



Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee

19th January 2021

Title	SEND Strategy (2021 – 2024) update
Report of	Chairman of the Committee, Councillor David Longstaff
Wards	All
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Key	No
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Summary

This report gives an update on the progress made in implementing the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2021 – 2024.

Officers Recommendations

1. That the Committee note the report.

1. Why this report is needed

- 1.1 The SEND Strategy identifies the vision and current priorities for SEND in Barnet over a three-year period from 2021 to 2024. It also sets out the principles, ways of working and the next steps for each of the seven priorities. An essential contribution to the strategy came from our consultation with children and young people, their parents and carers, schools and settings, and partners across health and social care. We used feedback from stakeholders to inform the strategy, including the priorities and next steps that need to be taken to achieve them.
- 1.2 The aims of the SEND Strategy have been co-produced with stakeholders. They are:
- To ensure that all children and young people with SEND have their needs identified as soon as possible and receive the right support at the earliest opportunity, with a clear focus on short term and long-term outcomes.
 - To ensure that children and young people with SEND receive high quality, integrated and inclusive services through effective and timely decision making across partner agencies and through listening and responding to the voices of children and young people, parents, families and professionals.
 - To ensure services are delivered locally and as inclusive and close to home as possible so that children and young people with SEND can benefit from community integration and support from services in Barnet.
- 1.3 There are seven priorities in the SEND Strategy which has been informed by the feedback from the consultation, internal reviews and the Ofsted and CQC SEND assurance visit that took place in October 2020. The priorities have been agreed with stakeholder groups including the SEND Development Group, the SEND Partnership Board and BING (Barnet Inclusion Next Generation), a group of young people with SEND who give views on strategic and operational developments. The priorities also link to the strategic priorities of the Education Strategy 2021-24 and the School and Settings Improvement Strategy 2021-24.
- 1.4 The priorities of the SEND Strategy are:
- 1) To ensure that we are working in a Family Friendly way and co-production is central to our work.
 - 2) To minimise the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the attainment, achievement and psychological wellbeing of children and young people with SEND.
 - 3) To ensure sufficient high-quality provision in borough for children and young people with complex needs, including Autism.
 - 4) To ensure effective joint commissioning with clear pathways of support from Early Years through to adulthood.
 - 5) In line with Resilient schools, develop greater confidence, skills and competencies in mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, utilising resources and services across Barnet, such as Specialist Team Support and Mental Health Teams.

- 6) Champion the educational progress and attainment of pupils with SEND.
- 7) Develop skills, knowledge and understanding across the workforce and local area to create supporting environments that promote community integration and independence, enabling young people to make informed decisions and have control over their own lives.

Progress update

Priority 1: To ensure that we are working in a Family Friendly way and co-production is central to our work

- 1.5 There are six parent carers who are members of the core auditing team for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). Other members of the team are managers from across health, education and social care. The core group meet on a quarterly basis to discuss the findings and agree actions to be taken forward before the next audit.
- 1.6 Parent carer representatives are members of strategic boards across the council and Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS), including the BELS Board, the Early Help Strategic Partnership Board, and the SEND Partnership Board and work closely with leaders and services to co-produce strategies, initiatives, and improvements in service delivery. Examples include the Autism Strategy and Action Plan, Short Breaks, the Open Spaces project, the Local Offer, the SEND Strategy, the Special Places Plan, Health and Social Care Newsletters, Health conference, SEND conferences, and the procurement of therapy provision.
- 1.7 From March 2021, parent carers have been core group members of the weekly Complex Needs Panel which makes decisions about EHCPs and provision.
- 1.8 Parent carers are active members of the SEND Development Group, SEND Joint Commissioning Group, Local Offer Steering Group, SEND workstreams, and SEND Partnership Board. Parent carers have co-produced the Parent Carer Zone and the Mental Health Zone on the Local Offer, and a series of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) from parent carers covering topics such as Therapies, SEN Transport, Mental Health services and Social Care.
- 1.9 In spring 2021, parent carers partnered the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group to commission a new provider for therapies.
- 1.10 The Open Spaces project, offering safe outdoor spaces and leisure facilities for families of children with SEND during the pandemic has been developed as a result of listening to the views and needs of families.
- 1.11 A Senior Practitioner Educational Psychologist has been given additional time and responsibility to work with groups of children and young people with SEND, including those with and without an EHCP to involve them in the co-production of strategic developments. The views of young people with SEND are a standing item on the agenda of the SEND Development Group.
- 1.12 A review of practice of teams in the Specialist Inclusion Service in BELS has resulted in a change in practice to ensure that the views of parent carers and children and young people with SEND are routinely obtained as part of assessments and targeted interventions.

Priority 2: To minimise the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the attainment, achievement and psychological wellbeing of children and young people with SEND

- 1.13 Assessments have taken account of previous virtual assessments, and, where needed, reassessments are taking place to inform decision making about provision and placements of children and young people with SEND who have an EHCP.
- 1.14 SEND teams have delivered a blended approach to service delivery, taking account of the child's needs and parental preferences for face-to-face meetings or virtual meetings. Parent carers have particularly welcomed having a choice of meeting for Annual Reviews.
- 1.15 Attendance at special schools has been closely monitored throughout the pandemic, and adjustments made to transport to take account of the vulnerability of some children in special schools. This has meant decreasing the number of children in each minibus at the height of the pandemic, and for some children who would usually travel by minibus but have increased risk due to their medical needs, individual transport has been provided for them. Where families of children with SEND have felt very anxious about their child travelling on a minibus, a Personal Transport Budget has been offered to the family.
- 1.16 The Open Spaces project has been extended to include exclusive access to a swimming pool for families who have a child with SEND. SEN Transport to and from the venue has been provided to families who request it.
- 1.17 From March 2021 to the end of the academic year 2020-21, we ran a very successful Transition Hub for children and young people with complex SEND (including medical/health needs) who needed more support than others to return to school.
- 1.18 Over 70 schools in Barnet have accessed the Language Enrichment Programme to support pupils who need to access some short-term targeted support for speech and communication. The Language Enrichment Programme has been extended to all early years providers in Barnet this term, and will be rolled out to parent carers of children with SEND in the spring and summer 2022.
- 1.19 The OTTO club (Occupational Therapy To Bridge the Learning gap) has started this term, and 12 schools are currently in receipt of a 10-week Occupational Therapy (OT) group intervention, run by a qualified OT with a teaching assistant from the school. This is for Reception and Key Stage 1 children who are likely to benefit from targeted input and support for fine and gross motor skills. This programme will be delivered to 68 schools over the course of the 2021/22 academic year. Early findings have shown a marked improvement to children's handwriting skills and attention control in the classroom.

Priority 3: To ensure sufficient high-quality provision in borough for children and young people with complex needs, including Autism

- 1.20 The SEND needs analysis has been updated and informs the Special Places Plan, which was consulted on in the second half of the autumn term 2021. This takes account of the numbers of places that are needed in Barnet in the next three years, together with the type of provision needed. All of the local special schools have increased the number of placements this year, a new primary Additional Resource Provision (ARP) for Cognition and Learning has opened at Broadfields primary school in September 2021. The plans include increased special school places, increased provision at Barnet and Southgate College, a new secondary ARP for Cognition and Learning opening in September 2022 and an annex for one of the maintained special schools to open in September 2022 to provide 39 places rising to 71 places in 2023. It also takes account of the Windmill special school opening in 2023 or 2024, and another proposed ARP for primary opening in September 2023.
- 1.21 An agreed statement of approaches, language and practice for Autism has been agreed across the partnership with parent carers, autistic children and young people and specialist services. The position statement will be shared with all partners, including schools and settings in January 2022.
- 1.22 Work is under way on developing a comprehensive training programme on Autism for stakeholders, which is informed by autistic young people and adults. An Autism pathway has been drafted which brings together information on autism provision across education, health and social care.
- 1.23 Post-diagnostic support is in place for early years children and secondary aged young people who have received a diagnosis of Autism. Work is underway to ensure that post-diagnostic support is available to all age groups.
- 1.24 A parent support group for families of autistic children is being piloted this term by the Autism Advisory Team in BELS in conjunction with Resources for Autism and Mencap.
- 1.25 Planning for the Autism support hub is underway. This is led by the 0 – 25 Team in Social Care and is overseen by the Joint Commissioning Group and the SEND Partnership Board. The work this term is concentrating on the delivery model and partnership agreements for delivering co-located services for Autistic young people and their families.
- 1.26 There is a comprehensive training programme for schools and settings to help them with providing the appropriate support and input for children and young people at SEN support (who do not require an EHCP). This includes 'Challenge workshops' for school SEN Coordinators (SENCOs), 'virtual' conferences for schools and early years settings, and SEND materials on the Local Offer.

Priority 4: To ensure effective joint commissioning with clear pathways of support from Early Years through to adulthood

- 1.27 In light of feedback from families, a recent review of Short Breaks has been undertaken, looking at a range of models and options to understand what 'good' looks like. Following this review, Short Breaks are offered at universal, targeted and specialist levels. Families are also able to take up a personal budget, enabling them to have the flexibility to go 'off list' from the quality approved providers.
- 1.28 We are developing clear pathway of support across the partnership for young people whose behaviour puts them at risk of exclusion. The pathway will include referral routes and delivery of services across health, education and social care.
- 1.29 Whittington Health NHS Trust has been awarded the contract for therapies (Speech and Language Therapy; Occupational Therapy; Physiotherapy) and "go live" on 1st February 2022. Whittington Health NHS Trust have already been working with commissioners in Barnet in relation to the acceleration work and will continue to liaise closely with all stakeholders, including Barnet Parent Carer Forum for co-production and engagement. The Clinical Commissioning Group and commissioners in the council will monitor outcomes and report to the SEND Partnership Board.
- 1.30 The Parenting Hub has been recently established to provide Early Years Parenting Interventions targeted at families with multiple needs and parents with personality disorders or disrupted attachment styles from past trauma.
- 1.31 We have developed a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Toolkit to complement the Behaviour support course which is offered to mainstream schools by the Inclusion Advisory Team (IAT) in Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS).
- 1.32 We have drafted an Autism pathway with partners across education, health, social care and with parent carers which clearly outlines what is available at the universal, targeted and specialist levels of service delivery for children and young people diagnosed with autism. There is also information and materials available to schools to support children and young people who present with behaviours associated with autism, but who do not have a diagnosis.
- 1.33 We have a newly formed role of a designated education representative for SEND who reports to the 0 – 25 Team in Family Services. This role has enabled effective and consistent working across different teams in education and social care, with greater coherence of consistency of advice and contact with families of children with SEND.
- 1.34 We have an established SEND Joint Commissioning Group with representation from education, health, social care and Barnet Parent Carer Forum. The SEND Joint Commissioning Group reports to the SEND Development Group.

Priority 5: In line with Resilient schools, develop greater confidence, skills and competencies in mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, utilising resources and services across Barnet, such as Specialist Team Support and Mental Health Teams

- 1.35 Development of a tiered training programme on autism is underway and will be rolled out to mainstream schools from May 2022. The programme will focus on understanding and acceptance of autism, and specific strategies and interventions for all staff (teaching and non-teaching staff).
- 1.36 All schools in Barnet will be able to access a Wellbeing and Mental Health training programme from March 2022. This is a multiagency initiative developed and delivered by staff across Family Services, BELS and Health providers and will cover Tiers 1, 2 and 3 with a focus on early identification and intervention.
- 1.37 Through the 'Challenge workshops' for SENCOs in primary and secondary schools, the Inclusion Advisory Team (IAT) have facilitated peer to peer challenges in schools to share good practice in inclusion of children and young people with SEND, with and without an EHCP.
- 1.38 There is a planned comprehensive training programme for schools focusing on preventing exclusions, covering understanding behaviour, trauma informed practice, restorative approaches and peer mentoring. This will be available to schools from May 2022.

Priority 6: Champion the educational progress and attainment of pupils with SEND

- 1.39 The percentage of children with SEN Support achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage is above the national average. Educational attainment at Key Stage 2 for children with SEN Support for Reading, Writing and Maths combined is in the top 10% and the proportion of children with an EHC Plan for the same measure is in the top 15%. For both groups, attainment exceeds national, London and statistical neighbour averages. Progress in Key Stage 2 for children with SEN Support also exceeds national, London and statistical neighbour averages. Progress in all subjects for children with an EHC Plan at Key Stage 2 exceeds national, London and statistical neighbour averages.
- 1.40 In 2021 Barnet is ranked within the top 10% for Attainment 8, the proportion of pupils attaining both English and Maths at level 4+ and level 5+ and EBacc APS. This is for both pupils with an EHC Plan and pupils in receipt of SEN Support.
- 1.41 An Early Identification Toolkit has been developed and is on the Local Offer. The Toolkit has been designed to help early years settings and schools to accurately identify special educational needs and the materials are relevant for all settings and all key stages. Moderation meetings with SENCOs have been introduced to ensure consistent and accurate identification of needs.
- 1.42 As part of their universal offer, the Children's Integrated Therapies service offers an extensive training programme for schools on speech and communication needs, and how to make reasonable adjustments to the physical environment. This offer will continue with the new therapy provider as the approach is the cornerstone of the

Balanced Model, an evidence-based model of delivery of therapy services (speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy).

- 1.43 With some additional Council Covid-related funding for children and young people with SEND, including those at SEN Support, all schools and early years settings in Barnet, including maintained nursery schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent providers (PVI), have been able to access the Language Enrichment Programme delivered online by a qualified Speech and Language Therapist. The funding has also been used for the OTTO Club, a 10 week programme delivered by a qualified Occupational Therapist to 68 schools, for Reception and Key Stage 1 children, which focuses on handwriting skills and gross motor co-ordination.

Priority 7: Develop skills, knowledge and understanding across the workforce and local area to create supporting environments that promote community integration and independence, enabling young people to make informed decisions and have control over their own lives

- 1.44 An Action Learning project has been set up as part of the preventing exclusions work and has started to be rolled out in the autumn term 2021. So far 11 schools have accessed the targeted training on best practice.
- 1.45 A Pathway to Adulthood Protocol has been co-produced with parent carers and young people and is on the Local Offer. This sets out aspirations and expectations for teams and services for young people with SEND.
- 1.46 A Combined Care Pathway for children and young people with Down Syndrome has been co-produced with parent carers, young people and partners in Health and Social Care. The pathway sets out information pertinent to children and young adults with Down Syndrome including relevant health and integrated services.
- 1.47 Work is under way to develop good practice guidance on transitions between key stages and from children's to adult services. This is due to be completed in July 2022.
- 1.48 An annual post-16 Transition Fair has been established to provide young people and their families the opportunity to meet with a range of professionals and voluntary organisations who deliver services for young people with SEND. Young people are able to access advice and information on the pathways that are available, including supported internships and college courses. Plans are underway to develop supported internships at Barnet and Southgate College for young people with learning difficulties and complex needs.
- 1.49 There is a dedicated Preparing for Adulthood SEND workstream with members from across the partnership including young people with SEND, parent carers and representatives from health, education and social care. There are a number of task and finish groups under the workstream, including Preparing for and finding Employment and Good Health. The workstream reports on progress to the SEND Development Group.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 Given that there is a statutory requirement for every Local Authority to have a SEND Strategy, it is appropriate for the committee to note the progress made on the seven priorities that aim to further improve the life chances of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

3. Alternative options considered and not recommended

- 3.1 None.

4. Post decision implementation

- 4.1 The Local Area partners will continue to keep the SEND Strategy under review and will update it as and when necessary. Implementation of the strategy is overseen by the SEND Development Group, consisting of representatives from BELS, schools, social care, health, Barnet Parent-Carer Forum and young people with SEND.

5. Implications of decision

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 The quality of the education offer in Barnet is at the heart of Barnet's continuing success as a place where people want to live, work and study. It plays a crucial part in making Barnet a popular and desirable place with many families attracted to the area by the good reputation of Barnet's schools and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 5.1.2 Excellent educational outcomes and ensuring all children and young people are equipped to meet the needs of employers are key to delivering the Council's strategic objectives set out in its Corporate Plan, 'The Barnet Plan 2021 to 2025': based on the core principles of fairness, responsibility and opportunity to make sure Barnet is a place:
- of opportunity, where people can further their quality of life;
 - where people are helped to help themselves, recognising that prevention is better than cure;
 - where responsibility is shared, fairly;
 - where services are delivered efficiently to get value for money for the taxpayer.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 The work to maintain and improve services and implement the SEND Strategy (2021 – 2024) is delivered from within existing resources of the council and partner organisations.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 Article 7 - Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships of the council's constitution states that the committee has responsibility for all matters relating to

children, schools, education and safeguarding.

5.3.2 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parent/carers of children of compulsory school age to ensure that their children receive an efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

5.3.3 The Council has duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). There is a statutory requirement for the Council to have a SEND Strategy and to keep it under review.

5.4 Insight

5.4.1 None.

5.5 Social Value

5.5.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2013 requires people who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Before commencing a procurement process, commissioners should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area or stakeholders.

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 The Risk Register for the education service includes a risk that poor forward planning means that adequate high quality provision is not in place for children and young people with Special Educational Needs resulting in a failure to meet their needs locally. To control against this risk, the SEND Strategy 2021-2024 includes priorities for planning provision and making improvements and future provision planning is regularly updated through the Barnet Special Educational Places Plan.

5.7 Equalities and Diversity

5.7.1 The Council has a duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act to have due regard to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;

- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

5.7.2 The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day-to-day business and to keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services. School improvement monitoring, supporting and challenging arrangements ensure that the quality of education in Barnet is maintained and improved. Outcomes for all groups of children and young people are monitored including children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children (those in receipt of free school meals and children looked after).

5.8 Corporate Parenting

5.8.1 A disproportionate number of looked after children have special educational needs. Ensuring a SEND Strategy and appropriate arrangements are in place for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will thus be of clear benefit to significant numbers of looked after children.

5.9 Consultation and Engagement

5.9.1 Barnet's SEND Strategy 2021 – 2024 has been co-produced and developed by the Local Area partners, which include parent carers of children with SEND, children and young people with SEND, including those with and without an EHCP, the council, Barnet Education and Learning Service, health service partners (the Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS England, health service providers) and schools and settings. Barnet Parent-Carer Forum has been fully involved.

5.10 Environmental Impact

5.10.1 None.

6. Background papers

6.1 Key education strategies, including the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy 2021 to 2024 were considered and approved by the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee at its meeting on 30th November 2020. The SEND Strategy was approved for consultation and was subsequently updated in response to consultation feedback. The final strategy was published on the council's website and can be seen here: – <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-support-information>