



# Wolverhampton Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2020



Wolverhampton  
SEND Partnership Board

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# Foreword from the Joint Chairs of SEND Partnership Board

Welcome to Wolverhampton's strategy for children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We are determined that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Wolverhampton live in an inclusive city where we work together to support them and their families to lead a good quality 'ordinary life' and achieve their full potential. We believe that by working together with families and communities we will achieve this.

This strategy sets out the vision and priorities of the SEND Partnership Board's offer to children, young people and their families for the next 3 years. It also recognises and builds on our strengths and what works well for families.

The SEND Partnership Board is where senior representatives of key city partner organisations meet to provide strategic direction to improve the lives of children and young people with Special Educational Needs / Disabilities and champion their wish to live an 'ordinary life'.

We commit to ensuring that this strategy is owned at the highest level of every city partner organisation and stakeholder group within the Wolverhampton area, providing a strong basis for us to make the positive changes and improvements that we are all seeking.

The policy has been co-produced with all stakeholders, and sets out the duties of SEND Partnership Board. It will be delivered through an action plan that will be overseen by the Children and Families Together Board. We will review the strategy and action plan on an annual basis to ensure that we remain focused on the right things and improve outcomes for children and young people in Wolverhampton.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy.



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City of Wolverhampton Council



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# Introduction

All children and young people with a special educational need or a disability should have a good life. The Children and Families Act 2014 brought in fundamental changes in relation to SEND. In particular it aimed to:

- Get education, health and social care services working together
- Ensure accurate and useful information is available to children or young people with SEND and their families
- Give children and young people and their parents more of a say about the help they get; and
- Give children or young people one plan for meeting their education, health and care needs that focuses on and gives time for getting ready for adulthood.

## Progress 2015-20

In 2015, we developed a five year SEND Strategy in response to the SEND reforms. Since then, Wolverhampton has made significant progress in realising the ambitions set out in our previous strategy and the aims of the Act. In particular:

- We have developed a strong and effective SEND partnership, with clear governance arrangements.
- We have worked hard to embed co-production as central to the way that we do things, leading to the launch of our Co-Production Charter.

- We worked together well to ensure the transfer of Statements to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans was achieved on time through following a genuine transfer review process, ensuring EHC plans are focused on achieving meaningful outcomes.
- There are examples, particularly in the early years, of very effective, integrated, "Team around the Child" working that is highly valued by families.
- We have developed and continued to review and improve our Local Offer so that information is available in one place.
- The proportion of young people with SEND in education and training has been improving. There is a higher proportion of adults with a learning disability in paid employment than in the West Midlands, or England as a whole.

## About this strategy

Wolverhampton's Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2020 (the SEND Strategy) sets out the vision and key priorities that partners in the city, including parents and carers, children and young people, education, health, social care and voluntary sector agencies want to focus on to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND over the next three years. It has been developed by the SEND Partnership Board and demonstrates our commitment to making sure children and young people with SEND and their families have

an equal opportunity to achieve a good quality ordinary life. It supports our ten year Children, Young People and Families Plan which aims to improve the resilience, health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families in Wolverhampton.

The strategy has been developed in co-production with children and young people, their families and a range of professionals. It also draws upon data from:

- What families and young people said at the Spotlight on SEND event 2019
- What families said in the Voice 4 Parents Annual parent Survey 2019
- What families, young people and professionals said in the Citizen Lab events in 2019
- What children and young people said at the Real Talk event 2018.

In order to understand what we need to do and what our priorities for the strategy should be, we have drawn on a number of sources of information. These include:

- Wolverhampton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Children and Young People with SEND 2019
- The Children, Young People and Families Plan for Wolverhampton 2015-2025

- City of Wolverhampton Council Plan 2019-24
- Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group Community SEND Health Strategy 2019
- Wolverhampton Challenge Board's Ordinary Lives White paper 2017
- Recommendations from the Voice 4 Parents Annual Survey
- Recommendations from the Changing Our Lives Quality of Life Review 2020
- Recommendations from the Children's to Adults Services Case File Audit 2019
- Recommendations from JSNA 2019
- Recommendations from Short Breaks Review 2019
- Recommendations from Alternative Provision Review 2019
- Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board Self-evaluation.

## Our Challenges

We have seen a lot of progress over recent years, and there is much to celebrate in relation to SEND in Wolverhampton. Nevertheless, by listening to children, young people and their families, and by looking at information about how services are working in Wolverhampton, we know that there are important challenges that we need to address.

Families have told us that:

- Sometimes they have to wait too long to receive support and sometimes services don't work together well enough, so they have to tell their story again and again.
- The Local Offer is not widely enough known about or promoted by all services.
- There is still work to do in embedding person-centred planning and co-production so that children and families feel in control. Some young people do not feel they "own" their EHC plan.
- The support for children, especially those receiving SEN support in school is not always planned or coordinated in a consistent way.
- They worry about children and young people moving onto the next phase of their journey, and sometimes there is not good enough information-sharing, joint working or planning to prepare for this.
- They feel more support should be available to support mental health, including support that is appropriate for children and young people with a disability.
- They do not feel well enough supported in their roles as parents and carers.
- There is not enough awareness of hidden disabilities in some services, organisations and communities.

- Sometimes they have felt pressured to move their child into specialist education provision because it is "easier" or because staff have not had the right training.

Our data tell us that:

- We do not identify some types of need as early or as well as other areas.
- There is increasing demand for services, such as diagnostic assessments and EHC needs assessments, and sometimes these are not delivered quickly enough.
- Too many children, including those with SEND, are excluded from school or do not access their full educational entitlement.
- The proportion of young people with SEND aged 16-17 in education or training remains below national and regional levels.
- The proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in settled accommodation is significantly lower than in comparable areas.



We recognise that all children with SEND are individuals with aspirations to lead their own lives. While life for a child or young person with SEND and their family is anything but ordinary, the ordinary life principles are what extraordinary achievements are built on.

Wolverhampton's Challenge Board defines an 'ordinary life' as being valued as people first, as loving family members, as rebellious teenagers, as paid employees, as community leaders, as home owners and tenants, as neighbours, as friends and partners. An ordinary life means that young people with the label of 'SEND' are seen in society, are valued, and have active lives. They do not live in service land, hidden away from communities with other disabled people. They are not kept away from any risk, nor over-protected. An ordinary life has challenges and responsibilities. It's about taking risks, making mistakes, changing our minds and sometimes getting into trouble. An ordinary life is one where people are in control of their own lives and make their own choices about where to live, who to live with, who to have relationships with, where to work, how to spend their own money and what to do to both learn and have fun. Being in control of these things improves the quality of life for anyone.

# Information about use of terms

## What does SEN mean?

The term special educational needs is described in law in the Children and Families Act 2014 as:

- A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
- A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
  - (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
  - (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.
- A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age (or would be likely, if no special educational provision were made).
- A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is/or has been spoken at home.

### What does disability mean?

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability. A disability is described in law (the Equality Act 2010) as:

**‘a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.’**

This includes, for example, sensory impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy. Many disabilities are hidden.



# SEND in Wolverhampton

The Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2019 and complementary SEND Sufficiency Analysis were published in 2019. Together they provide a robust and timely summary of information regarding Wolverhampton's Children and Young People with SEND which have informed this strategy. The key findings are presented below:

## Needs Analysis:

- In January 2019, there were 46,039 children and young people (across nursery to year 14) attending state schools in Wolverhampton. Of these, 7,834 were identified as having SEND; this equates to 17.02% of the school population or just over one in every six pupils.
- The number of pupils with SEND in the city has increased over the last three years (from 6,935 in January 2016 to 7,834 in January 2019).
- 1,365 pupils (2.96%) on roll in January 2019 were identified as having an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan and 6,469 pupils (14.05%) were identified as accessing SEN Support.
- The number of pupils with SEND varies in each phase and year group; 48.50% of pupils with an EHC Plan attending state schools in the city were in primary phase, 41.76% in secondary (Years 7-11), 8.13% in post 16 and just 1.61% in nursery.
- The total number of pupils with EHC Plans/Statements in Wolverhampton schools has fallen from its peak in 2014. However, since 2016 there has been a year on year increase in the total number of pupils with EHC Plan/Statement of SEN.
- In recent years, the number of children and young people with EHC Plan/Statement of SEN on roll in the nursery and post 16 phases have remained relatively static whilst those in the primary phase have increased markedly and those in the secondary phase have reduced significantly, but recently begun to recover.
- The total number of pupils accessing SEN Support fell between 2013 and 2016 but has recently increased to a peak in 2019.
- The number of pupils receiving SEN Support in the nursery phase peaked in 2018 but saw a sharp decline in 2019. The number of pupils receiving SEN Support in the primary phase reduced significantly between 2014 and 2015 but has since stabilised. The proportion of students receiving SEN support in the secondary phase has fluctuated, however since 2016 there has been a marked increase in cohort size. The number of pupils receiving SEN Support in the post 16 phase has recently increased to a peak in 2019.

- In January 2019, the most common identified primary needs of pupils with EHC plans were (in order of prevalence): autism spectrum disorder (ASD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), moderate learning difficulties (MLD), and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) difficulties.
- In January 2019, the most prevalent identified primary needs of pupils accessing SEN Support were: MLD, SEMH, specific learning difficulties (SpLD), and speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).
- The identified prevalence of the primary needs of ASD, SEMH, SLCN and “other SEN” has increased in recent years.
- The identified prevalence of the primary needs of MLD, SLD, SpLD and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) has decreased in recent years.
- In January 2019, 87.58% of pupils (6,861 pupils) with SEND in Wolverhampton schools were educated within mainstream provision, whilst 12.42% (973 pupils) were being educated within either Special Schools or Pupil Referral Units.
- In January 2019, 35.53% of pupils (485 pupils) with EHCPs in Wolverhampton schools were educated within mainstream provision, whilst 64.47% (880 pupils) were being educated within either Special Schools or Pupil Referral Units.
- In January 2019, the vast majority (98.56%) of pupils (6,376 pupils) accessing SEN Support in Wolverhampton schools were educated within mainstream provision, whilst 1.44% (93 pupils) were being educated within either Special Schools or Pupil Referral Units.
- In April 2019, 15% of children and young people with Wolverhampton EHCPs attended out of city or independent schools.

### Local Education Provision

- Wolverhampton has eight special schools, 11 resource bases, four pupil referral units and 98 mainstream schools all of whom provide support to pupils with SEND.

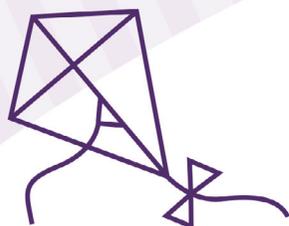


### Future Needs

- The total number of pupils with SEND within Wolverhampton's schools are forecast to increase by 11.22% between 2018/19 and 2026/27
- The total number of nursery age pupils with SEND within Wolverhampton's schools are forecast to remain relatively static
- The total number of primary phase pupils with SEND within Wolverhampton's schools are forecast to peak in 2021/22 and then cohorts are expected to decrease
- The total number of secondary phase pupils with SEND within Wolverhampton's schools are forecast to increase by 23.78% between 2018/19 and 2026/27
- The total number of post 16 phase students with SEND within Wolverhampton's schools are forecast to increase by 39.12% between 2018/19 and 2026/27.

A video with key messages from the SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/OHIQ4udwwcY>

For more information about SEND in Wolverhampton visit the SEND Local Offer:



[www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localoffer)

## Our Partnership

The **SEND Partnership Board** brings together key stakeholders including: Voice 4 Parents, head teachers, leaders and service managers in education, health, social care, public health, commissioning, and the voluntary sector. The Board is responsible for providing strategic direction and supporting joint commissioning to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND. It works in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, Wolverhampton CCG and wider co-production partners, to provide strategic oversight to:

- Identify all children and young people with SEND
- Assess and meet their needs
- Improve their outcomes.

The Board believes that children, young people and their families are best placed to shape the services and support they receive. It is committed to working with all stakeholders to co-design and co-produce solutions to create an inclusive future that changes lives: where disability does not define identity, expectations and aspirations are high, and ultimately where – with the right support – a good, ordinary life becomes a reality for all.

**Wolverhampton Challenge Board** is a strategic body for young people in the city to influence decision making at a strategic level. It has been developed and facilitated by Changing Our Lives. It aims to make sure that young people with the label of special educational needs and disabilities have good lives. The Board works with SEND Partnership Board members and a network of young people (including schools and colleges) around the city. The Board is not about consultation; it is about achieving outcomes.

In 2017 the Challenge Board published its first White Paper which was developed around the idea of an ‘ordinary life’. This emerged out of a desire from the Board to make a good, ordinary life a reality for all young people in the city.



**Voice4Parents** is Wolverhampton's parent carer forum, whose steering group representatives have children aged between 0 and 25 years with a wide range of special education needs and/or disabilities. It is the aim of the forum to ensure the voice of parents and carers in Wolverhampton remains at the heart of service planning and delivery and meets the needs of the community.

The forum exists to not only represent the voices of parents and carers living in Wolverhampton, but to work in partnership with service leads and commissioners to help shape the services and support accessed by the children and young people with SEND and their families who we represent.

Wider group membership of Voice4Parents is open to any parent or carer of a child/young person aged 0 to 25 years with SEND living in Wolverhampton. This enables Voice4Parents to gather and provide feedback on parent and carer experiences of a wide range of services in the city. Feedback is gathered through listening to parents and carers, attending events, social media, website, surveys, etc.

# Our Vision and Priorities

Wolverhampton is an inclusive City where we work with children, young people, and their families with SEND so that they have a good quality **'ordinary life'** and achieve their full potential.

This strategy signifies a commitment by all SEND Partnership Board partners to work together to achieve our vision and ensure that:

- Children, young people and their families are empowered and well supported
- Wolverhampton is an inclusive city
- Young people are well prepared for adulthood.



We believe that everything we do should be underpinned by:

- **Co-production** – we believe that young people and their families are best placed to shape the services and support that they receive
- **A highly skilled multi-agency workforce working together**
- **Aiming for a good quality ordinary life for all**
- **High expectations and aspirations** – creating and nurturing a culture which raises everyone's expectations for children and young people with SEND to ensure 'ordinary life' outcomes
- **Tell it once** – embedding a culture of 'tell it once' so that children, young people and families don't have to continually tell their story over and over again to different people and services
- **Joint commissioning** – working together to know ourselves, plan and deliver services that achieve real outcomes.

The strategy upholds the values behind Part 3 of the Children and Families Act, the SEND Code of Practice and the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which state a commitment to inclusive education of disabled children and young people, and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education.

# Co-production Charter for Children, Young People and Families

We will place children and families at the heart of everything we do and all work to deliver these priorities will be carried out in line with the principles and promises set out within the co-production charter for children, young people and families:

## Co-Production Charter for Children, Young People and Families

**This charter is a set of principles and promises of working together with young people and families to ensure they remain at the heart of decision making.**

**We believe that young people and their families are best placed to shape the services and support they receive.**

To communicate in good time and in a way that's appropriate for everyone

To have open and honest conversations

To seek regular feedback from families

To support each other in developing our knowledge and skills

**WE PROMISE**

To demonstrate the value our work is having

Your involvement will be welcomed valued and meaningful

Decisions about shaping services and support will be made together

To embed these promises in everything we do

City of Wolverhampton  
**Children & Families Together Board**

### We commit to delivering this promise using the following principles:



**Trust**  
There will be no conversations about you without you  
We decide priorities together  
Together we will find the best solution



**Shared understanding**  
We all agree about what we want to achieve  
We agree on what 'good' looks like  
We will be mindful of everyone's commitments



**Equal partnership**  
Everyone can take part. Whatever their needs or abilities  
We can learn a lot from each other  
We are all in this together!



**Creative thinking**  
We will plan creatively and do things differently  
We will work in a way that's best for you  
Finding the right solution may take longer but that's ok



**Communication**  
Everyone will be kept informed and updated  
We will be clear about what we can and can't do  
Information will be accessible for everyone





## Wolverhampton will be an inclusive city

### This means that:

- Partners and businesses across the city promote understanding, celebrate diversity and remove barriers for children, young people with SEND and their families.
- Schools and educational settings are inclusive and provide a culture of belonging for all children and young people.
- Public services and spaces are accessible for all children and young people with SEND.
- Children and young people with SEND have a choice of accessible leisure activities locally.
- Families have a choice of local education and training provision, including mainstream provision, that is able to meet all of the child or young person's needs.
- Partners and businesses across the city provide meaningful employment opportunities that are available to young people with SEND.

## Children, young people and their families are empowered and well supported

### This means that:

- When children and young people have additional needs, we identify these quickly and put the right support in place.
- Children and young people with SEND have a clear plan of support to achieve agreed outcomes, developed through genuine co-production.
- When life changes for children and young people, we will plan, support and share information together throughout those transitions.
- When a child or young person has a need for support to lead a more independent life, families will have information about personal budgets.
- When a child or young person with a disability and their family need a short break from each other there will be high quality, local options available.
- When a child or young person needs it, mental health support will be available that is timely, effective, and accessible.
- When parents, carers or siblings of a child or young person with SEND need information, support or advice this will be available.

## Young people are well prepared for adulthood

### This means that:

- Children and young people with SEND and their families have opportunities and support to talk about and make plans for independent adult life, from a young age.
- When young people with SEND leave school/ college they can access meaningful employment or training.
- Young people with SEND and their families have access to information and advice about what support is required as they move into adult life.
- Children and young people have opportunities to spend time with friend outside of school and college, and to be involved in their community.
- Young people with SEND have support and housing options available to enable them to live independently when ready.
- Children and young people with SEND have information and support to maintain a healthy life and can access health support when needed.



## How are we going to achieve this?

The SEND Partnership Board will oversee development and delivery of a comprehensive action plan that will focus on our three priorities and set out how we will achieve the outcomes that we have committed to. This Strategy sets the direction for SEND in Wolverhampton over the next five years, and over this time we will continually develop and refine our plans to achieve agreed outcomes.

Some of the key activities that will support the delivery of the SEND strategy include:

- Implementing a new system of allocating high needs funding to education settings that is based on children and young people's individual needs and helps to support inclusion.
- Planning to ensure the city's education estate meets the needs of all our children and young people.
- Improving processes for assessing and planning support for children with SEND that embed person-centred and joint working for SEND support and for those with an EHC plan.
- Setting up mental health support teams in schools and implementing the CAMHS Transformation Plan and the Emotional Wellbeing Review to improve access to mental health support services.
- Improving take up of two-year health checks.
- Supporting more children and young people with SEND to be able to travel independently.
- Improving the provision of short breaks.
- Developing the offer from Strengthening Families hubs to provide better early help to families of children and young people with SEND.
- Through the Transforming Care Programme improve support for children and young people with autism or a learning disability.
- Implement the Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group Community SEND Health Strategy 2019
- Roll out the use of health passports.
- Implement the Culture of Belonging programme to improve capacity in mainstream schools to become more inclusive and ensure the right support is available to pupils at risk of becoming disengaged from education.
- Review and improve the city's leisure offer for children and young people with SEND.
- Work with education providers and the Employment and Skills Board to improve availability of and access to inclusive employment pathways and opportunities.

## How will we know if we are making a difference?

The SEND Partnership Board will monitor delivery of the SEND strategy to ensure that the actions taken make the expected difference, and report to the Children and Families Together Board regularly to be held accountable for progress.

We will publish action plans and performance indicators against which we can measure our success. These will be updated every half-term and published on the Wolverhampton Local Offer. This will enable us to hold each other to account for our joint work and share progress made in delivering made in delivering our SEND Strategy. This would include how the strategy relates to other relevant strategies such as:

- Our Council Plan
- School Accessibility Strategy
- Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group Community SEND Health Strategy 2019
- CAMHS Transformation Plan
- #YES (Youth Engagement Strategy).

We will create a range of regular opportunities to listen to children and young people with SEND and their families so that they can tell us what is working and what still needs to be improved. This will also be opportunities for new people to get involved in co-producing any improvements identified.

To become involved in making a difference, visit:

[www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localoffer-co-production](http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/localoffer-co-production)



You can get this information in large print, braille,  
audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155

**wolverhampton.gov.uk** 01902 551155

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