



**Strategy for children and young  
people with  
Special Educational Needs /  
Learning Difficulties and Disabilities  
2008-2012**

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## Introduction

The development of Special Educational Needs/Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (SEN/LDD) policy and provision is a high priority for the Isle of Wight. Local Authorities are required to have a strategy for children and young people with SEN/LDD and this strategy sets out the vision for the next few years and how it will be achieved.

The strategy reflects national and local policy, and draws on the findings of a comprehensive review of SEN Provision that was carried out in summer 2007 and on needs identified by stakeholders. A working group of officers, headteachers and Parent Partnership has met on 6 occasions between December 2007 and May 2008 to draw up the strategy; a draft was shared with the SEN Parents' Voice group and revisions made as a result of their comments. The strategy has four inter-related strands

1. Strategic and Service Management
2. Provision
3. Communication, Partnership and Participation
4. Positive outcomes for children and young people

Each of these four strands has an associated action plan (see Appendices 1 – 4), which focuses on a number of crucial areas:

- **Strategic and Service Management** focuses on the strategic vision for SEN/LDD, and the leadership and management of SEN/LDD.
- **Provision** focuses on preventive services and improving and in some cases extending our provision to schools and families. It includes realigning our services to work in more integrated ways
- **Communication, Partnership and Participation** focuses on communication with stakeholders, partnerships with parents/carers, schools and other professionals, and better enabling the participation of children and young people.
- **Positive Outcomes** focuses on improving standards, raising pupils' achievement and promoting school improvement, including monitoring provision by mainstream schools, special schools and preventive services, and the professional development of staff.

Although early years/pre-school is not generally specifically mentioned, it is a thread running throughout the whole strategy as to be effective our provision and support starts even before children are born and runs from pre birth to 19 and in some cases to 25 years. So where, for example, we talk about reviewing and extending provision/services for children with communication and interaction difficulties (including autism), this will include early years and pre-school children.

The main focus in this strategy over the next 4 years is to:

- realign our current SEN/LDD services so they can work in a more preventive and integrated way. For children and young people, this means that they will get faster access to appropriate services without the need for multiple referrals and without the need for problems to have escalated to a severe level before services kick in
- ensure all the SEN/LDD services have a clear remit to increase the capacity of schools and parents/carers so that the people spending most time with the children and young people feel empowered and enskilled and more confident in addressing their special needs. This approach is enshrined in research which indicates that the most effective interventions are those where specialist workers work alongside others to enable them to implement successful strategies as part of their daily work
- ensure that children and young people are treated holistically and that the totality of their and their family's needs is taken into account when providing support; this applies particularly to those with severe and complex needs
- move to a commissioning model where services can be delivered by a range of providers
- ensure the entitlement of children with SEN/LDD to high quality teaching and learning so that the gap between the attainment/achievement of children with SEN and those without SEN narrows

The following section summarises the key aspects of national and local policy.

## **National and Local Policy**

### **National Policy**

National policy on special educational needs reflects the government's support for the Salamanca Statement, which was drawn up by a United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation world conference held in Salamanca in 1994. The Statement called upon governments to "adopt as a matter of law or policy the principle of inclusive education, enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise".

The principle that children with special educational needs should usually be educated in mainstream schools, where this is what their parents/carers want, was set out in the Education Act 1993 and consolidated in the Education Act 1996. This principle was qualified by the requirements that the child's needs were fully met in a mainstream school, other children were educated effectively and resources were used efficiently.

In 1997, the government published “Excellence for all Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs”, which outlined its strategy to improve provision for children with SEN. Whilst recognising the paramount importance of meeting the needs of individual children and the necessity of specialist provision for some, it declared the government’s commitment to the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mainstream education, wherever possible. It recognised, as does local policy, that there will always be a role for special schools as part of the continuum of provision, and that the expertise in those special schools should be shared with mainstream schools to increase the skills of those staff in addressing SEN/LDD.

The government published its current strategy for SEN, “Removing Barriers to Achievement”, in 2004. One of the strategy’s aims was “to personalise learning for all children, to make education more innovative and responsive to the diverse needs of individual children, so reducing our reliance on separate SEN structures and processes and raising the achievement of the many children – nearly one in six – who are considered to have SEN”.

It asserted the government’s belief that: “We have never been so well placed to deliver such a wide-ranging strategy to transform the lives and life chances of these children. The reform of children’s services set out by *Every Child Matters*, with its focus on early intervention, preventive work, and integrated services for children through Children’s Trusts, will deliver real and lasting benefits to children with SEN and their families”.

### Local Policy

The Isle of Wight Council’s “Policy for Special Educational Needs” was published in January 2000. The key values and beliefs that underpin the policy are:

- “equal value and respect for all
- recognition of individual differences with special regard for children with special educational needs
- equal opportunity for all
- life-long development through the provision of appropriate learning opportunities
- a constant search for improvement in the quality of service which would include a mutual challenge of all participating professionals
- commitment to both the spirit and statutory requirements of legislation, including partnership between pupils, parents and professionals”.

The policy recognises that:

- Differentness is an ordinary part of human experience. Inclusion involves the recognition and celebration of the diverse nature of people's abilities and disabilities. It is about being unconditionally part of a community, where all are of **equal value**.
- Inclusive practice is underpinned by the belief that **individual differences** bring opportunities for learning and growth for the whole educational community. The goal of inclusion is to enable pupils to learn and succeed within a community that validates and values individuality and difference.
- A commitment to **equal opportunity for all** asserts that all children and young people have equal rights to the opportunities offered by education, including the rights to high quality education and to be part of the community of the school.
- **Life-long development** depends upon **the provision of appropriate learning opportunities**. Pupils achieve, when provision is responsive to individual needs. Good practice in teaching and learning results from high quality professional development.
- To be effective, services must be self-critical in their **constant search for improvement**.
- To be effective, services must work in **partnership**, involving pupils and parents/carers in decisions, and collaborating with other professionals to ensure a seamless service for children, young people and their families.

The Council's "Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009" sets out targets for improvement across a range of areas. It focuses on the five outcomes that "Every Child Matters: Change for Children" (published by the government in 2004) suggested were key to well-being in childhood and later life:

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- achieving economic well-being.

There is a direct link between the Children and Young People's Plan and this SEN/LDD Strategy.

## Strategic and Service Management

This element of the strategy focuses on the strategic vision for SEN/LDD, and the leadership and management of SEN/LDD. This includes arrangements for assessing need, and planning, commissioning and managing provision.

The associated action plan sets out the following aims and how they will be achieved:

1. To review the “Policy for Special Educational Needs” published in January 2000 by identifying a specific group to review the existing SEN policy including reference to the draft Policy which was updated in 2006.
2. To develop preventive services which ensure that there is an investment in children’s needs not escalating by auditing and reviewing current services and ensuring all services have a clear remit to increase school capacity to support inclusive practice
3. To revise the authority’s statutory assessment guidance, decision making processes and Isle of Wight Local Procedures, and make them widely available, so that the basis for decisions and the related procedures are transparent to schools, parents/carers and all other stakeholders by:
  - a) Providing guidance to schools on the identification of SEN
  - b) Reviewing and revising all guidance and standard letters for statutory procedures
  - c) Reviewing statutory assessment procedures and involve headteachers in decision making panels
  - d) Reviewing current guidance with the intention to produce better quality user-friendly information which will enable parents to navigate through statutory procedures
  - e) Establishing an annual cycle for evaluating parents perceptions of the statutory assessment service, and acting upon parents’ views
4. To review the role and organisation of the Educational Psychology Team to ensure it can recruit and retain sufficient Educational Psychologists to carry out its key functions, including assessment and training.

5. To review the role and organisation of the SEN Administration (Statementing) team
  - a) Reviewing the name of the team to reflect its function
  - b) Reviewing the team's current level of staffing, job descriptions, and training needs
  - c) Communicating the team's role to all stakeholders.
6. To review the process of school SEN monitoring to ensure there is a stronger focus on achievement and outcomes for pupils with SEN/LDD. The review should include how findings are reported to all stakeholders and how issues of concern are managed.
7. To re-establish the SEN/LDD Strategy and Reference Group as a focus for evaluating the SEN/LDD strategy, delivering an annual report of achievements, and ensuring this Group reports to the Children and Young People's Trust Executive.

## Provision

This strand focuses on preventive services and improving and in some cases extending our provision to schools and families. It includes realigning our services to work in more preventive and integrated ways, and planning our services together with our health and voluntary sector partners to make them as effective as possible

1. To develop integrated teams for SEN/LDD and vulnerable children, which use the tools of the Common Assessment Framework and Lead Professional
  - a) To establish integrated teams which work to common and consistent protocols. A phased approach to be prepared and published
  - b) Establish a clear protocol for use of the Common Assessment Framework and integrated working
2. To review the provision of outreach services to mainstream schools by Medina House School and St Georges School
3. To review and extend the provision for children with communication and interaction difficulties (including Autistic Spectrum Disorder):
  - a) Audit and review the CLASS team and put forward proposals for an enhanced service and comprehensive training for schools
  - b) In the light of school reorganisation, review the service level agreements for each of the specialist centres located at Love Lane Primary school, Nodehill Middle school and Carisbrooke High school
  - c) Respond to the recently published Bercow Review of speech & language therapy services, in terms of enhanced training, preventive work and reviewing the local current arrangements between health and the local authority.
4. To carry out an audit of out-of-authority and independent placements to ensure effectiveness and value for money
5. To put forward proposals as to how the 2 special schools and Beaulieu House can work in partnership to provide a holistic service for children with

severe and complex SEN/LDD and to review and extend the range of out of school activities accessible for children with SEN/LDD

6. To establish an assessment and diagnosis service for ADHD and provide support to schools
7. To extend the range of services available to provide support for pupils with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) by:
  - reviewing current provision
  - establishing a rolling training programme and network support for developing nurture groups in primary schools
  - supporting schools in the delivery of the Social & Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme
8. To align SEN/LDD services so that they are ready to work in multi-disciplinary teams
9. To commission an advisory service for pupils with physical disabilities to ensure where possible their needs are met on the island.
10. To build capacity in mainstream schools to enable them to provide high quality provision for pupils with SEN/LDD
  - a) Roll out the Inclusion Development Programme to all schools
  - b) Roll out the Early Years Inclusion Development Programme to all EY settings
  - c) Identify and provide for the training needs of SENCOs and other professionals who support SEN/LDD within mainstream settings, with the intention of establishing a training programme
  - d) Increase capacity of family link workers/family support workers associated with schools or groups of schools
  - e) Provide training and development regarding Provision Mapping processes for schools

## Communication, Partnership and Participation

This element of the strategy focuses on communication with stakeholders, partnerships with parents/carers, schools and other agencies, and better enabling the participation of children and young people. This includes arrangements for involving pupils and parents/carers in decisions, and collaborating with other professionals to ensure a seamless service for children, young people and their families.

1. To clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of, and access to, all SEN/LDD services within the Local Authority Children's Services Directorate, and services for children provided by the statutory and voluntary sector, including Specialist CAMHS and therapy services in particular.
  - a) Each service to provide a clear outline of service aims and provision using a common format which is published
  - b) The Referrer's Guide to be ratified, signed off and published with one free copy to all schools. Referring agencies will be able to access via Eduwight.
2. To review the arrangements for communicating with parents/carers, about SEN/LDD, responding to their needs and involving them in the development of policy and practice.
  - a) Extend and develop the use of the consultation group 'Parent's Voice for SEN', as facilitated by Parent Partnership. Establish a clear protocol for reporting the group's views.
  - b) Revise all letter templates for correspondence to parents regarding statutory processes. This process will include consultation with parents prior to finalisation.
3. To develop networking/professional development forums for SENCOs, teachers and other professionals involved with pupils with SEN/LDD.
4. Enable the Parent Partnership Team to provide a wider service which includes support and advice on benefits related to disability, DDA and school exclusions.
5. To ensure there are appropriate processes for the effective participation and involvement of children and young people with SEN/LDD
  - a) Ensure there is representation of SEN/LDD on the Youth Council.
  - b) Facilitate schools' councils to have representation of SEN/LDD

- c) Review the processes for pupils' contribution to Local Procedures, statutory processes and annual reviews to ensure the views and wishes of children are more effectively recorded and acted upon

## Positive Outcomes for Children and Young people

This strand of the strategy focuses on improving standards, raising pupils' achievement in and beyond school, promoting school improvement, including monitoring provision by mainstream schools, special schools and preventive services, and the professional development of staff.

1. To help each mainstream school draw up a SEN/LDD profile (including vulnerable pupils), covering level and category of SEN, exclusions, attendance, ethnicity and free school meals; this can then be benchmarked against other schools and the school supported to implement a school improvement cycle related to SEN/LDD.
2. To enable schools to successfully self evaluate provision and outcomes for SEN/LDD pupils ensuring that all experience successful inclusion and positive outcomes.
  - a) Review the SENSEF ensuring that it enables schools to evaluate provision and outcomes for all vulnerable groups. Ensure that it reflects the DDA agenda.
  - b) To review and amend the current SEN monitoring process and format, in line with statutory requirements and guidance of the SEN Code of Practice to ensure the monitoring process includes a focus on all vulnerable groups including those with behavioural needs.
  - c) Audit and review systems which enable schools causing concern to be supported to improve inclusion of vulnerable pupils.
  - d) To ensure that there is a programme of CPD which focuses on the needs of SEN/LDD and other vulnerable groups and related aspects of school improvement.
3. To review procedures and practices around transition post school, building on Person-Centred Transition Reviews (used at St Georges special school) in order to effect a seamless transition post 16/19 years, actively involving young people in decisions about their future, ensuring that the offer is in line with their preferences and of a high quality, so that young people will have a planned destination post school, which meets their needs, ensures they can make a contribution to their community, and is in line with their wishes.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

<b>Accessibility Plan</b>	All schools need to have an accessibility plan which details how over time, they can improve access to education for all disabled pupils.
<b>ADHD</b>	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
<b>Annual Review</b>	The review of a statement of special educational needs held once a year.
<b>ASD</b>	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
<b>BESD</b>	Behaviour, emotional and social development
<b>Beaulieu House</b>	A local respite centre for children with disabilities
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
<b>Common Assessment Framework (CAF)</b>	A national initiative to ensure there is a standardised approach to assessing children and families with additional needs and deciding how those needs should be met.
<b>Co- morbid</b>	The presence of more than one disorder. An example would be a child having a diagnosis of both ADHD and Autism.
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development
<b>DDA</b>	Disability Discrimination Act
<b>Eduwight</b>	The local authority website for education on the Isle of Wight.
<b>EP</b>	Educational Psychologist
<b>IDP</b>	Inclusion Development Programme. This is a national programme for schools and early years settings which will enable mainstream schools to successfully include and support pupils with high incidence needs.
<b>Integrated Working</b>	Agencies working together in a co-ordinated way to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families.
<b>JAR</b>	Joint Area Review
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>LDD</b>	Learning Difficulties and Disabilities
<b>Lead Professional (LP)</b>	The person identified to take responsibility for co-ordinating support and being a single point of contact for children and their families who have particular needs being met by various agencies.

<b>Local Procedures</b>	The IOW guidance and templates for the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice Graduated Response.
<b>LAC</b>	Looked After Children.
<b>Medina House School</b>	Maintained special school for primary school children aged up to 11 years with severe and complex learning difficulties.
<b>National Strategy</b>	The National Strategy provides support for teachers and schools to raise standards across the whole curriculum.
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>Parent Partnership</b>	Provides impartial advice and information to parents of children with special educational needs.
<b>Provision Map</b>	A process and document which details provision a school makes for pupils
<b>Referrers Guide</b>	A manual which details information on services and agencies which support vulnerable children and young people across the Island.
<b>Respite Care</b>	A short and temporary relief from care of a dependent. This can be provided by services or volunteers and is for the benefit of the care giver and the child/young person.
<b>School Action</b>	When a class teacher identify that a pupil has SEN, they provide help which is different from that provided as part of the school's usual differentiated curriculum.
<b>School Action Plus</b>	If a child doesn't make progress at School Action, then the school seeks advice from outside agencies who support the review of progress for that child.
<b>SEAL</b>	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning. A nationally produced programme used by schools.
<b>SEN</b>	Special Educational Needs.
<b>SEN Matrix</b>	Isle of Wight produced reference and criteria for supporting assessment, identification and provision for SEN.
<b>SEN Reference and Strategy Group</b>	A locally formed group which includes a range of representatives who monitor and develop the Local Authority's SEN/LDD strategy.
<b>SENCO</b>	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
<b>SENSEF</b>	The Isle of Wight toolkit to support schools to self evaluate SEN/LDD
<b>Short breaks</b>	Another term for respite care.

<b>SIP</b>	School Improvement Partner
<b>SLCN</b>	Speech Language and Communication Needs
<b>St Georges School</b>	Maintained special school for secondary aged pupils aged from 11 years with severe and complex learning difficulties.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	A person or group with a direct interest in a particular organisation.
<b>Statutory Assessment</b>	A detailed assessment of a child's special educational needs which may lead to a statement.
<b>Vulnerable Groups/Pupils</b>	Refers to any group of pupils who could find it difficult to make progress or be successfully included, e.g. SEN, ethnic minorities, travellers, Looked After children.
<b>Youth Council</b>	A local group which ensures that the view of young people are considered when the Isle of Wight Council is making decisions and forming policies