



## Keeping you Connected

### Introduction

Dear Parents and Carers,

We want to welcome you to our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) newsletter. Slough is deeply committed to supporting our children and young people to have the best possible start in life and to grow up to be happy, safe and loved, thriving.

The newsletter has been designed to give families the information they need in an easily accessible format. It is part of our exciting developments for Slough children, young people and their families. As always, we welcome your feedback - please let us know how well it works for you - "Keeping you connected".

In this first communication we wanted to update you on our journey. We would very much like to have more involvement, advice and information from parents and families who have a child or young person with SEND in Slough, so we hope this is a positive and welcomed step forward.

Moving forward we are really keen to include stories from parents and carers in our newsletter. Reading about another parent's experience can be so reassuring to those who are new to the world of SEND. If you or a member of your family would like to write an article for a future issue of SEND, please contact us at:

[SENDteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SENDteam@slough.gov.uk) and together we will build an environment that offers the very best support for our children with SEND.

Best regards,  
Sue Butcher  
Chair of Slough SEND Improvement Board  
Director of Childrens Services  
Slough Borough Council

Best regards,  
Neil Hoskinson  
Director of Education  
Slough Borough Council

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In this issue we discuss:

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1. Our Improvement Journey
  2. The SEND Local Offer and Ordinary Provision
  3. What's new
  4. Contacting the SEND Team
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Our improvement journey so far....



**In February 2023**, we welcomed a monitoring visit from the Department for Education (DfE). This visit helped us to focus on the areas we still needed to improve, despite our efforts the outcome of this visit concluded that we had not managed to move quickly enough to evidence satisfactory progress since the inspection in September 2021. As a result of this Slough Borough Council was issued with a Statutory Direction by the Minister. The Statutory Direction brought another layer of scrutiny because the DfE appointed a commissioner to oversee our progress. We continued to be monitored by the Department for Education through an action plan called a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) and we committed to a rapid improvement programme.

**By February 2024**, a follow-up review by the DfE and NHS England (NHSE) evidenced that we had made significant progress. Although we had started from a low base, the DfE acknowledged the meaningful strides we made in improving our services. A fully operational SEND Partnership Board had been established, supported by a robust data dashboard allowing us to effectively monitor our progress. Our SEND Improvement Plan and Integrated Care Board (ICB) transformation plan were identified as instrumental in driving essential changes to align our initiatives.

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**By October 2024**, we established a strong Senior Leadership Team and committed Local Area Partnership, including schools, health providers and commissioners, and Special Voices, Slough's partner carer forum. Although we are pleased that our practice has improved no agency can succeed on its own, and we are all responsible for improving services. The SEND team have seen a higher levels of completed Education Health Care plans with improvements in quality and we have invested in extra resource as we continue to focus on tackling delays. However, timeliness remains an area of concern for us within the service, just as it is for you as parents and carers of children and young people in Slough. We want to reassure you that as a partnership we are committed to addressing this as an absolute priority. Although we face financial challenges, we have invested in a dedicated team to focus on this work.

Another area of concern is that communication can still be inconsistent at times, and we have developed the statutory SEND team and processes to improve this and ensure that we are supporting families more effectively.

### **What have we done so far...**

We know we are still on a journey, but we want to share with you the things we have done.

- **Improved SEND Services:** We have strengthened the statutory SEND team; by increasing the resource and we have a stable leadership team. There is an active and dedicated local area partnership including health and schools and Special Voices. As a team we are driving forward improvements in all aspects of SEND services.
- **Updated SEND Strategies:** Our outcomes-based SEND and Inclusion strategy is being coproduced with children, families and partners.
- **Improving timescales:** Reducing the delays in EHC Needs Assessments and the timeliness of plans, is a priority. We are working hard to tackle this by adding extra resource to our teams.
- **Quality of plans.** We are auditing the quality of our work using the national Local Government Association (LGA) quality assurance toolkit. this process helps us scrutinise the quality of our plans and makes sure we make the improvements required in a timely way.
- **Support for SEND** An "Ordinarily Available Provision" document has been co-designed for children with special education needs but without EHC plans and we have relaunched [Slough SEND Local Offer](#)
- **Collaborative Initiatives:** Various co-production activities, including coproduced strategies like the Preparation for Adulthood Toolkit, Integrated Therapies Contract, and new travel training program, are in progress. By increasing resources, we are hoping that waiting lists for therapies decrease, and this will be closely monitored.

- **New Governance and Participation:** The SEND Partnership Board has been developed into an Operational group and Strategic Improvement Board; both have very clear priorities. Representatives from Special Voices have always attended the Partnership Board and are now members of the Strategic Improvement Board. This representation is highly valued and makes a significant difference to the discussions and the work of the partnership.
- **Participation:** There is a fantastic participation offer for children and young people with SEND led by a dedicated participation officer. Young people are actively engaged in our ongoing improvements.
- **Future Planning:** We are planning for the next Local Area Inspection, with continued self-evaluation of the local area partnership and your feedback.

**Next steps...**We want to hear from you to help guide the next phase of our journey. Please give us your feedback and idea in the feedback form link below:

[SEND Parent and Carers Feedback and Ideas form](#)

### What's new? Arbour Vale Expansion



Ensuring we are responding to children with complex needs in SEND is an absolute priority and as an example we identified that there was an increase in the number of children requiring specialist school places for September 2024. Following tremendous partnership working we have expanded Arbour Vale school and developed a new learning environment for these children. Further work is due to be completed by January 2025 to continue to meet the needs of our SEND pupils into the future.

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## The SEND Local Offer

Welcome to the [Slough SEND Local Offer](#) providing online information about services, support and activities for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25.

[SEND Local Offer with Special Voices](#) A powerful example of co-production led by a partner working group.

On our Local Offer you will find information from [SENDIASS](#)

## The Ordinary Provision Offer

Sloughs [Ordinary Provision](#) tool kit is detailed in the Local Offer and is available for:

- All educational settings
- Parents, carers
- Other professionals.

This offer has been produced in collaboration with schools in Slough detailing the support Slough Borough Council and its partners expect mainstream schools to offer their Children and Young People with SEND.



## Contacting the SEND Team

There are two dedicated email addresses to help you contact us, and to help us effectively respond to you, we would ask that you please use the correct email address depending on the nature of your contact with us:

[SEND\\_EHCNArequest@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SEND_EHCNArequest@slough.gov.uk) - this email is the address to send all your ECH Needs Assessment request.

[SENDteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:SENDteam@slough.gov.uk) - This email is for all other enquiries

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**Or call us on 01753 787676**

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