

York Schools Forum

17th October 2024

Report of Assistant Director, Education and Skills

Safety Valve Year 3, Quarter 2 monitoring report

Summary

1.This paper provides the members of the School Forum with an update on the progress being made to deliver the Safety Valve High Needs recovery plan. The Year 3, Quarter 2 monitoring report was submitted to the Department for Education on 23rd August 2024.

Progress on the Safety Valve Recovery Plan

2. In Quarter 2 the local authority has reported that it feels less confident that it can meet the deficit reduction targets set out in the Safety Valve agreement. This is due to a growth in demand for special school places and the commissioning of a small number of high cost out of area placements for the academic year 2024-25. This is currently creating an in-year pressure of £782K. As an f40 local authority the low level of school funding has an impact on being able to create sustainable system change whilst managing historic deficits due to lack of financial headroom to implement innovative solutions. Waiting lists in health have created increased costs from parental requests to fund private assessments and packages of therapeutic intervention to deliver provision in section F of EHC plans.

3. As reported previously despite the progress York has made delivery of the deficit reduction targets within the Safety Valve agreement will not deliver long -term sustainable change without significant changes to the national legislative framework. This includes changes to school funding to address the current inadequacy of notional SEN funding in mainstream. The increased costs of teaching assistants due to pay awards has created an additional pressure for mainstream and this needs to be considered in any review of SEND funding.

.4. The table below summarises the operational activity that has taken place in Quarter 1 of Year 3 against each of the priorities in the Safety Valve agreement:

Safety Valve Priority	Activity in Year 3 Quarter 2 (June 2024-August 2024)
Manage demand appropriately by supporting more children and young people in mainstream settings and appropriate and timely ceasing of Education, Health and Care plans.	The numbers of requests for statutory assessment has continued to rise, however the proportion of children and young people supported in mainstream remains above the national average.

	<p>Despite the rise in the number of EHCPs the percentage of decisions to issue has remained at 88%.</p>
<p>Reduce the costs of SEND transport and support independence by improving strategic and individual commissioning and contract management. This will include reductions in the costs of out of city placements, a review of banding and SEND transport.</p>	<p>The York Independent Travel Training service has been extended. The additional capacity allows more travel training to be delivered to increase active travel and reduce the need for SEND transport.</p> <p>The implementation of the minibus fleet is proving cost effective and has reduced the transport costs for the Danesgate Community (specialist SEMH provision) which is now working within the set budget and achieving savings (Year 1 saving £73K, Year 2 saving £66,500).</p> <p>Plans for consultation on changes to post 16 transport has been finalised this quarter.</p>
<p>Support the inclusion of children and young people with SEND in mainstream settings to improve outcomes and reduce requests for specialist provision, including the development of pre-and post-diagnosis support pathways.</p>	<p>Both special schools are operating above their PANs and the delay in the opening of a special school in a neighbouring local authority coupled with increased demand is creating a pressure on in city sufficiency.</p> <p>Plans to develop a SEND Hub as part of the family hubs provision have been developed in this quarter. This will be taken for decision to the September meeting of the council's Executive. Key partners and stakeholders are involved in the development of the SEND Hub including the parent carer forum. The SEND Hub will provide a single point of access for parents and carers and will be a physical front door for the SEND local offer.</p> <p>Evaluation of the Learning Support Hub and the work of the School Re-integration Support Worker has taken place during this quarter and demonstrates the positive impact of the interventions.</p>

<p>Create more enhanced resource provision in mainstream schools to support the transition of children with a primary need of autism and associated social, emotional and mental health needs to reduce out of city placements.</p>	<p>Additional secondary enhanced resource provision has been developed. This has taken some young people who would have opted for a place in our secondary special school. The Inspire Centre, developed by the Excel MAT, has had a positive impact on increasing provision for young people with SEMH needs</p>
<p>Increase the number of young people with SEND in employment in the 19-25 age range by preparing post 16 and post 19 for adulthood, with a focus on routes to employment post 19.</p>	<p>Recruitment and selection to the Aviva supported internship programme was successfully completed in this quarter. During 2023/24 21 young people have followed the supported internship route.</p> <p>The SEND Employer Forum continues to meet and is developing a network of inclusive employers.</p> <p>Work to implement vocational profiling is progressing and the plan to implement in two schools by the end of March 2025 is being developed.</p> <p>The UKSPF Inclusive Employer Project has now been signed off.</p> <p>Review of Post 16 provision is taking place and a sufficiency plan will be developed in quarter 3. This will be co-produced with the parent carer forum, health and adult social care to support the implementation of the Preparation for Adulthood protocol.</p>

5. The deficit reduction assumptions are being re-evaluated and additional support from the DfE SEND adviser team is being accessed to review the next steps in the implementation of the Safety Valve agreement.

Next Steps

8. To complete the review of SEND Banding by January 2025 to ensure that resources are being used to support reasonable adjustments in mainstream.

Recommendations

10. Note the progress on the Safety Valve recovery plan between the Department for Education and the council which forms the basis of the grant agreement that the council has signed up to.

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