

Report subject	Special Educational Needs & Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy
Meeting date	26 May 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>Children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) have high aspirations for their future. In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole we want to support all children and young people to enjoy their childhood and develop the skills, confidence and resilience to achieve their goal of a positive and successful adult life.</p> <p>The Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy has been created in partnership with stakeholders. It sets out our ambition for children and young people with SEND, supporting delivery of the council's Big Plan.</p> <p>The ambitions in the strategy will be realised through the delivery plan, overseen by the SEND Improvement Board.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Cabinet notes how the strategy was developed in partnership and agree the strategy.</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To agree BCPs shared partnership ambition for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.</p> <p>To support BCP Council in meeting its legal responsibilities in relation to special educational needs and disabilities.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Mike White, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People Councillor Nicola Greene, Portfolio Holder for Covid Resilience, Schools and Skills
Corporate Director	Elaine Redding, Interim Corporate Director, Children's Services
Contributors	Simon McKenzie, Head of Service, SEND Claire Webb, SEND Improvement Programme Manager
Wards	All wards
Classification	For decision

Background

1. Within BCP all stakeholders have high aspirations for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). In order to ensure children and young people achieve their potential it is crucial that local partners work together including children and young people themselves, their parents and carers, the council, health, education providers, and the voluntary and private sectors.
2. SEND describes a broad spectrum of needs. This could be a child needing occasional support in school through to a child requiring 24 hour support and care. The level of support may vary during their life depending on their circumstances.
3. In 2014, the Children and Families Act was introduced with a view to reforming the delivery of support and services for children and young people with SEND to ensure:
 - the participation of children, their parents and young people in decision- making
 - the early identification of needs and early intervention to support them
 - greater choice and control for young people and parents over support
 - collaboration between education, health and social care services
 - high quality provision
 - a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
 - successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment
4. The creation of the new BCP area has created the opportunity to create a new strategy. SEND strategies were already in place for Bournemouth, Christchurch (via Dorset County Council) and Poole, this new strategy both replaces and builds upon existing strategies providing one BCP strategy.
5. This report explains how the strategy has been developed and provides an overview of the goals and aspirations of BCP Council.

Developing the strategy

6. This strategy has been developed in consultation with stakeholders including the Local Authority, children and young people and their parent carers, schools and our health colleagues.

7. The starting point was gathering the views of children and young people with SEND and their parent carers. This included a workshop with young people with SEND through Chatterboxes YMCA Youth Project (disability action group) and SPACE LGBTQ (a youth group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and questioning young people) who ran a SEND specific engagement event. This event had a focus on the future and preparing for adulthood.
8. This was complimented through reviewing our performance data with a focus on outcomes and service delivery as well as findings from the SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, national research and best practice from other areas.
9. The Local Government Association (LGA) SEND peer challenge in January 2020 recommended the wider involvement of parents, parents/carers and children and young people. A stakeholder event was planned, however, due to Covid alternative arrangements had to be made:
 - a. Stakeholders including parent carers, schools/education providers, health, the council were invited to identify their priorities and feedback on the draft strategy via email.
 - b. Children and young people with SEND were invited to share their views through two different routes:
 - i. Tells us what makes them happy (this was part of a wider piece of work to also inform the new Children and Young People's Plan)
 - ii. 'Tells us': What is important to you? What could make things even better? What stops you doing the things you want to do? What do you like about school/college? And What do you want to do when you are older?
10. During April/May 2020 a survey for all pupils (with and without SEND) was carried out to understand their sense of belonging and connection to their school during the Coronavirus school closure and what schools could do to support them. A total of 3158 children and young people completed the survey and the summary of responses considered.
11. Children and young people with SEND have told us that they typically find online engagement difficult, and we know that it is not accessible to the those with more complex needs. This was further hampered by covid 19. Whilst overall feedback was from good range of children and young people, engagement and response levels were lower than we had hoped. Key to the strategy is our commitment to co-production and work has been commenced to increase participation with children and young people going forward.
12. This feedback has informed and shaped a revised draft strategy which was approved on 22nd March 2021 by the SEND Improvement Board. This is the local area partnership Board driving improvement in SEND outcomes which reports to the Health & Wellbeing Board. The Board which was established in the Summer 2020 has representatives from parent carers, health, the Local Authority, across the education sector, voluntary sector, and is independently chaired by an LGA advisor.

Overview of the strategy

13. The strategy sets out the mission of local partners, including BCP Council, to ensure that all children and young people with SEND have brighter futures, fulfilled lives and are part of their local communities:

- Experiencing inclusion in every aspect of their lives.
- Achieving their full potential.
- Being partners, alongside their families, in developing provision and services.

14. Central to the strategy are the 5 priorities principles across the parentships:

- a. Strong Leadership and Governance Across Partners
- b. Working Together (co-production)
- c. Young people are prepared for adulthood and achieve their full potential
- d. Inclusion in education and the local community
- e. SEND Joint commissioning

15. These priorities drive the collective work of partners underpinning the improvement work being undertaken and the final section of the strategy sets out how partners will ensure the strategy is delivered.

Summary of financial implications

16. The strategy outlined is for service improvement. Delivery of the plan is overseen by the multi-stakeholder BCP SEND Improvement Board, which is independently chaired, with representatives from BCP Council, Parent Carers Together, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, the education sector, the voluntary and community sector, and health providers. This Board was set up following a peer review of SEND services and has no representation or remit to consider or monitor finances. Ofsted in inspecting services similarly do not take financial considerations into account and services are graded on performance only.

17. The strategy will be delivered by partnership working with budgets across the system being used to support children identified with additional needs.

18. Budgets for council services supporting children with SEND will be monitored in the usual way and any significant variances reported to Council. These budgets include, for example, commissioned SEND school transport services and staffing costs supporting service activities in the strategy.

19. The cost of education provision for children with high needs is funded through the ring-fenced dedicated schools grant (DSG). This grant is allocated to the council by the Department for Education and how it is spent and reported on is highly regulated. Some funding for pupils with high needs is delegated to mainstream schools through a formula. A central budget provides for costs above delegated amounts and funding for special schools, other specialist providers and centrally provided services. Latest projections for 2021/22 include that a central budget of £57 million is required in 2021/22.

20. The DSG retained high needs budgets have experienced growing demand and cost pressures for some years. The funding gap identified currently is £8.3 million for 2021/22. This financial position and the associated accumulated deficit recovery plan will be considered going forward through a new High Needs Recovery Board, chaired by the chief executive. The aim of the strategy is to re-direct funding to better value for money services, including more locally available school places. Other services supporting the children and families across the partnership spectrum will also need to be agile and responsive to this high need group, especially as the demographic projections indicate that the numbers of children and young people with complex needs will continue to increase over the next 5-25 years.

Summary of legal implications

21. There are no direct legal impacts arising from this strategy, it will however support the Council in meeting its legal responsibilities regarding SEND.

Summary of human resources implications

22. There are no direct human resource impacts as a result of the strategy, any human resource impacts arising from the implementation of the strategy will be assessed through the delivery plan/associated implementation work.

Summary of sustainability impact

23. There are no sustainability impacts arising from this strategy, any sustainability impacts arising from the implementation of the strategy will be assessed through the delivery plan/associated implementation work.

Summary of public health implications

24. There are no direct public health impacts. As a result of the strategy, however the work arising from the strategy is in part intended to support children and young people to stay healthy.

Summary of equality implications

25. A full equality impact assessment has been carried out (Appendix 2). No actual or potential negative outcomes from the strategy have been identified. The proposed strategy will have a positive equality impact in relation to the following protected characteristics: age, disability and special education needs. We also know from service data that children and young people can also have additional needs or face additional challenges due to being in care or care experienced for example.
26. National research shows that SEND can be a result of poverty as well as a cause of poverty: across the UK, children with SEND are more likely to experience poverty than others and are less likely to experience a fulfilling education or leave school with outcomes that reduce the chances of living in poverty as adults (Joseph Rowntree Foundation Special educational needs and their links to poverty, February 2016). This indicates that the strategy could also have a positive impact in terms of socio-economic status.

Summary of risk assessment

27. There are no direct risks created by the strategy, risks will be assessed through the delivery plan/associated work to implement the strategy. The absence of a strategy potentially risks the Council and local area partners being less effective in working together to improve outcomes.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – BCP SEND and Inclusion Strategy

Appendix 2 – Equality Impact Assessment