Oxfordshire Start Well Commissioning

Day 2 Lean Six Sigma Yellow Belt – Workshop Evaluation

18 November 2026 | SESLIP Targeted Support

Summary

Day 2 consolidated the Start Well Commissioning Team's learning from Day 1 and moved the work through the Improve and Control stages of DMAIC. Using the evidence gathered between workshops, including placement and financial data, parent/carer and provider feedback, pathway intelligence and the SESLIP SME case review, the team tested its understanding of the problem, prioritised improvement opportunities and designed elements of a future-state pathway. The day finished by translating Lean from a training exercise into continuous improvement practice, with colleagues identifying where specific tools could be used in their own commissioning work and agreeing to bring learning back to the team.

Agreed key line of enquiry

> **A system that enables children and young people (CYP) 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.**
>
> Through effective partnership working, local market development and increased choice, the system will deliver high-quality, sustainable provision that responds to changing individual needs, fulfils statutory responsibilities whilst achieving value for money to the NHS and OCC.

What Day 2 achieved

- Reconnected the team to the evidence and learning gathered since Day 1, using a "show and tell" approach to challenge and refine the shared understanding of the current system.
- Strengthened the evidence base around the live challenge: young people aged 16+ remaining in high-cost INMSS placements, limited local provision, pressure on the High Needs Block and Adult Social Care budgets, and the need for clearer transition pathways.
- Used Lean improvement tools to generate and prioritise ideas, including redesign principles, Fishbone thinking, impact/prioritisation approaches, 5Ws and 1H and Kano analysis.
- Moved from the AS-IS towards a TO-BE pathway, identifying critical pain points, future-state changes, ownership and measures.
- Introduced Control through team scorecards, standard work, visual management, review rhythms, quality assurance and benefits tracking.

- Ended with “Lean into Practice”, asking colleagues to select practical tools to use in live commissioning work and share the learning at a future team meeting, embedding continuous improvement rather than treating Lean as a one-off project.

How SESLIP organised and supported improvement

SESLIP support	What this enabled	Application to Start Well
Structured two-day DMAIC journey	Day 1 created a shared language and AS-IS view; Day 2 deliberately moved into Improve and Control.	Kept the work focused on a live commissioning challenge rather than generic Lean theory.
Independent SME case review	Added a focused review of eight cases to the team’s own data and experience.	Helped identify information gaps and test whether needs, provision, decisions, funding and transition could be traced clearly.
Evidence integration	Brought together quantitative data, parent/carer voice, provider feedback and wider pathway intelligence.	Enabled the team to challenge assumptions and distinguish system pressures from individual case issues.
Facilitated redesign	Provided practical tools for future-state design, prioritisation and Kano analysis.	Supported the team to move from identifying pain points to defining what a better pathway should look like.
Control and capability building	Introduced measures, scorecards and continuous-improvement routines, then asked colleagues to identify tools they will reuse.	Supports improvement to continue within Start Well after the workshops rather than relying on external facilitation.

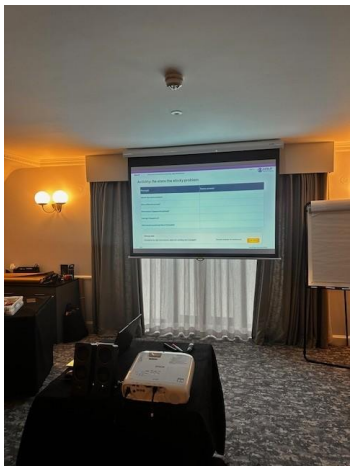
Evidence brought into Day 2

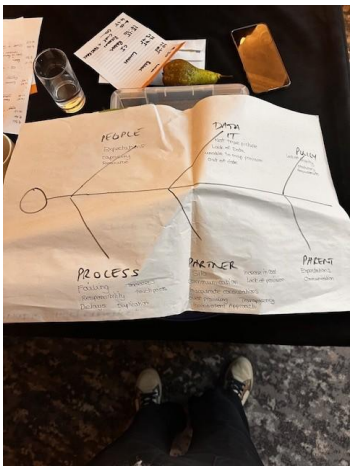
The second workshop deliberately started with evidence gathered since Day 1. This strengthened the team's ability to move from "we think" to "we know enough to test". The combined evidence highlighted:

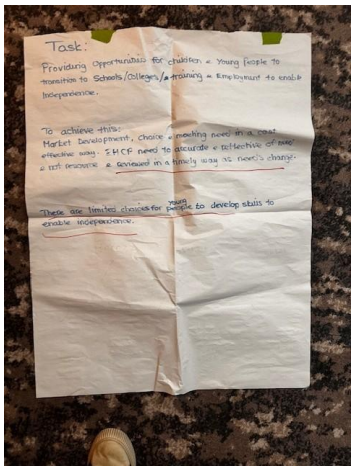
- 85 unique young people aged 16+ in the INMSS dataset, across 91 placement records, with approximately £3.9 million recorded financial commitment.
- Parent/carer feedback showing particularly weak confidence in post-16 transition planning, information and clarity about responsibility for the move into adult services.
- Provider feedback identifying decision and placement delays, funding/commissioning issues and transport as important barriers, while recognising the value of strong relationships and supported transitions.
- Pathway intelligence suggesting high process load, including around 800 consultations in one academic year compared with around 200 college offers, alongside waiting, hand-offs, over-processing and failure demand.
- The eight-case SME review identifying inconsistent traceability between needs, provision, decision rationale, funding and transition, with Adult Social Care pathways unclear in several reviewed cases.

Examples of participant outputs and practical application











Day 2 combined facilitated learning with practical mapping, analysis and redesign activities.

Workshop observations and emerging themes

- The challenge is a whole-system issue rather than a single service failure. Education, Adult Social Care, health, providers, families, transport, funding and statutory processes all influence the pathway.
- Local sufficiency and market development remain central. Process improvement alone cannot create choice where suitable provision does not exist.
- Earlier transition planning and better forecasting are critical if Oxfordshire is to shape local capacity before young people reach a point of urgent placement decision-making.
- Information quality, clear decision rationale and named ownership matter. Lean highlighted the need for a traceable line from needs and aspirations through options, decision, funding, outcomes and transition review.
- The voice of young people and families needs to be built into both pathway design and ongoing measures of success, not treated as a one-off consultation exercise.
- The team recognised that improvement needs both redesign and control: a better process, supported by measures, review routines and learning loops.

From current state to improved pathway

Day 2 helped the team translate the evidence into design principles for the future state. The Lean framing encouraged a pathway that is:

Design principle	What it means for Start Well
Earlier	Act before need escalates and identify future requirements soon enough to shape provision.
Clearer	Use a consistent evidence set, transparent decision standards and traceable rationale.
More local	Increase the ability to meet need in Oxfordshire where this is effective and appropriate.
Joined-up	Bring education, health, social care, commissioning and providers together at the right points.
Measured	Build outcomes, customer experience and review into the pathway so learning can drive further improvement.

Control and continuous improvement

The workshop deliberately did not finish with a fixed 30–60–90 day plan. Instead, the final section focused on how Lean could become part of everyday Start Well commissioning practice. The team explored:

- a small set of meaningful measures spanning child/family experience, pathway flow, quality, provision and system sustainability;
- standard work such as checklists, pathways, decision criteria and templates;
- visual management through simple trackers, dashboards or communication cells;
- regular review rhythms and quality assurance, including case audits and family/provider feedback; and
- a "try it – reflect – share – decide whether to use it again" approach to continuous improvement.

Lean into Practice

Each colleague was asked to identify a Lean tool or approach that could be applied to a real commissioning challenge, the first opportunity to use it, what they would look for or learn, and to share that learning at a future Start Well team meeting. This shifts the emphasis from completing a training course to building an ongoing improvement habit.

Practical legacy for the Start Well team

Capability retained	How it can be used
Root definition / problem framing	Clarify purpose and avoid moving straight from a symptom to a preferred solution.
SIPOC, swimlane and customer journey	Make complex commissioning pathways visible and identify hand-offs, gaps and customer experience.
Pareto and data measures	Focus attention on the vital few issues and use evidence to prioritise effort.
5 Whys / Fishbone / 5Ws and 1H	Test possible causes and challenge why current processes operate as they do.
Kano / future-state design	Distinguish basic expectations, factors that drive satisfaction and potential added-value features when redesigning services.

Overall evaluation

Day 2 successfully completed the applied Lean learning cycle for the Start Well Commissioning Team. SESLIP organised the support so that training, independent evidence, stakeholder voice and the team's own operational knowledge were brought together around one live improvement challenge. The programme enabled colleagues to move from defining

and mapping the current system to testing causes, redesigning the future pathway and considering how improvement will be measured and sustained. The most important legacy is not a single action plan, but a stronger shared capability to use Lean tools as part of routine commissioning, review and problem-solving. This gives the team a practical basis for continuing to improve post-16 SEND pathways, local choice, transition experience and value for money over time.

Participant feedback was consistently positive, with respondents highlighting both the immediate value of the Lean methodology and its potential application across a range of live commissioning challenges. Feedback also demonstrated appetite for continued SESLIP support beyond the two-day training.

Theme	feedback	Implication for SESLIP / Start Well
Value of the Lean training	Participants valued the Lean training as a practical and engaging way to structure problem-solving, challenge assumptions and understand the problem before moving to solutions. One respondent described the facilitation as exceptionally engaging and said they would have welcomed a longer course.	The applied, facilitated format worked well and should be retained for future Lean offers.
How the tools will be used	The team identified clear opportunities to use Lean tools in business-as-usual commissioning, including structured problem-solving, continuous improvement, evidence-based commissioning and helping teams take a more objective view of complex issues.	Lean capability has potential to become part of routine commissioning practice rather than remain a one-off training intervention.
Priority areas for application	Suggested applications included post-16 transitions, employment pathways, reducing high-cost placements, SEND reform, co-production with children, young people and families, Alternative Provision models and thresholds, referral routes, reintegration, quality assurance, and changes affecting care leaver homelessness.	There is a strong pipeline of live commissioning challenges where the methods could be tested and embedded.
Wider support requested	Respondents expressed interest in a broad range of SESLIP support, including short diagnostics, longer-term improvement support, specialist input, sub-regional and multi-agency workshops, strategic programme leadership, coaching and mentoring, Lean process redesign, shared tools/resources, embedded consultancy and regional practice networks.	The feedback indicates appetite for both targeted short-term support and longer-term improvement capacity.
Future engagement	All respondents indicated willingness to engage with further SESLIP support, subject in one case to available capacity.	There is a positive basis for continued engagement with Oxfordshire and potential follow-on support.

Overall, the feedback suggests that the training was valued not simply as a learning event, but as a practical improvement approach that participants could see themselves applying to real commissioning work.

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