

SEND Education Strategy & Action Plan

Transformation and Sufficiency

2018 - 2021

1. Introduction

This strategy sets out the next three years development of the local authority's and the local areas delivery of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) education services, commissioning for SEND, and our SEND school place capacity. It seeks to deliver transformation and improvements in the local education sector around SEND and to build on what we do well and to ensure that we are on the road to local sufficiency and financial stability.

It continues the local authority's on-going implementation of the SEND reforms and focuses on meeting local challenges both in balancing the delivery of support services through the Education Health Care Planning (EHCP) process and ensuring sufficiency of local educational placements.

This SEND education strategy supports the delivery of key aims outlined in the Local Area's overarching SEND Strategy and its improvement plan, the local Children and Young Peoples plan, the recently implemented Behaviour Strategy and the Local Strategic Transport review.

The strategy takes into account the changes in local demography, the change in the requirement to deliver services across a 0-25 age range and the interface with health and social care. The strategy and its actions also take into account the cultural changes in the local educational landscape and the financial challenges faced by the local authority and local area settings, schools and colleges.

In particular, the strategy must ensure local delivery of services and educational placements within B&NES, and that inclusion in mainstream schools is better supported. Developing local education sufficiency in educational placements supported by services is key to the local areas sufficiency and future financial health.

2. Our Local Area - how we know what we need to do differently?

It is essential to focus on local knowledge and importantly our local population and their needs to deliver an effective strategy. The research was carried out in 2017/18 by our Public Health team to understand our SEND population, their needs and in particular our education placement capacity. This research is presented in our Joint Strategic Needs Analysis of our SEND population, which viewable via the link below;

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/special-educational-needs>

Our challenge is partly due to our growth in the number of children who have special educational needs and disabilities, the changing needs in our growing SEND population, and the current reliance on the independent school sector to support these children. This information supports recommendations in this strategy and in particular tells us where we need to focus our services and efforts. Appendix 1 illustrates this, A1A highlights our SEND growth, our change in need type in A1B and our use independent sector schools in A1C.

A SEND consultant has further supported our strategy, undertaking work to analyse our local spending patterns and carrying out a surface review of locally commissioned SEND education services and placements. We have also benchmarked ourselves against other local area spending patterns regarding SEND services and placements.

We also know from parents and carers what we need to improve, both from feedback and direct consultation, and we also have our completed Self Evaluation and SEND Strategy Improvement Plan to tell us what we need to do better, or differently. We do well in the early years in identifying and networking support for children with SEND, in later year post 16 we also have strengths. It is during the school years where we need to develop better reach and leadership to work more effectively with the sector and the networks that support children and young people with SEND.

Importantly, our local families tell us they are very satisfied with the EHCP process and our support during this. However, our Parent Support Group tell us that parents sometimes feel frustrated in ensuring that schools support those pupils with SEND that do not require an EHCP. We can do better to understand their needs and support this group of pupils. A link to our recent EHCP survey with parents is viewable below:

<https://www.rainbowresource.org.uk/pages/web-site-information/you-said-we-did>

3. Financial Stability

Our growth in SEND is mirrored in nearly all local authorities across the country. Our overspend in high needs funding is also mirrored in nearly all these local areas and is the number one priority for most local authorities in the South West. We are not alone in our financial challenge, and we can learn from the activities of other areas. Our challenge is to reduce our reliance on the

independent school sector and to develop our services to support and retain children with Autism (ASD) and Social and Emotional Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH) in local services and schools.

Appendix 2 highlights our financial challenge; A2A illustrates our growth in spending in this sector and A2B illustrates the type of SEND need we predominantly use this provision for. Placing our children and young people in the independent school sector can on average be three times more expensive than placement at a local school. While some children need this provision, it is not a sustainable pattern, and our local schools need to be supported through capital investment and services to retain these children.

Our financial challenge will not resolve itself, but neither is it unresolvable. However, it will require investment and some changes in spending and commissioning behaviour to drive change. We have to spend more in some areas and invest capital, to spend less in the future. While this remains a difficult challenge in our financial climate, the focus of this work will need to address the areas medium and long-term financial viability. The change will not be immediate and budget overspend pressures will exist for some years.

Securing capital will be a priority, and although the Free Schools programme is currently unclear in its future, some DfE funding and local borrowing can help us achieve some of our aims. Alongside this, high needs funding should be used to bolster and adapt our support services and develop more bespoke programmes, particularly for post-16 children and young people, as well as coordination of improvement in teaching practice and implementation of a graduated approach to support universal standards for SEND in all schools.

4. Our aims - what we will do differently and our planned outcomes

This strategy has three main aims;

- Improve capacity, reach and delivery of SEND education support services, based on local need
- Support inclusion improvement and sector-led co-ordination of SEND teaching and practice for all children with SEND age 0 – 25 years
- Deliver local education SEND placement sufficiency and reduce unsustainable costs driven by out of county placements and travel

We will then judge ourselves by the following outcomes:

- Implementation of a graduated approach for SEND in our all our educational sectors
- Fewer children having to travel out of the county for their education
- Increased appropriate special school placements, particularly for children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and social and emotional mental health (SEMH) difficulties
- Reduced placement breakdowns, and reduction in fixed term and permanent exclusions for children with SEND.

The strategy can only achieve its aims by changing what we do in 4 key areas:

- Local Authority SEND education services (contained within the Education Inclusion Service)
- Supporting excellence in SEND teaching and practice in education sectors
- Commissioning education & support services through the high needs budget
- Commissioning of educational placements.

A narrative and an action plan supports each key area in this strategy.

5. Our 4 Key Areas of work

Key Area 1: Local Authority SEND Education Services

- The Local Authority's Education Inclusion Service sits at the front end of delivering the Education Health Care Planning process, ensuring timely access to resources, clear application of thresholds, and clear banding descriptors for allocating SEND resources for EHCP's.
- Whilst progress in implementing the reforms has been good, and our timeliness in delivering EHCP's is much improved; we can, however, improve our feedback and interactions with partners and families. Key to this is efficient business processes and making the best use of technology to engage and interact with children young people and stakeholders.
- The service ensures that children and young people have access to suitable educational placements and support services to sustain placements. Our future priorities must focus on delivering on-going preventative support and support where placements are at risk of breaking down. The Local Authority needs to address the removal of the behaviour support service and learning support service and work differently within a changing environment of education leadership and delivery of

services; we will look to develop a targeted service around behaviour and SEMH for those mainstream placements most at risk.

- We will look to make changes to some local authority SEND services, such as the Education Psychology service, to improve the local authority's capacity to support early help for all children with SEND. The service will support the implementation of a graduated approach for SEND and an equitable training offer for all schools based on identified need. Support for early years is good, but the capacity to coordinate and support practice earlier for all children with SEND across the wider education sector is limited and needs to be improved. We will also build on our developing and good practice in preparing for adulthood in education through the continued development of the 0-25 team and our work on transitions with adult services.

Key Area 2: Teaching and Practice in Education Sectors – supporting and developing continual sector led improvements

- The local area continues to deliver SENCO networks and support practice; has a local Inclusion Charter Mark Award; and supports the SENCO Award with Bath Spa University, but the offer locally needs to be improved and better coordinated to ensure that there is a pathway of support in all settings both pre-16 and post 16 for all teachers and staff. Early years SEND practice support for SEND is strong, but local authority support for SEND children without EHCP's reduces when children enter statutory school age. We also need to achieve better local area oversight of SEND practice in all settings and can learn from other areas how this can be and implemented.
- The Local Authority can no longer be the direct provider to deliver continued support and professional development across teaching and practice to support SEND. It does, however, need to consider what it does next and the role of teaching schools, its areas of strength and what it can do differently to enable the sector to work together. Key to this will be the implementation of a sector-led graduated approach to SEND for all pupils
- We also know that schools face on-going challenges with supporting pupils with SEMH and ASD; in particular, our primary settings need additional support and advice. We need to address the capacity to coordinate, innovate and support the local area better in the offer from the local authorities remaining education services.
- Exclusions in Bath and North East Somerset have increased over the last two years, and this includes an increase in children with SEND. This trend is a national concern. We have increased our capacity in alternative provision to offer more preventative placements. However, more work needs to be done to utilise these placements in a preventative way. We will look to work with our schools via the School Standards Board to address this issue of rising exclusions. We also recognise that we need more local SEMH special school placements for some children, particularly in primary, and we are developing

this capacity. We have supported a mainstream school to develop a SEMH resource base; alongside this we will develop a targeted service from within the local authority to support EHCP school placements at risk due to behaviour.

Key Area 3: Commissioning Services through the High Needs Budget.

- The high needs budget commissions a range of services, which includes, Sensory Support, ASD Outreach, Alternative Provision and Early Years SEND Support. While local services are respected, the contracts need to be re-designed to respond to current and future need and pressures. We also have areas of imbalance and emerging need that needs to be addressed more acutely through efficient commissioning.
- The SEND team will need to commission internally and externally in what is a changing market of traded and private services, particularly to support pupils with SEMH and ASD. We will look to develop more proactive services and approaches to support complex placements and schools with high levels of SEND pupils.
- Commissioning capacity will also be addressed, to ensure oversight of the whole SEND system when commissioning priorities in this strategy. The capacity will be delivered in the context of the changing structure of the integrated commissioning arrangements of the local authority and the clinical commissioning group (CCG); this should provide opportunities for greater join up with health and social care commissioning and transition into adult services.

Key Area 4: Sufficiency of Local Educational SEND Placements

- The local area has a range of good or outstanding special schools. Our schools are now full each year and ensuring the sufficiency of placements is no longer possible. We will seek to encourage inclusion in a mainstream school where possible. However, we do have some gaps/capacity issues in our local provision that we need to address. Especially key is addressing a provision gap for pupils with ASD and SEMH. We will also address our limited placement provision for children with SEMH.
- Increasing special school places is important. However, we must seek to find opportunities to promote inclusion in mainstream schools and we will look to direct capital towards those schools that have resource bases and wish to expand and to support schools wishing to develop resource bases as part of their school offer.
- Our good post 16 offer also needs to be improved; we will deliver additional specialist local placement provision at this age to focus on life skills, independence, training, and employability. Equally important is the development of post 16 provision for children in specific circumstances, such as in the Youth Justice System, LAC or high risk of NEET. We need a different more be-spoke post 16 offer for these children, which for some children will need to start earlier in key stage 4.

- We have already addressed capacity in alternative provision through an increase in local spaces; the re-commissioning of these services is captured in the corresponding action plan, including a recommissioning of education provision for children medically unfit for school. We will complement our additional capacity by working closely with local colleges to develop a pre-16 offer for those children whose mainstream education placements is not suitable. However, a key challenge for the local area is to provide a permanent, fit for purpose, alternative provision building for some of our most vulnerable pupils.
- The implementation of these changes will help the local area move away from the financially unhealthy use of out of county provision and subsequent high transport costs. Locally delivered provision and services will also support the transition into adult services for some children and young people and will start pathways that are financially sustainable in later life. Key to our capital investments will also be the re-commissioning of support services to develop local pathways for specific groups of children to ensure young people are in suitable educational placements from the earliest opportunity.
- Our capital plans to provide additional SEND school placements are evolving continually. Latest updates can be found through this [link](#) which will take you through to our SEND Capital Briefing Document.

6. Delivery of the Strategy

This strategy is not a beginning, many of these changes and actions are already underway and delivering improvements. It is instead a culmination of existing and new work streams that will define our actions over the next three years. In uncertain times pragmatism rules and our plans and aims may change or be adapted, but our ambition to improve its outcomes should remain consistent.

The following four action plans are designed to drive the activity to deliver the wide range of change and transformation needed to achieve our strategic aims in our four main areas of work. The actions will be driven internally by our Education Inclusion Service and commissioning team, but require successful partnerships and support from all our settings and services.

Action Plan Key Area 1: Local Authority SEND Education services

Action	Narrative	Timescale	Impact	Status
Improve the Timeliness of EHCP plans	LA statutory timescale is to deliver EHCP's within 20 weeks. We will continue to maintain our current rate of doing this 93% of the time. This is above the national average performance of 60%	April 2018	Children & Young people receive access to resources in a timely way	Completed
0-25 SEND Thresholds for EHCP's	Threshold guidance defines eligibility. The LA will consult on and deliver clear application of thresholds across all age ranges.	Jan 2018	The Local Area can understand the thresholds for support at all age ranges	Completed
Introduce new SEND Bandings for allocation of finance for EHCP's	Bandings are clearly written and will inform schools how we will provide funding based on the individual needs of children and young people.	Sept 2019	Financial resources are allocated accurately based on the assessed level of need	Ongoing
Improve use of Technology internally to improve data & contact with families.	We will replace back office/ introduce front facing education systems to improve recording & communication with families	Dec 2018	We will accurately capture SEND need & communicate better with CYP, families & stakeholders, thereby reducing administration time.	Completed
Implement SEND Transport Policy & SEND Transport	Implement a new more flexible SEND Travel Policy and Officers to support efficiencies and choice	April 2018	Parents and Carers have greater choice over transport to school. Local Authority avoids preventable spend.	Completed
Restructure SEND service to deliver a 0-25 Service	Develop a SEND Team that oversees all age range SEND decisions and allocation of finance, including early years and preparing for adulthood co-ordination	April 2018	All decision making and oversight for EHCP is within the same team focusing across the age range 0-25 from best start to preparing for adulthood.	Completed
SEND graduated approach for all settings and schools.	Implement, monitor & support a graduated approach for all settings to accurately describe the expectations of delivery of education & support for children with SEND	Sept 2019	All settings & parent/carers understand the expectation of providing a graduated approach to high-quality teaching for children with SEND	Ongoing
Education Psychology Service	We will remodel our EP service to see that effectively delivers an enhanced statutory service as a priority &	Sept 2018	EP time is effectively managed to support internal and external needs within the local	Completed

	offers an equitable training offer for all.		area	
Capacity to support the graduated approach, SEND improvement visits	We will improve our capacity to deliver support and coordinate the graduated approach and support the development of local SEND improvement visits	Sept 2019	The LA will have implemented a graduated approach to support teaching and practice that for all children with SEND	Ongoing

Action Plan Key Area 2: Teaching and Practice in Education Sectors – developing and supporting continual sector led improvements

Action	Narrative	Timescale	Impact	Status
Roll out a graduated approach for SEND in all settings	The local area will have a clear understanding of expectations for all education settings regarding the provision for special educational needs and disability (SEND) 0-25 years at universal and targeted levels	Sept 2019	SEND will be clearly defined at all stages of education for parents, carers young people and schools.	Ongoing
Local area SEND school improvement visits	We will create the capacity to support our local graduated approach, supporting good inclusive practice and benchmark our journey. We will support this through a rolling program of local SEND improvement visits for schools	Sept 2019	Support and challenge will exist for schools and settings to develop ongoing inclusive practice. Schools will know what they need to do to improve and we develop strategic oversight of SEND practice in schools.	Ongoing
Continue to support the development of SENCO networks & support the SENCO Award	We will continue to work and identify capacity to work with the education sector to support SENCO networks and to support Bath Spa University SENCO award	Sept 2020	SENCO's will continue to have networks to develop practice and support. The LA will have a forum to share developments & practice and schools will have access to SENCO accreditation.	Ongoing
Supporting the work of our local teaching schools & college	We will work with our local teaching schools & college to support and develop training and innovation to drive sector improvements and innovation	Sept 2020	Teaching Schools & college will consider and deliver an offer to improvements in SEND Teaching and Practice	Ongoing
Improving attainment and progress for children with SEND in our Schools	We will work with our local school improvement strategy to drive improvements in attainment and performance for all children with SEND	April 2020	Children with SEND will have year on year improvements in their attainment and performance at school	Ongoing
Post 16 practice & learning from others	We will work with our local college and seek to learn from best practice in other areas to ensure our post 16 offer for children and young people with SEND supports further education and training.	April 2019	Our post 16 provision will be inclusive and supportive to ensure children have appropriate access to FE and training support better employability outcomes	Ongoing

Tackling rising exclusions	Exclusions for children with SEND and all children have increased. We will work with our schools standards board to address this issue and find ways to work more preventatively. Alongside this, we will develop a targeted service for children with EHCP's and issue SEND exclusions guidance for all schools	Sept 2021	Schools will have clear guidance on exclusion processes for EHCP children and have access to additional support to prevent exclusion	Ongoing
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Action Plan Key Area 3: Commissioning Services through the High Needs Budget.

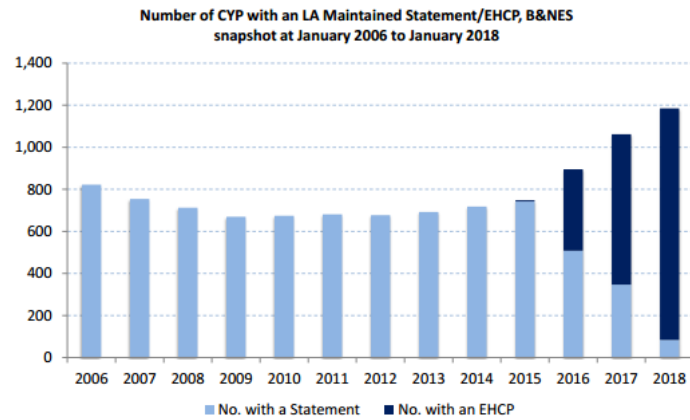
Action	Narrative	Timescale	Impact	Status
Commissioning & contract Capacity	We will create additional capacity within our preventative services commissioning team to deliver commissioning intentions and support our aims	Sept 2019	SEND Commissioned services will be re-commissioned and services will have more oversight and strategic direction	Ongoing
0-25 SEND Team commissioning	We will look to re-align budgets to support capacity of the 0-25 SEND team to commission additional EP time and behavior support to placements at risk	Sept 2019	The SEND team will be able to react better to schools needing additional support to prevent placement breakdown	Ongoing
ASD Support Service	We will re-commission our ASD outreach service to be able to respond to our growing population and develop more focus on those children with more complex needs	Sept 2020	Children with complex ASD will be supported to sustain school placements and schools will develop Autism Strategies & autism champions	Ongoing
Sensory Support Service	We will deliver improvements from a recent local evaluation and a new contract for our shared service for children with sensory support needs	April 2020	The sensory support service will be more responsive to local area needs and improvements	Ongoing
Early years Support	We will re-commission our Bath Opportunity Play group contract and our nurture outreach service	Sept 2018	Children with SEND in the early years will have access to specialist nursery provision and evidence-based practice to support early years development	Completed

Action Plan Key Area 4: Sufficiency of Local Educational SEND Placements

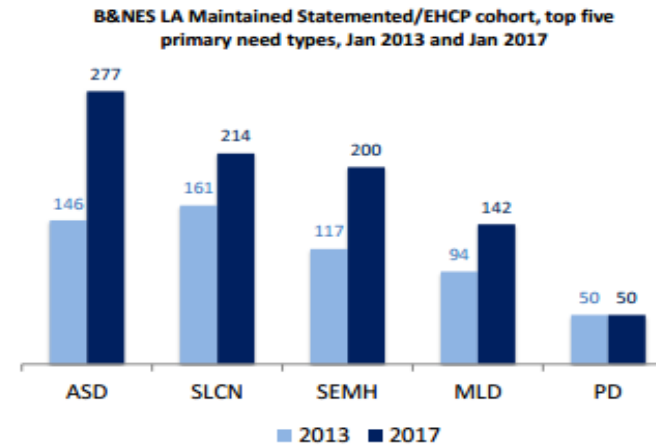
Action	Narrative & Progress	Timescale	Impact	Status
Expansions of SEMH provision	We will expand our provision at Aspire Special school for children with SEMH. OFSTED rated the school 'Good' and it is well regarded by local families	Sept 2019	We will create 34 additional places, with more at the primary level to support children at an earlier stage	Ongoing
Post 16 Provision	We will work with Bath College to develop post 16 provision including residential places for children with SEND that focuses on education, life skills, and employability	Dec 2018	We will deliver 54 additional post 16 places within the local area	Completed
Pre 16 College options & provision children with specific needs	We will enable Bath College and Schools to work together to develop a pre-16 offer for young people who need an alternative offer and courses for children with high support needs	April 2019	Children and young people will have access to pre-16 college provision where appropriate. More flexible courses will support our children who at risk of becoming NEET	Ongoing
Supporting Mainstream Provision	We will support the development of resource bases in our mainstream schools, particularly for children with ASD	Sept 2021	We will have a broader range of resource bases to support our children with SEND in our Mainstream Schools	Ongoing
Increasing Special School capacity	We will look to develop additional Special School Provision within B&NES, particularly for children with ASD and SEMH	Sept 2021	Children with ASD and SEMH will have access to local education provision and services without having to travel long distances	Ongoing
Alternative Provision	We will re-contract our Alternative Provision providers for our children who are PEX and our HERS service for children medically unfit for school.	Sept 2018	Good or outstanding providers will register & deliver AP services, and we will deliver improvements in outcomes and re-integration	Completed
Alternative Provision	The local area currently delivers alternative provision at some temporary sites. We will identify a fit for purpose permanent site for AP.	Sept 2021	We deliver Our Alternative Provision from a high-quality educational site that values some of the most vulnerable pupils in B&NES	Ongoing

Appendix 1

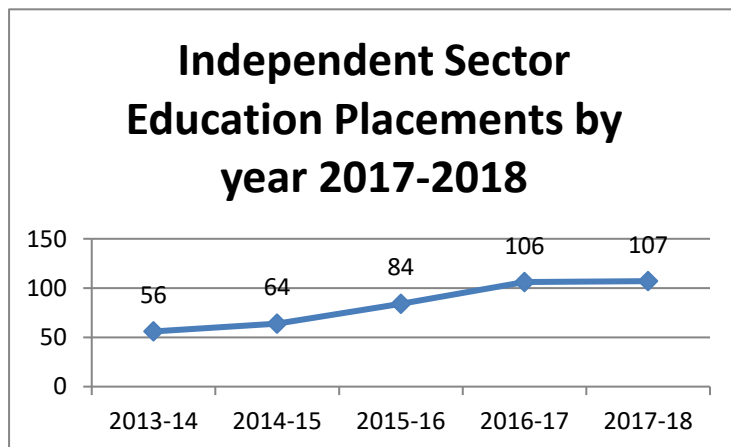
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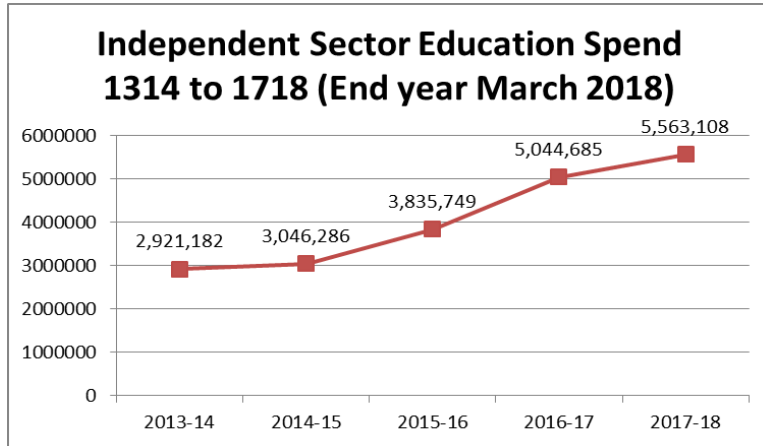


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Appendix 2

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