

Waltham Forest Vision for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged 0 - 25

2020/21 - 2022/23

Introduction

Waltham Forest Council, Waltham Forest Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), Education and Parent Forum have high ambitions for all children and young people, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The strategy was co-designed by children, young people, parents and with the Local Authority. The local Parent Forum has worked with the council and CCG to develop more parent-friendly approaches to co-production that support the involvement of a broader range of local parents in the work to implement the SEND reforms, develop our Local Offer and make a real difference to family lives.

Our vision

Our overarching vision is as follows:

Children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) will achieve well in early years, at school, at college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

This supports the vision of our new Joint Health and Wellbeing Board “that everyone who lives in Waltham Forest is happy, healthy, and thriving.”

Outcomes

We aim to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND by working to eight key outcomes

- 1. To strengthen a Local Offer which is accessible and supports children and young people to achieve the best they can in education and in life**
- 2. To meet children and young people’s needs and outcomes via an EHCP process which is effective and in line with Code of Practice expectations and supports them to develop their independence**
- 3. To deliver good quality statutory social work for 0-25 age range of children and young people alongside EHCP process**
- 4. To provide clear, comprehensive and integrated health pathways, which support children and young people to live and learn well so they can be healthy, active and visible in their local communities**
- 5. To support children and young people with SEND to prepare for adulthood so they can live independently and secure work opportunities**
- 6. To support carers (including young carers) in their caring role and to have a healthy life outside of caring**

- 7. To explore opportunities to improve efficiencies and effectiveness across the service through the use of ICT**
- 8. To provide high quality, local, inclusive nursery and education provision which supports independence and achieving the best possible outcomes**

Principles

The key principles identified are summarised below:

- Collaboration across the whole system with Education, Health and Social Care providing holistic and integrated support
- Co-production of EHC plans with children and young people which accurately reflect outcomes, needs and provisions including closer involvement of parents/carers and children and young people in the design and delivery of services
- Improved engagement, relationship and communication with the parent's forum
- Improved post 16 opportunities and outcomes with a greater number of young people with SEND gaining employment and having choices about how they achieve independence to stay in or near their family and local community
- Support to develop inclusive practices in mainstream schools
- Provision of local schools with increased capacity within special school provision and nursery places, preventing children from travelling long distances

Context

There are just over 45,000 children and young people of school age in Waltham Forest and about 1 in 6 of them are identified as having SEND: a total of just over 7,000 pupils. Waltham Forest is one of London's growing boroughs, with the population expected to grow by 9.5% by 2025. The school-age population is projected to grow at a similar rate during this same period, rising to 48,500. It is likely this growth will result in as many as 100 more children and young people who need to be supported through an EHC plan. In Waltham Forest we are seeing an annual increase of EHCPs at 20% per year.

The largest group by primary need with an EHC plan in Waltham Forest is that with autistic spectrum condition (ASC), at 31% followed by those with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH), at 26%, which reflects the need nationally; (Appendix A, Evidence Base).

Waltham Forest has a strong offer for children and young people with SEND:

- High quality and accessible Early Years provision for children including a universal offer of Speech and Language Therapy with drop-ins, if required, onward referral to the specialist Henry service; effective early identification by health visiting; nurseries can request top up funding for children with SEND; well-established physio and occupational therapy interventions for children with specific needs (e.g. movement disorders); pre-school intervention groups for specific skills needed for communication; portage for the most complex children with severe needs.
- Special schools and alternative provisions perform well – having all received a minimum of a ‘good’ rating or better from Ofsted
- Three Ships Programme - For young people leaving school we have provision to improve their life chances through Traineeships, Apprenticeships and Internships.
- Paid employment rates for people with SEND are high compared to other areas (15% compared to 6.3% across England and 6.1% in Inner London)

However, the overall academic outcomes for children with SEN Support and EHCP children and young people in Waltham Forest primary and secondary schools are behind the national average. The council aims to play a greater role in supporting partners in education to improve children’s academic achievements.

Since 2014 we have been on an improvement journey for our children and young people with SEND and to implement the reforms as described in the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice. It’s important that we can take this a step further and that we are able to respond to the demand effectively to deliver key outcomes for our children and young people. It is important that partner agencies and families continue to be involved in the co-development of the service and the benefits that this brings.

How will we deliver our outcomes:

We are working more closely with partners to join up and improve services and as part of that we set out the initial priorities identified within the Joint Commissioning Plan to be:

- Speech, language and communication
- Occupational therapy
- Preparation for adulthood and transitions
- 0 to 25 Integration
- Short breaks & Respite Provision
- Better Mental Health within our school settings (part of the CAMHS Transformation Plan)

- Roll out and development of Kooth online counselling (free, safe and anonymous online support for young people) expansion to align with CAMHS
- Continuation of the young mental health ambassadors' path
- Positive Behavioural Support to health professionals, support workers and to educational settings to reduce challenging behaviour

In order to enable us to realise our vision and fulfil the aims of this strategy, as a partnership, we make the following set of commitments. Co-production with parents, families and young people is a key principle that runs through all these **commitments**:

1. To strengthen the accuracy and completeness of the published Local Offer, in line with the SEND code of Practice, to ensure that it is accessible and sets out information about provision families can expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in the Borough area who have SEN or are disabled:

- Develop and implement a Local Offer Development/Action Plan to deliver effective and complete service
- Support the development of excellent mainstream and specialist local education settings
- Reduce the number of children who attend school out of the area
- Ensure smooth transitions between schools/colleges
- Ensure clear information is provided from schools/colleges about their offer
- Implement a new approach to travel assistance to maximise independence from young age
- Celebrate best practice in education, health and other settings
- Review the information, advice and support service
- Review the early identification and prevention services aimed at improving emotional and mental wellbeing of children and young people with SEND
- Complete the review of short breaks to ensure the offer meets the changing needs of children/young people and their parents/carers
- Complete a review of banding levels ensuring these respond to identified needs
- Review link between Local Offer information for families on Council website and information for professional on the Hub website

2.To meet children and young people's needs and outcomes via an EHCP process which is effective and in line with Code of Practice expectations and supports them to develop their independence:

- Develop and embed clear processes, procedures and criteria to enable parents, young people and professionals to make appropriate and timely referrals and applications (e.g. EY SENIF/School Local Offer Funding, EHCP application, Short breaks)
- Put children and young people and their families at the heart of support plan/EHCP design and delivery and ensure a person-centred approach
- Review EHCP process in line with Code of Practice to ensure that EHCP's outline children and young people's needs and provide clear support, interventions, outcomes/expectations which enables them to develop their independence, resilience
- Ensure smooth transitions between schools/colleges
- Build our workforce capacity, skill and professional knowledge base
- Improve performance and compliance with statutory timescales keeping in mind timely provision of plans for every child
- Prioritise quality and co-production of health and care needs assessments, plans and annual reviews
- Strengthen relationships and communication across partnership and parents
- Improve pathways/forms and templates in collaboration, ensuring these are child friendly, current and relevant to the increasing and diverse need of our community
- Implement school clusters and co-location of SEND officers to improve relationship, communication and effectiveness EHCP process
- Improve on the waiting times for CAMHS appointments for children and young people with complex needs
- Prioritise health/mental health assessment for children with presenting needs at EHC referral stage to ensure that they can have a medical assessment or assessment of need timely

3.To deliver effective statutory social work practice for 0-25 children and young people alongside EHCP process

- Improve performance and quality of all assessments and interventions
- Develop need-led and strength-based plans, that are SMART, keep children and young people at heart of all we do
- Develop Think Family practice in problem solving develop creative direct work strategies to give voice to all

- Build relational and collaborative partnership within and outwards with all involved in children/young people's lives based on effective communication and information sharing
- Continued focus on recruitment, training and development of staff
- Review and enhance the commissioning of placements for Children Looked After (CLA) placements of children with SEND

4.To provide comprehensive and integrated health pathways which support children and young people to live and learn well so they can be healthy, active and visible in their local communities:

- Develop pathways for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs; pathways are in place but it is the demand /capacity that is the issue
- Deliver a co-produced All Age ASD Plan ensuring the Plan reflects local needs and prioritise including improved timeliness of diagnosis to treatment and post diagnostic support
- Develop an integrated and jointly commissioned pathway for occupational therapy

5. Improved post 16 opportunities and outcomes with a greater number of young people with SEND gaining employment and having choices about how they achieve independence, resilience and are empowered to stay in or near their family and local community:

- Deliver the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) workstream and action transition plan
- Early identification for transition pathways from the age of 14 years
- Develop pathways to employment, work experience, traineeships, internships, apprenticeships leading to greater employment options
- Develop pathways to supported and other accommodation
- Improve transitions between children's and adults' services
- To provide evidence-based ASD, ADHD and LD pathways for children and young people so they can lead healthy, active lives with support to be as independent as possible
- Strategy to support children and young people with SEND to lead healthy, active lives
- Develop an all age ASD Strategy

- Ensure all information on the Local Offer is tailored to and accessible for children and young people with autism and their families
- Implement the Transforming Care action plan to transform services for people with learning disabilities.

6. To support carers (including young carers) in their caring role and to have a healthy life outside of caring

- Complete the review of short breaks to ensure the offer meets the changing needs of children/young people and their parents/carers
- Raise visibility and access for young carers who are siblings of children and young people with SEND
- Review the support and information available to all carers of children with SEND to ensure that they have the support they need to maintain their own health and wellbeing.

7. To support children and young people with SEND, (and in particular those needing Alternative Provision), by providing the highest quality physical environments to enable them to achieve the best outcomes possible:

- We will replace the Burnside school site with a ‘state of the art’, innovative, co-located facility. Our existing Secondary Pupil referral unit is in extremely poor physical condition with buildings having reached the end of their useful life. The accommodation is not fit for purpose being undersized and unable to provide adequate provision for growing student numbers. The current building does not have provision to meet secondary curriculum requirements and limits the ability to teach subjects such as Science, Design Technology and Drama. The site does not have external sports/play areas and classroom sizes are too small. The building does not inspire confidence in our young people and reinforces negative associations of alternative provision. It is proposed that we develop plans to create a new state of the art Alternative Provision that will boost moral for staff and students, improve outcomes and life chances by enabling a more dynamic and varied curriculum to be taught, and remove negative connotations associated with Alternative Provision. Funding is available to commission this project through the SEND Capital Funding allocation
- We will invest in the creation of new ‘Social Inclusion’ Units that will focus on Young People at risk of exclusion that have experienced trauma. These Units will be based on the site of Mainstream Schools and will be an articulation of our desire to have a

more inclusive approach to our work with these young people. These Units will accommodate between 6 to 10 young people and will be managed through our existing FAP process

- We have developed our Children's Social Care Service facility by rebuilding on the Summerfield site 99 Leyton Green Road, providing 7 day care comprising: A 5 bed short breaks respite care unit providing overnight and day care for young people aged 8-17 with disabilities, a 3 bed residential unit for children with physical disabilities/learning disabilities/autism aged 11 to 17
- This new facility will enable the Council to provide overnight stays for children and young people 7 days a week (rather than 6). It will avoid some of the more costly procurement of short breaks respite provision from out of the borough that is also disruptive and inconvenient for families already struggling to care for a sick or disabled child. The Council has little control over the quality and standards of care provided from external providers, despite retaining the burden of responsibility and duty of care. The 3 medium stay beds will enable children who can no longer live at home to remain close to their family and connected to their local community.
- We have invested significantly on the re-development of Belmont Park School. This has been done through the innovative project (see above), the Leyton Green Road project. This has led to new Construction, Drama, PE and general Learning Spaces, alongside the facilities mentioned above
- We have invested in additional provision for young people at risk of exclusion. These bases have been created at Belmont Park School and South Chingford Academy. In addition, we have created a small unit, (at Belmont park), to support young people who are in the process of being assessed for an EHCP
- We are exploring the possibility of creating a Post 16 'Base', on the site of one of our maintained 11-16 secondary schools, to support young people with Autism. This school has an expertise in supporting young people who have a diagnosis of Autism. Our belief is that we could create a unit that would enable a number of young people to access additional support as they transition from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5, and from Key Stage 5 to their next 'Life Pathway'.

8.Explore opportunities to improve efficiencies and effectiveness across the service through the use of ICT

- Improve the range and quality of information and resources available to education professionals from the Hub website

- In Improve the range and quality of information and resources available to parents and carers on the Council's website
- Improve the range and quality of information and resources available to SEND service staff to effectively manage their casework and record relevant information
- Explore opportunities to commission or introduce ICT packages that will improve efficiencies, performance and compliance with statutory timescales e.g. development and reviewing of EHCPs.

Governance

The SEND service in Waltham Forest is governed by the Strategic Board chaired by the director and attended by strategic leads from SEND service, local authority, public health, commissioning, adult social care, CCG, NELFT, education settings and the parent forum. The Board meets termly to provide strategic direction and leadership and quality assuring the local area's effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

How we will know we are making progress

We are developing an outcome focused Action Plan based on our commitments in partnership with parents/carers. This will set out the priorities with lead officers and expected timescales. We will track our progress at the SEND strategic board, Executive Board where all partners come together on a regular basis. We will continue to develop our relationship with parents/carers and with our Parent Forum to implement our shared priorities, progress in meeting them and to update all stakeholders through regular communications.

This Strategy will be refreshed on an annual basis to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of our residents and we will conduct a full review in 2022.