



SEND Strategy

Islington's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2022-27



ISLINGTON
= For a more equal future

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Foreword

“Our Children’s Services vision is that every child and young person in Islington feels safe and thrives, leading to a fulfilling life. Education is the key tool to achieving this vision and transforming outcomes for children and young people.”

We have the ambition, through our Education Plan, to reimagine education and consider what might be possible for future generations. This SEND Strategy is one of the nine pillars that will support the delivery of that plan.

Our bold and ambitious strategy will provide the best education for all Islington children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND).

By 2027, all children and young people with SEND and their families can say:

- Our needs were identified at the earliest possible stage
- Information about services is easy to find, clear and fair
- We are listened to and treated respectfully
- Our voice and views are at the heart of all decision making for our child
- Our needs are understood, and the right provision is in place
- We are involved in co-production of services and support
- We are not excluded from schools
- We have received timely, person-centred, aspirational and ambitious planning for a good adult life with a smooth handover from children to adult services

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring all children and young people are included in their local community; this will include building on the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with SEND, so that more children can attend and be included at their local school with confidence
- Developing our local offer of provision: including the creation of new specialist provision in mainstream schools with state-of-the-art facilities
- Meeting needs in a way that is ambitious, inclusive and realistic to deliver within a challenging financial context; this will include making the very best use possible of the £38 million pounds a year that Islington Council receive to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

The Department for Education recently completed a national SEND Review, and in March 2022 published the SEND Green Paper: Right Support; Right Place; Right Time. This strategy is set within the challenging context outlined in that review.

We’ve developed these ambitious plans because the need for SEND provision is growing and we want all our children and young people to have the best possible outcomes so that they go on to have fulfilling lives, living as independently as possible.

The strategy commits to promoting inclusion, and excellent outcomes for children with SEND and those who need additional support to achieve their full potential.

The strategy applies to all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25, including those who have an Education, Health and Care Plan and those who receive SEND Support. This includes children who live in Islington but attend education settings out borough.

Executive Summary

This is a bold and ambitious strategy for continuing to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families in Islington, as part of the wider corporate mission to create a more equal Islington, where everyone who lives here has an equal chance to thrive. It builds on work already achieved and has been co-produced with children and young people, parents and carers, schools and settings and other key stakeholders. The strategy will support the inclusion of all children and young people in Islington, as one of the nine pillars of our Education Plan. It is an essential part of the process of continuous improvement required to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, supported by a needs assessment, ongoing self-evaluation, and detailed Action Plans.

We have listened carefully to what children, young people, their families and carers have told us about their experiences and views. Schools and support services have also told us of their challenges in meeting increased demand. This has informed the development of a shared vision and set of principles to underpin this strategy.

We have focused our work under four main Ambitions:

- **Ambition One: Fully inclusive education for all:** We will support all schools and settings in Islington to be inclusive and welcome children and young people with SEND
- **Ambition Two: Right support in the right place at the right time for parents and carers:** We will transform parents' experience of the SEND system by delivering the right support in the right place at the right time
- **Ambition Three: Equity and excellent education provision:** We will deliver new, ambitious and innovative provision that enables children and young people with SEND to receive excellent education in their local community
- **Ambition Four: All young people are well prepared for adulthood:** We will enable all young people to achieve independence, build good relationships and have a meaningful occupation

Islington Council is committed to the early identification of need to ensure that the correct support is identified, and plans are put in place with children, young people, and families at the right time. This strategy is also underpinned by our 'Fairer Together' approach to create a more equal Islington, where everyone has a more equal chance to thrive

The SEND Strategy will drive inclusive practice in all our schools and settings, support a financial model that enables schools and settings to support children with additional needs appropriately and promote independence and equip young people with SEND for life by enabling them to stay within their local communities attending, where possible, their local mainstream schools.

Partnership working, integrated service delivery and Joint Commissioning will continue to have an important part to play in the delivery of our priorities.

Introduction

There are around 8,000 children and young people in Islington between the ages of 0-25 who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Partners take joint responsibility to co-ordinate health support, care and learning leading to best outcomes for these children and young people so that they are able to fulfil their ambitions and thrive.

We are proud of the quality of our SEND provision in Islington, which was recognised through our Local Area SEND Inspection which took place in November 2021 as follows:

- Strong strategic leadership and well-established teams
- Strong and well-established joint working relationships
- Very effective use of data
- Partnerships with parents and children and young people are meaningful and effective
- Children and young people with SEND achieve well
- Education, Health and Care Plans are of a consistently high quality and provide an up-to-date and clear picture of each child and young person's needs
- Partnerships between the Islington SEND Team and schools are very positive
- Short breaks are used effectively to support families
- The area-wide approach to meeting children and young people's SEMH needs is strong
- Transition planning is strong
- Case officers know young people and their families very well
- Procedures to identify needs in the early years are very well embedded
- The work of special schools, including through outreach services, makes a real and demonstrable difference to children and young people's lives and achievements
- Clear oversight of children and young people who are electively home educated
- Children and young people receive comprehensive support while they await diagnosis

But there are still things that we need to do better. We also know from [research](#) that children and young people with SEND have been disproportionately affected by the COVID pandemic and must therefore be at the heart of recovery plans. We also know through consultation and through our LA SEND Inspection that not all Islington schools are welcoming of children and young people with SEND.

Locally we have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of children and young people identified with SEND, particularly those who have an EHCP, which accelerated during and post pandemic. This is in line with a national trend.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out the vision, aspirations, and priorities in Islington for developing support and provision for children and young people with SEND and their families over the next five years. It applies to all partner agencies in Islington who have responsibilities for commissioning and providing services for children and young people with SEND and their families, and view this as a high priority.

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Achieving fully inclusive education, good health and care leading to most children and young people with SEND attending their local mainstream school, where they will be welcomed and supported to learn, contribute, and participate in all aspects of the life of the school alongside their peers is our goal. This strategy recognises the roles that all partners have in supporting that goal.

It is a strategy for all the children and young people in Islington who have SEND and their families, and delivery is everybody's business.

SEND Review: Right Support; Right Place; Right Time (SEND Green Paper)

In March 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) published the SEND Green Paper: Right Support; Right Place; Right Time following a national SEND Review. The review was commissioned in response to widespread recognition that the national SEND system was failing to deliver, that parental and provider confidence was in decline, and that the system had become financially unsustainable. It applies to all partners across Education, Health and Social Care.

The Green Paper sets out the findings of a national SEND review, summarised as:

- There is a vicious cycle of low confidence in mainstream provision which sees more children coming forward for specialist provision, pulling more money out of main budgets
- Children and young people with SEND and those in alternative provision have consistently poorer outcomes than their peers.
- The current SEND and alternative provision system is financially unsustainable
- There is too much inconsistency across the system
- The SEND system remains too dependent on education to meet need

The Green Paper proposes:

- Establishing new local SEND partnerships, bringing together education (including alternative provision), health and care partners with local government and other partners to produce a local inclusion plan setting out how each local area will meet the national standards. The plan will be statutory and must be approved by the DfE.
- Setting nationally consistent standards for how SEND is identified, and needs met
- Reviewing and updating the SEND Code of Practice
- Supporting parents and carers to express an informed preference for a suitable placement by providing a tailored list of settings
- Setting a new national framework of banding and price tariffs for high needs funding

- Streamlining the redress process, including mandatory mediation, whilst retaining the tribunal for the most challenging cases

Implementation plans will also be considered alongside proposed national reforms to Health and Social Care, including Integrated Care Systems and the forthcoming Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The strategy is also informed by research undertaken by Ofsted: '[Putting children and young people with SEND at the heart of recovery plans](#)', which looked at the impact of the COVID pandemic and concluded that nationally:

- Children and young people with SEND have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic
- Children and families expressed concern about missed and narrowed education, the absence of essential services and long waiting times for assessment and treatment
- Many families were exhausted, particularly when they were unable to access essential services for their children
- Some children have been 'wrongly labelled as having SEND' simply because they are struggling following extended periods away from their education setting
- There is also concern that some children and young people, especially those in the early years, may have new or different needs

'This will undoubtedly put further strain on a system that is already under pressure'.

The case for a new approach

Our local offer for children and families with SEND has been considered a strength by parents, schools and settings and partners for many years. There has been significant investment and redesign of specialist provision (special schools, satellites and PRU), and there is corporate pride in the high quality of that offer. There are strong, well-established partnerships and collaborative working across education, health and care systems to support children and young people with SEND.

Children and young people with SEND and their families must remain at the heart of service planning and delivery, and we are committed to driving educational excellence and promoting positive life experiences through inclusive and sustainable schools and support services.

But, and perhaps as a consequence of a well-developed local offer, demand and complexity of need have accelerated, particularly over the last 18 months. If this trend continues, demand will outstrip local supply.

Conversations with parents, schools and partners reflect a perception that too many of our children and young people go to special schools to have their education, health and care needs met because the right provision, skills and appropriate level of funding are not available in mainstream. While provision for children with SEND in most mainstream settings is of high quality, we know that the quality of our mainstream offer is not universal. Building more local special schools is neither affordable or in line with our vision for a fair and inclusive system.

Our strategic focus must therefore now shift to our mainstream schools and early years settings, where we need to build resilience to meet an increasing complexity of need, and find the best ways to capture existing skills, knowledge, and best practice within our schools to build capacity so that all our schools are equipped to manage 21st century need. A key consideration in achieving more inclusive practice across all our schools therefore also include the development of Additionally Resourced Provision in mainstream schools to address immediate need to ensure sufficient specialist support. This will particularly focus on meeting the demand and the increasingly complex range of needs of children with Autism Spectrum Conditions, and/or Social Emotional and Mental Health needs.

Refocusing intervention and quality inclusion within mainstream schools, will also enable our specialist settings to concentrate on those learners with the most complex of needs as the bar in terms of severity continues to rise.

We also recognise there is a strong view across our schools that the current SEND funding model is not fit for purpose. There are also some strongly held views that decision making regarding placement of children is not transparent or fair. We cannot ignore these feelings. An increase in reliance on statutory process has also affected capacity within our operational SEND teams to maintain the systems and processes required to meet statutory responsibilities.

Considering the learning from other Local Authorities and the recent DfE publication: [High needs budgets: effective management in local authorities](#), we also recognise that to make the required system changes will take time. Building relationships, trust, and shifting culture are all critical components and cannot be rushed. However, there are immediate demands, and the following sections set out how we propose to address immediate demands in the system change as well as longer-term cultural shift.

Inclusion and the views of Parents

Islington Parents of children with SEND have co-produced an **Islington SEND Parents Charter** through the Co-production Board, which parents have asked all Islington Schools to sign up to.

SEND Parents Charter

Wanting the best for our children and young people.

- All schools understand and implement good practice in line with the equalities act
- Develop SEND expertise and make it everyone's business
- Plan and intervene as early as possible
- Make sure everybody understands the medical and social models of disability
- Commit to developing everyone's understanding of additional support needs

Everyone understands SEND

1

- Have high expectations for our young people, as you would your own
- Be open-hearted and curious about difference
- Be ambitious for our children
- – help raise their aspirations and encourage them to achieve

Be ambitious and have high expectations

2

- Encourage young people to take 'managed risks' to promote their independence
- Ask for their input from an early age so they feel as if their opinion counts - this will help build their ability make decisions
- Help our children to speak up for themselves - one good step is having them prepare a page for their reviews, including strengths

Develop independence

3

- Don't focus on the child's condition; focus on the individual child's needs and understand them
- Emphasise our child's strengths and achievements to nurture their confidence and self esteem
- Have clear plans in relation to SEND and share them with parents

Have a 'can do' approach

4

- Listen to parents realistic targets and expectations
- Open and honest communication
- Value our contributions as equal partners

Work in partnership with parents

5

- Provide us with information and let us know of your concerns in good time
- Know about and support parents to navigate the 'local offer' – not just the website
- Share your behaviour programmes and approaches that work well with us to continue at home for consistency

Ways of working with parents

6

- Involve our children in your decision making and service delivery
- Involve our children appropriately in their own assessment, planning and review
- Understand the importance of transitions for children with SEND - involve our children in planning for change so that their experience is less stressful

Young people's involvement

7

- Work together with other agencies
- Have good systems, processes and structures Assess – Plan – Do – Review.
- Whole class and whole school - make learning fun and accessible for all children.

Integrated approaches

8

- Good quality on going SEN training for all teachers
- Effective approaches to teaching and learning for all children
- Dignity and respect for each other

Strong leadership of SEND

9

- Make your SEND offer
- person-centred – don't try and make our children fit your offer
- Generalise skills knowledge to work with all children
- Have a flexible approach and be more tolerant of all children's needs

Be an inclusive school

10

We will ensure continuous improvement of parental engagement at a strategic level by:

- Continuing to work closely with our Parent Carer Forum and other established parent support groups /charities, listening to the voices of all parents, carers, children and young people and acting on what we hear
- Engaging a wider group of families in the planning and evaluation of our services
- Ensuring our communication is accessible, open, clear, and timely.
- Ensuring our workforce has the necessary skills to work in partnership with parents, carers and children and young people with SEND and are responsive to their needs.
- Involving children, young people and their families in all decision making about their lives.

Our vision and shared principles

Our vision for children and young people with SEND in Islington, co-produced with Islington parents and carers of children and young people with SEND is for:

- An inclusive education system whereby children with increasingly complex needs achieve and succeed within mainstream schools
- A consistent, borough wide approach to including all children and young people with SEND
- Every child and young person have a sense of belonging and feels part of their school, irrespective of background, needs or culture.

Underpinning our vision is a set of jointly agreed and owned principles.

- Collective responsibility: SEND is everyone's business
- Early support and intervention: to prevent escalation
- Mainstream presumption: mainstream education is an entitlement
- Localisation: provision as close to home as possible
- Personalisation and co-production: valuing the uniqueness of all
- Transparency: clear and honest communication across the system
- Partnership and collaboration: a seamless, integrated system
- Innovation and flexibility; driven by outcomes, not process
- Learning: we value learning, reflection and iterative development (*Think – Test – Learn*).

We will continually reflect on these principles as we move through our programme of work, to ensure that we remain focused on the reasons for driving change in Islington. This will be done as part of our annual Self Evaluation process.

Our partnership Ambitions for the next five years

In response to the above, we have identified the following Ambitions to be addressed over the next five years to ensure all children with SEND in Islington receive high quality, inclusive and integrated services when they need them. Parents want those services to be delivered as close to home as possible and for them to support children and young people with SEND to be the best they can be. Our vision will only be achieved by ensuring that all partners work together across each of these priority areas.

- **Ambition One: Fully inclusive education for all:** We will support all schools and settings in Islington to be inclusive and welcome children and young people with SEND
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We are focussing on these areas because:

- Children, young people and families and partners have told us that these are the things that are important to them
- Analysis of our performance, and of good practice in other local areas demonstrates that these are the areas we need to do better in, if we are to improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND

The following section sets out how we will achieve these ambitions and what success will look like. We will conduct annual surveys with parents and children and young people to check our progress against the qualitative measures outlined within the success measures.

Ambition One: Fully inclusive education for all

We will support all schools and settings in Islington to be inclusive and welcome children and young people with SEND

Context:

Work across the Islington local area in relation to SEND and inclusion has many strengths, and this strategy will sustain and further develop these areas:

- Educational outcomes for children and young people, including those who have SEND, are looked after or face additional challenges, are consistently improving, except in Key Stage 4 where further action is needed
- Co-production with parents, carers and children and young people is well established
- There are many excellent examples of joint commissioning of services across health, education and social care
- School suspensions and exclusions are reducing
- Our Fair Access processes, delivered through Securing Education Boards, lead to improved understanding of the needs of children and young people, promoting inclusion.

However, there also challenges:

- Not all Islington schools' welcome children with SEND
- The number of children and young people identified with SEND has grown at a rate of around 8% per year for the last three years
- Although exclusions have reduced, more needs to be done to reassure parents and carers of the effectiveness of local strategies for supporting vulnerable children
- Persistent absence from Islington school remains stubbornly high, particularly among vulnerable groups for whom full attendance is crucial if their aspirations are to be achieved.

High level priority actions

	Priority	Action
1.1	<p>Promote Islington’s approach to inclusion</p> <p>(See also Appendix 3: Our Approach to Inclusion and Belonging)</p>	<p>Identify, model, and share good inclusive practice in schools (i.e., where children and young people with SEND feel they belong, are respected and valued and supported to make progress and achieve their ambitions through high quality teaching and a challenging, wide-ranging curriculum).</p> <p>Encourage all partners to adopt a holistic approach and work collaboratively to support all children and young people with SEND to improve progress and outcomes.</p> <p>Ensure education inclusion support is part of the wider joined-up offer of support for children and young people’s care and health needs, e.g., through improved links with Early Help and locality-based service</p>
1.2	<p>Support and empower all schools to play their part in a fully inclusive system</p>	<p>Support high quality core inclusive education delivery by bringing together the development of a core training offer, leadership development, and peer review</p> <p>Provide specialist intervention and additional support, for example through extended outreach from special schools and Alternative Provision (AP), piloting opportunities</p> <p>Promote peer reviews of inclusion with an identified focus on SEND provision, using self-evaluation tools developed with Whole-School SEND</p>
1.3	<p>Build knowledge in our workforce so that vulnerability is recognised, and needs are met</p>	<p>Provide workforce development opportunities (with impact evaluations) in areas such as trauma informed practice, neurodiversity, mental health and wellbeing to ensure accurate identification of need, assessment and provision that leads to full inclusion in education.</p>

	Priority	Action
		<p>Make available toolkits and resources e.g., to support preparation for adulthood, for secondary schools to better support those with ADHD and other attention difficulties.</p> <p>Raise awareness of non-discriminatory practice and quality assure all training and workforce development opportunities to challenge discrimination in service delivery and/or access to services</p>
1.4	Enhancing the 0 – 7 offer for children with SEND	<p>Children in their early years are potentially those whose development has been most impacted by the coronavirus pandemic; this is also where we are seeing the most significant increases in diagnosis of complex SEND.</p> <p>Transition from Early Years into school, and support once they move into school will therefore need to be managed and supported in different ways. A Working Group has been established to consider key challenges for partners, what's working and what isn't, and what needs to be developed in response</p>
1.5	Make available high-quality data	We will provide all schools and partners with a contextualised overview of inclusion data to help identify areas for development and measure impact
1.6	Good Practice and Pilot opportunities	We will identify and capture good practice into the directory of support for sharing. We will also provide support to schools to further develop good practice activity in relation to improving achievement and attainment of children and young people with SEND.
1.7	Reducing Suspension and Exclusion of children with SEND	We will support schools to work collaboratively to develop strategies to reduce the numbers of children and young people who are excluded from education through delivery of Islington Education Plan

	Priority	Action
1.8	Improving Attendance of children and young people with SEND	Children and young people must attend school regularly to benefit fully from their education provision. our approach to improving attendance includes. A 12-month improvement plan is in place focusing on parental responsibility, School leadership and management of attendance, partners providing needs-based support and the Local Authority continuing to provide challenge and support.
1.9	Support at Transition points	Childrens Services Scrutiny undertook a review of the ways in which the council supports young people with SEND and their families at various points of transition and made a range of recommendations (March 2022). There is a detailed action plan in response to the recommendations of the committee and they will keep progress under review.

What does success look like?

Children and young people are happy and enjoy life, feel supported and safe. They are included and active in their local community.

- The majority of children and young people with an EHCP are educated in their local mainstream school – nationally published data shows that the balance of those with an EHCP in mainstream is at least in line with national, regional and statistical neighbour
- Key data shows proportionate representation of children and young people with SEND (e.g., elective home education, attendance data, youth offending, emergency health admissions, social care services)
- There is a reduction year on year in the number of suspensions and permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND
- More children and young people with SEND attend school regularly
- Less children and young people with SEND are attending school on a reduced timetable
- Annual survey carried out by parent/carer forums shows evidence that year on year parents/carers have increasing confidence in the system and, where issues persist, there is clear evidence of follow-up action

- Parents also tell us that they are listened to and treated respectfully, their voice is at the heart of decision making for their child and they are involved in co-production of services and support
- Venues and activities are accessible, so this no longer prevents children and young people's participation in locally based activities
- Our workforce tell us that that they have the right skills and knowledge and access to appropriate training

Children and young people tell us that:

- They are welcomed and feel valued by the school, clubs and organisations within their community
- The support they are receiving is making a difference to their lives
- They are able to learn at school or college
- They are supported to access the activities they want to take part in and to pursue their own interests
- They are happy at school or college and have friends
- They have someone who they can talk to and with whom they can share any worries they might have about their safety
- They are accessing the activities they want to locally
- They have experience well planned transitions at all stages of their education.

Ambition Two: Right support in the right place at the right time for parents and carers

We will transform parents' experience of the SEND system by delivering the right support in the right place at the right time

Context

The views of children and young people and parents and carers are at the heart of everything we do.

- Islington's Local Area SEND inspection by Ofsted / CQC in November 2021 reported that 'Leaders take seriously the views of parents and young people. Partnerships with parents and young people are meaningful and effective. Leaders actively involve parents and young people in shaping the area's policies as well as practices'.
- Our 'Pyramid of Participation' model reflects the ladder of co-production, so that there are different routes and levels of participation for parents, including our Co-Production Group, the Parent Forum, Parent Consultants and our Parent Parliament.
- There is strong and positive working relationship with our main parent/carer forum
- Co-production is active and valued, and an established part of commissioning, designing and delivering services for children and young people with SEND.

However, there are areas for further development:

- The SEND Green Paper has reported that nationally, parental confidence in the SEND system is low
- Islington is a very diverse community and not all parents understand what support they are entitled to and when. Some parents have not heard about or used the local offer website
- Impact of the COVID on family resilience – research now shows that children and young people with SEND have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic
- Wait times for access to some specialist health therapies, mental health interventions and assessment pathways is too long
- Children who do not attend early years settings need to have their needs identified much earlier
- Demand for short breaks and home to school transport have risen sharply during / post the pandemic, impacting on capacity

- Chairs of the Parent Carer Forum are keen to engage a wider group of families in the planning and evaluation of our services
- We have seen an increase in the number of parental appeals to the First Tier SEND Tribunal. Although this increase is both in line with National trend and the overall significant increase in the number of children with EHCPs locally (i.e. by 30% increase over the last 3 years) we recognise the distress and frustration for parents that sits behind this. This SEND strategy is about addressing the root causes of those disputes.

High level priority actions

	Priority	Action
2.1	Equity of access to SEND services for parents and carers	<p>We will develop an effective SEND and Inclusion Communication Strategy to ensure Islington SEND partners have clear and transparent communications with parents about strategic developments and information is accessible to all parents, carers and families.</p> <p>All commissioned or in-house services must ensure that engagement initiatives reach and involve families from a range of backgrounds and experiences, representing Islington's diverse communities.</p>
2.2	A Local Offer that is accessible to all families and young people	Development of the Local Offer Website to ensure accessibility and awareness among parents, carers and practitioners with support from the Corporate Communications Team. We will consult create a continuous improvement and quality control process through consultation.
2.3	Health Therapies review and remodelling	As numbers increase, the current model for delivering health therapies is becoming increasingly unsustainable. A fundamental review is therefore underway to identify new ways of working to meet a changing demographic. This will be led by health commissioners recognising wider regional challenges across the North Central London Integrated Care System

	Priority	Action
2.4	CAMHS transformation	<p>Children and young people are currently waiting too long for specialist ASC and mental health interventions. Regional as well as local planning is in place to address this, as well as reviewing the ASC diagnostic pathway and possible over-representation of some groups. There is particular concern around adolescent girls with a diagnosis of ASC and their mental health needs.</p> <p>We are committed to developing social and emotional mental health (SEMH) services for all CYP in line with the THRIVE Framework. The framework identifies a range of different needs and appropriate evidenced based interventions whilst maintaining a focus on early intervention and prevention ensuring children and young people are able to THRIVE. This framework puts children and young people and their parents / carers at the heart of shared decision making ensuring their voice is heard and listened to, to determine how their SEMH needs are met.</p>
2.5	Supporting parents to fully utilise opportunities to improve health outcomes for children and young people with SEND	<p>This includes:</p> <p>Promoting health checks for young people age 14+ with learning disabilities, including autism and Integrated Review at two</p> <p>A stronger focus on prevention at the preconception and ante-natal phase.</p> <p>Developing understanding and soft in practice a to:</p> <p>support and help families to understand the impact of adversities and trauma on child development</p> <p>empower children to share and know that they have a safe space to talk in school</p>

	Priority	Action
2.6	<p>Early identification systems and processes are in place across partnerships, so no child of any age is overlooked.</p>	<p>Our Early Years SEND team will ensure:</p> <p>A joint agency approach to supporting families, aligning early years services and agencies and overseeing duties for early years outcomes, sufficiency and information are met.</p> <p>All Early Years children with SEND are identified through integrated pathways between education, health and care so that all children requiring SEND provision at school entry have had their needs assessed and a supported transition to Reception is in place.</p> <p>Our Pupil Services Management Team will ensure:</p> <p>Targeted support is available for all vulnerable learners in schools, including those with SEMH, neurodiversity, speech, language and communication needs, health and wellbeing and safeguarding needs and ensuring appropriate intervention from trained practitioners so that children remain in mainstream education.</p> <p>Children at risk of exclusion have in place appropriate, timely support to mitigate exclusion and to develop resilience to anti-social or criminal activity for those who have been excluded.</p> <p>Our Virtual School Head will ensure:</p> <p>Looked After Children have health assessments and those with EHCPs have school places secured in a timely way when they are placed out of borough through a system of advocacy by the corporate parent.</p> <p>Our Youth Offending Service Manager will ensure:</p> <p>Vulnerable learners within the Youth Offending Service are identified and have their learning needs assessed and supported</p> <p>At risk cohorts of children in schools from different social and ethnic backgrounds are identified</p>

	Priority	Action
		Educational equality, access to education and improvement in academic attainment for those groups
2.7	Review of Short Break (including overnight and respite care)	Demand for these services has increased post pandemic and we will carry out a review involving parents and carers to ensure that sufficiency and high quality are maintained as cost effectively as possible. This work will be informed by our SEND profile and projections data
2.8	Review Home to School Transport capacity in response to increased demand, noting a high level of satisfaction with service from current users	<p>The review will focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity for extending Personal Transport Budgets (reimbursement) and independent travel training Data collection / route planning, including pick-up points

	Priority	Action
		<p>Links with Adult Social Care</p> <p>Staffing and capacity to deliver services</p>
2.9	Support for families from wider Council services	<p>Some families report a lack of awareness / understanding of the additional challenges that families of children with SEND may face e.g., housing, hazards within the home or community</p> <p>We will work collaboratively as part of the Family Hub programme to ensure that parents / carers of children with SEND know about and understand the services available to them, where to go to access those services and get the range of support they need, and that the support is on offer in a way that works for the family</p>

What does success look like?

All parents understand and have confidence in the SEND services available in Islington, whether that is within health, education, social care or the voluntary sector.

- Education, Health and Care and Health-based assessments are completed in a timely manner and following assessment families do not have to wait so long for treatment to start
- families report that because of improved access to the health services they need, their health needs are being identified and met earlier
- Interventions and support to improve children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health are having a positive impact
- All two-year olds in Early Years Settings are receiving an Integrated Review
- More young people over the age of 14 with a learning disability are accessing their annual LD health check
- Data shows less conflict in the system e.g., number of Tribunals registered, number of appeals
- Numbers of children and young people identified with SEND will be in line with population expectations

- Quality of all assessments reflect a child centred approach and show joined up working
- Annual local authority and parent/carer survey data shows that there is a continuing increase in the number of parents/carers, children and young people who report a positive experience of, and confidence in, the SEND support system

Feedback from parents/carers shows satisfaction with early identification of need, by all agencies. They tell us:

- Information about services is easy to find, clear and fair
- We are listened to and treated respectfully
- Our voice and views are at the heart of all decision making for our child
- Our needs were identified at the earliest possible stage
- Our needs are understood, and the right provision is in place
- We are involved in co-production of services and support

Children and young people tell us that:

- They are as healthy as they can be
- They are happy and enjoy life

Ambition Three: Equity and excellent education provision

We will deliver new, ambitious, and innovative provision that enables children and young people with SEND to receive excellent education in their local community

Context

We are proud of the high quality of our SEND education offer in Islington, which was recognised through our Local Area SEND Inspection.

- We have an impressive profile of schools, with 95% rated good or better.
- Educational attainment outcomes for SEND children are strong at key stages 1-2. For example, at primary age more children with SEND reach expected standards than the national average. By secondary age attainment for children with EHCPs do less well however and are in the bottom quartile nationally both for children receiving SEND Support and those with an EHCP.
- Some children with more complex needs benefit from more specialist provision. We have invested in increasing the range and number of specialist settings in Islington so that most of our children with complex needs can attend school locally and in their community.
- We also have highly ambitious plans to further develop provision for children and young people with social emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs through New River College (Alternative Provision) in line with the vision set out within the SEND Green Paper.
- While physical facilities across our special schools are generally good, primary provision for Samuel Rhodes School is not adequate and we should consider alternative locations as part of wider School Place sufficiency planning.
- The main concerns from parents are around fairness and equity, which we address through the second ambition in this send strategy (Responsive and timely support for parents and carers).

There are significant challenges however:

- The last three years have seen a 30% increase in demand for SEND provision. The pandemic will account for some of this; Ofsted have also recognised some risk of children being wrongly labelled as having SEND simply because they are struggling following extended periods away from school. However, the SEND system was fragile even before the pandemic.

- A national SEND review was commissioned in 2019 in response to widespread recognition that the national SEND system was failing to deliver, that parental and provider confidence was in decline, and that the system had become financially unsustainable. The SEND Green Paper was issued in March 2022 proposing significant reforms that are currently out for consultation.
- Our data also shows some disproportionality, with some groups statistically over-identified (e.g., Black African children with Autism).
- There is a perception that too many of our children and young people are opting to go to special schools to have their education, health and care needs met because the right provision, skills and appropriate level of funding are not available in mainstream. Delivering the first Ambition in this SEND Strategy (**Fully inclusive education for all children in Islington schools**) is to address this, but there will still be some children who would benefit from access to more specialist approaches and facilities but located in a mainstream setting.
- Although we have a strong special school offer, we are unusual – compared to other LAs – in having few specialist resources bases in mainstream schools (Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPS)). [0.4% of our children receive provision through a mainstream resource base compared to 1.7% for Inner London and 1.6% nationally].
- There is now both the need and appetite for developing ARPs locally both from parents and schools; this would particularly focus on children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions and Social Emotional and Mental Health need.
- There is also a strong view across our schools that the current SEND funding model is not fit for purpose and that decision making for the placement of vulnerable children is not transparent or fair.
- An increase in reliance on statutory process has also affected capacity within our operational SEND teams to maintain the systems and processes required to meet statutory responsibilities.

High level priority action

	Priority	Action
3.1	Additionally Resourced Provision (ARPs) for children with ASC as part of the wider SEND / Education strategy to ensure that all schools are inclusive. Learning and	We will develop a network of small, inclusive ARPs in mainstream schools over the next three years, each eventually working with a group of feeder schools. Introduction will be phased (i.e., two 6-8 places for Sept 2023, a further 2-4 for Sept 2024 and if needed, a further 3-5 (i.e., 9 in total) for Sept 2025. Development will be school-led, informed by what works best and an agile 'Think – Test – Learn' approach.

	Priority	Action
	practice from ARP development will also inform this ambition.	Schools interested in developing an ARP will first follow a development programme (self-review of inclusion and belonging using tools developed by Whole-School SEND , trauma informed practice, Autism Education Trust accreditation, adoption of the Islington Parents SEND Charter), so that parents can be confident of a high quality inclusive offer. For more detail see Proposed Changes: SEND Provision in schools on page 20
3.2	Disproportionality and statistical over-representation of SEND some groups	We will address issues of disproportionality by supporting and challenging partners to improve analysis of a range of quantitative and qualitative data regarding the identification of children as having SEND; this will include considering diagnostic tools and approaches used and using information to consider cultural sensitivity as part of service development
3.3	Raising the attainment of children with SEND through high quality teaching	We will develop a programme of support targeted toward those schools where children with SEND perform less well, based the five recommendations on SEND in mainstream schools with accompanying tools and resources set out by the Education Endowment Fund following their research into best practice i.e., <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a positive and supportive environment for all pupils without exception • Build an ongoing and holistic understanding of pupils and their needs • Ensure all pupils have access to high quality teaching • Complement high quality teaching with carefully selected small group and one-to-one intervention • Work effectively with teaching assistants
3.4	Extending the reach of New River College (NRC) (Alternative Provision) to support more children with	We are working closely with NRC to develop exciting and ambitious proposals to further extend their current reach to some of our most vulnerable children in response to need. This will include extended preventative for those at risk of exclusion, extended outreach work for those with medical

	Priority	Action
	Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs	needs e.g., children with long COVID; support to ARPs; Year 12 and possibly Year 13 respite; a more flexible offer for young people in mental health crisis and vocational / training facilities
3.5	Respond to the SEND Green Paper proposals to make Alternative Provision an integral part of the local SEND systems	<p>Local SEND partnerships will be required to plan and deliver an alternative provision service focused on early intervention that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds system capacity to deliver the vision that all alternative provision schools are in a strong multi-academy trust, or have plans to join or form one, • Ensures evidence-led services based on best practice • Is compliant with a new bespoke performance framework for alternative provision, which will focus on focused on progress, re-integration into mainstream education or sustainable post-16 destinations • Delivers greater oversight and transparency of pupil movements including placements into and out of alternative provision
3.6	SEND Capital allocation 2022/3-2024/5	A SEND Capital allocation of £7m over the next two years will be targeted towards the further development of New River College, repair and possible relocation of Samuel Rhodes primary department; and the development of physical spaces within mainstream schools for ARPs. Subject to affordability we would also like to offer match-funded bids from mainstream schools for innovative inclusion projects.
3.7	SEND Funding and transparency of decision-making	<p>In response to a request from mainstream schools for a more responsive approach to the allocation of SEND funding within the constraints of the current national formula framework, £1m of additional funding was allocated across mainstream schools on a per pupil basis for 2022-23 to target children with ASC and SEMH needs at KS1, as a one-off payment.</p> <p>We will continue to work with schools to find better ways to allocate resources responsively as well as innovative ways of achieving more with less funding.</p>

	Priority	Action
		<p>We will also be advised by new SEND funding framework and accountabilities proposed in the SEND Green Paper</p> <p>We will also work with school representatives to find practical ways to involve them in decision making around EHCP requests and allocation of funding that doesn't add to bureaucratic burden</p>

What does success look like?

Children and young people are the best they can be at school, college or work

- An increased proportion of children with SEND achieve a Good Level of Development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- The gap in attainment between those children with SEND and those with no SEND has narrowed
- An increased proportion of children with SEND achieve the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at the end of KS2
- The Attainment 8 and Progress 8 scores of young people with SEND show a sustained improvement
- There is a sustained increase in young people with SEND achieving L2 and L3 qualifications
- The ARP and feeder schools will form a SEND cluster who moderate, share good practice and potentially commission SEND services jointly
- There would be a reduction in SEND transport demand as children will be attending their local school
- We will have in place an ARP support service involving allocated cross-agency support that would represent a more efficient use of resource than supporting individuals / schools (Team Around the ARPs)
- The ARP schools will form a network for sharing of good practice as well as informing the LA on future commissioning needs
- This would be a truly school-led model, with the LA acting as facilitator / commissioner (the LA would remain responsible for placing children in ARPs)
- The model will help contribute towards our overall aim that all Islington schools are regarded (by schools and Parents) as welcoming of children with SEND

Children and young people tell us that:

- They are being treated as an equal to their peers
- They are happy at school or college and have friends
- They are able to learn at school or college
- The courses they are accessing are relevant to their future.
- They support they are receiving is making a difference to their lives
- They enjoy the activities they access either through school or in their local community

Proposed changes: SEND Provision in schools

Although we have a strong special school offer, we are unusual – compared to other LAs – in having few specialist resources bases in mainstream schools (Additionally Resourced Provision). [0.4% of our children receive provision through a mainstream resource base compared to 1.7% for Inner London and 1.6% nationally]. In the past there has been limited appetite for developing this locally (both from parents and schools) but there has been more interest over recent years as SEND demand has risen generally.

The group of children likely to benefit most from Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) are those who generally have cognitive potential to access a mainstream curriculum and show capacity for using and understanding language, but can become overwhelmed by their environment at times, and may display behaviour that challenges.

There are many models but through discussion with parents and schools, visits to other LAs and research evidence, the model we propose is a borough-wide network of small, inclusive primary ARPs (6-8 places each), with each eventually working with 4-5 'feeder' primary schools. Nine schools have already expressed an interested in providing an ARP.

Introduction would be phased (i.e., two 6-8 places for Sept 2023, a further 2-4 for Sept 2024 and if needed, a further 3-5 (i.e., 9 in total) for Sept 2025. Development would be school-led, informed by what works best and an agile 'Think – Test – Learn' approach.

The introduction of ARPs should be seen as **only part of a** wider SEND / Education strategy that will see:

- A focused programme of intervention around inclusion and belonging through self-evaluation, whole-school training / development (e.g., trauma informed practice, Autism Education Trust accreditation) and adoption of the Islington Parents SEND Charter,

leading to an inclusion quality mark so that parents can be confident that all Islington schools are welcoming of children with SEND and have a plan in place for embedding good practice.

- A more responsive approach to funding SEND in mainstream schools so that they have more flexibility to target resource where and when needed (prevention and earlier intervention).

The advantages of this model include:

- The ARP and feeder schools will form a SEND cluster who can moderate, share good practice and potentially commission SEND services jointly
- There would be a reduction in transport demand as children would be attending their local school
- We will develop an ARP support service involving allocated cross-agency support that would represent a more efficient use of resource than supporting individuals / schools (Team Around the ARPs)
- The ARP schools would form a network for sharing of good practice as well as informing the LA on future commissioning needs
- This would be a truly school-led model, with the LA acting as facilitator / commissioner (the LA would remain responsible for placing children in ARPs)
- The model will help contribute towards our overall aim that all Islington schools are regarded (by schools and Parents) as welcoming of children with SEND.

Ambition Four: All young people are well prepared for adulthood

We will enable all young people to achieve independence, build good relationships and have a meaningful occupation

Context

- An Islington Progression to Adulthood plan 2020 sets out a long-term vision for progression or adulthood for children and young people with SEND with needs defined in line with the four broad areas of need referenced in the SEND Code of Practice (Communication and interaction; Cognition and Learning; Social, emotional mental health; and Sensory and / or physical needs, which locally includes young people receiving continuing care services)
- The purpose of the plan is to ensure all young people with SEND and their carers have sufficient information to make informed choices and understand their rights in relation to the Care Act; and Parents have access to a wide range of information in one place, to avoid them getting passed around the system and minimise the risk of delay.
- Ofsted told us when they visited in 2021 that: 'Leaders work effectively with colleges and post-16 providers. They ensure these settings have the information they need when pupils transfer from one phase to the next. Colleges praise the work of Islington SEND Team. This is because case officers know young people and their families very well...'
- Young people have told us that they want more support and information for themselves and their families so that they can prepare for adulthood and achieve independence.
- More work is planned to support young people into employment, education and training, such as opportunities for young people to access supported internships.
- We will revise and strengthen our Governance arrangements for preparation for adulthood to promote independence and diverse pathways to employment and training.

High level priority action

	Priority	Action
4.1	Review reach of the Progression to Adulthood Team, currently operating as part of the Council's core offer within Adult Services to ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet present and future need	<p>The Team must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of information and advice about the adult care and support system in line with the Care Act 2014 • Robust support for those young people who are not eligible for support from Islington's Learning Disability Partnership ((ILDP), the criteria for which is a global learning disability) including young people with Autism, mental health needs and / or physical and sensory needs; and • Young people are assessed under the Care Act where that is appropriate.
4.2	Develop the Local Offer and improve communication with young people and their families	A transitions or 'pathway' guide will be developed using examples of good practice from other LAs To help support young people, their families and the professionals working with them, understand and navigate the various pathways and services that young people with SEND are likely to encounter as they progress into adulthood
4.3	Identify pathways into a range of services to support health and wellbeing	To ensure that alongside well-established pathways for young people with a learning disability, we establish similar pathways for young people with social and emotional mental health needs; long-term conditions; and / or who are in receipt of continuing health care services.
4.4	Tailor Islington's housing offer for young people with disabilities who cannot live independently	Improve the diversity of options and provide accessible information and pathways about those options as for young people with SEND and their carers to access the type of housing that gives them the best quality of life.

	Priority	Action
4.5	Share information and collate data to inform commissioning strategies resulting in better use of resources	Ensure that Islington Council, North Central London CCG and wider partners use and share data to inform planning, target resources and drive change in respect of young people with SEND.
4.6	There is a detailed Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) reduction plan which focuses particularly on vulnerable groups including those with SEND	<p>The Plan focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the profile of young people likely to become NEET so that relevant stakeholders can support them in active NEET prevention. • Working with employers, iWork service and the Youth Employment and Skills Board members to identify emerging skills gaps and understand how the needs of business have changed, particularly over the course of the pandemic. • Shaping a curriculum that prepares young people for the changing landscape of the labour market and that all, no matter what their starting points, can access pathways to quality careers
4.7	Review and update the Progression to Adulthood Plan	<p>Develop a robust long-term Progression to Adulthood approach with those who currently use and will use services with clear governance, partnership, and leadership arrangements. This should address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any issues arising from the growth in demand and population, particularly the 16 years plus age group in the context of the range of opportunities currently • The range of pathways from statutory education into work and how this matches the range of needs of young people with SEND • Arrangements for developing cross-borough opportunities for young people to develop key life skills, e.g., travel, money management, self-care, healthy living and independent living • Create wider access to more inclusive social and leisure activities, including after-school/college and holiday clubs, for young people whose needs are currently not being met

	Priority	Action
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that young people with SEND and their families are aware of and can access the annual health check for young people aged 14+ with learning disabilities • Strengthen links between CAMHS and Adult Mental Health Services to support young people who will transition between the services and produce clear guidance about other services available for those who will not meet thresholds for adult services • Create a toolkit of Preparation for Adulthood resources to support young people, families and education, health and social care practitioners to improve understanding of and strategies to support preparation for adult life • Work with employers and FE providers to develop a greater range of options, education, training and employment, for young people when they move on from compulsory education
4.8	Set up a Supported Employment Partnership that will identify and deliver supported opportunities to enable young people with SEND and other vulnerable learners to move into paid employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a bespoke Islington Supported Internship model with the Council as provider of work placements opportunities • Development work will sit within the Council's 14-19 delivery plan, which includes work streams to address the reduction of NEETs (young people not in education employment or training), develop links with the world of work, and to improve the Careers guidance offer available through schools. • Work will start at a small scale with one-off work experience opportunities with key partners, prototyping an offer for 1-2 young people with major providers, we anticipate moving to a full-scale implementation which can meet the needs of all young people with SEND who might benefit from supported internship within three years. • This will enable us to test and learn; it will also allow space for the necessary workforce development to ensure that young people will be welcomed and appropriately supported in work placements within the Council.

What does success look like?

- Quarterly reports/audits show an increase in the number of creative, collaborative, and flexible packages of support with a clear link between the identified needs/outcomes in plans and decision-making processes

- There is good planning for adult life with young people and their families reporting increased choice and control about living independently, having good health and opportunities to take part in a range of activities including employment
- All children and young people leave school with an option of further education, employment, or training - there is a drop in numbers of those with EHCP who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- The number young people over the age of 16 with a diagnosable mental health condition receiving treatment increases in line with NHS targets.

Children and young people are listened to and are understood

Children and young people tell us:

- They are involved in decisions about their future
- They have more say in how they receive the support they need
- They are empowered to participate in and to give their views during the EHC planning process and the annual review of their EHC Plan
- They have more influence in the review and design of services
- That because of being listened to there are more opportunities available to them e.g., in their community, at school, at college and in the world of work.

Children and young people have choice about their future

Children and young people tell us that:

- There is a wider range of options, education, training and employment, available to young people with SEND following compulsory education
- More young people with SEND are accessing and completing college courses and apprenticeships tailored to their interests
- Young people with SEND tell us the college courses they are accessing are relevant to their future
- An increasing number of young people access Supported Internships and enter a form of employment afterwards
- An increasing number of young people with SEND are in Supported Employment
- More young people with SEND are able to live independently e.g., in supported housing

- There is an increase in the take up of personal budgets amongst young people aged 16 to 25
- They receive the equipment/support they need to become more independent.

Consultation: Key messages and considerations

We have co-produced this strategy with the support and contributions of many families, children and young people and other stakeholders.

Our priorities have also been informed by:

- Self-assessment across the SEND partnership
- Review of school place sufficiency within the local authority (SEND Sufficiency Plan)
- A series of conversation events (virtual and face to face) with parents and carers and schools that took place between June to October 2021
- Findings from the Ofsted and CQC inspection of SEND services in Islington (8 to 12 November 2021)

Key messages included:

- **Fairness and equity:** the need for the LA to ensure all schools take and welcome children with SEND, and to address disability discrimination where it occurs
- **More rapid access to resources with less bureaucracy:**
- **ASC, SEMH and Behavioural:** this is where families and schools are seeing the biggest increases in need, and where they feel less able to support.

The development of this strategy has taken place at a time of great challenge and change, and we are particularly grateful to all those who made the time to contribute and shape it.

Conclusion

The proposals set out in Strategy show the commitment in Islington to supporting children and young people with SEND.

We will work with partners and parents to develop a clear programme of work to deliver the necessary culture change to build an inclusive system set out in this Strategy so that more children and young people are supported to thrive and succeed.

To make this happen we will:

- Align this strategy with our wider Education Plan
- Have a strong focus on evidence-based delivery and learn from best practice
- Embed co-production with children, young people, and their families at every level in our delivery because we know that the best performing SEND systems are those that this
- Develop SEND Governance in line with SEND Green Paper proposals for statutory local SEND Partnerships with responsibility for publication of an Inclusion Plan which will be subject to DfE approval

The SEND Strategy will:

- Drive inclusive practice in all our schools and settings
- Support a financial model that enables schools and settings to support children with additional needs appropriately
- Promote independence and equip young people with SEND for life by enabling them to stay within their local communities attending their local mainstream schools where possible



Appendix 1 – Legislative Context

The Department for Education (DfE) leads the SEND system for England and determines the legislative, policy and funding arrangements for children and young people with SEND.

The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out the responsibility to improve services, life chances and choices for vulnerable children and to support families. The Act expects the SEND system to extend from birth to 25, where appropriate, giving children, young people and their parents/carers greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring needs are properly met. It also expects those working with children and young people with SEND to pay regard to the relevant regulations and statutory Code of Practice for SEND.

The Act says that all Local Authorities **must**:

- Work in partnership with families
- Ensure that all children and young people can access the right support and provision to meet their needs
- Adopt an integrated approach to meeting the SEND needs of children and young people
- Meet the needs of children and young people with the most complex needs through a single plan – an Education, Health and Care Plan
- Involve children, young people and their parents/carers in decision making at both the individual and strategic level
- Involve children and young people and their parents/carers in shaping services
- Publish a local offer detailing the support and provision available within Islington
- Jointly plan and commission services
- Provide information, advice and support to children, young people and their parents/carers in line with the requirements of the Act and Code of Practice.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability discrimination as:

- Penalising a child by failing to accommodate their needs
- When a child receives less favourable treatment because of their disability
- Applying a provision, criterion or practice that puts, or would put, a disabled child at a disadvantage compared with another child who is not disabled
- Failure to make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to accommodate them
- Behaviour that violates the dignity of a disabled child, or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them (harassment)
- Victimisation - for example, treating a child poorly because their parent has made a complaint against the setting.

Schools must not discriminate against a child by not offering a place or by only offering a place under specific terms and conditions. They must ensure that the child has full access to

education, facilities and services. They must not subject the pupil to 'any (other) detriment', which means they must not subject the child to any form of disadvantage.

Our practice is also guided by the following Progression to Adulthood outcomes:

- Education, employment, and training
- Independent living
- Community inclusion
- Healthy living

Appendix 2 – Local Context

Our [Local Area SEND Inspection](#), the report of which was published in January 2022, confirmed many strengths in Islington including strong partnerships and collaboration, but also confirmed our self-assessment of some areas for further development, including:

- Most schools in Islington make sure that children and young people with SEND are made to feel welcome. However, some do not.
- Children and young people wait too long for specialist Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and mental health interventions.
- The variety of post-16 options for those with the most complex needs is limited... and there lacks a systemic and coordinated approach to this.
- Due to recruitment issues, some direct speech and language therapy has stopped. There are longer waiting times for some occupational therapy in mainstream schools.
- The proportion of fixed-term exclusions for children and young people with SEND is too high in secondary schools.

A detailed needs assessment as set out in the [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\): Islington profile and projections document](#), which is published annually, underpins this strategy. A [SEND Self-Evaluation](#) document and our [SEND Sufficiency Plan \(2022\)](#) also inform our priorities.

Key messages from our SEND Profile and Projections

- We have 1,634 children and young people with an EHC Plan
- This represents an 8% increase (i.e., of 125 pupils) from January 2021
- There are 3,605 children receiving SEND Support; this is slightly higher than in January 2021
- The overall school population in Islington has reduced by 300 plus pupils over the last 12 months
- There are currently long NHS wait times, particularly on the Neuro-developmental pathway
- Growth in numbers is particularly within the area of Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC), but with a significant cross-over with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

Locally we have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of school-aged children and young people identified with SEND, particularly those who have an Education Health and Care Plan.

Local SEND Profile and Projections

Over the last four years, the increase in the proportion of EHC Plans issued in Islington, although significant, has been at a slower rate than seen nationally and within comparator authorities (see Table 1 above).

Age Profile

23% of all EHC Plans maintained by Islington are for young people aged 16-25. This is exactly in line with the current national rate. This group account for 19% of our SEND expenditure (compared to 17% nationally). The numbers of plans for this age group have increased by 38% since January 2018. A relatively low proportion of young people over the age of 18 with EHCPs have left the system in the past three years compared to previous years, and we believe this is at least partially as a consequence of the COVID pandemic. Effectively therefore, we have considerably more children entering the SEND system, particularly over the last two years, than there are young people exiting at age 19-25.

Type of provision

66% of Islington children with EHCPs attend mainstream settings, with the remaining 34% attending some form of specialist setting, including Alternative Provision (1.8%). Almost 50% of children and young people with EHCPs nationally are in specialist settings¹. Only 1.4% of Islington residents with EHCPs attend independent / non-maintained special schools, compared to 2.7% for Inner London.² Independent / non-maintained settings account for 14% of national SEND expenditure.³ On average, the cost of a place at an independent / non-maintained special school is twice that of maintained provision.

Data shows that an upward trajectory was evident before 2020, but the number of EHCPs for children with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) has increased significantly in the last two years, by 11% from January 2020 to January 2021, and 15% from January 2021 to January 2022. Children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs have risen by 8% and are now our second largest area of need.

Although growth in numbers is particularly within the area of ASC, there is significant cross-over with SEMH needs, and we are seeing many more children with a dual diagnosis of ASC and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

As well as local ASC specialist provision through The Bridge London Trust and The Courtyard, around 50% of children and young people currently placed at provision for children with learning difficulties and SEMH needs also have an ASC diagnosis.

¹ LG Inform+

² High Needs Benchmarking Tool

³ DfE National SEND Statistics, 2021-22

Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) profile: increasing complexity

There is increasing complexity of need within the ASC continuum. This means that at the same time as we have seen an almost exponential **growth in number** of children with an ASC and significant growth in SEMH conditions (particularly among adolescent girls), the needs of children and young people are becoming **increasingly complex** (using cost as an indicator). This is assessed as a 26% growth in level of complexity over the last two years. It should be added that the challenges in increasing complexity of need are also apparent across Learning and Cognition as well as Physical and Sensory areas of need so that all of our schools, settings and services are impacted by increased demand.

Wider context

It is also important to note that over the same period, the overall child / school population in Islington is reducing. Any consideration of future options relating to SEND provision must therefore also be closely aligned with the overall approach to pupil place planning across the borough to ensure most efficient use of resource.

We must also recognise that in Islington, **need is acute**. There are higher than average levels of income deprivation affecting children, poor health, disability living allowance entitlement and more children in receipt of free school meals (all government indicators of greater need when allocating high needs block funding to local authorities) than most of our comparators.

Despite the above, the proportion of Islington resident children and young people with EHCPs remain in line with comparator boroughs and the inner London average. This is a testament to the strong and inclusive approach taken in Islington schools and the firm partnerships which exist in the borough.

The Dedicated Schools and High Needs Grants are well managed in Islington, so that it is one of a smaller number of local areas not currently in deficit as a result of high SEND demand. This is also in the context of Islington being a higher spender than neighbouring LAs on SEND Support and inclusion services, mainstream and top-up SEND funding, but a lower spender on non-maintained and independent school places.⁴ Pressure on the system is unlikely to reduce in the short term however, so that maintaining an attractive, affordable and sustainable SEND local offer will remain a challenge.

The issues we are experiencing are not Islington-specific and are being felt across the country. The underlying causes - both nationally and in Islington - are complex and systemic. Solutions therefore require whole system response and deep culture change. There are no quick fixes.

⁴ Source: DfE High Needs funding Benchmarking Tool

Appendix 3: Our Approach to Inclusion and Belonging

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion is the practice of ensuring people feel that they belong, are engaged and connected. It is about valuing all individuals, giving equal access and opportunity to all and removing discrimination and other barriers to involvement.

As the champion of families, children, and young people in Islington, our collective priorities are to:

- Be certain that all children and young people are engaged with and included in the provision of high-quality inclusive education
- Ensure that, whatever their circumstance or ability, our children have a sense of belonging, feel respected, are valued for who they are and develop the knowledge and skills required for adult life.

Inclusion means striving to achieve continuous improvement in standards, a significant narrowing of achievement gaps for vulnerable groups of learners and a wholly inclusive education system which ensures:

- Equitable access for all
- Sufficient, appropriate, quality education provision is available for all Islington children and young people
- All children and young people are supported to engage fully in their education
- There is strong collaboration and multi-agency working to provide a self-improving, sustainable system which supports the education of all.

Supporting and empowering schools

The success of an effective inclusive education system depends on all stakeholders sharing the same aims. We aim to support and empower all of our schools and settings to be fully inclusive, incentivising and motivating engagement by:

- Ensuring processes and priorities are based on school-led evaluation and evidence-based
- Using data and information that is contextualised to present a realistic picture
- Providing a high-quality training and support, with an equitable core offer for all providers
- Supporting the development of locality-based collaborations that meet local need
- Supporting the development of a school-to-school system of continuing professional development.

Collaborative working will enable transparency between providers. Accountability and challenge will be the responsibility of all parties, and it will be expected that all parties work together to eliminate any fractures in the system for our children and young people.

Impact

For children, young people, and families:

- All children and young people experience a high quality, inclusive education within the most appropriate setting to meet their needs. For the vast majority of children with SEND, there is a presumption in law that this will be within a mainstream setting.
- Children and young people with SEND have their needs identified early, thrive socially and emotionally, achieve their potential academically, experience positive transitions between key stages of education and are prepared to live as independently as possible.
- Parents and carers are confident that their child's school or setting has the knowledge, skills
- and confidence to meet their needs, and their broader health, wellbeing and social care needs are being supported.

For schools:

- Schools meet the needs of children and young people with SEND through strengthened inclusive practice
- Support delivered within and through schools is connected to a wider, integrated offer from partner services, which support the child or young person's broader social, emotional and physical wellbeing
- Schools draw on, and work in partnership with, a wider range of professionals to ensure a holistic response
- Schools can facilitate smooth and successful transitions through effective local collaboration, built on a shared understanding of best practice

At Borough level:

- Through strengthening outcomes at an individual and school-level, we will see:
- A greater proportion of children and young people with SEND accessing a high-quality, inclusive education within a mainstream setting
- Improved outcomes, attainment and progress made by all children and young people
- Achievement gaps closing for vulnerable groups, including children and young people with SEND

How we will support further development

The Local Government Association Report, '[Developing and sustaining an effective local SEND System](#)' (ISOS, 2018) identified five core features of effective practice essential to improving inclusive capacity within mainstream schools as follows:

- Put in place clear expectations about what needs mainstream schools / settings will meet
- Back these expectations with a clear offer of capacity-building support
- Engage system leaders who can play a role in supporting practice beyond their immediate school
- Ensure schools and settings have access to an explicit offer of targeted inclusion support
- Ensure that education inclusion support is part of a broader, holistic and joined-up offer of support of support for young people's care and health need

Reflecting the above, we have identified the following three core priorities to support and further strengthen Inclusive practice in Islington that will be reflected our Ambition:

- Supporting high quality core inclusive education delivery – by bringing together the development of a core training offer, leadership development, and peer review
- Providing specialist intervention and additional support - e.g., through extended outreach from special schools and AP; through pilot opportunities
- Ensuring education inclusion support is part of the wider joined-up offer of support for children and young people's care and health needs – e.g., through improved links with Early Help and locality-based services