



**Draft Strategy for Children and
Young People with
Special Educational Needs
and/or
Disability**

2006-2009

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

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1. Introduction

The purpose of the Strategy document for Children and Young People with SEN and/or Disability is to describe council strategy for SEN and Disability for the next three years, 2006 to 2009.

It aims to

- Set out a framework that will inform future planning and development across all partner agencies
- Provide a clear direction for service improvement
- Enhance effective and co-ordinated joint working

The intended audience is

- Brent schools, childrens centres and other educational establishments
- Local services for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities and their families
- Parents and carers

Local Context

Brent Children and Families Department was established in July 2005 bringing together education and social care services for children aged 0-19. A single Childrens and Young People Plan was published in 2006. It sets out a vision for children and young people's services in Brent that is shared by all partner agencies, and identifies key priorities for Brent.

This document sets out the Council's commitment to improving services for children and young people with SEN and disabilities. It should be seen in the context of Brent's Children's and Young People's Plan which is the overarching plan. It should also be read in conjunction with the Accessibility Strategy, which describes how Brent Council and schools will work together to promote inclusion and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of disability.

This strategy also reflects the outcomes of a review of SEN provision in Brent which was completed in 2005. The review identified the need for

- A strong and continuing role for special schools in meeting the needs of children and young people with the most complex needs
- Increased collaboration between special schools and mainstream schools to promote successful inclusion
- Improvements to local specialist provision in order to meet a wide range of needs and reduce out-Borough placements

2. Legislative Framework

Recent legislation is based on a social model of disability. It places a responsibility on all services to remove barriers to progress faced by children and young people with disabilities and SEN and give them full access to education, health, social care, leisure and employment opportunities.

Removing Barriers to Achievement (2004)

The government issued guidance to local education authorities in 2004 entitled 'Removing Barriers to Achievement: the Government's Strategy for Special Educational Needs.' It outlines four key themes:

- Early intervention
- Removing barriers to learning
- Raising expectations and achievement
- Delivering improvement in partnership

This guidance is closely linked to the Standards Agenda, the inspection of schools and early years settings, and to the workforce reforms. All educational establishments have a responsibility to promote inclusion, overcome potential barriers to learning and respond to children's diverse needs.

The Children Act (2004)

The Children Act requires a fundamental change in the way that services for children and young people are delivered through the development of integrated services tailored to meet the individual needs of children and young people. Fundamentally, Section 52 of this Act places a statutory duty on local authorities to give particular attention to improving the educational attainment levels of children and young people looked after, irrespective of where they are placed.

The Disability and Discrimination Act (2005)

This Act amends the definition of disability to encompass a wider range of people who experience discrimination associated with disability, physical and mental health needs. The Act tackles institutional discrimination through a duty to promote disability equality for the public sector. The definition of disability as stated in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) is as follows:

'A person has a disability for the purpose of this Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day to day activities

And includes the following caveats:

- Children whose behavioural difficulties stem from social needs who are not disabled even if they have learning difficulties:

Improving the Life Chances of Disabled Children and Young People (2005)

This report from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit sets out the national vision for disabled children and young people to access the full range of opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life.

National Service Framework for Children, Young People & Maternity Services (2004)

The National Service Framework is a 10 year programme intended to stimulate long-term and sustained improvement in children's health. It sets national standards for children's health and social care. Standard eight of the framework is dedicated to disabled children and young people and reads as follows:

'Children and young people who are disabled or who have complex health needs receive co-ordinated, high quality child and family centered services which are based on assessed needs, which promote social inclusion and where possible, enable them and their families to live ordinary lives'.

3. Guiding Principles

The following guiding principles underpin Brent's strategy

- The child's best interests are paramount. The over-riding aim is to ensure that all young people have the best opportunity to succeed in later life and are happy, confident, healthy and as independent as possible. An integrated multi-agency approach is essential to improving the life chances of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- Services should be provided flexibly according to the individual needs and circumstances of children and families. In order to achieve this, children, young people and their parents should have the opportunity to influence the design and delivery of the services they receive
- All educational settings, health and social care services have a responsibility to ensure high quality inclusive provision is in place across the Authority
- Children and young people with SEN and disabilities should have access to a full range of education, social and leisure opportunities provided as locally as possible in the same way as non-disabled peers

In working with children with SEN or disabilities and their families, our aspirations are as follows:

- i) Individual special need is identified as early as possible.
- ii) Support services from health, social care and education are available in a timely and coherent way.
- iii) High expectations and positive attitudes are set from the start.
- iv) Professionals communicate well with children, young people and their families and involve them in decision making.
- v) Parents are supported and enabled to care for their child's special needs.
- vi) Integrated assessment of individual need is carried out with the minimum disruption to the child and family.
- vii) Needs are met through high quality support and care in local provision wherever possible, co-ordinated around the needs of the individual.
- viii) Educational provision ensures a broad and balanced curriculum approximately matched to levels of need and age of the child.

4. Identifying priorities for Brent

The Children and Young People's Plan identifies 6 broad priority areas for Brent for 2006-9. Each of these priority areas is broken down further into specific objectives. Priorities and objectives have been established through a self-assessment process drawing on performance data, judgment from inspections and consultation with children and young people.

The following objectives taken from the Children and Young People's Plan are particularly relevant to the SEN and disability strategy

- To ensure disabled children and young people are able to access the same wide educational and life opportunities as others
- To increase family support for children in need, including those with disabilities
- To improve integrated service delivery for disabled children and young people
- To accelerate the rate of improvement of under-achieving groups, narrowing and eliminating gaps
- To improve educational outcomes for Looked After Children to match or exceed national averages
- To ensure all schools provide an education which is at least good as defined by Ofsted
- To work with employers to improve access to work experience and employment opportunities for targeted groups

In addition, the following objectives have been identified through internal self-assessment processes views of stakeholders and external inspection.

- To improve co-ordination of services providing specialist advice and support to schools for children with SEN and disability
- To ensure the effective use of data in raising the educational achievement of children and young people with SEN and disabilities
- To ensure statutory objectives for SEN are well met, within a culture of partnership working between schools, local authorities and other agencies.
- To increase understanding of the implications for education providers of the Disability Discrimination Act and ensure School Accessibility Plans are in place
- To continue to strengthen in-borough specialist provision for SEN and reduce need for out-borough placements
- To improve availability of play and leisure services for children and young people with SEN and disabilities
- To improve arrangements for supporting the smooth transition of children and young people with SEN or disability at key times (entry into school, secondary transfer, leaving school)
- To ensure that the views of children and young people with SEN and disabilities and their families inform planning

Drawing on this analysis, four major strands of work have been identified

1. Supporting schools and other education providers in developing inclusive practice
2. Ensure effective multi-agency co-ordination
3. Strengthening local specialist provision
4. Improving services to children young people and their families

A broad outline of the current situation and priorities for the future in each of these areas is set out on subsequent pages.

A detailed action plan outlining key actions, lead responsibilities, timescale and resource requirements will be drawn up for each priority.

SUPPORTING SCHOOLS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS IN DEVELOPING INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

What we want

All early years settings schools and other education providers to provide an excellent and inclusive education for children with a wide range of needs.

Key progress we have made

- There is a comprehensive and well regarded training programme
- An early years SEN service has been established to provide support to non-maintained settings
- Specialist outreach services are in place for children with autism and sensory impairment
- A primary behaviour support service has been established in response to identified need
- Improvements have been made in co-ordinating support to schools for behaviour and attendance
- SEN funding arrangements have been revised to promote earlier intervention
- A wide range of advice, guidance and support available to schools
- Guidance for primary SENCO's has been revised and updated
- The 'Brent Access to Inclusive Technology' Service, based at Grove Park has been established.

What we now need to do

- Continue to provide high quality training on leadership and management
- Extend use of self-evaluation approaches on inclusive practice within schools
- Expand the service to mainstream schools for supporting children with a diagnosis of autism
- Extend the service for supporting pupils with assisted and augmentative communication technology
- Extend use of provision mapping approaches across the Authority
- Implement the local authority accessibility strategy for 2006-9 and support schools in developing their accessibility plans
- Improve assessment, planning and monitoring systems including use of P scales
- Introduce an audit process to ensure that delegated funding is used effectively
- Review impact of funding strategy and ensure funding arrangements for SEN reflect changing needs
- Develop reciprocal agreement between the local authority and schools about admission arrangements for students with statements

ENSURING EFFECTIVE MULTI-AGENCY CO-ORDINATION

What we want

An integrated multi-agency approach to meeting the needs of children with SEN and disability and their families.

Key progress we have made

- Good partnership structures are in place with a high level commitment from the Childrens Strategic Partnership Board to integrated service delivery
- There is agreement to implement an integrated services pilot programme in the Kingsbury area which will include use of the Common Assessment Framework
- Education and Social Care Services for children with SEN and children with disabilities have been co-located
- A multi-agency group has been established to develop proposals for a fully integrated service for children with disabilities across education, social care and health
- An overarching information sharing agreement is in place

What we now need to do

- Extend the use of the common assessment framework, identification of lead professionals and multi-agency support teams across the Borough
- Improve transition arrangements for children with SEN/disabilities at key times (entry into nursery/school, primary/secondary transition, leaving school)
- Ensure statutory obligations are met for delivery of therapy services, in collaboration with health providers
- Develop integrated service teams for children with disabilities
- Improve information sharing amongst practitioners

STRENGTHENING LOCAL SPECIALIST PROVISION**What we want**

Excellent in-Borough specialist provision for children with complex needs and less reliance on out of Borough placements

Key progress we have made

- SEN review has been completed and proposals for future developments have been agreed by members.
- Inspections of Brent Special Schools and Pupil Referral Units have reported very good and outstanding practice.
- Provision for children with autism has been developed at Fawood Childrens Centre.
- Post 16 provision at Woodfield School is under development.
- The service for deaf and hearing impaired children at College Green nursery is available to children and young people aged 0-19.

What we need to do

- Implement the SEN review
 - Improve special school accommodation
 - Re-designate special schools as required to meet more complex needs
 - Establish post 16 provision at Woodfield, Hay Lane and Grove Park schools
 - Develop specialist outreach and consultancy services from special schools and additionally resourced provisions
 - Establish new key Stage 3/ Key Stage 4 Pupil Referral Unit
 - Establish designated mainstream provision for children with physical disabilities
- Review and develop early years provision for SEN and disabilities linking with Childrens Centre developments.
- Implement strategy for improving provision for children with sensory impairment
- Ensure additional resourced mainstream provision meets current and projected needs in the Borough
- Ensure clear progression routes for 14-19 students with complex needs
- Develop local specialist provision across social care and education to meet the needs of looked after children who have high level emotional and behavioural needs.

IMPROVING SERVICES TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

What we want

Services to be flexible and responsive to the identified needs of children, young people and their families.

Key progress we have made

- Wide consultation undertaken as part of the SEN review.
- Strong parent partnership service has been established
- Children and young person's reference group has been established as part of the new partnership arrangements.
- Range of information and literature available for parents/carers of children with SEN/disability

What we now need to do

- Consult disabled children, young people and their families about proposals for service integration
- Ensure that young people with SEN and disabilities are well represented in the Youth Parliament
- Continue to improve quality of written information available to parents/carers
- Ensure accessible information is available to children and young people in a variety of formats.
- Carry out equality impact assessments on relevant Council policies to ensure no adverse impact on children with SEN and disabilities
- Improve access to respite and child care reducing the need for multiple assessment
- Improve availability of play and leisure opportunities to children and young people with SEN and disabilities.

5. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

Progress reports will be considered by the Inclusion Advisory Group with representation from schools, relevant agencies and parents groups on a 6 monthly basis.

The priorities directly linked to the Children and Young People's plan will be monitored through the performance management mechanisms that apply to the Plan and performance will be evaluated by the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board.

Additionally, an annual report on progress in implementing the strategy, detailing performance against key indicators, will be taken to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.