



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inclusion Strategy 2021-2023



Working in partnership:

Buckinghamshire Council

Family and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks

NHS Buckinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

SEND IAS Service

Schools and education settings

Pace (representing voluntary and community sector organisations)



1. Introduction

In Buckinghamshire we are ambitious to continuously improve the support we provide to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families. The SEND and Inclusion Strategy reflects our high aspirations, setting out our key priorities and the steps we are taking to achieve our goals. Critically, the strategy is delivered through organisations working collaboratively and efficiently towards a set of shared goals.

The Strategy has been coproduced from the outset with key stakeholders, including the local authority, local health services, schools, the Voluntary and Community Sector, young people, and parent representatives from Families and Carers Together (FACT) Bucks, the parent/carers forum, and Buckinghamshire SEND IAS. Importantly, the strategy is owned by the Local Area. To be most successful, our plans require a genuine sense of collaboration between these various players. We hope that this breadth of collaboration may also create the opportunity to develop innovative funding mechanisms that go beyond typical statutory sources – particularly from the voluntary and private sectors.



2. What have children and young people with SEND and their families told us?

In developing the Strategy, we have been keen to listen to the views of children, young people and their families. At the 'Shout Out for SEND' conference in November 2019 young people with SEND shared their experiences of living in Buckinghamshire and this feedback has shaped the aims and objectives of our strategy. Experiences young people shared were varied, however the overriding message was that 'SEN children are NOT different from other children!' This is reflected in our strategy vision statement and we have sought to ensure the themes they highlighted, summarised below, are addressed. Young people said:

- We should be given whatever help we need to perform at our best.
- Bullying in schools isn't always taken seriously.
- Employers should be given information on how to manage and support staff with SEND.
- We want to develop the skills to be able to live on our own, with friends or with a partner.
- We need more places for activities and to meet friends.
- Classrooms can be too noisy, making it difficult to concentrate.
- People don't understand the behaviour of some young people with SEND and may treat us unfairly.
- We get a lot of support from teachers who listen to what we need.
- Support from experts is often good but can be too short.

The full conference report that captures young people's voices can be found by visiting the [Buckinghamshire Family Information website](#).

In addition to this feedback from young people, 61% of responses to the public consultation on this strategy were from parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. Again, experiences and views were varied, however there was a consensus among respondents that the ambitions described in the strategy are appropriate, far reaching and welcomed. The full consultation report that details specific feedback can be found on our Local Offer (add link when published). Close working with FACT Bucks in the delivery of this strategy, will continue to ensure family's voices remain central to achieving our ambitions.

A photograph of two young children playing in a field of fallen autumn leaves. The child on the right is wearing a blue jacket and a green skirt, and is smiling while holding a leaf. The child on the left is wearing a light blue jacket and is also smiling. The background is filled with fallen leaves in shades of orange, yellow, and brown.

3. What do we want to achieve?

Our Vision

Our vision for children and young people with SEND is the same as that for all children in Buckinghamshire:

To build a better future for all children and young people in Buckinghamshire so that they realise their potential, whatever their starting point is. We will ensure children and young people:

- Are safe.
- Live fulfilling lives.
- Are healthy.
- Reach their potential in education and other aspects of their lives.
- Together with their families are resilient and can identify their own solutions.
- Make a positive contribution to their community.

We recognise that children and young people with SEND face more challenges than their peers. This strategy focuses on aspiration and inclusion rather than difference. We aspire to a society where all children and young people live lives free from bullying and discrimination. It is about supporting children and young people with varying needs not just the most complex, through every stage of their lives and into adulthood, being creative where additional help is needed to reflect that each child or young person is unique.

Our Principles

Everything we do will be centred on the child or young person and those who care for them, rooted in the concept of co-production and shared responsibility. Our key principles are:

- Early intervention to meet need, enabling growth and building resilience.
- Timely and clear communication.
- Trusting relationships with and between all professionals.
- Inclusive early years settings, schools and colleges.
- Support provided by parents, carers, families, friends and communities is recognised and valued along with specialist support provided by professionals.
- High quality, cost-effective and consistent services across the local area.

These principles underpin all aspects of the Strategy.

Our Aims and Objectives

Our aims and objectives are focused on the four Preparation for Adulthood outcomes outlined in the SEND Code of Practice, Jan 2015, providing a structure to our aspirations. Young people were central to developing the aims, helping us to understand and articulate the things they felt were important to enable them to live fulfilling lives.

Healthy Living

Aim: I am able to keep myself safe and healthy.

- I know how important it is to have good physical and mental health.
- I have access to information about my health such as medication, diet and health checks so that I can make the choices that are right for me.
- I know who can help me stay healthy as possible and safe; and how to get their help.

Objectives:

- A1. Health information and advice is available and accessible to children, young people and their families.
- A2. There are opportunities for children and young people to participate in physical activities at school and in their communities.
- A3. Children and young people should have access to healthy food and support in shopping and cooking skills as required.
- A4. Children and young people are registered with a GP and have access to specialist health services where appropriate.
- A5. Young people aged 14+ and adults with learning disabilities are added to the Learning Disabilities Register held by the GP and are offered an Annual Health Check .
- A6. Health assessments carried out in line with legal frameworks support and inform other relevant health assessments where practicable in order to reduce duplication for families.
- A7. Children and Young People receive help for mental health difficulties that are effective and timely so that children and young people feel supported at all stages in their lives and have a positive self-image.
- A8. There is provision for post-diagnostic support to enable families to understand diagnoses and support their children effectively.
- A9. Young people experience a smooth transition to adult physical and mental health services .
- A10. A whole-family prevention approach is adopted particularly focusing on younger siblings who may be exposed to many of the same risk factors but may not yet have reached the stage of triggering a SEN referral.



Socialising and Taking Part

Aim: I can participate in wider society.

- I have meaningful relationships and opportunities for a social life.
- I can choose to enjoy hobbies, clubs and holidays.
- I can take part meaningfully in day to day activities.
- I can communicate in a way that works.

Objectives:

- B1. Children and young people with SEND feel valued, accepted and connected to their school and wider communities and are not subject to bullying
- B2. There are opportunities for children and young people to get involved and feel part of their communities
- B3. There is a choice of support available so that children and young people can participate in education and social activities in different ways according to their needs
- B4. Children and young people, parents/carers and professionals contribute to Education, Health and Care Plans which value strengths and are produced in a child- or young person-centred way
- B5. Parents/carers and the wider community /providers are aware of the Local Offer which is comprehensive, accessible and includes information about employment and other meaningful activities
- B6. Families feel supported and are able to access early help
- B7. Community organisations offering services to the public are encouraged and supported to be inclusive.

Ambitions for the Future

Aim: I can achieve my ambitions in education, work or other meaningful activity.

- I will be encouraged to have high aspirations which will be shared and celebrated by those around me.
- I can learn in a space and at a speed that is right for me.
- I have the skills and support to get a job or voluntary role that fulfils me.
- I can access information about education and job options so that I can make informed choices.

Objectives:

- C1. Early and intensive intervention as appropriate to ensure better outcomes are achieved for the child.
- C2. Schools deliver effective SEN support in line with the Code of Practice and as set out in 'Ordinarily Available Provision.'
- C3. Children and young people have the opportunity to receive an excellent education as locally as possible, without the fear of exclusion due to their special educational needs and disabilities.
- C4. Children and young people are able to develop key work skills through a broad and balanced curriculum with stretching progress measures.
- C5. Schools and colleges aspire, in particular, to be autism friendly as part of being inclusive, in order to meet a wide range of needs and support learning.
- C6. Transport is not a barrier to children and young people accessing educational and career related opportunities.
- C7. Children and young people receive high quality careers advice and guidance and exposure to work related learning/enterprise opportunities.
- C8. There is a range of short breaks, work experience, internships and apprenticeship opportunities, including within the local authority, to help young people progress.
- C9. Options for post-16 study for young people in special schools and special colleges are as worthwhile as mainstream options.
- C10. Effective planning between educational providers and other professionals means young people can successfully access sustainable employment.

Independence

Aim: I can live independently.

- I have choices about who I live with and where.
- I know how to look after myself and my home.
- I can choose where I want to go and how I get there.

Objectives:

- D1. Young people are able to exercise choice and control over how they live their lives, informed by accurate and accessible information.
- D2. Schools proactively promote and support the development of key life skills to enable independent living.
- D3. SEN Support and Education, Health and Care Plans reflect, at the earliest stage, the potential of an individual child or young person to be independent.
- D4. Young people are provided with the necessary support to leave home when they are ready and are able to access appropriate supported living as locally as possible.
- D5. Agencies work together to ensure that a range of safe and secure accommodation is available to meet the needs of young people over the age of 18 so that they can pursue their independence, learning and employment opportunities.
- D6. Independent travel training enables young people to develop the self-confidence and skills to participate in activities outside of the home.



4. How we will achieve our aspirations: The Local Area SEND Improvement Plan.

The Local Area SEND Improvement Plan has been developed to drive improvement and change, ensuring our strategy is achieved. It is informed by our Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) and is owned by the Buckinghamshire SEND Integrated Services Board.

The Improvement Plan focuses on eight key priorities. These are:

1. SEND Support.
2. Sufficiency; Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).
3. Preparation for Adulthood (PfA).
4. Joint Commissioning.
5. Statutory Performance (SEND Operations).
6. Quality Assurance.
7. Local Offer Advisory.
8. Voluntary and Community Sector.

This Strategy and improvement actions will be governed through the SEND Integrated Services Board. In addition the SEND Improvement group will monitor the progress of the impact groups, ensuring accountability. Achievements and emerging issues will continue to be captured in Buckinghamshire's Self Evaluation Framework document which informs the ongoing review of the improvement plan. Individual services or organisations will continue to hold accountability for their contributions to the overarching Strategy and use their existing reporting mechanisms to ensure oversight and challenge, bringing items to the multi-agency Boards as required.

SEND Integrated Services Board (ISB)

The SEND Integrated Services Board is the key strategic body that oversees the delivery of the SEND and Inclusion Strategy and SEND Improvement Plan. The role of the Board is to:

- Provide strategic direction across the local area to ensure the Children and Families Act (2014) is fully understood and embedded.
- Drive change and improvement, ensuring accountability of all agencies and partners in achieving the aspirations of the Buckinghamshire SEND and Inclusion Strategy and associated SEND Improvement Plan.
- Understand the functions of the different services and know where the services are in terms of quality and performance. Agencies take full responsibility for managing their own performance.
- Understand, learn from and act upon the views and experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families, co-producing solutions wherever possible.
- Challenge underperformance and take action where monitoring indicates that targets are not being met.
- Understand and contribute to the Self- Evaluation Framework(s) (SEF).
- Ensure services are streamlined and work together effectively to achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The Board is chaired by the Corporate Director, Children's Services, and includes representatives at senior level from across Education, Health and Social Care, as well as parent/carers and voluntary and community sector representatives.

SEND Improvement Group and Impact Groups

The purpose of the SEND Improvement Group is to drive change and improvement across the local area to ensure children and young people with SEND receive high quality services that meet their needs. Specifically, the group:

- Oversees the implementation of the SEND Improvement Plan, monitoring progress against the actions in the Plan and ensuring they are delivered at pace.
- Seeks to understand barriers to progress and identifies solutions to overcome these barriers.
- Identifies issues/risks and mitigates against these, escalating as appropriate where resolution cannot be achieved.

Impact groups take forward the key priorities of the Improvement Plan. They are all multi-agency groups with specific expertise in the given area. Impact Group Chairs attend the monthly Improvement Group meeting to update on progress and resolve issues that may be impacting on achieving the outcomes required.