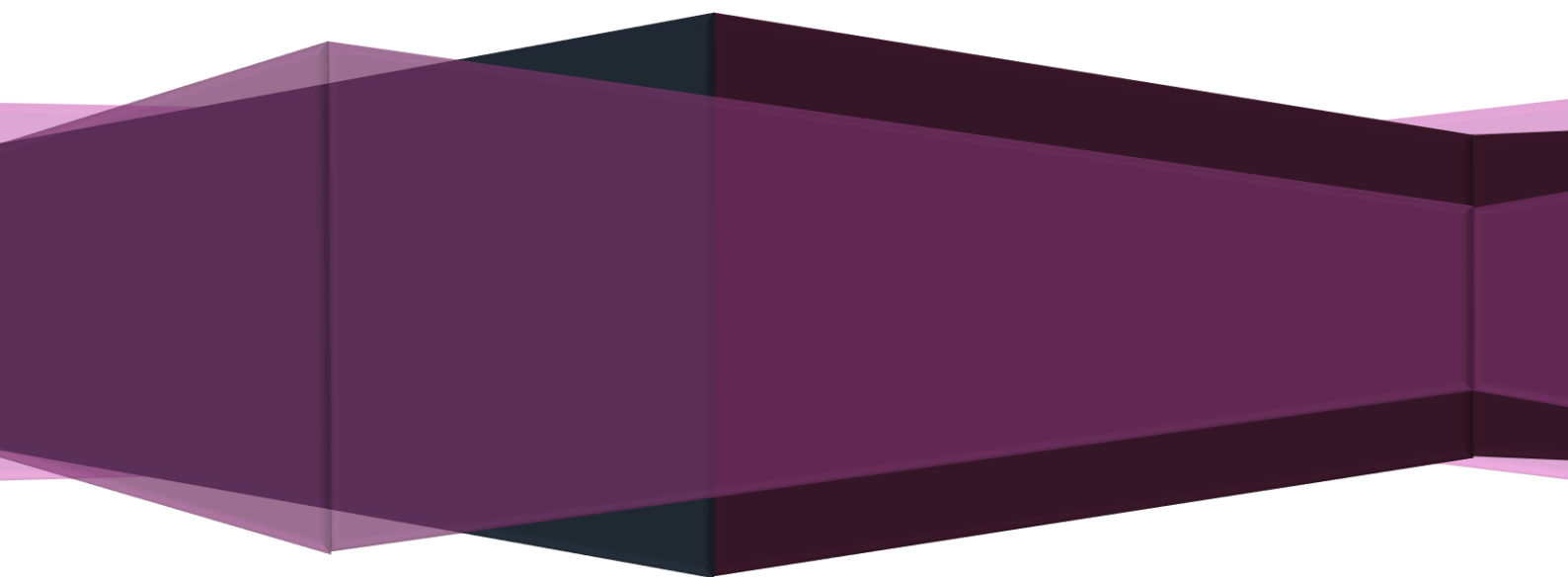




Walsall SEN Strategy 2020 - 2023

Walsall Council



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Introduction

All children deserve the best start in life, and for our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), this requires us to identify learning needs early, to have the right level of collaboration with parents, carers and our providers, and to have the provision we require to meet the diverse range of needs for our children and young people.

The Children and Families Act 2014 brought in fundamental changes in relation to SEND. In particular, it aimed to:

- Get education, health and social care services working together
- Ensure accurate and useful information is available to children or young people with SEND and their families
- Give children and young people and their parents more of a say about the help they receive
- Give children or young people one plan for meeting their education, health and care needs that focuses on and gives time for getting ready for adulthood.

We are committed to enabling, challenging and supporting all schools to be inclusive so that the best outcomes are achieved for all pupils and we will be regularly sharing our progress through the Walsall Council Local Offer.

What are Special Educational Needs and Disabilities?



Section 20 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and Section 312 of the 1996 Education Act, states that a child or young person has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children have a learning difficulty or disability if they: what about Autism and SEMH?

- have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age;
- have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions; or
- are under compulsory school age and fall within one of the definitions above or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them

Children must not be regarded as having a learning difficulty solely because the language or form of language of their home is different from the language in which they will be taught.

Special educational provision means:

- for children of 2 years or over, educational provision additional to, or different from, the educational provision made generally for children of their age in schools maintained by the local authority, other than special schools, in the area; or
- for children under age 2, educational provision of any kind

In addition, the SEND Code of Practice sets out four broad areas of need and support which may be helpful when reviewing and managing special educational provision. These are:

- communication and interaction;
- cognition and learning;
- social, emotional and mental health difficulties; and
- sensory and/or physical needs

Further information can be found within Section 6.28 - 6.35 of the 2015 SEND Code of Practice.

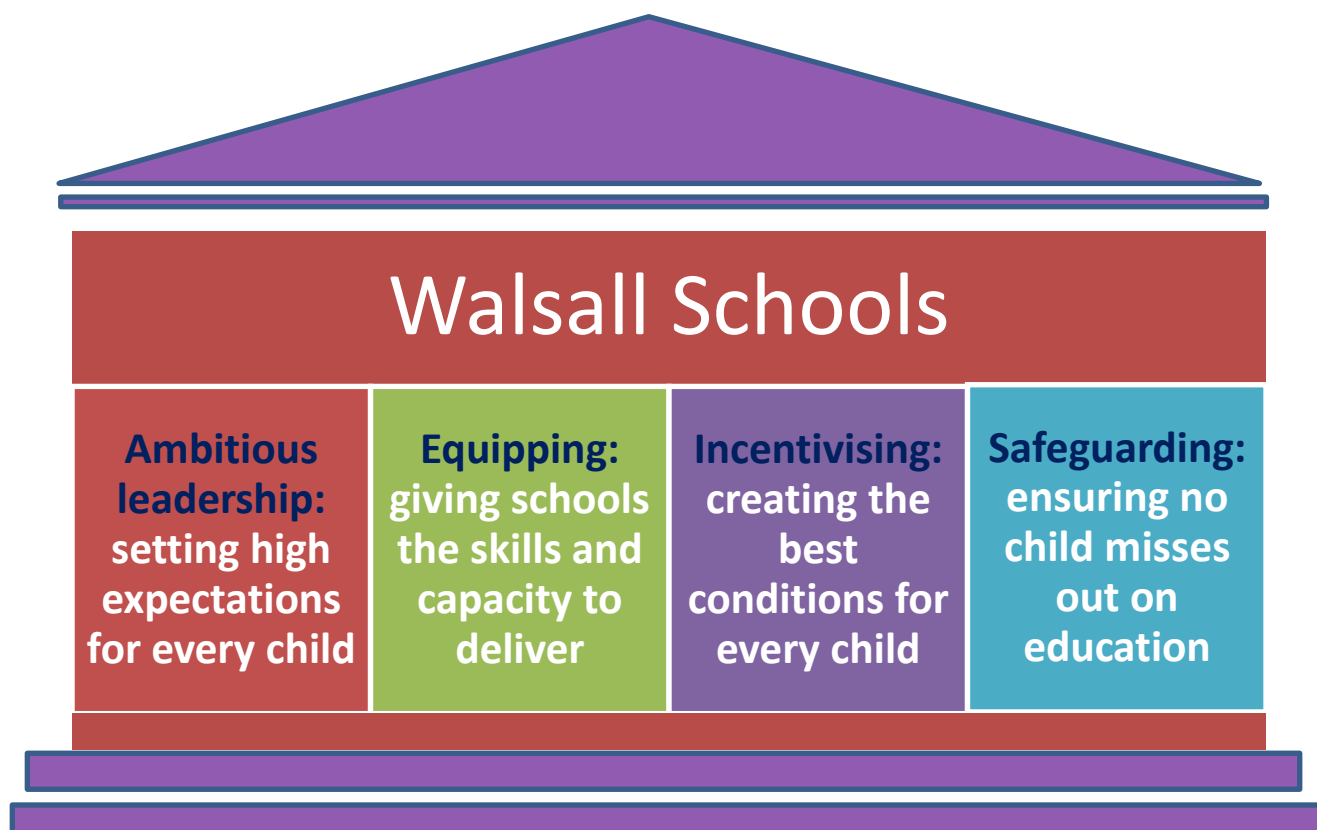


The Walsall Vision for SEND

This strategy is in line with the vision of Walsall Right for Children and Inclusion Strategy which states that Walsall will be an inclusive borough where all partners work collaboratively to ensure children and young people get the right support at the right time. Regardless of their learning needs or abilities, all children and young people in Walsall will be able to gain the skills and confidence to succeed.

We expect education, care and health services to be delivered in an integrated way so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children's and young people's learning and development, safety, well-being and health outcomes are well promoted alongside their educational progress and achievement.

Systemic improvement across Walsall is required to achieve the abovementioned, and in line with the Walsall Inclusion Strategy we put forward a vision for reforming practice built on four key pillars and identified in the education review conducted by Edward Timpson¹:



This strategy will build on changes and developments over the past 2 years including:

- Closer school sector working with schools supporting each other to address needs
- Improved collaborative work and information sharing such as Virtual Head Teacher briefings, SENCO Forums, Joint safeguarding and SEND Forums, locality working and a developed graduated approach to meeting needs
- A strategic joint commissioning approach to plan support and provision at all levels of need, including a focus on all age disabilities
- Review of Specialist Provision
- Ensuring that young people and parent voices are central to developments with an agreed co-production charter
- Improvement in the number of EHC Plans being completed in 20 weeks.
- A focus on key transition points and pathways to the next stage of education starting at age 2, 9 and 14 – focusing on planning two years in advance
- Successful improvement of our social care systems to build quality frameworks that address safeguarding needs

While this has all driven forward improvement, there is a clear recognition that more needs to be done to reach the aspirations that the local area has for its most vulnerable young people. This strategy provides the overarching focus for that to be achieved relating to children and young people with SEND.

¹ Timpson Review of School Exclusion, May 2019

National Policy and Local Responsibilities

This strategy is being implemented against a background of significant Government reforms to Education, Health and Social Care for children and young people with SEND and their families and/or carers. The overall purpose of the reforms are to join up support across health, education and social care from birth to 25, ensure early intervention, put children and parents at the centre of decision-making and ultimately facilitate better outcomes for children and young people. Walsall aim to ensure children and young people receive the right support at the right time, in line with our Walsall Right for Children vision.

Children and Families Act 2014

The Children and Families Act 2014 includes a number of changes to support better outcomes for children and young people with SEND, up to the age of 25. The responsibilities brought in under the Act include a focus from the early years on

Preparing for Adulthood

(PfA) outcomes that lead to fulfilling adult lives. The PfA outcomes cover paid employment, further and higher education, independent living, good health, friends, relationships and being part of the community.

The main elements of the 2014 Act are summarised below:

- SEND responsibilities have been extended from birth to 25 to help support young people into further education, employment and independent living and improve the transition between children's and adult services for those with the most complex SEND.
- 'Statements of SEN' are being replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) that outline the provision needed to support the child or young person to achieve aspirational outcomes.
- There are new decision making rights and responsibilities for children and young people from the age of 16 so that they are involved in shaping the support they receive and have more choice and control.
- Local authorities and key partners must provide the information and support necessary to enable participation in decision making for children, young people and their families. To support this, information about services for children and young people with SEND must be made available in a clear and easy to access manner through the 'Local Offer' website.
- Local authorities and key partners are required to jointly plan, commission and review services for children and young people with SEND.
- The right to a personal budget for the support to children, young people and families must be extended.

SEND Code of Practice 0-25

The Department for Education published the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice in 2014 and updated the document in 2015.

The Code reflects the changes introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014 and explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to provide for those with special educational needs under the Act.

This strategy is also informed by other legislation including the Mental Health Capacity Act 2005, the Equality Act 2010, the Autism Act 2009, and the Care Act 2014

ALL set out requirements that the local authority and its partners must adhere to for children and young people with SEND.

Local Context



Walsall has an overall school population of ^(a) 51,139 pupils. Of this, Department for Education (DFE) Local area SEND report has shown that the total number of students accessing SEN Support is 12.1%. This is slightly below the mean of 12.9% for the West Midlands.


(a) DFE 2021

Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans

2707 EHC Plans are maintained by Walsall Council*

EDUCATIONAL HEALTH & CARE PLAN

*Walsall statistical data 1 July 2021

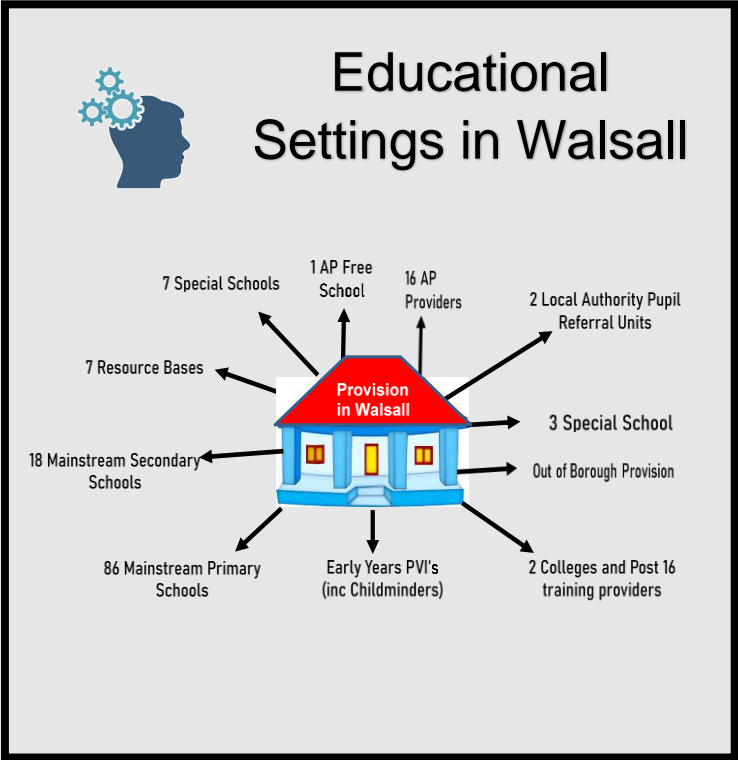


SEND Placements

Children and Young People (CYP) with an EHC Plan:

- 25.6% are attending maintained special schools
- 21% are attending a mainstream LA school
- 19.3% are attending a mainstream academy
- 13.6% attend a general further education and tertiary college/higher education

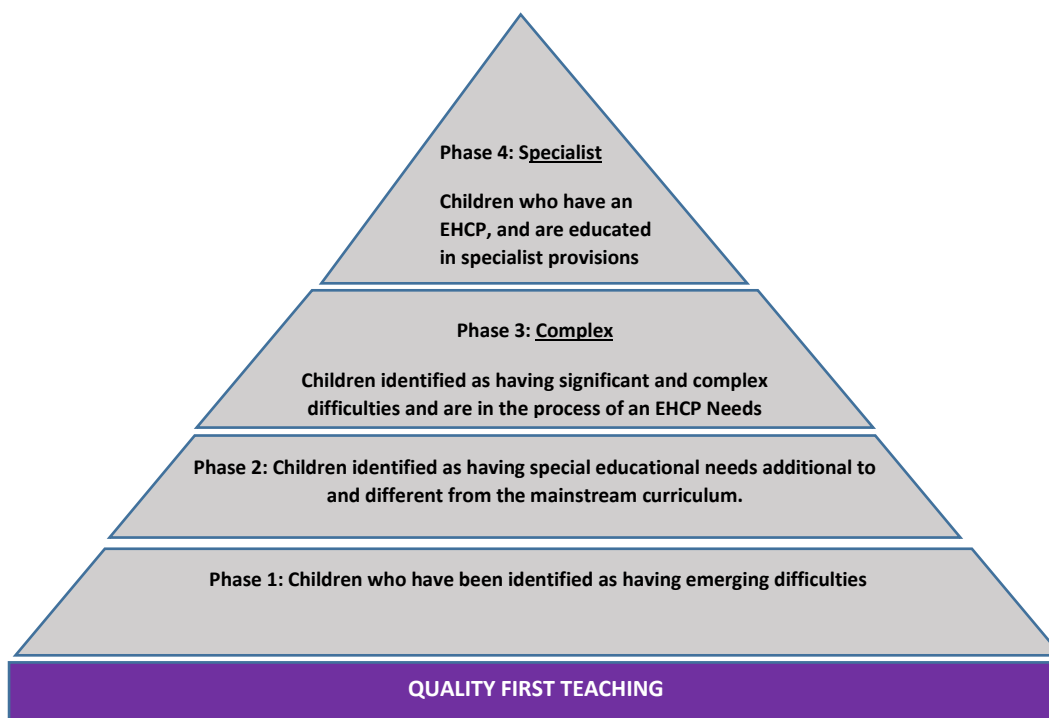
Walsall statistical data 1 July 2021



Walsall approach to supporting SEND

Walsall believe that every child and young person should have their needs met in their local community wherever possible. This includes local early year's settings and schools, further education colleges and work places. We believe that SEND Provision is NOT about a building; rather, identifying and implementing the most effective **inclusive** approaches to promoting the best outcomes for our children and young people. We expect all early years, post 16 providers, mainstream schools and academy's to make effective provision for children with SEND, in order for them to make good educational progress, which allows them to easily transition to the next stage of their education, employment and independent adult life.

Walsall adopts a graduated approach, illustrated in the diagram below to identify and support children and young people with SEND. [also see appendix...]



A graduated approach means that we expect reasonable adjustments to be made, ensuring that the majority of children and young people with SEN are able to have their needs met within a mainstream provision, thus allowing them to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers whilst being fully included within their communities.

Within the graduated approach, at the Universal level, needs are met through Quality First Teaching and Learning (QFT). Additionally, health and social care services can be provided at this level. QFT is provided to all children and young people, including those with SEND; all teachers are teachers of children and young people with special educational needs.

Support at the upper levels is tailored to meet the needs of the individual child or young person. For example, implementing the use of assistive technology, or using small group or individual interventions.

However it is recognised that some children and young people may require more complex specialist intervention to support their needs. Where children and young people require specialist support, we conduct a multi-agency assessment (Health and Care needs assessment) to determine what additional support they may require. If these assessments reveal that the child or young person requires a provision that is significantly different from that provided for other children or young people of their age, and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be written. The EHCP outlines what support and provision they require within the areas of educational, health and social care. More information about the graduated approach and EHCP's can be found on the Walsall [Local Offer website \[link\]](#).

Aim

The Aim of this SEND strategy is to turn high aspirations for all of our learners with SEND into a reality. The strategy outlines our vision, aims and values ensuring that we are working collaboratively to identify and meet the needs of Walsall's children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) from birth to the age of 25. This strategy does not exist in isolation and builds on the Inclusion Strategy, Walsall Right for Children and the outcomes of our Ofsted local area inspection in February 2019. We acknowledge that our vision and aims cannot be implemented and delivered by professionals alone. We are committed to working together with children and young people, as well as parents and carers, providing support as required, thus enabling an environment and conditions to be created, which allows them to thrive and achieve their personal goals and aspirations.



The Walsall borough aims to:

- Ensure a spirit of co-production and partnership with parents, their children and young people with SEND, involving them in all key decisions
- Work collaboratively with schools and partner agencies to deliver an effective SEND system which ensures effective early identification of need
- Have high expectations for all children and young people with SEND, ensuring that their local educational settings are inclusive and meet their needs
- Celebrate the successes of children and young people
- Commit to promoting and celebrating strong leadership and inclusive practice for children and young people with SEND across all phases of Walsall's schools and settings
- Ensure collaborative working with health partners and services to ensure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Ensure a rigorous focus on the preparation for adulthood outcomes

Strategic Priorities

In line with our vision and feedback from parents and carers we have identified 4 key priorities which we will focus on to shape the future direction of SEND services in Walsall. We recognise that these priorities cannot be delivered by individual organisations alone and we have a commitment to working together in partnership to achieve collective goals and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.



**1. A PERSON CENTRED APPROACH
[CO-PRODUCTION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR
PARENTS/CARERS]**

2. EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

**3. IMPROVE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE OUTCOMES
FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND**

**4. ENSURE THAT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND MAKE A
SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD**

1. A PERSON CENTRED APPROACH

We have a responsibility to place children and young people with SEND and their families at the heart of everything we do. We aim to ensure that they are involved in the development and design of all aspects of SEND services and provision. This will enable them to have improved choice and control over the support that they receive, allowing local services to meet their needs. Ensuring that the right information is available and accessible for all children and their parents/carers is a key factor. We have the responsibility to ensure the right support is provided to ensure they are able to actively and make informed decisions. The above mechanisms, will create an environment of co-production. Co-production meaning, a good working relationship between all professionals, children, young people and their parents/carers that draws on the knowledge, skills and resources of all to develop solutions.

Ensuring that children, young people and their families have access to the right information plays an important part in enabling them to participate in effective co-production. As part of the reforms in 2014, it was set out that information about local SEND services are to be made available in a clear and easy to read manner. Walsall Councils Local Offer provides information on provision and support services for adults. We are continuing developments to ensure that all children, young people are aware of these resources. The Local Offer website is under continual development to ensure that we are reviewing how information is presented and how the site is navigated. Walsall SENDIAS (<https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/walsall-sendiass/>) are also available to support children, young people and their parents with co-production.

What our parents, young people and partners have told us we need to do:

- Ensure that parents/carers, children and young people with SEND feel that they are being listened to
- Have a more transparent approach
- 'Work with', rather than 'doing to', children and their families, making sure they are meaningfully involved in all planning and decisions which may affect them
- Improve working relationship with Walsall's Parent Carer Forum (FACE) and other parent forums
- Embed good practice guidelines for co-production and train providers in this.
- Ensure that all children and families are aware of the Walsall Local Offer and how to access it

Our Objectives:

- Full implementation of the developed co-production charter
- Co-produce a youth engagement SEND strategy
- Ensure the voice of the young person and their family will be at the centre of all our services.
- Agree a programme of review and development discussions based on this strategy
- Continue to review and develop the Local Offer, ensuring that assessment and support processes are clear and easy available to all
- Services and schools will be open, honest and transparent about with families about what support is available
- Make sure Services and schools will work together to ensure good communication with children, young people and families that is focused on the individual child.

What will success look like?

- Feedback from children and their families will reflect high levels of satisfaction in regards to planning and review of the support that they receive.
- More children and their families will use Walsall's Local Offer website and find the info they need.
- The voice of the child or young person and parents and carers will be evident in all EHC plans and reviews.
- A reduction in complaints and tribunals.
- Young people with SEND and parents/carers will be actively involved in review, development and commissioning of services and provision.

2. EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS

The early identification of need is key to the future development of a child. Early diagnosis and support not only improves the child's ability to reach their academic potential, but also prevents the development of mental health difficulties such as low self-esteem and potential behavioural difficulties, which may further interfere with their ability to learn. Without early diagnosis, the potential to develop the skills they need to have a fulfilled and successful life as an adult can be greatly reduced.

What parents, young people and partners have told us we need to do:

- Ensure there is appropriate access to support when SEN needs are identified
- Improve post diagnosis support for parents and carers
- Improve access to emotional and well-being support for parents of children with new diagnosis
- Have appropriate access to mental health services with reduced wait times

Our Objectives:

- Identify children and young people as early as possible so they get the right support at the right time
- Ensure health services and early years education providers work collaboratively to make sure needs are identified and the appropriate support is put in place as soon as possible
- Use data to prioritise how we allocate and use the resources we have available to get the right skills, knowledge and funding in place to identify and assess needs in a timely manner
- Ensure appropriate information regarding SEND needs and post diagnostic support are available on the Local Offer
- Assess children and young people based on their individual needs and work collaboratively with families to understand what works and what needs to change
- Have clear assessment and review processes which describe who does what and when on an ongoing basis
- Have EHC Plans which are high quality and have a focus on long term aspirations and outcomes

What will success look like?

- Children and young people will have timely assessments of their strengths and difficulties which are used to create a plan so that they receive the right ongoing support and services
- Children and young people and their families will feel that they have been listened to and action has been taken
- Schools and services will understand and implement assessment and review processes working with families
- Services will work seamlessly together to assess children and young people, focusing on their needs over their diagnosis.

3. IMPROVE EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND

We want children and young people with SEND to be able to develop and thrive throughout their lives - from the early years right through to adulthood. We are aware that for children with additional needs this can be difficult, however Walsall have good provision in the early years and support that can address barriers to progress and development. We want to further develop these positive aspects in the early years, ensuring that children and young people continue to flourish and achieve their aspirations.

We are aware that children and young people with SEND can sometimes achieve lower outcomes compared to their peers without SEND, and this may have an impact on future opportunities and preparation for adult life. As a result, it is essential that we continue to develop and further improve progress and attainment for children and young people with SEND in Walsall to ensure they can go on to achieve their aspirations and the best outcomes later in life. As with all children and young people, those with SEND should be able to flourish in all aspects of their life and are supported to lead independent and fulfilled lives.

What parents, young people and partners have told us we need to do:

- Continue to develop capacity within the graduated approach, increase the knowledge and skills of staff in universal services and develop local area strategies shown to have a positive impact.
- Share good practice where children and young people with SEND have good progress
- Celebrate positive outcomes for SEND children and young people more widely
- Increase provision, so children and young people are able to remain in the local area
- Provide mental wellbeing support at universal level tier one and tier two.
- Improve access to mental health and wellbeing services
- Work to ensure that high quality teaching is consistent across Walsall so that those with SEND have access to supported learning.

Our Objectives:

- Provide a borough wide approach to inclusion in schools so that all children are made to feel welcome.
- Ensure that services are of high quality and meet young people's needs.
- Develop a programme where the success of children and young people with SEND can be celebrated more widely
- Commence a specialist provision review to ensure the most appropriate provision is available for children and young people with SEND
- Monitor and quality assure the impact of services. If issues with the quality of adequacy of services, we will take the appropriate action to ensure children and young people's needs are being met.
- Ensure schools are supported to make the physical learning environment as inclusive as possible.

What will success look like?

- The gap in attainment will be closing and show an improving trend for children with SEND.
- Improved progress from their starting point for all pupils with SEND.
- A reduction in the proportion of children and young people with SEND who are excluded or have poor attendance.
- A reduction in NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)
- A reduction in health inequalities.
- Reduction in waiting times to access mental health support services
- Children, young people and their parents/carers will have more self-care responsibilities and greater involvement in decisions about services.

4. ENSURE THAT ALL YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND MAKE A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

In order to achieve a happy and fulfilling adult life, transition to adulthood must begin early and include support for individuals to achieve their aspirations. Transition covers health, relationships, housing, employment and/or purposeful participation in the community with as much independence as possible. Continuing to develop transition for young people post-19 is key, to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and support to secure maximum independence in adulthood.

In terms of the transition from children's to adult's services, there is currently an integrated multi-agency transition pathway in development. This will provide a formal process for supporting young people before, during and after transition, and will provide clear roles and responsibilities to ensure young people get the right support at the right time.

What parents, young people and partners have told us we need to do:

- Work in collaboration to ensure transition plans are developed from age 14.
- Develop young people's decision making skills - to make decisions independently of parents/carers.
- Ensure that professionals and parents support the voice of the child and encourage choice and control from age 16.
- Share guidance on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and the Care Act 2014; provide training where necessary.
- Ensure that we equip all young people with the skills needed for independent living.
- Increase opportunities for supported living in the local community.
- Increase the accessibility and range of social and leisure activities for those with SEND.
- Create 'safe places' in the community where young people with SEND can seek help when out in the local community. For example local shops and businesses with recognisable signs on display
- Have reference to the Autism Act 2009

Our Objectives:

- Develop pathways of support and intervention for young people from age 2, age 9 and age 14.
- Provide clear support to parents and carers to support their child at key transition stages, ensuring they are at the centre of the process

- Ensure that early intervention and social care teams work with education and health services to begin transition planning early
- Ensure clear pathways for children and young people as they move through education stages into adult life, ensuring services and processes across education, health and care are joined up
- Use available data and information from listening to children and young people, and their families to inform commissioning, in order for the right provision is implemented in line with the needs of the child/young person
- Work with employers to develop employment opportunities for young people with SEND, including supported internships, work experience and volunteering

What will success look like?

- All young people who need one will have a transition plan in place from age 14.
- There will be:
- An increase in the number of young people with SEND in Walsall who are in education, employment or training (EET).
- Increase in number of young people aged 19+ with SEND who are in a positive destination.
- Developed Supported Internship Programme with increased numbers
- Increase in the number of adults with learning disabilities living in the community.
- Increase in the number of adults with learning disabilities in employment.
- A reduction in health inequalities.
- Young people and families tell us they are happy.

FACE

FACE Walsall, is the Parent Carer forum for the borough of Walsall is led by parents for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-25 with additional support needs and disabilities in Walsall. They work in partnership with commissioners and service providers across health, social services and education.

The aim of the Parent Carer Forum is to enable parents and carers to share their knowledge of what works and what does not work so well; and to help service providers and commissioners focus their efforts on effective, high quality support.

More details can be found here: <https://facewalsall.wordpress.com>



Strategy Implementation

In order to deliver the aims and priorities within this strategy, we will put in place a robust action plan which details how we will ensure delivery and implementation of the SEND strategy.

The action plan will cover all areas of the SEND strategy and will include:

- SMART (Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound) outcomes
- Resource implications, including funding
- Timescales for delivery

This action plan will be reviewed, updated and be published accordingly via the local offer.



Feedback and Comments

We would be pleased to receive your comments on this strategy document. If you have any feedback, please email SEN@walsall.gov.uk. We would welcome suggestions about ways of improving this document and examples of good practice.

APPENDIX 1: Key Legislation and Guidance

Autism Act. 2009

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/15/pdfs/ukpga_20090015_en.pdf

Children and Families Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

Equality Act 2010:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf

Equality Act: Schedule 10

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>

Equality Act 2010: Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability (specifically schedule 10).

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85010/disability-definition.pdf

The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012): Technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/educationproviders/schools-guidance/key-concepts/reasonable-adjustments>

SEND Code of Practice 2014 revised 2015 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

SENDIAS – Family Action

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/walsall-sendias/>

Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/pdfs/uksi_20141530_en.pdf

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014) (DFE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>