

Annex A - Local SEND Reform Plan feedback for (West Sussex)**1. Local SEND Reform plan**

Q1 - Vision - What is the local area trying to achieve?
The Local Area Partnership have clearly articulated their vision, based on the improvements from their post-inspection strategic plan and in response to the Schools White Paper. There is clarity from the vision statement about what success looks like in terms of improved targets. They have outlined their ambitions well and the emphasis on value for money is clear.
Q2 – Where does the local area partnership expect to be in the next 3 years?
The local area partnership has worked together to present a detailed overview of where they are now, and where they would like to be in three year's time, using the four building blocks, with an ambition for inclusion and mainstream inclusion. The plan also contains a high-level summary of the expected success measures and target metrics.
Q3 – What is your local strategy to deliver your 3-year vision?
The plan contains a clear strategy and recognises that the local area now needs to build on their maturing areas of strength and embed consistency, strengthen co-production, and fully integrate commissioning. The response also includes a commitment to building on learning from both DBV and the Change Programme.
Q4 – Maturity Assessment Tool
The Maturity Assessment Tool is complete. It includes the state of the area currently, and improvements that are yet to be made.
Q5 – What is your roadmap for the next 3 years?
The local area partnership has provided a detailed road map based on the four building blocks, with enablers, key milestones, target metrics and success measures included.
Q6 – What will you deliver in the first year?
The delivery plan is highly detailed, is aligned with the four building blocks, and contains separate success measures, milestones and trajectories. A high-level

financial breakdown has been included, with a more detailed breakdown provided as an attachment. Milestones and trajectories could have been more granular.

Q7 – How will local area partnerships deliver the first-year plan?

The plan includes a comprehensive summary explaining the revised governance procedures that will be introduced, alongside detail on the organisational practicalities and the role of the new workstreams. There could have been an explicit reference to how this will be funded via the Transformation Grant. Capacity for project delivery could also have been more detailed.

Q8 – Other Funding (Capital)

The plan includes an intent to enhance mainstream provision, alongside also an expansion to the post-16 offer and more focus on the future of the EY access to appropriate support. This could have been strengthened with further information around how future demand will be met alongside why special school places are needed over mainstream placements.

Q9 - System partner and stakeholder engagement, and co-production

The local area has outlined how they intend to build on and enhance the partnership arrangements, already strengthened through being part of the Change Programme, with mechanisms for engaging with the sector and wider community included.

Q10 – Risks and Mitigation

The plan identifies five risks with appropriate and realistic mitigations that are likely to have an impact of delivery of the Local SEND Reform Plan. However, with mitigations, the risks do not appear to be significantly lessened.

Q11 - Dependencies

A range of dependencies, both local and national have been identified, with risk and opportunity explained throughout. The strategic role of the board is emphasised in its role of horizon scanning to ensure impact on the Local SEND Reform Plan's delivery is properly managed.

Q12 - Monitoring and Evaluation - How will you know if you are succeeding?

Four core areas have been identified for the focus of the monitoring. A clear explanation of the governance and oversight has been given, with an emphasis on

partnership working. The response outlines the use of both quantitative and qualitative data to track KPIs and maintain a feedback loop to enhance ongoing reflection and improvement.

Q13 – Monitoring and Evaluation – Reporting to DfE

The data template is complete. Baseline assumptions are set out clearly and the figures throughout are consistent with the Reform narrative.

Q.14 - Governance

The understanding of the importance of effective governance is a theme throughout the plan, with the governance mechanisms set out as required in the detail needed and containing the expected stakeholders. There could have been a direct reference to the overall SRO portfolio holder.

2. Policy-specific feedback

Families First Partnership

Alongside, the SEND reforms, you'll be very aware that delivery of the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme is a priority for the government. Similarly, FFP will also improve support for children, young people and families, and overtime build a more inclusive, responsive and sustainable system. The FFP programme guide sets out the expectations for this year with a focus on fully operational delivery across the three strands by 31 March 2027. The programme guide also highlights the link between FFP and SEND, where often the same children may be receiving services. It makes clear that the local Family Help offer should reflect the needs of disabled children and provides examples of how this can be achieved.

You have a ring-fenced grant for spend on FFP and a delivery plan, agreed across your safeguarding partnership, that articulates your local approach. These plans were shared with the department in December 2025 and quarterly reporting on progress is a grant condition. It is vital that progress on FFP delivery is prioritised, alongside your SEND reform plan. The department will consider local authority progress across both reform programmes and failure to spend the FFP funding appropriately or meet the March 27 deadline may impact future decisions on support.

Post-16

It is clear that FE is thought of as a key part of the policy but mainly as part of a wider support system than an integral part of the plans and more detail could be given on how this would be achieved. There is good reference to the sector being part of the Experts at Hand offer. It is also encouraging to note Chichester College Group being specifically referenced as a strength in the local area for their SEND work.

EY

As implementation progresses, local area partnerships should ensure that delivery of SEND reforms for children aged 0-5 remains aligned with local Best Start in Life plans, bringing together early years setting, Best Start Family Hubs, health and family services to support earlier identification of need and provision of appropriate support. This includes clear routes to access the Experts at Hand service.

Early years providers and Best Start Family Hubs should be meaningfully engaged in local governance and delivery arrangements, with appropriate representation of the early years sector in strategic decision-making. Partnerships should maintain strategic oversight of early years SEND provision, including the sufficiency and quality of support available to children aged 0-5.