

North Northamptonshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy

*For children and young people with
Special Educational Needs (aged 0-25)*



**North Northants
SEND Partnership**

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Foreword



Ann Marie Dodds
Director of Education,
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Cllr Scott Edwards
Member for Education,
North Northamptonshire Council

We are really delighted that we can share with you our SEND & Inclusion Strategy for children in North Northamptonshire. This strategy is the culmination of many months of work with children, families, and all stakeholders. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed, and we are sure that together we can achieve the very best in North Northamptonshire for all our children.

We are committed to work together to ensure that every child can be their very best and we will work tirelessly together to achieve this.

We have made many positive changes over the past two years, and this has set us on a journey to continuously improve and we will do this together for all our children.

Our ambition, through this strategy, is to coproduce the highest quality services that can be accessed at the right time and in the right way by the children who need them. Some of those services we will deliver ourselves, others will be delivered through commissioned arrangements.

This is the start of our journey in North Northamptonshire, and we believe we will achieve great success together.

“ We will be our best, so every child can be their best. ”

Supported by:



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North Northamptonshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy

Introduction and context

Welcome to North Northamptonshire's SEND and Inclusion Strategy! We believe SEND is everyone's business and through this Strategy we would like to share with you our ambition and priorities for developing support and provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

The content of this document has been co-produced as part of a series of meetings, conversations and workshops listening to and learning from the experiences of parents / carers, children and young people, services, schools and partners including social care and health.

We have also drawn on the feedback received from service users, including children and young people, and providers as part of our SEND Peer Review in October 2022 which focussed on the impact of work to embed co-production at an individual, operational and strategic level.

Consideration has also been given to the areas for improvement themes identified in our Self Evaluation Form (SEF).

Feedback from the range of activities outlined have identified the following key themes where people want to see improvement and where our self-evaluation outlines areas for improvement:

- Training
- Meeting statutory time frames
- Early identification and response
- Communication
- Local Offer and Support
- Resources
- Process, Outcomes, Monitoring and Accountability



Our Vision

We are ambitious for all children and young people with SEND.

This vision is underpinned by our strategic principles:

**Co-Production
at the heart
of all our
practices**

**SEND is
everyone's
business**

**Making
good
practice
common
practice**

**Identifying
the right
needs at the
right time**

Why do we need a SEND and Inclusion Strategy?

It is important to have a shared understanding of the issues and challenges that then informs our priorities and actions. Our Strategy is based on listening to what we have heard and ensuring that we focus on the things that are most important to our service users. It will help us take the necessary actions together to identify and meet local needs and secure improvement and confidence in local provision and services. Our Strategy demonstrates our collective commitment to improving SEND across North Northamptonshire, setting out our approach to identifying and meeting SEND needs in line with a graduated approach to support and provision. It includes actions to ensure children and young people's SEND Support needs are identified early and provision made to reduce avoidable escalation of their needs, as well as for those with an education, health and care plan (EHCP).

By placing children and families at the heart of our thinking and our actions, this strategy sets out how we will work collaboratively to ensure North Northamptonshire Council and its partners work within the statutory requirements and guidance of the Children and Families Act (2014), the SEND Code of Practice (2015) and the Equality Act (2010).

The national SEND Review and the Green Paper sets the direction of travel for SEND improvement and cultural change needed to implement a successful SEND system. When the government response to the consultation on the Green Paper is published, we will make sure that recommendations and direction are taken into account and steer our work and the delivery of our SEND and Inclusion Strategy.

Who is our Strategy for?

The SEND strategy is for our children, young people and their families to understand the actions the Council and partners in health are making to support improvement in their experiences and achieve better outcomes.

It is for all staff working in SEND within North Northamptonshire and we will involve all partners, services, providers and schools in supporting delivery of our strategy, embedding improving SEND and Inclusion as everyone's business. It's also for families and young people in North Northamptonshire, to understand the actions the Council and partners in health are making to deliver inclusive, person-centred services across SEND.

Outcomes

The strategy will help us provide better outcomes for children and young people. We are adopting the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) co-produced SEND Outcomes Framework to understand the progress that is being made for our children and young people, these outcomes are:

- My voice is heard
- I am able to learn
- I am healthy
- I am happy
- I feel supported
- I am safe
- I am in control of my life

“ It's important for us to work alongside schools and professionals for what is of the best interest to our children. ”
- Parent A

Our Aims

Through the delivery of this strategy we aim to:

- **Learn** from the experiences of parents/carers, young people, and use this to inform actions to support improvement across the system.
- **Deliver** improvements to the experience and outcomes of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- **Embed** best practice in co-production and SEND provision.
- Ensure a **consistent and positive** process and experience that enables children and young people to thrive and make good progress
- Make sure services are provided **effectively and efficiently**, making best use of our collective resources.



Our Priorities

These priorities have been formed as a result of co-production work across the local area. This has consisted of a series of meetings, conversations and workshops that shaped the initial priorities, which were then presented for feedback at SEND Services Improvement workshops in January of 2023.

Responses and comments from the experiences of parents / carers, services, schools and partners from other agencies were then incorporated and shaped what are our final priorities as a partnership going forwards alongside understanding areas for improvement identified in the Self-Evaluation Framework.



Co-Production

Embed co-production as a way of working together with families (parents / carers and young people) in everything that we all do across North Northamptonshire.

Early Identification and Intervention

Identifying and meeting needs at the earliest opportunity – developing inclusive practice and providing the right support at the right time as locally as possible, meeting statutory time frames.

Sufficiency

Building the capacity in the SEND system (including specialist provision / places and specialist support to mainstream settings / schools) to meet identified need locally.

Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood

Improving Transitions for children and young people, 0 – 25.

Skilled Workforce

Developing a skilled workforce that is confident in identifying and meeting SEND and additional needs.

Partnership Working

A shared understanding of the outcomes sought for, and by children and young people with SEND, and clarity of the progress made towards those outcomes across the Local Partnership.

Co-Production

Embed co-production as a way of working together with families (parents / carers and young people) in everything that we all do across North Northamptonshire.

When we talk about co-production, we mean working together with parents, carers and professionals in equal partnership to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people.

Why this is a Priority

- Feedback has indicated that there is not a common understanding of co-production across the system, and more work needs to be done to shift the culture and make this happen consistently across the local area
- Our Peer Review evidenced that the experiences of parents / carers and young people are variable
- We recognise that engagement with children, young people & their families in developing local provision is key to successful outcomes - together we are stronger

What we are going to do

- Develop a Co-Production delivery plan that sets out all of the actions to promote, deliver and monitor implementation of the Charter. Provide training on effective co-production practices
- Communicate our co-produced Co-Production Charter, ensuring all of our services and providers sign up to delivering against the Values and actions in our Charter
- Hold regular engagement opportunities with children, young people and their families at a strategic and service level, helping us to shape and monitor the services that are commissioned and delivered
- Publish how this way of working and listening to feedback is influencing services, including commissioned services
- Keep a record of who has signed up to our Charter and evidence of how they are delivering it
- Publish list of who has signed up on the Local Offer website
- Work with providers, schools and settings to embed co-production

How will we know that this has been achieved?

- Children and young people with SEND and their families feedback shows that they are confident that their needs are being identified and met early and that they are confident that local provision is meeting their needs
- Feedback from parents / carers, young people & via Local Offer feedback function
- Social media insights
- Annual Review of EHCP
- Service and organisation promotion
- Service lead updates on how it is being implemented
- Service delivery evidencing its implementation
- School / setting promotion on website, including how it is being implemented through the SEND Information Report
- SEND Strategic Reports reference how it is being delivered
- Surveys
- Externally validated Inclusion Quality Mark / SEND Audits
- Evidence of implementation in contract specifications and monitoring

“Co-production is important to children and families because accessing help can be difficult and variable. There needs to be more consistency across the county, and ongoing efforts to raise parental awareness of what is available.”
- Parent A

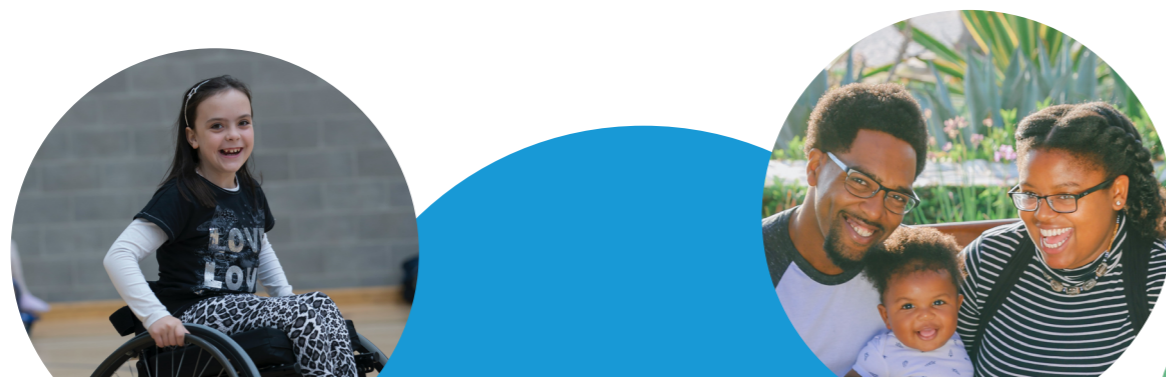


Early Identification and Intervention

Developing inclusive practice and providing the right support at the right time as locally as possible.

Why this is a Priority

- Expectations are not clear and current guidance does not link to processes for escalation or evidence that would support a view that the child / young person needs something 'in addition to and different from' their peers to enable them to make good progress
- We need to make sure that we and families are confident that the majority of young people with SEND have their needs identified and met effectively in local universal provision
- We need to make sure that local community provision, including clubs and leisure opportunities have the skills, knowledge and expertise to be inclusive and to meet the majority of needs
- We need to make sure that all our children have access to good quality inclusive local educational settings with timely support for the things they find difficult and seamless transitions between phases of learning
- Make sure that there is agreement and clarity on the expectations of schools, settings and services
- Pressures upon early years and childcare settings as a result of the pandemic and in relation to retention of staff means a robust training package needs to be put in place to support the sector
- The authority must meet our statutory duties, this must be considered throughout the range of services provided; from early help through to more acute intervention



What we are going to do

- Graduated approach guidance that sets out expectations for providers, services and settings, including what we mean by inclusion, what should be 'ordinarily available' & criteria for accessing support from specialist services, and how to access partner services
- Use the Early Years Review recommendations to inform actions to improve SEND and Inclusion across the early years, including workforce development
- Review impact of implementation of early years SEN Inclusion Funding and additional SEND funding streams
- Increase training, networking and peer support opportunities across local provision, community based services, health and care services and schools
- Grow our specialist outreach provision from best practice providers to support others within the local area
- Explore and agree preferred setting and school SEND Audit tools and encourage implementation
- Children and young people and parents and carers understand what community activities are available, and children and young people are supported to participate, where appropriate, to make friends and develop positive relationships
- Support and challenge early years providers, schools, colleges and other universal services, including leisure opportunities to identify and meet needs early & be inclusive
- Work with mainstream schools, young people and families to explore flexible local alternative provision options for those children and young people that need it
- Use our Self Evaluation Framework as a tool for improvement. The action plan will ensure grip and pace on improvement/development activity and will give clarity to responsibilities and accountabilities for progression.

How will we know that this has been achieved?

- Guidance is in place that is co-produced and agreed, published on the Local Offer website and being implemented consistently
- Increase in consistency of practice across the local area evidenced by parental feedback showing confidence in the local provision
- Setting and school confidence in their ability to identify and meet needs
- The needs of children being identified early with appropriate support put in place to address those needs – less children starting school who are not school ready and have unidentified/diagnosed needs

Sufficiency

Building the capacity in the SEND system (including specialist provision / places and specialist support to mainstream settings / schools) to meet identified need locally.

Why this is a Priority

- Some mainstream settings did not feel able to meet the needs of some pupils
- Parents / carers not confident that local provision have sufficient skills and resources for meeting needs
- Waiting times are too long to access some services and waiting lists are too large
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure sufficient school places
- We have seen an increase in children and young people needing to access independent schools due to lack of places
- We had identified children and young people without a specialist place who needed one
- We recognised the need for better forward planning



What we are going to do

- Address the combined issue of increasing capacity in maintained SEND provision to accommodate the needs of children with SEND and the issue of reducing the use of expensive and geographically distant independent provision
- Develop local specialist provision, including specialist provision in mainstream schools, that ensures that children and young people with SEND are able to access local provision that meets their needs as geographically close to their home as possible
- Identify and implement across services ways of resourcing an appropriate mainstream offer that would avoid duplication and gaps, simplify processes and increase local resilience
- Identify and implement models of support for families, early years providers and schools when referred to a service. Include this in work to develop and improve the Autism and ADHD Pathway
- Jointly planned and commissioned provision and services, underpinned by outcomes, feedback and data which provide value for money and meets the ongoing challenges of agile resource allocation and redistribution of resourcing for SEND under review.

How will we know that this has been achieved?

- Sufficient specialist places locally for those who need it when they need it
- Parental confidence in local provision
- Consistent inclusive practice across the area evidenced by SEND audits, Ofsted etc
- A pattern of local provision that is meeting local needs



Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood

Improving Transitions for children and young people, 0 – 25, so that they are well-prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes

Why this is a Priority

- Parents and carers, young people, early years providers, schools, colleges have indicated the need for more consistent expectations and support for all transitions
- Following the pandemic there is a significant increase in the number of children attending an early education or childcare setting with low and emerging needs particularly around speech and language
- Our Preparing For Adulthood (PFA) self-assessment evidences inconsistency in practice and lack of clear information for young people and their families

What we are going to do

- Identify and implement actions identified through the review of early years
- Ensure children and young people are supported before and during any point of transition, including when they will no longer be eligible for a service
- From an early age, children develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to prepare for greater independence and adulthood, including in the areas of further and higher education, employment, more independent living, good health, positive relationships and participation in society



How will we know that this has been achieved?

- Children and young people and their parents / carers provide positive feedback about their transition experiences including adult social care where appropriate
- Early years providers, schools, colleges and employers are confident that they understand the needs of the children and young people in our area and are able to plan for and meet their needs
- Information is available on the Local Offer for children, young people and families to access
- Support and plans reflect children and young people's ambitions, and extend beyond required levels of support to focus on the planned outcome
- Improved flexibilities in the curriculum offer (AP)
- Reduction in suspensions and exclusions
- Increased attendance
- Reduction in Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- EHCPs include PfA outcomes in all plans from at least the age of 14



Skilled Workforce

Developing a skilled workforce that is confident in identifying and meeting SEND and additional needs.

Why this is a Priority

- Feedback has indicated that there is not a sufficiently skilled workforce for families to feel confident that needs are identified and met
- Feedback suggests workforce development is too ad hoc
- Pressures upon early years and childcare settings as a result of the pandemic and in relation to retention of staff means a robust training package needs to be put in place to support the sector

What we are going to do

- Develop and implement a training offer that sets out expectations of training for all (universal), targeted training for particular needs, and specialist training
- Develop and implement a SEND Induction programme
- Early Education and Childcare training audit is being undertaken to understand qualification levels across the sector and identify any gaps/ training needs in relation to Early Identification, Inclusion and supporting Children with SEND which will inform the training support offered in the coming year
- Work with the Teaching School Hub to ensure SEND training is embedded into their offer
- Ensure that practitioners have the appropriate skills to understand children and young people's needs and aspirations, and to create an inclusive environment
- Ensure that practitioners working with children and young people with SEND have the right knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harm, and understand that children and young people with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation

How will we know that this has been achieved?

- Feedback from the workforce demonstrates improved confidence in identifying and meeting SEND needs
- Children and young people and their parents / carers provide positive feedback about services and NSCP



Partnership working

Partnership working that has the child at the centre across all agencies / providers 0 - 25.

Why this is a Priority

- Feedback has indicated that families and schools don't feel that services always work well together
- Families tell us that they are not clear on what services are available
- There is not sufficient support for families while waiting for services
- Families report that when services work well together, they have a better experience
- Families experience multiple appointments and assessments which means they have to tell their story multiple times
- Joint commissioning approach is not yet developed

What we are going to do

- Actions that ensure SEND is being embedded in family hub work, education, health provision and leisure provision across all localities
- Agree a high level approach to joint commissioning for children and young people and develop and implement a joint commissioning strategy
- Identify opportunities for integrated assessment
- Develop and put in place support for families while they are waiting for services.
- Promote and share partner information to support families in accessing wider services
- Take steps to ensure all staff provide clear information on access guidance / thresholds for different services to parents / carers and young people



How will we know that this has been achieved?

- Families report an easier experience of agencies working together
- Families report a reduced need to repeat themselves, reduced frustration, and increased confidence
- Reduction in complaints
- Families report smoother transition between phase and services

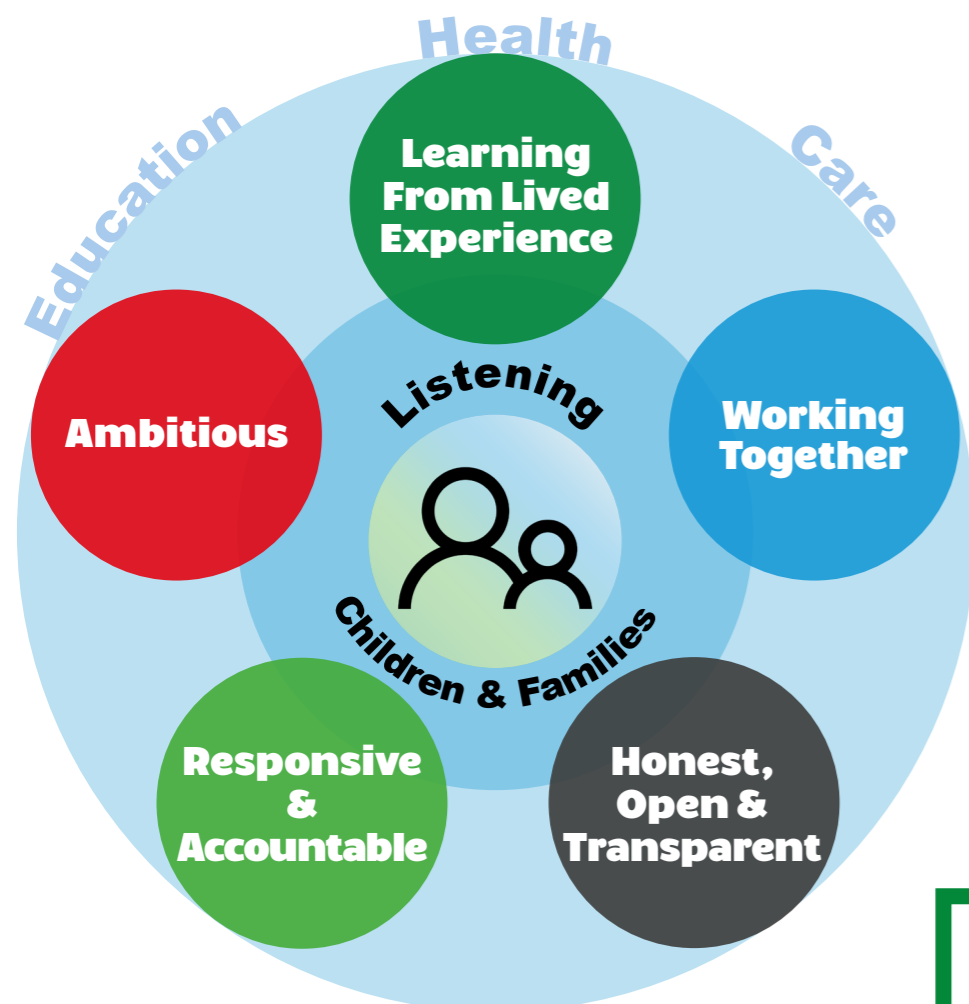
“ We all play a part in the support package for children & young people, so if we don't work together, we might miss things or not have enough of a view of the person involved in this process to make as much of an impact as we can. ”
- Parent B



Our Co-Production Charter

We want to see co-production embedded in all of our practices across North Northamptonshire so that it becomes 'just the way we all work here'.

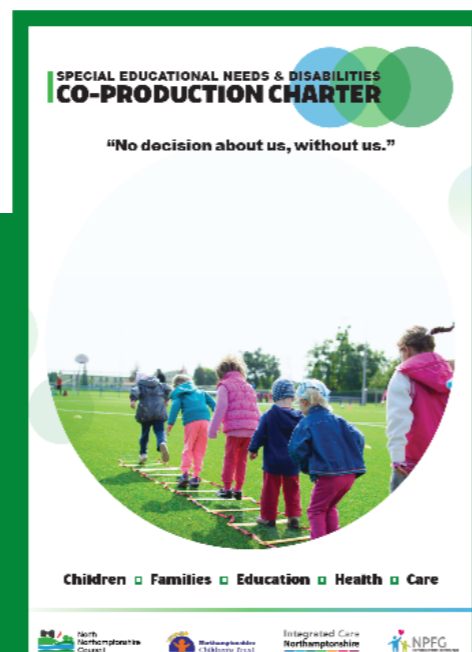
We have worked with partners to co-produce a Co-Production Charter which articulates our shared values and commitments. We believe that children and young people will achieve better outcomes if we have a clear focus on working well together.



Our five values set out in the charter.

See the Co-Production Charter in full on our [Children's Services Intranet page](#).

A one-page summary version is also available to [view](#).



The Ways We Are Going to Work

“ I just want the system to work for us, and if I can contribute to making it better, then I think that it's important to do so. ”
- Parent B

Communication

Improving communication across the local area is a key priority for us:

- Between families and services
- Between services and schools / settings
- Between services
- Between strategic leadership & operational delivery

We will regularly report and share the outcomes, achievements and impact of our SEND work and the SEND and Inclusion Strategy through multiple channels, including the refreshed Local Offer website. This will be informed by the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families. We will continue to come together regularly with families on an agreed focus to support delivery and evaluate impact.

Learning from data and feedback

All workstreams and service plans will utilise data and feedback to influence and inform work priorities. Progress will be reported through multiple channels, including the Local Offer website.

Quality Assurance, Monitoring & Accountability

We will be collectively committed to monitoring quality and impact of what we do. Measures will be included in each priority area action plan to monitor quality and outcomes, and to report on the impact of work, the evidence to support this and the steps identified to address issues.

Governance Monitoring and Review

The SEND Accountability Board has been set up to provide strategic leadership and direction in the approval of self-evaluations / assessments and the development, implementation and monitoring of the SEND and Inclusion Strategic Plan and working group plans.

Its role is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the delivery of the planned work and to recommend actions as appropriate, including required corrective actions to keep delivery on track through workstreams.

SAB Workstreams

Workstreams / working groups will co-produce an action plan to deliver the priorities set out in this strategy. Action plans will be developed which will include clear outcomes and measures to ensure that progress and impact is being made. The workstreams / working groups will report regularly to the SEND Accountability Board.

Glossary

Children and Families Act 2014: A law that came into force on 1 September 2014. Part 3 of the Act sets out the law on special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The Act is supported by the SEND Regulations 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 Years.

Commission / Commissioning: The process of selecting and contracting a provider to deliver a service.

Co-production: Co-production refers to a way of working, whereby everybody affected works together on an equal basis to create or change a service. The approach is built on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it.

Early Years: The first five years following a child's birth.

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment: An assessment carried out to review in detail the education, health and social care needs of a child or young person that may contribute to special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It is sometimes called a statutory assessment.

Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP): An EHCP is a legal document which describes the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that a child or young person has and the help that they will be given to meet them. It also includes the health and social care provision that is needed.

Local Offer: A website for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to find out about the range of Education, Health and Social Care services, support and activities available for them locally. Also refers more generally to the local offer of support that is available for children and young people with SEND.

Mainstream School: A school that provides education for all children, whether or not they have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Maintained School: A school funded by the local authority.

Outcome: The benefit or difference made to a child or young person due to the support given.

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA): The process of thinking about and planning for the transition of a young person from child to adulthood

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years: A guide for schools and local authorities that sets out the help they should give to children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Schools and local authorities must 'have regard' to the Code in anything concerning children with SEND.

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND): Difficulties or disabilities which require that special educational provision be made available for a child or young person to promote learning.





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