Working together
improving outcomes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategy for children and young people with
Special Educational Needs and who are Disabled
Draft for consultation
Introduction

This strategy is in response to the changes set out in the recently published Children and Families Bill, the changes to funding high needs pupils with special educational needs and those who are disabled and our local needs in Kent to develop more specialist provision and integrated services in education, health and social care.

Children and young people have told us that they want to be treated with respect, as individuals who have a valuable contribution to make. We know that families have to struggle to access the right services in a coordinated way.

We have a challenging agenda for improvements in the achievement, health and well being of all children and young people in Kent. This strategy sets out how we will achieve our ambition of good outcomes for children and young people with the most complex special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There is a lot of good work to build on. We have invested in our Special Schools as centres of excellence to support all Kent schools to develop capacity to educate more children with SEND through local forums with other key services and agencies. We have well established SEN specialist resourced provision in a number of mainstream schools supporting many individual pupils with statements. We have purpose built Multi-Agency Specialist Hubs in Ashford, Sittingbourne and Margate. The Early Support Programme for complex needs children (aged 0-7) is providing families with person centred, multi-agency support through nine co-ordinated access points. The Palliative Care Network has improved access to short breaks for families with disabled children and complex health needs, support for parents and carers and increased professional awareness of the service.

However our capacity has not kept pace with changing needs; we do not have enough provision for autism, speech and language needs, and emotional, social and behavioural needs. And we are spending too much on transporting children to schools too far away from home and their local communities, including too many children educated and cared for out of the county.
Vision

We want Kent to have a well planned continuum of provision that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND, from birth to age 25, and supports their families. This means all agencies working in a more integrated way and more closely with parents and carers, demonstrating our strong commitment to early intervention and prevention so that help is provided in a timely way.

The Kent Children and Young People’s Joint Commissioning Board’s vision is for every child and young person in Kent to achieve their full potential in life, whatever their background.

Our vision incorporates the vision of the Health and Wellbeing Board to deliver better quality care, improve health outcomes, and improve the public’s experience of health and social care services.

The aims of the strategy

The overarching aim of the strategy is to improve the educational, health and emotional wellbeing outcomes for all of Kent’s children and young people with SEN and those who are disabled.

The second key aim is by 2014, to ensure Kent effectively delivers the changes in the Children and Families Bill, to have better integrated assessment and joint commissioning support to deliver single education, health and care plans.

The third key aim is to develop the range of social care, health and education providers and encourage a mixed economy of provision as well as the highest quality and cost effective independent and non maintained Special schools where some children and young people are placed.

We aim to ensure there is more joined up work across all sectors, by those who work with children and young people so that we achieve the highest quality support for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

We aim to ensure all specialist SEN provision in Kent is good or better and all Kent Special schools continue to develop as effective centres of excellence, providing models of best practice and high quality training and outreach support for other schools, so that there is capacity in every school or setting to intervene earlier and provide the most effective support. Key to this is ensuring that every school can deliver the SEN core standards and that by 2014 there are staff in all schools with training and expertise in ASD, BESN and speech and language needs.

We aim to ensure that transitions are well managed, so that there is continuity of support and young people are well prepared. A key transition is into post 16 education or training, and at age 19 into employment and early adulthood. These transitions are challenging and our aim is to ensure young people with learning difficulties and those with disabilities up to age 25 are engaged in purposeful education and training, so that they are able to move onto skilled employment and adult life with support from adult social care services for those who need it.
We recognise that services need to be more flexible if they are to meet individual needs. We aim to provide better personalisation and personal budgets for families for aspects of education and care where that will support greater independence and choice. Lastly a key aim of the strategy is to develop an integrated service for disabled children and families, to provide a ‘tell us once’ approach, so that families and young people have a more coordinated service and do not have to repeat their story to different agencies.

In the strategy we set out a number of priorities and have set some challenging improvement targets for 2016-17. The success of the Strategy will be dependent on good SEND practice in every school and a stronger commitment to inclusion and integrated working so that we make better use of the resources we have across all schools and services, working more closely together.

By 2016, we will have

**Better outcomes for pupils with SEND:** Progress and attainment for these pupils at all key stages will be above the national average and achievement gaps will be less than those of our statistical neighbours.

**Improved quality of educational provision:** All Kent Special schools and 90% of mainstream schools will be judged good or better in OFSTED inspections.

**More effective early intervention:** there will be greater access to universal services, fewer statutory assessments and Statements; improvements in absence by SEND pupils and no permanently excluded young people with SEND. Less than 300 children and young people will be in out of county placements. We will have reduced the need for more specialist intervention.

**More provision and engagement in post 16 learning and training:** 95% of young people with SEN will be in learning or training. More apprenticeships will be available and transition to adult services for the most vulnerable will be well planned.

**Additional Provision:** All mainstream schools will develop expertise to support children and young people with ASD, BESN and speech and language needs and more placements will be in mainstream schools, greatly reducing SEN transport. A mixed economy of providers will offer parents greater choice. More places will be available in Kent Special schools.

**Improved Services:** Joint assessment and planning will happen across all agencies. Access to therapy and CAMHs will have improved. All disabled children will have access to equipment and wheelchair services and families will benefit from short breaks. Parents will know what they can expect from all agencies.

**Improved parental confidence and engagement:** there will be more parental involvement in the development of integrated education, health and care plans and fewer appeals tribunals. There will be greater choice and flexibility through personalised budgets and direct payments. Reviews based on the Team around the Family approach will ensure they include all those involved with the child and their family.
Our priorities are to

1. Improve provision for, and access to, local services in education, care and health, so fewer children are educated out of their area and out county.

2. Develop the quality and capacity of early years providers, schools and colleges, in order to meet the needs of local families and children with SEND.

3. Develop the broadest range of providers to increase parental choice and offer provision which offers a flexible match to the needs of our children and young people.

4. Improve progress rates and outcomes for all children and young people with SEN and disabilities so that we close the achievement gap between them and other children and achieve outcomes which are above national expectations.

5. Build parents’ confidence in the support provided and improve the engagement of parents by providing them with timely information, advice and support.

6. Develop and improve services for children, young people and families with their active participation and make available personal budgets where it will improve independence and choice.

7. Deliver greater local integration and co-ordination of education, health and care services for children and families in Kent.

8. Improve early intervention and ensure preventative support is more targeted to reduce poorer outcomes and prevent escalation and rising levels of need.

9. Develop a systematic and joint strategic commissioning approach to improve the quality and availability of provision 0-25, with good transition to adult services.

10. Ensure the provision of high quality specialist services as appropriate and necessary, such as speech and language therapy and child and adolescent mental health support.

11. Ensure we improve the effective and efficient use of our resources to meet increasing demand and remove perverse incentives, so that costs do not escalate.

12. Successfully deliver the Kent approach to integrated education, health and care planning by autumn 2014.

13. Ensure disabled children and families have timely access to appropriate community equipment and wheelchair services to meet their current and future needs.

14. Work with partners in health to ensure more effective commissioning and adequate provision for speech and language therapy, child and adolescent mental health services and school and community nursing for children with complex health needs.
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You can give us your views online at www.kent.gov.uk/SEND

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