

Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021 – 2025

Refreshed April 2023

**Cheshire East
SEND Partnership**



Contents

Contents	2
1. Glossary	3
2. Introduction	5
3. Our Vision	7
4. Our commitment	7
5. What we face	7
6. Local and National drivers	9
7. What our children and young people tell us	9
8. What parents and carers tell us	12
9. Need in Cheshire East	13
10. Three stages of system confidence	14
11. Potential Risks	19
12. Governance	19
13. Impact	21
14. Action Plan	23

We would like to thank everyone who has made, and is continuing to make, this Strategy a reality, including:

- All the children, young people, parents and carers who gave their time and energy, and honestly told us how it is
- Our education professionals, including SEND and specialist support teams, and staff within educational settings
- Early Help and Social Care professionals in Children's and Adults' Services
- Health professionals within the Clinical Commissioning Group and provider services
- All members of the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board and workstream

1. Glossary

Term	Meaning
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a condition that affects people's behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse.
ASC	Autistic Spectrum Condition is a condition related to brain development that impacts how a person perceives and socializes with others, which can cause problems in social interaction and communication.
ASD Pathway	Autistic Spectrum Disorder Pathway describes the expected practice in relation to people whose needs may fall within the Autism Spectrum Disorders.
CAMHS	The name for the NHS services that assess and treat young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.
Child's Electronic Case Record	This refers to the electronic social care case management system used by the Local Authority. It is often referred to as Liquid Logic.
Coproduction	This is an approach whereby professionals, children and young people and their families work together as equal partners to plan services that affect them. In Cheshire East this is committed to our 'TOGETHER' values which support open and clear communication and accountability to all involved in providing support to children and young people with SEND.
EHC	Education, Health and Care
EHCP	An Education, Health and Care Plan is a legal document that sets out a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs. It describes the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support them to achieve what they want to in their life.
Engagement Session	Sessions where children and young people, parents and carers and members of the SEND partnership come together to share their views and ideas about the strategy.
First Concerns	Children and young people who have been identified as having emerging difficulties.
High Needs Funding Block	The funding allocated and received from central government by Local Authorities for pupils with SEND and high needs
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. This is an assessment of how well the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people living in Cheshire East are being met.
Local Offer	The Local Offer lets parents and young people know what special educational needs and disabilities services are available in the borough, and who can access them.
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills is responsible for inspecting the effectiveness of local area services for children with SEND.
OT	An Occupational Therapist's role is to help people overcome the effects (physical, psychological, social and environmental) of disability so that they can carry out everyday tasks or occupations.

Parent Carer Forum	The Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum is a voluntary group who work in partnership with professionals within the Cheshire East Local Authority area to ensure the voice of parents and carers with children that have additional needs is heard throughout the decision-making process of service initiatives.
Quality Assurance	The maintenance of a desired level of quality in service delivery by routinely evaluating stages in the process.
Quality First Teaching	A style of teaching that emphasises high quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class.
Resource provision	A mainstream school receives additional funding to provide extra specialist support or facilities for children with SEND.
SALT	Speech and Language Therapy helps people who have speech and communication difficulties. They also help people with eating, drinking and swallowing problems.
SEN	Special Educational Needs (SEN) covers a wide range of needs. These include behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, speech, language and communication, hearing impairment, visual impairment, multi-sensory impairment, physical disability and autism
SEN Support	The process by which schools assess the needs of children, and then provide appropriate support.
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. The SENCO is responsible for the operation of a school's SEN policy and coordination of specific provision made to support individual pupils with SEN, including those who have EHC plan.
SEND	A child or young person who has a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support, which is shortened to SEND.
SEND Partnership	A multi-agency partnership arrangement which leads and drives developments around support, processes and provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) aged 0-25 years in Cheshire East.
SEND Partnership Board	A group made up of senior representatives that drive and monitor the work of the Partnership in line with our joint SEND strategy.
SEND Passport	A tool used by the Council to aid and capture the voice of children with SEND through 1:1 and group participation.
SEND Toolkit	Explains the responsibilities, outlines the provision and support that the Local Authority expect to be in place in all educational settings which support Cheshire East children and young people with Special educational needs.
Written Statement of Action	A document which sets out the actions that are needed to address the significant areas of weakness in a local area identified by Ofsted and/or the Care Quality Commission following inspections.
Dedicated Schools Grant management plan	A document which is a requirement from the Department for Education (DFE) where a local authority has a deficit position on their high needs dedicated schools grant (DSG), this provides a financial and EHCP 5-year forecast.
Delivering Better Value programme (DBV)	The DBV programme is designed to provide dedicated support and funding to help 55 local authorities with substantial deficit issues in their high needs block of the DSG, to reform their high needs systems, with the aim to put more local authorities on a more sustainable footing so that they are better placed to respond to the forthcoming special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms.

2. Introduction

This **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy** has been refreshed after taking the views across all partners at three engagement sessions held in April 2023. The previous work undertaken as part of the original Strategy still remains a key focus and is reflected within the priorities. The aim of the refresh is to align the findings from the Delivering Better Values (DBV) programme and the content from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) management plan to ensure the partnership are working collectively towards the same objectives within one plan.

Following the coproduction of the refreshed strategy we have identified the following 5 priority areas:

1. Strengthening the quality assurance framework analysis to ensure evidence of continued improvement across the partnership including impact for children, young people and families
2. 0-25 SEND commissioned services and provision to meet the aspirations of children and young people
3. Improve timeliness and transformation of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions
4. Strengthening early identification and intervention through inclusive practice
5. Alternative Provision

All our engagement to develop the Strategy and our delivery of support for SEND is premised on our TOGETHER principles of co-

production. 'TOGETHER' in Cheshire East is outlined in this document and was created by our children and young people, in conjunction with a range of professionals and parent carers, as they didn't understand the word 'co-production'.

Every attempt has been made to write the strategy so that the many people who are interested in how SEND works in Cheshire East can easily understand it. Throughout the strategy the word 'we' has been used many times on purpose because, without us all working TOGETHER, we won't achieve the excellent outcomes that we want for our children and young people with SEND.

In this strategy, 'we' include parents and carers, children and young people, the Local Authority, Health, education settings, providers etc.

TOGETHER in Cheshire East

TOGETHER is our shared definition of coproduction in Cheshire East because it is inclusive to all.

Teamwork when designing, delivering and evaluating individual support and services

Open-minded ideas and discussions

Genuine communication for all parties involved

Equal partners help to shape and improve support for all

Trust each other to make the right decisions

Honest

Engage and empower children, young people, adults and families

Respect for everyone's views and opinions

Working TOGETHER as equal partners towards a common goal for all of our children, young people, adults living in Cheshire East.

Our **TOGETHER** Values and Commitment

We will...

- Listen to your views
- Communicate honestly
- Trust each other
- Be person centred
- Adapt to people's needs
- Respect and value all opinions
- Do what we say we will

We won't...

- Use jargon or acronyms
- Give too much information
- Rush meetings
- Take too long to complete our actions
- Be judgemental

3. Our Vision

“Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young”.

We believe that...

- Children and young people are best supported within their families and their communities.
- All children and young people should enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood.
- Cheshire East families and communities are strong and resilient, with the right help, from the right people, at the earliest opportunity.

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people - that they achieve well in all aspects of their lives and are happy, fulfilled and play an active role in their communities. For children and young people and their parents and carers, this means that their experiences will be of a system which is supportive of everyone and we ensure our resources and energy are applied efficiently. Their special educational needs and disabilities will be picked up at the earliest point with support routinely put in place quickly, and their parents and carers will know what services they can reasonably expect to be provided. Children and young people and their parents and carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve.

4. Our commitment

As a SEND Partnership, all relevant organisations in Cheshire East are committed to providing the best quality education and support for children and young people.

We want all our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be **HAPI**:

Happy and healthy

Achieving their potential

Part of their communities

Independent as possible, making choices about their future.

5. What we face

We are publishing the refresh of our strategy in response to supporting outcomes for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) becoming more challenging due to the increase in numbers and complexity of need. Children with an EHCP have their needs met through the council's DSG high needs grant but this has exceeded the funding received for that purpose.

This situation has occurred over the last seven years with several factors contributing to this locally, and with the high needs funding allocation which is not linked to EHCP numbers.

This is a national issue and as a result, the majority of councils are now facing significant deficits on their DSG reserve as recurring overspends are transferred each year. Despite this being a national issue, the situation is acute for Cheshire East.

Children and young people and their parents/carers expectations quite rightly remain high. This strategy refresh will support us to ensure that we are well placed to meet this changing landscape, whilst supporting to ensure the needs of our children, young people and families are met.

Due to the energy, commitment and dedication of all parties involved in this work, we have already moved a long way towards achieving our aims, but we still have more to do to ensure that children and young people achieve their best possible outcomes. Our SEND revisit in May 2021 by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission scrutinised whether we had made sufficient progress in addressing two areas of significant weaknesses identified at a previous inspection in 2018, which were:

- the timeliness, process and quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans; and
- establishing an effective autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathway and in reducing waiting times.

Inspectors found that, since their last visit, the timeliness, process and quality of EHC plans have been transformed, saying that by early 2020, almost every needs assessment was completed within the 20-week deadline, compared to less than one in six in 2018, as a result the Written Statement of Action was removed.

Regarding support for children and young people with autism, inspectors found that more children are starting nursery and school with their needs understood and met. Families have also been offered support and training, so they can better understand and support their child. In terms of waiting times, in 2018 more than 200 children and

young people were waiting more than 12 weeks for their first assessment, but by March 2020, this had reduced to two weeks.

The partnership self-evaluation provides an ongoing picture of our current performance alongside quality assurance activity.

The improvements identified in our revisit and the feedback from inspectors to improve our communication with parents and carers surrounding our improvement journey is captured within this strategy. This will be monitored and scrutinised by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board to ensure we achieve what we have set out in this Strategy.

We will only achieve a stable, creative and personalised offer for children and young people with SEND by maximising our capacity and resources available to support children and their families. Early identification of support needs and strategies to prevent those needs escalating should be a key focus.



6. Local and National drivers

National drivers

- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Care Act (2014)
- DfE SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan
- SEND Ofsted Framework
- The Mental Capacity Act (2005)
- NHS Long Term Plan (2019)
- NHS Mental Health Investment Standard (2020)

7. What our children and young people tell us

Local children and young people with SEND shared their views on what is important for this strategy through the completion of individual SEND Passports with sections on different topics. All of their individual contributions were captured and have been summarised below.

- NICE Transition from Children's to Adults' Services for young people using health and social care services (2016)
- Equality Act 2020
- Autism Strategy
- Outcome of the current national SEND Review

Local drivers

- Cheshire East Corporate Plan (2021-2025) and Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Cheshire East Partnership 5-Year Plan
- Access to SEND Services Framework
- Multi-agency Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Strategy
- Children's Joint Commissioning Strategy (2021-2023)
- SEND Partnership Sufficiency Statement and SEN Provision Plan (2023-2026)
- Cheshire East All-Age Autism Strategy (2020-2023)
- 'My Life, My Choice' Cheshire East Learning Disability Strategy (2019-2022) – Revised plan in place from January 2024
- Cheshire East All-Age Mental Health Strategy (2019-2022) – Revised plan in place from January 2024
- Children and Young People Plan (2022-2026)
- The joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Cheshire East (2023-2028)

Area	What is working well?	What's not working well?	What would make it better?
Education, Health and Care Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Plan helps people to understand me, to think about all of my needs, and to know what I need help with. • I feel listened to and that my views are heard, and I am involved in meetings. • The support I get in class/college/my support internship is helpful, and I am enjoying college/my supported internship. • I feel there are people I can talk to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coronavirus pandemic has made some things more difficult, e.g. finding work experience, starting new support from organisations etc. • Anxiety needs can be a barrier to attending meetings or can be triggered by certain class/course subjects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More subject options and work opportunities. • More support around anxiety needs. • More opportunities to do things on my own at an earlier age to make me a little bit more independent. • Recapping what my EHC Plan says and what the next step will be.
My Education and Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having support from different places to prepare for the world of work, including job coaches and organisations being proactive in looking for work experience. • I have a good plan in place for what I want to do when I'm older/after school or college, and how to get there. • I am enjoying my classes/course and am happy to be working towards milestones and targets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some difficulties in finding suitable options and work experience placements, especially due to the Coronavirus pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More support for employers to encourage more of them to offer job opportunities, and more options for older young people. • Being able to visit colleges and providers, and access my placement, when Covid-19 restrictions ease. • Improved communication, such as people repeating instructions about tasks or giving me specific dates about when things are going to happen.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am able to get the health appointments and treatments that I need and can book appointments fairly quickly and know how to do this. • I have been referred to, or have received, a diagnosis, and appreciate the support I have from different professionals to manage my health needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I may need more support or specialists to meet my health needs fully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier access to some services, and shorter assessment times.
Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I get the support and help I need to meet my care needs. Support is given by different people, including school/college staff, social workers, job coaches, carers, personal assistants and family. I also do self-care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I sometimes need more support with practical issues, e.g. to resolve issues with manoeuvring a frame around potholes or being able to hear in noisy places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people to give me more independence. • More deaf awareness in the general population.

Area	What is working well?	What's not working well?	What would make it better?
People who help me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are lots of different people who are aware of my needs that I can speak to and ask for help if I need it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some struggles with friendships and being in lockdown during the Covid pandemic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People to continue to treat me as a young adult. Being able to attend social groups and clubs again in person.
Opportunities and Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I spend time with my friends and family. I access different activities, such as virtual youth groups, attending a Duke of Edinburgh group, sports clubs, dance lessons etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no youth club activities, or activities for people with learning disabilities, where I live. Covid-19 has stopped me doing things. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I hope some of the activities that I did before Covid-19 will restart soon, and that we can meet in person when it is safe. Local groups or opportunities to socialise with people in our area.

8. What parents and carers tell us

"Honest and open communication using clear language with children and young people and their parents"

"Information and support are provided to enable children, young people and parents to engage meaningfully"

"Children, young people and their parents will proactively be asked to provide feedback"

"A single point of contact who provides support during and after the initial assessment and timely / effective communication"

"Clear information on the role of the local authority and partners in monitoring provision"

"Children and young people have the support they need"

"Kindness, understanding and empathy demonstrated in all communications"

"To truly understand the needs of children and work collaboratively to develop a person-centred plan"

"Settings deliver what is in the plan and parents are happy with provision"

"Parents, children and young people are central to all discussions and contribute as equal partners"

"Understanding of current legislation with regular training to ensure everyone is up to date"

"A greater range of provision is available"

9. Need in Cheshire East

There are approximately **84,200** children and young people under 19 in Cheshire East, which is 22% of our population.

There is a comprehensive [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#) for children and young people with special educational needs and/ or disabilities. Our JSNA, which reviews the health and social care needs of our population, estimates that we should expect around **8,252** children and young people aged between 5 and 18 in Cheshire East to have a special educational need. That equates to 10% of all children and young people – or **one in ten**. This number is based on the prevalence of different needs within the national population and within research literature.

9.1. Needs are increasing and changing

As at January 2023, **5388** children and young people receive SEN Support in Cheshire East (within statutory school age as in School Census 2023) and **4029** children and young people aged 0-25 in Cheshire East have specialist needs and have an Education, Health and Care Plan. A number of children and young people with SEN will have their needs met through universal support within quality first teaching and learning, or first concerns. (Data as per SEN 2 2023)

The SEN team are working with schools and other settings to improve our data on the number of pupils receiving SEN Support to ensure that we are consistently and accurately capturing the number of children and young people we support. As a result of this joint work, we expect

to see the number of pupils recorded as receiving SEN Support increase over the next year.

Children and young people with SEND are changing in the range and complexity of need they require support with. Proportionally more children and young people with SEND are eligible for free school meals: in the January 2023 census, 30.3% of children with SEND were eligible for free school meals, as compared to 13.2% of children with no SEND. 29.6% of pupils receiving SEN Support and 31.9% of pupils with an EHCP were eligible for free school meals.



10. Three stages of system confidence

This Strategy sets out the important building blocks to achieve our vision and commitment to children and young people with SEND and their families. We will utilise the analogy of riding a bike to explain the Strategy in a straightforward manner. The principles of riding a bike from a young age are:

Riding a bike	SEND
Good stabilisers and confidence	Our partnership is clear on its priorities, has sufficient resources that are used effectively, and everyone is confident in our work together.
Right frame and servicing	As children show signs of needing support, they are supported early and effectively. As needs grow, a person-centred approach is taken, and this is checked with parents on a regular basis.
Personal touches	Children are at the centre of all we do; regular co-production and personalised communication ensures children and young people's hopes, and aspirations are met.



A group of our parents and partners got together and listed all the important things we should remember when working together (co-producing) on SEND. The results are shown as 'visual minutes' on the following page. Although a strategic discussion with our Parent Carer Forum these minutes can be used as the basis for improving co-production across the wider body of parents and carers.

We will hang this in every office, clinic, school and setting across our partnership, along with our TOGETHER principles, as a constant reminder of putting children and families at the centre of all that we do.



In order to build on this piece of work, a charter for how the SEND Partnership and parents and carers work together will be developed to build on the mantra of 'co-production, co-production, co-production'.

GOOD STABILISERS AND CONFIDENCE

CULTURE – “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” - the culture across our SEND partnership will determine the success of our drive to improve the outcomes and life-chances for children with SEND. By putting children and young people at the heart of all we do and supporting their **individual** needs and what is important to them, both now and in the future, we will achieve success. A positive / transparent culture across the SEND partnership and improved communication with parents and carers will build confidence and trust in all we do.

INCLUSION - children and young people are supported to access the same services, activities, and opportunities as their peers wherever possible.

FLEXIBLE AND WELL-TRAINED WORKFORCE - training the whole workforce and parent and carers **Together** will create a skilled and cohesive force for achieving good outcomes. Given the increase in demand and complexity of needs, it is even more important that our workforce can respond proactively and flexibly to patterns of demand.

Co-production, Co-production, Co-production is embedded and **Together principles applied** to ensure children and young people are always involved in the decisions that affect their lives. Parents and carers are experts on their children’s needs and are essential partners in decision making.

SUFFICIENT LOCAL, GOOD QUALITY SEN SCHOOL PLACES - children and young people can access their school place, support and activities within their local area wherever possible, and they are part of their local community.

DEMAND MANAGEMENT AND BEST USE OF RESOURCES - support is planned to meet the needs of children and young people in our area so we have the right types of support, with the right amount of availability, that are delivered effectively through multi-disciplinary teams. We are creative and innovative in meeting children and young people’s needs. Needs are met early to prevent escalation.

GOOD INTELLIGENCE - targeting support effectively and efficiently based on comprehensive, good quality, timely data and feedback from as many sources as possible.

SUPPORT - the best quality support is underpinned by good quality, timely, child and young person-centred processes, assessments and plans.

ASSESSMENT - a strong SEN needs assessment enables us to determine what support is needed, and a good quality EHCP ensures all the key parties are involved in developing a solution together. Child-centred support means providing integrated support that meets children and young people’s individual needs, across education, health and care, in line with what is important to them, both now and in the future.

OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

How we ensure good stabilisers and confidence is achieved:

- Regular checking in with children and young people, parents/carers & settings and clear routes for constructive feedback that maintains relationships.
- Timely, effective Annual Reviews of EHC Plans.
- Quality Assurance.
- Reflection on feedback and making the necessary changes.

RIGHT FRAME AND SERVICING

SEN SUPPORT - support is tailored to the needs of the individual child. A graduated approach means that we expect reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure that the majority of children and young people with special educational needs are able to access and have their needs met within mainstream provision, so they enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and are fully included within their communities.

A GRADUATED APPROACH - we expect reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure that the majority of children and young people with special educational needs are able to access and have their needs met within mainstream provision, so they enjoy the same opportunities as their peers wherever possible and are fully included within their communities. Quality First Teaching and Learning, as well as effective health and social care services is the key.

MAINTAINING STABILITY OF SCHOOL PLACE - our support teams are well trained, proactive and flexible to meet the changing profile of needs. Our teams work in a multi-disciplinary way and make best use of our Cheshire East Toolkit for SEND.

DIAGNOSIS AND PATHWAYS (e.g. AUTISM, ADHD) - assessment processes and diagnosis are timely, and communication along the way is effective. It is important that pre and post diagnosis support is person-centred, and evidence based, not based on what support/skills we have available. We should avoid silo pathways as needs commonly co-exist.

JOINT COMMISSIONING - we need to make the most of our resources as a partnership to meet the needs of individuals and groups of children and young people. We utilise all the rich intelligence and feedback to plan the purchase/redesign of support needed, and constantly review that outcomes for children are being achieved.

EARLY EFFECTIVE PLANNING FOR KEY TRANSITION POINTS - from Early Years through to Post-16 preparation for adulthood, each transition point should be carefully thought through for each young person, taking account of the different environment they are moving on to, clear and timely data sharing between settings, and sharing of good practice.

EARLY PLANNING FOR PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD - to ensure young people have time to adjust and feel comfortable with their preparation for adulthood, allowing time to build the right Post-16 offer that recognises the wide range of young people's goals and unique solutions to achieving them.

OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

How we ensure the right framework and servicing is achieved:

- Regular checking in with children and young people, parents/carers & settings and clear routes for constructive feedback that maintains relationships.
- Timely, effective Annual Reviews of EHC Plans.
- Quality Assurance.
- Reflection on feedback and making the necessary changes.

PERSONAL TOUCHES

BESPOKE OUTCOMES THAT ARE ASPIRATIONAL - we aim high for children and young people with SEND, and every plan, review and action to support has the lived experience and outcome for the child at the heart.

PERSONAL BUDGETS - an amount of money to deliver the provision set out in an Education, Health and Care Plan where the parent or young person is involved in securing that provision, increasing personalisation of support and involvement of families in decision making.

EVERYONE FEELING A GENUINE PART OF THE SEND FAMILY - if we let it, SEND can feel complicated and lonely for children/young people and their families. We will look for every opportunity to act as one SEND family working TOGETHER, embracing feedback, views and input from parents. We will welcome it as the useful gift it is and use it effectively to improve support and outcomes.

KNOWING THE INDIVIDUAL CHILD AND PERSONALISED COMMUNICATION - ensure support teams contacting families have familiarised themselves with the young person before engaging. Ensure learning from complaints changes practice and changes are visible to parents.

OVERARCHING REQUIREMENTS

How we ensure that personal touches are achieved:

- Regular checking in with children and young people, parents/carers & settings and clear routes for constructive feedback that maintains relationships.
- Timely, effective Annual Reviews.
- Quality Assurance.
- Reflection on feedback and making the necessary changes.

11. Potential Risks

The Local Authority and NHS Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group have invested significant financial resources into the SEND teams and support for autism, emotional and mental health over the past two years. This has provided a basis for good improvement across SEND; however, the demands at SEN Support, levels of EHC needs assessments, and Education, Health and Care Plans, continues to put pressure on the whole SEND system.

As with many local authorities across the country, Cheshire East Council's currently has a DSG deficit position of £47 million and is forecast to be £146 Million (mitigated) and £273 Million (unmitigated) by March 2027 (based on the DSG management plan from 2022/2023 to 2026/2027) This plan is updated on a rolling 5-year basis.

In 2023 the government announced the findings of the national SEND review and have published their SEND and alternative provision improvement plan. Our SEND Strategy refresh has reflected some of the suggested changes; however, the improvement plan is still in the early stages of the change programme, and we may need to further reflect within our strategy as the roadmap develops. The next full review of our strategy will take place in 2024.

12. Governance

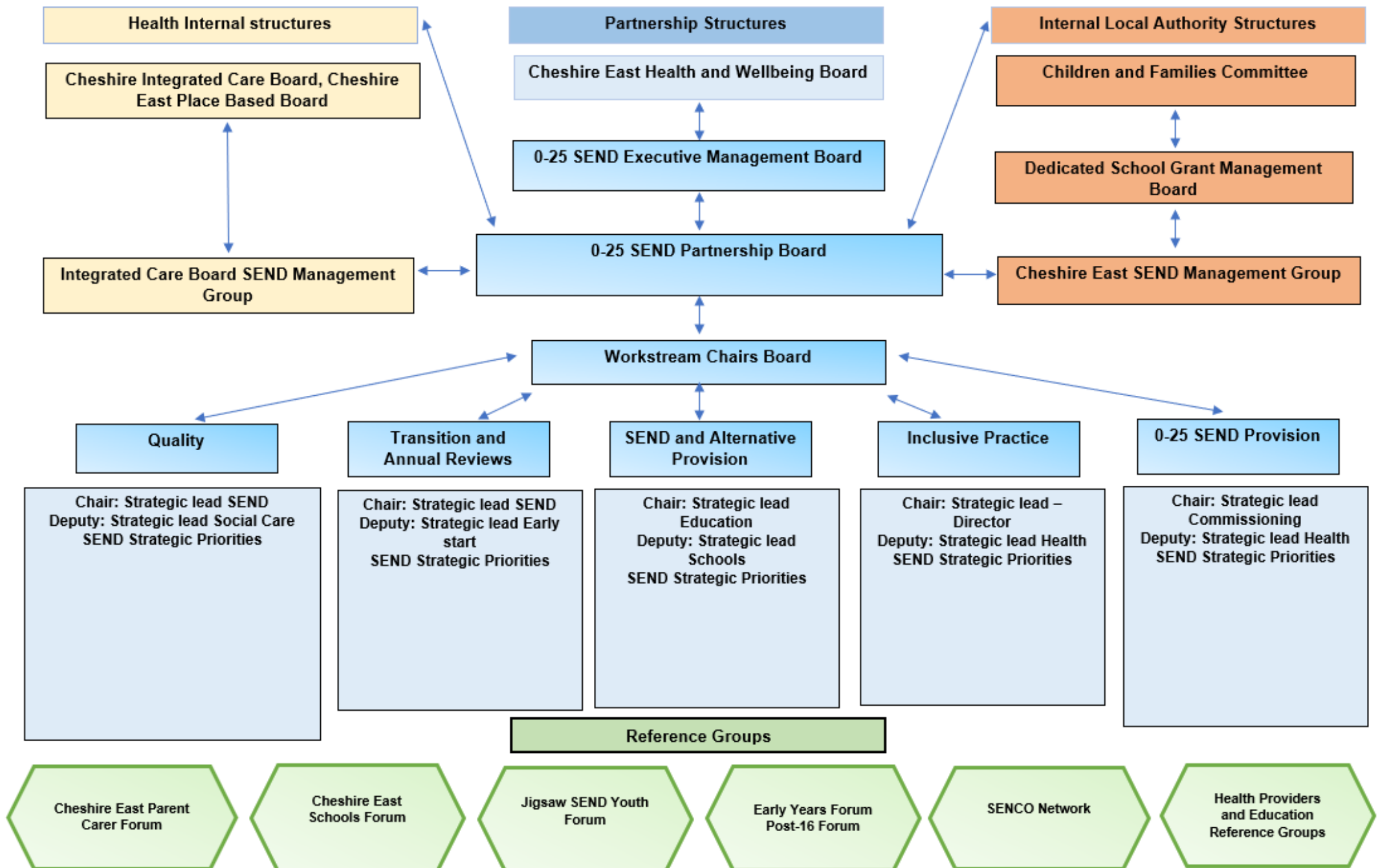
This is an ambitious programme which cannot be achieved without the full commitment from all the key partners at every level, from strategic directors to frontline practitioners within Social Care, Education, and Health across children's and adult services.

The whole SEND system needs to work together effectively in order to improve the support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) across Cheshire East. This work is being driven by the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board and executive board, since June 2023 the governance arrangements have been strengthened with the Executive Director of Childrens Services nominated as chair.

The board is responsible for developing and delivering our SEND Strategy, in order to maximise life opportunities and positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families. It includes representatives from the local authority, primary and secondary schools, further education providers, CCG and health provider services, early years, and the Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum. A governance structure for the SEND Partnership is shown on the following page.



SEND Governance Structure



13. Impact

13.1. How will we know we have succeeded?

We are committed to working in partnership with our key stakeholders in developing and shaping our services. Children, young people, parents, carers, early years' providers, schools and colleges, health and social care professionals are the people that are best placed to know what is needed and what works well. This strategy has been co-produced with these key stakeholders, and they will continue to be involved in helping us deliver our priorities and in evaluating what difference we are making.

Ultimately, we will evaluate our success against the difference we make to the lives of our children and young people. We will use our Quality Assurance Framework alongside the following sources to inform us on how well we are performing, what's working well, and where we need to take action to achieve change:

13.2. Listening to Feedback

We will monitor and assess quality throughout our local arrangements by seeking views from everyone involved at all points of contact.

The voice of children and young people will be paramount, and will be gathered in a number of formats, and at various points in time. We will also ensure that we capture the views of parents and carers and utilise opportunities to build positive relationships.

13.3. Assessing practice through audits

Multi-agency audits will be used to evaluate the quality of our work to support families across the partnership. Findings from these audits will be reported to the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board.

Audits will explore the quality of practice, concentrating on the multi-agency footprint across the EHC needs assessment process, and will assess practice against agreed practice standards

13.4 Analysis of data, outcomes and impact

A SEND scorecard is in place which is reported to the 0-25 SEND Partnership Board for scrutiny. This scorecard considers a variety of information, such as the number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans by primary need, age group and locality, the number of requests for EHC needs assessments, and the timeliness of completion, and the performance of various health services.

Each SEND workstream will be accountable for a section of the scorecard relevant to their deliverables. This will be scrutinised by the Partnership board.

13.4. Learn and implement improvements in practice

We will embed a culture and structure of listening to families and practitioners to ensure effective recording and monitoring of all feedback and queries. Clear and transparent structures will be in place

to evidence learning from feedback and where this has prompted change and further service developments. Mechanisms for gaining feedback on EHC needs assessments and Plans, and our Local Offer

(both our provision and the quality of support) will be further enhanced and embedded.

We will build-in multi-agency opportunities to reflect and learn and celebrate successes and share best practice

14. Action Plan

It is important that the delivery of the priority actions from the previous SEND Strategy, and the momentum that has been achieved, is not lost as we move to a refreshed SEND Strategy. A significant amount of improvement has been achieved over the last three years and as you would expect across SEND, many of the improvements require further ongoing attention to ensure they are fully embedded and monitored to ensure their positive impact is a reality for children, young people and their families.

Each workstream will have a detailed plan and scorecard to ensure that will have oversight and scrutiny through SEND partnership and executive boards.

An overarching improvement plan is also in place as a mechanism to ensure themes and areas of development from our quality assurance practise and self-evaluation are addressed.



1. Strengthening the quality assurance framework analysis to ensure evidence of continued improvement across the partnership including impact for children, young people and families

What we aim to achieve:

- **Ensure there is clear communication when sharing our refreshed strategy with ALL stakeholders following our involvement in the Delivering Better Value programme**
- **An effective quality assurance framework across education, health and care practice and services through implementation of robust monitoring and use of feedback from all stakeholders.**
- **A culture of co-production when planning support and services, which embraces best practice and person-centered work.**
- **A cycle of continuous professional development embedded across the SEND partnership.**
- **Improved communication and improved relationships between families and professionals.**
- **A fully effective Local offer that is relevant, up to date and provides information for all children, young people, families and partners.**
- **Provide clear information for families on all aspects of the SEND system and in particular the range of support and services available**
- **Systems to ensure oversight of the quality monitoring of education, health and care settings and services that ensures continuous improvement of services and proactive use of feedback from all stakeholders**

Impact Measures

- **Confidence survey for parents, children and young people, settings and workforce**
- **Number of complaints**
- **Number of mediations and appeals**
- **Increased take up in multi-agency training**
- **Increased number of compliments**
- **Working together/co-production meetings effectively take place via scorecard**
- **Increase number of 'hits' on local offer pages**
- **Quality assurance audits**

How this will be achieved:

- 1. Strengthen governance and embed the quality assurance framework**
- 2. Develop, provide oversight and monitor the partnership training programme to include workforce development, annual conference, mandatory training and accredited CPD**

- 3. Review and regularly update our local offer pages and align with the family hubs digital offer**
- 4. Create and publish an annual survey for parent/carers, children and young people, schools and settings and other key partners.**
- 5. Utilise feedback and analysis to support development across each workstream.**
- 6. Measure and track education, health and care outcomes through a holistic outcomes' framework**
- 7. Implement Parent / Carer access to Child's electronic case record (Liquid Logic)**

2. 0-25 SEND commissioned services and provision to meet the aspirations of children and young people

What we aim to achieve:

- Children and young people receive better outcomes through improved integrated service delivery
- Clear links are demonstrated between population needs and what is procured for children and young people with SEND based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA)
- Improved coordination of early years support and implementation of a new portage service
- Families have access to a range of support through Family Hubs across Cheshire East, including face-to-face, outreach and digital
- Children and young people access good quality local schools, settings and services, with appropriate support with travel arrangements
- Children, young people and their families have access to a range of services to support families including, equipment, home adaptations and consumables, short breaks, HAP and family information service.
- Ensure there is equity in access to provision and services for all children with SEND
- Advice and the right support are in place for children and young people to achieve successful outcomes including into adult life
- Joint commissioning arrangements enable partners to make best use of resources to improve outcomes for children and young people and form part of an ongoing review and improvement cycle
- Effective provision within adult services to meet the needs of 18 – 25-year-olds is available via local offer pages.
- Local arrangements are in place, including service level agreements
- Pathways exist to paid employment including apprenticeships, traineeships, and support internships

Impact Measures:

- Number of EHC plans ceased
- Number of supported internships
- Number of new specialist school placements
- Number of EOTAS/missing education
- Reductions in waiting lists for health services
- Learning disability annual health checks for young people aged 14+
- Number of children and young people on the dynamic support database
- Health outcome measures
- Education outcomes measures
- PFA outcomes

How will this be achieved:

- 1. Relaunch joint commissioning arrangements to enable partners to make best use of resources to improve outcomes for children and young people**
- 2. Redesign pathways and services in line with guidance – e.g. the national framework to deliver improved outcomes in all-age autism assessment pathways; mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance and providing guidance for schools**
- 3. Review therapy services (SALT, Occupational Therapy, and Physiotherapy) to ensure equitable provision for all children and young people with SEND, including those attending out of area schools**
- 4. Produce SEN Sufficiency statement and SEN capital programme**
- 5. Reviewing the process of ceasing of plans and what other support is available from adult social services**
- 6. Review and increase supported internships and alternative pathways**
- 7. Measure the impact of specialist provision through quality assurance arrangements**
- 8. Implement the detailed transformation plan for travel support**

3. Improve timeliness and transformation of Annual Reviews of EHC Plans, including transitions

What we aim to achieve:

- **Timely agreement of transition plans to enable multi agency engagement to support effective transition for children and young people**
- **Effective communication with children, young people, families and all partners regarding annual reviews and the transition processes**
- **Two-year training programme for all schools and settings, tailored to educational phases (best practice, what's on offer in the next phase of education and develop clear expectations for everyone)**
- **Transitions to adult health services and adult social care which are timely, appropriate and well planned**
- **Preparing for adulthood (PFA) offer is a golden thread throughout a child's/young person's journey and EHC plan**
- **Improved quality and timeliness of EHC plans**
- **Annual reviews will accurately reflect the children and young people's current needs and any changes in provision required to meet those current needs**

Impact Measures

- **Timeliness of annual reviews**
- **Multiagency involvement in annual reviews**
- **Transition data, change of placement data and outcomes of annual review data.**
- **Intended destination report (number of named places at nursery 1, nursery 2, reception etc)**
- **Number of needs assessments at transition point**
- **Number of change of placements at transition point**
- **Confidence survey to children and families**
- **Confidence survey to schools, settings and health and social care professionals**
- **Year 9 preparing for adulthood plans are in place for all children/young people**

How will this be achieved:

- 1. Review and refresh the process for transition with the aim to strengthen the system for all children and young people within a transition phase of education**
- 2. Review and update a coordinated partnership training programme**

- 3. Develop and co-produce guidance for parents, children/young people and schools and settings on what to expect and how to maximise effectiveness of annual reviews and the transition process**
- 4. Review of the annual review process and procedure using feedback to inform change**
- 5. Transition videos for all phases of education linking to the local offer**
- 6. Implement a consistent system for quality assurance of existing EHC Plans through the use of the quality assurance framework**

4. Strengthening early identification and intervention through inclusive practice

What we aim to achieve:

- **Strengthened SEN support plans, enhance support to schools and settings from across the partnership**
- **Effective multi agency identification of needs in early years ensures children have the right start and access to early support**
- **The multi-agency approach embeds the graduated approach at all levels and builds on best practice via training programme**
- **Intervention and support are in place through early help and preventative systems**
- **A clear integrated assessment process and pathway is in place for all children and young people with SEND to support effective, timely and consistent decision-making processes**
- **Statutory assessment timescales are met**
- **Children, parents and families have confidence in the graduated approach and SEN support plans**
- **Quality of advice and plans at each stage**
- **Effective use of Personal Budgets, oversight and agreement for joint individual packages to support needs of children and young people**

Impact Measures

- **Number decisions not to assess, where needs can be met at SEN support**
- **Number of change of placements as needs are being met at mainstream**
- **Improvement in satisfaction surveys**
- **Uptake in training sessions delivered**
- **Impact evidenced through workforce surveys**
- **Number of plans processed within timeframe**
- **Number of mediations**

How will this be achieved:

- 1. Relaunch, promote, embed and raise awareness of the toolkit with all schools and settings to ensure that there are robust processes for the graduated approach, to support children and young people and to allow them to stay in mainstream education as appropriate**
- 2. Increase understanding and application of the graduated approach (SEND toolkit) for all areas and for all staff across the partnership, which will contribute to the overall training plan**
- 3. Review and re-design the panel(s) decision-making, to streamline the process from early years to post-16**
- 4. Review and refine the statutory assessment process guidance and resources**

5. Alternative Provision

We want to achieve:

- **Quality needs led alternative provision commissioned by schools and local authority at the right time for children and young people.**
- **A consistency of review to ensure alternative provision is supporting children and young people's progress and attainment.**

Impact Measures

- **Children and young people with good attendance in their alternative provision placement**
- **Children and young people with improved attainment as a result of alternative provision intervention**
- **Reduction of permanent exclusion for children and young people receiving alternative education intervention**

How will this be achieved:

- 1. Develop and implement an Alternative Provision Strategy**
- 2. Provide clear policy and practise guidance for Personal Budgets.**
- 3. Development of a flexible purchasing system for alternative provision**
- 4. Development of a quality framework for commissioning alternative provision in Cheshire East and commissioned places outside the local authority, ensuring robust safeguarding arrangements are in place**
- 5. Develop one register of local authority commissioned alternative provision**
- 6. Develop an alternative provision handbook for use by local authority and schools**



Your thoughts matter

If you have any views on this document or how we can improve our services, please do contact us at SENDPartnerships@cheshireeast.gov.uk