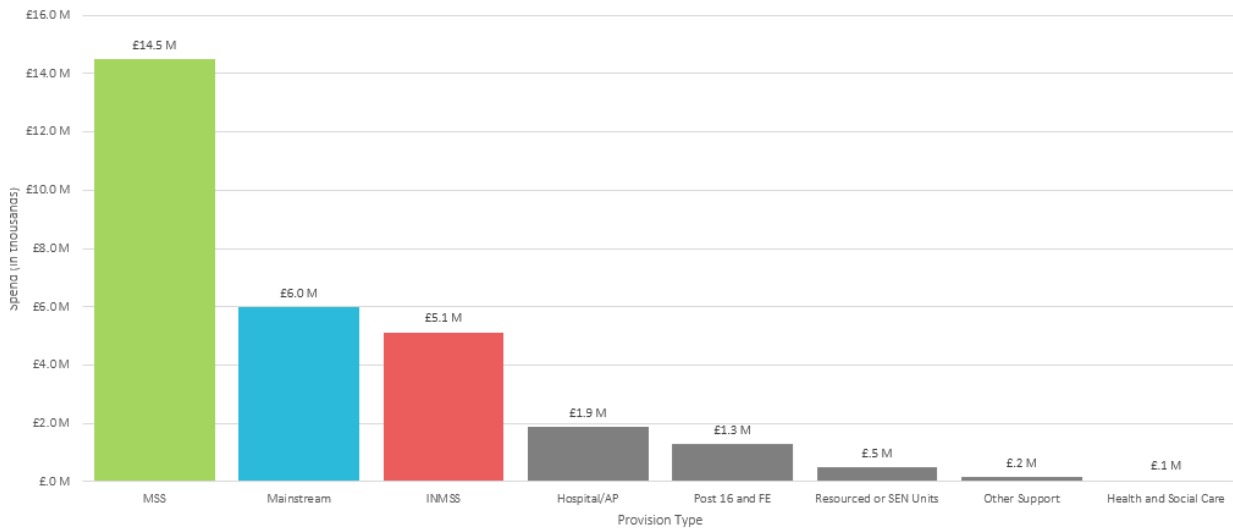
4.9 The Delivering Better Value analysis has made some conclusions about potential future demand for specialist provision in the next five years:

- EHCPs per Capita are higher than national average and have risen sharply from 2020 – 2022 in Tameside

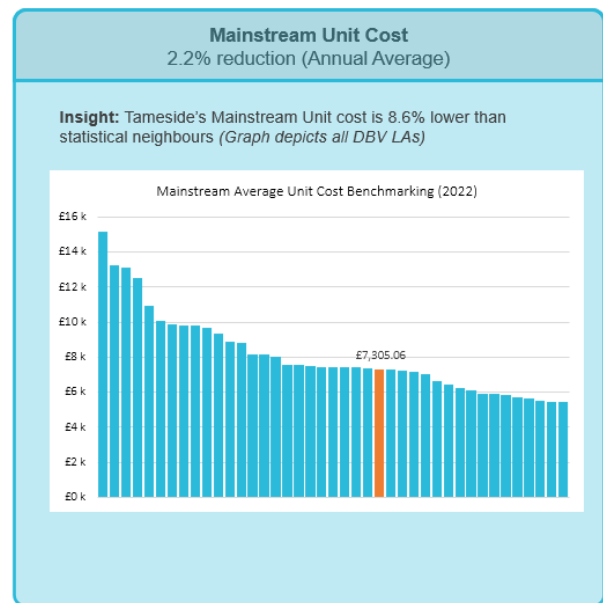
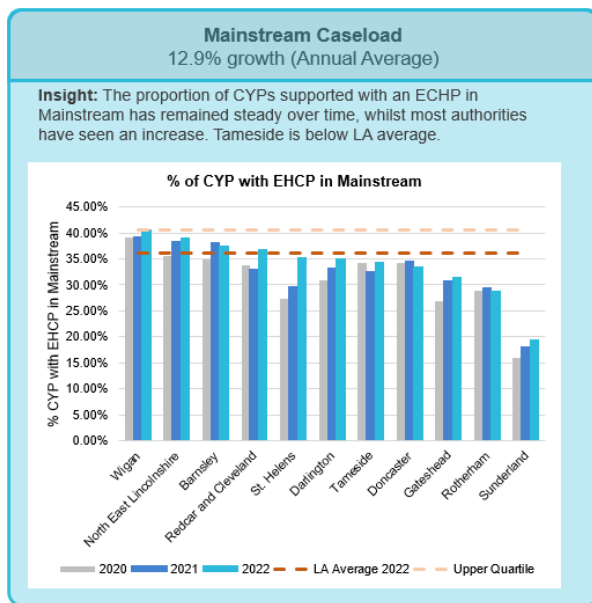


- Mainstream schools, maintained special schools (MSS) and Independent and Non-maintained special schools (INMSS) are the three biggest areas of spend

2021/22 HNB Expenditure Breakdown

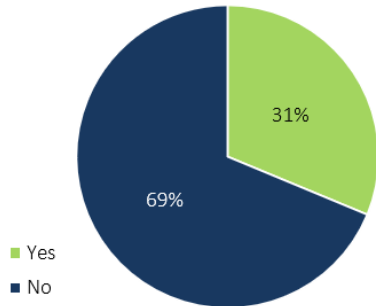


- Tameside's mainstream unit cost is 8.6% lower than statistical neighbours



- Case reviews found that 57% of maintained special school placements and 56% of Independent and Non-maintained special schools placements were non-ideal

Did we achieve the ideal outcome for the CYP and enable them to achieve their goals and aspirations?



Which provisions would be better suited to deliver ideal outcomes?

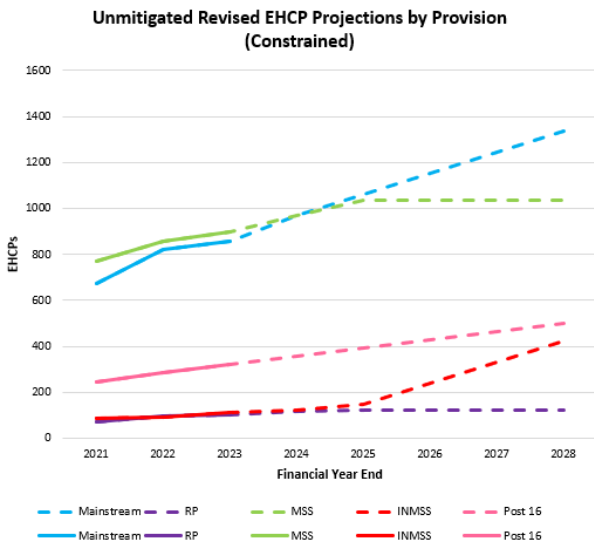
Provision (e.g. type of school/setting)	Cases	EHCP Necessary (%)	Ideal Placement (%)	Resourced Provisions or SEN Units	Mainstream schools and academies	LA maintained special schools	Not enough information available
LA maintained special schools	14	86%	43%	29%	29%	0%	0%
Independent or non-maintained special schools	9	100%	44%	0%	0%	22%	33%
Mainstream schools and academies	5	40%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Resourced Provisions or SEN Units	2	100%	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%
Early year settings	2	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

- Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **Mainstream rather than in MSS**
- Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **Mainstream without the need of an EHCP**
- Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **MSS rather than in INMSS**
- Supporting the goals and aspirations of the child in **RP rather than in MSS**

Our biggest opportunity is around the cohort of CYP starting INMSS placements

- Caseload growth in Independent and Non-maintained special schools is predicted to rise sharply when mainstream special schools hits capacity in 2025

Unmitigated EHCP Projections by Provision



Assumptions

- Linear increase from 2021 to 2023 used to forecast going forwards
- Capacity constraints for RP have been assumed to be 122 places on an ongoing basis – new EHCPs are assumed to flow into MSS when at capacity. When MSS at capacity, flow is expected into INMSS.
- MSS capacity set at 1035 (in-borough 874 and out of borough 161) – assume that new EHCPs flow into INMSS when at capacity

Forecast Number of EHCPs by Provision

Provision	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Mainstream	674	820	859	969	1062	1154	1247	1339
RP	70 (58)	97 (105)	100 (122)	119 (122)	122 (122)	122 (122)	122 (122)	122 (122)
MSS	768 (870)	855 (913)	896 (1035)	968 (1035)	1035 (1035)	1035 (1035)	1035 (1035)	1035 (1035)
INMSS	85	92	112	123	146	238	331	423
Post 16 Provision	247	287	319	356	392	428	464	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>2151</b>	<b>2286</b>	<b>2536</b>	<b>2757</b>	<b>2978</b>	<b>3199</b>	<b>3420</b>

## DBV Opportunities will affect Mainstream, RP, MSS and INMSS caseload

HN Pupil Unmitigated Projections per provision								
Provision	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Mainstream	674	820	859	966	1055	1144	1232	1320
RP	70	97	100	119	133	148	162	177
MSS	768	855	896	964	1025	1085	1145	1205
INMSS	85	92	112	123	136	149	162	175
Post 16	247	287	319	355	390	424	459	493
<b>Total EHCPs</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>2151</b>	<b>2286</b>	<b>2526</b>	<b>2738</b>	<b>2950</b>	<b>3160</b>	<b>3370</b>

**Table shows the unmitigated EHCP projections in each provision**

Our main savings will be through reduction in CYPs in the INMSS, which has been facilitated by LA mitigations

Opportunity Area	Target Mitigated Number of EHCPs							
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Target Mainstream	674	820	859	966	1030	1071	1106	1134
Target RP	70	97	100	168	189	215	240	266
Target MSS	768	855	896	915	966	1010	1054	1099
Target INMSS	85	92	112	123	134	144	153	162
<b>TOTAL EHCPs</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>2151</b>	<b>2286</b>	<b>2526</b>	<b>2709</b>	<b>2864</b>	<b>3012</b>	<b>3154</b>

Opportunity Area	Stretch Mitigated Number of EHCPs							
	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Stretch Mainstream	674	820	859	966	1021	1044	1058	1065
Stretch RP	70	97	100	168	191	221	251	281
Stretch MSS	768	855	896	915	962	999	1037	1074
Stretch INMSS	85	92	112	123	134	142	150	158
<b>TOTAL EHCPs</b>	<b>1844</b>	<b>2151</b>	<b>2286</b>	<b>2526</b>	<b>2698</b>	<b>2831</b>	<b>2956</b>	<b>3072</b>

**Above tables show the target and stretch mitigated projections for number of EHCPs in provisions affected by the opportunities**

### 4.10 The analysis phase indicates that:

- There has been a rapid increase in EHCP plans over the last three years and in particular those with a Speech, Language and Communication need. The projection of EHCP demand and the type of provision attended has taken account of the rise in demand for EHCPs which has yet to plateau and the overall downturn in total pupil population that has just started.
- The number of starts in maintained special schools at the key transition points have put pressure on the capacity and spend through maintained special schools. However the evidence suggests needs could have been met differently or within a time-limited programme of specialist support.
- There has been a rapid escalation in referrals for EHCPs pre 2023 particularly for age 4 and 5 year olds with Speech, Language and Communication need.
- An EHCP being seen by parents and some schools as a requirement to trigger the right provision and support.
- There is fragile parental confidence and nervousness of some schools for pupils with SEN Support and an EHCP as they reach key transition points.

4.11 In order to allow core SEND system improvements to embed and re-shape the number and type of specialist school places needed (ie Annual Reviews to ensure right placement with the right support) and for the DBV plan to take effect, it is proposed for Tameside to reach 266 Resource Provision places and 1099 maintained special school places.

4.12 The proposed, relatively small, increase in specialist school places will ensure capacity is sufficient whilst other improvements embed but more importantly the pathway through Primary Resource Provision to Secondary Resource Provision (as appropriate) is available, which isn't the case at the moment and the in-effective breaks in Key Stage structure of Special School provision in the secondary phase is rectified.

4.13 Provisional plans to address the demand illustrated above include:

- Develop an Early Years Assessment Centre in each locality following Silver Springs pilot (24 places across Nursery, Reception and Year 1. This increase in specialist capacity is already taken account of as a mitigation within DBV analysis.

- Increase Primary Resource Provision by 72 places (more work re geographical reach to match localities with high SEND, reduce transport and decide whether each RP caters for specific need or left open in order to respond to local / changing need)
- Two Resource Provisions as a step down from Early Years Assessment Centres (one at the old Hawthorns site)
- Three 15 place Resource Provisions at Secondary Schools (one in each neighbourhood, following opening of the new Longdendale RP)
- Change age range of Thomas Ashton Special School from 5 – 14 to 4 – 16 (no increase in places commissioned)
- Develop TPRS from age range 14 – 16 to 11 – 19 and increase capacity by 55 places
- Change age range of Samuel Laycock from 11 – 16 to 11 -19 and increase by 30 places
- Develop former Hawthorns site to become a Special School (42 places) and Resource Provision (12 places)

4.14 The work to develop additional places will be overseen by the SEND Inclusion and Partnership Board.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 School place planning is a complex process that requires almost constant review to ensure that the Council is able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient places.

5.2 By being proactive and working in partnership with all our schools over a number of years, the Council has been able to meet the demand for places in spite of significant variations in pupil numbers.

5.3 After the sustained period of growth, data indicates the need to consider reducing levels of surplus that are predicted to increase in primary and secondary schools over the next few years.

5.4 There is a need to engage in dialogue with primary school leaders to begin to consider options to reduce projected levels of surplus capacity. Whilst levels of surplus in secondary schools are not expected to increase significantly for a number of years, dialogue will begin to ensure that temporary places added to cope with the increase in pupils over recent year are removed first.

5.5 Whilst there are currently sufficient places to meet expected demand in mainstream provision, this is not the case for specialist places. The draft SEN Sufficiency Plan is important to understand the supply and demand issues for specialist places and to drive plans to meet identified need in a systematic way.

5.6 The school place planning process must continue to be dynamic particularly in view of significant housing development and predicted increases in children and young people requiring support for their additional needs within the borough and the impact that will have on demand and travel to learn patterns.