



**Southwark Council  
Special Educational  
Needs and Disability  
(SEND) Strategy  
2022-2025 Consultation  
Version**

**February 2022**

## 1. Why are we doing this?

- **We are ambitious and want to do better.** We are doing well for many of our children and young people with SEND. All of our nine special schools are good or outstanding and we are in the top 25% of mainstream schools achieving well for pupils requiring SEND support. But we can do more to make our services more inclusive.
- **We want to keep pace with demand and practise innovations improvements.** The number of children and young people with EHC plans is steadily increasing: from 1580 in 2013/14 to 2638 in 2020/21. Their needs are more complex, with 49% of the plans supporting those with ASD (autistic spectrum disorder)
- **We want to make sure that we have the best possible arrangements in place to make the right plans for our children and young people.** Partnership working with key agencies can be challenging; particularly, for example, as the changing arrangements with health organisations ICS (Integrated Care Systems) develop. Nevertheless, we want to make the best arrangements possible and, most importantly, work openly and collaboratively with children, young people, and their families to support and guide them through their education and care pathways to become confident adults.
- **We need to make the best use of the resources to make a difference.** Costs are continuing to increase, and, although compared to other areas we educate more of the borough's children and young people with SEND needs in local mainstream and special schools, we want to develop even more local provision.

**Question 1. Are our reasons for updating the strategy right?**

## 2. Our vision

**Our overall mission is to improve life chances for our residents and make Southwark a special place to live and work.**

Our current council plan sets out Southwark's values:

To:

- treat residents as if they were a valued member of our own family
- be open, honest and accountable
- work for everyone to realise their own potential
- spend money as if it were from our own pocket
- make Southwark a place to be proud of
- always work to make Southwark more equal and just
- stand against all forms of discrimination and racism.

**Our vision for children and young people with SEND follows these values and means we want to:**

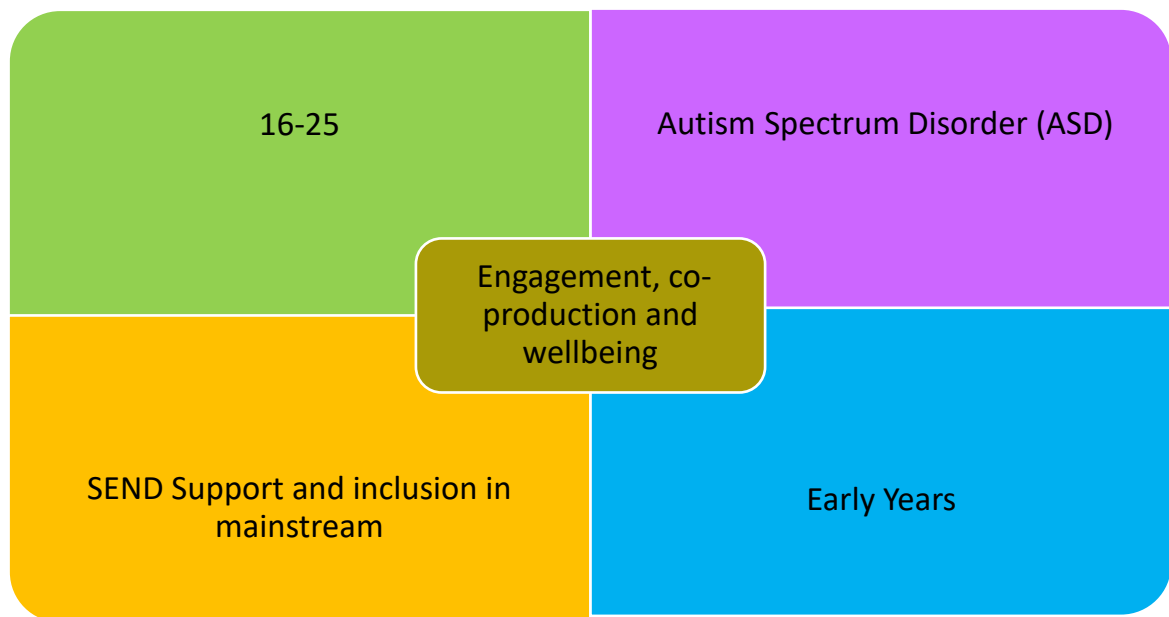
- Improve and further develop our continuum of provision for all children and young people of all ages.

- Have a stronger commitment to early intervention, assessment, planning and support through working with partner agencies and the voluntary and community sector.
- Make sure that our early years' settings, mainstream and special schools, as well as post- 16 settings, are more effective in ensuring children and young people with SEND make good progress in their learning and in their personal and social development.
- Enable all our children and young people to transfer successfully to the next stage of their education, the world of employment, and to transfer to an independent adult life wherever possible.

Questions 2 and 3. Do you agree with our vision? Do you agree with our aims?

### 3. Our priorities

We have identified five main priority areas for the next 3 years; at the heart of which is engagement, co-production and wellbeing.



Question 4. Have we captured the right priority areas?

## **Priority 1: Engagement, co-production and wellbeing.**

**We want to better engage and work together with parents, children and young people and all other agencies involved in providing support for SEND, ensuring that the wellbeing of the child or young person is central the way that we work together.**

### **We will:**

- Make sure that children and young people with SEND and their families are included in all decisions about their support, together with those key agencies that support them.
- Provide high quality and accessible, information, advice and guidance to support children, young people and their families at key transition points, from their early lives and into adulthood.
- Develop new ways of engaging children, young people and their families and carers in the co-production and commissioning of services.
- Create bespoke pathways as young people develop towards adulthood that recognises they need support to make their own choices and decisions once they become young adults.
- Raise more awareness with parents and partners to understand the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and develop pathways with the Children's and Adults' Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to provide more specialist assessments.
- Enhance and improve the short breaks offer for children and young people with SEND and the use of and access to personal budgets across the 0-25 age groups.

### **How will we know we are making a difference?**

- We will publish how feedback from the local area is influencing services on our local offer.
- Our strategy will develop and be informed by the voice of those who use the system.

## **Question 5. Are these the right things to do?**

## **Priority 2: Services for children and young people with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)**

**We want to improve provision and support across the age range for children and young people who have ASD**

### **We will:**

- Continue to develop a wide range of services in Southwark so that families can choose settings that best suit their children and which are closer to home and community.

- Improve early years provision and transition to specialist primary school provision to reduce exclusions and improve the contribution of education staff to the pathway.
- Continue to increase capacity in our special primary and special schools for our children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Work with all new and expanding schools and providers in Southwark to ensure that new settings are autism friendly and can offer appropriate learning opportunities so that outcomes are good for all young people with complex needs and ASD.
- Increase the provision in our mainstream secondary schools for young people with ASD.
- Work more closely with young people and their families to match provision to their needs and aspirations.
- Continue to return proactively to their communities those children and young people in out of borough provision.

### **How will we know we are making a difference?**

- Children and young people with complex needs and ASD will have access to services that meet their needs locally.
- Educational settings and staff can demonstrate they have a good understanding of complex needs and ASD and can effectively meet the needs of the children/ young people in their care.
- There will be a reduction of the need for out of borough placements for young people with complex needs and ASD.

### **Question 6. Are these the right things to do?**

### **Priority 3: Early identification of children with SEND.**

**We want to provide more timely high-quality provision for young children with complex needs and their families in all early years settings and better coordinated support**

#### **We will:**

- Work towards ensuring greater consistency in the current identification and assessment approaches going forward, particularly for children with ASD and complex needs.
- Improve take up of a pre-school place for all children with SEND to enable them and their families to have support to meet their needs at the earliest opportunity.
- Strengthen the capacity of all schools and settings to assess and make provision for SEND.
- Provide parents with more choice that meets their needs by maintaining a balance of providers of high-quality provision from across the sector.

- Maximise the take up of the free early education offer, especially amongst the most vulnerable.
- Support providers with the effective delivery of the new Early Years Foundation Strategy (EYFS), which has a strong focus on early language and vocabulary and maths skills.
- Create new, and strengthen existing, high quality educational pathways for children with additional needs to ensure they get the support they need when they need it.
- Support the development of professionals across the sector to equip them with the skills they need to meet a range of complex needs.
- Review current funding mechanisms to ensure funding reflects the high level of SEND in Southwark's nurseries and enables early intensive intervention to achieve best value for money.

#### **How will we know we have made a difference?**

- There is a consistent approach to identifying and assessing the needs of all of our young children with SEND so that their needs do not increase because early help and intervention are not provided in a timely way.
- The right funding mechanisms are in place and support exists to provide the highest quality provision for children with SEND aged 0-5 years.
- There is evidence of more local provision meaning that more young children with complex needs are having their needs met in their community.

#### **Question 7. Are these the right things to do? Anything else?**

### **Priority 4: Working within mainstream schools**

**We want to develop greater confidence skills and competencies in mainstream schools to meet consistently the needs of children and young people with SEND**

#### **We will:**

- Increase the levels of support and training through outreach services, advice and consultancy services, and sharing of best practice through peer-to-peer support across the borough, to be able to meet the needs of these children and young people effectively.
- Positively engage with mainstream schools on what inclusion actually means, celebrating best practice and using existing expertise to share effective practice across the borough.
- Provide/ develop/ ensure better co-ordination with partners, the development of an enhanced initial teacher training and ongoing face-to-face and e-learning CPD offer for teachers, heads, and governors on SEND, including on ASD, SEMH, and pupil behaviour.

### **How will we know we have made a difference?**

- An increase in capacity of mainstream schools to support a wider range of SEND.
- An increase in the proportion of children with newly issued EHC plans placed in mainstream maintained schools.
- A reduction in the number of children and young people with SEND requiring an out of borough placement.
- An increase in sustainability of mainstream placements. An increase in parent confidence that their children's needs can be met locally, within a mainstream school.

**Question 8. Are these the right things to do?**

### **Priority 5: Pathways to adulthood for young people 16-25 with SEND**

**We want to develop pathways for young people with SEND moving into adulthood that enable them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives.**

#### **We will:**

- Develop clear multi-agency pathways for young people with complex needs and for those who can move into education, vocational or work settings.
- Develop more options for quality post-19 provision by working with secondary special schools and local providers.
- Reduce the number of young people who remain in education without clear outcomes for independence.
- Better realise the range of available opportunities (e.g. supported internships, apprenticeships, and training).
- Increase the number of young people with SEND who are successfully supported into work and/ or independent living.

### **How will we know we have made a difference?**

- We will have a more financially sustainable service with fewer young people needing educating out of the local area.
- Evidence that there is an increase in the number of young people taking up a broader range of opportunities for meaningful learning, vocational or employment activities.
- Young adults will express higher levels of satisfaction and confidence in undertaking life choices.

**Question 9. Are these the right things to do? Anything else?**

## **4. Background information**

SEND Capital Strategy Review

SEND Local Area Review 2018

ASD Education Review 2020/21