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BIRMINGHAM
SEND
STRATEGY

2023 - 2028

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Foreword

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families - Birmingham City Council

Director for Children and Families - Birmingham City Council

Chief Executive - Birmingham Children's Trust

Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Nursing Officer - NHS Birmingham and Solihull

Chair - Birmingham Parent Carer Forum

Director of SEND and Inclusion - Birmingham City Council

We are delighted to introduce Birmingham's refreshed Strategy for Children and Young People and Young Adults (CYP) with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It has been co-produced with our stakeholders to ensure all partners make a positive difference for our CYP and their families.

We know that children and young people with SEND are some of the most vulnerable in our society and it is our collective responsibility to provide them with the support they need to thrive. This strategy has been developed with this in mind, and it sets out a clear vision for improving outcomes for our CYP.

It sets out some of the most important issues facing CYP and how we will work in partnership to address these. We have listened carefully to the feedback and experiences of those who have lived and worked with

SEND, and we have used this to shape our priorities and objectives. The strategy takes a whole system approach, recognising that not one size fits all when it comes to supporting our CYP. It builds on the strengths of existing services, aims to address any gaps in provision and ensures that everyone involved in supporting CYP with SEND works collaboratively.

It identifies our SEND ambitions and our coproduced priorities across education, health and social care which will be monitored by the multi-agency SEND Improvement Board (the SIB). There will be ongoing review to ensure we remain focussed on the priorities and the progress to achieve them with a focus on improved outcomes for CYP.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this strategy, including CYP, parents and carers, professionals, and

representatives from the voluntary and community sector. We hope this strategy will be a useful resource for everyone involved, and that it will drive improved service delivery and experiences for our families and CYP. The implementation of this strategy calls for a collective effort from all stakeholders, including education settings, local authority teams, health and social care professionals, families and the wider community.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our commitment to ensuring that every child and young person with SEND in Birmingham receives the support they need to reach their full potential. We are proud to present this SEND Strategy and look forward to working with our partners to make it a reality. Together, we can create a city where our children and young people with SEND can thrive.

Introduction

The Birmingham Children's Partnership has set out how we are to remain focused and ambitious for our children and young people and that all stakeholders are committed to the following:

Children & Young People's Plan 2023-2028:

CHANGE for children & young people

AMBITION: Birmingham is a great place for us to grow up...

We are **THRIVING**

Delivered through our overarching principles:

- Young people are at the heart of everything we do
- We are ambitious for every child & young person
- We are one partnership, with shared priorities



Our ways of working:

relationships-based, strengths-based, restorative, trauma-responsive, developmentally aware, and whole system.



We are THRIVING, because we are...

CONNECTED to meaningful opportunities and we are prepared for adulthood.



CONFIDENT to connect with help we can trust at the right time, right place.



INCLUDED and get the most we can from our home, school and community.



HEALTHY as possible and nurtured throughout our life course.



SAFE at home, and in places and spaces outside of our families and schools.



HAPPY and **RESPECTED**
Our voices and lived experience matter.





Practice that matters to our people & our workforce in Birmingham:

These have been captured through practitioner engagement events and through people in Birmingham expressing what is important to them. Many of the principles of practice identified are individually supported through a range of different strategies, where a wider system of work supports these changes. These principles of practice are being brought together, built upon and promoted through the Inclusion Strategy and agreed and signed up to by partners.



Person-centred



Right support,
right place, right time



Relationship-based



Across whole
life-course



Coordinated
partnership working



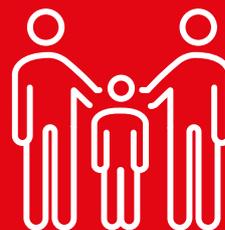
Locality-based offer



Strength-based



Co-production



Family-centred

Our SEND mission statement

We will work with all of our children, young people and young adults with SEND to support them to thrive in their early years, at school and in further education, to find employment, and lead happy, healthy, independent and fulfilled lives. We will listen to them and their families to give them opportunities to influence how they access and benefit from support.



The existing Birmingham SEND strategy was developed in 2018, running until 2023. This refreshed version has been co-produced, with all stakeholders being given the opportunity to influence and directly shape the outcomes that Birmingham children and young people and adults need to thrive in Birmingham. Children, young people, families, professionals from all disciplines and all services supporting families were involved in creating this refreshed way forward for Birmingham.

This strategy outlines what we will do, how we intend to do it and the difference the services will make to meet the needs of individuals at the right place and at the right time.

In developing this strategy, we have listened to service users. Quotes from families, children and young people can be seen throughout this document. We will strive to ensure that services are delivered in line with what people say they want and need. All services within this strategy will be compliant with current legislation, for example, the Children and Families Act (2014) and SEND Code of Practice (2015) and in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. We will also align with the outcomes from the 2022 Green Paper which outlines what local areas should be doing to deliver effective SEND services and Alternative

Provision. Our actions will also contribute to Birmingham's ambition of becoming recognised by UNICEF as a "Child-Friendly City".

We have challenged our local area thinking with a focus on improving our collective delivery and increasing the consistency of services through partnership working, co-production and person-centred techniques. We will remain outcome focused and ensure a culture of continuous improvement and collaboration, widening the knowledge of all professionals to deliver excellent services. We will deliver provision that gives every person a clear and appropriate pathway to adulthood that meets their aspirations and ambitions.



IN BIRMINGHAM
11,123
YOUNG PEOPLE
WITH AN
EHCP

(DECEMBER 2022).

This is an **18%** increase since January 2019.



BETWEEN JANUARY 2019 AND JANUARY 2022,

THERE WAS
AN INCREASE
OF THOSE REQUIRING
SUPPORT WITH
SLCN OF
38%



THE NUMBER OF NEW
EHCPs
ISSUED
EACH YEAR HAS
INCREASED BY
37%



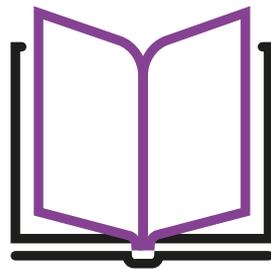
between January 2019
and January 2022.

BETWEEN JANUARY 2019 AND JANUARY 2022,



THERE WAS
AN INCREASE
OF THOSE REQUIRING
SUPPORT WITH
ASD OF
25%

IN JANUARY 2019
34%
OF THOSE WITH A
NEW EHCP
ISSUED WENT TO
MAINSTREAM
EDUCATION



In 2022 this was down to **20%**.

IN JANUARY 2023,
WE HAVE
171
SENAR STAFF



This increased from **42** in January 2019



Developing the strategy

In developing this strategy, we have listened to all our stakeholders and developed the following priorities:

1. Effective early identification of needs with appropriate and timely assessments across Education, Health and Care.
2. Collaborative, graduated approach delivered consistently across the city, ensuring the right support and provision are in place as soon as possible.
3. Smooth transition across Education, Health and Care at every stage of a young person's life, particularly the transition to adult life.
4. A comprehensive review of the provision in education settings across Birmingham to deliver an offer which is aligned with national and regional best practice.
5. Locality-based model of provision, right support, right place, right time with improved access to provision which meets the needs of the families, children and young people in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice.
6. Excellent communication and engagement between children and young people, families, Education, Health and Care services, including schools.
7. A resilient, skilled and sustained SEND Partnership team that delivers impact and positive outcomes for all children and young people who have additional needs.
8. Improved collection, publishing and analysis of data to inform the Birmingham SEND priorities in supporting children and young people in the future.



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PRIORITY 1

Effective early identification of needs with appropriate and timely assessments across Education, Health and Care.

We have been told it takes too long to get an assessment and that we need to have the support put in place much sooner.

“Waited 3 years for my Speech Therapy; this is too long. Why should I have to wait 3 years to be supported in school? This is not fair.”

Raddlebarn CYP, October 2022

“He is getting on much better at school but has been waiting 2 years for an Education Psychology Assessment.”

Parent, September 2022

We know that we must:

- Ensure accurate identification of need.
- Deliver assessments which are co-produced between professionals and families.
- Focus on inclusive practice.
- Ensure provision is effective in meeting need(s) and which overcomes barriers.
- Have real ambition for our children and young people, not restricting their opportunities to thrive.
- Ensure that direct payments and the support they facilitate are easy to access where appropriate.

To deliver more effectively, we will ensure the pockets of excellent practice across Birmingham are shared and replicated in all areas of the city. This includes learning from and mirroring early years practice which ‘wraps’ around the family when necessary.

We will assess the needs of those requiring support based on their individual needs rather than waiting for a medical (or any other form of) diagnosis. We will do so earlier so

we can deliver a high-quality plan of support as soon as possible, clearly outlining who should do what and when.

These assessments will be undertaken co-productively, giving appropriate time to listen and consider the views of the individual being assessed, their family, the school staff and the other professionals involved. Professionals from different services will exchange information more effectively to minimise the need for children and young people to tell their story multiple times.

We will develop the capacity of services to undertake assessments more quickly and minimise wait times. We will ensure teams co-produce the best way to deliver effective assessment before working together to embed the support that will meet the needs identified at that time. This will include ‘proactive’ work from professionals working with education settings, advising and creating support plans without the need for formal diagnosis and assessment.

We will continue to develop and review the training and capacity needed to increase the confidence of all those working with children and young people with additional needs.

We will deliver clear and easy-to-follow steps that the local area will follow to provide appropriate assessments as quickly as possible (without needing a diagnosis).

We will also ensure regular reviews are undertaken at appropriate times so that the provision and support are maintained or adjusted to meet needs effectively, that progress is celebrated, and that families, children and young people and professionals understand the interventions being delivered. These will be person-centred and recognise the child's ambitions, listening to what they want to do and where they would like to be in the future.

Support will be provided more effectively, in the right place at the right time, and trust will be built between families and professionals, so those with additional needs have the best chance to progress through life. We will focus on early intervention and ensure we develop the capacity of all education settings to support

consistently and effectively. Provision will be developed to be consistently inclusive across the local area and provide equity for all children, young people, and families.

Impact this will have:

- i) Clear and ambitious plans created for the right support in the right place at the right time, ensuring appropriate outcomes for all children and young people.
- ii) Families and their children and young people being listened to and able to influence the provision they receive.
- iii) Education settings and providers of services will deliver assessment and review processes with families.
- iv) The focus will be on needs and not diagnosis, ensuring support is put in place as quickly as possible to meet needs.

We will know if we have achieved this with the following:

- Improved feedback from families.
- Improved progress and achievement for children and young people.
- Improved sustained destinations in adulthood.
- Shorter waiting times for medical assessment results in less days lost in education due to ill health.
- More children and young people are supported locally and where they want to be educated.
- Reduced travel to specialist provision.
- A robust and clear graduated approach with more professionals comfortable with how they support children and young people with additional needs.



PRIORITY 2

Collaborative, graduated approach delivered consistently across the city, ensuring the right support and provision are in place as soon as possible.

We will ensure services work together to meet needs. This support will be delivered via a Graduated Approach, where support can be given without the need for a diagnosis or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). There is already excellent work being undertaken in many Birmingham education and community settings without the need for an EHCP. Children and young people are progressing and achieving what they want to accomplish through clear plans of support from multi-agency teams.

We have been told:

"I went to secondary school, and in this school, no one has helped me."

Year 8 child

The SEND Code of Practice defines the Graduated Approach as:

A model of action and intervention in early education settings, schools and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs. The approach recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and that, where necessary, increasing specialist expertise should be brought to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing.

Birmingham's approach will bring education settings, service providers and parents together to meet the needs of children and young people at the right place and at the right time. We will ensure all children and young people receive an appropriate education, one that is appropriate for them as an individual, promotes high standards and contributes to the fulfilment of their potential. This will require services to take greater responsibility for supporting children and young people where they are

educated. Services and settings will develop their provision, ensuring they take responsibility for intervening early and using their resources appropriately. Help will be provided to increase skills and knowledge within the workforce (see Priority 7) so that education settings and service providers take responsibility within the continuum of support

The implementation of the Balanced System for Speech and Language Framework is an excellent example of early intervention, capacity building and a graduated approach. It is also a strong example of collaboration and co-production between health professionals, education professionals, school teams and the family. This approach ensures clear communication, using the pillars of good SEND practice, ASSESS – PLAN – DO – REVIEW and monitors when provision needs to change, so that continuous progress is made. This approach will be considered for many services across the local area to improve trust between services and families and children and young people.



NOD

The SEND Code of Practice also states:

The graduated approach should be led and coordinated by the setting SENCO working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting and informed by EYFS materials, the Early Years Outcomes guidance and Early Support resources.

Through the ASSESS – PLAN – DO – REVIEW process, each child with additional needs has the appropriate support put in place, all underpinned by Quality First Teaching. There are three broad levels of support within the graduated approach.

1. Universal (needs that can be met locally with reasonable adjustment).
2. Targeted (services for those with needs that require specific support).
3. Specialist (services for those with the most complex needs).

Any of the Universal, Targeted or Specialist support can be delivered in any setting. It may be to overcome a specific need at a particular time or can be required for months or years to ensure progress is maintained.

As children and young people develop and learn differently, an approach which works for one child may not work for another.

Support should be reduced over time where progress is being achieved. The above will be done alongside the child's aspirations, focusing on preparing for adulthood and independent living. Additional, focused support at key transition points will be crucial in some cases (see below Priority 3).

Many education settings make reasonable adjustments using their professional judgment and within existing resources. This is often referred to as SEN(D) Support. There are good examples of practice in Birmingham with children and young people with additional needs being supported in mainstream settings without an EHCP. However, there we have a long way to go in Birmingham. Settings often request additional resources and diagnosis before making reasonable adjustments. Approaches and provision in settings needs to become much more consistent, ensuring equity in the local area so everyone receives the same quality of support regardless of where they access education.

The Developing Local Provision (DLP) program has supported the evolution of capacity in localities to support families, children, young people, and settings. The creation and evolution of the Special Schools Outreach Service (SSOS) and work targeted at building capacity in mainstream education proves that universal provision with reasonable adjustments makes a real difference and provides the right support at the right place at the right time.

Regular reviews are essential to ensure needs are met at the right level. It might include having a safe place or quiet room where the child can go, carefully choosing where a child sits in the classroom, extra help, the provision of specialist equipment, or financial and time commitments. Support will come from those directly in the education setting who have had appropriate training and interventions from other specialists.

Provision must be available to meet the needs of anyone requiring support. The local partnership will work together to review and develop the capacity to train professionals to assess need and deliver more effectively within their roles.

This will include teachers, teaching/classroom assistants, SENCOs, Social workers, Health visitors, and other care and health professionals alongside the Birmingham City Council Educational Psychologists, Advisory teachers and Early Years teams.

A co-productive approach will be taken to review the services needed to meet statutory functions as a universal offer. The same approach will be taken to re-calibrate where and how children and young people should be educated in mainstream, resource bases and specialist settings. We will ensure that all settings support the right children and young people at the right time and place, having co-produced plans with them. We will deliver access to high-quality provision, consistently across Birmingham for everyone with additional needs.

The sufficiency strategy is currently being developed and will be a 5 - 10 year plan. We need to increase capacity in Birmingham education settings to create enough places for those with additional needs in mainstream, in resources bases and in specialist provision over the next three years. We will make sure that all appropriate stakeholders are included in developing the capacity needed in the right parts of the city.

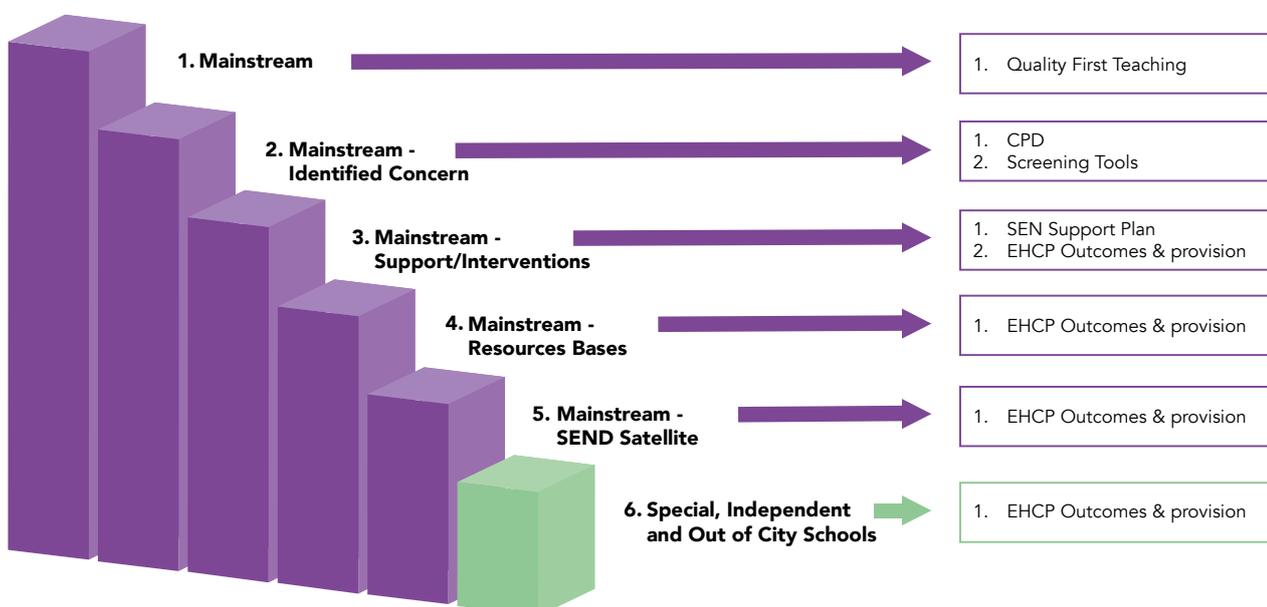
In the same way that safeguarding is everybody's business, so is SEND across the Birmingham Children's/ SEND Partnership. The Birmingham Local Offer will be enhanced to ensure that capacity and resources are allocated according to need, with a locality team around the school and a child-centred approach.

Impact this will have:

- i) Professionals will be empowered to support children and young people without waiting for formal assessment or diagnosis.
- ii) Provision will be easier to access with capacity deployed to early intervention and support.
- iii) Increased consistency across Birmingham, reducing the need to travel to access provision.
- iv) Clearer understanding for all stakeholders regarding the graduated approach, improved communication and preparation for adulthood.

The Birmingham approach can be summarised by the following image. Each stage follows and is enhanced by the next. E.g. Quality First Teaching is throughout every stage, not only in 'Mainstream'.

1. SEND Graduated Provision Model



PRIORITY 3

Smooth transition across Education, Health and Care at every stage of a young person's life, particularly the transition to adult life.

We have had some lovely feedback about the process for the reviews of EHCPs, but these are often in isolation and not consistent for all providers or professionals.

"I get support with every single problem, with my stammer, anxiety, confidence and self-esteem...and many more. I can always count on their help. Nurses, well-being staff, pastoral team staff are always ready to help me. The same as every teacher, even the lady from Reception."

Young person, June 2022

The move through the education stages and into adult life is one of the most significant areas of concern for families, schools and services.

We have also been told:

"Big problem with medical transition to adult services. People literally have nowhere to go..."

Parental feedback, 2022

"My son's placement was due to end this year. I received no advice, guidance, as to what would happen when his placement ended. It was only because I sent numerous emails, made telephone calls etc., that someone finally responded."

Parental feedback, 2022

We need to improve the collaborative approach between providers and professionals to ensure:

- Our services work well together with citywide 'Standard Operating Procedures' for children and young people's transition points with a demonstrable set of effective systems and processes.
- Our communication regarding annual reviews, in advance of key transition points and between organisations supporting those with additional needs, must be clear and effective to ensure families know what is happening.
- Joined up reviews with multi-professional input, working well and focusing on how the next stage of life will deliver positive outcomes as well as preparation for adulthood.
- We need to make sure that it is easy for children and young people to access the support they need between and across different providers and services.
- We need to make sure that all mainstream settings are better equipped to support all levels of need, recognise family preference and embrace the Code of practice.

To do this, we will:

- Ensure clear standard operating procedures which spell out organisational and individual responsibility for reviews of the provision in place. These will be easy to follow and have clear timelines.
- Continue to strengthen the professional collaboration and co-production around transition, utilising the knowledge of those who know the child best.
- Deliver professional reviews and clear plans of support at each stage. Paying particular attention to the 'stage' transfer moments and giving reassurance to the families and children and young people at those times.
- Ensure each review includes clear steps that support preparation for adulthood. We will make sure that all children and young people have their own plan that clearly supports them moving into adult

life. This will include work and any other meaningful activity, independent living, being a part of their community and managing their health.

- Ensure that the commitments are in place to deliver the most appropriate support from education, health and care in a joined-up way.

We will measure ourselves against:

- The quality and timeliness of reviews and how co-productive they are for families and professionals.
- Improved tracking of post 16 destination status for young people that leave year 11 and 12, to ensure understanding of cohorts and needs.
- Striving towards 100% participation of post 16's into positive destinations; supporting the needs of all young people

- Appropriate increases of focused support at key transition points.
- The balance of provision available to meet needs and the numbers of those with additional needs who access appropriate opportunities (mainstream, SEN support, specialist).
- Sufficient provision and support across education, health and care for children and young people aged 16-25.



PRIORITY 4

A comprehensive review of the provision in education settings across Birmingham to deliver an offer which is aligned with national and regional best practice.

Aligned with a robust graduated approach, we need to ensure that all education settings have the appropriate capacity and skillsets to support children and young people earlier, creating an environment that will support them to thrive. Ofsted is clear that settings must consider the views of the child and family when assessing needs. Settings should always work to be inclusive and make sure all students access the same classroom at the same time in environments where they can all flourish. In addition, all students are included in all aspects of the learning offer provided.

We have been told:

“Lack of support, feel like we’ve been forgotten about, especially when he’s been in and out of learning at different places due to not being able to find a school and one close enough too.”

Parental feedback, 2022

Children and Young people have told us in September 2022:

“No one helps me. Teachers don’t explain things if I say I don’t ‘get’ the work and I get a sanction for speaking in class.”

24

“They want me to learn the same as everyone else, even when I struggle in a subject.”

Too many children and young people are currently in the wrong setting and, in some cases, are not in education. All settings are expected to support families, children, and young people (as written in the SEND Code of practice) to access a mainstream setting with the wrap-around support to help them thrive.

The comprehensive review cannot be delivered in isolation. Support for schools to ensure a consistent solid graduated approach of support that is consistent in every setting is crucial. A balance is required to provide the appropriate levels of support delivered through different professionals. This includes direct work with children and young people through statutory services to assess needs and to train other professionals to deliver within their setting. Educational psychology, therapy, social care and other specialist services will need to review and co-produce ways of working to ensure a sustainable model and consistent approach across the city provides equity for all families, children, and young people.

To deliver this, we will:

- i) Co-produce and work with school leaders to agree on what is needed to deliver effective support in schools.
- ii) Co-produce and review the availability of provision in

mainstream, resource bases and specialist settings to ensure equity and those appropriate settings are named for children and young people in the city.

- iii) Consider the use of funding to make sure all levels of need, universal, targeted and specialist, are appropriately supported in all settings.
- iv) Make sure all mainstream settings are better equipped to support all levels of need, recognise family preference and embrace the Code of practice.
- v) Grow and learn lessons from the DLP SSOS program to improve outreach from special schools to other settings and share the learning and best practice from the wider DLP projects.
- iv) Co-produce the graduated approach to develop the capacity in all settings and at all phases, consistently applied across the city.
- vii) Ensure support for children and young people can be delivered locally, without unnecessary travelling.

As a result of the above, we will:

- Provide better environments with the right support at the right time for all children and young people with additional needs.
- Ensure local provision is in line with Ofsted and Code of practice requirements and expectations.
- Meet needs as they are presented and by drawing in the right support from across the partnership in the right place and at the right time.



PRIORITY 5

Locality-based model of provision, right support, right place, right time with improved access to provision which meets the needs of the families, children and young people in line with the Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code of Practice.

There are too many children and young people in settings within the Birmingham partnership area who are a long way from their homes and community. Many schools offer excellent environments and inclusive practices; however, there are areas of the city where children and young people and families can see that their peers are receiving different, better and more outstanding support than they are.

There is also inequality across the city, with some areas having mainstream, resource bases and specialist settings all relatively close to each other. Even where these provisions exist, there are inequalities between them, sometimes based upon institutional preference and willingness to support, which is to be commended. However, we need to make sure that the provision in place is created according to the needs of the families in the local area after some strategic decision-making and which is based upon data.

In addition to creating the correct provision, we need to enhance the existing models of locality working being effectively deployed in Birmingham to improve the partnership working across the city.

Birmingham Children's Trust (BCT) and National Health Service (NHS) providers have been working on a locality model for some time, and we will co-produce a way forward with all providers to deliver consistent levels of support according to need in localities. Resources and decisions about where resources need to be deployed will be made strategically by the SEND Partnership.

We will cultivate multi-professional teams within a locality model. Each team will share resources, knowledge and communicate more effectively so that they can engage with families needing support as quickly as possible. We will also support and empower local decision-making so that the teams within the localities can use resources wisely so they are able to meet needs as quickly as possible.

We will:

- Create and develop resource bases in localities where they are needed.
- Create and establish multi-disciplinary teams that can intervene as early as possible.
- Embed locality working within and across different provider teams.

- Build capacity in education settings to meet needs at the earliest opportunity within their locality.
- Provide resources where the locality decision-makers can deploy them according to need.

We will know we have been successful when:

- We have settings that support the needs of their local community.
- We have reduced the waiting times for an intervention to agree on support needs.
- Time from professionals is allocated to localities to meet the needs of families.
- Families do not have to travel out of their local area to receive support.
- Families tell us they are receiving support from teams that share knowledge and work together to deliver support.
- Professionals tell us they are working more effectively together.
- Support is provided without the need for diagnosis or formal assessment.



KNOWLEDGE

PRIORITY 6

Excellent communication and engagement between children and young people, families, Education, Health and Care services, including schools.

We need to build mutual trust and two-way relationships with children and young people, families, schools and services across the city based on openness and honesty. There are pockets of excellent practice, but these are often related to an individual or a specific service area. We need to be more consistent across all services and ensure empathy, 'customer care' and co-production are critical components of communications with those we are here to support.

Too often, we receive feedback that our communication is not effective. Family members, children and young people do not feel they know what should happen on their journey and find it hard to get the answers they need. Feedback tells us they find our systems, including the SEND Local Offer website, overly complicated and challenging to use, and there is insufficient transparency; they do not know where to go for help when there are gaps in support.

"Lack of communication, don't deal with and signpost rather than support,"

Parental feedback, 2022

"Need to be able to communicate with (multiple services) more easily."

Parental feedback, 2022

We are getting more positive feedback from families that show how well things can be delivered and received. We need to improve communication so that all families tell us that it is easy to reach us, the journey is straightforward, and they feel cared for.

"Ever since SEND became involved in my child's development, I've never really known when they come see my son and what the outcome was but this year, I was fully involved in my son's support plan and what will be done to further help with his development. This gave me a sense of relief and peace of mind cause I knew what to expect and how person-centred his support plan was."

Parental feedback, 2022

"For the first time in 4 years, I've actually received a letter from transport confirming it's been arranged. Such a relief1 less thing to worry about."

Parental feedback, 2022

We need to communicate clearly and proactively with families and between SEND services so that everyone understands what is happening, who is leading the process and how long things should take. This will be more than information on a website or process maps provided in writing. We will personally engage with families earlier in any process, explaining the systems and processes to support them and their child or young person. We need to explain what the outcomes and positive impact will be.

We also know that children, young people, and families want to be communicated with differently. The use of social media, podcasts, and visual and spoken media have been requested rather than only written communications. We also need to be mindful of those neurodiverse in our audiences for whom reading can be challenging.

Through discussion and co-production:

- We will provide easy-to-access resources on the SEND Local Offer website for children, young people, and families to find up-to-date information.
- We will improve communication between the teams of professionals supporting a child or young person and their family.
- We will improve the levels of customer care to support families that are going through new or multi-agency and sometimes challenging processes.
- We will ensure that the voice of the child or young person and their family will be at the centre of all our services.
- Services and schools will work together to ensure good communication with children, young people, and families focused on the individual child.

- We will ensure that different methods are used to communicate key messages, particularly video messaging and podcasts.
- We will ensure that assessment and support processes are clear and shared with all concerned.
- We will have a clear and consistent way of working with families throughout their journey from beginning to end. Families will know what is happening and what will happen next.
- All service providers and SEND professionals will be well informed, open and transparent about the help and support available.
- Services and schools will work well together, and families will know what is happening and when.

The SEND Partnership has developed a communication strategy shared with all stakeholders across the city and will be implemented as part of our SEND services improvement programme.

As a mandatory requirement, we will also deliver customer care and communication training to all professionals working with families, families and children and young people across the partnership.

As a result, we will deliver a culture where:

- Professionals proactively share information, resources and support with families and children and young people so that they know where to find help quickly and easily.
- Families and children and young people and all those providing support to them will communicate more effectively.
- Professionals will have the tools to communicate well with families, children, and young people.
- It will be easier for families, children, and young people to access the information and understand the available help.



PRIORITY 7

A resilient, skilled and sustained SEND Partnership team that delivers impact and positive outcomes for all children and young people who have additional needs.

We need a workforce that works well together with shared values and trust. We must ensure that leaders have clear roles, responsibilities, and confidence to make the right decisions to support children, young people, and families. We need to have decision-making processes that are clear and accountable with a workforce supported by training so they have the right skills and knowledge. We need to have systems that are easy to follow for all teams, with everyone knowing what should happen and when.

Across our SEND Partnership, we can grow the committed, hardworking and often overstretched workforce by providing better systems and information, allowing them to make decisions locally with one purpose, improving the experiences of those we support.

We already have families telling us that:

"We did have a really good, efficient, kind, hardworking (contact); however, as usual, they got moved, and now I feel that (my child) is a number the person-centred approach has now gone."

Parental feedback, 2022

We have some excellent staff that go the extra mile to help, but not all staff have the skills or resources they need. We have a range of expertise across the city. However, it is not consistently available to all, and we still have issues recruiting and retaining staff which impacts how well services deliver.

Children and Young people have told us in September 2022:

"Having more SEN awareness and support from class teachers, as well as teaching resources."

"Teachers need training on how to teach us with learning needs."

Our leaders tell us that:

- Systems and processes do not join up, and the pressures on individual services hinder facilitating change.
- Teams have operated in isolation for many years without necessarily joining up effectively.
- We have some good joint working, but it is not consistent across the city, and we know that cases involving many teams can be a challenging experience for families.
- We have some excellent training in place, but not everyone knows about it, takes the opportunity to benefit from it, and there is no central record of minimum standards consistently applied across the area

We will:

- Develop our training offer to create a programme for all professionals that covers inclusion and SEND, growing what is already in place.
- Ensure minimum standards of mandatory training become the norm for all professionals in the local area, improving their knowledge of the local systems, skills to fulfil their role AND ensuring families receive high-quality service delivery.
- Deliver training in ways that everyone will find accessible, including webinars, e-learning and face-to-face sessions.
- Make sure that there is a citywide offer of training for our SENCOs (and teams in all education settings from early years to post-16) so that they have the skills and expertise to coordinate support within their setting.

- Use feedback from families to tell us how we are doing and what we need to improve upon.
- Include families in training where possible, both as providers and training recipients.
- Share learning from mistakes and complaints with the workforce to support improvement.
- Undertake peer reviews and service evaluations so that we can keep improving our services across our localities/neighbourhoods, joining together education, health and care services as local teams in different areas of the city.

By delivering the above, we will ensure greater accountability of service leaders and their teams and drive improvement in service users' experiences. Continuous improvement and learning from our mistakes will be crucial to the sustained and embedded improvements needed.

We will measure our success by:

- the number of professionals undertaking mandatory training.
- the number of professionals undertaking specific skills-related training.
- increased confidence of professionals in supporting in the right place at the right time.
- the number of leaders undertaking peer-led reviews of service delivery.
- the feedback we receive from professionals and service users
- the number of complaints we resolve effectively.



PRIORITY 8

Improved collection, publication and analysis of data to inform the Birmingham SEND priorities in supporting children and young people in the future.

We need to improve how we collect and use data across the services in Birmingham. We need to do this so that we know as early as possible who needs help, what sort of help they need and where they need to access it. This is not just one service but all services combining their information and data to improve how we support families.

There is too much fragmentation, and a dedicated team for collecting, analysing and reporting on what the data tells us is crucial to delivering sustained improvement and successful SEND and Children's Partnerships.

Whilst there is some good practice isolated in teams for gathering data relevant to their specific remit, we need to collect data at a central pace that is up-to-date, accurately recorded and supports leaders to improve outcomes and performance for families.

We need to make sure that where settings and providers (from early years to post 16) are identifying any additional needs, this is considered when the local area makes plans and forecasts what is required to meet local needs in the future. Too often, we are 'reacting' and lack proactivity to predict what is needed and where it is needed to support children, young people, and families.

There is a clear recognition that more needs to be done to reach the local area's aspirations for its most vulnerable children and young people, including where families feel change is not rapid enough. We need to ensure that all teams record consistently across the partnership and share data that can support resource planning and other operational decision-making. Teams working directly with those with additional needs will have a dedicated place to record interventions

and outcomes. Progress and successes can then be tracked, and support can be increased and decreased according to need.

We can also be more transparent with the data that we hold. We can publish appropriate information on our Local Offer website to show how we perform against quality standards. We can also publish aggregated data about where needs are being met, how many families are being supported and where gaps need to be filled. Better data analysis will inform stakeholders of the provision and support that must be available to meet needs so we can celebrate success and progress made over time.

We will:

- Review and provide appropriate capacity to embed a Children and Young People and Families data team.
- Focus on improving the data exchanges between providers and data collection by all providers. These are to be automated wherever possible.
- Analyse data to predict future needs to create sufficient high quality local provision in the right places and at the right time.
- Use the data to prioritise how we get the right skills, knowledge and funding to identify and assess needs promptly.
- Collaboratively and co-productively work with all partners to deliver 'performance management' indicators and use

these to improve how we support those we serve.

- Introduce a standardised (eventually, digitised) EHCP process and template to minimise bureaucracy and deliver consistency.

We will know we have succeeded when:

- All partners can report performance data showing progress and sustained improvements in service delivery.
- The Local Offer website has a strong and appropriate data section providing transparent and accurate performance data.

- Resources are deployed effectively, maximising the time we can give from services to those we need to support.
- Trends and forecasting of needs are easier to illustrate so that leaders can identify resource requirements for the future.

To deliver this strategy, we will need to put in place a robust action plan which details how we will make the necessary changes. The action plan will be monitored through the SEND Improvement Board chaired by our DfE-appointed commissioner (John Coughlan) and via the Director of SEND & Inclusion, Director for Thriving Children & Families and Director of Schools & Employability.



Glossary of Terms

Throughout this strategy, we use several key terms:

ASSESSMENTS - The gathering of information about children and young people's strengths, abilities, progress and aspirations.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT 2014 -

A legislation that brought together a number of changes to services for vulnerable children and young people and families. The changes cover the family justice system, virtual schools for looked after children, adoption, childcare, shared parental leave and flexible working, and services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). The provisions in the Act which relate to SEND came into force in September 2014.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE -

All groups of children, young people and young adults from birth to age 25.

DfE - Department for Education

LOCALITY-MODEL -

Neighbourhood or district where services should be delivered; within the community as close to where people live.

EDUCATION SETTING -

All education providers, including all early years settings, childminders, nurseries, schools, colleges and training providers.

EYFS - Early Years Foundation Stage

- A set of standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

FAMILIES - All parent carers, grandparents and anyone seen as a family member that directly supports the children and young people.

GRADUATED APPROACH -

We have referenced the SEND Code of Practice (page 100) and mean different levels of support in place to meet an individual's need at the right time for them.

LOCAL OFFER - Provision available from the partners in Birmingham to support children and young people with additional needs. It is NOT the graduated response or a universal offer of support.

LOCAL OFFER WEBSITE -

Online platform where providers of services share their service descriptions and where families and professionals can search for local processes/systems and contact details.

PLANS - All types of written plans across Education, Health and Care.

PROVISION - All types of help and support that meet need. Education, Health and Care services, including education settings, Birmingham centralised education teams, school improvement activity, health services, social care team(s) and voluntary and community services.

QUALITY FIRST TEACHING -

A style of teaching that emphasises high-quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class. Quality first teaching includes differentiated learning, strategies to support SEN pupils' learning in class, ongoing formative assessment and many others.

SEND CODE OF PRACTICE -

A guide for schools and local education authorities about the help given to children with special educational needs. Schools and local authorities must have regard for the Code when working with a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

SERVICES - Any service across Education, Health and Care, including statutory social care services (including adult social care), supporting children and young people.

THE BALANCED SYSTEM FOR SPEECH AND LANGUAGE

FRAMEWORK- Is a way of making sure that in a setting, school or local area, the right provisions are available for parents, carers and professionals to help children and young people develop their speech, language and communication.

TRANSITION - For every transition stage in a child’s life, when they go from home into their first early years setting, from an early years setting into primary school, from primary to secondary school and into post-16 education and adult life. This includes transition to adult Health and Social Care services.



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Help, support, advice and information
for children and young people with
special educational needs and disabilities.
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