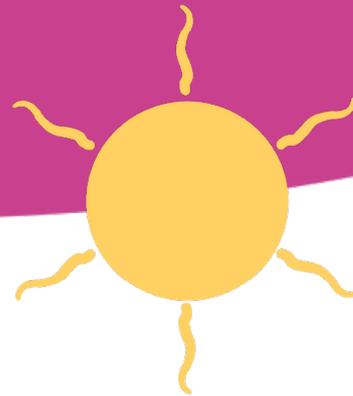




West Sussex SEND Strategy 2026-2030

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Foreword and Introduction

In West Sussex, we believe that every child and young person should be included, supported, and able to thrive in their local community. We know however, that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) have inconsistent experiences and outcomes across the County. We want to change that by supporting all children and young people with SEND to achieve highly, so that they typically have positive experiences and outcomes, by reducing the variation and tackling inequalities as a core ambition of this strategy.

As a Partnership, we have listened carefully to the lived experiences, hopes, and concerns from our children, young people and their families. It is our commitment to make real improvements across our SEND system, that will be felt positively by our children, young people and their families. We aim to provide clear information and offer helpful support to children and young people whilst they are waiting for specialist services, so that families are not left behind.

We know this will not be easy as we have some very difficult challenges to manage, including significant financial pressures and a rising need in the number of children and young people with SEND. However, we are dedicated to working in creative and collaborative ways, so that we can secure the best outcomes for our children and young people with SEND, in partnership with their families.

Our strategy focuses on:

- Improving outcomes through early help and inclusive practices
- Coordinated support across education, health, and care services
- Partnership working with families, schools, and settings

We are proud of the quality of our provision across early years settings, schools and post-16 education providers. We use data effectively to understand and support learners' needs; however, we do acknowledge that there are areas for improvement, particularly when communicating and engaging with our families.

To address this, we have made 'Co-production' one of our five guiding principles as well as effective communication with children, young people and parent carers a strategic priority. NHS Sussex will also work with families to make sure health services are easier to reach, more joined up, and responsive to each child's needs. We look forward to working with our families in a co-produced way to deliver this.

The strategy has been shaped by:

- Our Joint Ofsted and CQC SEND Area Inspection (Nov 2023)
- Several partnership workshops, public consultations and strategic engagement sessions
- Our SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Strategic Partnership Board, West Sussex Young Voices, West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF) and West Sussex
- Together for Change Panel, chaired by the WSPCF

This strategy is jointly led by West Sussex County Council Children's Services and NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB). It sets out our clear vision for SEND, five guiding principles to support partnership working and six strategic priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND, whilst fostering inclusivity. Our five guiding principles are also described as our commitments throughout this strategy. We have ensured that there is a golden thread throughout this document that links our five working principles to intended outcomes, and the actions that we are going to take to deliver them.

Monitoring impact and progress

Progress will be monitored via our SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Partnership Board which is chaired independently to ensure greater accountability. We will use our co-produced SEND Outcomes Framework as a tool to monitor children and young people's experiences and to set key strategic improvements as a partnership, supported by our West Sussex Parent Carer Forum's (WSPCF) annual survey, which will use to analyse qualitative feedback, on an annual basis.

In addition to this, our SEND Continuous Practice Improvement Plan (CPIP) will be our implementation plan and will detail key actions and agreed activity against this strategy. We will also monitor progress via our SEND and AP Partnership Board on a monthly basis, ensuring that we deliver against our six priorities and improve outcomes for our children and young people with SEND.

We are ambitious and committed to ensuring all children and young people with SEND in West Sussex can thrive and achieve highly.



Councillor Jacquie Russell
Cabinet Member
for Children and Young
People



Daniel Ruaux
Executive Director of
Children's
Services, West
Sussex County
Council



Caroline Tozzi
Joint Director for Children
and Young People, NHS
Sussex Integrated Care
Board (ICB)





Our Vision

'By listening, caring and acting, we will create a bright and inclusive future for all children and young people with SEND in West Sussex.'

National and Local Context

National context

As of January 2025, over 1.7 million pupils in England have SEND, representing nearly 20% of the school population. 5.3% have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 14.2% are receiving SEN support. EHCPs have increased by 11.1% year-on-year, with the sharpest rise at primary school level. Boys continue to make up the majority of SEND pupils, though this gender gap is slowly narrowing. The SEND system is under significant strain due to rising demand and funding pressures which have impacted on challenges with service delivery.

SEND & Alternative Provision (AP) Change Programme Partnership (CPP)

The SEND & AP Change Programme is a national initiative in England aimed at reforming the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) systems. It builds on the government's SEND and AP Improvement Plan, which was published in March 2022 following a public consultation, and is further informed by the schools' white paper published in 2026. This initiative is focused on designing and testing inclusive, sustainable systems. The first phase of reform will roll out from 2026 to 2028, with full implementation starting in 2028.



The reform aims to make the system more inclusive, streamline EHCP processes and improve outcomes. A SEND Reform Bill may follow, but no formal timeline has been confirmed at publication time of this strategy.



Health Reforms

Health services across England are changing to make care simpler, more joined up, and better value for money. As part of these national changes, NHS England's work will move into the Department of Health and Social Care to help reduce duplication and make decision-making clearer.

Locally, NHS Sussex and NHS Surrey Heartlands became one organisation on 01 April 2026. In line with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) across the country, the organisation has taken on a more focused role as strategic commissioners to help deliver the ambitions in the 10-Year Health Plan for England and improve long-term health outcomes. It will also reduce costs and strengthen how services work together.

We will continue to work closely with families and partners to make sure care and support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities stays consistent, joined up, and centred on what each child needs.

Three strategic shifts form the foundation of the model ICB's approach to transformation:

From Treatment to Prevention:

Prioritise preventative health by tackling root causes of illness early, in collaboration with local authorities

From Hospital to Community:

Shift care closer to home through integrated, person-centred services in local neighbourhoods, reducing dependence on hospitals

From Analogue to Digital:

Leverage technology and data to deliver smarter, more efficient and personalised care

Social Care Reforms

Social care is being reformed through the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme, alongside the changes in SEND and Health services. The FFP programme aims to create a more responsive and preventative system of support, ensuring families receive timely help before issues escalate and require more intensive interventions.

The FFP programme introduces Family Help teams; prioritises Family Group Decision-Making and creates Multi-Agency Child Protection teams (MACPT). A crucial outcome is an enhanced focus on partnership working and improving the social care focus on both children's education and crucially, children's preparation for education. This includes the development of an improved Family Hub offer and the development of the Best Start programme.



Local Context

In West Sussex, there are approximately 130,832 children in schools, of which 27,944 children have SEND (21%). Of those pupils with SEND 6,899 have an EHC Plan (5%) and 21,045 receive SEND Support (16%) (as of census day 2025). We have a higher number of pupils in receipt of SEND Support, but slightly lower number of pupils with EHC Plans than nationally. The numbers of EHCPs age 0-25 exceeds 10,000 and on average has been rising by 30% each year in recent times, with numbers projected to increase at a similar rate in future years.

The percentage rise in the number of requests for EHC needs assessments in West Sussex since 2019 is over double the rise seen in England, the Southeast and our statistical and geographical neighbours. Prioritising early intervention and prevention models of practice, is fundamental to our commitment in meeting the needs of our children and young people earlier, ensuring that we truly deliver a child and young person-centred approach.

The West Sussex Approach

West Sussex is embracing upcoming changes in education, health, and social care with optimism. We are committed to building a fairer system that provides strong, supportive services for children, young people, families, and schools, to better meet the needs of learners with SEND.

So that we can meet the increasing number of children with SEND needs, we have a SEND sufficiency plan in place with dedicated capital identified to fund additional/ create new provision that meets the needs of local children and young people, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility

We have ensured that our new SEND Strategy is aligned with [Our Council Plan 2021 to 2025](#), [West Sussex Children and Young People's Plan 2026 to 2029](#) and [Right from the start West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2024-2027](#).



Parent, Carer and Young People's views about SEND services in West Sussex

Views and lived experiences of our children, young people and their families are important to us. They help to shape and evolve how the partnership delivers services that are designed to support them, by removing barriers to access and ensuring that the system is more equitable.

All services need to be joined up. Nobody seems to understand the pathways through services - not school, not clinicians... We are going in circles.

The community as a whole should have a better understanding of disabilities. We want to be understood and treated with kindness.

Prompt appointments for mental health conditions, my child has been on the therapy waiting list for 10 months.

I'd like to be able to access activities and places with my family.

More resources and support in school, my daughter falls between the cracks of "coping" (she doesn't cope) and being on the SEN register (school doesn't think she's "that bad").

We have been well supported by some excellent individuals.

I would like there to be more employment opportunities or work experience opportunities, to help me decide what I want for my future.

Reducing waitlists for healthcare, mental health support and Neurodevelopmental pathways.

Access to supported housing options, more pre-crisis support (it shouldn't take a crisis to get adequate support).

Being able to attend clubs and having friendships is important to me.

Principles

Our five guiding principles are a commitment to the ways in which we will work as a partnership and will enable our vision to become a reality. Our principles are linked to 'what we are going to do' and will also be demonstrated through impact of improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND.

1.

Child / young person-centred approach

- The needs and wishes of the child or young person are at the heart of all decisions
- Plans are tailored to individual needs and aspirations
- Children and young people are actively involved in decisions about their support

2.

Co-production

- Children, young people, parent carers and professionals are equal partners in the development, implementation and evaluation of SEND services across the partnership
- We care about children's and families' experiences and want to work together to co-design services that support them and improve outcomes

3.

Inclusion and Accessibility

- Promoting participation in mainstream education wherever possible and appropriate, incorporating the Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice (OAIP) guidance
- Ensuring all children and young people with SEND are included and welcomed in their learning environments, have a sense of belonging and achieve well
- Providing access to the curriculum and learning opportunities that are appropriate for their needs

4.

Early Intervention and Prevention

- Identifying and addressing needs as early as possible
- Implementing effective early intervention strategies to support needs and prevent them from escalating unnecessarily
- Providing targeted support to address specific areas of need, such as communication and interaction or social, emotional and mental health difficulties

5.

Strong multi-agency working

- Working effectively with our partners and other relevant agencies by listening and taking appropriate action when needed
- Breaking down barriers between services and improving communication to enhance children, young people and their families' experience
- Sharing information and resources to ensure a coordinated and effective approach to foster a collective responsibility

SEND Outcomes Framework

Our local area partnership has co-produced and developed our SEND Outcomes Framework.

The SEND Outcomes Framework identifies a range of things that children, young people, families and professionals would like our children with SEND in West Sussex to do, have and achieve, so that they can make progress and attain the best possible outcomes.



The SEND Outcomes Framework will further support the way we measure how well we are improving experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND in West Sussex.

We will use this framework when we:

- Want to commission new services
- Check how well we are improving outcomes for children and young people
- Listen to the views and experiences of children, young people and their families

The SEND Outcomes Framework will be used alongside our SEND Strategy 2026-2030. It will help shape improvement activity across our SEND system as well as supporting the setting of key strategic direction for the partnership. Outcomes will be measured on an annual basis via our Parent Carer Forum's (PCF) Annual Survey, using a range of qualitative descriptors and quantitative data, set against each of the five outcomes.

We are committed to improving the experiences and outcomes of our children and young people with SEND. We will do this by carefully analysing the data from the PCF survey alongside our numerical service indicators, so that we can forward plan and ensure that our services are providing the right support for West Sussex's children and young people with SEND to achieve what is important to them.

How we intend to develop our local SEND system (West Sussex's six Priorities)

Priority 1



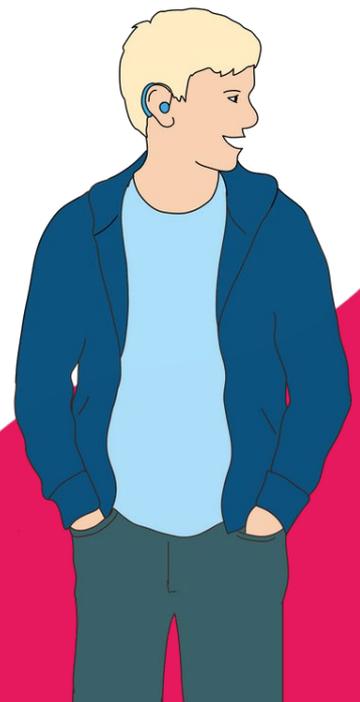
The right support at the right time for children and young people with SEND and their families across education, health and social care, with improved access to support and services.

This is a priority for us because...

- Our families tell us they would like earlier access to support, they would like more information about what support is available, and they would like shorter waits when accessing services
- We know that early and flexible intervention is essential to improve the lives of our children and young people with SEND
- Early intervention is one of the underlying principles of the SEND Code of Practice. The SEND Code of Practice says that 'all those who work with young children should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early'

Some things we have done so far...

- Improved our Social Care timeliness for EHC needs assessment advice, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Developed a quality assurance framework for EHCPs, supporting our commitment to strong multiagency working
- Refreshed and co-produced our Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice (OAIP) guidance to support schools and settings in meeting the needs of children and young people earlier
- Tested and piloted our Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST) in the Crawley area, as part of the DfE's SEND & AP Change Programme, to support early intervention and prevention work



If we do this well the impact will be:

- Children and young people will have improved access to support at the earliest opportunity, without the need for an EHCP, supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Parent carers and young people report greater confidence in our education, health and social care services to meet their needs, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach and strong multi-agency working
- Improved coordination of data and information across the partnership to better establish our understanding of needs and how we plan for them, supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Children, young people and their parent carers will provide positive feedback about the services they receive, supporting our commitment of inclusion and accessibility
- More children and young people will access services and schools close to home without the need to travel, supporting our commitment of inclusion and accessibility
- Families report that information, advice and guidance is easy to find and that it is helpful and practical in supporting them to meet their child or young person's needs, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach

What we are going to do:

- Develop and deliver a Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO) to drive an integrated multi-agency approach to inclusion and SEND, including education and health services supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Enhance the skills of the workforce across the partnership by providing effective training to be better equipped at meeting a range of SEND needs, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Improve the collection of SEND data as well as how we use it, to enable us to better meet the needs of our children and young people with SEND, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Review, improve and promote the Local Offer, so that it is easily accessible, up to date and comprehensive, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Strengthen the work of the Social Care Disability Transitions Panel, applying consistent consideration of the Adult Continuing Health Care checklist, Mental Capacity assessments and linking with health professionals for clarity of diagnoses when appropriate, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working

This will help children and young people achieve the following outcomes:

I am
ambitious

I am
safe

I belong

I am
independent



Priority 2



An inclusive education with smooth transitions for children and young people with SEND to support a sense of belonging in our educational settings and community.

This is a priority for us because...

- We know that outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND are inconsistent across the county, and we want all children with SEND to typically have positive experiences
- There are a markedly higher proportion of children and young people placed in specialist and independent specialist provision in West Sussex in comparison to national figures and statistical neighbours
- Some children and young people with SEND are not receiving their full education entitlement due to their SEND needs not being met
- We know that transition pathways are not as clear and consistent for children with special educational needs and disabilities who are not known to social care
- It is our local area's collective ambition that many children and young people with SEND are educated in their local mainstream setting, where appropriate

Some things we have done so far...

- The Dynamic Support Register (DSR) and delegated functions such as the Community Education Treatment Reviews (CETR), Learning Disability and Autism (LDA) case management, have transferred to Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust' (SPFT) provider collaborative, aligning with adult and CAMHS inpatient processes, this supports our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Piloting our Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST) with Crawley Secondary Schools, to support children and young people at risk of permanent exclusions to support our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Supported primary age and secondary age-phase transitions for children moving into Reception and Year 7, using outreach support from special schools, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility



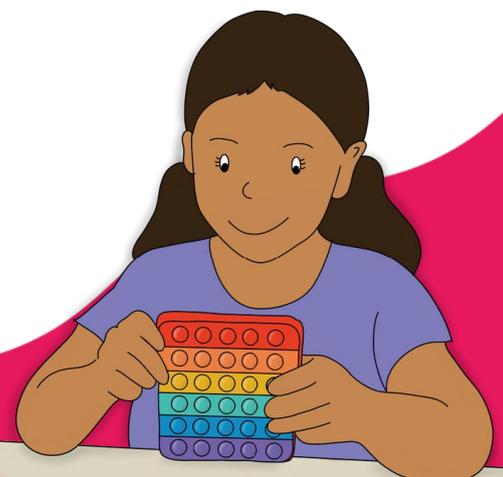
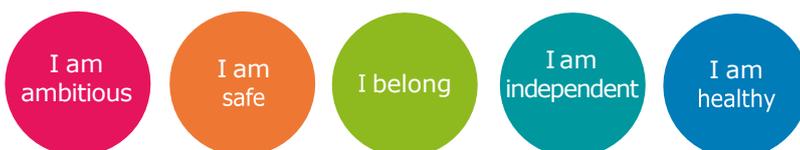
If we do this well the impact will be:

- Quality First Teaching (QFT) will lead to effective curriculum implementation for children and young people with SEND throughout the county, supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- More children and young people who have been out of school/ education will be transitioning back to a school/ setting or alternative provision that can meet their needs, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- A higher proportion of children and young people with SEND will be successfully accessing mainstream education in their local area, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Education settings will be well supported, confident and suitably skilled to meet the local needs of children and young people, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Improved sufficiency of placements for children and young people who require enhanced provision, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Improved transitions for children and young people with SEND to their next phase of education or employment, supporting our commitments to strong multi-agency working and child/ young person-centred approaches

What we are going to do:

- Establish a multi-agency partnership action group that unblocks barriers for children and young people who are not attending school/ college, on part-time timetables or accessing unsuitable AP. We will develop a clear plan to support these children, and their families receive the help they need, with a view to reintegrating back into a suitable provision using a strong multi-agency approach, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Create a clear definition of Inclusion and expectations for our mainstream schools and settings, this supports our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Embed consistent use of Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice (OAIP) guidance in education settings, map and monitor its impact, this supports our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Pilot an Assistive Technology Lending Library (ATLL) in our Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO) areas, to support a range of SEND needs in mainstream settings, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility

This will help children and young people achieve the following outcomes:



Priority 3



Preparing for adulthood earlier to support our young people with SEND achieve greater independence by accessing the community, further education and/or paid employment.

This is a priority for us because...

- Young people with SEND have told us that they want support with gaining paid employment and living independently
- Young People with SEND have told us that they want access to more community based and leisure activities that are local and accessible for them
- Our Council Plan is committed to 'Helping people and communities fulfil their potential'
- The SEND Code of Practice says that with high aspirations and the right support, most children and young people can go on to achieve successful long-term outcomes in adult life
- As a partnership we want to work together to help children and young people to realise their ambitions

Some things we have done so far...

- Focussed on and reviewed data we hold to better understand our Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) cohort as a baseline starting point for improvements, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Established a 'connect to work' group to focus on supported internships and supported employment, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Identified opportunities to increase supported internships and supported employment in the Local Authority (LA) and with local employers via our 'Growing West Sussex' partnership, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Public Health colleagues have undertaken a needs assessment on leisure activities for young people, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Improved how Special Educational Needs and Assessment Team (SENAT) engage with adult social care, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working



If we do this well the impact will be:

- More young people with SEND will be in paid employment, supporting our commitment to stronger multi-agency working and taking a young person-centred approach
- The number of young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET) reduce as more young people have a suitable destination identified, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- There is a greater choice of supported living opportunities, further education and internship programmes supporting our commitment to a child/ young person-centred approach
- Barriers are removed for young people and their families when accessing leisure activities by increasing awareness of the offer available and making information more accessible, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- There is a more joined up approach to the planning of provision for those aged 19-25, supporting our commitment to co-production and strong multi-agency working

What we are going to do:

- Deliver the Growing West Sussex and Woodlands Mead Supported Internship Programme for young people with an EHC Plan, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Create a Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) forum with a focus on skills, pathways to employment, curriculum design and accessible technologies to enable independence, that supports our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Deliver against key workstream activity as identified in the Health and Well-being Board, to ensure young adults with SEND have greater choice for Supported Living, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Supporting and contributing to West Sussex Young People Leisure Time Strategy, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working and co-production
- Create a clear multi-agency process for young adults aged 19-25, to ensure that the partnership is working in an integrated and person-centred way for young adults with SEND, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working

This will help children and young people achieve the following outcomes:

I am
ambitious

I belong

I am
independent



Priority 4



The Partnership works in creative and innovative ways to manage resources through considered and sustainable commissioning, whilst responding to the needs and views of SEND children, young people and their families.

This is a priority for us because...

- We have listened to the feedback from families about services failing to meet need and we know children and young people with SEND are waiting too long to access specialist and targeted provision across a range of community health services
- We have a statutory duty to commission jointly to achieve the best outcomes
- Smarter working is needed to develop a sustainable financial future for our services
- There is a move to Sussex wide commissioning, and we need to ensure there is a local focus which reflects the needs of West Sussex children and families

Some things we have done so far...

- Created a SEND Sufficiency plan, identifying capital to fund additional appropriate provisions, using a need led and flexible model supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Co-designed and co-produced a Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) Service Level Agreement (SLA) with special school headteachers and the LA's Procurement Board, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Triangulated support with special school headteachers, Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT) and internal contractual arrangements, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Close training and monitoring of existing contracts, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working



If we do this well the impact will be:

- More families access specialist and targeted services with clear outcome plans, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- More early intervention offers across health-based community and voluntary sector services, supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Mainstream and specialist schools are well equipped to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Improved data and family feedback tells us which services are most effective - this will help us change and continually improve services, supporting our commitment to co-production
- A clear and well understood shared commissioning strategy for SEND, and a sustainable plan for the development of services - this will involve health, social care and education services and will support our commitment to strong multi-agency working

What we are going to do:

- Identify gaps in provision for children and young people with SEND and create additional/new provision that meets the needs of local populations, in accordance with our SEND Sufficiency Plan, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Review all out of date service specifications with providers to ensure service offers meet needs of our SEND children and young people, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working and co-production
- Development of neurodivergent and SEND friendly services including our Autism in Schools Project, supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Develop a joint commissioning strategy in relation to core health services in line with the transformation and repositioning of the Integrated Care Board (ICB), supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working and co-production

This will help children and young people achieve the following outcomes:

I am
ambitious

I am
independent

I am
healthy



Priority 5



Emotional health and wellbeing are actively promoted for children and young people with SEND. Targeted and specialist support that is effective and equitable for those experiencing mental health difficulties.

This is a priority for us because...

- Children with SEND are more likely to experience mental health problems during their lifetime
- Long-term increases in levels of referrals for mental health difficulties across all age groups of children and young people have been experienced in West Sussex
- Early identification and support for mental health difficulties is recommended in the Mental Health Needs Assessment, which is part of our Children First approach and is a priority area in the WSCC Children and Young People's Plan
- The West Sussex Health and Wellbeing strategy 2025-2030 has Children and Young People's Mental Health Emotional Well-being (MHEW) as a priority area

Some things we have done so far...

- Developed our Thriving in Education website and mental health and wellbeing offer to all West Sussex schools, to support our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Developed the West Sussex Single Point of Access (SPoA) to support our commitment to child and young person-centred approach and strong multi-agency working
- Developed Thought-Full (mental health support teams) so that 60% of children and young people attending school in West Sussex can access, to support our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Redesigned CAMHS website, NHS Sussex SEND Training hub, and delivered CAMHS webinars to provide access to high-quality information, to support our commitment early intervention and prevention
- Provided additional investment to the Reaching Families Neurodevelopment support and training service, to expand advice sessions, 1:1 support and workshops, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Launched the new Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) process and associated implementation projects, to support early intervention and prevention



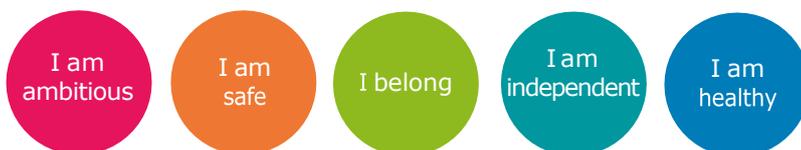
If we do this well the impact will be:

- Waiting times for CAMHS will reduce, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Improved mental health and wellbeing amongst children and young people with SEND, with improved quality of life for them and their families, supporting our commitment to a child/ young person-centred approach and strong multi-agency working
- Education settings feel better equipped and supported to provide support to children and young people to look after their own mental health and wellbeing, supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention and greater inclusion and accessibility
- Improved offer of support to those at risk of poor mental health and emotional well-being, reducing barriers and inequalities, by supporting inclusion and supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- A more positive experience for children and young people with SEND and parent carers with improved knowledge and confidence in dealing with mental health issues, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach

What we are going to do:

- Improve Specialist Community CAMHS waiting times as part of the wider Mental Health Transformation Programme led by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT), supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Further develop the digital support offer and identify long term funding options for a dedicated Neurodevelopment support service, to support our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Extend the Community Education Treatment Review (CETR) awareness training through a newly developed offer, to support our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Align and deliver against the six areas of focus in The [West Sussex Public Mental Health Needs Assessment](#) pertaining to children and young people with SEND/Neurodevelopment needs (ND), supporting our commitment to inclusion and accessibility
- Reduce mental ill health, by supporting children and young people earlier (0-5 years), supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention

This will help children and young people achieve the following outcomes:



Priority 6

6.

Effective and responsive communication with our children and young people with SEND and their families to foster respect and understanding, building an environment in West Sussex where every child feels like they belong.

This is a priority for us because...

- Our families have told us that our communication with them needs to improve
- When all stakeholders, including professionals, schools and families are involved in shaping services, those services are more likely to meet real needs. This leads to more credible and effective services, better use of resources, higher satisfaction and better outcomes for all
- We want to encourage clear, respectful dialogue between families, schools and professionals to ensure that mainstream schools are welcoming and capable of supporting all learners
- Local authorities have statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice to involve families in decisions. Co-produced plans are a fundamental part of our 'Children First' values, and the prioritisation and integration of communications across our services supports these obligations

Some things we have done so far...

- Created a SEND Communication Co-ordination Group (SCCG) that delivers co-ordinated communications to colleagues and partners across the Education and Skills directorate, supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Delivered parent carer events in person and online, to showcase services that can provide universal support for children and young people, as well as share our new 'Ordinarily Available Inclusive Practice' (OAIP) guidance supporting our commitment to early intervention and prevention
- Co-produced the 'SEND Outcomes Framework' with parent carers who particularly shaped the qualitative service indicators, supporting our commitment to co-production
- A review of our Local Offer to ensure compliance as well as providing information for parent carers that is reviewed each quarter, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach



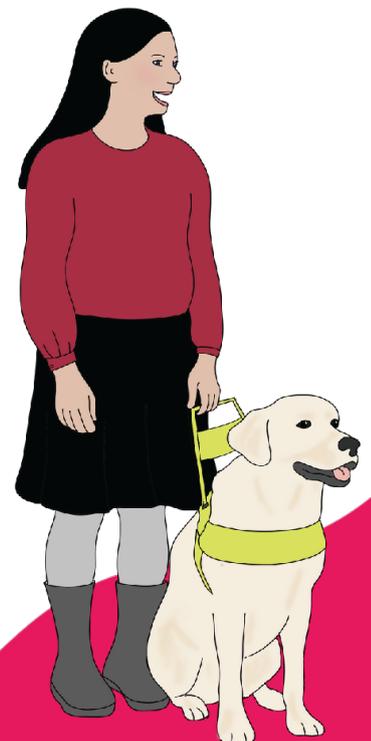
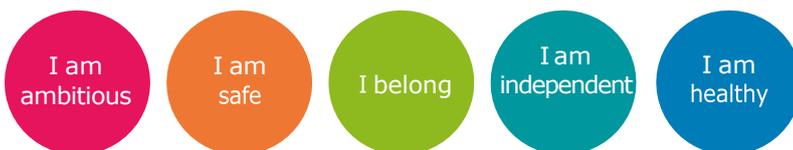
If we do this well the impact will be:

- Parent carers' satisfaction improves when asked about their involvement in planning and shaping services that supports them and their children and/or young people with SEND, supporting our commitment to co-production
- Children, young people and families will feel they are listened to and respected, building their understanding and trust in the service, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Families report an increased confidence in the Partnerships offers, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach and co-production
- More families participate in their reviews, planning meetings and policy consultations and are active partners in decision-making, leading to more holistic and effective support plans supporting our commitment to co-production

What we are going to do:

- Define and establish clear and accessible feedback mechanisms and processes to listen and respond to the voices of children, young people and families, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach
- Create and implement a feedback cycle calendar for all parent carer feedback to be captured termly, and use this to help inform strategic direction for the partnership, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach and co-production
- Provide routine updates to our SEND families, referring to 'Your feedback, our actions', supporting our commitment to strong multi-agency working
- Improve operational communication with parent carers, particularly for those known to our SENAT service, supporting our commitment to a child and young person-centred approach

This will help children and young people achieve the following outcomes:



Appendix

Glossary of terms used in the SEND Strategy

A

Adaptation

The act of changing practice or policies to make them suitable to meet a child or young person's needs.

Assess, Plan, Do, Review

A system that follows four stages, often referred to as a 'cycle': Assess, Plan, Do, Review (ADPR). For further information about this cycle, often referred to as the 'graduated approach', see Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015. This cycle should not be considered a single process.

C

CAMHS

CAMHS which stands for Child Adolescent and Mental Health Serves children and young people under 18 who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health, such as depression, anxiety, behavioural issues, or other mental health conditions. The review, chaired by an independent professional, aims to ensure the young person receives the right care and support to live in the community.

Community

A group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society.

Co-production

A way of working where children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals are equal partners from the very beginning of a project or initiative, when designing, developing, delivering, and evaluating services and support to achieve better outcomes.

Care, Education and Treatment Review (CETR)

A meeting for children and young people (aged 0-18) with a learning disability or autism who are at risk of or are in a specialist hospital.

D

Delivering Better Value (DBV)

A Department for Education (DfE) funded SEND programme which aimed to support local authorities and their partners to improve delivery of SEND services for children and young people whilst working towards financial sustainability.

Department for Education (DfE)

The Department for Education is a ministerial department of the Government of the United Kingdom. It is responsible for child protection, child services, education, apprenticeships and wider skills in England.

E

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

A legal document used in England for children and young people aged 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) describes a child or young person who experiences persistent difficulties attending school due to emotional factors, often leading to prolonged absences. This can manifest as low attendance, high sensitivity, anxiety, low mood, social isolation and difficulty forming relationships with teachers and peers.

G

Graduated approach

A way of meeting needs through effective implementation of support before moving a child or young person onto higher levels of support by following the assess, plan, do and review cycles.

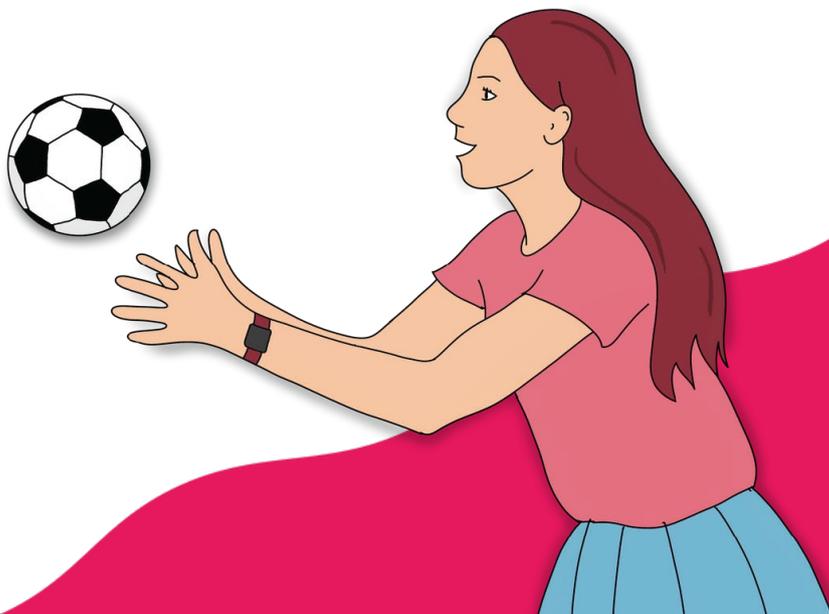
I

Impact

The significant or direct changes that happen because of planning and intervention.

Inclusion (Education)

Creating a learning environment where all students, regardless of their background, ability, or learning style, feel valued and supported and have equal opportunities to participate and succeed.



L

LGBTQ+

LBTQ+ is a term that refers to lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning individuals, along with other sexual orientations and gender identities. The "+" at the end of the acronym, "LBTQ+", signifies inclusivity and represents the vast spectrum of sexual orientations and gender identities beyond those explicitly mentioned.

Local Area

The geographical area of a local authority (West Sussex), including all the services within that area that support children and young people with SEND. This includes local authorities, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), Public Health, NHS England for specialist services, early years settings, schools and post-16 further education.

Local Authority

The Council which is a level of government responsible for local services (e.g. West Sussex County Council).

Local Offer

Information about education, health and care services, leisure activities and support groups in one place. A website for families that provides clear, comprehensive and accessible information about the support and opportunities that are available in their local area.

N

NEET

Refers to young people over the age of 16 that are Not in Education, Employment or Training.

Neurodevelopmental delay (NDD)

NDD is a term used to describe delays in skill development of infants and young children, affecting one or more areas of development like motor, speech or social skills.

Neurodiversity (ND)

The unique ways people's brains work. While everyone's brain develops similarly, no two brains function just alike. Being neurodivergent means having a brain that works differently from the average or "neurotypical" person.



P

Partnership

Refers to the SEND Area Partnership including education, health and social care, including other key stakeholders such as children, young people and their families.

Person-centred approaches

Focusing support on the needs of an individual. Ensuring that people's preferences, needs and values guide decisions and providing support that is respectful of and responsive to them.

Preparation for adulthood (PfA)

Refers to the process of supporting young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to transition into adulthood. This involves planning for their future education and employment, developing independent living skills, fostering community inclusion and ensuring their good health and well-being. PfA is a collaborative effort between young people, their families and relevant professionals, aiming to empower young people to achieve their aspirations and live fulfilling lives.

S

Settings

An environment where learning takes place, encompassing a wide range of spaces and institutions, from traditional schools and colleges to nurseries and pre-schools.

Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT)

A specialist NHS organisation providing mental health, learning disability, and neurodevelopment care services for people in Sussex, including West Sussex.

T

Thought-Full

A service in West Sussex that supports schools with all aspects of mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Transitions

The changes and adjustments individuals make as they move between different settings, services, or stages of life. These transitions can involve moving from childhood to adulthood, switching between different schools or education levels, or changing health and social care providers.

