

# SEND Strategy

**2022-2025**



**“All children can flourish  
and achieve; it’s our shared  
responsibility to unlock  
their potential”**

# Foreword

We are delighted to launch Gloucestershire's Education Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) strategies 2022-2025.

These strategies build on the work delivered through the Joint Additional and High Needs Strategies and following engagement with children, families, colleagues and partners set out the shared vision and priorities to continue our journey to enable children to live remarkable lives and keep children at the heart of what we do.

The strategies will further strengthen our partnerships, take learning from areas of continued development, and build on local strengths. The strategies are timely, as we start to emerge from a global pandemic that has had an unprecedented impact on all our children and young people, and particularly the most vulnerable.

Nationally and locally, we have seen the impact for children that have missed the developmental benefits provided by timely and available Education, Health and Social Care assessment and provision.

The early life, early identification, and early intervention support from multi agency services that support children and families was limited due to the pandemic. This coupled with parental confidence to use services that were available, and the current economic position has created a complex landscape of need for Gloucestershire to respond to.

An example is the socialisation and learning that children benefit from in attending early years' settings. Due to the restrictions placed on all of us by the pandemic we have seen increasing challenges for children in the early years stages of their lives with significant gaps in speech and language development, impacting on the preparation for school and wider community participation that we have previously perhaps taken for granted. The lost learning and opportunities being part of a cohesive community for children and young people in our primary, secondary, special post-16 and colleges is also challenging, but again not as much as the loss of structure, socialisation, and personal development that education and community access provides for our young people.

Education is also a protective factor for many of our most vulnerable children; a place that isn't just focussed on learning but providing holistic support for their well-being and personal development. Consequently, we are seeing a rising number of vulnerable children and young people that need support across Education, Social Care, Health and the community and voluntary sector.

This rise builds on the increasing demand we have across Gloucestershire of children and families needing early support, interventions that have a meaningful impact from all services and a rise across all areas for statutory assessment and plans.

The two strategies we share with you here have been produced together, to ensure that we take a joined-up approach to address this rising level of need in all settings. They share common goals to ensure that:

- Locally we grow together and work collaboratively in a structured way with a shared vision that works in the best interests of children and young people
- Local funding is supporting earlier identification and intervention and that we address barriers that prevent access to earlier intervention
- Local specialist support is of high quality and available when its needed.

We are proud of the work that our services and teams undertake to support the children and young people in Gloucestershire. We believe that the vision and priorities that are set out in the strategies focuses our work on enabling children, young people, and their families to be able to access the information and the support they need to thrive.



Kirsten Harrison, Director of Education

# Introduction

This strategy has been built on the priorities from the Joint Additional Needs Strategy, this was co-produced with parent carers, young people and health and social care partners. The strategy builds on the work that has been delivered over the past three years through the **Joint Additional Needs and High Needs Strategies**, and sets out to simplify these priorities.

This is the next phase of our work to grow together as a Local Area. To ensure that Gloucestershire's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) offer continues to improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people.

Children and young people are at the heart of this strategy to enable children to live remarkable lives. The focus is on co-production and collaboration to provide good quality services, to achieve good outcomes for the children, young people, and families we serve.

We know that good provision for children and young people with SEND requires a strong and effective culture of inclusion that supports all children and young people to thrive. As such this strategy will be delivered alongside our **Inclusion strategy**. In Gloucestershire we want to focus on:

- Removing barriers and improving inclusion across all education settings and services
- Ensuring all children and young people can access education and services to identify needs and provide the right support at the right time
- Making sure that everyone is working collaboratively in the best interests of children and young people
- Ensuring that specialist services are of high quality, available when needed and provide best value for public money.

All children and young people deserve the support they need to be confident, resilient individuals with their own ambitions and aspirations as they develop into adulthood irrespective of their learning needs or abilities.

We know how important it is for support to be provided at the right time particularly for children and young people with SEND so that they can develop the skills they need to thrive and to be ready to transition to the next phase of their lives.

We believe in celebrating difference and learning from each other.

We want Gloucestershire's Local Offer to reflect this. This will mean that every child and young person can grow in their local and inclusive, supportive community.



## What does SEND mean?

### Special educational needs (SEN)

- A child or young person has SEN if they have 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:
  - has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
  - 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.

SEN is a legal term derived from s.20 of the Children and Families Act 2014. A detailed description can be found in the SEND Code of Practice: 0 – 25 years. Or you can read the easy-read version of the [SEND Code of Practice](#) from [Mencap](#).

In Gloucestershire and nationally, we know that there continues to be an increasing number of children and young people needing extra support, short term, and longer term. We see this in the rise in Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) and hear this from our families, local schools, and settings.

We also know that the global pandemic and subsequent economic challenges has meant significant disruption and immense pressure for children and young people. For some families these have lessened resilience, increased poverty, and increased mental health difficulties across the population. For some children and young people with SEND and their families the impact will have delayed access to learning, access to social support and health provision. This may mean more local support is required and our work will reflect this.

We will focus on what is important to our young people, parents and carers and our schools and settings locally. Our priorities set out where you have told us we need to invest time and resources to support the wide range of social, emotional, educational and health needs; as well as making sure children and young people of Gloucestershire with SEND have access to the right support at the right time. Wherever possible for support to be close to home helping to build local provision and community connections.

## Who is the SEND Strategy for?

The SEND Strategy is for everyone in Gloucestershire who has a responsibility for supporting children and young people with SEND. Having heard what is important to children and families, we have co-produced clear and shared responsibilities and priorities. We want to work collaboratively for children with SEND. It is a local area commitment to grow together, delivering service improvements and measure the outcomes this achieves.

We believe that we should all contribute to improving the outcomes and reducing inequalities for children and young people with SEND.

The strategy and action plan provides a framework for everyone supported by and working in SEND in Gloucestershire across Education, Health and Care and the range of 0 – 25 services who are growing and working together to achieve the priorities.

When we say ‘we’ it means Gloucestershire’s SEND community: Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum, Education, Social Care and Health services, local schools, and education settings; with youth voice at the heart of our work in partnership with children and young people, parents, and carers.

## Our vision

We want all children and young people in Gloucestershire to thrive, exceed expectations and live remarkable lives. We will support children to be confident, achieve their ambitions' be aspirational and progress positively into adulthood.

To do so we will grow together, work co-productively with children, families, education, health, and care services to have a shared responsibility so that locally we provide:

- A positive learning experience in their school or education setting(s)
- Joined up access to early support using the Graduated Pathway or statutory support through the Education, Health and Care Plan
- Opportunities to shape and influence the support children and their families receive.



## What do we mean when we talk about working collaboratively and a shared responsibility?

These terms emphasise the importance of working together to support children and young people. When we use them, we are referring to everyone that is involved in helping a child to flourish and succeed. This includes families, early years, and post 16 providers, schools, health and care and community partners, support services and the local authority. Everyone has a role to play:

### We expect all settings, services and providers to:

- Be aspirational for **all** children and young people
- Understand and promote an inclusive culture
- Provide good or outstanding education
- Understand and respond holistically to barriers and underlying needs to education and learning, including the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)
- Through early identification of needs and effective use of Gloucestershire's Graduated Pathway of Early Help and Support.
- Provide accessible and up to date information on the [Local Offer](#) and [Glos Families Directory](#)
- Support families to support their child, understand the challenges families may be facing and feel able to discuss any concerns they may have.

### As parent, carers and families we will:

- Be aspirational for our child/children
- Do all we can to encourage and help our child to attend regularly and be on time unless they are unwell
- Encourage our child to learn and reach their potential by taking an active role in their education and activities
- Ask for help or advice if we believe our child is struggling.

### We expect the Local Authority to:

- Be aspirational for all children
- Enable all children to access high quality education, learning opportunities and community inclusion suitable for their needs and phase of development
- Support and work in partnership with schools and other settings to develop a highly skilled workforce that keeps children and young people safe and enables them to reach their potential
- Work in partnership with schools, other settings and partner agencies to identify the inclusion needs and priorities year on year, using hard and soft data, research and local intelligence.

## The importance of inclusion

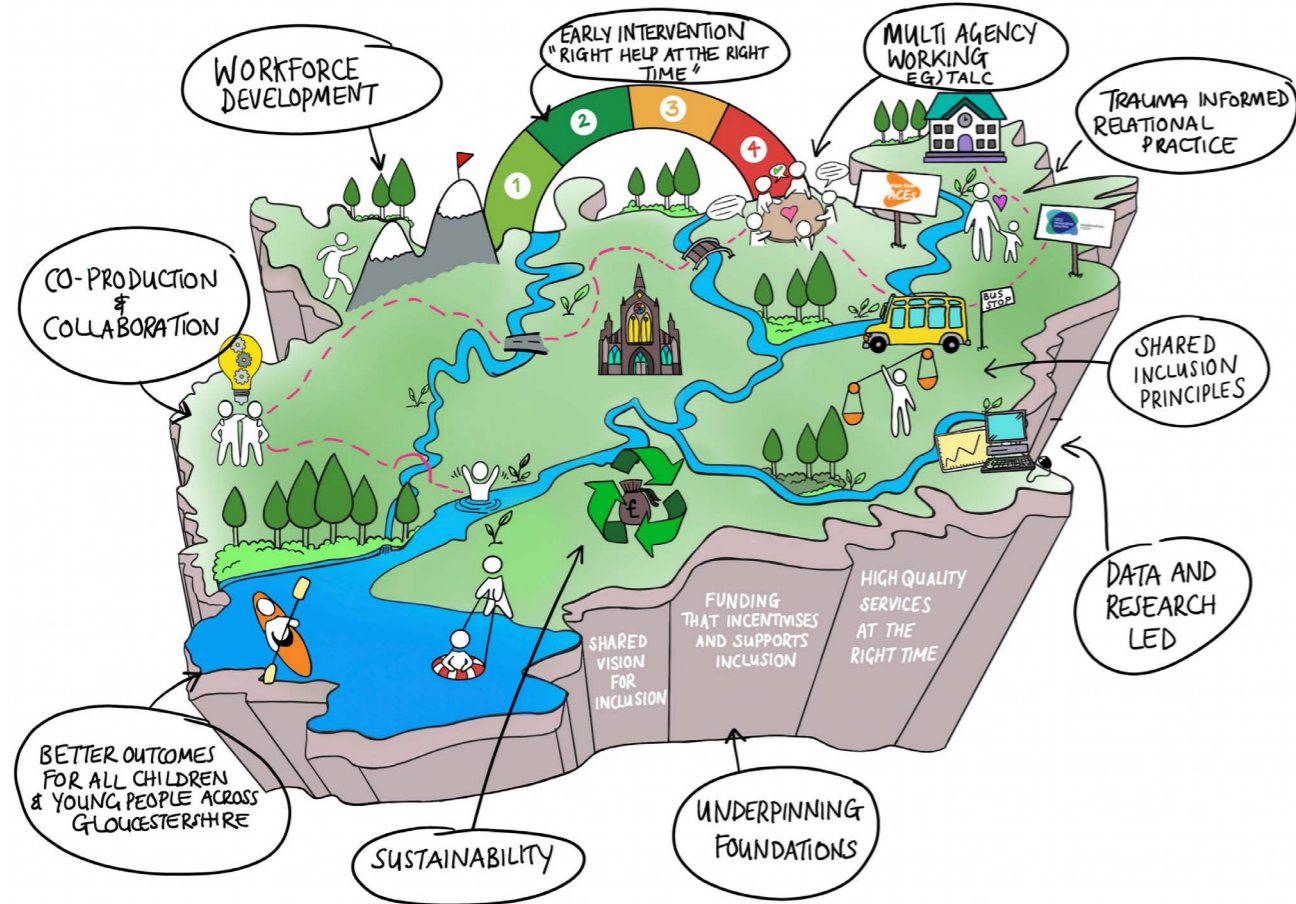
We know that the Inclusion Strategy will play a significant role in improving the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND and as such this strategy and the Inclusion Strategy have been developed alongside each other.

In our Inclusion Strategy we have set out a vision for the development of our local education system where we promote the development of strong foundations that:

- Ensure early identification, early intervention and inclusion are funded focussing on whole setting inclusive practice and early intervention
- Ensures high quality support services and interventions that are available at the earliest opportunity to support children, young people, whole setting development and system change
- Enables and promotes everyone to work collaboratively with a shared vision and responsibility to support, challenge and hold each other to account to support children and young people in Gloucestershire.



# Features of the local system



Building strong foundations will provide us with a stable platform upon which we can continue to successfully develop the key features of our local system. The features of our local system shape the experience that we want people to have and drive decision making and planning.

They are:

1. A culture that adopts a graduated approach to early identification, effective assessment, and early intervention; ensuring holistic child and family centred support is available when it's needed – “the right support at the right time”
2. A shared set of inclusive principles to which everyone signs-up
3. That we focus on sustainable long-term solutions that support whole school and system development
4. Effective multi-agency working in which shared responsibility is a consistent theme
5. To operate in an ACEs and Trauma-informed way, looking beyond external behaviours to understand the needs of children and young people and to respond to that in a restorative and relational way
6. To ensure that all developments and interventions are data and research-led – we find out what works and apply it to our local context
7. That we remain focussed on the impact our work has on the outcomes for children and young people
8. That everything we do is co-produced with key people, but most importantly, families, children, and young people
9. Workforce development – great people are at the heart of a great and sustainable local system and it's critical that we provide support to develop their skills and expertise.

## Our SEND Priorities 2022-2025

Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND is everyone's responsibility. Inclusion is the foundation of our improvements for those with SEND, however we also know that there are key areas for SEND provision in Gloucestershire to work on. As such, stakeholders, including parents and carers, within Gloucestershire will commit to working together on the following priorities over the next three years to improve:

1. **Communication** that is timely and informative.
2. **Access** to support when it is needed.
3. **Outcomes** that are ambitious and achievable.



### These priorities have been informed by:

- A self-assessment of what works and what's missing across the Gloucestershire SEND partnership
- A review of the local area SEND services and outcomes
- Feedback on local SEND services
- Findings from the Ofsted inspection of SEND services in Gloucestershire
- Progress made against our service transformation plans.

### Other information and the data we collect tells us that:

- The attainment outcomes for young people with SEND should be better
- Poor educational attainment is linked to poorer outcomes in other areas of life
- We spend and do a lot, but we are not always clear on what is making the biggest difference to the outcomes of children, young people, and their families
- Children's needs to be identified and addressed more quickly
- We need to improve our communication of specialist SEND provision locally
- Financial pressures are increasing due to increased **demand**.

Further information on local needs can be found in our [SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).



# Priority 1

## Improve our communication

### What will we do?

We will work together to make sure that communication is timely, effective and information is easy to access and updated regularly.

### Work in progress:

Review of our Local Offer and developing a refreshed website to deliver sustained improvement in our Information, Advice and Guidance to everyone involved in supporting children and young people with SEND.

To further achieve this, we will:

- Work co productively with parent carers, children and young people and partners to make sure information is accessible, and decision making is clear and communicated
- Improve access to up-to-date information through a refreshed digital Local Offer
- Provide clear information on available support and transitions from Early Years' settings, schools and in preparation for adulthood
- Review our Graduated Pathway to ensure this is accessible and used effectively
- Improve and increase opportunities for communication with parents and carers through parent voice, Gloucestershire Parent Carer Forum and SENDIASS
- Support the development of our SEND workforce through skill sharing evidence based best practice and investment in professional development.

### Why are we doing this and what impact will it have?

Parents and carers, children and young people and our wider stakeholders have told us that:

- Access to information needs to be clearer, simpler, and straight forward
- Navigating SEND processes can often be difficult and confusing
- It isn't often clear what support is available locally
- There are sometimes delays to accessing SEND support and assessments are taking too long
- Parent, carers, children, and young people do not always feel listened to, understand how decisions are made, or are part of the decision making.

### Improving our communication will:

- Ensure engagement is planned early and meaningfully so that co-production can be achieved well and people feel listened to
- Reduce confusion and mixed messaging by making sure information is accurate, up-to-date and consistent across the county and build trust by doing what we say we will do
- Support all settings and services to adapt and operate inclusively for all children
- Make sure information is relevant, easy to find and easy to read
- Provide clear and simplified pathways to access support when it is needed.

# Priority 2

## Access to support when it is needed

### What will we do?

We know that not all children with SEND require long term support. We believe that support should be accessible, delivered flexibly and that our roles are to work with children, young people, and their families to help find the right support at the right time.

### Work in progress:

- Review and redesign of the EHCP pathway, to simplify access, maximise digital solutions, improve communication and timeliness
- Review of the Graduated Pathway to ensure this is used to maximum effect to identify need and provide early intervention support to provide the right support at the right time
- Development of our banded funding model, so that funding can be used flexibly to meet need.

To further achieve this, we will:

- Review use of resources to make most efficient and effective provision available at all stages of the Graduated Pathway and Statutory resource
- Invest in SENDIASS services to ensure parents and young people have access to free and impartial advice
- Provide support as early as practical to do so, including transition support when moving settings or schools
- Provide clear information to simplify access to the right support at the right time
- Implement the new EHCP pathway to improve access, communication, and timeliness
- Support schools and settings with whole school training so that they can increase skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for all children with SEND
- Develop our available special school provision in the county, through increased special school places and resource bases
- Continue to develop our banded funding model so that funding can be used flexibly to meet need.

### Why are we doing this and what impact will it have?

We want our services to be agile so they can meet the evolving needs of our children and young people. We need to reduce the complexity of processes so that we can give children and young people the support they need in a setting that is appropriate for them.

These changes will:

- Set clear expectations and increase confidence in the system
- Help ensure children and young people get access to the right support at the right time
- Streamline systems and processes to improve access and reduce waiting time for assessment and support.

## Priority 3

# Improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND

### What we will do?

We want to do more to help young people with SEND achieve better outcomes; outcomes that are ambitious and allow children and young people to achieve their personal goals, these ambitions may range from academic aspirations to individual goals that help them to develop into happy, healthy young people. To do this, we need to make sure that their support plans are built around personal aspirations, needs and outcomes.

### Work in progress:

Increasing SEND services capacity through investment into early intervention and casework services.

To further achieve this, we will:

- Support schools and settings with whole school training so that they can increase skills and knowledge to improve outcomes for all children with SEND
- Provide a skilled workforce with access to training and development, to enable learning and sharing of best practice
- Work together across Education, Health and Care to reduce unnecessary barriers to assessment and support and ensure that the aspirations of young people are clear within the support plan
- Provide casework capacity to attend and progress annual review amends to support children, young people and schools have up to date plans, measure progress and outcomes
- Listen and share learning from feedback from compliments, complaints, mediation, and Tribunals to understand what is working well and improve practice to support good outcomes for young people
- Review and publish our performance benchmarks.

### Why are we doing this and what impact will it have?

We know from our data that we have more work to do to support children and young people with SEND achieve academically. We must continue to listen and adapt our local services, responding to what we learn. This is how we will help children and young people with SEND in Gloucestershire to have positive achievements and outcomes from their education experience.

These changes will:

- Improve attainment outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Improve the quality and timeliness of support that is based around their needs.

## Measuring Impact

### How will we check and share information on the difference we are making?

- We will co-produce an Improvement Action Plan that will work towards our priorities so that we continue to improve our local SEND offer. This will show how we are going to implement the strategy and measure the progress we are making
- We will provide regular updates on our progress against our action plan objectives to the SEND and Inclusion Improvement Board who will oversee the delivery of the priorities set out in the strategy
- We will use the feedback from our young people and their families and our schools and education settings, and regularly review our performance data to check that what we are doing is making a difference and delivering against the action plan
- We are accountable to children and young people with SEND, their families and the wider public, so we will regularly publish progress against our action plan.

## What is the SEND and Inclusion Improvement Board?

The SEND Improvement Board is a group of people, including young people with SEND, parents, schools, the County Council, and health services. The SEND Improvement Board agrees the Inclusion and SEND Strategy action plans and makes sure we carry it out.

# SEND Strategy

2022-2025

