



Draft Hackney Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion 3 Year Strategy

Draft

Introduction

The Hackney Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028 sets out our local area vision and priorities for supporting children and young people with SEND and their families. The Hackney Local Area Partnership is aspirational and ambitious in setting targets for how we will work together to ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes in life.

This strategy has been co-produced by children and young people, families, professionals and practitioners. It draws on the lived experience and knowledge of children and young people with SEND and those who care for them, as well as that of the local authority and NHS services, settings, providers, and voluntary and community organisations who form our local area partnership. It applies to all children and young people in Hackney identified with a special educational need and/or disability between the ages of 0-25 who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or receive SEN Support.

The SEND and Inclusion 3 Year Strategy builds on the previous Hackney SEND 3 Year Strategy. It aligns with Hackney Education's Strategic Plan 2025-2028. Priority 1 which is **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion: Ensuring efficient and sustainable SEND provision, early identification of needs, and timely support**. It will also be delivered alongside wider programmes of work such as school organisation plans, the Hackney Education Alternative Learning Service (HEALS) and Hackney Council's Equality Plan and Anti-Racism Framework, and the City and Hackney Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy, with the overall aim of ensuring that children and young people are able to receive the most appropriate education to meet their needs.

We have agreed, as a local area partnership, to use the following definition to drive our work/focus on inclusion and enable a collaborative approach in Hackney.

Inclusion means identifying and supporting the full range of needs through flexible, personalised support. This starts with a strong universal offer, with an emphasis on welcoming all children, young people and families and creating a culture of belonging in Hackney communities.

Vision

Our vision is for a borough where every child and young person with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is empowered to thrive, achieve their full potential, and live lives that are as independent, healthy, and fulfilling as possible.

To achieve this, we will develop a collaborative, transparent, and equitable system that is driven by the voices of children, young people, and their families. This needs led system will support our schools and settings to identify needs early and provide efficient, sustainable, and high-quality provision, in the right place, at the right time.

How this strategy has been created

Our co-production cycle has included a series of workshops, discussions, targeted questionnaires, and surveys, carried out between April-October 2025, through a variety of in-person and online formats. Our core stakeholder groups throughout have been:

- Children and young people
- Parents and carers
- Teachers/ SENCOs/ school governors
- Professionals and practitioners

We have been transparent about our progress throughout the year by providing regular updates to the SEND & Alternative Provision (SENDAP) Local Area Partnership Board and, when necessary, adapting and improving our approach in response to feedback. Our co-production cycle followed three key phases:

Phase 1

- **Over 200** children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals engaged in in person and online workshops and discussions to talk about the key issues and challenges we should address in our new SEND and Inclusion 3 Year Strategy. This has underpinned the development of the priorities which form this strategy.

Phase 2

- **128** children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals shared their views about how we should prioritise the biggest issues and challenges and the solutions and outcomes that we should work towards to address them. This helped us to refine our priorities, draft our vision statement, and define the outcomes we want to see.

Phase 3

- Children, young people, parents, carers, and professionals have been invited to provide feedback on a first draft of this strategy, and we will incorporate their input and suggestions into a refined final version.

We would like to give special thanks to the Hackney SEND Parent Carer Forum, Interlink, Chinuch UK, Children Ahead, inDEPth (Young People's Neurodivergent Panel), the Huddleston Centre, Immediate Theatre, and The Boxing Academy, for their valuable support in helping us to hear the diverse voices of children and young people with SEND and their families. We would also like to thank our colleagues across the health, social care and education sectors.

Hackney Context

- **A proudly diverse borough:** Almost 40% of Hackney's population was born outside of the UK and 58% of the 0-19 population are from a Global Majority background. Hackney is home to the largest Charedi Jewish community in Europe and there are a total of 89 languages spoken across the Borough.
- **2 in 10 pupils with SEND:** Around 20% of children and young people in Hackney have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) or receive Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support, which is more than the London and national averages.
- **Increasing numbers of EHCPs:** Since we made our last strategy in 2022, the number of people with an EHCP in Hackney has increased by 20%.
- **Falling rolls:** At the January 2025 pupil census there were 613 surplus reception places (23% of all available reception places) and 4189 surplus places (21%) across reception to Year 6 at mainstream primary schools.
- **Primary needs of children and young people with an EHCP:** Autism (36.7%), Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (24.9%), Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (24%), Moderate Learning Difficulty (7.8%).
- **Primary needs of children and young people receiving SEN Support:** Speech, Language, and Communication Needs (28%), Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (21%), Moderate Learning Difficulty (11.4%), Specific Learning difficulty (8%), Autism (8%).
- **Placements:** As well as mainstream schools, Hackney has three maintained Special Schools, 14 Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs), two Language Resource Provisions (LRSSs) a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and an Alternative Provision (AP) offer.
- **Schools:** 100% of our maintained schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted.
- **Health Providers:** a variety of partners commission and deliver health and wellbeing services in Hackney. They include: The London Borough of Hackney, Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, GP Confederation, Primary Care Networks, the North East London Integrated Care Board, and East London NHS Foundation Trust.
- **Children and Family Hubs:** Hackney has four Children and Family Hubs, which provide information, help and support to families.

Priority 1: Emotional Wellbeing & Family-Centered Support

What we've been told

Children/ Young People	Parents/ carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many of us feel a lot of stress, and struggle with big emotions like sadness, worry, and anger• Being bullied is a big problem that makes us feel sad and can even stop us from seeing our friends or going to places we used to enjoy• Some of us feel very alone and isolated and don't get many opportunities to go out of the house or meet up with friends• It can be hard for us to manage emotions, stop putting things off, understand the bigger picture in lessons, and keep up with homework• There aren't enough places to meet friends that are safe, calm and don't have too much going on• Activities aren't always well advertised or flexible enough for everyone to take part and they're often too expensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication from schools is not always constructive and effective• There is sometimes a lack of 'kindness' in the way that Children and young people with SEND and their families are treated by schools, services, and the community• Parents of disabled children sometimes have significant difficulties accessing appropriate housing• There are not enough safe outdoor spaces or inclusive and specialist local community centres and organised activities
Partnership Professionals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a lack of safe, inclusive out of school activities and , including gaps in the provision and update of Short Breaks and Respite• Families face multiple challenges in navigating the system, including language barriers, financial constraints, and parental health conditions• Unsafe or unsuitable housing is a major concern which directly impacts family capacity to care for children with needs as well as parental mental health.• There is a need for increased mental health support for parents and carers• It is challenging for universal mental health offers to prioritise the high volume of pupils• There is a big mental health impact on staff/ SENCOS responsible for supporting pupils with SEND in under resourced mainstream settings• The mental health of parents is significantly affected by factors like sleep deprivation and poor housing particularly in families with multiple children with SEND, there is a need for increased mental health support for parents and carers	

What we want to see

- More resources for mental health support in schools for pupils and staff and parents, including support with addressing bullying
- Expanded universal mental health and wellbeing programmes, including access to green space.
- Partnership working to address the impact of socioeconomic issues. These include access to social housing with SEND priority, free school meals/food poverty, the cost of living crisis, and parental health on families
- More support for parents/ carers and families of children and young people with SEND, including supportive communication from schools
- Opportunities for young people with SEND to socialise and engage in activities in their community, including Short Breaks and Respite

Priority 2: Inclusive Environments (Spaces, Services, & Attitudes) and Belonging

What we've been told

Children/ Young People	Parents/ carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes schools aren't flexible enough for our individual needs• We sometimes worry about being safe when we're out, especially if we feel overwhelmed and there's no one to help. It's also upsetting when we're not treated like the age we are• Some of us have experienced feeling unwelcome at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Families sometimes experience parent blame rather than supportive engagement from services and don't always feel that their lived experience is influential enough• The school curriculum lacks engaging opportunities for physical activity, outdoor learning, and hands-on experiences that may enable less academic neurodiverse and disabled children to experience success at school and a greater sense of achievement• There is a need for better communication and collaboration between schools and local community services or groups.• More work is needed for the whole community to have a better understanding of SEND to be confidently inclusive and make reasonable adjustments
Partnership Professionals	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lack of consistent reasonable adjustments for young people with SEND leads to fatigue and disengagement, particularly in physical activity• There's a significant lack of available spaces in specialist settings, leading to	

- children in ARPs and mainstream settings needing further support
- Knowledge of and access to externally available specialist support is sometimes limited in mainstream settings

What we want to see

- **Improved SEND training for mainstream schools, to promote a more flexible, accommodating, and inclusive approach to SEND students, based on individualised programmes of support that recognise all forms of attainment**
- **A sense of belonging and an understanding of SEND, underpinned by collaboration between schools and the community**
- **Improved support for children and young people with SEND to feel safe and engaged, including those who are not attending school**
- **Investment in maintaining a stable, high quality specialist provision that meets the full range of needs of children and young people with SEND. This includes high standards of quality across all Additionally Resourced Provisions**
- **More awareness of the options for external support across schools and settings**
- **Children, young people and their families feeling empowered to influence and participate in decision making**

Priority 3: Transitions & Future Pathways

What we've been told

Children/ Young People	Parents/ carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have concerns about managing money, getting around, and sorting out housing when living more independently • Many of us want to live by ourselves or with friends, but it's hard to get clear information about how to do this, where to live, or how to get help with things like paying bills and looking after a home • Some of us worry about the transition to sixth form and have struggled to engage with college • Some of us are worried about living away from home • There isn't enough support with managing change when we're moving from school to places like sixth form or college • Many of us rely heavily on our families to support us with day to day tasks and feel very worried 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of well communicated Post 16 options for young people with SEND • Access to adult social care services is confusing and there is a lack of communication about waiting times for Care Act assessments • Employers struggle to recognise the diverse and nuanced needs of young people with SEND, making it harder for them to find suitable work • There is a lack of clear communication about how parents/ carers can continue to support their child after they turn 18 • There are a lack of vocational routes into paid employment for young disabled people

about how we would manage without them	
Partnership Professionals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of ownership of SEND pupil outcomes at post-16, limited opportunities for retakes, and insufficient support for internships and university transitions. • There is a lack of variety in post-16 options, and access to good careers advice and comprehensive pathway information is also limited. • There's a clear need for comprehensive training to support young people to live independently, including financial education and fostering healthy risk assessment, and for a better understanding of this in schools and among parents • There's a lack of tailored messaging around appropriate independence based on individual needs and continued support and linking with families at post-18 • It is sometimes challenging to align a child/ young person's individual independence targets with the targets in their EHCP 	

What we want to see

- **Targeted support and training for independence in schools and settings based on a shared understanding of independence**
- **Support with preparation for all aspects of adulthood for children and young people with SEND, including assessments for Adult Social Care**
- **Earlier and more comprehensive discussion about pathways and working towards independence and independent living, including routes into work and the role of parental support**
- **A wider variety of Post-16 options and comprehensive support with retakes and transitions, with accountability shared by post-16 colleges and sixth forms**
- **A strengthened supported housing offer and keyworkers for transition and beyond.**

Priority 4: Waiting Times & Equitable Access to Support

What we've been told

Children/ Young People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are long waits for assessments and some specialist help, which can sometimes be given in ways that don't feel comfortable or helpful to us • It can be hard for us to talk to adults or professionals because we worry about what others might think. • Some of us can't access certain medication in the area we live • Some of us have experienced a lack of communication from 	Parents/ carers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waiting times for assessments and support services are too long and families are not always updated on how much longer the wait is • It is not always clear how to access support from services • There are barriers to and a shortage of resources to provide early help and it is not always clear how children are prioritised for early screening
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schools about our support	
<p>Partnership Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to address systemic barriers to support, access barriers and communication gaps exist across some services • There's a significant demand for support services related to toileting and awareness of acute needs in schools • There is a need for more support for academically performing pupils who may not require an EHCP • There's a clear need for families to have a better understanding of current and future available support • Concerns exist about the number of children not in school and regarding children being held back in Early Years until a diagnosis is secured, leading to a lack of data on this cohort's needs • Families sometimes continue to face difficulty in accessing crucial specialist support, such as Occupational Therapy (OT), which is vital for developing independence skills, remains difficult 	

What we want to see

- **Reduced wait times for diagnoses, assessments and services and more support for parents/carers and children while awaiting diagnosis**
- **Fair and inclusive access to the right kinds of therapies and services, including for children under five and those without an EHCP**
- **More accessible appointment arrangements and outreach options, including for those not currently accessing support**
- **A needs based approach to providing support rather than reliance on diagnosis**
- **Effective, clear, and accessible communication about available support and services**

Priority 5: Workforce development, Training & Resources

What we've been told

Children/ Young People	Parents/ carers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of us feel that teachers at our school did not understand our needs • Some of us have struggled when support we've been offered at school is later taken away • Some of us have felt that the people supporting us have not properly understood the issues we face 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for more SEND training in schools for staff e.g. Headteachers, Teaching Assistants and School Governors • Communication from schools and services often focuses on identifying problems rather than building on strengths • Services need to help address barriers to empower children and young people and their parents and carers, including those with

	<p>additional caring responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An absence of 'kindness' in some schools and settings makes it hard for young people, especially during puberty, to maintain engagement • Schools often struggle to meet the goals set out in a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) • There is a stigma around children delaying a year in school
<p>Partnership Professionals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of mentors and role models who can deliver age-appropriate safety messaging • There is a noted lack of consistent knowledge regarding annual reviews and the implementation of reasonable adjustments across schools and services, as well as a limited broader understanding of key terminologies like "known to service offers" and the social model of disability • SENCOs are frequently taking on roles beyond their remit, including therapeutic support, leading to increased stress and mental health strain. • Support workers need adequate training especially in light of growing demand for services • Challenges remain in fostering truly inclusive cultures within mainstream schools, including a lack of consistent willingness to engage with needs, and value all forms of attainment 	

What we want to see

- **A strengthened workforce of SEND professionals and more funding and resources, including appropriate training for mainstream school staff, to consistently support children and young people with SEND**
- **A needs based approach to providing support rather than reliance on diagnosis**
- **A sense of belonging and an understanding of SEND, underpinned by collaboration between all Hackney schools and the community**
- **Joined-up working and collaboration across services, voluntary and community organisations, emphasising strengths over problems**
- **More support, compassion and kindness from schools, settings, and services to empower families of children and young people with SEND, including those with additional caring responsibilities**
- **Better and more systematic monitoring and accountability of how Education, Health and Care plans (EHCPs) are implemented in schools and settings**

How we will deliver this strategy

The Hackney Local Area Partnership is committed to achieving the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND and we recognise that doing so will require resilience and adaptability in the face of ongoing national uncertainty and change. While we have built this strategy on a solid foundation of co-production and a shared commitment to improving outcomes, we recognise that we will need to prioritise agile implementation to ensure outcomes are achieved sustainably. This will allow us to respond flexibly and effectively to new central government guidance and ensure our services remain aligned with local needs and the evolving national direction.

This strategy sets the priorities and outcomes we want to see and we will agree on ambitious, but realistic, actions and initiatives to achieve them through an annual planning process. Each year, the SENDAP Local Area Partnership Board will agree to an Annual Delivery Plan, where individuals, organisations, and service providers across the partnership will commit to specific actions to be delivered against our five priorities that coming year. The Board will evaluate the delivery of the previous year's Delivery Plan and publish a report.

As stated in the introduction, this strategy builds on the previous Hackney SEND 2022-2025 Strategy. Below we have outlined some of the areas of work which will be continued as part of this new strategy.

Priority 1: Emotional Wellbeing and Belonging

- The WAMHS (Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools) programme now runs in almost every school in Hackney. Through this programme, schools have an identified Senior Mental Health Lead, an allocated CAMHS worker and a partner from Hackney Education supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Priority 2: Inclusive Environments: Spaces, Services, and Mindsets

- Use our Capital Grant Allocation to invest in new, high quality specialist provision.
- Revise Hackney's Alternative Provision offer through the implementation of HEALS.

Priority 4: Access, Waiting Times & Systemic Barriers to Support

- Further develop the work of our new Children's Integrated Commissioning Strategy, to ensure that we are providing value for money in the services that we commission.
- To meet the increased demand for neurodevelopmental assessments, CAMHS is changing the diagnostic pathways with a view to streamlining the pathways, prioritising needs and managing the demand.

Priority 4: Waiting Times & Equitable Access to Support

- Continue to bring together the School Improvement Team and SEND Services so they are working closely together to develop an accessible curriculum across Hackney settings that meets the needs of children and young people.
- Find the best mechanism for children and young people to contribute to the SENDAP Local Area Partnership Board meetings.

Priority 5: Transitions and Future Pathways:

- Our Preparing for Adulthood Delivery Group will track the delivery of our Preparing

for Adulthood Strategy via a detailed delivery plan.

How we will measure impact and change

We want to be transparent about the progress we are making against our priorities. We will measure the following 'Outcome Indicators' throughout 2025-2028 and monitor whether or not the indicators for each Priority are moving in the right direction, allowing us to adapt our plans to ensure that we are delivering what has been promised in strategy.

Priority	Outcome Indicator	Desired Trend
Emotional Well-being & Belonging	% CYP with SEND who report that always and/or most of the time they enjoy their life	Up
	% of CYP with SEND who report that they know how to stay happy and have the support they need to do so	Up
	% of CYP with SEND who report that they have a friend/friends who they can talk to	Up
	% of CYP with SEND who report that they have a trusted person who they can talk to	Up
	% CYP with SEND who report that they have the support they need to cope when life feels hard	Up
	% CYP with SEND report that they are involved in a club, group or hobby they enjoy	Up
	# of CYP with SEND accessing short break activities	Up
	# of CYP with SEND who are eligible for short breaks, accessing short breaks activities	Up
Holistic, Family Centred and Inclusive Practice	% of CYP with SEND who report that there is someone at their school, college or education setting they can go to if they feel worried	Up
	% of CYP with SEND who report that they feel safe and like they belong in their education setting	Up
	% of CYP with SEND who feel safe and like they belong in their local community	Up
	% CYP at SEN Support on a reduced timetable	Down
	% CYP with an EHC Plan on a reduced timetable	Down
	% of parents/ carers who feel their own accessibility needs are met by their child's school	Up
	% CYP at SEN support who have been suspended from school	Down
	% CYP with EHC Plan who have been suspended from school	Down
	% CYP at SEN support who have been permanently excluded from school	Down

	% CYP with EHC Plan who have been permanently excluded from school	Down
	% of CYP at SEN support persistent absence	Down
	% of CYP with EHC Plan persistent absence	Down
	% of CYP with no SEN persistent absence	Down
	% CYP with SEND who report that they have been supported and encouraged to make their own decisions about their daily life	Up
	% of CYP who give a high rating to the support they have received in school or college	Up
	% of parents/carers who state they have access to an appropriate support service	Up
	% CYP with SEND who report that they are learning new things every year	Up
	% CYP with SEND who report that they know how to stay healthy and have the support they need to do so	Up
	% YP aged 14-25 on the LD register with an up to date (annual) health check	Up
Waiting Times & Equitable Access to Support	% of EHCPs processed within 20 weeks (excl exceptions)	Up
	% of parents/ carers who feel they receive adequate signposting to other services	Up
	% of Parents/ carers who have a positive experience navigating the Local Offer	Up
	% CYP with SEND who report knowing where to go to access help and support for their physical health	Up
	% CYP with SEND who report knowing where to go to access help and support for their wellbeing	Up
Workforce Development, Training & Resources	% CYP with SEND who report that that the people in school care about their opinion	Up
	% of parent carers who stated that the support their child received made a difference to their quality of life	Up
	% of parent carers who stated that the people who support their child know what the outcomes are in their child's support plan	Up
	% of CYP who give a high rating to the support they receive in school or college	Up
	% of parent carers who stated that they are satisfied with the progress their child has made towards their outcomes	Up
	% of parent carers who stated that the outcomes in their child's support plan reflect their views	Up
	% of parent carers who stated that the outcomes in their child's support plan reflect their child's views	Up

Transition & Future Pathways	% of 18-25-year olds with SEND who report that they have been supported to think about where they want to live	Up
	% of 18-25-year olds with SEND who report that their current living environment reflects their choices	Up
	(or %) of young people with SEND who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Down
	% /# of young people with SEND (18-25) in employment	Up
	%/# of young people with SEND (16-25) undertaking a supported internship or apprenticeship	Up
	% CYP with SEND who are able to safely and confidently access public transport	Up

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