SESLIP
South East Sector Led Improvement Programme

Oxfordshire Start Well Commissioning

Day 1 Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt – Workshop Evaluation

2 November 2026 | SESLIP Targeted Support

Summary

Day 1 established a shared Lean improvement framework for the Start Well Commissioning Team and applied it directly to the live challenge of post-16 SEND provision and transition to adulthood. The workshop moved from purpose and problem definition through to current-state mapping, demand and data, waste and failure demand, and root-cause analysis. A strong common theme emerged across the group outputs: the system should be judged not simply by whether a placement is secured, but by whether children and young people are supported to thrive, develop independence and transition successfully into adulthood through coordinated, timely and sustainable provision.

Agreed key line of enquiry

A system to enable children and young people with SEND to thrive and transition successfully into adulthood, by providing timely, coordinated and person-centred education, health and social care support, alongside meaningful pathways to independence, further education, training and employment.

This will be delivered through effective partnership working, market development and increased choice, ensuring high-quality, sustainable provision that meets individual needs and statutory responsibilities while achieving value for money.

What Day 1 achieved

- Created a common language for improvement through Lean Six Sigma and the DMAIC framework: Define, Measure, Analyse, Improve and Control.
- Clarified system purpose through CATWOE (Customers, Actors, Transformation, Worldview, Owners, and Environmental constraints) and root-definition exercises, with participant outputs consistently emphasising independence, adulthood outcomes, coordinated education/health/social care support, choice, market development, statutory responsibilities and value for money.
- Defined the live challenge and used problem and goal statements to separate symptoms, causes and solutions.
- Made the current system more visible through Voice of the Customer, SIPOC (Suppliers, Input, Process, Outcomes, Customers), customer journey, swim-lane and rich-picture approaches.
- Introduced demand, flow, variation, value, waste, failure demand, data sources and root-cause analysis as the evidence base for improvement.
- Established between-workshop evidence gathering so that Day 2 can move from current-state understanding to improvement, control and implementation.

How Lean supports the key line of enquiry

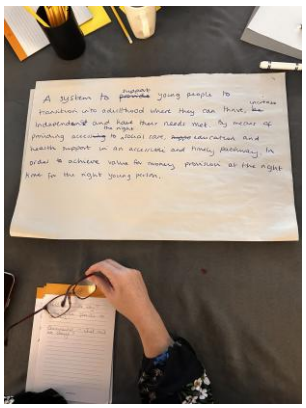
DMAIC	Lean contribution	Application to Start Well
DEFINE	Agree purpose, customer value, scope and the problem to solve.	Keep the focus on outcomes for young people: independence, choice, successful transition and preparation for adulthood.
MEASURE	Use evidence to understand demand, flow, variation, cost and outcomes.	Build a reliable picture of need, provision, transition points, capacity, waits, out-of-area use and gaps in local choice.
ANALYSE	Test root causes rather than reacting to symptoms.	Understand why pathways become delayed or constrained – for example hand-offs, market gaps, funding routes, information quality or unclear ownership.
IMPROVE	Redesign around value and test countermeasures.	Develop earlier, clearer and more coordinated pathways and commission provision that better reflects need and aspirations.
CONTROL	Agree measures, ownership and review routines.	Track whether changes improve transition outcomes, choice, timeliness, quality, statutory compliance and value for money.

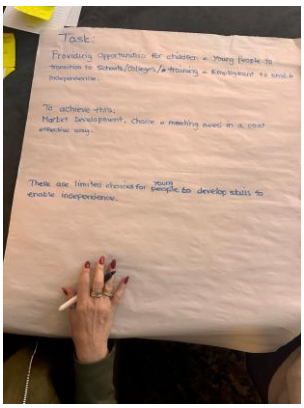
Workshop observations and emerging themes

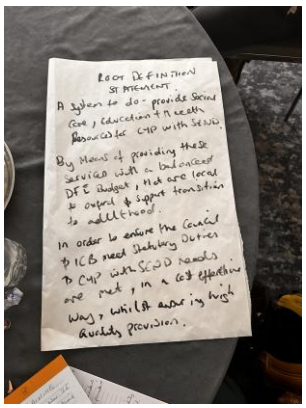
The practical outputs show useful convergence around the purpose of the Start Well system. Although the groups used different language, the photographed root-definition exercises repeatedly referenced:

- young people thriving, developing independence and transitioning successfully into adulthood;
- timely and accessible education, health and social care support;
- further education, training and employment as meaningful routes to adulthood;
- greater choice and stronger market development;
- meeting statutory duties and individual SEND needs; and
- high-quality provision delivered sustainably and cost-effectively.

Examples of participant outputs







What this means for the improvement work

- The shared ambition is broader than solving an isolated placement problem. The system needs a clear line of sight from need and aspiration through to provision, transition and adult outcomes.
- The Lean work should examine the end-to-end pathway rather than optimise one team's activity in isolation.
- Customer value should be defined from the perspective of the young person and family as well as commissioners and partners; faster processing is only valuable if it leads to better, more appropriate outcomes.
- Market development and increased choice need to sit alongside process improvement. If the required provision does not exist, an efficient pathway alone will not deliver the agreed purpose.
- Financial sustainability and value for money are important constraints and outcome measures, but should be considered alongside quality, independence, timeliness, choice and statutory responsibilities.

Priorities for the period between Day 1 and Day 2

Evidence to bring back	Why it matters
Validate the AS-IS maps and key hand-offs with colleagues who do or experience the work.	Confirms the actual pathway and identifies variation between policy and practice.
Bring data on demand, provision, waits/lead times, placement type/location, costs, outcomes and known gaps.	Allows the team to distinguish high-volume issues, high-impact exceptions and evidence gaps.
Test the emerging problem statement and root-cause hypotheses against cases and data.	Prevents the team moving prematurely from symptoms to solutions.
Identify where information is duplicated, decisions are revisited or responsibility is unclear.	Targets waste, rework and failure demand.
Bring examples of where transitions work well as well as where they are difficult.	Helps identify conditions for success, not only failure points.

Overall evaluation

Day 1 successfully established the foundations for a practical Lean improvement project. The team developed a shared view of the purpose of the Start Well system and began to make the current pathway, customer experience, constraints and evidence requirements visible. The next stage is to validate these views with data and real cases, test the most important root causes, and use Day 2 to move into future-state design, prioritised improvements, measures and a 30–60–90 day implementation plan.

See separate Day 2 Evaluation Report

Claire Woodcock | SESLIP Associate | November 2026