Children and young people with special educational needs: Context and key priorities 2017–2019

Working together in Hampshire
## Contents

**Introduction** 2

**The Hampshire Context** 2

**Background** 2

**Aim** 4

What are we aiming to do 4

**Key priorities** 5

Working with other statutory and voluntary bodies to provide support for children with SEN 8

**Appendix 1:**
SEN Support: guidance for early years providers, mainstreams schools and colleges  
*Available online at www.hants.gov.uk/senguidance*

**Appendix 2:**
Hampshire Local Area SEND action plan  
*Available on request, please email enquiries.sen@hants.gov.uk*

**Appendix 3:**
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)  
*Available online at www.hants.gov.uk/jsna*

**Appendix 4:**
EHC plan process map  
*Available online at http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/sen-ehc-overview.pdf*

**Appendix 5:**
Hampshire Children and Young People's Plan 2015–2018  
*Available online at www.hants.gov.uk/cypp*

**Appendix 6:**
Hampshire's Children’s Trust Thresholds Chart  
*Available online at www.hants.gov.uk/earlyhelp*

**Appendix 7:**
Statistics: Special Educational Needs (SEN) (DfE)  
*www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-special-educational-needs-sen*
Introduction

The 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms have offered Hampshire local authority the opportunity to reflect on the practice and procedures pointing to special educational needs (SEN) within the county. The local authority is committed to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEN, building on the existing services and quality of provision that already exists within the local authority.

The Hampshire Context

Hampshire is a large shire county with 11 districts. There are a total of 523 schools comprising 425 mainstream primary schools, 69 mainstream secondary schools, 26 special schools and three nursery schools. Within the mainstream schools there are 56 specialist resourced provisions. There are nine early years (SEN) hubs for those with SEN to complement the early years provision available in some of the special schools. There are 17 further education and sixth form colleges in Hampshire. All offer support for young people with SEN.

There is a strong relationship between the local authority and its community of schools and colleges, including the academies. Details of Hampshire schools, and the SEN provision available can be found at http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/SEN-provision-in-Hampshire.pdf

In September 2016, over 6000 children and young people in Hampshire had a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. This represents 2.8% of the school population. Of these children and young people, over 60% attend special provision.

Background

Special schools and resourced provisions within mainstream schools in Hampshire have a good reputation for providing for children and young people with SEN, including the highly regarded Outreach service to support mainstream schools. There is currently a focus on reshaping this Outreach service so that it too reflects the spirit of the 2014 SEND reforms.

The Children and Families Act and funding reforms in 2013/14 have brought about a significant change in the relationship between the local authority and post-16 institutions. Local authorities now directly commission and fund post-16 high needs provision and have responsibility for Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, including naming the education or training provider. This strengthens the need for local authorities and post-16 institutions to work closely together to support the development of the best outcomes for young people.

Local authorities and post-16 providers both want to support young people to achieve and make a successful transition to adult life including employment, independent living, making friends and being a part of the community and good health. These are the four areas key to preparation for their adult life and being able to be as independent as possible. Working together is essential to ensure that placements are made in the best interest
of the young person, and achieve good outcomes and value for money.

The Short Breaks programme supports parents and families with disabled children. The establishment of the Family Support Service aims to improve the co-ordination of services available to families.

The local authority analyses data to help ensure that provision is available to meet demand, for example increasing the resourced provision places available for children with social communication and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) needs as this has been an increasing demand in recent years.

There is currently a countywide review of the travel arrangements made for children with statements or EHC plans to ensure this service is effective and efficient. This incorporates the introduction of personal travel allowances to families, and a review of the geographical location of special schools and specialist provision around the county of Hampshire to try to ensure supply meets demand.

Complementary to the review of travel arrangements is a countywide focus on inclusion so that children with SEND are able, as far as possible, to attend their local mainstream school. This requires a focus on the provision and support that can be made available to the mainstream schools to enable this to happen. There needs to be a cultural change by both parents/carers and schools that children with SEN can be effectively supported within a mainstream setting, and that progress can be made with the correct approach.

We are working closely with colleagues in health and social care to ensure that a more co-ordinated approach is made towards ensuring families receive the support they need, and that along with the voluntary sector, services work in a much more integrated way so that quality provision and positive outcomes for children and young people 0-25 can be realised.
Aim

Hampshire County Council and its partner agencies are committed to improving the outcomes and life chances of all children and young people within the county. Our aims are to strengthen inclusive opportunities for learning and living for all children and young people with SEND 0 to 25 years, to promote their achievements and outcomes and to use resources in the fairest and most effective way possible.

What we are aiming to do

In common with other local authorities we are implementing the most significant reforms in SEN for thirty years. We acknowledge that the changes needed will take time, and will evolve over time, but we are committed to realising these reforms working in partnership with health, social care and parents, carers and young people themselves. We will ensure that:

- children’s SEN are picked up early and support is routinely put in place quickly
- staff have the knowledge, understanding and skills to provide the right support for children and young people who have SEN or are disabled
- parents know what they can reasonably expect their local school, college, local authority and local services to provide, without having to fight for it
- aspirations for children and young people are raised through an increased focus on life outcomes
- for more complex needs, an integrated assessment and an EHC plan from birth to 25
- there is greater control for parents and young people over the services they and their family use.

The three key areas of focus for the reforms have been:

- the introduction of a new birth to 25 education, EHC plan to replace statements of SEN and learning difficulty assessments (LDAs). There is also an associated requirement to undertake ‘Transfer Reviews’ to move those with a statement of SEN or LDA on to an EHC plan by April 2018
- the introduction of optional personal budgets for some families with an EHC plan to give greater independence, choice and control over the services they use to meet the assessed needs of their child or the young person
- the Hampshire Local Offer - a website providing details of all local health, education, social care, leisure services and support for children and young people with special educational needs or who are disabled. The website can be found at http://fish.hants.gov.uk/localoffer
Key priorities

The following have been identified as the key priorities that the SEN service needs to address:

1. Partnership and co-production with parents/carers, children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability
2. Early recognition of needs and appropriate intervention
3. Strengthening inclusion in mainstream settings
4. Ensuring local provision is responsive to and meets local need and improves outcomes
5. Fair and efficient use of resources
6. Integrated working between agencies.

Defining our children and young people with SEND 0 to 25 years

It is recognised that SEND encompasses children and young people with a broad range of needs. For some the focus of support will be wholly educational. For others, their families will need support from a number of statutory services (required by law) and this will continue throughout their childhood and possibly into adulthood. A child or young person may have special educational needs or a disability or both.

Special Educational Needs

The definition used in the SEND Code of Practice: 0–25 years (2015) remains statutory and is as follows:

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Disability

The Equality Act (2010) has replaced all existing equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act. Within this, disability is defined when:

a) the person has a physical or mental impairment, and

b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Equality Act (2010)
Priority 1 – Working in partnership with families, children and young people

- Work in partnership with Hampshire Parent Carer Network.
- Ensure families, children and young people feel fully engaged, listened to and better informed.
- Ensure attention is paid to the needs of individual children and young people.
- Ensure decision makers have regard to parental preferences.
- Enable parents and young people to make informed choices by making information accessible and readily available, particularly via the Local Offer.

Priority 2 – Early recognition of needs and appropriate intervention

- Ensure children and young people's additional needs are recognised early and preventative action is taken that helps children overcome their difficulties and enables them to realise their potential.
- Ensure professionals recognise when children transfer from one setting to another that this may require careful planning.

Priority 3 – Strengthening inclusion in mainstream settings

- Ensure that schools, colleges and other agencies take responsibility for all children and young people within their local community, ensuring there is appropriate support.
- Ensure effective arrangements are made for children who are permanently excluded.
- Ensure that all providers are compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and have clear policies and guidance for staff, developing their knowledge, skills and understanding of equalities so that all pupils are well supported.
- Make inclusion meaningful, in all settings, in accessing learning, activities, opportunities and services.
- All children and young people are valued and supported to overcome their difficulties.
Priority 4 – Ensuring local provision is responsive to local need and improves outcomes

- A continuum of effective provision within mainstream schools, special schools and post-16 providers to support identified and future needs of vulnerable learners.
- Provide outreach support in a flexible and responsive way.
- Support collaboration between mainstream and specialist/special provision to give children and young people access to provision according to their needs.
- Maintain a focus on outcomes, and the four preparation for adulthood outcome areas:
  - Employment
  - Independent Living
  - Community Inclusion
  - Health.

Priority 5 – Fair and efficient use of resources

- Allocate available resources to support children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities fairly, efficiently and transparently.
- Offer greater accountability to parents/carers

Priority 6 – Integrated working between agencies

- Develop the offer of jointly commissioned personal budgets to enhance parents/carers or young person's choice and control
- Establish needs and ensure there is appropriate provision to meet those needs.
- Ensure that the local authority (including children's and adult services), health commissioners and providers, education providers and other frontline providers of support, including the voluntary sector, work together in an efficient and fully joined up way.
Working with other statutory and voluntary bodies to provide support for children and young people with SEN

In order to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs, Hampshire County Council has built successful partnerships with statutory and voluntary bodies to ensure that services are joined up and are more than the sum of their parts.

The Children’s Services Department is working with health services and voluntary and special interest groups to develop systems and protocols for multi agency working, joint funding arrangements and information sharing. Examples of multi agency initiatives include:

**Special Educational Needs (SEN) Service**
- along with its education, health and social care partners Hampshire County Council’s SEN Service is jointly responsible for identifying and assessing children and young people’s special educational needs and disabilities. The SEN Service manages the statutory education, health and care needs assessment and subsequent Education Health and Care plans including placing and reviewing the special education arrangements for more than 6,000 of Hampshire’s children and young people, aged 0–25 years.

The SEN Service commissions and manages the other statutory arrangements in the Children and Family Act 2014 (part 3) and the Education Act 1996, including:

- ensuring sufficiency of special educational placements
- representation of the local authority’s interests in the First Tier Tribunal (SEND)
- commissioning provision of independent information, advice and support to families, children and young people; independent support; disagreement resolution and mediation.

The Service is configured to cover the East and West of Hampshire, with eight locality teams aligned to the county’s districts and boroughs.

The County Service Manager leads the strategic positioning of the service, supported by two Education Officers. Four Senior Special Needs Officers manage the eight Special Needs Officers and their teams of Caseworkers and Assistants. Three Assistant Education Officers advise the Senior Special Needs Officers and their teams on complex casework management, and represent the local authority in First Tier Tribunals and mediations.

The SEN Service is leading on and contributing to a wide range of developments, in response to the wide-ranging SEN reforms.

**Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN)**
- Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) is an independent charitable organisation working throughout Hampshire. Parent carer members all have children and young people, aged 0–25 years, with additional needs (professionals with an interest in HPCN’s work are also welcomed). HPCN
has a working partnership agreement with Hampshire County Council and health which enables trained HPCN representatives to work alongside the professionals who provide health, education and social services to children and young people in Hampshire in order to improve the outcomes of children and young people now and in the future. Parent carer representatives participate in a wide range of meetings, events and work streams in order to present the parent carer view, shape services and make a positive difference to families’ lives. HPCN’s input matters, because all of its members have local knowledge and personal experience which means they understand what families want and need from services.

HPCN runs a range of initiatives to benefit its members and collect their views. Get Together meetings run monthly throughout Hampshire’s regions, offering a range of topics and guest speakers. Talk Together groups meet in mainstream schools, bringing SEN Co-ordinators and the school’s parent carers together to discuss and shape the learning experience. Regular Learn Together events provide an opportunity for parent carers and professionals to gain new participation skills. Training has included person centred planning, participation workshops, and Independent Parental Special Education Advice (IPSEA) advice on special education and the law.

Reforms arising from the Children and Families Act 2014 include a duty to involve parent carers in strategic decision making about provisions and services for their children with special educational needs and disabilities. Parent Carer Forums have evolved to represent the views of parent carers of children and young people with
disabilities. HPCN Membership provides a collective opportunity to help shape local provisions and services. Hampshire Parent Carer Network also participates in regional and national consultations on behalf of its families. It is part of the South East region of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF).

**Impartial Information Advice and Support (IIAS)** - in Hampshire is a collaboration of two established information and advice services **Support4SEND** and **Parent Voice**.

Information, advice and support is available for parents/carers of children and young people from birth to 25 years and children and young people themselves. Both services operate to the same service principles, including impartiality of information and empowerment of parents/carers, children and young people. Either will provide basic information and signposting for education, health, social care and disability services but they have areas of expertise which are explained below. You can contact either service directly or you can call the IIAS information line also detailed below.

The IIAS Information Line is manned Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm with an answerphone service outside of these times. Experienced staff will be able to respond to your query or signpost you to the most appropriate service.
Tel: 0300 303 2677 or email us at iias@hantslocaloffer.info.

**Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology** - the team of educational psychologists provide early intervention support to SEN Co-ordinators in schools through half termly supervision groups.

We also work with early years settings, schools and colleges through sold service arrangements to support practitioners in identifying and meeting the needs of children with a range of complex learning and social and emotional needs.

**The Specialist Teacher Advisory Service** - the service is split into four teams who work with children and young people who are deaf/hearing impaired (HI), have a visual impairment (VI), have a physical disability (PD) or have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) or autism. Each team within the service has a team leader who leads, experienced teachers with appropriate and/or mandatory qualifications in their relevant specialisms; mobility and independence instructors, a teacher adviser and a support officer for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) and ICT, specialists in risk assessment and manual handling, speech and language therapists and early years deaf instructors. The service is available to children and young people, families and carers, pre-schools and nurseries, schools, colleges and other professionals and agencies.

**The Communication and Language Team** - the team support mainstream children and young people who have an EHC plan with a priority special educational need of SLCN and /or autism. In collaboration with the health services we endeavour to ensure all of these children and young people have access to a speech and language assessment across the whole county.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Speech and Language Therapy Team** - Hampshire County Council has its own team of Specialist
Speech and Language Therapists working in all Hampshire's special schools to meet the speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) of pupils. The team also provide training to staff in schools to help them support SLCN in the classroom, work with parents/carers and support the work at SEND tribunals to reduce disputes over speech therapy provision. The team work collaboratively with NHS therapists where they also work in some schools and good examples of joint work have taken place in some schools.

Rehabilitation/mobility officers for children with visual impairment – this service is funded by Children's Services Department to provide assessments and training in mobility and daily living skills for children with visual impairment.

Education Inclusion Service (EIS) – the Education Inclusion Service provides education for those young people of statutory school age who cannot attend mainstream or special school because they have either been permanently excluded from school and are awaiting a school placement, are at risk of exclusion, are emotionally vulnerable or are medically unwell and unable to attend school. Secondary aged pupils are referred to one of seven Education Centres whilst primary aged pupils can be referred to one of the six Primary Behaviour Service teams who provide an outreach service and in-reach provision for a small number of pupils.

Primary Behaviour Service – a team of dedicated practitioners with extensive experience working in Hampshire primary schools to promote children’s positive behaviour and emotional wellbeing, to reduce exclusions and improve the

behaviour of children in school. The aim is to improve the confidence of staff in coping with and providing for these children.

School Home Integrated Project (SHIP) – funded by the Children's Services Department, this project supports parents and carers and families of children and young people who have severe learning difficulties and may also have difficult and challenging behaviours. It aims to involve everyone who works with the young person, wherever they may be: at home, in school or in any other setting. This is to ensure a more consistent approach in meeting the needs of children and young people beyond the school day.

Hampshire Virtual School for children in care – works in partnership with settings, schools, social workers, carers and parents to improve educational outcomes for children in care. National statistics show that around 60% of children looked after have special educational needs. The Virtual School works closely with key professionals, teams and partners to ensure that children's needs are identified and being met, and that interventions make a difference and have an impact. This information is recorded in each child’s Personal Education Plan (PEP). Further information about the Hampshire Virtual School may be found on the Local Offer website and on the Virtual School’s own website at www.hants.gov.uk/cic-virtual-school.

Children's Services Social Care – the vision and priorities of the Children and Young People Plan continue to be based on the commitment of providing early help for children, young people and families. This approach focusses on delivering the right help at the right time to safeguard and
promote best outcomes for children, young people and their families, while diverting them from the need for more intensive, high cost and disruptive interventions. Central to this way of working is to ensure that partners are able to work together to provide the best balance of universal, targeted and specialist services for children, young people and families, including children’s social care, children’s centres, health, schools, youth provision, local and district borough councils and the voluntary sector services.

The model of early help aims to ensure a seamless pathway of interventions as families move in, across and out of services, which can be represented by the windscreen of need, available at www.hants.gov.uk/earlyhelp.

In Hampshire early help is facilitated by:

- a Family Support Service providing a co-ordinated approach to working with families with complex needs but below the threshold of social care (level 3 as contained in the revised Hampshire’s Children’s Trust Thresholds Chart, see link at Appendix 6)

- early help hubs providing advice, guidance support and signposting to agencies working with families at level 2

- close alignment of the Family Support Service and the Supporting (Troubled) Families programme

- strong home-to-school links, with teachers and others identifying problems and enabling parents/carers to ask for help when needed but also to develop their own parental strengths

- schools identifying problems with children’s development or learning, and intervening to ensure they get back on track, working with parents/carers to achieve this

- children’s centres focusing on identifying, reaching and helping the families in greatest need

- the Healthy Child Programme (0-19) - the benefits of this approach are well evidenced. It can mean the difference between educational success and failure. It can also mean the difference between a child staying at home, or entering the care system.

**Social Care Services for Disabled Children**

- Hampshire County Council operates four specialist disabled children social work teams, a county wide occupational therapy team, a short breaks service, three in-house residential short break units and is responsible for commissioning a wide variety of third sector providers of care and support delivered in the home and community. The short breaks service is an open access programme which delivers a wide variety of leisure and entertainment opportunities to any disabled child in the county. The Occupational Therapy Service provides equipment and adaptations to children in their own homes, with the aim to ensure children and young people are as independent as possible at home and supported to manage their daily living activities. The social work teams provide support and social work interventions to those disabled children and young people eligible for a service, including support in the home and community, day services, overnight short breaks, child protection and support for Children Looked After.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) - In 2013 it was estimated that 10% of children in Hampshire have mental health problems and 50% of lifetime mental illness is diagnosed by the age of 14. Physical and learning disabilities can have an impact on mental health and these children can be at increased risk of developing mental health problems. In order to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people it is important that they can easily access the health care and treatment needed.

The priorities for the ‘Be healthy’ outcome include promoting access to health services for vulnerable groups of children and young people.

We know that achievement at school is a key determinant of future life chances. Overall, Hampshire’s children and young people perform well in key assessments and exams, with results above national and regional averages. However, the gap between disadvantaged or more vulnerable children and their peers remains a significant issue. In order to close this gap, parents need to be supported to help their children. The priorities include:

- increasing the proportion of children attending ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ schools
- continuing to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged children, especially those in care, those eligible for free school meals, those with special educational needs and those with minority ethnic and traveller group heritages who do not achieve as well as the children in other groups
- target support to parents/carers who need help with their children’s education.

SEN Travel - Transport is provided only to the nearest appropriate school as determined by the Children’s Services Department and normally only when the journey to school is more than the statutory distance of 2 miles (aged up to 7 years) or 3 miles (aged 8 and over). Also transport may be provided within the walking distances where this is recommended following an assessment of individual need. There are more than 7,000 children with an EHC plan in Hampshire, most are taken to school by parents/carers or are able to make their own way to school but Hampshire County Council does currently provide home to school transport for over 3,400 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to over 500 educational establishments. Many of those transported by the County Council will travel with peers on vehicles contracted to take pupils to schools, where required the journey can be escorted. The service currently costs in excess of £30m and so the local authority is exploring all available avenues by which costs can be reduced. All travel arrangements are being actively reviewed to ensure the eligibility of the pupil and that the transport arrangement is still suitable. Recently the local authority has made effective use of travel allowances so that parents/carers can transport their eligible child and actively encourages independent travel schemes.
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