# SEND & Inclusion Strategy

Supporting children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who may need additional support

2023-2027

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## Executive summary

Our borough is a place that puts residents first and is committed to making every service a good service. This strategy is about how we do that for children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities and those who may require additional support.

There is an Oldham commitment to constantly work with residents, and this starts with children, young people and their parents/carer, who are equal partners.

Together, we want to improve our performance and create a truly inclusive Oldham. Local area statutory partners; Oldham Council and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership; are also committed to working in collaboration with partners. This includes children, young people, parents/carers, childminders, early years education settings, schools, post 16 education settings and the voluntary sector.

We all have an important role in working with our partners and stakeholders across the organisational, private, public, voluntary and community sectors to achieve our vision and long-term ambitions. By 2027, we want all children and young people to experience and feel that they are heard and are included.

Over the last few years, we have been making progress through our SEND Improvement Programme. We have reflected the progress of this and the difference it has made so far in our improvement journey.

As a partnership, we are committed to ensuring that support and provision for children and young people continually improves and that we build the trust and confidence of children, young people and parents/carers in Oldham's provision and services across education, health and care 0-25.

As a local area, we are ambitious for all our children and young people, which is why we have high expectations of our childminders, early years' settings, schools, colleges and support services. We want all children and young people in Oldham to have a great start and skills for life in preparation for their continued progress to becoming happy and productive young adults.

Just as importantly, we want all young people to have access to opportunities for training, education, volunteering, employment and apprenticeships to help them gain the skills they need to become independent participants in their local community.

As a local area, we have a strong focus on disadvantage and want to help everyone to access their right to an education, be included and achieve their full potential. We take a residents first approach to ensure that children, young people and parents/carers experiences are fully embedded and influence how we evolve.

Our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme underpins our SEND & Inclusion Strategy and provides an overview of current activities to be undertaken to achieve improvements in provision and services across the local area.

Our actions have been specifically identified to improve outcomes for children and young people so that they have the best possible experiences and opportunities to equip them for their future.

We sincerely thank everyone who has invested their time and effort to create our SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

## Guiding principles and values

As a local area, we strive for constant improvement through shared responsibility, knowledge about ourselves and commitment to achieve the best outcomes for all our children and young people. Our work is targeted towards improved early identification of need, effective targeting of support, services and provision across education, health and care.

Being knowledge rich will ensure our work responds to the needs of the local area, is evidence based, and takes responsibility for the commitments we make to our children and young people. We will do that in a responsible way through directing our resources to the areas that have the most impact and where children and young people are most at risk of poor outcomes.

When we talk about children and young people with SEND, we include those who are vulnerable for many different reasons and who are likely to need support from multiple services during their life. Many children and young people who have SEND will have lives that have been made more complex by all the different, agencies, policy and legislation that shape the support they might need.

Services may include those from education, health and care, including specialist teachers, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), Children with Disabilities and other social care teams, health services and specialist education support, to name but a few.

Other people around the child or young person, including their families, may also have their own support needs and this is when Early Help services may be required. Throughout all of this, it is vitally important that the voice of the child, young person and their family are kept at the heart of decision making with choice and control being paramount.

Our approach is grounded in what works best to improve outcomes for children and young people so that they can have the best future possible and thrive as part of our local community.

This means being efficient and prioritising what we know we need to focus on to provide the right level of support through education, health and care. This is encompassed in the SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, which underpins the commitments we are making through the SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027.

Oldham's vision for all our children and young people is that they achieve well in their early years, at school, and in further education so that they can find employment, are happy, healthy and fulfilled, and have choice and control over their lives. We believe that all children and young people should be able to:

- Be educated and included in the community where they live.
- Have friendships, relationships and are part of their community.
- Be as independent as possible and do it for themselves.
- Access opportunities that prepare them to be successful in life, learning, volunteering and work.
- Access appropriate high-quality support to build their emotional resilience and improve their positive health and wellbeing.
- Feel, safe and happy when taking part in all the opportunities available to all.
- Feel listened to and actively involved in influencing decisions that affect their lives and communities.
- Feel proud and be ready for life.

## Strategic priorities

| SEND & Inclusion Strategy | Local area priorities | Young people's priorities | Parents/carers priorities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Priority 1: Early identification and SEN support | A great start and skills for life | Being and feeling safe | Early years<br>SEN support and the graduated response |
| Priority 2: Health and wellbeing | Healthy, safe and well supported residents | Positive health and wellbeing | Mental health and wellbeing<br>Health services |
| Priority 3: Community and social inclusion | A clean and green future | Friends, relationships and community | Accessing your community<br>Short breaks and social activities |
| Priority 4: Joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision | Quality homes for everyone | Doing it for ourselves | Independent Living<br>EHCPs and annual reviews<br>Social care |
| Priority 5: Preparing for adulthood | Better jobs and dynamic businesses | Employment and volunteering | Employment and training<br>Transitions including post-16<br>Home to school transport |
| Priority 6a: Communication and interaction: autism | Cross council priorities | Cross council priorities | Included in all the priorities above |
| Priority 6b: Communication and interaction: SLCN | Cross council priorities | Cross council priorities | Included in all the priorities above |
| Infrastructure 1: Engagement, participation and coproduction: working in partnership with children, young people, parent/carers and partners, stakeholders | | | |
| Infrastructure 2: Quality assurance: keeping support and provision under review, including services, settings and individual provision made via EHCPs | | | |
| Infrastructure 3: Local offer: ensuring that what we say about the local area is of high quality, easy to navigate and performs well | | | |
| Infrastructure 4: Sustainability: assuring value for money to achieve financial balance and enable the best use of resources to meet need in the local area | | | |
| Infrastructure 4: Workforce development: creating an inclusive local area through a highly skilled workforce | | | |

## Governance structure

| Key to governance levels | |
|---|---|
| Organisation level | |
| Executive decision making | |
| Oversight of performance | |
| Priority steering groups | |
| Partners/stakeholders | |

The improvements we have identified in the SEND & Inclusion Strategy are underpinned by the wider SEND Improvement Programme. Implementation of the programme will be governed by the system-wide SEND Partnership Board and progress will be monitored and reported to Cabinet, Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership Governing Body and Oldham education settings (inclusive of early years, schools and colleges) as part of the ongoing cycle of reporting.

Work will be done through the priority workstreams and subgroups, which include representation from education, health and care, 0-25, children and young people and parents/carers.

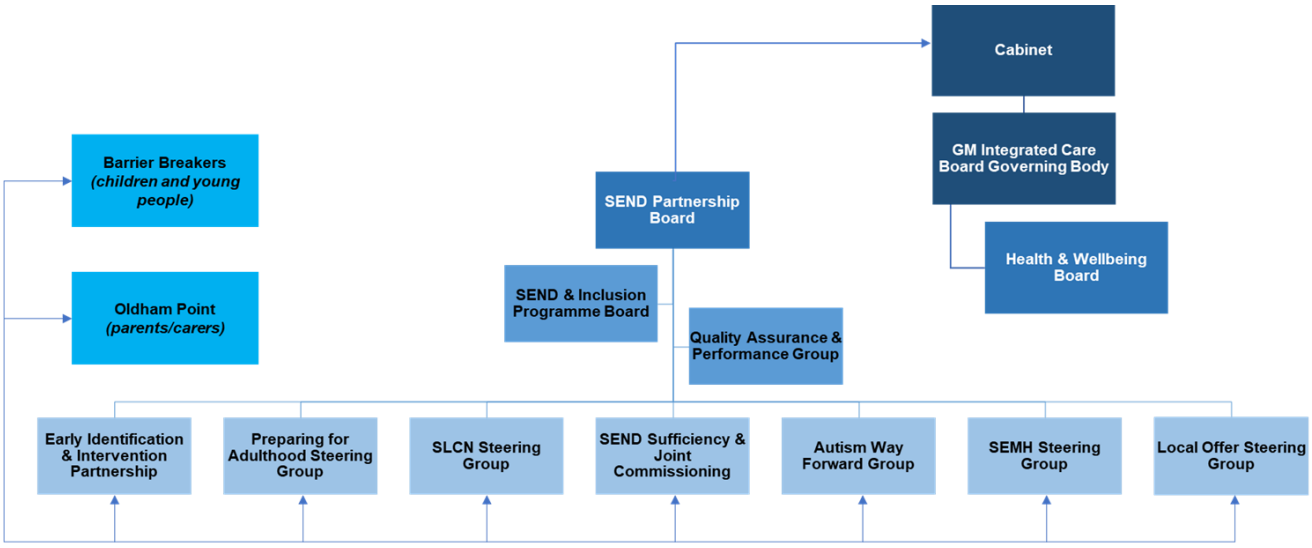
All strategic groups are responsible for parts of the overall SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme. Priority workstreams and subgroups meet every half term and report up to the SEND Partnership Board.

There is regular reporting, and this includes narrative about progress, performance data and financial information so that we know how successful we are.

We recognise it is important to be clear about who has responsibility and accountability for delivery of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy at the strategic and organisation level. Roles of key accountable officers and partners are included in our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme so that it is plain who is accountable for ensuring the delivery of aspects of the strategy.

We feel strongly that there is shared responsibility and accountability, with all partners, and we want to improve transparency of that through more regular reporting on the local offer.

Ultimately, the benefit of all our work will be felt in the way our children and young people have their needs identified and met across education, health and care, covering the 0-25 age range and in how they are enabled to achieve the best outcomes possible.



## What success looks like and how it will be measured

We have included success criteria and a performance data in our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme, which will show where we were at the beginning of the strategy and how these change over time, to where we want to be.

The overall performance of the local area is measured against national key performance indicators, compared with local, regional and our statistical neighbours (the local areas that are most like us).

The data we use includes *performance data*; things we can measure in numbers or percentages, and *perceptive data*; things we can measure by assessing where we are and how things have improved, according to our partners and stakeholders. We will be reporting our progress regularly, so that we are transparent about what we achieve.

To provide oversight, progress, highlights and challenges will be reported at SEND Partnership Board and in reports to Cabinet throughout the life of the strategy. This will be discussed and monitored at all strategic meetings, workstreams and subgroups and progress against each action will be assessed.

## Priority 1 Early identification and SEN support

**Headline**

The rationale for early identification of potential SEND is that the right provision and intervention can be put in place before gaps in progress and development widen.

Early identification is not restricted to the early years but to any age when concerns might be noticed. We recognise that early and accurate identification of SEND are prerequisites for ensuring effective SEND provision is put into place across the local area.

**What we will do**

- Review the quality and capacity of the centrally based SEND & Inclusion Service and strengthen the core offer to education settings by providing a clear offer of targeted support for inclusion, regardless of whether there is an education, health and care plan (EHCP) in place.
- Develop an information pack on SEND in the early stages, including a range of information sheets, leaflets and a main poster on SEND to be in education settings and community spaces.
- Ensure that inclusion support is part of a broader, holistic and joined-up offer of across education, health and care.
- Develop a simplified SEN support toolkit of resources that works alongside the graduated response toolkit.
- Work with mainstream education settings to support how they can meet the needs of children and young people at the SEN support and the EHCP level through awareness raising and training at all levels.

**Because of what we do**

- Children and young people at SEN support level will benefit from having their needs identified and met through robust early identification and intervention in education settings.
- Continuing professional development will increase the knowledge and skills in mainstream education settings, enabling children and young people to be identified and supported at an earlier stage.
- Education settings will have more access to support, including through early years sector support and for whole school SEND and inclusion development.
- There will be a ***consistent*** approach to early identification across the system, and this will lead to reduced suspensions and exclusions and more children and young people engaging in education.
- There will be assurance for parents/carers that there is fair access to placements in the early years and a full education offer through school and further education and they are not being encouraged to electively home educate their child.
- The Education Inclusion Service will better reflect the needs of the local area.

## Priority 2 Positive health and wellbeing

### Headline

We see positive health and wellbeing as one of the cornerstones of building an effective life and this starts from birth. As a local area, we take a coordinated and evidence-informed approach to mental health and wellbeing and work in collaboration across education, health and care from the earliest years.

Education settings, along with local area partners, have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, by developing approaches tailored to their needs.

### What we will do

- Focus on investing in earlier intervention and prevention; and exploring how specialist support can be delivered differently.
- Ensure joint commissioning delivers better, joined-up support by planning pathways of support for specific types of needs, for example autism.
- Put in place effective governance structures and processes to ensure strategic decisions can be taken swiftly and effectively, whatever the make-up of council and the Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership.
- Signpost parents/carers to the right support for their own health and wellbeing.
- Create more accessible information, advice and support for young people about the things that are important to them, including sex and relationship education.
- Work with GPs to ensure SEND is considered in the course of their work with children, young people and parents/carers.
- Ensure that there is an effective offer for children and young people who require alternative provision to be put in place because of mental health related difficulties.

### Because of what we do

- Parents/carers will know where to get the correct information and advice to support their health needs at the earliest point of time.
- Children and young people will benefit from the people who care for them feeling supported to be as healthy as they can be.
- Children, young people, parents/carers and education settings will have the information they need to know where to get the right support for their mental health needs.
- Parents/carers will have a better understanding of what GPs can offer and will be able to take advantage of what's available, from universal provision to more focused and targeted services, for the right needs and at the right time.

## Priority 3 Community and social inclusion

**Headline**

Friendships, relationships and understanding yourself and who you want to be is a big part of becoming an adult and this starts from the earliest years. As well as understanding what a good relationship or friendship is, finding out more about sexual health, body image and emotions is also important to get around and be included in the local and wider community.

We want to ensure the best experience of community and social inclusion, from the earliest age, so that children and young people are empowered to become as independent, self-reliant and confident as possible, whether this means building and maintaining friendships, joining local groups, taking part in council run activities or accessing services.

**What we will do**

- Ensure a stronger support network and opportunities for young people who are in the 18 to 25 age phase so that social opportunities don't just stop.
- Work with the voluntary sector to explore what else can be provided in the local community to support community inclusion.
- Advise clubs and providers for activities that are available for everyone, really are available for everyone, regardless of their support needs. This might mean training, support and advice for lots of organisations who provide social and community activities.
- Work in collaboration with partners and stakeholders to provide more information about pathways into sports and afterschool clubs for children and young people who have SEND.
- Promote volunteering opportunities for young people with SEND, which can provide unique experiences. More activities for this, which offer a variety of experiences, will be made available, including within the council.
- Support and signpost parents/carers to wellbeing groups for parents/carers so that they feel empowered and more able to access things in the community for themselves and for their children and young people.
- Work collaboratively with strategic partners to explore and develop the use of personal budgets across education, health and care for young people who have SEND so that they have more choice and control about the services and support they receive.
- Keep all support and provision under review through an agreed schedule to identify what needs reviewing and carrying out focused work to understand how service are working and what needs to change.
- Ensure that children and young people are treated as individuals when professionals are involved, rather than being combined into a general category of need. This also means looking at criteria for access to services and removing diagnosis-based access unless there is a specific and/or justifiable reason for this.

**Because of what we do**

- Parents/carers will feel supported to have a productive, supportive family life, where families are content and are able to take the opportunities that fit with their own lives.
- Children and young people will:
    - Have a full and stimulating life that includes friends, family and positive relationships.
    - Be able to socialise with friends who support and understand them and explore relationships safely.
    - Feel safe when they are out by themselves and with friends, accessing the local community.
    - Have good knowledge of the clubs and social opportunities they can attend and take advantage of these.
    - Be happy.
    - Be able to put their views across, feel listened to and can express their thoughts and feelings about what is right for them, leading to more power over their own lives.
    - Understand how to make their own decisions in the way that works for them. Benefit from services that are shaped by their own opinions, thoughts and needs.

## Priority 4: Joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision

### Headline

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education, and this is the best opportunity for most, including for those at SEN support and EHCP level. Where this is not right for those with the most complex needs, we have high quality special school places, and we want to ensure that there are sufficient places to continue to meet the needs of the local area into the future.

We also want to increase the options for more children and young people, who may need support beyond what mainstream provision can currently offer, to remain in mainstream education. This will be done through the development of a greater range of education options in mainstream primary and secondary schools.

We also want to ensure the right level of provision from support services is available for all children and young people, regardless of their education setting.

### What we will do

- Develop a range of 'mainstream plus' options to support children and young people who require provision than is expected to remain in mainstream schools.
- Develop an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in all types of specialist SEND provision so that there is a transparent plan for how local provision can meet local needs.
- Work with partners to develop more structure and consistency for considering bespoke placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Develop a joined-up network of SEND and inclusion practice across the borough, which is supported by Oldham's early years specialist support services, special schools, mainstream plus practitioners and centrally based specialist services.
- Work with education settings to ensure the best use of the high needs capital funding to improve and enhance the environment to support children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure that there are enough specialist placements to meet the needs of the local population within Oldham and map this out for the period of this strategy and into the future, in consideration of forecast needs.
- Explore what can be done to offer parent/carer support in education settings in partnership with SENCos and services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient options available for young people when they leave school, including apprenticeships, sixth form, work-based opportunities and further education.
- Promote and expand the inclusive offer in Oldham, so that more young people have access to employment pathways that meet their needs including, through; work placements, work experience, traineeships, supported Internships and apprenticeships.
- Review health provision to ensure the right level of health provision is commissioned to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and develop our commissioning agreements between the local authority and the integrated care system so that key health services have good transition plans between children's and adults' services.

### Because of what we do

- More children and young people will have their needs met in mainstream provision and will access the opportunities this provides so that they are able to make a positive contribution and play an active role in their community.
- Children and young people will benefit from the right support, when they need it, so they can continue to learn new skills and knowledge along with their peers.
- Capacity will be built in education settings across all age phases.
- Children and young people with SEND will have, and make use of, the same opportunities as everyone else because there is an expectation that they will get the right support and encouragement.
- Young people will have more options for post 16 pathways available in their community so that they enjoy a sense of achievement as they continue to build skills, leading to future employment.

## Priority 5 Preparation for adulthood

### Headline

We recognise that preparing for adulthood starts form the earliest years and runs through childhood and into adolescence and appropriate support in the early years can reduce the amount of support a child, young person or family requires when they are older.

As children and young people grow and develop, they should have the opportunity to get involved in their local community in all sorts of ways. Young people grow older, they may want to live alone, or with others, in their own home.

In Oldham, young people have told us that independent living is more than just about where you live. They also feel that being as independent as possible, is just as important as who you live with. We want to make sure that young people can live as independently as possible, no matter what their circumstances.

### What we will do

- Be pro-active in gathering feedback from young people about their aspirations and use this to commission pathways that will enable them to pursue their goals.
- For children in the early years, parents/carers will be supported to access health, education and care services for a better start in life.
- Engage with children and young people who are likely to require further support or bespoke pathways to pursue their aspirations and convene local education providers and wider partners to shape corresponding pathways.
- Expand vocational options to support young people who have SEND onto employment pathways, including supported internships and apprenticeships.
- Engage with local employers, in the private, public and voluntary sectors, and support them to develop opportunities for young people with SEND to make a successful transition to the world of work.
- Help employers to understand the needs of the young people with whom they will be working and to put the right support in place for this to be successful.
- Use learning and good practice to show a wider range of employers how transition into the workplace can be done effectively.
- Ensure that there is a strong, joint local offer of education, health and care options to enable young people with the most complex needs to make a successful transition to adult life.
- Ensure that there are effective processes for all transitions for children and young people and early planning of a young person's transition to adult life that will enable a young person to thrive.
- Develop a joined-up transitions team that includes children's and adults social care and provides a consistent offer relating to assessment, support and services.
- Work with education settings to promote more lessons on life skills, including, travelling, money management, and learning about paying bills.
- Develop accessible information about the EHC process and what this means for sixth form, university and going into work much earlier than it is currently provided.
- Enable parents and carers to access information that helps them to support their children and young people to make decisions about their future.
- Ensure that children and young people begin preparation for adulthood and preparing for change throughout their journey, including at all levels of need, so that work is completed to enable children and young people to begin to make decisions about their future.

### Because of what we do

- Children and young people will develop the right skills to be as independent as possible in the way that works for them.
- Young people will benefit from having the right support from the people in their lives, including for making decisions when it comes to their own life and care needs.
- Young people can budget and manage their finances, with the right support when this is needed.
- Children and young people will influence services so that they are better aligned with their priorities.

## Priority 6a Communication and interaction: autism

### Headline

We want Oldham to be a place that values everyone's contribution to their local communities and makes sure they are welcomed, supported and no-one is left behind. We want to achieve an autism friendly approach across the borough through services that are joined up, proactive and of high quality.

We also want to support education settings, service settings and the wider community to have a good understanding of children and young people who have social communication difficulties and autism, what this can mean, and how they can include them in all opportunities that are available universally. Our work in this area will align with the National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults 2021 to 2026.

### What we will do

- Work with community and voluntary sector to promote access to universal social activities for children and young people who have autism.
- Engage with partners and stakeholders to identify the training needs regarding autism and social communication difficulties and identify the priority groups for continuing professional development. This will include partners from health, social care, education, housing, employment, leisure, police and criminal justice services to support continuing professional development.
- Co-design training with young people and parents/carers who have lived experience of autism.
- Build on the Autism in Schools project to provide a sustainable training programme for schools, in partnership with parents/carers.
- Create an autism outreach service for children and young people with communication and interaction needs who are in mainstream education settings.
- Expand vocational options to support young people who have autism onto employment pathways, including supported internships and apprenticeships.
- Implement the complex case panel to ensure sound oversight of young people with the most complex needs, and who may require a continuing high level of support, as they prepare for adulthood.
- Develop education provision and accommodation options for young people who are currently accessing provision outside of Oldham, to ensure that they can be supported as close to home as possible, as they transition to adulthood.
- Review pathways for diagnosis for autism.

### Because of what we do

- There will be increased opportunities available in the community as more providers will make reasonable adjustments to be autism accessible for all children and young people.
- Education settings and parents/carers will know how to access training at the right time, to boost their understanding of how autism and social communication difficulties affects children and young people and practical ways to support them.
- Children, young people and their parents/carers will know what they should expect from their school or education setting.
- Education settings will benefit from access to specialist support so that they can build capacity for supporting children and young people who have autism.
- Specialist and mainstream services including health, social care, early years, education, housing, employment, leisure, police and criminal justice are inclusive, accessible and accommodating for children, young people and parents/carers.

## Priority 6b Communication and interaction: SLCN

### Headline

In Oldham, we want every child and young person to be enabled to communicate to the very best of their ability. Within the early years we want early identification of communication needs to be supported with timely access to strategies, interventions and advice to reduce the longer-term impact of communication needs.

To do this, we want to make sure that there is a high level of skill across the workforce. This is because we want to create a local area that is knowledge rich regarding how to foster and support speech, language and communication needs for our children and young people.

### What we will do

- Develop a joined-up speech and language pathway that outlines the offer of services for all children from universal to specialist. This will include supportive strategies that families can use at home.
- Embed consistent messages to parents/carers about the importance of the home learning environment and what is important in supporting communication and language development at all stages.
- Explore funding for investment in SLCN across the continuum of need.
- Strengthen the ways we are promoting SLCN awareness across education settings and services who work directly with the KS3/4 and p-16 SEND population.
- Implement a Secondary Language Link pilot to target children and young people at the KS3/4 phase, whose speech, language and communication needs have not previously been identified.
- Review speech, language and communication needs in the local area against the provision available and act where this needs to be improved.
- Promote and support the speech, language and communication framework as a whole school development for schools.

### Because of what we do

- Children and young people are supported by professionals who understand their needs and as a result, are supported to get better outcomes.
- Parents/carers are up skilled in understanding their child's needs in relation to speech, language and communication and, as a result, can support their development in this area.
- Older children and young people who have not had speech, language and communication needs identified at an earlier stage will be supported by professionals who understand their needs and support their development as they move towards adulthood.
- Through Secondary Language Link, secondary phase practitioners can identify and meet speech, language and communication needs informed by an enhanced understanding of language development and how to identify and address needs.

## Infrastructure 1: Engagement, participation and coproduction

**Headline**

Engagement, participation and coproduction are a big part of what is happening in Oldham, and we want this to be embedded successfully at all levels across the local area partnership.

Children, young people and their parents/carers, together with partner organisations, are central to developing an effective local area system for SEND and inclusion. Coproduction is how we want to work and is a core expectation for all service leads, commissioners and providers.

**What we will do**

- Act on our commitment to sharing challenges and solving problems in a spirit of coproduction through ownership, with children, young people and parents/carers, of the SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme.
- Ensure that coproduction is meaningful, by engaging at the earliest stage, openly sharing challenges and enabling parents/carers to generate ideas and shape solutions.
- Develop more opportunities for children, young people and parents/carers to influence the local area system at a strategic level and build the capacity of local groups and networks to fulfil this role.
- Introduce an annual cycle of SEND and inclusion events for parents/carers, with an increased level of adult service and housing representatives involved.
- Ensure that education, health and care services work collaboratively with POINT to share accurate information about services/provision and make sure it is communicated effectively.
- Create a parent/carer pack to provide clarity about pathways to support for different aspects of education, health and care.
- Create and promote a lending library of resources for SEND so that parents/carers can borrow resources, rather than spending money to find out that resources are not right for them and their child or young person.
- Hold parent/carer sessions in different areas of the borough on different days, and at different times so that they fit around busy lives.

**Because of what we do**

- Parents/carers of early years children, school aged children and young people will be able to access information about their rights and choices without having to ask for it or seek it out themselves because they won't know what they don't know.
- Parents/carers will be an equal partner in strategic and working groups to help to identify issues and implement changes.
- They can also share experiences to help professionals understand some of the impact of SEND on their lives.
- Peer mentoring from other parents/carers will be promoted and will help many other parents/carers.
- Parent/carers will be supported by peer mentors who are well supported themselves by services.

## Infrastructure 2: Quality assurance and performance

### Headline

We are committed to the delivery of effective provision and services through sound policies, procedures and practice. Quality assurance and performance monitoring is a feature of our work across the local area partnership. Through this, we ensure continuous service improvement by embedding a culture of shared local intelligence and, where quality and performance issues arise, a commitment to learning and acting.

We believe in partners being accountable for the quality of their work and being prepared to account for the impact on the outcomes for children and young people. We will maintain a robust tracking system, which collates and monitors all performance related to SEND and inclusion to support effective challenge and scrutiny.

### What we will do

- Implement the EHC Hub, an online system for developing EHCPs and managing annual reviews.
- Strengthen the support available for the early years sector to identify and submit appropriate request via the online service.
- Develop a comprehensive data set for SEND and inclusion, that brings together education, health and care and publish updates on the local offer website.
- Roll out a whole school audit system for schools and develop an early year's version, to also be implemented.
- Implement a reporting process for the completion and results of the formal termly audit for EHCP's, as outlined in the audit process and publish the results on the dashboard and headline report.
- Develop an outcomes dashboard that focuses on what is important to children and young people and how we measure progress for that.
- Report to SENCos and early years providers, through development days, regarding high quality evidenced based interventions.
- Introduce a system for reviewing all commissioned specialist provision on an annual basis.

### Because of what we do

- Parents/carers will be able to access more detail about who is involved with their child or young person's support and provision, and they will have access to information about what they do and how to contact them.
- Children, young people and parents/carers will know the date of their next annual review meeting, as this will be set a year in advance from the previous meeting.
- Data will be more accurate and better reflect the local area position so that more informed decision making is supported, and this leads to more targeted support and intervention.
- Data will be better protected and more accurate as areas of error will be minimised.
- Developments for specialist provision will be identified and good practice shared wider through practitioners.

## Infrastructure 3: Local offer

### Headline

Oldham's vision is to be a place where children and young people will thrive. The local offer is what is available in the local area for children and young people who have SEND, and their families. The local offer website is what we say about this and provides information on what is available in Oldham.

The local offer website has been produced by children, young people, parents/carers and practitioners working together.

### What we will do

- Ensure that children, young people and parents/carers can access information in an understandable format so that they can make informed choices. This includes making sure that information is readily available in all formats, including paper based if this is requested.
- Explore the creation of multiple location public information facilities where parents/carers can collect information on what they need in a format that suits them, including accessing advice from professionals, at their own pace.
- Review statutory responsibilities in relation to the local offer and identify improvements.
- Ensure that the local offer website is SEND related and that all information is related to accessible, Oldham based support and provision.
- Explore the use of an App as another aspect of the local offer.
- Simplify the local offer website in terms of jargon so that the language used is consistent and accessible.
- Empower children, young people and parents/carers, to play a strategic role within the local SEND system, through the parent carer sessions and the annual cycle of SEND and inclusion events for families. Create inclusion groups within settings for children and young people to be a part of.

### Because of what we do

- Children and young people will be given information about their rights and choices without having to ask for it or seek it out themselves.
- Children, young people and parents/carers will be confident that they are getting the most up to date and accurate information.
- Parents/carers new to SEND will benefit from jargon free information that will be more accessible.

## Infrastructure 4: Sustainability

**Headline**

To make sure that we can keep improving for children and young people we need to have a grip on how we deliver SEND services for children and young people so that they can be protected and developed.

Sustainability will be achieved through understanding the local context and ensuring that resources are targeted based on that knowledge and what we know works well.

**What we will do**

- Participate in the Delivering Better Value programme in partnership with the DfE.
- Carry out a review and formal consultation, of the resource allocation system of funding related to EHCPs, across all age phases and education settings, both mainstream and special.
- Carry out a review and formal consultation of p16 SEND provision to identify how the range of pathways can be improved.
- Review and update the SEND Transport Policy.
- Create the opportunities for creative and transparent discussions with parents/carers about transport options, with a focus on promoting independence.
- Share good practice in decision-making and transport assessments, co-production of policies and guidance with parents/carers.
- Create a full and creative range of support options for travel to school.

**Because of what we do**

- The Delivering Better Value programme will support a more targeted budget, in relation to specific identified areas and this provides confidence that resources are being managed effectively.
- There will be confidence that the resource allocation system for EHCPs is fit for purpose, fair and delivers the best system for children and young people.
- Statutory processes will be managed effectively, and this will provide confidence in the system for all partners and stakeholders.
- P16 provision will be in line with statutory requirements, creating a more equitable system for children and young people.

## Infrastructure 5: Workforce development

**Headline**

To ensure that children and young people benefit from the best support that enables them to reach their potential we need a workforce that is skilled, knowledgeable and progressive.

We want our partners to  feel confident in their ability to deliver the best possible system. This means having access to the most effective continuing professional development opportunities that are accessible and fit in with the demands of daily work.

**What we will do**

- Work with regional partner local authorities to define the training offer across the region that promotes access to employment for children and young people.
- Review the training currently available in the borough and identify any gaps for development and create a suite of training available to in different formats.
- Link training and development to the findings through audits, emerging themes and actions plans.
- Establish an autism training steering group to lead on planning and implementation of autism training across the local area.
- Review all current training related to SEND and inclusion and plan an appropriate programme based on the findings.
- Develop and deliver a continuing professional development programme targeting whole school development for SEND and inclusion.
- Ensure the early years sector has access to a professional development programme for SEND and inclusion.
- Promote use of the Graduated Response Toolkit and develop this further.
- Develop and promote a comprehensive transition support pack that covers all key transitions.
- Develop more creative methods for continuing professional development, for example, webinars, podcasts and online courses.
- Build a development offer for professionals and practitioners and use as part of the induction programme to Oldham as well as a maintaining competency programme.

**Because of what we do**

- Children and young people benefit from better transition planning, ultimately leading to work-based activity, and this improves their outcomes in later life.
- Children and young people benefit from an upskilled workforce who have a better understanding of SEND, and their obligations under the SEND Code of Practice, and can apply this knowledge and understanding.
- Increased awareness and confidence of staff in identifying SEMH and related needs leads to better provision for children and young people.
- All children and young people are supported by a skilled workforce that identifies their needs at the earliest opportunity enabling appropriate support and plans to be put in place.

# SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027: Annex A:
Sufficiency of specialist places to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND)

**Contents**


1. Introduction
2. Aims and ambitions
3. Rationale and evidence of demand
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5. Considerations
6. SEND sufficiency projects 2023-2027
7. High needs provision capital allocations 2021 – 2024
8. Collaborative approach
9. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027


**January 2023**

## 1. Introduction

Across the local area, there is a commitment to deliver high quality education for all children and young people, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme underpins the strategy and clearly set out the local area's commitment to delivering high quality support and provision across all our schools and educational settings, enabling the best outcomes for every child and young person over six key priorities and five key enablers.

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education, and this is the best opportunity for most, including for those at SEN support and EHCP level. Where this is not right for those with the most complex needs, we have high quality special school places, and we want to ensure that there are sufficient places to continue to meet the needs of the local area into the future across all our mainstream and specialist provision.

We recognise that there are children and young people, who may need support beyond what mainstream provision can currently offer and we want to increase the options for this group. This will be done through the development of a greater range of education options in mainstream primary and secondary schools. In addition, further consideration will be undertaken regarding the development of provision in early years and post sixteen education as part of the longer-term strategy.

We also want to ensure the right level of provision from support services from education, health and social care is available for all children and young people, regardless of their education setting.

The sufficiency element of our strategy is monitored and developed through the Joint Commissioning & Sufficiency Partnership, which focuses on joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision.

To explain how we are going to achieve our ambitions for the children and young people of Oldham, this annex forms part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and focuses specifically on the SEND specialist place sufficiency aspect of the strategy.

## 2. Aims and ambitions

The overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy details all that we are aiming to achieve across the local area to get the best outcomes for children and young people. The sufficiency annex sets out further detail about how the local authority and partners will address the fundamental challenges being faced in meeting increasing demand for the range of specialist places we need to sustain for children and young people with SEND within the resources available. This will be done in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

The sufficiency annex to the main SEND & Inclusion Strategy will be based upon the following objectives:

- Ensuring children and young people with SEND have access to the right type of school placement and provision which best meets their needs, and which is within their community. This includes those who have been categorised as having needs relating to social, emotional and mental health; autism and/or speech, language and communication needs.
- Embedding a partnership-based approach, to ensure the appropriate range and capacity of provision is available in local mainstream schools, academies, trusts and specialist settings to enable the needs of a greater number of children and young people to be met, as part of an inclusive culture. This builds upon our commitment expressed in the Education Improvement Strategy.
- Building a sustainable system that provides value for money and the most effective use of available resources, which continues to underpin the strategy and results in improved settings, environments and skill sets that get the best outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensuring that children, young people and their families are at the heart of planning support and provision.

In line with previous years developments, statutory partners continue to work closely to ensure, where possible, that children and young people with SEND do not have to travel out of the borough to have their educational needs met through early identification and support. Work in this area has been undertaken in parallel with improvements to the quality and efficiency of education, health and care plan processes. This is to enable children and young people who require ongoing specialist support to be placed in the best possible provision and have their needs met through a stable and enriching school life.

The strategy further sets out its objectives to continue to address pressures within the SEND system, placing a renewed focus on developing capacity locally through re-setting the balance in favour of borough based resource and satellite provision which is closer to children and young people's home and community, and which prevents the need for significantly more costly, independent provision outside of the borough.

Improving personalisation, through things such as personal budgets, alternative provision and education other than at school is also a key priority to create a system which promotes independence, confidence and aspirations and enables children and young people to make a successful transition to adulthood. Annex B of the SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027 will focus on these aspects.

## 3. Rationale and evidence of demand

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) resultant in the current figures shown in table 1.

| **SEND for school aged children and young people** *(excludes early years and post 16)* | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Phase** | **Total** | **Special place** | **SEN Support** | **EHCP** | **Total SEN** |
| Primary | 26400 | 22365 | 3449 | 586 | 4035 |
| Secondary | 17985 | 15724 | 1889 | 372 | 2261 |
| Special | 1183 | 0 | 18 | 1165 | 1183 |
| PRU | 37 | 0 | 37 | 0 | 37 |
| **Total** | **45605** | **38089** | **5393** | **2123** | **7516** |

***Table 1**: School census January 2022*

Numbers continue to show that Oldham has a higher number at the EHCP level and lower at the SEN support level than statistical neighbours and the national average.

| | **Oldham** | **Stat' neighbours** | **National** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Nº of school age pupils** | 47169 | 530311 | 9000031 |
| **No of pupils with SEND** | 7662 | 89820 | 1485409 |
| **% Who have an EHCP** | 4.7% | 3.9% | 4.0% |
| **% At SEN support level** | 11.5% | 12.9% | 12.6% |
| **% Total who have SEND** | 16.2% | 16.8% | 16.6% |

***Table 2:** EHCPs and SEN support comparisons. School census January 2022*

Latest national data, published in June 2022 by the DfE, shows that the most common type of need for children and young people who have an EHCP is autism and for those who are identified as requiring SEN support is speech, language and communication needs (SLCN). This is also reflected in Oldham and there has been an increase in those being diagnosed and/or presenting with autism, both nationally and in Oldham.

In Oldham, for children and young people with an EHCP, data shows us that, autism is the most common primary type of need, with **42%** of children and young people in Oldham schools and settings having this primary type of need. SLCN and SEMH are also significant with **17%** of the Oldham schools EHCP cohort having a primary need of SLCN and **12%** SEMH (Jan Census 2022).

Despite the identified number of children and young people in Oldham schools who have an EHCP with a primary need of SLCN, this may not account for the true level of need in this area. This is because many children and young people will have been categorised as having social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), needs at secondary school whilst at primary they may have been more likely to be identified as having SLCN. This indicates that when they move to secondary school, their SLCN has been under identified or mis-categorised.

Table three shows the latest forecast for Oldham children and young people who have an EHCP, or may need one in future, if we do not change how we do things.

| | ASC | HI | MLD | PD | PMLD | SLD | SEMH | SpLD | SLCN | VI | MSI | Other | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2015** | 371 | 41 | 123 | 82 | 54 | 109 | 153 | 23 | 170 | 17 | 0 | 7 | 1150 |
| **2016** | 411 | 45 | 134 | 90 | 55 | 119 | 167 | 28 | 183 | 20 | 0 | 14 | 1266 |
| **2017** | 498 | 53 | 152 | 98 | 60 | 135 | 191 | 44 | 228 | 24 | 0 | 7 | 1490 |
| **2018** | 592 | 62 | 192 | 118 | 71 | 141 | 239 | 47 | 268 | 29 | 0 | 9 | 1768 |
| **2019** | 668 | 68 | 224 | 125 | 72 | 146 | 283 | 51 | 311 | 30 | 1 | 69 | 2048 |
| **2020** | 770 | 72 | 249 | 136 | 76 | 123 | 321 | 79 | 339 | 32 | 3 | 50 | 2250 |
| **2021** | 803 | 67 | 240 | 143 | 80 | 111 | 340 | 89 | 382 | 32 | 3 | 23 | 2306 |
| **2022** | 914 | 75 | 260 | 150 | 93 | 116 | 405 | 96 | 513 | 39 | 4 | 35 | 2700 |
| **2023** | 1027 | 76 | 272 | 157 | 97 | 105 | 458 | 99 | 615 | 47 | 6 | 35 | 2994 |
| **2024** | 1130 | 84 | 299 | 173 | 107 | 116 | 504 | 109 | 677 | 52 | 7 | 39 | 3293 |
| **2025** | 1243 | 92 | 329 | 190 | 117 | 127 | 554 | 120 | 744 | 57 | 7 | 42 | 3623 |
| **2026** | 1367 | 101 | 362 | 209 | 129 | 140 | 610 | 132 | 819 | 63 | 8 | 47 | 3985 |
| **2027** | 1504 | 111 | 398 | 230 | 142 | 154 | 671 | 145 | 900 | 69 | 9 | 51 | 4384 |
| **2028** | 1654 | 122 | 438 | 253 | 156 | 169 | 738 | 159 | 990 | 76 | 10 | 56 | 4822 |
| **2029** | 1819 | 135 | 482 | 278 | 172 | 186 | 811 | 175 | 1090 | 83 | 11 | 62 | 5304 |
| **2030** | 2001 | 148 | 530 | 306 | 189 | 205 | 893 | 193 | 1198 | 92 | 12 | 68 | 5834 |

***Table 3**: projected numbers of EHCPs up to 2030, following the current trajectory (actuals at Jan census to 2022 (2023 TBC in spring 2023), forecasted from 2024 based on average 10% national increase).*

For all statutory school aged children and young people with an EHCP reviewed and maintained by Oldham LA, **55%** are educated in special schools (inc. INMSS and maintained special schools) The national average is **34%** and for metropolitan boroughs is **9.9%**. Table 4 shows what this means in numbers of children and young people.

| | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Mainstream** | 589 | 648 | 782 | 868 | 932 | 982 |
| **Special** | 701 | 794 | 887 | 962 | 1003 | 1093 |

***Table 4**: special school places 2017 – 2022*

## 4. Pressure on high needs funding

INMSS monitoring provides up to child level data to understand the SEND needs required to both develop provision that children in INMSS settings could transition back and therefore provide appropriate local provision. This also enables us to forecast and understand the needs of the population to allow a focused approach to capacity development for specific identified needs, namely autism, SLCN and SEMH.

Tables five and six show an overview of the use of INMSS placements highlighting a reduction on the dependence on the use of these schools due to developments to date.

| Financial year | INMSS placements: out of borough | Total costs |
|---|---|---|
| 2019/2020 | 94 | £3,952,846.00 |
| 2020/2021 | 77 | £4,282,601.00 |
| 2021/2022 | 67 | £3,973,022.00 |
| 2022/2023 | 62 | £3,609,940.00 |
| Costs are based on full academic year costs. Latest information as of 21 October 2022. | | |

***Table 5**: INMSS placements outside of Oldham.*

| Financial year | INMSS placements: in borough | Total costs |
|---|---|---|
| 2019/2020 | 50 | £802,440.00 |
| 2020/2021 | 46 | £1,189,946.00 |
| 2021/2022 | 30 | £935,443.00 |
| 2022/2023 | 24 | £890,382.00 |
| Costs are based on full academic year costs. Latest information as of 21 October 2022. | | |

***Table 6**: INMSS placements in the private sector located in Oldham.*

Previous reports have demonstrated that the continual long-term dependence on out of borough and independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS) is not favourable as a long-term sustainable option when viewed against steadily rising increase in needs for these cohorts of children and young people.

The INMSS data full year forecast figures for 2022/23 indicate that 30 children and young people were/are placed in INMSS settings with a primary need of autism at a cost of £1,478,153.40. This is on average £49,000 per place.

The INMSS data full year forecast figures for 2022/23 indicate that 32 children and young people were/are placed in INMSS settings with a primary need of SEMH at a cost of £1,394,534.50. This is on average £44,000 per place.

| Primary need | INMSS number | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| Autism/SLCN | 30 | 1, 478,153.40 |
| SEMH | 32 | 1, 394,534.50 |
| Other | 24 | 1, 627,634.10 |

***Table 7**: Costs of INMSS related to specific areas of need.*

Whilst numbers in INMSS continue to reduce, through our concerted efforts, the cost of INMSS rises due to increases in prices in the independent sector, which the LA has no control over. We would like to see more of this funding remaining in Oldham schools and education settings. Our strategy, therefore, is to work towards ensuring more of our resources stay within Oldham education settings.

## 5. Considerations

The continuing work on SEND sufficiency has clearly identified a gap in educational provision for children and young people with autism/SLCN and/or SLD/SEMH, whose needs are not currently being met in mainstream schools, resourced provision or local special schools. This often results in children and young people being placed in independent non-maintained special school (INMSS) provision out of borough, or in-borough independent settings.

Oldham does have an autism specific special school; however, this is targeted at children and young people who can follow a GCSE pathway and curriculum. There is currently a gap in specialist provision for children and young people who have the following needs:

- Communication and interaction (autism/SLCN) combined with moderate to severe learning difficulties.
- SEMH and combined severe learning difficulties.

There are currently only three established resource provisions in Oldham, providing **36** places in total. This 'mainstream plus' provision needs to grow to enable children and young people to be educated in the borough that they reside and ensure access to the right provision.

Whilst much of the capacity development is providing short and medium term cost avoidance, to ensure resources stay within the borough, the growing need for capacity of in-borough provision set against the rise in EHCP's requires a multi-faceted approach. Utilising early identification and support, graduated response as well as the development of in-borough provision with our maintained and academy partners must be a key part of this.

Demand for EHCPs and specialist places continues to rise and the council's ability to create more places locally within acceptable timescales is compromised. In addition, the complexity of some children and young people's needs, combined with the lack of mainstream specialist places, has meant that the council has been required to make greater use of INMSS to deliver provision.

There is potential to impact on the use of INMSS places currently however this would require several dependencies not least parental consent, appropriate key phase transitions of children in a particular year group.

There is a real concern on the long-term ability to impact on the use of INMSS places without having the ability to develop provision within the local area at the pace and scale needed to affect this. However, Oldham remains a partner within the Northwest Framework to secure specialist placements if required.

Further issues include:

- The unknown cohort of 'in-year' identification of children and young people who have SEND add to additional EHCP number, and these prove difficult to forecast, e.g. families moving into the area, other local authorities placing in Oldham schools, etc.
- Developing the market to encourage more school settings and trusts to develop and/or expand provision in the borough in the short and medium term.
- Development of forecast data for post 16 and review of statutory post 16 ESFA requirements that impact on the rising demand for placements up to the age of 25.
- The success of all identified projects with various approvals required from, capital, planning, providers and the possible impact of BSF/PFI initiatives.

## 6. SEND sufficiency projects 2023-2027

Progress has already been made on sufficiency projects including Medlock Valley (6 places) and Newman R C (6 places, PILOT only) plus Kingsland School scheduled for January 2023 (12 places). This will provide a further 24 places for the 22/23 academic year and a further 12 the following year.

In addition, an expression of interest went out in the Spring Term 2022 to all schools and settings, requesting they express an interest should they wish to provide resource or satellite provision.

From this initial expression of interest, **17** primary schools, **2** secondary schools and **1** FE provider have requested to be considered for mainstream plus provision. Due to the demand for mainstream plus places in secondary a further secondary mainstream plus provision will be needed in phase 1.

A further 6 mainstream plus provisions will open prior to 2025, giving an additional 108 places in total (36 in 2023, 2024 and 2025).

Development discussions have continued as part of the SEND sufficiency strategy work, assessing the available data to target provision against the needs of children and young people.

This highlights further the need for increased provision related to communication and interaction needs (autism and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)) as well as SEMH needs.

Discussions continue with education providers to support the LA in its aims of the send sufficiency plan and its drive to significantly reduce the impact on the high needs budget by ensuring children and young people remain in local provision with a reduction in the use of INMSS.

| Resource provision | Primary need | Total cost per place* | Year | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 22/23 | 23/24 | 24/25 | 25/26 | Total |
| Kingsland School | Autism/SEMH | £19,869 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | **12** |
| Medlock Valley | Autism/SEMH | £15,127 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 0 | **18** |
| Secondary 1 | Autism/SEMH | £19,869 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 0 | **18** |
| Secondary 2 | Autism/SEMH | £19,869 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | **18** |
| Secondary 3 | Autism/SEMH | £19,869 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | **18** |
| Secondary 4 | Autism/SEMH | £19,869 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | **18** |
| Primary 1 | Autism/SLD | £15,127 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | **18** |
| Primary 2 | Autism, SLD | £15,127 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | **18** |
| FE 1 | Autism, SEMH | £19,869 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | **18** |
| **Subject to review of resource allocation system.* | | | **24** | **48** | **48** | **36** | **156** |

***Table 8**: Planned creation of resource provision/mainstream plus provision.*

## 7. High needs provision capital allocations 2021 – 2024

Those SEND projects requiring capital investment have and are being supported through the Special Provision Capital and the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grants.

The current sufficiency plan and model is based on developments in the short and medium term with mainstream plus provision developments, but with the recent allocation of additional funding through the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant this could allow for additional capacity to meet the needs sooner.

Oldham have been awarded further funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24, from the DfE's high needs provision capital allocation grant. This creates a cumulative total of 6.0m (from the original 0.8m allocated in 2021-22).

| **High Needs Provision Capital Allocations 2021-24** *(published March 2022)* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Updated HNPCA 2021-22** | **Updated HNPCA 2022-23** | **Additional HNPCA 2023-24** | **Total HNPCA 2021-24** |
| £830,009 | £2,189,364 | £3,012,464 | **£6,031,837** |

***Table 9**: HNPCA 2021 - 2024*

This funding is to support the development of additional capacity and enhancing school/setting environments to support children/young people with SEND. This is great news for Oldham as it will enable more sufficiency projects to proceed, thereby enhancing the specialist places available within the borough. This will be managed through the Education Provision Team, which reports into the Education Provision Group (EPG).

The potential capacity expansion programme based on the forecast data for children and young people with EHCP's, as well as recognition of those currently in INMSS and their respective year groups would look to provide the additional capacity we need.

## 8. Collaborative approach

The continuing development discussions with schools regarding additional capacity at mainstream school sites has the potential to align itself to a positive inclusive model. This supports the aims of providing local education places for children and young people with SEND in Oldham and may be more practical in effectively supporting the educational needs and demands of all children in Oldham long term, and successfully impacting, to the extent needed, to reduce the high needs block in the long term that will be sustainable.

Most children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive in their local mainstream setting, without the need for an EHCP. To ensure we can achieve this, we need to create a financially sustainable system that provides value and ensures the best outcomes for children and young people.

Previously, we have considered the increase of special school places, however national developments and drivers have caused pause for thought. The Education Act 2011 changed the arrangements for establishing new schools and introduced section 6A, which is known as the academy or free school presumption which, without central government funding, would require the LA to provide the capital to fund any development. In addition, government plans can lead to significant aspects of changes of the education landscape potentially having a significant impact on local authorities, that is not yet known.

Monitoring of the use of INMSS placements and the tracking of year groups as part of the ongoing dedicated schools grant sustainability improvement programme, provides information that supports the development of in borough provision. This will allow us to review the use of INMSS whilst also monitoring the local increases identified in the data around needs and EHCP's. Also of note is that Oldham are part of the SEND North West Framework, used to identify possible placements within an agreed funding range. This is something we need to drive forward.

An additional benefit to our improvements will be enabling children and young people to participate in activities that build self-esteem and independence skills such as those delivered through the Short Breaks Play and Leisure offer.

**In summary**

The priorities we have identified as part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy are intended to further reduce the need for INMSS because of strengthening the range of provision with the borough. This will enable more of the high needs block to remain within the borough, and it will reduce the social costs for children, young people and families.

To address sufficiency in the best way to meet the needs of children and young people in Oldham, we are proposing to establish sufficiency of specialist places by working in partnership with schools/settings and trusts to develop specialist provision within mainstream schools.

Our commitment is that children and young people have their needs identified promptly, with appropriate support and provision put in place within Oldham at the earliest opportunity and at the level they need it.

## 9. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027

### What we will do

- Develop a range of 'mainstream plus' options to support children and young people who require provision than is expected to remain in mainstream schools.
- Develop an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in all types of specialist SEND provision so that there is a transparent plan for how local provision can meet local needs.
- Work with partners to develop more structure and consistency for considering bespoke placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Develop a joined-up network of SEND and inclusion practice across the borough, which is supported by Oldham's early years specialist support services, special schools, mainstream plus practitioners and centrally based specialist services.
- Work with education settings to ensure the best use of the high needs capital funding to improve and enhance the environment to support children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure that there are enough specialist placements to meet the needs of the local population within Oldham and map this out for the period of this strategy and into the future, in consideration of forecast needs.
- Explore what can be done to offer parent/carer support in education settings in partnership with SENCos and services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient options available for young people when they leave school, including apprenticeships, sixth form, work-based opportunities and further education.
- Promote and expand the inclusive offer in Oldham, so that more young people have access to employment pathways that meet their needs including, through; work placements, work experience, traineeships, supported Internships and apprenticeships.
- Review health provision to ensure the right level of health provision is commissioned to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and develop our commissioning agreements between the local authority and the integrated care system so that key health services have good transition plans between children's and adults' services.

### Because of what we do

- More children and young people will have their needs met in mainstream provision and will access the opportunities this provides so that they are able to make a positive contribution and play an active role in their community.
- Children and young people will benefit from the right support, when they need it, so they can continue to learn new skills and knowledge along with their peers.
- Capacity will be built in education settings across all age phases.
- Children and young people with SEND will have, and make use of, the same opportunities as everyone else because there is an expectation that they will get the right support and encouragement.
- Young people will have more options for post 16 pathways available in their community so that they enjoy a sense of achievement as they continue to build skills, leading to future employment.

# SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027: Annex B:
Sufficiency of alternative provision to meet the needs of children and young people who need an alternative approach to access education

**Contents**


10. Introduction
11. Aims and ambitions
12. Rationale and evidence of demand
13. Considerations
14. SEND and alternative provision sufficiency projects 2023-2027
15. Collaborative approach
16. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027

## 1. Introduction

Across the local area, there is a commitment to deliver high quality education for all children and young people, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our SEND & Inclusion Improvement Programme underpins the strategy and clearly set out the local area's commitment to delivering high quality support and provision across all our schools and educational settings, enabling the best outcomes for every child and young person over six key priorities and five key enablers.

Alternative provision (AP) is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as: Education arranged by local authorities for children and young people who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for those on a fixed period exclusion; and those being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.

Depending on the reason a child or young person requires AP, placements can be commissioned by the local authority or directly by schools. It is up to whoever is commissioning the support to determine the most appropriate AP provider. In every case, partnership working with parents/carers is crucial and it is expected that consideration of the views of the child, young person, their parents/carers and other professionals.

Types of AP providers include AP academies, AP free schools, pupil referral units (PRUs), hospital schools, independent providers, further education colleges, and voluntary sector providers. In Oldham, we have a range of this provision and have carried out a review of the sufficiency of places currently available and what we may need in the future.

All children and young people are entitled to a mainstream education, and this is the best opportunity for most, including for those who are vulnerable and who may require an alternative approach. Where this is not right for those with the most complex needs, we have good provision in our pupil referral unit (PRU), and we want to ensure that there are sufficient places to continue to meet the needs of all our children and young people into the future across all our mainstream and alternative provision.

We recognise that there are children and young people, who are at risk of disengagement and may need support beyond what mainstream provision can currently offer and we want to increase the options for this group, in line with the DfE SEND & AP Plan to create targeted in school, transitional/time limited and longer-term AP. This will be done through the development of a greater range of alternative provision options in mainstream primary and secondary schools. In addition, further consideration will be undertaken regarding the development of provision in post sixteen education as part of the longer-term strategy.

We also want to ensure the right level of provision from support services from education, health and social care is available for all children and young people, regardless of their education setting.

The alternative provision element of our strategy is monitored and developed through the Joint Commissioning & Sufficiency Partnership, which focuses on joint commissioning for sufficiency of specialist support and provision as a continuum of need across SEND and vulnerable groups.

To explain how we are going to achieve our ambitions for the children and young people of Oldham, this annex forms part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023–2027 and focuses specifically on the sufficiency of alternative provision as part of the overall strategy.

## 2. Aims and ambitions

The overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy details all that we are aiming to achieve across the local area to get the best outcomes for children and young people. The AP sufficiency annex sets out further detail about how the local authority and partners will address the fundamental challenges being faced in meeting the need for CYP, particularly those with SEMH in accessing alternative provision AP. This will be done in collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

The AP sufficiency annex to the main SEND & Inclusion Strategy will be based upon the following objectives:

- Ensuring children and young people with SEND and specifically SEMH have access to the right type of alternative school provision and support, for the most appropriate period and which is based on sound and consistent principles of early identification, where provision is matched to needs.
- Embedding a partnership-based approach, to ensure the appropriate range and capacity of alternative provision is available and widely understood, ensuring that children, young people and their families are at the heart of planning support and provision.
- Building a sustainable system that provides value for money and the most effective use of available resources, resulting in improved settings, environments, skill sets and outcomes for children and young people, through workforce development, targeted support and improved systems for identification of need.
- Embedding a partnership-based approach to the quality assurance of alternative provision in line with an evidenced based approach (AP-Quality-Benchmark-Toolkit-Summary (integrated.org.uk)) and in a manner which promotes sharing of good practice.

In line with Oldham principles of coproduction, statutory partners and stakeholders continue to work closely to ensure that children and young people can access appropriate alternative provision, as required, from a coordinated range of offers, building on existing provision and resources.

The aspiration of the AP strategy is to strengthen and improve a system of provision which has a greater focus on personalisation of educational opportunity and curriculum, which is purposeful in promoting independence, confidence and aspirations, raising skills and enabling children and young people to make a successful transition to adulthood.

Work in this area has been undertaken in parallel with improvements to the quality and efficiency of education, health and care plan processes and wider sufficient strategy and is consistent with the wider strategy in its overriding objectives to address pressures by placing a renewed focus on developing capacity locally.

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## 3. Rationale and evidence of demand

In recent years, and since the Covid 19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in demand for AP.

Schools and Settings commission their own AP for all non EHCP pupils and a Collaborative Provision Register has been implemented as part of the Oldham Pledge: https://www.theoldhampledge.co.uk/

All schools and settings submit returns to the local authority for any children or young people on a reduced timetable and these are discussed at Team Manager level with schools and on the strategic monthly dashboard.

| Phase | 2020/2021 | | | 2021/2022 | | | 2022/2023 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Total EHCP | Total SEN Support | Total | Total EHCP | Total SEN Support | Total | Total EHCP | Total SEN Support |
| **Primary** | 20 | 15 | 3 | 78 | 27 | 37 | 42 | 17 | 24 |
| **Secondary** | 69 | 7 | 26 | 317 | 18 | 79 | 282 | 35 | 99 |
| **Special** | 12 | 12 | 0 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| **PRU** | | | | 12 | | 12 | 13 | | 13 |
| **Total** | 101 | 34 | 29 | 421 | 59 | 128 | 348 | 63 | 136 |
| **Numbers of CYP on reduced timetables (3-year period)** | | | | | | | | | |

***Table 1**: Reduced Timetable returns 2020 - 2023*

The LA commission alternative provision for all those with an EHCP, those who have been permanently excluded from school and those that are unable to attend school for medical reasons.

Kingsland School is the LA commissioned PRU and provider of alternative provision, providing 70 places for children and young people that have been permanently excluded, 30 places for pupils that are unable to school due to medical reasons and 12 places for children and young people with an EHCP that have a primary need of emotional or mental health difficulties.

Work is underway for a second site for Kingsland to provide a step out provision for 30 pupils at risk of exclusion.

Oldham LA exclusion statistics are below. Permanent exclusions have increased over a 3-year period whilst suspensions have decreased year on year from 2021 – 2023. Schools and settings are using a small number of Alternative Providers currently to reduce suspensions.

| | Suspensions | % Difference | PEX | % Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2020/2021** | 1523 | | 39 | |
| **2021/2022** | 2655 | 74% | 45 | 15% |
| **2022/2023** | 2478 | -7% | 62 | 38% |

***Table 2:** PEX and Suspensions data 2020 – 2023*

Demand for AP and EOTAS for pupils with EHCPs has also increased in recent years and has significantly risen over the last 12 months, due to pupils with EBSA after the pandemic and the local authority SEND & Inclusion Strategy, ensuring Oldham children and young people are educated wherever possible in the borough that they reside.

Table 3 shows demand for AP and EOTAS. Please note the decrease in demand for high cost out of borough placements and high cost in borough independent placements as Oldham LA commissions more AP and more bespoke provision is created in the borough to meet the needs of our children and young people.

| | CYP with EHCP on AP (cumulative) | EOTAS (number named in provision in EHCP | Number of INMSS (out of borough) | Number of INMSS (in borough) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2020/2021** | 39 | 5 | 70 | 49 |
| **2021/2022** | 31 | 6 | 61 | 47 |
| **2022/2023** | 47 | 12 | 59 | 29 |

***Table 3:*** *demand for AP and EOTAS 2020 – 2023*

For context regarding PRU provision, the PAN for Broadbent Rd (PRU) is 70. This was increased from 40 in 2020/21 due to demand. The PAN for the Specialist Learning Centre (SLC) is 30. Permanent exclusion (PEX) numbers dropped during the pandemic, likely due to children and young people not being in school. All accessing both sites have been registered at the SEN support level (K code) with most going on to have EHCPs issued. This indicates how crucial it is to review and plan for AP in the wider context of SEND and inclusion.

| Provision | Year | Total |
|---|---|---|
| PRU | 2022/23 | 81 |
| SLC | 2022/23 | 47 |
| PRU | 2021/22 | 66 |
| SLC | 2021/22 | 30 |
| PRU | 2020/21 | 78 |
| SLC | 2020/21 | 24 |
| PRU | 2019/20 | 116 |
| SLC | 2019/20 | 31 |
| **Referrals** | | |
| Referrals to SLC | 2022/23 | 81 |
| Referrals to SLC | 2021/22 | 70 |

***Table 4:*** *number of pupils who accessed PRU and SLC by 16/06 every academic year*

## 4. Considerations

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for arranging suitable full-time education for children and young people permanently excluded from school, and for others who would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies to all children of compulsory school age living in the local authority area, regardless of whether they are on a school roll, and what type of school they attend. The provision of full-time education for excluded children and young people must begin no later than the sixth day of the exclusion.

There is no statutory requirement for how soon full-time education should begin for children and young people placed in AP for reasons other than exclusion. However, the guidance states that local authorities should ensure that they are placed as quickly as possible. In addition, although good AP will differ depending on the circumstances of the child or young person, there are common elements that AP should aim to achieve, according to the DfE, including:

- Good academic attainment on par with mainstream schools, particularly in English, mathematics and science (including IT), and with appropriate accreditation and qualifications.
- That the specific personal, social and academic needs of children and young people are properly identified and met to help them to overcome any barriers to attainment.
- Improved motivation and self-confidence, attendance and engagement with education.
- Clearly defined objectives, including the next steps following the placement such as reintegration into mainstream education, or successful transition to further education, training or employment.

To ensure resources support children and young people to access education within the borough, the growing need for capacity of provision set against the demand requires a multi-faceted approach. Utilising early identification and support, graduated response as well as the development of in-borough provision with our maintained and academy partners must be a key part of this. Whilst much of the capacity for providing sufficiency of AP is providing short and medium term support, a more joined up longer term approach is crucial, including for cost avoidance.

To ensure this can be achieved, there will be a focus on:

- How the system can provide the highest quality support that enables children and young people who are vulnerable to thrive and prepare for adulthood, including employment.
- Supporting parents/carers to make decisions about what kind of support will be best for their child.
- Making sure support across the borough is consistent, joined up across health, care and education services, and that high-quality support is available.
- Striking the balance of local authority provision and inclusive mainstream provision.
- Aligning incentives for inclusion and accountability for schools, and the local authority to make sure the best possible support for children and young people is provided.
- Working collaboratively with school to understand what is driving demand for AP.
- Ensuring that public money is spent in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner.

## 5. Alternative provision sufficiency projects 2023-2027

An expression of interest went out in the Spring Term 2022 to all schools and settings, requesting they express an interest should they wish to provide resource or satellite provision, including for creating AP.

From this initial expression of interest, **17** primary schools, **2** secondary schools and **1** FE provider have requested to be considered for mainstream plus provision. During conversations with schools to progress projects, some are now being considered for AP, in conjunction with the PRU.

Discussions continue with education providers to support the LA in its aims of the send sufficiency plan and its drive to significantly reduce the impact on the high needs budget by ensuring children and young people can be supported by their own school, with access to high quality AP when required.

Projects requiring capital investment have and are being supported through the Special Provision Capital and the High Needs Provision Capital Allocation Grants.

The current sufficiency plan and model is based on developments in the short and medium term with alternative provision developments, but with the recent allocation of additional funding through the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant this could allow for additional capacity to meet the needs sooner.

Oldham have been awarded further funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24, from the DfE's high needs provision capital allocation grant. This creates a cumulative total of 6.0m (from the original 0.8m allocated in 2021-22).

| **High Needs Provision Capital Allocations 2021-24** *(published March 2022)* | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Updated HNPCA 2021-22** | **Updated HNPCA 2022-23** | **Additional HNPCA 2023-24** | **Total HNPCA 2021-24** |
| £830,009 | £2,189,364 | £3,012,464 | **£6,031,837** |

***Table 9**: HNPCA 2021 - 2024*

This funding is to support the development of additional capacity and enhancing school/setting environments to support children/young people with SEND and who require alternative provision. This is great news for Oldham as it will enable more sufficiency projects to proceed, thereby enhancing the specialist places available within the borough. This will be managed through the Education Provision Team, which reports into the Education Provision Group (EPG).

The potential capacity expansion programme based on the forecast data for children and young people who require alternative provision would look to provide the additional capacity we need.

## 6. Collaborative approach

The continuing development discussions with schools regarding additional capacity at mainstream school sites has the potential to align itself to a positive inclusive model. This supports the aims of providing local education places for children and young people with SEND in Oldham and may be more practical in effectively supporting the educational needs and demands of all children in Oldham long term, and successfully impacting, to the extent needed, to reduce the high needs block in the long term that will be sustainable.

Most children and young people should be able to access the support they need to thrive in their local mainstream setting, without the need for alternative provision. To ensure we can achieve this, we need to create a financially sustainable system that provides value and ensures the best outcomes for children and young people.

In Oldham we are committed to joining up the system so that a wider range of AP will be on offer, and this will be child and young person centred. Options being considered for development include part time or short term evidence based academic, vocational, therapeutic and personal development programs to support those within a mainstream setting who are at risk of permanent exclusion. The programme will be developed to provide a needs-fulfilment model; through which, high quality initial assessments will determine the right package for each child or young person. This will be done in collaboration with the PRU as a lead partner.

A clear referral process between mainstream schools and AP, and a rigorous entry and exit criteria will be developed, aligned with a revise fair access process. Consideration will also be given to other areas that can create vulnerabilities including in year moves (through normal admissions procedures) and formal managed moves.

Capacity within any newly commissioned AP will need to be flexible to accommodate differences in placement length and style; with some placements being full time, e.g. for in-year admission in Y11, part time, short term (sessional) and one-off.

**In summary**

The priorities we have identified as part of the overall SEND & Inclusion Strategy are intended to further reduce the need for AP through strengthening the range of provision within the borough and within schools. This will enable more of the high needs block to remain within the borough, and it will reduce the social costs to children, young people and families related to difficulties in accessing education.

To address sufficiency in the best way to meet the needs of children and young people in Oldham, we work in partnership with schools/settings and trusts to develop specialist provision within mainstream schools.

Our commitment is that children and young people have their needs identified promptly, with appropriate support and provision put in place within Oldham at the earliest opportunity and at the level they need it.

## 7. SEND & Inclusion Strategy 2023 – 2027

### What we will do

- Develop a range of 'mainstream plus' options to support children and young people who require provision than is expected to remain in mainstream schools.
- Develop an evidence-informed and collaborative approach to planning places in all types of specialist SEND provision so that there is a transparent plan for how local provision can meet local needs.
- Work with partners to develop more structure and consistency for considering bespoke placements for children and young people with the most complex needs.
- Develop a joined-up network of SEND and inclusion practice across the borough, which is supported by Oldham's early years specialist support services, special schools, mainstream plus practitioners and centrally based specialist services.
- Work with education settings to ensure the best use of the high needs capital funding to improve and enhance the environment to support children and young people with SEND.
- Ensure that there are enough specialist placements to meet the needs of the local population within Oldham and map this out for the period of this strategy and into the future, in consideration of forecast needs.
- Explore what can be done to offer parent/carer support in education settings in partnership with SENCos and services.
- Ensure that there are sufficient options available for young people when they leave school, including apprenticeships, sixth form, work-based opportunities and further education.
- Promote and expand the inclusive offer in Oldham, so that more young people have access to employment pathways that meet their needs including, through; work placements, work experience, traineeships, supported Internships and apprenticeships.
- Review health provision to ensure the right level of health provision is commissioned to meet the needs of the local area.
- Review and develop our commissioning agreements between the local authority and the integrated care system so that key health services have good transition plans between children's and adults' services.

### Because of what we do

- More children and young people will have their needs met in mainstream provision and will access the opportunities this provides so that they are able to make a positive contribution and play an active role in their community.
- Children and young people will benefit from the right support, when they need it, so they can continue to learn new skills and knowledge along with their peers.
- Capacity will be built in education settings across all age phases.
- Children and young people with SEND will have, and make use of, the same opportunities as everyone else because there is an expectation that they will get the right support and encouragement.
- Young people will have more options for post 16 pathways available in their community so that they enjoy a sense of achievement as they continue to build skills, leading to future employment.