



SEND and Inclusion Strategy Update

London Borough
of Barnet

2021 – 2024
Updated October 2022

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1 Introduction

The SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024 was agreed at CES on the 20 November 2020.

“Our vision is for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to achieve well, be confident individuals, live fulfilling lives and successfully transition to adulthood”.

The **SEND Strategy** has three key aims:

- 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.

In addition to these aims, there are 7 strategic priorities.

- Priority 1: To ensure that we are working in a Family Friendly way and co-production is central to our work.
- 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.
- Priority 3: To ensure sufficient high-quality provision in borough for children and young people with complex needs, including Autism.
- Priority 4: To ensure effective joint commissioning with clear pathways of support from Early Years through to adulthood.
- 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.
- Priority 6: Champion the educational progress and attainment of pupils with SEND.
- 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.

Further actions needed.

- Update SEF on an annual basis with contributions from all partners via the SEND Partnership Board

- *Review terms of reference for the SEND Partnership Board to ensure it fulfils any expectations of the SEND Green Paper and agree a forward Plan.*

2 Key Achievements

2.1 The local area was subject to a joint CQC/Ofsted inspection in January 2022. The [Inspection Outcome Letter](#) highlighted many strengths and also took into account the impact of the pandemic and the changes the local area had made as a result.

The main findings were:

- *“Leaders from education, health and care have an accurate view of the positive impact of their work. They know what works well and what needs to improve. This is underpinned by strong and trusting working relationships and effective communication between partners. This means that services are managed effectively across education, health and social care.*
- *Children and young people with SEND enjoy their time in education and in their social lives. They like living in Barnet. They feel well supported by the professionals who help them. The support they receive helps them to access learning at school and college more easily.*
- *Parents and carers are typically positive about their children’s experiences in schools and colleges. They feel that education settings meet their children’s needs well. Parents and carers feel that the education, health and care (EHC) plans make a positive difference in assessing and meeting their children’s needs.*
- *Parent representatives feel respected and valued as part of strategic and operational teams. One parent told us, ‘We work fantastically well together.’ Parents and carers help leaders to design and deliver different services in the area. Their views are taken seriously, and they contribute to decision-making at all levels.*
- *The area has experienced recruitment challenges across health services. This has led to a reduction in therapeutic provision. It has also increased the length of time children and young people wait to access therapies. Despite these pressures, staff have worked creatively to support children and young people and their families. Nevertheless, parents and carers are concerned about the impact this has on their children.*
- *School and college leaders speak highly of area leaders. They said that area leaders provide ‘invaluable support’ and are ‘very responsive’ to meeting the needs of children and young people, including those who need specialist provision.*
- *Leaders have responded thoroughly and promptly to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has helped leaders to think differently about how to tackle needs, such as providing safe and inclusive outdoor spaces for CYP with SEND.*
- *There is a strong, extensive and multi-agency training offer in Barnet. Many people, from parents to school governors, were positive about the quality and helpfulness of training in improving their ability to identify and meet the needs of children and young people.*
- *Co-production (a way of working where children, families and those that provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) in Barnet goes beyond consultation and collaboration. Children, young people, and parents and carers influence and help deliver improvements across a wide range of services.*
- *Leaders have rightly focused on further strengthening the offer for young people after they are 16. There is now more effective collaboration between colleges, post-16*

settings and secondary schools to assess young people's needs. This has made the move from secondary schools to post-16 providers more effective.

- *The special educational needs and/or disabilities information and advice service in Barnet is well established and well used. Leaders have recognised and responded to the need to reduce waiting times and meet increased demand by employing more staff. However, some parents told us that they experience long waiting times for this service.*
- *Parents and carers who are aware of the online local offer say that it is useful. Leaders have worked to strengthen the offer so that it is more appealing to children and young people. Leaders have added a 'young people's zone' section on the local offer website, which is useful and more engaging for children and young people".*

Further actions needed.

Therapy offer.

Our joint key priority at this time is to improve the therapy offer in Barnet. Representatives from the Barnet Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) have been involved in meetings with representatives from the provider (Whittington Health) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Clarifying the therapy offer has been a key challenge and this has been exacerbated by the North Central London (NCL) review which has yet to be concluded although meetings are planned to update all areas.

Actions taken

- The Language Enrichment Programme has been funded for a further year. Staff **from 90 primary schools and 11 secondary schools** have taken part in training and projects focussed on Vocabulary, Narrative Skills and Social Communication.
- The Council has agreed a further £150k for therapy from the high needs budget, which will be part of an ongoing commitment.
- The ICB has also provided an additional £330k to support initial assessment as well. This is short term funding intending to address some of the immediate challenge, in particular initial assessments.

Further action needed.

- Continue working with ICB, BPCF and representatives from BELS/Council to address immediate shortfalls.
- Continue working with ICB, BPCF and representatives from BELS/Council to develop the long-term offer.

2.2 Wider achievements

- **Opening of the new Pavilion School building** – the Pavilion officially opened to pupils in its new building in September 2022.
- **Maintaining high rates of new EHCPs issued on time** - Barnet achieved 98.3% compared to a London average of 65.6% and a national average of 59.9%.
- **Multi Agency EHCP quality Audit** - 10% of new EHCPs are audited of which 93% were graded good or outstanding.

Further action needed.

- Annual review completion rates continue to be challenging. There has been recent provisional agreement by the Council to expand the annual review team to address this. Monitoring of completion rates to be fully embedded to monitor impact.

3 Updates on Priorities

3.1 Priority 1: Working in a family friendly way in order to embed authentic co design and co-production continues to be a focus. Listening to the views of young people with SEND and their families is central to our decision making and driving forward strategic developments. Barnet Parent Carer Forum is represented on the SEND Partnership Board, the SEND Development Group and the Board of Directors of the Barnet Education and Learning Service. Representatives of the BPCF Steering group are also part of the membership of the Complex Needs Panel.

All of the SEND Workstreams have parent representation; the CAMHS transformation programme and the Autism strategy have been co-produced with parent carers and young people; Parents are involved in helping us to ensure that the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans is consistently good, and are involved in the auditing of Plans on a quarterly basis.

We value the views of parent and carers and young people, and as equal partners we want to ensure that their views are represented at all levels of support for SEND in Barnet.

Further action needed.

- Increase representation from a broader range of parent carers across Barnet and ensure that more children and young people with SEND have opportunities to engage in co-production and design to help shape strategic developments.

Complaints

We are determined to provide a better experience for families and are closely monitoring complaints so we can identify trends. We are aware there has been an increased number of complaints with respect of therapies which has already been identified as a priority area over the coming year. It is pleasing to see the number of complaints that have not been upheld have decreased; further work needs to be done to resolve complaints more quickly and at an earlier stage.

SEN Complaints				
Financial year	no. of cases	Upheld	Not upheld	Partially upheld
2019 - 2020	55	25	14	16
2020 - 2021	46	9	25	12
2021 - 2022	50	7	28	15
2022 – *present	32	2	15	10
We currently have 3 open cases. 2 cases were resolved at first point of contact.				

SEN Transport Complaints				
Financial year	no. of cases	Upheld	Not upheld	Partially upheld
2019 - 2020	1	0	0	1
2020 - 2021	1	0	1	0
2021 - 2022	4	0	3	1
2022 – *present	4	0	2	1
We currently have 1 open case.				

Mediation, Appeals and Hearings/Tribunals

Barnet have a higher rate of appeals at 2.9% compared to the London Borough average of 1.7% and the national average of 1.8%. This has continued to rise with the number of appeals registered during 2022 at 107 to date. Tribunal cases are for calendar years.

Year	No of Appeals	RTA/RTI	BFI	I	National Trials	Actual Hearings
2017	43	12	27	4	0	14 (12 upheld in favour of the LA)
2018	71	39	30	2	4	17 (16 upheld in favour of the LA)
2019	101	39	57	5	10	19 (18 upheld in favour of the LA)
2020	97	34	55	6	8	17 (15 upheld in favour of the LA)
2021	100	35	61*	2	2	16 (13 upheld in favour of the LA)

Key: RTA: Refuse to Assess; RTI : Refuse to Issue, B, F & I: these are different sections of the EHCP that are appealable. Section B: description of CYP's need; Section F: description of the Special Educational Provision (SEP) they require (SEP is specialist provision the SEND Code of Practice describes as 'additional to and different from' that which is universally available); Section I: names the setting, school or college (Placement) they will attend.

**Of the 61 appeals registered against either sections B, F and/or I, 4 were for Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and almost a quarter (14) solely related to the provision of therapy.*

Mediations

The table below identifies the number of requests for mediation. As can be seen the tribunal team are able to resolve a high number of cases without the need to proceed to a tribunal and are particularly successful in resolving concerns through informal tribunal mediation.

Year	No of Requests	Formal Mediation	Informal Mediation	Proceeded to Tribunal
2017	16	1	6	9
2018	19	0	0	18
2019	29	2	19	5
2020	23	2	17	5
2021	22	4	18	4

The SEND Green Paper consultation outlined intentions to make formal mediation compulsory. It is Barnet's experience that informal mediation is quicker, less stressful and more cost effective than formal mediation.

Further action needed.

- Explore ways to resolve disagreements, including complaints and potential appeals to SENDT informally and at an earlier stage.
- Develop a plan for the implementation of any requirements made by the DfE following the SEND Green Paper consultation.

3.2 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.

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

- The educational attainment of all children in Barnet continues to be a priority for us. The Local Area was recognised for its work in terms of mitigating the impact of the Pandemic *"Leaders have responded thoroughly and promptly to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has helped leaders to think differently about how to tackle needs, such as providing safe and inclusive outdoor spaces for children and young people with SEND"*.

Further action needed.

- Continue to monitor the progress of children and young people at SEN Support and those with EHCPs and identify ways to reduce the attainment gap further.

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

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

- The Special Educational Places Plan, which was approved by this Committee in November 2021 outlined the planned delivery of specialist provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities which aimed to ensure sufficiency of SEND provision in Barnet over three years (2021-24). This is all on track apart from the opening of 'The Windmill' all-through Special School, which caters for the needs of children and young people with autism. Due to building delays

this will not open in September 2023 as planned but will be delayed by up to six months. Talks are ongoing with the DfE with regard contingency plans.

- The Special Educational Places Plan continues to be updated on an annual basis (see Appendix C) so we can use information to plan for changes in the number and type of specialist places needed. It is essential that sufficiency of specialist provision and the offer of specialist support to enhance the mainstream offer continues to be kept under review annually.
- Forecast data will help to identify gaps in commissioning arrangements from early years with respect increased numbers and changes in volumes by need type for example.
- Local provision for local children remains a priority.

Further action needed.

- Annual SEND Special Educational Places Plan to be updated annually and incorporated into local area Inclusion Plan (part of the SEND Green paper proposals) as appropriate.
- Sufficiency Plan to be updated in June/July each year to take into account the latest statistical analysis from the SEN 2 Census data (published May each year).
- Further analysis of out of borough placements. For example in Barnet 3.5% of CYP are placed in independent mainstream compared to 1.6% for all London. Further work needed (via the Independent HNB review to analyse trends) [Local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities report for London Borough of Barnet | LG Inform](#)
- Annual publication of Barnet's position against national comparators and publish on local offer website (national comparisons are published in May and July) by end October annually.
- Clarify reports needed and agree annual issue date for each.
- Explore with early years colleagues' data from SENIF requests and agreements to support improved forecasting of need.
- Explore with Health colleagues what data is available to support early identification of increases or decreases in need.

Further information on SEN statistics can be found at

[Special educational needs in England, Academic Year 2021/22 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Education, health and care plans, Reporting Year 2022 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK \(explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities report for London Borough of Barnet | LG Inform](#)

3.4 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.

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.

- Confidence in the specialist teams continues to be high and is very well valued. A recent business case highlighted the need to expand the team which has been agreed. This will mean the team are able to maintain their current service offer despite an increase in the number of children and young people diagnosed with Autism or who are on the waiting list for a diagnostic assessment.

Further action needed.

- Completion of recruitment process for additional staff
- Review SEND Green Paper Implementation Plan and map our services to ensure there is clarity about the local offer and services available to schools and families.

4 Additional Priorities

4.1 Funding and ensuring best value of High Needs Block Spend alongside an increasing demand.

- The issue of funding for pupils with special educational needs has been well documented and continues to be challenging at both a national and local level as demand exceeds that of central funding.
- We have therefore agreed an external and independent review of the use of our High Needs Block, which has been commissioned. This will include a review of the spend as well as listening to the views of key stakeholders

Further action needed.

- Consideration of recommendations made, and a full action plan developed with timescales for key milestones and implementation.

4.2 Policy changes/consultations.

Local Area SEND Inspections

- Following consultation over the summer of 2022 a new joint inspection framework will be implemented in early 2023. There is a useful commentary from the Ofsted Chief Inspector [Amanda Spielman](#) about the proposed new framework and its links to the SEND Green Paper which can be found [here](#).

Key changes are

- Greater emphasis on the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- A focus on impact rather than delivery of the reforms.
- There will be an overall judgement for each area, alongside the outcome letter that identifies key strengths and areas for improvement.
- The inclusion of Alternative Provision (AP) in the inspection

4.3 SEND and AP Green paper consultation '[right support, right place, right time](#)'.

The report has rightly highlighted many of the challenges within the SEND system and sets out a framework of reporting and accountability.

Key recommendations include

- The inclusion of Alternative Provision (AP) within Area SEND Inspection framework.
- National Standards for SEND and AP with regard how needs are identified and met.
- New local area SEND Partnerships
 - A requirement of the partnership will be to produce a local Inclusion Plan setting out how each area will meet the national standards - when specialist support is needed, the provision that is available within the local area, including units within mainstream, alternative and specialist provision.
- A new DfE regions group to take responsibility for holding local authorities and trusts to account.
- Provide a tailored list of settings, including mainstream, specialist and independent for parents/carers.
- Mandatory mediation.
- National tariffs and banding
 - matched to levels of need and types of education provision set out in the new national standards - providers will have clarity on how much funding they should expect to receive for delivering support or a service, whilst ensuring the right pricing structures are in place, helping to control high costs attributed to expensive provision
- A standardised and digitised EHCP process and template.
- A new inclusion dashboard for 0 to 25 provision giving a timely, transparent picture of how the system is performing at a local and national level across education, health and care.

The DfE has advised an implementation plan will be published before the end of this calendar year.

Further action needed.

- Consideration of recommendations made, and a full action plan developed with timescales for key milestones and implementation. This should include cost implications for resources (e.g. digitised systems) as well as capacity costs for setting up of reporting frameworks, including gathering, cleansing, analysis and reporting of data.

5 For Information

Recent Government Appointments

Secretary of State for Education

[Gillian Keegan](#) , appointed 22 October 2022.

Further information on ministerial appointments since 25 October can be found at the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ministerial-appointments-25-october-2022>

The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP and Robert Halfon MP have been appointed as Ministers of State in the Department for Education. It is not clear who will take over responsibility for SEND.

[Ministerial Appointments commencing: 25 October 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

