

Liverpool Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2023-2026





Foreword

We are delighted to present our Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) strategy for 2023-2026, which has been developed in collaboration with parents and carers, children and young people, and our valued partners. We are grateful for your input, which has helped shape the strategic direction for the next 3 years.

The SEND strategy builds on the successes of the previous version; however, we recognise that there is still much work to be done to ensure that we meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. To make it easier for our partners and stakeholders to understand and engage with our plans, this strategy is shorter and more focused than our previous one.

The strategy is based on a comprehensive understanding of the local SEND landscape, including the latest SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and findings from Ofsted and CQC's revisit inspection in May 2022. We have also conducted a review of therapies to ensure that we are providing the best possible support.

Every child deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential and have a childhood that prepares them for a fulfilling adulthood. For children and young people with SEND, this is particularly important. We recognise that success depends on effective communication and collaboration between all partners, including parents, carers, children and young people, education settings, social care services and health services. This requires a renewed commitment from those in leadership positions across the city. We need to be clear about our respective roles and responsibilities and be better at supporting and challenging each other. Co-production must become "business as usual" and, importantly, we need to listen and respond more effectively to families, ensuring they receive the right support in the right way, at the right time.

We look forward to working with you all in the months and years ahead to deliver our ambitions for children and young people with SEND in Liverpool.



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Underpinning Principles

The SEND strategy for 2023-2026 remains founded upon the Section 19 principles of the Children and Families Act 2014. They require local authorities to have regard to the views, wishes, and feelings of the children, young people, and their parents; the importance of their participation in decision-making; and the need to support children and young people to achieve their best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

These principles are designed to encourage:

- the early identification of needs and early intervention to support them;
- greater choice and control over support;
- collaboration between education, health, and social care services;
- high quality provision;
- a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning; and,
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

Additionally, the partnership recognises the rights of children stated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Article 23(1) of the UNCRC provides that children with mental or physical disabilities should “enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure

dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community.” Article 24 of the UNCRPD states that “parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to:

- The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity.
- The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential.
- Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.”

Building upon this foundation, the strategy outlines a fresh set of priorities that will effectively guide our collective efforts over the next three years.

Executive Summary

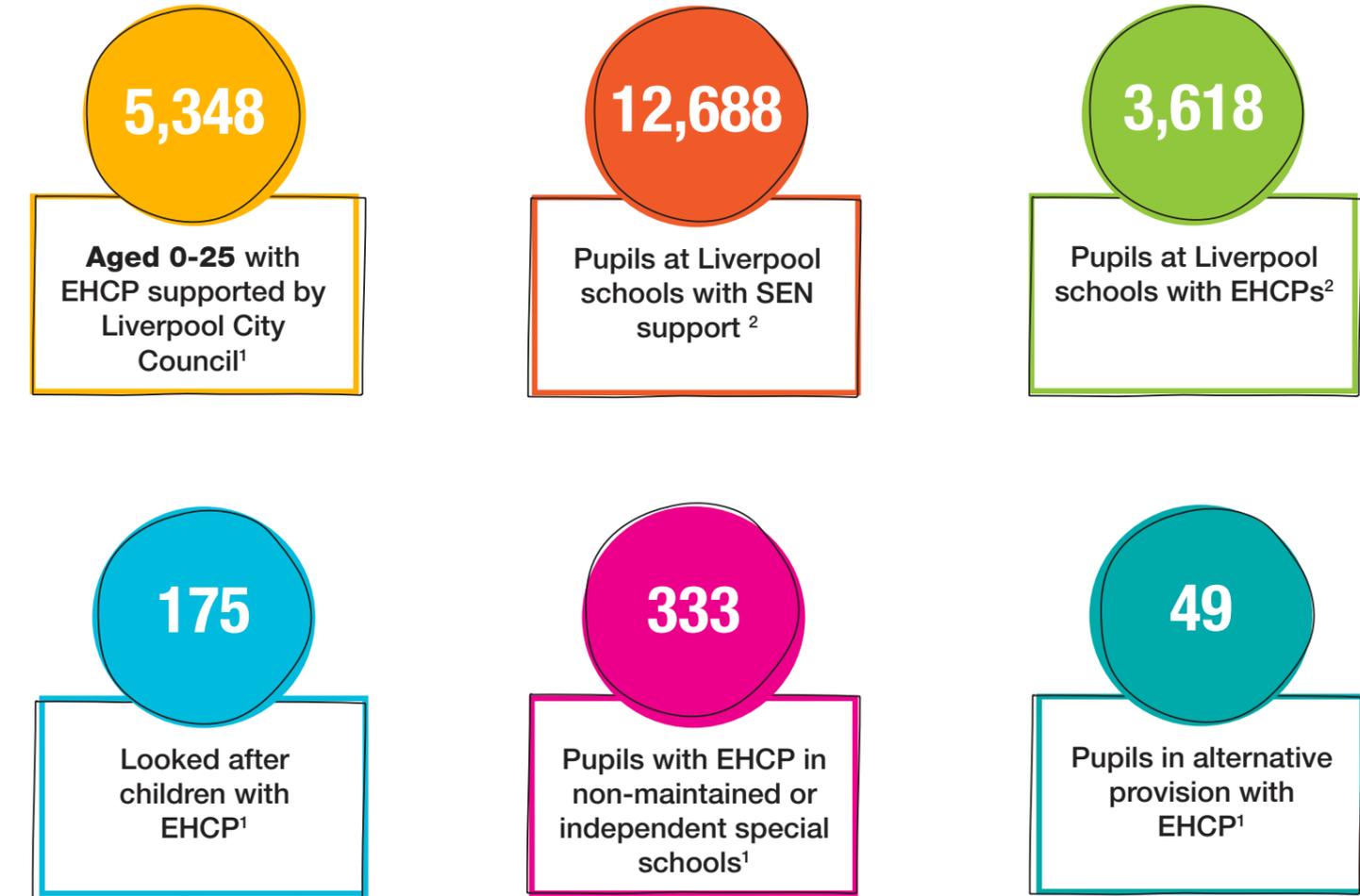
The partnership remains committed to our vision to 'provide the right support, in the right way, at the right time, to achieve the best possible outcomes for the children and young people with SEND'.

In pursuit of this aspiration, we have co-produced five priority areas.

Our five priority areas are:



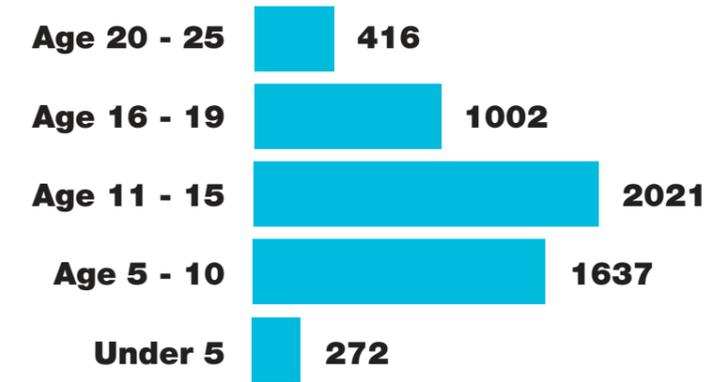
Local Context



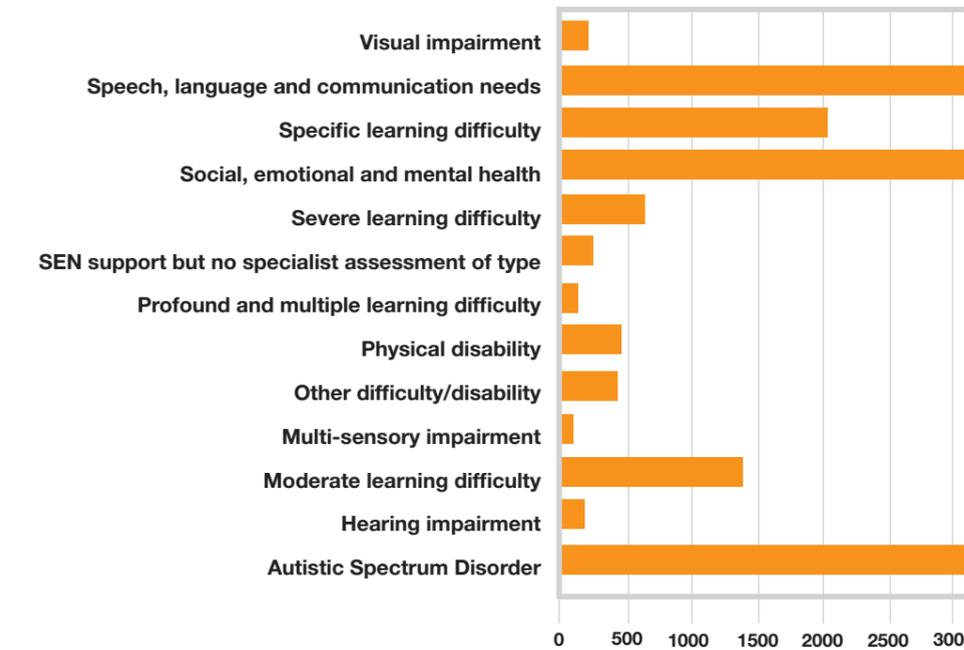
1. Liverpool City Council, June 2023
 2. DfE SEN2 and School Census data, January 2023

Local Context

EHCPs by age ¹



EHCP and SEN support pupils by need ²



1. Liverpool City Council, June 2023
 2. National Statistics, Special educational needs in England, June 2023

How the Strategy was Developed

The SEND strategy was developed through a collaborative and consultative process, drawing on a range of different sources of expertise and perspectives. The following are some of the ways in which the strategy was developed:

Stakeholder engagement:

The development of the SEND strategy involved engagement with a range of stakeholders including children and young people with SEND, their families, education providers, health services, and community organisations. Importantly, families who attended local SEND events were given the opportunity to vote for the priorities which meant the most to them. The feedback received from families was a key factor in determining the five priority areas outlined in the SEND strategy.

Research and evidence:

The development of the SEND strategy was informed by a range of research and evidence-based approaches. This included the Liverpool SEND joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) 2019, the JSNA post COVID addendum 2022, a review of local and national policy, including the Department for Education's (DfE) SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (2023), as well as an analysis of local SEND data.

Co-production:

The development of the SEND strategy was characterised by a strong emphasis on co-production, which involved working in partnership with Liverpool's parent carer forum and colleagues across the SEND Partnership.



Our Strategic Priorities:

1. MEETING SOCIAL CARE NEEDS

Ensuring that children and young people with SEND and their families have access to high-quality early help and social care support is crucial to enable them to lead fulfilling lives and reach their full potential. Children with SEND are children first and foremost, and they deserve to have the same opportunities and experiences as their peers. Furthermore, the law states that disabled children are children in need. As such, they may require assessments and provision to access services and their local community. Families told us they wanted better access to a broader range of services and support. Therefore, our priority is to meet the social care needs of children and young people with SEND and their families.

We will:

- embed the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) role;
- improve the timeliness and quality of EHC needs assessment advices;
- give better support through personalisation;
- broaden short break provision; and,
- improve the timeliness of Initial Health Assessments for children entering care.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- An increased proportion of children and young people with SEND reporting that their needs are being met.
- More opportunities and reduced waiting times for short breaks.
- Social care advice for EHC needs assessments will be returned within 6 weeks.
- All Initial Health Assessments for Children in Care will be completed within 20 days.
- An increased number and proportion of personal budgets.

2. EARLY IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION

The partnership has taken on board feedback from parents who have expressed a desire for prompt and effective interventions for their children at the earliest stage. To this end, we must have arrangements in place to identify SEND early and accurately.

We will:

- create and implement an Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision handbook;
- audit the impact Graduated Approach Handbook, then revise and re-issue it;
- increase the number of enhanced provision places in nursery schools;
- create more Continuing Professional Development opportunities across the partnership;
- improve transitions between school phases, including the development of a transition toolkit; and,
- further develop the early identification process of under 5s.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- An increase in the timeliness of identification of children under 5 identified who have SEN.
- Demonstrable progress will be evidenced from audits of SEN support plans.
- More children's SEND needs will be met within their local community schools.
- School SEND Information Reports will reflect best practice based on Liverpool's Graduated Approach document.

3. PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

The transition from childhood to adulthood can be a challenging time for any young person, but for those with SEND, the process can be particularly daunting. Parents have highlighted the need for more support and resources to be directed towards developing life skills, independent living skills, and transition planning. Co-production discussions emphasised the importance of creating pathways for our young people to access education and employment opportunities, breaking down barriers to participation in the workplace.

We will:

- co-produce a Preparation for Adulthood development plan with children and young people and their families;
- improve the pathway to employment and lifelong learning opportunities;
- ensure more young people are in education, employment, or training (EET), can live independently and manage their own health needs;
- promote awareness of community engagement through the Local Offer; and,
- improve transition for children and young people with SEND into further and higher education, adult health services and adult social care.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- An increased number of supported internships.
- An increased rate of supported interns will have moved into employment.
- Fewer children & young people with SEND will be NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- An increased proportion of young people with SEND living independently.
- The Local Offer will better reflect community opportunities.
- Children and young people with SEND, along with their families, will express satisfaction with the seamless transition between different phases across education, health, and social care.

4. SEND SUFFICIENCY PLANNING

Having the right educational placement is key for supporting children and young people to achieve their potential and long-term aspirations. SEND sufficiency planning will ensure that there are enough places in mainstream and special educational settings for those with EHCPs. Over the last few years, we have seen a year-on-year increase in the number of EHCPs by approximately 25%. Furthermore, the levels of complex needs have increased, which will be factored into our planning. In addition to the 240 extra places made in the 22/23 year, we will continue to develop capacity within the city so children and young people with SEND can remain within their local community for their education.

We will:

- conduct a needs assessment to identify the number and type of SEND places required for future planning;
- produce a sufficiency strategy outlining our plans;
- improve quality assurance systems, which robustly ensure provision for SEND learners is of a consistently high standard;
- increase the knowledge and skills in mainstream education settings, enabling children and young people to be supported to remain in mainstream, when appropriate; and
- enhance information on the Local Offer so it is clear what provision is available.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- Increased capacity in the mainstream schools, including more places for children within SEN units and resourced provision.
- Provision will exist to meet the increasing need for support for girls with SEMH (social, emotional and mental health) needs.
- More children will be educated in Liverpool maintained special schools, avoiding the use of out of area placements.

5. DEVELOPING THE HEALTH AND THERAPY OFFER

Organisations within the Liverpool SEND Partnership have an important role to play by working together in the early identification, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of children and young people with long term conditions and disabilities. Our Health Offer will ensure that children and young people are provided with support in a timely way that delivers improved outcomes for individual children and young people, their families, and carers.

We will:

- improve access to Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy;
- work collaboratively with health providers to ensure a positive experience for children and young people with SEND by embedding co-production and increasing awareness;
- ensure good quality advice from all health providers to inform the EHCP processes;
- improve access to ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) diagnostic and support service, particularly for those aged 18-25;
- improve the proportion of young people with SEND who receive an annual learning disabilities (LD) health check, including a health action plan;

- ensure all mental health practitioners understand their responsibilities for children and young people with SEND and have the relevant skills to support them;
- give better support through personalisation; and,
- improve the timeliness of Initial Health Assessments for children entering care.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- Family satisfaction: When surveyed, both children and young people and their families and carers will show increased satisfaction with the delivery of therapeutic interventions.
- Reduced waiting times: Appointments will be timelier as measured by the performance indicators.
- All Initial Health Assessments for Children in Care will be completed within 20 days.
- An increased proportion of personal health budgets where this is an assessed need.
- Health outcomes will be met: Children and young people meet their agreed health goals, and carers and the children and young people themselves will report positively about their experiences of therapeutic support.

Governance

Effective governance is critical to the success of our SEND strategy. To ensure strong governance, accountability, and challenge, we have established a robust oversight structure through the SEND Strategic Partnership Board (SENDPB). The board comprises representatives from various organisations, including NHS Cheshire and Merseyside (Liverpool Place), Liverpool City Council, schools, and the parent/carer forum. It is co-chaired by the Associate Director of Quality and Safety Improvement (NHS Cheshire and Merseyside), and the Deputy Director of Children's Services & Director of Education (Liverpool City Council). This board provides oversight, strategic direction, and scrutiny to the delivery of the strategy.

The SEND Joint Commissioning Board (JCB) provides a strategic forum for the parent carer forum and key partners to jointly plan and commission services within the remit of Liverpool City Council and NHS Cheshire and Merseyside (Liverpool Place).

The SEND Performance and Compliance Group (PCG) monitors the performance of relevant health and local authority services and escalates risks to the SENDPB.

Lastly, to operationalise the strategy, we have established thematic groups responsible for the implementation of specific priorities. These groups will work together to ensure that actions and resources are directed towards achieving the set goals.



