

2022-
2025

Southwark
Council

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy

for children and young
people aged 0-25



Foreword

This strategy strengthens Southwark Council's commitment to maximise positive outcomes for children with Special Education Needs and or Disabilities (SEND) and their families, through proposals for greater collaboration and a renewed focus on priority areas. This approach could not be timelier, with 2,891 children and young people currently with active Education Health and Care Plans and an increasing demand for specialist services we want to make sure that our children have the opportunity to attend high quality local provision, to enjoy learning and to reach their potential.

Developed and co-designed in partnership with the Institute of Public Care in consultation with our SEND service users, the voices of our families with children with special educational needs have helped reshaped our ambitious vision. We are building on an already well-established SEND system, with excellent provision for children, young people and families across Southwark's special and mainstream schools and early years settings. While we cannot under-estimate the challenges involved in improving the quality of special needs services, these challenges will not temper our commitment and ambition to deliver the best for our children and young people with special educational needs.

Working together in the current climate

The current cost of living crisis is bearing down on all our families, not least those reliant on special educational needs services. Working together will improve outcomes for children and young people, by helping us overcome administrative and external financial challenges and find better ways to deliver services.

The four key priorities that came out of the consultation will be at the centre of our joint work. As clearly set out in this strategy, these are: *Improving provision for complex needs; Provision of more timely, high quality identification and provision; Development of greater confidence skills and competencies in all settings; and Development of pathways into adulthood for young people with SEND.*

The priority framework will enable all relevant partners to focus on the areas important to our children and young people, including the importance of working with children in their early years and later on in their transition from childhood to adulthood. The strategy will also help develop close working relationships that could make a real difference to life chances through educational and employment opportunities.

Delivering our ambition

The collaborative approach to the strategy will be maintained throughout the next phase, namely the design of the implementation plan. The SEND Operational Group, with representation from all agencies across the borough including health, social care, parents and carers, CAMHs and adult health, mental health and therapy services, will sign off and monitor the plan.

As deputy leader and cabinet lead for children, young people and education, I will ask cabinet to work closely with council departments and partners to influence the delivery of the vision.

In the spirit of this strategy we must work together to make this strategy and plan purposeful, we will hold a new open annual Southwark Special Education Needs and Disabilities conference to bring members, key stakeholders and families with special educational needs together. Everyone including councillors will have a meaningful opportunity to understand and positively contribute to our commitment to enhance the lives and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs in Southwark.



Cllr Jasmine Ali
Deputy Leader Southwark Council
& Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Education

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Executive Summary

Southwark has many reasons to be proud of the quality of its services and the educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and their families. There is excellent provision for these children, young people and families across the local area's special and mainstream schools and early years' settings. We recognise that there is a need to keep pace with demand, to share best practice and improve the quality of provision further.

This strategy sets a challenging agenda for improvement: to build on the good progress made since the SEND Area Review in 2018 (50019750 (ofsted.gov.uk) and to address the areas for action identified in that review, alongside expanding the capacity of SEND provision locally to meet the needs of children and young people from 0-25 years old. It is focused on ensuring good practice in every school and a stronger commitment to inclusion at all ages from 0-25.

The local area's challenge in this period is to ensure that we focus our resources on the most educationally effective provision that provides best value for money, and that we use what we know about our children and young people, and their families, to plan ahead effectively. All our children and young people with SEND deserve to have the opportunity to attend high quality provision locally, to reach their potential, and to enjoy learning.

Over the past three years, we have been working to the SEND Capital Strategy (SEND Education Provision Strategy | Southwark Local Offer) and have made significant progress in expanding the capacity of SEND provision to meet local need for children and young people 0-25 years.

The local area's programme for change is still operating in challenging times from a health, economic, and policy perspective. The global pandemic has placed an additional layer of complexity onto service development and family life, encouraging a necessary focus on immediate priorities, safety, and continuity of existing delivery. Southwark mobilised a multi-agency, back- to-school working group in April 2020 to support the attendance of vulnerable children (including those with SEND).

This strategy has been developed in the context of pressure on the resourcing of high needs placements as a significant issue, which has been recognised both locally and nationally. In light of this and the direction of the government Green Paper (SEND Review – right support, right place, right time (publishing.service.gov.uk)) we await the outcome of the national consultation and subsequent statutory changes. However, through these periods of change, it is important to state that Southwark has remained committed to meeting our statutory duties and the continuous improvement of our offer for children and young people with SEND.

This current SEND strategy is a Local Authority focused document. Health partners are committed to the development of a collaborative SEND strategy for the local area's health, care, and educational systems, and participated in the consultation process.

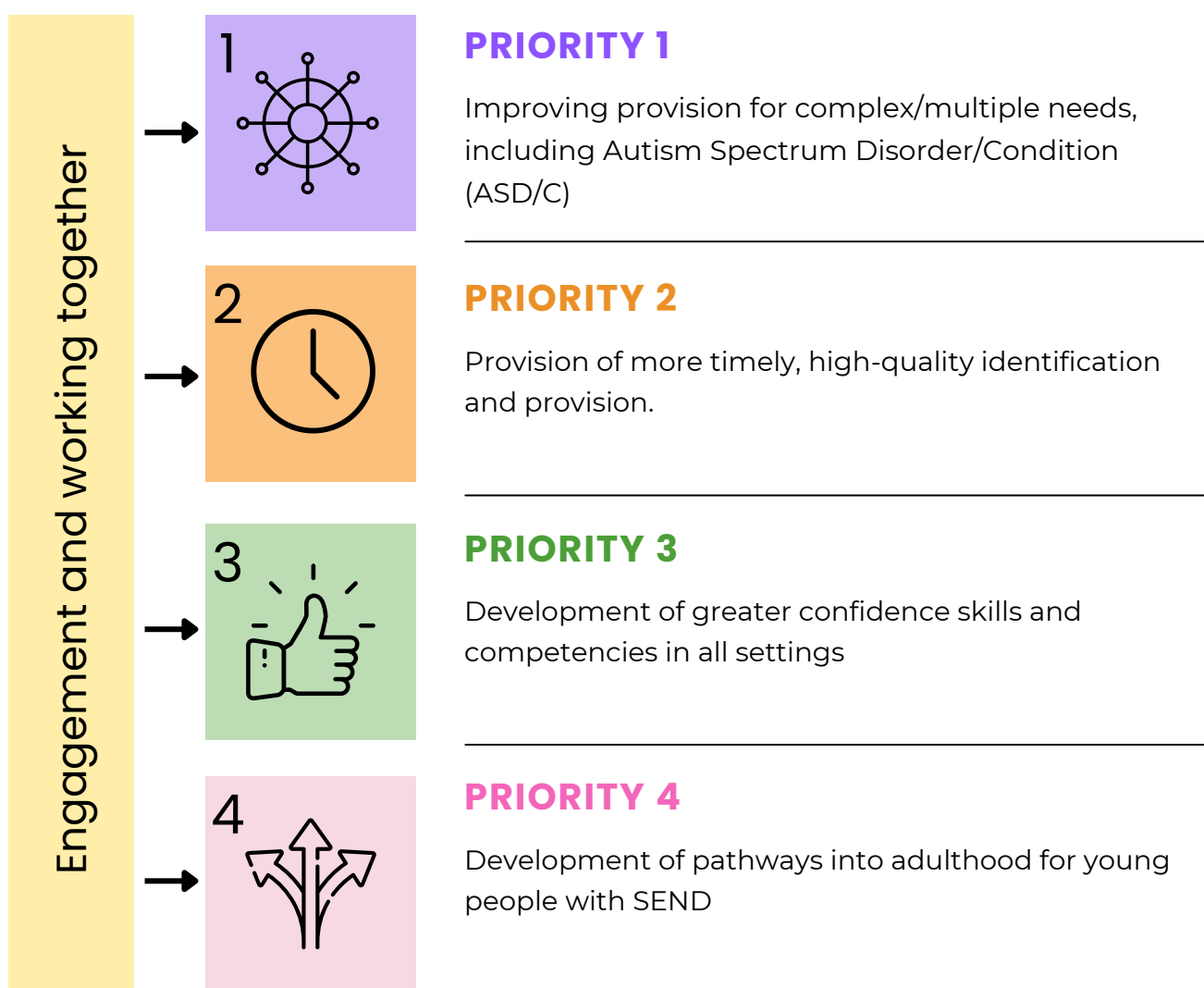
Integrated Care Systems (ICS) are new partnerships between the organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, to coordinate services and plan in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities between different groups. ICS cover a larger footprint, and Southwark will be part of South East London ICS. There will be a new model of collaboration, partnership and integration, with many decisions delegated to local systems and leaders to agree. The development of place-based partnerships will be determined locally, and this will include the commissioning for SEND and the required governance arrangements. These have not yet been agreed and it makes sense to wait until SEND arrangements are known so that we understand who our key SEND partners are and can agree a more collaborative SEND strategy.


The development of this strategy has been informed by all those involved in the SEND process. The views of children, young people, their families and carers as well as schools and other stakeholders were captured using a range of consultation activities, collated into a full consultation report and incorporated into this final document. In addition, throughout the process, we have maintained engagement and consulted with head teachers from special schools through the 16-25 Pathways to Adulthood board, through the ASD Review and the Early Years Strategy, and parents and carers are engaged through representation from Southwark Independent Voice on our boards.

The local area's SEND strategy will be reviewed regularly as the SEND landscape changes. We eagerly await the results of the consultation on the government's SEND Green Paper to inform that work.

Our statement of intent and key priorities

The overarching statement of intent of this strategy is to better engage and work together with every child or young person with SEND and all other agencies involved in supporting them. It underpins the strategy and threads through all the four identified priorities. These priority areas, supported by performance indicators, will guide our SEND work between 2022 -2025. They are:





And the objectives that sit underneath them are:

- to ensure we engage and work together with parents and carers, children and young people, and all other agencies involved in providing support for SEND;
- to improve provision and support across the age range for children and young people who have complex/multiple needs; including those with ASD/ASC (Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Condition);
- to provide timely, high-quality identification of need and provision for children and young people with complex/multiple needs and their families.
- to develop greater confidence skills and competencies in all settings from early years to leaving school so that we can more consistently meet the needs of children and young people with SEND;
- to develop pathways for young people with SEND moving into adulthood that enable them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives;
- to ensure that the wellbeing of our children, young people and families is considered in all that we do.

We know we still have work to do to improve the local area's service offer. By placing engagement and coproduction with everyone at the heart of our priorities, we are confident that we can reshape our offer, promote wellbeing, and deliver better outcomes for our children, young people and families with SEND.

Section 1: Vision, principal objectives, aims and purpose

This strategy builds on a strong, well-established SEND system: provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Southwark are excellent. All of the local area's special schools are good or better. Of the nine schools, five are consistently OFSTED outstanding.

At the end of the summer term 2021 (2019 for most recent published results at primary), the achievement of children and young people identified as 'SEN support' in Southwark mainstream schools was in the top 25% of local authorities in the country in the End of Key Stage assessments at age 6 and 11, at GCSE and Post- 16.

We recognise that only by continuing to work collaboratively with all Southwark stakeholders: parents, children and young people and providers, can we maintain and build upon these high standards. We acknowledge that there is a need to keep pace with demand, to share best practice and improve the quality of provision further.

Why are we doing this?

- We are ambitious and want to do better. The local area's special schools and mainstream settings are doing well but we can do more to make our services more inclusive.
- We want to keep pace with demand and encourage innovation. There are increasing numbers of children and young people with more complex needs who require EHC plans. We need to think how we can practically, and creatively, meet these needs.
- We want to make sure that we have the best possible arrangements in place with our partners and key agencies to make the right plans with our children and young people.
- We know that we are living in financially challenging times so we must make the best use of our resources to make a difference. Costs are increasing and we want more local quality provision.
- We want to work more collaboratively with children, young people, and their families and improve their experience of the SEND system so it is clearer, more equitable and more responsive.

We work closely with our Parent Carer Forum: Southwark Independent Voice (SIV), launched in September 2019. Their mission statement and purpose are below:

Mission

To enable parents and carers to be active participants in coproduction with the Local Authority (Southwark Council), Clinical Commissioning Group (*PARTNERSHIP SOUTHWARK*), the NHS and other partners. Our aim is to ensure positive and productive outcomes for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and learning disabilities (SEND).

Purpose

To give parents and carers an informed collective voice at a strategic level to bring about change for the better.

We have a number of projects ongoing with SIV to improve the local area's services for our parents and carers and they are a fully collaborative partner on our boards, playing an important role in aspects of development of strategy and continuing work.

Southwark's values

As a central London borough, our mission is to improve life chances for our residents and make Southwark a special place to live and work. More than ever, we recognise that in times of financial constraints, there is a need to focus our resources on the areas where we can make the most impact.

Our current council plan sets out our 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.

The local area's vision for children and young people with SEND



The local area's vision for children and young people with SEND is aligned closely to these values, and fits within the overarching strategy of the council, Partnership Southwark and the Partnership Southwark Recovery Plan for Health and Social Care.

For our children and young people with SEND this 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 and inclusive in ensuring children and young people with SEND make good progress in their learning, personal and social development;
- Enable all our children and young people to transfer successfully to employment whenever possible, to live independently or for those with the most complex needs to have quality experiences that enhance their everyday life;
- Analyse further the ethnic heritage and cultural backgrounds of children and young people with SEND in order to understand and address any disproportionality issues.

Section 2: Valuing your views – Key themes from the consultations

Key themes

We heard from a range of professionals, schools, stakeholders, parents/carers and young people during the development of this strategy. There was a consensus from those involved in the consultation process that the strategy in general terms was important and focused on the right issues. The feedback from these consultations has been reflected in the vision, statement of intent and priorities in this revised strategy. From these, key themes were evident which will be taken forward in delivery plans as they progress. The identified key themes are described below:

- Strengthen and have a more proactive approach to inclusion, specifically referencing inequalities and discrimination that black, Asian and minority ethnic children and young people with SEND can experience.
- Improve communication between all stakeholders: parents and carers, children and young people, schools and professionals.
- Simplify systems and processes where possible. All stakeholders consulted considered them overly cumbersome, often feeling there was duplication in the report or information leading to delays and feelings of being overwhelmed.
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. These are not always clear and lack of clarity can slow progress.
- Improve skills/knowledge. More support is needed for staff (in schools in particular) to feel confident about managing a range of needs.
- Improve recruitment and retention. All stakeholders raised this as an issue. Smooth transitions in recruitment and good levels of retention are important for meaningful and consistent relationships between parents/ carers and key staff.

- 
- Focus and improve resources on a limited budget. All stakeholders raised concerns around how changes/improvements could be made when it was considered there is a shortfall in resources.
 - Understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. All stakeholders felt there was an impact that needed to be recognised and addressed, particularly around waiting lists for assessments and delayed access to services.
 - Collect better information and analysis to inform commissioners and track improvements. Better data would support these developments by identifying need, clarifying what is meant by 'good' and 'quality', and giving clarity around baseline positions.

More information, collated together, to help parents start in the right direction"

We asked parents and carers to name one important thing that would make a difference to the services provided and this what they said:

"More information, collated together, to help parents start in the right direction."

"Communication is key."

"Access to peer to peer opportunities and support to feel less isolated, alone and scared."

"Parents and teachers working together to make things happen - keep us updated with what is happening and any changes that will impact on my child."

"Communication between the key stakeholders involved with the child, coming together and planning together."

"Make sure children don't go unnoticed, don't nullify the challenges the child has if not as visible."

"Why is it the child has to conform, why aren't we conforming to them?"

"Invest in more schools so that children with different profiles aren't bungled in together - right choice, right school."

"Easier to access respite and short breaks desperately needed for complex needs."

"Parents need to be able to speak to people comfortably and feel listened to, not judged, it is important how professionals treat you, we need support and encouragement - not sympathy."

// SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

Section 3: Our statement of intent: engagement and working together

We want to better engage and work together with every child/ young person with SEND and all other agencies involved in supporting them to ensure that the wellbeing of the child or young person is central to the way that we work together.

This statement underpins and runs throughout all of our priorities: it reflects our key values and principles and is the 'golden thread' that is at the centre of all that we do, linking values and principles to strategy.

What parents and carers told us:

- Communication is key – the importance of keeping parents informed, even of small changes.
- The importance for parents and carers to be involved and contribute as equal partners to be listened to, recognising the experience the parent or carer has.
- Parents and carers to be given respect and encouragement to support their child and recognition of their role in the child's life.
- The importance of parents/ carers and professionals working together to make things happen and understand what can make a difference for the child.
- Decisions about placements being made in a timely way so parents and their young person can be clear about what is happening and prepare for it.
- There can be difficulties in accessing extra care support hours, activities and breaks for children during school holidays, particularly for complex needs or personal care, and the importance of these for family life.

We will:

- Communication is key – the importance of keeping parents informed, even of small changes.
- The importance for parents and carers to be involved and contribute as equal partners to be listened to, recognising the experience the parent or carer has.
- Parents and carers to be given respect and encouragement to support their child and recognition of their role in the child's life.
- The importance of parents/ carers and professionals working together to make things happen and understand what can make a difference for the child.
- Decisions about placements being made in a timely way so parents and their young person can be clear about what is happening and prepare for it.
- There can be difficulties in accessing extra care support hours, activities and breaks for children during school holidays, particularly for complex needs or personal care, and the importance of these for family life.
- Improve awareness with parents and partners to understand and take into account when assessing and supporting children/young people and their families the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs); including the impact of racial discrimination on people's everyday lives and mental health issues.
- Enhance and improve family wellbeing by improving the short breaks and extra-curricular activities/ holiday activities offer for children and young people with SEND and the use of and access to personal budgets for all.

Section 4: The local picture; facts and figures

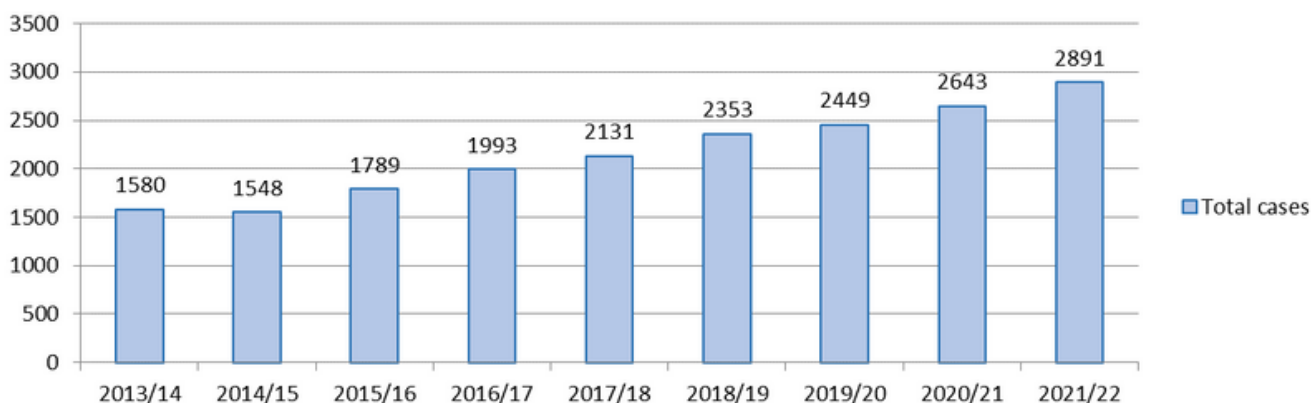
SEND Identification

The number of children and young people with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans for whom we are providing additional, different or specialised provision, has increased by over 60% since 2014. This is in line with national trends and year on year increases of around 10%

Number of EHC plans issued

In Southwark, the number of children and young people with an EHC plan has been increasing since 2014/15 and in January 2022 the total number of EHC plans was 2783 (as reported for the national SEND annual data collection). The Southwark percentage increase, at 7%, is lower than national (10%), however, the percentage of EHCPs in Southwark's schools is tracking national and London data at around 4%. As at July 2022, the number of children with EHCPs in Southwark schools is 2,891.

Increase-Decrease 2013-2022



Identification of children and young people with ASD/ASC

Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/C) also remains the most prevalent primary type of need for children and young people with an EHC plan, with 48% of Southwark's EHC plans being for young people with ASD/C. This is nearly double the proportion nationally. Some of the reasons for this relate to shorter waiting lists in Southwark for ASD/C diagnosis, resulting in earlier identification.

Increased demand for specialist provision

This has put pressure on the number of commissioned places available in maintained provision and has meant an increase in the number of children and young people needing to access specialist provision out of the borough. However, the SEND Capital Strategy over the past 3 years and our continued commitment to increasing provision locally should enable Southwark to provide a local place for most children and young people.

Increase in the cost of EHC plans

Over the last three years, the number of children and young people with an EHC plan has increased. This has placed significant pressure on the High Needs Block, which funds all the placement costs for our children and young people with EHC plans. The average cost of an EHC plan increases as the young person matures and in the post-16 range has increased to an average cost of over £20,000 per plan.


Where we educate our children and young people: local vs out of borough provision

Compared to our statistical neighbours and the national average, we educate more of our children and young people in local mainstream schools at present and a broadly similar proportion in resource bases and maintained special schools. This is reflective of our principles and strategy of keeping our most vulnerable learners close and within their community. We are keen to reduce stress and anxiety by minimising the length of journey that our children and young people have to take to get to their place of education.

It costs more for a pupil or young person to attend a special school outside Southwark than to attend a local special or mainstream school, and costs always increase considerably when the pupil has to attend an independent special school or college.

The increase in local places for our children with ASD/ASC, with the opening of Spa Camberwell, has reduced our reliance on independent special providers for children with ASD/C. However, need for placements for our Looked After Children and young people (LAC) with SEND, who have social and emotional (SEMH) needs, has increased out of borough. The same is true for our need for specialist placements for young people with SEND who are post-16. These factors account for the continuing high spend on out of borough placements.

To continue to be able to provide for our ASD/C young people in borough and improve local provision for our post-16 SEND population, we have specific projects ongoing in those two areas. The local authority has carried out an ASD Education Review with recommendations that will be captured into the Inclusion Plan that aligns with this strategy.



In addition, a multi-agency 16-25 Pathways to Adulthood Board has been established to consider pathways to adulthood for our young people with SEND, post-16.

What we have achieved so far

- Since 2018, there has been an increase in places in local special schools, further development of inclusive provision in mainstream schools and an overall growth of local capacity.
- Cherry Gardens primary school (Severe Learning Difficulties/PMLD) has now relocated to its new site in the heart of the borough. Places have increased to over 85. This represents a 45% increase in places for some of Southwark's most complex primary age children and young people.
- Spa Camberwell (5-16 ASD/ASC) currently has over 60 children and young people on roll, numbers will rise to over 80 in September 2022.
- Beormund primary school (SEMH) will move to its new central site in Peckham in 2023/4. It will have 21 additional places – roll rising to 56 – and will develop strong links with local primary schools and local authority services to reduce exclusions, develop inclusive provision and support for families in the local area.
- A secondary age resource base for students with ASD/ASC will open at the Charter School East Dulwich in September 2023 with between 6-10 places, growing to approximately 25 places.
- There are currently a number of SEND/inclusion expansion or repurposing projects completed, or in progress, in mainstream schools and colleges in the borough.

Section 5: Our priorities

Priority 1

We want to better engage and work together with every child/ young person with SEND and all other agencies involved in supporting them to ensure that the wellbeing of the child or young person is central to the way that we work together.

Why is this important?

- Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition (ASD/ASC) identified as the primary need on an EHCP in Southwark is almost twice the national average.
- A person with ASD/ASC may have other complex or multiple needs which will impact on a child/young person's development and life chances and which need support.
- There are high numbers of children and young people with complex needs and diagnoses of ASD/ASC with funded (high level of support) EHC plans in our mainstream and special schools. Overall, 48% of all EHC plans have ASD/ASC as a primary need. This is significantly higher than the national picture and illustrates the importance of ensuring that there is understanding, knowledge and experience of ASD/ASC and complex/multiple needs in every setting.
- ASD/ASC and complex/multiple needs impact on all aspects of children's and young people's lives to varying degrees, including their learning. There is a continuing need to ensure that a wide range and variety of provision develops in Southwark so that families can consider a range of settings to meet their children's needs and that are closer to home and in the community.
- Southwark currently has learners with EHC plans for ASD/ASC in mainstream schools, in special schools, and in resourced base provision as part of mainstream schools. Children and young people succeed in all these settings. However, we do not currently have sufficient provision in our secondary schools for young people with ASD/ASC.

- Working with young people and their families to match the provision to the needs of their child or young person. The local authority should work in collaboration with schools to ensure that there is capacity to meet the learning needs of children and young people with ASD/ASC and complex needs in the most appropriate setting.
- The recent Education ASD review has made seven recommendations for development of provision and services and these will be considered in the Inclusion Plan for this strategy alongside those from other agencies as we move forward in our work together.



What parents and carers told us:

- ASD/ASC is important but there is a need to understand/support other conditions which a child may have, in addition, and which may have considerable impact on daily living and support needs for a child at school and in the family home.
- It is important to make sure that there is awareness of, and provision for, other conditions a child may have and that they don't go unnoticed.

- Teachers and staff (in special and mainstream) should have more training around the range of complex needs as often children have more than one condition.
- All settings need to be aware of the intersectionality of protected characteristics that might affect disabled children and young people and take account of these in their service delivery.

We will:

- Continue to develop a wide range of services closer to home and community.
- Continue to increase capacity in our special primary and special schools for our children and young people with the most complex/ multiple needs.
- Work with all new/ expanding schools and providers to ensure appropriate learning opportunities for those with complex/multiple needs (including ASD/ASC).
- Develop the provision in our mainstream secondary schools for young people with complex/multiple needs (including ASD/ASC).
- Work more closely with young people and their families to match provision to their needs.
- Provide parents with a range of options and create new/strengthen existing, high quality educational pathways for complex/ multiple needs.
- Where possible, continue to return proactively to their communities those children and young people in out of borough provision.
- Support the needs of those young people with complex/multiple needs (including ASD/ASC) who are in or at risk of entering the youth justice system to improve their chances of living in the community and reducing their offending behaviour.

Priority 2

We want to provide more timely identification and high-quality provision for young children and young people with complex /multiple needs.

Why is this important?

- It is well-known that the earlier intervention is provided to support SEND needs, the better the life outcomes for the child or young person.
- Consistency in the early identification of need is essential to provide parity in the level of funding awarded to provide support.
- High- quality provision will support better progress.
- It is important to maximise the take up of early years provision for all three-year olds.
- Settings need to be able to access support and training through outreach services, links with peer experts and networking to share best practice within the borough to be able to meet the needs of these children and young people.
- To ensure that an increasing number of children and young people with SEND have the opportunity to be educated locally, it is vital that our mainstream schools continue to be able to meet the needs of the increasing number of children and young people with a variety of SEND placed within them.
- Development of a SEND support pathway in mainstream schools across the borough should lead to consistency in outcomes.

What parents and carers told us:

- Parents/ carers need time to come to terms with a diagnosis and to begin to navigate the system.
- Some parents find accessing help and support difficult. Signposting to SIAS and the Local Offer needs to be consistent in all cases.

- Parents raised the need for adequate training for teachers in all settings so that a child's Special Educational Needs can be identified and met at the earliest opportunity.
- Parents reminded us that some conditions only become evident at later ages and we need to make sure these children are supported and don't fall through the net.



We will:

- Support all agencies to develop further a common understanding about identification and assessment for children and young people with SEND.
- Work to improve the system to ensure parents/carers have better, accessible, accurate and up to date information about services and processes regarding SEND as soon as issues are identified.
- Improve early intervention and the support for parents with very young children or who are expecting a baby where there appear to be higher chances of the child having SEND.
- Improve take up of a pre-school place for all children with SEND.

- Support the development of professionals across the sector to equip them with the skills they need to meet a range of complex /multiple needs.
- Review current funding mechanisms to ensure children get the right support at the right time, including those needing early intensive intervention.
- Develop a more proactive approach to identifying those children/young people whose needs may, for whatever reason, not have been assessed when they were younger- including those young people in the youth justice system.

Priority 3

To develop greater confidence skills and competencies in all settings from early years to leaving school so that we can consistently meet the needs of children and young people with SEND

Why is this important?

- The majority of the rising numbers of young people with EHC plans are placed in mainstream schools. All schools are facing financial pressures and new funding arrangements, which are expected to have a significant impact on them.
- Schools also face the challenges to inclusion presented by age- related expectation and a narrowing curriculum.
- Settings need increased 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.
- As there is an uneven distribution of placements within mainstream schools across the borough, there is a need for us to engage schools with what it means to be fully inclusive. We want to use existing expertise to share effective practice across the borough.



What parents and carers told us:

- There was a feeling that getting an EHCP was difficult and process not clear, could it be more straightforward?
- Some parents described good multi- agency input into plans, particularly in primary school and nursery, but for others the experience of the process and plan being multi- agency or joined up was not evident.
- Some parents/carers felt there was a stigma for their child being on an EHC plan. Some children and young people aware they are on a different pathway.
- They would welcome more space in schools for subjects that are not formally assessed and are more creative/ therapeutic or vocational.
- Staff working with SEND children in the education setting need to be well trained.

We will:

- Work with settings to target support and training to where it is most needed.
- Ensure all providers in the early years are signposted to support available.
- Support mainstream settings in their desire to be as inclusive as possible and celebrate and share best practice and expertise.
- Analyse the full data set of factors affecting children and young people who have been, or are at risk of being, excluded, or who have attendance issues so that we can take action to minimise disproportionality.

Priority 4

To develop pathways for young people with SEND moving into adulthood (16-25) that enable them to lead more independent and fulfilling lives.

Why is this important?

- Parents and carers whose children or young people attend Southwark special schools are very satisfied with the provision. Parental feedback in recent inspections contributed to outstanding outcomes but concerns remain regarding post-19 placements and the lack of local options.
- Although out of borough placements are not always the first preference of Southwark families as they remove young people/adults from the family home, some families still consider their young person's needs not able to be met locally and pressure for post- 19 out of borough placements remains.
- The lack of suitable, high quality, post- 19 provision for our more vulnerable young people/adults, means that we are over-dependent on out of borough and independent/ non-maintained providers.

What parents and carers told us:

- They need more available information on future opportunities for children and young people in this age range.
- Decisions about placements are not always timely, parents not clear what is happening at a time when they need certainty about the next stage.
- They are unclear about what happens next, what the processes are or where to go for support when a young person is approaching 25. It can feel like there is less focus as children get older.

We will:

- Develop clear multi-agency pathways for young people with SEND, including those in the youth justice system and for those with complex multiple needs. This will give them meaningful opportunities, including into education, vocational or work settings

- Develop more options for quality post-19 provision by working with secondary mainstream and 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 meaningful work and/ or independent living to reach their full potential.



Section 6: How we will know we are making a difference

- We will see an increase in capacity of mainstream schools to support a wider range of SEND.
- We will see a reduction in the need for EHC needs assessments and EHC plans overall.
- We will see an increase in the proportion of children with newly issued EHC plans placed and retained in mainstream settings
- Educational settings and staff will be able to demonstrate they have a good understanding of a range of complex needs and how they can be met, including the needs of children or young people with SEND from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds.
- We will see an increase in parent and carer confidence that their children's needs can be met locally, within a mainstream setting.
- We will see a reduction in young people with complex/multiple needs being educated out of area and that more are having their needs appropriately met in the community.
- Young people and their parents/carers will have a greater and informed understanding of the pathways and options available to them
- We will see evidence that there is an increase in the number of young people taking up a broader range of opportunities for meaningful academic or vocational learning, employment or other activities that enhance their wellbeing
- Young adults will express higher levels of satisfaction and confidence in undertaking life choices

Section 7: Next Steps and Monitoring Progress

The SEND Operational Group will develop the SEND Inclusion Plan to support the strategy, with clear actions, milestones, accountabilities and delivery timelines. This group will monitor the Inclusion Plan and report up through the SEND governance structure on progress.

An annual report on progress will be produced and widely circulated, including being published on the Local Offer for parents and young people to access. Parents, carers and professionals will be consulted about the progress of the strategy as we move forward.

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