

**Strategy for
Special Educational Needs and Disability
2012-16**

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Foreword

Cambridgeshire County Council has always placed a high priority on developing inclusive practices where we recognise and value every child's strengths, abilities and needs. In this document we describe our four year strategy to raise aspirations and improve outcomes for children and young people aged 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

I am grateful for the contribution of parents and carers, young people, schools and other partners to the development of this important strategy for SEND. The commitment of so many people and organisations to the consultation which underpins this strategy demonstrates a real strength in our partnership working. By further developing these existing partnerships and through joint planning and delivery of services, I am confident that we will improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Adrian Loades

Executive Director: Children and Young People's Services and Adult Social Care
Cambridgeshire County Council

Section 1 – Introduction

Background

In this document we describe Cambridgeshire County Council's four year strategy for children and young people aged 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND). It replaces the Cambridgeshire SEN strategy produced in 2005.

A review of our approach to SEND in Cambridgeshire began in 2010 to ensure that our policy and practice reflect the many changes and recommendations made at national level. These include the Equality Act (2010) and the Government Green Paper '*Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*' (SEN Green Paper) issued in 2011. Whilst being clear about what we want to achieve with partners over the next four years, we will be flexible in our approach so that we can respond to on-going legislative and funding changes.

Our Vision

In Cambridgeshire, our vision is to ensure that all children and young people with SEND have a full range of support and opportunities available to them. This will enable them to become confident individuals, effective communicators, successful learners and responsible citizens, and achieve the life outcomes to which they and their families aspire. To achieve this will require professionals and local communities to work effectively together. We also want to ensure that parents and carers have greater confidence by giving them better access to information and greater opportunity to participate in decision making. We will strive to make our SEND processes more flexible and transparent.

The Principles

The underlying principles of our vision are that all children and young people have important rights. These include being safe, feeling valued, enjoying learning and achieving success through participation in education, community and family life. To protect these rights we are committed to the following principles:

- Involving children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers in all decisions about them.
- Ensuring the inclusion and participation of children and young people with SEND in all aspects of family, school and community life.
- Receiving the right support at the right time.

We are committed to ensuring that disabled children and their families have the support they need as a matter of course. Disabled children and their families have the same human rights, including the right to the same quality of life as those who do not live with a disability. We recognise that all families are different, so they will need different types and levels of support depending on the age of their child and the impact of their disability.

To put these principles into action we have identified good practice guidelines that provide a framework to improve our services for children and young people with SEND. These are summarised in Appendix 1.

Who are our Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disability?

In this strategy we recognise that SEND encompasses children and young people with a broad range of needs. For some the focus of support will be wholly educational. For others their families will need support from a number of statutory services and this will continue throughout their childhood and may continue into adulthood. A child or young person may have special educational needs or a disability or both. We will first consider the definition for Special Educational Needs (SEN) and then for disability.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

At the time of publication of this strategy the Department for Education (DfE) is undergoing a process of consultation to change the SEN Code of Practice (2001). Until new legislation becomes law the definition used in the SEN Code of Practice remains statutory and is as follows:

'Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Children have a learning difficulty if they:

Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age; or

Have a disability which prevents or hinders the child from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for children of the same age in schools within the area of the local education authority; or

Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would so do 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.'

SEN Code of Practice (2001)

Disability

The Equality Act (2010) has replaced all existing equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Within this, disability is defined when:

- a) the person has a physical or mental impairment, and*
- b) the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities*

Equality Act (2010)

The working definition for disability used within Cambridgeshire by Children's Social Care and Short Break services is:

The needs of the disabled child or young person are beyond those of a non-disabled child of the same age and means they are likely to require lifelong support in the future from statutory services.

SEND Data for Cambridgeshire

According to SEND census data January 2011, there are 17,268 children and young people in Cambridgeshire identified by schools as having SEN. This is 22.3 % of the school population and is slightly higher than the national average of 21%. These children have needs in any one or more areas related to learning, communication, sensory, physical or behavioural, social and emotional need. The children with the most severe learning and behavioural needs will have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SSEN). This sets out the statutory provision to which the child is entitled (SEN Code of Practice 2001). Within Cambridgeshire schools there are currently 2,503 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs which is 3.2% of our school population. This is higher than the national average of 2.8% of the school population. Our total number of children and young people aged 0-19 with a Statement of Special Educational Need across Cambridgeshire is just over 2,800.

Nationally, 1.2% of the child population is recognised as having a disability with a high level of need. This percentage was applied when targeting the Aiming High short break programme and now the Short Break Duty (April 2011). For Cambridgeshire this identifies approximately 1,600 children and young people under 19 years with a disability. Approximately 1,100 children and young people with disability are receiving short breaks or other social care services (January 2012).

Analysis of our SEND census data shows us that the proportion of children and young people with SEND is higher in Cambridgeshire in comparison to national data and other similar Local Authorities (our statistical neighbours). It also shows us that there is a significant gap between the attainment of those with SEND and those without.

For a full analysis of the SEND data for Cambridgeshire please refer to the SEND Data Analysis Report 2012 that can be found at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Financial and Policy Context

In the current economic climate the financial pressure on public sector services is acute. In Cambridgeshire, we are required to set reduced budgets for many of our services over the next four years. Nevertheless, we recognise that within these financial constraints there is a genuine opportunity to reduce bureaucracy and increase effectiveness. To achieve this we must ensure that our provision targets the right children and young people at the right time. We will maximise the skills of those working with children and young people and streamline efforts across services through joint working practices.

Currently the way that the funding system works is that services provided by the Local Authority are funded through the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant (LACSEG). Local maintained schools will continue to receive SEN funding directly from the Local Authority. The schools that have Academy status will receive direct funding from the Department for Education (DfE) for some elements of SEN/Additional Needs for children and young people with SEND. The DfE will recoup this funding from Cambridgeshire County Council. Academies, like all schools, are expected to provide a high quality education for all children, including those with SEND. Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SSEN) must be given priority for admission to the school specified on the SSEN, with a legal duty on all schools to make the provision as identified within the SSEN.

On the 26th March 2012 a paper was issued for consultation by the DfE setting out far reaching changes to the way that schools and Local Authorities are funded. Both the proposals and the timescale are ambitious. In responding, the County Council will seek to ensure that there is sufficient funding and services to enable children and young people with SEND to achieve and succeed.

Section 2 – The Consultation Process

An essential and valuable contribution to the strategy came from a three month consultation with children and young people with SEND and their parents or carers. In addition, we consulted in depth with schools, our own services and other partners.

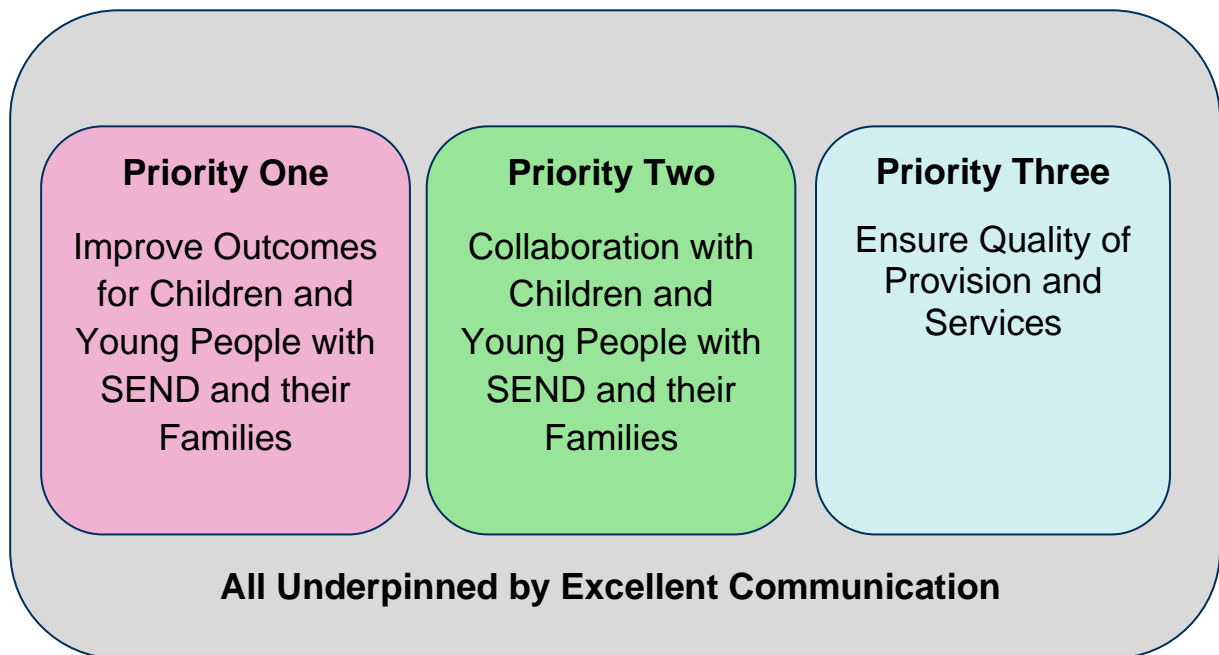
This consultation included:

- On-line questionnaire for parents and carers (*118 responses*)
- On-line questionnaire for partners (*199 responses*)
- Questionnaires for children and young people (*50 responses*)
- Four area based parent events (*200 parents*)
- An event for young people aged 14 to 25 years old (*14 young people supported by 3 voluntary organisations*)
- An event with key NHS staff (*19 attendees*)
- An event for Early Years providers (*22 attendees*)
- SEND Heads conference (*184 attendees*)
- An event to discuss the Single Plan for parents and carers of children attending Highfield Special School (*9 attendees*)
- A special school staff meeting (*approx 50 attendees*)
- Task and Finish group meetings led by the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Children and Young People's Services
- A multi-agency steering group event (*30 attendees*)
- Governor Advisory Group and Area Governor Meetings (*reaching over 200 governors*)
- Primary Headteacher Breakfast Meetings (*reaching approximately 120 Headteachers*)

A full report on the consultation process is available from www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk. The report records and analyses the comments and ideas from the consultation.

Section 3 – The Priorities

We recognised throughout the consultation process that there is evidence of good and excellent practice already in place that we need to build on. However, we want to see continuous improvement and from the views gathered during the consultation we identified three main priorities (see below).



Priority One: Improve outcomes

Our first priority is important because national data shows us that life chances for children and young people with SEND are disproportionately poor. Young people with SEND are twice as likely as their peers to be 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). They have a higher incidence of mental health needs, offending behaviour, and higher levels of financial deprivation.

As stated earlier, our analysis of SEND data shows us that the proportion of children and young people with SEND is higher in Cambridgeshire than nationally and that of other Local Authorities similar to us (our statistical neighbours). Although we are able to evidence that the attainment of children and young people with SEND is gradually improving, there is still a marked gap between the attainment of our children and young people with and without SEND across all phases of education.

This information indicates that we need to encourage greater consistency in the identification of SEND across Cambridgeshire. We also need to promote good practice in schools and settings to enable children and young people with SEND to make good progress and be able to evidence achievements. This includes wider achievements in independence, participation, communication and life skills. This good practice needs to be shared. Equally, we need to continue to target support to

schools and other settings where the progress, attainment and achievement of children and young people with SEND is limited.

We will continue to work with educational and community settings to improve access to a full range of care, leisure and community activities. This will include out of school activities and mainstream and specialist youth services through to the age of 25 years. We will work to promote opportunities for disabled children and young people and ensure greater access to these activities.

Priority Two: Collaboration

The recommendations from the Lamb Inquiry (2009) and the SEN Green Paper: Support and Aspiration (2011) highlight the importance of listening to children, young people and their parents and carers, involving them in decision making and enabling them to have more choice and control.

We have well established partnership arrangements with voluntary organisations to help engage parents and carers to seek their views and consult with them on new developments. We need to extend these so that there is a greater opportunity for parents and carers and young people to be supported to provide their views, tell us what works, and what improvements we need to make.

Through person-centred approaches at transition Annual Reviews of Statements we are able to gather the views and aspirations of young people so that the plans reflect their interests now and for the future. This approach will be extended across all Annual Reviews. It will be central to the pilot work to develop a multi-agency 'Single Plan', taking forward the proposals outlined within the SEN Green Paper (2011).

Priority Three: Ensure quality

The analysis of our data and the views of parents and carers, schools, and partners are all essential elements in determining what services we should be delivering, how they should be delivered, and where.

We will develop further the expertise and confidence of front line practitioners so that the needs of children and young people with SEND are fully understood. We need to ensure that all the provision is good quality, and accountable and can evidence improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We need to make effective links with employers and further education providers to ensure that young adults with SEND are provided with work, training and apprenticeships that help them achieve greater economic independence and wider choices in life.

We will be developing additional resources to meet the needs of children and young people with the most complex needs. This requires multi-agency partnerships to support families in their home life, educational provision, with health and care arrangements to maintain children's placements locally.

Section 4 – What we will do

We have identified ten action points across the three priority areas. These will be outlined in this section and described in more detail in the action plan in Appendix 2. We start each action point with a few quotes from parents and carers, young people, schools and partners gathered through the consultation process.

Priority One: Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND and their Families.

1. We will set the highest expectations for children and young people with SEND for their educational and life outcomes.

“I would like to have better information about his academic and social progress. I would like to have better information about how the support he receives in school is actually functioning and how it relates to the targets in his statement” (parent/carer)

“I’d like to be an illustrator” (pupil)

“I would like to be a horse carer” (pupil)

“I would like to be a builder” (pupil)

“I would like to become a vet because I love animals and I love helping them and it is biology” (pupil)

“I would like to learn about other planets” (pupil)

“I would like to look after a family when I am older” (pupil)

“...they [children with SEN] aren’t always stretched to see what exactly they can achieve as non SEN children might be.” (parent/carer)

“Never say ‘he is doing well for someone with his condition’.” (parent/carer)

What we will do

We will support schools and educational settings to raise the attainment of children and young people with SEND. This will include funding schools to implement evidence based interventions such as *Achievement for All* and restorative approaches to improve behaviour, to help address raising attainment and achievement as well as improving behaviour and attendance for children and young people with SEND.

We will improve children and young people’s opportunities to develop greater independence, communication and life skills. For example, working with post-16 providers to develop provision for children and young people with disability and complex learning needs.

We will develop new guidance to support children and young people with behavioural difficulties. This will be promoted across all educational, health and care settings so that children and young people with complex and challenging behaviour experience consistency in the strategies applied by all those who care for them.

2. We will improve early identification of SEND.

“I think that family support groups in the Early Years are important. These provide opportunities for parents and children to come together with professionals from Education, Health and Social Care to share information and advice.” (school / partner)

“We need to continue to empower class teachers to identify and support within the class” (school).

“There needs to be continuous training to ensure consistent approach across the county.” (school)

“I was ‘lucky’ because my son has cerebral palsy, hence much was done at an early stage to identify and provide for his SEN. It is much harder for children without a diagnosis. More needs to be done to get such children addressed and their needs met” (parent/carer)

“We need to ensure that there are clear and uncomplicated referral pathways when parents or professionals have concerns or seek assessment” (school/ partner)

What we will do

We recognise that early identification of SEND can apply at any age between 0-25 years. We will ensure that all those working with or supporting children or young people will have access to advice and guidance on how to recognise and address SEND.

We will target support in the Early Years so that we can identify children with SEND as early as possible. We will work with all of our Early Years settings, including Children’s Centres, and other partners to put in place early intervention strategies so that children’s learning and development is maximised at this crucial time.

We will embed ‘Early Support’, the Government’s recommended approach to achieve coordinated, family focused service delivery for children and young people with high needs disabilities.

We will implement the principles and practice of good multi-agency planning, using the Early Support approach to deliver better integrated assessments and plans for young children with SEND and their families working across Children’s Centres and Early Years settings.

Early identification of emotional and behavioural needs, including emerging mental health needs, will be addressed through improved partnership working across schools/settings, NHS, and Children and Young People's Services. We will provide better access to training and will apply evidenced based interventions that support children and young people alongside their families within their community settings.

3. We will support all children and young people to make successful transitions.

"Transition is a very important time for both child and parent/carer. It is good for all sides of the transition to meet together, talk and exchange ideas for how to make things as easy as possible for the family/ child and to ensure everyone knows what is expected of them." (parent/carer)

"With a child going to a new school we had the key worker go to the new school to assess what physical changes they would need to consider...the key worker went with the child for four visits, stepping back a little more each time, till the child was confident in the new class" (early years setting)

"I would like my child to be given choices in what they want to do. His choices should be respected. Opportunities for work experience and vocational training should be available. Schemes which encourage employers to participate would be welcomed." (parent/carer)

What we will do

We will ensure every child and young person with SEND is supported to make a successful transition at all times including during periods of significant change in their life. Our transition process will:

- start early,
- be flexible,
- be individually tailored to meet the needs of the young person and their family, and
- continue, if necessary, following the transfer to adult care.

Professionals will be available to provide advice and guidance to parents on what options are available, and they will work in partnership with parents to enable them to take part in the decisions about their child's needs and support arrangements.

We will ensure children and young people with complex needs have 'communication passports' to support transitions between settings. These provide all those working and caring for the child or young person with SEND with information about their likes and dislikes, the best ways to communicate, and a brief description of their needs.

Included in these are 'hospital passports' for those children and young people under regular treatment for significant medical need.

4. We will develop a 'single plan' approach to multi-agency working

"Everyone needs to listen to what each person has to say about a child to get the true picture and then need to agree a plan of action that will be carried out"
(parent/carer)

"I think that it is important that we simplify processes so that decision making is quicker." (school / partner)

"Appropriate and timely information needs to be made available...what the child and family can expect by way of support from the LA and professionals. There needs to be an honest approach to available money to support needs whether mild to moderate or extreme to complex." (parent/carer)

"We have found that a multi-agency approach to writing individual education plans has prevented the child from having a disjointed approach to progress." (school)

What we will do

We will promote coordinated planning and information sharing using the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). Our aim is to reduce bureaucracy and avoid duplication wherever possible. We will improve the ways in which we communicate between services and agencies to ensure children and young people with SEND and their families receive a more integrated service.

We will pilot a holistic multi-agency 'Education, Health and Care Plan' (EHCP) or 'Single Plan', as proposed in the SEN Green Paper. This plan will clearly outline the needs, aspirations and the support arrangements for children and young people and their families with high level complex needs. We will ensure parents and carers, children and young people understand the process of joint planning and are supported to take part as partners in decision making. The learning from this pilot will be extended to deliver greater coordination of services.

We will ensure that our work is informed by other Local Authorities that are taking forward developments with the Single Plan and personalised budgets. We will invite parents and carers, children and young people to share their views and experiences to help shape the process and evaluate the outcomes from a multi-agency Single Plan.

Priority Two: Collaboration with Children and Young People with SEND and their Families.

5. We will ensure parents and carers and children and young people are able to participate more in decision making.

"It is helpful to be involved as much as possible in all decisions. To be well informed helps no-end, and to have input is vital as we are all looking after the child."
(parent/carer)

"parents are often the real expert when it comes to SEN children." (parent/carer)

"I think that it is important that we understand that parents need to feel that they will be listened to, they will receive a reply and things may change" (school/partner)

"I consider it a top priority that we promote and participate in Team around the Child meetings so parents are involved in the plan to support their child and understand what is in place." (school/ partner)

"We try to use pupil voice as much as possible to add confidence to parents' decision making" (school)

"Those children that are able also have a view. It has been our experience that it has been taken into account. They also have a wealth of information." (Parent/ carer)

"What helps us make good choices? Trying out / experiencing options. Talking to others who have already made that choice. LOTS of information. People listening to how we feel" (young adults with SEND)

What we will do

We will ensure that parents and carers feel that they are equal partners in a team working together in support of their child. For some parents and carers the team will just involve the school or educational setting. For others the team will involve a range of professionals and this becomes a 'Team around the Family'.

We will listen to parents' and carers' aspirations for their child when developing the plans that will support them across home, school and community. We will foster a culture of mutual respect to facilitate parents and carers and professionals to work together.

Person centred planning will be promoted to ensure the plans focus clearly on the child and young person's views and aspirations. The plans should reflect their views and aspirations, and identify the next steps to help them achieve their goals. These should inform options regarding work experience, post-16 placements, employment and future living arrangements.

We will ensure parents and carers and young people have increased opportunities to participate in changes to strategies and on-going evaluation of our services. We will work with local voluntary organisations to achieve this.

6. We will ensure parents and carers receive emotional and practical support.

“Parent should be signposted to places where they can get support – support organisations and also where they can meet other parents and families with similar difficulties.” (parent/carer)

“We have been involved in caring for our disabled son for 16 years. During this time, one of the most frustrating aspects of caring is having to deal with so many individuals.” (parent/carer)

“Parents need hope, determination, support and strength at this stage (identification of need) to get through.” (parent/carer)

“I think everyone should be given a liaison who knows the system, who can work on your behalf. We had our Portage worker but I am aware that not all get that kind of support.” (parent/carer)

What we will do

In recognising the hugely important role parents and carers have in their child's development and learning we will ensure that those with children and young people with high needs have access to training, support groups, and advice. These will be delivered through a variety of settings, e.g. Children's Centres, home, educational and health settings.

Working with the Parent Partnership Service and voluntary organisations, we will ensure that parents and carers can access support and advice at the right time. We will continue to seek parents' and carers' views on the best ways to do this.

A key worker or lead professional will be identified to support families with a child with complex needs to identify family strengths, needs and wishes to ensure that multi-agency planning is sensitive and takes account of family diversity.

We will ensure short breaks and respite support continues to be available for families with high needs in line with our responsibilities under the Short Breaks duty.

7. We will ensure that all information that goes to parents and carers is clear, available and accessible.

*“Professionals should ensure that they give parents all the useful information, there should be a checklist for professionals so that things do not get missed.”
(parent/carer)*

*“Children’s centres are a good source as they can either provide you the information or point you in the right direction, they are invaluable to families with children under 5 years. The same sort of place is needed for families with school age children.”
(parent/carer)*

“Unless you are good at finding information, especially online, it is currently scattered in too many different places to be easily accessible.” (parent/carer)

*“Information should be provided in...plain English, not using teacher talk and codes.”
(parent/carer)*

“I would like for people to speak in ways I can understand at meetings especially my reviews” (young adult with SEND)

“I think to be as well informed as possible is very helpful. It is very much a journey taken together with parents and teaching professionals working jointly to discover what help is best for your individual child.” (parent/carer)

What we will do

We will ensure that parents and carers of children with SEND have access to clear and accessible information at all times. Parents and carers will receive all reports and information written about their child and these will be accessible and use everyday language. Parents and carers will be supported to understand information; for instance, through using alternative formats and community languages, where appropriate.

We will provide guidance to help professionals make reports more accessible and understandable to parents and carers. Arrangements will be in place to ensure regular monitoring of information to ensure it meets quality standards in terms of accessibility to parents and carers.

We will ensure the SEN statutory assessment processes is transparent and explore the use of independent facilitators using the voluntary or community sector. There will be clear feedback channels for parents and carers to respond to the services that they have received.

We will publish information setting out how to access services and who is eligible to access them.

Priority Three: Ensure Quality of Provision and Services

8. We will deliver provision and support arrangements at the right time and in the right place.

"We need to look at their [children's] needs holistically and ensure input from all services needed to support their progress." (school / partner)

"Don't underestimate the need for respite." (parent/carer)

"All SEN provision needs to be flexible enough to incorporate enough informal education within it, whilst still achieving formal educational outcomes" (parent/carer)

"They [school] are doing a brilliant job." (parent/carer)

"It is good to share...skilled resources to support teachers across school and interaction between settings for children with similar or the same SEND so that children, teaching and support staff are not isolated in their setting." (parent/carer)

"I think it could be useful to provide more therapies...which would help my child cope with everyday life. As my child is in mainstream school there is limited access to therapies which are provided for children in special schools. I strongly believe that it would be beneficial if there were some workshops available for disabled children after hours." (parent/carer)

"I would like better work experience that I can choose." (young adult with SEND)

What we will do

We will implement the actions from the Educational Placement Strategy by improving the range of high quality provision available. Our aim is to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND as close to their home as possible. We will regularly analyse our data on SEND to ensure we develop a range of provision to meet local need.

We are currently working with our special schools to ensure they can address the educational needs for children and young people with the most complex needs. For children and young people who would benefit most from attending a mainstream school we will make advice and training available to schools to enable them to meet needs.

We will commit to the Every Disabled Child Matters joint charter between the Local Authority and Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) outlining the offer to children and young people with a disability.

9. We will ensure greater clarity regarding accountability of services for children and young people with SEND.

"I would like termly updates, what improvements have been made in the school, how needs are met. Open and frank discussions." (parent/carer)

"I would like to see an effective process to enable parents/carers to continuously rate the service they receive." (parent/carer)

"I would like information on how effectively measured is the time and resources spent in actual progress the children are making....accountability that children are making good progress and therefore money is being well spent." (parent/carer)

"It would be good to have statistics showing exam results for the attainment of 5 GCSE passes including English and Maths for children with SEND and how well children with SEND are doing in individual schools." (parent/carer)

What we will do

We will provide information annually on the achievement, attainment and progress of children and young people with SEND. We will compare our performance with the national data and with similar local authorities. This information will be shared with parents and carers.

All specialist units and centres commissioned and funded by the Local Authority will have Service Level Agreements (SLA), or contracts for Academy schools, that clarify their responsibilities and accountability. We will implement the Local Authority's quality assurance measure (SEND Review) to monitor our special educational provision within Cambridgeshire schools. Parents and carers and young people will be part of evaluating the SLA.

Educational and care settings will have clear systems in place for gathering, analysing and responding to parents' and carers' opinions. Our services will target support where there is an identified need within a setting.

We will offer support to schools and settings to ensure that they can appropriately assess and track the progress and attainment of children and young people with SEND. This will support the evidence schools and settings need for Ofsted under the new Framework for School Inspection (2012). The Ofsted framework (2012) has an increased focus on the achievement and progress of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.

10. We will ensure we have a professional workforce that is confident and knowledgeable in SEND.

“Continuous training to ensure a consistent approach across county is important to support early identification.” (school)

“Professionals from different fields can learn from one another and I think it’s useful if they share good practice.” (school/partner)

“If something isn’t working try different ways to help children learn.” (parent/carer)

“Regular opportunities for staff working directly with children to meet together and share ideas and expertise is important.” (school/partner)

“We need to ensure that we have well trained staff who know the right approach to adopt for the child to ensure that he/she feels safe and happy.” (school)

What we will do

We will ensure we develop a competent workforce, able to meet the needs of children and young people with complex learning and behavioural needs across home, residential, education and community settings.

We will ensure that there are clear plans for workforce development based on self evaluation and skills audits so that all those who work with children and young people with SEND have the necessary skills and confidence (appropriate to their role) to support children and young people and their families.

A training and development programme will be offered to schools and settings and community partners that is responsive to their needs. It will include competency based training at different levels depending on the role of the professionals.

We will offer support to schools and settings to ensure that they know about their responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), and are taking action to increase accessibility.

We will ensure all staff understand safeguarding procedures fully, and training is provided on a regular basis (at a minimum every 2 years). Up to date information and guidance on safeguarding procedures will be provided for all schools and educational and care settings.

We will continue to develop programmes in partnership with parents and carers to empower them to have a key role in their child’s learning and participating in decision making.

Section 5 – Action Plan

The ten action points described previously are expanded on in our Action Plan (see Appendix 2). It summarises the specific actions, how we will measure success, and the timescales for completion. This action plan will be developed further providing more detailed information including quantitative and qualitative measures to evidence the outcomes. We will review the action plan regularly over the timescale of the strategy. We will report an annual basis and publish this on the Cambridgeshire County Council website.

Conclusion

In this strategy we have described our vision for SEND in Cambridgeshire. We have gathered the thoughts and opinions of children and young people with SEND, their parents and carers, schools and other partners and services with whom we work and we have analysed our SEND data. This has pointed to three priorities that we will focus on over the next four years:

1. Improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families
2. Collaboration with children and young people with SEND and their families
3. Ensure quality of provision and services

With the support of all those involved in the consultation we have been able to explore these priorities in some depth and develop an Action Plan to show how we will work together to achieve the desired outcomes.

In order to ensure that we can be held to account for the Action Plan we welcome your continued involvement in regular monitoring and feedback of SEND provision and services. We hope this document demonstrates how important your input has been in the creation of the SEND strategy and we look forward to continuing this partnership.

Glossary

Acronym	
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CAMH	Child and Adolescent Mental Health
DfE	Department of Education
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EY	Early Years
FSM	Free School Meals
LA	Local Authority
LAC	Looked After Children
LACSEG	Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NHS	National Health Service
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PCT	Primary Care Trust
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCo	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SSEN	Statement of Special Educational Needs

For a more detailed glossary of SEND terms please go to www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Cambridgeshire documents related to the SEND Strategy

Strategy
Narrowing the Gap Strategy 2012
Education Placement Strategy 2011-2016
Cambridgeshire Area Special Schools Specification 2011
Placement Strategy 2011-2015

National documents relating to SEND

Document
Ofsted New Framework for School Inspection (2012)
SEN Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability (2011)
Equality Act 2010
SEN Code of Practice (2001)
The Children Act (1989)

Links to the above documents can be found at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Good Practice

We have identified some core elements of good practice that if put in place will support children and young people with SEND and their families to feel valued, able to participate and have greater sense of choice and control.

Our principles	Good Practice
Involving children and young people and their parents and carers at the centre of all decisions about them.	<p>The child or young person and parent and carers are actively involved in any plans made about them.</p> <p>Meetings are welcoming and there is an ethos of mutual respect.</p> <p>Children, young people and parents and carers have easy access to the information that they need to make informed decisions.</p> <p>The use of jargon in any communication is avoided wherever possible.</p>
Ensuring the inclusion and participation in all aspects of family, school and community life.	<p>There is awareness of the reasonable adjustments that need to be made to ensure inclusion.</p> <p>Provision or support is personalised to the child or young person's individual needs.</p> <p>The young person is seen as an individual with personal interests and strengths as well as particular difficulties.</p> <p>Success and achievements are celebrated.</p>
Receiving the right support at the right time.	<p>Access to specialist support is clear and transparent for parents and carers and other professionals.</p> <p>All those involved with children and young people with SEND are aware of the full range of local activities and resources available to them and how they are accessed.</p> <p>Effective teams around the child or family are in place and those who are involved maintain excellent communication with each other.</p>

Appendix 2 – Action Plan

Priority One

1: Higher expectations for children and young people with SEND and their families.

To ensure all educational settings raise the attainment of children and young people with SEND and value all aspects of their learning and development we will:

Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support schools and settings in identifying aspirational targets for children and young people with SEND based on national data guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased % of children and young people achieving P scale, National Curriculum or Foundation levels of progress in line with or better when compared with national data for those with a similar starting point. 	Sept 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support schools and settings to monitor the progress of children and young people with SEND, so that they make the best progress possible. We will track attainment progression from Foundation Stage Profile through subsequent Key Stages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records of LA Keeping in Touch visits and SEND service planning meetings with schools and settings demonstrate improvements in progress and attainment for children and young people with SEND. 	January 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a range of raising attainment projects to deliver better outcomes for those with SEND. This will include implementing the <i>Achievement for All</i> programme across 50+ primary and secondary schools and Raising Achievement in SEN projects (RASEN). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased % of children and young people attaining significantly higher than expected levels of progress when compared with national data for those with a similar starting point. Improved attendance and parental involvement amongst target groups in the schools that have signed up to <i>Achievement for All</i>. 	September 2014 December 2014

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate Cambridgeshire behaviour policy and provide training in behaviour approaches to improve safety and a consistent approach across settings for children and young people with SEND. Pilot the use of restorative approaches to improve behaviour in a number of schools and settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour Policy disseminated to all schools and settings including care and residential. Reduction in fixed term and permanent exclusion due to behavioural difficulties in the schools applying restorative approaches. 	<p>December 2012</p> <p>March 2016</p>
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2: Early identification of SEND

To ensure that those working with or supporting children or young people with SEND have access to support and guidance on identification of SEND we will:

Action	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide training to Early Years (EY) settings on early identification of need using the Inclusion Development Programme materials and the EY responses for speech and language and autism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of EY practitioners/settings receiving training and reporting changes in their practice as a result. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop 6 Children's Centres into specialist SEND hubs, making them more accessible to disabled children and their families and providing training to staff to increase their understanding of SEND. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and carers accessing the 6 specialist SEND hubs reporting improved accessibility and provision. 	July 2013
<p>Embed the Early Support multi-agency planning approach with families, children and young people with high needs disability to develop the use of a 'Family Service Plan' or single plan, written in partnership with families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families report positive experience of participating in the integrated plans for their child with SEND. 	July 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminate the e-learning toolkit for mental health and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of schools accessing e-learning and attending 	March 2014

provide further training for school staff to improve their understanding of emerging emotional, behavioural and mental health needs.	further training sessions.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement with CAMH an integrated pathway for early/emerging mental health problems including community based family support to address mental health and behavioural needs, e.g. Marlborough programme, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) and Parenting programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of a clear integrated pathway to support mental health needs. Improved access to mental health services in the child or young person's local community. 	December 2013 March 2014

3: Successful transitions for all children and young people with SEND

To ensure every child and young person is supported in making successful transitions including moving into further education, employment or training we will:

Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update and implement good practice protocols for transition. These protocols support transitions across each phase of education. Particular focus will be placed on entry into school from EY settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dissemination of revised transition protocols to all schools and settings and Children and Young People's Services. Analysis of SSEN transition plans demonstrating that there are good transition arrangements in place. Children with complex needs making a successful transition from EY into full time provision in reception. 	September 2012 September 2013 September 2013

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide bespoke packages to increase young people's access to supported living, employment and training including work experience and post 16 training opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reduction of Learners with Learning Difficulty and/or Disability (LLDD) recorded as NEET and an increase in the number that are in supported living, work or training. Young people with SEND report positive and relevant work experience and increased access to apprenticeships post-16. 	<p>September 2014</p> <p>July 2013</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear information for parents and carers, children and young people with SEND about the range of services and options available and how transitions between children and adult services are coordinated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All young people and families receive the appropriate information to support them making choices about their future plans. 	January 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the use of communication passports to improve information sharing for children and young people attending a range of settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that communication passports are being used effectively. 	July 2014

4: Professionals working together

To ensure children and families with high level complex special educational needs and disability receive holistic, coordinated and seamless services we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
Review the CAF and Early Support processes to reduce bureaucracy and enable good communication between professionals and with parents and carers. Provide a key worker or lead professional to support families with a child with complex needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent and carer feedback on the effectiveness of the CAF and Early Support processes, their key worker or lead professional, and the support provided. 	September 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve education, NHS and care providers to pilot a DfE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single plan in place for 8 young people through the pilot 	March 2014

<p>‘Single Plan’ approach with 8 young people with exceptionally high levels of need who require multi-agency planning for their needs to be met locally, e.g. at home, school and community contexts.</p>	<p>project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people’s educational, health and care needs are met within local provision. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the learning from this pilot to inform the development of single plan approaches for a wider group of high needs disabled young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and carers express greater satisfaction with coordinated planning. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to identify clearly the resources available to support a child or young person with complex high needs and provide opportunities for parents to participate in decisions about how the available resources should be utilised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources clearly identified by partners. Parents and carers reporting participation in the decisions regarding deployment of resources to meet needs. 	March 2014

Priority Two

5: Parent and carer and child participation in decision making

To ensure that parents and carers feel that they are equal partners in a team and that they are supported to play their part in decision making. we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a ‘Team around the Child or ‘Team around the Family’ approach to streamline and coordinate services for families with children and young people with complex SEND. This will be initially implemented with all families receiving Early Support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from parents and carers evidence they have participated with professionals in making plans and decisions around their child. 	December 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch the new Annual Review pro forma that promotes children and young people and their family being at the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All reviews for children and young people with a statement 	March 2014

centre of the review.	will be person centred and will record their aspirations and plans that cover home, school and community.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot the involvement of parents and carers in the process of drafting statements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from parents and carers evidence greater involvement in drafting statutory plans. Reduced number of tribunals. 	March 2014
To ensure the views of parents and carers, children and young people are sought to inform planning for service improvement we will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing parent/carer forums such as the Parent Partnership Service, Pinpoint and other voluntary organisations and routinely consult and seek their views on services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of parental and carer consultation and views influencing policy and practice. 	March 2013

6: Parents and carers receive emotional and practical support

To ensure emotional and practical support is provided to parents and carers at the point of diagnosis we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a range of parenting interventions using evidenced based approaches to meet the emotional and behavioural needs of children and young people. Support parents and carers to access these. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from parents and carers showing that they feel more equipped to support their child's learning and development after the intervention. 	March 2013
To ensure that thereafter, the right support is available at the right times for parents and carers we will:		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek parent's and carer's views on the best ways to make Parent Partnership Service and other organisations more accessible to them so that they can provide a range of support including mediation, information, and advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from parents and carers on effective support and advice from Parent Partnership Service and other organisations. 	March 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a range of short break and respite support for families of disabled children and young people with high needs allowing them to care for their child and meet their family needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from families' record that they feel supported in their family life. 	March 2013

7: Information that is accessible and transparent

To ensure that parents and carers of children with SEND have access to clear and accessible information at all times we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Local Authority SEND web site that provides information about local services and guidance for parents and carers and professionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA SEND website established. 	September 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish a directory of services for parents and carers that describes the responsibilities of different services and professionals, how to access them and information about service thresholds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents and carers and professionals accessing the new LA SEND website and directory of services. Feedback on accessibility and usefulness of the website and directory. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide guidance to help professionals prepare written reports that are easy to understand. We will monitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professionals' reports meet quality standards for accessibility. 	December 2013

accessibility of reports through individual supervisions.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a parental and carer feedback system involving the Parent Partnership Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of parents and carers accessing the new parental feedback system and responses to feedback given. 	November 2013
To ensure that the statutory assessment processes is made more transparent we will:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the gathering of feedback on the statutory assessment process from parents, carers and schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from parents, carers and school demonstrates better access to information, timeliness, support and advice regarding statutory assessment. 	March 2014

Priority Three

8: Delivery of provision and support is at the right time and in the right place

To ensure that there is an appropriate range of provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND as close to their home as possible we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the actions within our Educational Placement Strategy to reduce the need to place children and young people with SEND 'out of authority'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer places will be required in independent special schools. 	March 2014

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) to develop, and ensure we implement the Every Disabled Child Matters joint charter between the Local Authority and the PCT outlining the offer to children and young people with a disability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance to the Local Authority and PCT Every Disabled Child Joint Charter. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a clear protocol for joint commissioning of places between Children and Young People's Services and Adult Services. • Provide the opportunity for young people with SEND to receive bespoke services that meet their personal needs, including the use of self-directed support and personalised budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from young adults about the information and support provided to help them make choices in their lives. 	March 2014

9: Greater clarity regarding accountability of services for children and young people with SEND

To improve accountability for the achievement, attainment and progress of children and young people with SEND and enable accountability we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare our performance with national data and data from local authorities that are similar to Cambridgeshire (statistical neighbours). Share this information with parents and carers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of improvements in attainment for children and young people with SEN at end of Foundation Stage, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 when compared with the data from national and statistical neighbours. 	March 2013

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the data for children and young people with SEND where we have concerns regarding their level of progress, their attendance, number of exclusions or other factors that are a barrier to their learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gap between the attainment of children and young people with SEN and non SEN is reducing including when pupils with SEN have Free School Meals (FSM) and/or Looked After Child (LAC) status. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the use of the LA SEND Review to support the quality assurance of the special educational provision within Cambridgeshire schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All LA funded specialist provision will have an annual quality assurance review as part of the Service Level Agreement with the provider. 	March 2013

10: We have a professional workforce confident and knowledgeable in SEND

To ensure that all those who work with children and young people with SEND have the necessary skills and confidence (appropriate to their role) to support, children and young people and their families we will:		
Actions	Measurement of success	By when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a plan for workforce development based on self-evaluation and skills audits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A training plan based on the audit of need is available on an annual basis for schools, setting and other partners. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support accredited training courses for teachers and other professional staff to undertake accredited training that will lead towards additional qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of staff who have achieved the SENCo award and/or accredited qualification in dyslexia, sensory impairment, autism, etc.. 	March 2013

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide headteachers and SENCo with information, support and training on the best 'evidence based' practice to support teaching and learning through SEND networks and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take up of training events, conferences and on-line materials by schools and settings. • Evaluations from schools and settings on training and advice being provided. 	March 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training on the Equality Act and duties on schools and settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools' and settings' policies and procedures evidence the requirements of the Equality Act. 	March 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for staff working and caring for children and young people with the most complex learning and behavioural needs across all settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from staff evidence their increased confidence to support children and young people with complex needs so that they participate and access everyday activities. 	March 2014