

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2010 - 2013

1. Background

The most recent Annual Performance Assessment of Services for children and young people in the City (December 2008) judged that children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress when compared with rates of progress in similar Councils.

The Annual Audit Commission Schools Survey, summer 2009, also reflects a positive picture in relation to the quality and impact of work undertaken with children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

This perception is also mirrored in feedback received arising from the 2009 annual conference for parents of children and young people with SEND and individual service evaluation reports.

These positive outcomes are reflective of the way in which all sections of the children's workforce have engaged in this important area of work in a spirit of collaboration and openness.

Ofsted and the DCSF have also recognised the quality of consultation and engagement with children and young people with SEND in relation to Service provision.

The strategy has been built on our ongoing commitment to openness and engagement.

All of the aims, objectives and actions incorporated in the three year action plan have been either devised, shaped or informed by children and young people or parents and carers, and it is arising out of this collaborative approach that Services for children and young people with SEND will continue to improve ensuring best possible outcomes for all.

The SEND strategy seeks to build on successes to date and address those challenges that lie ahead

2. Context

We want all our children and young people to become the best they can. Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are less likely to achieve as much as their peers across the 5 every child matters outcomes. Improving their rate of progress, involvement, and inclusion in society, will help them to achieve more as individuals. By narrowing the gap in achievement between children and young people identified with SEN/disabilities and their peers this will in turn reduce inequality and allow communities to benefit from the contribution that these children and young people and their families can make to society as a whole.

We also know that children and young people with additional needs may need support to help them overcome barriers to achievement.

Support works best when it is delivered in a way which is co-ordinated and integrated and which includes children young people and their families as equal partners with those professionals who are there to help.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on services to co-operate and work together to improve the well being of all children and young people. Within the Local Authority children's services are in the process of being transformed. Locality teams are being established. These are made up of professionals who are empowered to work with children and young people and their families in holistic integrated way. The Local Authority have involved Health and other partners in deciding how the Locality teams will be established and how they will work with partners to provide a "joined up" service based around the needs of families.

For children and young people to achieve their potential they also need to be able to thrive within an atmosphere of high aspirations and expectations.

Ofsted (2004) SEN and Disability: "Towards Inclusive Schools" clarifies the importance of setting high expectations to improve progress and outcomes for children and young people with SEN:

'Expectations of the success that pupils with SEN can have remain at the heart of the matter. Many of those in mainstream schools could do better, provided that the curriculum, teaching and other support were better adapted to their needs and greater rigour was applied to setting targets for achievement. Until more is expected from lower-attaining pupils, improvement in provision for pupils with SEN and the standards they reach will continue to be low'.

Looking forward, The Children Plan sets important goals for improving the well being of children and young people by 2020. In particular the plan makes important commitments to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities including improving the quality of teaching, and providing schools with better data on the progress made by children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This commitment further complements the drive to collect information from parents regarding the quality of services for disabled children (National Indicator 154) and the focus placed by the DCSF on ensuring that all children and young people identified with SEND receive quality first teaching within the context of fully inclusive schools that ensure good outcomes for all.

In the City significant work is being undertaken by the SEND outcomes partnership to develop and disseminate city wide data sets and tracking procedures that will enable all practitioners to focus more effectively on children and young people's achievements and target work where greater progress might be expected. The School Improvement Service, other Local Authority teams and third sector partners are also engaging positively with schools with the aim of developing increasingly effective practice in working with children and young people who experience Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Future progress will be tracked using an outcomes framework which sets out the aims for each of the five Every Child Matters Outcomes and maps these against key indications drawn from the National Indicator Set, National Public Service Agreement targets and DCSF strategic objectives.

3. Underpinning strategies

In line with the children Act 2004 the City has a Children and Young People's Plan. The SEND strategy sits below the Newcastle Plan for Children 2009 – 2010 and develops those strategic commitments made to address the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The SEND strategy is also:-

- Built on the participation of children and young people, parents and carers as well as those who provide services (**Participation Strategy**).
- Designed to promote effective joint working to raise the aspirations of the children, young people and their families (**Children's Trust**).
- Aimed at increasing the impact of early intervention and effective prevention, including support to parents and carers (**Early Intervention and Prevention**).
- Intended to support and challenge those who provide educational opportunities to improve the achievement of children and young people (**School Improvement and 14-19 Strategy**).
- Built on the principle of continual review so that we can improve the impact of all our work for children and young people's wellbeing and achievements (**Performance Management**).
- Focused on achieving improved outcomes and the most efficient and effective use of resources (**Performance Management**).
- Centred on the development and recruitment of a skilled, competent, safe and well-led workforce that works effectively together to improve outcomes (**Children's Workforce**).

The strategy also builds on progress made within the life time of the Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Strategy 2003 – 2008.

The priorities incorporated in the strategy come from:

- The Newcastle Plan for Children as referenced above.
- Our analysis of need and what the data is telling us about outcomes for children and young people.
- Newcastle JSNA: Learning disability in children February 2009.
- What children, young people, parents and carers have told us is important to them.
- Strengths and weaknesses identified in the last APA.
- DCSF priorities including narrowing the gap and disability equality.

4. Vision

Children and young people with SEND will become the best they can in all areas of life. This means they will:

- **Be healthy**
 - Enjoy the best physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and development, so that they feel good about themselves and their lives.
- **Be safe**
 - Be safe and protected from harm within their families, communities and the City as a whole.

- **Enjoy and achieve**
 - Realise their ambitions, enjoying and achieving in all areas of life.
- **Make a positive contribution**
 - Take an active part in positive opportunities presented in all areas and stages of their life and the life of the community, and be valued for their contributions.
- **Achieve economic well-being**
 - Be actively protected from discrimination in order to live free from poverty and hardship.

How was the strategy developed?

The SEND strategy builds on the previous SEN / Inclusion strategy. It has been informed by an extensive process of consultation with 15 parents / carers, 17 children and young people and other key stake holders. This work was undertaken between January and December 2009 and was facilitated by Skills for People. The strategy has been validated by the following partnerships and stakeholders.

Children's Trust Board
 Schools
 SEND Outcomes Partnership
 Children with Disabilities and SEN Management Partnership
 Enjoy and Achieve Partnership
 Children's Be Healthy Partnership
 Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Reference Group

What do children, young people, parents / carers say?

As part of the process of developing the SEND strategy parents / carers children and young people told us what they thought about services now and what they wanted in the future. Looking forward, children and young people said they wanted:

1. Increased transparency in relation to decisions made about children and young people.
2. Greater involvement in the planning and delivery of facilities, arrangements and resources.
3. Accessible local services.
4. Services and facilities that are inclusive and available to all.

Parents / Carers wanted:

1. A well trained workforce with sufficient capacity and expertise to address a wide range of need.
2. An integrated process of assessment and intervention mediated by good communication protocols.
3. Partnership working.
4. A voice in the development and shaping of services.
5. Transparent and equitable processes for resource allocation

Current situation / performance

The Local Authority has an inclusive approach to the use of data. The Local Authority has an Information Sharing Agreement with Newcastle PCT to share data. Data is systematically used to monitor standards and progression, and to support the setting of appropriate and stretching targets for all children and young people, including those working below National Curriculum levels. The expectation is that:

- At KS2 most children and young people make at least 2 levels of progress
- From KS2 to K4 increasing numbers of children and young people make at least 3 levels of progress
- At all key stages no children or young people makes less than one level of progress unless there are exceptional and significant barriers to this being achieved
- The attainment gap between children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their peers will narrow

For those children and young people working below National Curriculum levels, sublevels are used to measure small steps of progress. This is particularly relevant for those of our children and young people who experience significant barriers to learning and engagement, and this is embedded in the nationally developed progression guidance.

Within the City increasing numbers of children and young people with SEND are achieving 2 levels of progress in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science. However, there is still progress to make in the percentage of children and young people with SEND achieving the threshold level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2.

Ofsted judgements for the achievement of children and young people with SEND across schools are very positive. 80% of special schools are judged to be good or better by Ofsted with 60% judged to be outstanding.

What do we know works?

- Early intervention and prevention that engages before a crisis or breakdown occurs.
- Targeted and integrated support, delivered in a joined up child and young person centred way.
- Timely and accurate assessment that enables children and young people, families and others understand what needs to be done.
- Good communication built around a 'think families' approach.
- A skilled and motivated workforce that continually re-shapes to meet identified needs.

How / Who will manage the strategy and action plan?

The strategy will be managed via the Integrated and Targeted Services Management Group, the SEND Outcomes Partnership, and the Children with Disabilities and SEN Management Partnership (which is part of the Children's Trust Governance arrangements). Jonathan Caswell LSP (PEP) is the named officer responsible for the delivery of the action plan.

Key stakeholders

Children and young people
The Children's Trust

Elected Members
Parents and carers
Schools, Settings and other early years providers
Local Authority and Health Service professionals
Voluntary organisations

Staff development

Workforce development is essential to ensure that practitioners are appropriately skilled to deliver services to children, young people and their families. Looking forward staff development objectives linked directly to the delivery of the SEND strategy focus on two main areas:

- Workforce reform arising from the move towards the transformation of Services within locality structures and integrated/targeted services.
- The need to maintain high levels of practitioner expertise across the breadth of the workforce.

Resources

- Base budget
- Staff time
- Voluntary and community sector activity

Monitoring, review and evaluation

As referenced in the impact section of the attached action plan, and reported to, monitored and reviewed by the SEND outcomes partnership.

Targets

To improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND thereby:

- Narrowing the attainment gap between children and young people with SEND and their peers
- Improving attendance
- Reducing exclusions
- Meeting key transition priorities
- Improving community cohesion
- Building an increasingly inclusive and tolerant society
- Reducing inequality

Action plan

See attached.