

# Thurrock Council

## Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2020-23

### SEND strategic vision

Our vision is all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities across the local area can access outstanding support in their early years, school, college and work. This will enable them to fully achieve their full potential and have happy, healthy and fulfilling lives.

### Inclusion in Thurrock

Thurrock Council has a long standing commitment to an inclusive system of education, health and care support, which actively enables young people to access and have full participation in any aspects in community life. This is in compliance with the Salamanca Statement and Framework for action on Special Education Needs (1994), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is embedded in the Equality Act 2010.

### Thurrock SEND key strategic priority areas

Developed through a process of co-production with partners to fulfil our shared vision for SEND, our key strategic priority areas are:

- 1. ensure that children, young people and families are at the heart of an effective SEND system**
- 2. ensure every child and young person is making good progress and attends a good place to learn**
- 3. ensure children, young people and families are well supported**
- 4. ensure an effective and responsive approach to assessing and meeting children, young people and families' needs**
- 5. ensure the early identification of and early support for children with SEND**
- 6. ensure young people are well prepared for adulthood**

This strategy was produced in partnership with NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group.



## **Key SEND priorities 2020-2023 – background**

Thurrock Council has continued to work across a range of areas of special educational needs and disabilities, including those that were identified in our Ofsted/Care Quality Commission (CQC) Local Area inspection in March 2019, which formed part of the subsequent Written Statement of Action. We have worked on an ongoing process of self-evaluation, monitoring statutory processes, and are using additional governance structures and monitoring systems to evaluate developments and improve all areas of service in relation to SEND.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has meant we have had to adapt the way we work. We have used a range of technologies to keep in touch with our children, young people and families.

This process of ongoing evaluation has led to the identification of key priority activities under the established areas of strategic priority for the next phase of the SEND implementation. This ensures we are meeting our vision for SEND across the local area, whilst delivering all of the actions and intended outcomes in the Written Statement of Action. We have taken the opportunity over the past year to update and refresh our key strategic priorities, which are outlined below.

### **Key priority area 1**

We will ensure that children and families are at the heart of an effective SEND system, co-producing and working in partnership to ensure that the child/young person remains at the heart of the decision making process.

To achieve this, we will:

- embed the new engagement and participation strategy for children and young people to ensure they are fully engaged in all aspects of SEND developments, including the joint commissioning strategy focusing on the experience of the child/young person
- ensure that comprehensive feedback is obtained from children and young people with regard to the services they are currently accessing and that this directly drives future service developments
- continue to develop a broad representation of child and young person's views on all aspects of local area support, through targeted activities with different age groups and with service users reviewing the local offer
- further developed the partnership approach when working with the Parent Carer Forum and support its development through a range of new engagement activities to ensure they have a voice in ongoing developments
- use the comprehensive feedback gathered through engagement activities, the local offer engagement portal and meetings with parents and young people on the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and annual review process, ensuring parents, children and young people are listened to and valued, thus allowing further development of programmes to meet child/young people's needs

### **Key priority area 2**

We will ensure every child and young person is making good progress and attends a good place to learn and develop life skills.

To achieve this, we will:

- review and embed the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to review the current and future predicted need of SEND resources and placements; leading to the introduction of a capital programme of development of high needs placements based on the review to ensure appropriate placements are in place to meet any needs
- implement and develop best practice through a quality assurance framework for out-of-borough specialist placements, to ensure all settings are providing a high-quality service for young people accessing them and that there is a clear accountability framework to ensure pupils are fully supported and are making good progress
- implement the newly refreshed quality assurance framework within all educational settings to ensure the whole-system partnership approach is further developed with clear process around the 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review' cycle at all levels of SEND identification
- develop the Autism Education Trust (AET) Hub and ensure all educational establishments are autism friendly and employ the AET framework and guidance as part of their universal offer – we will also consider how we can include other areas of disability going forward, such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- ensure processes and systems used by the council allow for accurate tracking of children's provision, and that data generated by the system is accurate and validated – we will provide systems that enable all key partners to be involved including our commitment to ensure we have strong communication systems in place for parents/carers

### **Key priority area 3**

We will ensure children and families are well supported.

To achieve this, we will:

- continue the work linked to the communication and engagement strategy for child/young people, and co-design a new website platform to improve accessibility and engagement for children/young people in accessing the local offer
- undertake a comprehensive review of local offer content, school and setting SEN information and implement an ongoing programme of 'update and advise' as part of the Local Offer Development Plan
- review the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) to ensure the ongoing availability of high quality advice and support services to parents
- review with parents and carers the offer of support to disabled children, including access to the Sunshine Centre, short breaks and personal budgets, together with access to any other support services included under Brighter Futures, and develop new arrangements to ensure these are included in the EHC plan

### **Key priority area 4**

We will ensure an effective and responsive approach to assessing and meeting children and families' needs.

To achieve this, we will:

- explore the development of an online EHC plan hub that allows for better co-production of EHC plans and annual reviews
- ensure the statutory SEND service is high performing and works in partnership with educational settings, parents, children and young people to deliver high quality EHC plans within statutory timescales that effectively meet the needs of all children and young people, and allow their outcomes to be met through the most appropriate provision
- continue to embed the quality assurance process to ensure the quality of EHC plans improves thus enabling children and young people to meet their aspirations and long term goals
- develop a partnership SEND training programme, ensuring we use a person-centred planning approach

## **Key priority area 5**

We will ensure the early identification and early support for children with SEND.

To achieve this, we will:

- quality-assure our outreach services and targeted programme of development activity to ensure services are focused on appropriate needs leading to maximum impact on outcomes
- review the offer of specialist early years placements to ensure all children with SEND have access to the appropriate specialist support in their education
- ensure staff in all settings have access to high quality continuing professional development, along with information and advice on all aspects of SEND through face-to-face, e-learning and bespoke training

## **Key priority area 6**

We will ensure young people are well prepared for adulthood.

To achieve this, we will:

- ensure the service is focusing on the voice of young people enabling them to have choice and control – we aim to ensure young people are excited and ambitious about their futures
- develop high quality post-16 provision working in partnership with training providers, implementing innovative solutions for provision to be Ofsted-rated 'good' or above, developed in consultation with young people and focussed on developing independence, budgeting, communication, and relationship skills – this will ensure that young people are prepared for the world of work and independent living
- ensure all EHC plans are of high quality, reflecting the voice of the young person – we will ensure they are aware of their EHC plans and aspirational career choices
- ensure excellent support during transition by delivering high quality career advice from Year 9 onwards, enabling young people to be aware of the significant regeneration opportunities in Thurrock and be supported to make sound choices about their future

- further develop apprenticeship and supported internship offers that are reflective of young people's ambitions, are ambitious in their outcomes for the young people, are instrumental in decreasing number not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Thurrock and providing a sound foundation for the career progression of young people
- develop comprehensive arrangements with the Disabled Children's team, the Transition team and the Personal Advisers to ensure that transition planning includes all elements of preparing for adulthood and leads to a clear measurable improvement in outcomes for young people undergoing transition to adult services
- strengthen the offer to young people with SEND aged 16 to 25 years through consultation on appropriate programmes of education and support in colleges including access to Educational Psychology and specialist outreach services
- review the specialist programmes of support and implement a targeted programme of co-produced specialist options for young people over 19 years-old wishing to access a range of learning activities
- deliver a comprehensive health offer to young people with SEND, supporting clear routes of transfer into adult services and enabling continuity and high quality support for health needs