

Everyone's included: the Leeds SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027 - Update

Date: 30th November 2022

Report of: Director of Children and Families

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Summary

This report updates on our co-production of the new Leeds strategy '*Everyone's Included*', which aims to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people (CYP) aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This strategy was shared in its draft form at an earlier meeting of the Board and has been informed by discussions at that meeting. The final strategy was approved by the SEND partnership board and is now in the process of publication.

At this meeting, we will also provide a brief presentation detailing our journey to co-produce the strategy with CYP with SEND and their families, our partners across learning, health, and social care, and our voluntary sector partners. We will describe governance and implementation arrangements, which will continue to ensure a partnership approach.

The strategy reinforces the duties of local authorities, health bodies, and education providers to provide for those with SEND under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The strategy also aligns with the recommendations of the recent Green Paper [The SEND Review: right support, right place, right time](#), which has been published since the Board last considered the strategy in draft form.

Recommendations

- a) That the Scrutiny Board supports communication and implementation of the new strategy, considering the views shared by CYP with SEND during its co-production: 'It's really important for leaders and people with influence to speak up for inclusion'.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report is about our new Leeds strategy '*Everyone's included: the Leeds SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027*'. This strategy aims to make Leeds an inclusive child-friendly city for our children and young people (CYP) aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The strategy is appended (see Appendix 1).
- 2 It is the statutory duty of the Council under the Children and Families Act 2014 to co-produce this strategy with partners (including CYP with SEND, their families, partners across education, health, social care, and the voluntary and community sector) and publish it. The strategy sets out local arrangements for fulfilling the duties of local authorities (LAs), health bodies, and education providers (early education providers, mainstream, alternative, and specialist schools, post-16 and post-19 providers) under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, as set out in the [SEND Code of Practice 2014](#). It is also the statutory duty of the Council to set out arrangements for supporting young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood.
- 3 The new strategy responds to a changing and challenging national and local context.
- 4 Locally there are challenges around recruitment and retention of professionals across Social Care, Learning Inclusion, Health and the wider partnership which have led to periodic reduced capacity that has impacted on the consistency and timeliness of support and statutory work delivered to children and families. The service is working proactively with partners to address the current challenges, the work that is underway is set out in paragraph 19 of this report.
- 5 Nationally, a Green Paper, [The SEND Review: right support, right place, right time](#) ('the SEND Review') proposes significant reforms to services for CYP with SEND across learning, health, and care services. A White Paper is expected to be announced by the end of 2022.
- 6 The findings and recommendations of the SEND review mirror the priorities our local families and partners have shared with us, and which have formed the basis of our new local strategy:
 - The need for **a system-wide focus on providing high-quality universal education, health, and care services**. Joined-up commissioning and planning of services, and joined-up practices, based on shared principles, a shared language, and joint approach to managing data across a shared outcomes framework, are vital to deliver '*the right support, in the right place, at the right time*' – or, to use the language of our Leeds Early Help approach, to '*have the right conversations, with the right people, at the right time*'.
 - This must be underpinned by **a consistent ethos of, and commitment to, inclusion across all our learning places and services, actively promoted by leaders**. Most CYP with SEND should be able to, and have a right to, learn and participate alongside their peers, in their local mainstream schools, settings and services.
 - Inclusive schools, settings and services **depend on a skilled, confident, supported, and resilient workforce. We need unified, consistent approaches to inclusive practice, led by or with practitioners delivering excellent practice**, to enable equitable experiences and improved outcomes for CYP and families. The government in announcing the SEND review, has pledged to invest in professional development to support inclusive practice and leadership in universal services.
 - **Consistent, high-quality practice in early identification and assessment of needs, and quality planning to meet needs, with a focus on meaningful outcomes, are critical.**

- While most CYP should be able to access mainstream schools, settings and services, there is a growing minority, in Leeds and nationally, of CYP who have very complex learning, health, and care needs. **We need to increase numbers of places in diverse, high-quality provision that can meet growing numbers of CYP with complex needs**, including provision for those aged 16 to 25. The SEND Review, and [the 2019 Timpson review of children missing education due to school exclusions](#), also emphasise the needs of learners vulnerable to exclusion from school and **the importance of quality alternative provision** to meet their needs. The Government has pledged to invest in new specialist and alternative learning places, and in more ‘wrap-around services’ and ‘respite care’ childcare provision.
 - The SEND review also emphasises **clarity in accountability across local SEND systems**. It proposes new ‘SEND partnerships’ in every local area, each with a shared local strategy for improving the experiences and outcomes of CYP in learning, health, and care, and clear lines of accountability for implementation.
 - This has prompted **Ofsted and the CQC to review the framework for their joint inspections of SEND services, proposing to increase scrutiny** of local areas’ effectiveness in improving experiences and outcomes for CYP with SEND. The new inspection framework will come into force in 2023.
 - The [proposed changes to the Ofsted and CQC inspection framework](#), which are due to be finally determined by the end of 2022, seek to: increase representation of the voices of CYP with SEND and their families in assessing the effectiveness of local areas; increase scrutiny of integrated working, by introducing new social care lead inspectors to join inspection teams alongside the current learning and health inspectors; increase the scope of inspections to include alternative provision; and introduce a new ongoing cycle of inspections, which includes full inspections, monitoring visits and annual engagement meetings. Introduction of 3 new inspection outcomes is also proposed, to provide clearer information about how an area is performing, what needs to improve and who is accountable. There will also be an expectation that all areas produce and publish a strategic plan for SEND, which is updated following inspection.
- 7 Our local strategy (detailed version attached, Appendix 1) sets out our local response to the national agenda and to the views and experiences shared by our local CYP and their families.
 - 8 We aim to publish the strategy in both the detailed form appended, and in a much shorter ‘quick and easy read’ format which will be immediately accessible on our Leeds Local Offer website. The Local Offer website sets out all local services and strategies supporting CYP with SEND, across the learning, health, and care partnership, and voluntary and community organisations.
 - 9 We aim to communicate the strategy from December 2022, using a wide range of communication mechanisms, for example via local networks of key partners in learning, health; and care; e-bulletins to partners and families; social media, including our new Facebook account for parents and carers of CYP with SEND in Leeds; Child Friendly Leeds communications and networks; our new Parent Carer Forum; and our new Leeds Youth Forum. A communications plan, is currently in production.
 - 10 Young people involved in co-production of the strategy have told us that they are keen to see local leaders and influencers support communications, to ‘show that inclusion is important to them’. The name of our strategy, ‘*Everyone’s included*’, was suggested by young people who wanted to share the message that ‘everyone’s included’ in making our city a child-friendly and inclusive place.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 11 The new strategy aims to improve the experiences and outcomes of CYP with SEND across their attendance, attainment and achievement in learning; their preparation for adulthood; their participation, and ability to have a voice and influence change; and their health and well-being, including their social, emotional and mental health and well-being. It aims to reduce the significant 'gap' between outcomes for these CYP and their peers without SEND, which is an issue nationally as well as locally.
- 12 This makes a vital contribution to our Child Friendly City agenda. A child-friendly city is one where CYP most vulnerable to inequalities, can thrive alongside their peers.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 13 **Health and well-being:** The *Everyone's included* SEND and Inclusion strategy and associated improvements, make a crucial contribution to our Leeds Health and Wellbeing strategy, as indicated in the strategy document (Appendix 1). The physical, mental, emotional and social health and well-being of CYP (alongside their learning, participation, ability to have a voice and influence change) are prime concerns of the statute which requires the LA to co-produce the strategy and publish it. The CQC will be scrutinising the effectiveness of our Leeds multi-agency arrangements to promote the health and well-being of CYP with SEND, during their joint area inspections with Ofsted.
- 14 **Inclusive growth:** the outcomes of CYP with SEND in terms of preparation for independent adulthood and post-16 and post-19 education, training, and employment, are critical to a prosperous city. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) at 2021 reports [significant inequalities for disabled adults across qualifications, employment, housing, and emotional and mental well-being](#). 'Around half of disabled people aged 16 to 64 years (53.5%) in the UK were in employment compared with around 8 in 10 (81.6%) for non-disabled people; people with severe or specific learning difficulties, autism and mental illness had the lowest employment rates'. There is also notable cost to the exclusion of learners: according to analysis of the costs of a single permanent exclusion from school, when considering long-term factors such as unemployment, interaction with the justice system, and poor health outcomes, costs to the city are at least £200,000 per annum. Identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable learners earlier, is crucial to preventing inequalities and increasing the prosperity of our population.
- 15 **Zero Carbon:** Implementation of the strategy will have a positive impact:
- Ensuring adequate support for CYP with SEND to travel independently using public transport, especially where CYP have been dependent on travel by taxi
 - Ensuring new learning places, or expansion to existing learning places, are designed with consideration to effective use of energy.
 - Ensuring a continuum of provision to meet CYP's learning needs is available in each area of the city, thus avoiding extensive travel for learners without suitable local provision.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: all wards; city-wide agenda.

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

Members have had, and have engaged with, consultation opportunities shared widely but not in the specific context of wards.

16 Co-production activities that have informed the *Everyone's Included* strategy include:

Initial scoping, 2019:

- An early survey of the families of CYP with SEND to identify their key priorities at the beginning of the co-production process; approx. 230 participants
- Follow-up focus groups to dig deeper into common themes in responses to the above
- A large-scale conference with a range of multi-agency partners, with over 100 attendees

'Testing' key elements of an emerging draft strategy, informed by early scoping, 2021/22:

- Online information (with paid promotions to target parents/carers and parent/carer interest groups), accessed by over 30,000 individuals (at a cost of just £50). Around 3000 'interact' with information – 'likes', 'shares' etc.
- [Approx. 550 partners](#) take part in 1-hour online workshops, tailored/bespoke activities for specific groups, or discussion items at meetings of key partners, and/or complete detailed surveys to share their views.
- Meetings attended to discuss the emerging strategy include: every Family of Schools meeting in Leeds (covering virtually all school leaders); Area Inclusion Partnership Chairs; Secondary Head Teachers Forum; Post-16 leaders network; specialist school leaders meeting; West Yorks. Children with Additional Needs forum; Leeds Health SEND steering group; Early Help Board; and more!
- A new SEND Youth Forum was established during the co-production period and its members responded positively to sessions offered to discuss their views on the emerging strategy.
- A new Parent/Carer Forum was also established due to the closure of the former local parent and carer participation group, EPIC Leeds, which was funded by the DfE to support participation in local SEND developments. Our Voice, Influence, and Change (VIC) Team have maintained an active forum for parent/carer participation in Leeds. The new Forum will contribute to implementation of the strategy and will play a key role in its governance and evaluating progress.

What are the resource implications?

17 Work is underway to identify the resource needed to fully implement the strategy across the wider Leeds learning, health and care partnership, and to self-assure and self-assess our services in line with the new Ofsted and CQC Framework. There will be significant implications for teams across the LA and local health agencies, including teams supporting quality, joined-up information and data management across the partnership.

18 Resource for implementation was considered at the new CYP's Population Board on 8th November 2022 (this Board is part of the new joint national and local approach to commissioning and delivering health services via an integrated care partnership of LA services and health agencies) with further focussed discussion planned for the next board meeting.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

19 Key risks were discussed at the new CYP's Population Board on 8th November and a detailed risk register following this meeting is now being co-produced with shared responsibilities across all partners. Potential risks identified include:

- Limited capacity of teams to support implementation of the strategy, self-assessment of our services in line with the new inspection framework, management of associated risks; and joined-up approaches to managing data and information. Pressures on capacity reflect the rising population of CYP with complex SEND, and the financial pressures on services.
- Increased pressures financially, including great pressures on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, which is the key source of funding for schools and education settings supporting CYP with higher level SEND needs.
- It will also be important to ensure our governance arrangements are robust, and to secure engagement from key leaders across the partnership in governance arrangements and ensuring accountability.

20 Activity to mitigate these risks is already underway and include

- establishment of a strategic multi-agency steering group
- invest to save proposals to increase capacity to support schools in the inclusion agenda and prevent difficulties escalating
- development of data intelligence to support targeting of resources
- development of multi-agency working groups sitting alongside each priority with clear action plans
- a robust recruitment and retention strategy
- support for colleagues wellbeing through individual and group supervision responsive to wider workplace issues and individual needs

What are the legal implications?

21 It is the statutory duty of the Council under the Children and Families Act 2014 to co-produce this strategy with partners (including CYP with SEND, their families, partners across education, health, social care, and the voluntary and community sector) and to publish it. The strategy sets out local arrangements for fulfilling the duties of local authorities (LAs), health bodies, and education providers (early education providers, mainstream, alternative, and specialist schools, post-16 and post-19 providers) under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, as set out in the [SEND Code of Practice 2014](#). It is also the statutory duty of the Council to set out arrangements for supporting young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

22 Not applicable – this strategy must be co-produced and published, by law (point 19).

How will success be measured?

23 We will use a combined approach of:

- Listening to the voices of CYP with SEND and their families: as per the new Ofsted and CQC inspection Framework, the views of CYP and families in reflecting their own

experiences and outcomes, and in critically assessing the progress of the strategy and its work-streams, will be vital. Our new SEND Youth Forum and Parent Carer Forum will be an invaluable mechanism for engagement, linked to the SEND Partnership Board

- Listening to the voices of our practitioners and leaders across learning, health, and care services, including the private, voluntary and community sectors
- A shared outcomes Framework which takes a holistic view of data about CYP's outcomes in learning, health, care, and well-being. This will be driven nationally, in association with the SEND Review, but we await final confirmation of detail (expected by the end of 2022). Locally, in the interim we will consider a range of meaningful outcomes data, including for example: the length of time CYP wait for assessments of their needs, and access to support to meet those needs; learning outcomes at each key stage; numbers of YP at age 17 and age 19 who are in education, employment, training; numbers of CYP with SEND who are excluded.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

- 24 There will be two phases of implementation for this five year strategy; the first has commenced in 2022 (pragmatically, some projects cannot wait for the details of governance and lines of accountability to be defined) and phase 2 will be planned as the final responses to the Green Paper and new statute, are confirmed. (It was expected that we would have that final response, in 2021, but the impact of the pandemic on timescales for the national Review, has been significant; hence taking this phased approach to planning).
- 25 Responsibilities for implementation is currently being determined across the learning, health, and care partnership through the strategic steering group with specific arrangements being shared at the CYP's Population Board,

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – A copy of 'Everyone's included: the Leeds SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2027. Making Leeds an inclusive child-friendly city for our children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND and additional needs'.
- Appendix 2 – Details of the Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening in relation to the Leeds SEND and Inclusion strategy 2022 – 2027.

Background papers

- None