

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cheshire East Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)  
Strategy 2021 – 2024

## VERSION CONTROL

Date	Version	Author	Description of Changes
13/09/2021	1.1	Gerard Buckley	Initial EIA
15/09/2021	1.2	Gerard Buckley	Data updates

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**Stage 1 Description:** Fact finding (about your policy / service /

<b>Department</b>	Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Team		<b>Lead officer responsible for assessment</b>		Dave Leadbetter Head of Children's Commissioning	
<b>Service</b>	Children's Services		<b>Other members of team undertaking assessment</b>		Laura Rogerson Dave Leadbetter Laura Hindhough Juan Turner	
<b>Date</b>	15 September 2021		<b>Version</b>		1.2	
<b>Type of document (mark as appropriate)</b>	<b>Strategy</b> ✓	<b>Plan</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Service</b>
<b>Is this a new/ existing/ revision of an existing document (please mark as appropriate)</b>	<b>New</b> ✓		<b>Existing</b>		<b>Revision</b>	
<b>Title and subject of the impact assessment (include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate and how it fits in with the wider aims of the organisation)</b>  <b>Please attach a copy of the strategy/ plan/ function/ policy/ procedure/ service</b>	<p>Cheshire East Cheshire East Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2021 – 2024 represent a significant step forward since the service was inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in 2018, and we are very proud to bring this strategy together. All our engagement to develop the Strategy and our delivery of support for SEND is premised on our TOGETHER principles of co-production.</p> <p>Our Vision</p> <p>"Together we will make Cheshire East a great place to be young". We believe that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people are best supported within their families and their communities.</li> <li>All children and young people should enjoy the best education which prepares them to thrive in adulthood.</li> <li>Cheshire East families and communities are strong and resilient, with the right help, from the right people, at the earliest opportunity.</li> </ul>					
<b>Who are the main stakeholders and have they been engaged with? (e.g. general public, employees,</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/Carers</li> <li>Service users</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commissioners</li> <li>Operational Staff</li> </ul>			

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<b>Councillors, partners, specific audiences, residents)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Councillors</li> <li>▪ Independent Sector Providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health colleagues</li> </ul>
<b>What consultation method(s) did you use?</b>	<p>The development of our SEND Strategy has been linked to the collaborative work to support the response to the SEND Inspection 2018. Further, we have been working extensively to develop this strategy through consultation events over recent years within the SEND Partnership, service users, and parent carers. An informal consultation was conducted during February and March 2019 in which we worked directly with parent carers and service users, individuals and groups of people who have life experiences daily, seeking their views for the aims and objectives for the strategy through face-to-face conversations; telephone calls; emails; meetings; workshops and questionnaires, in which the following was clearly emphasised, and which have informed and shaped the key priorities of this Strategy.</p> <p>Working in partnership with health, care and education settings and other services and organisations will ensure that children and young people with SEND achieve good outcomes and access provision and services that are of a high quality. Within this area of transformation, there is a focus on improving school effectiveness and sharing of best practice. This area of transformation will have the potential impact of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an improvement in the attainment and progress for children and young people on SEN Support and with a statutory plan</li> <li>▪ a decrease in the number of children and young people with SEND who are excluded from education settings</li> <li>▪ a decrease in the number of children who need to request an EHCP.</li> </ul>	

### Stage 2 Initial Screening

<b>Who is affected and what evidence have you considered to arrive at this analysis?</b> <b>(This may or may not include the stakeholders listed above)</b>	<p>All young people, their parents/carers and professionals involved are affected by the new draft.</p> <p>There are approximately <b>84,200</b> children and young people under 19 in Cheshire East, which is 22% of our population.</p> <p>There is a comprehensive <a href="#">Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)</a> 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 <b>8,252</b> 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 <b>one in ten</b>. This number is based on the prevalence of different needs within the national population and within research literature.</p>
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As at January 2021, **5,072** children and young people receive SEN Support in Cheshire East, and **3,145** 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. The SEN Team are working with schools and other settings to improve data on the number of pupils receiving SEN Support to ensure there is consistency and accuracy capturing the number of children and young people supported. As a result of this joint work, there is an expectation 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: this equates to just over 25% of pupils with SEND compared to 9.5% children and young people with no SEND in Cheshire East (25.5% of pupils receiving SEN Support and 25.8% pupils with an EHCP are eligible as in the School Census, January 2020).

The following table shows the increase in EHCPs:

Local Authority	No. of EHCP/ Statements	
	2010	2019
Cheshire East	1,520	2,087 (37% +)
Cheshire West	1,411	1,857 (31% +)
Warrington	1,015	1,566 (54% +)
North West	31,095	47,353 (52% +)

	England	228,221	353,995 (55% +)
	<p>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.</p> <p>As with many local authorities across the country, Cheshire East Council's high needs funding is projecting a £10m - £12m deficit over the coming three years and are currently working with the Department for Education on a Recovery Plan.</p> <p>Three potential areas where unforeseen potential disproportionate effects on people from protected characteristics could be found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential is that some groups of people with more mild or moderate conditions may be a risk of receiving less support as the need to prioritise becomes more prevalent due to budget pressures, the impact of the pandemic and increasing expectations.</li> <li>• One of the Ofsted recommendations was the need to focus more on assessing the needs of people with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder). With finite resources, implications for other user groups need to be considered as resources are re-aligned for instance, children and young people with sensory conditions.</li> <li>• The impact of the pandemic has adversely affected the health of the market resulting in less choices when commissioning out services for people with SEND. In some cases there is an increased risk that out-of-borough places become unavoidable.</li> </ul> <p>Also families from disadvantaged socio-economic groups may not have the resources to fund the relevant IT kit and broadband costs. This could be a disadvantage re receiving support, advice and guidance during lockdown periods where IT communication has been the norm. There is some evidence that even post-pandemic, there will be a much greater emphasis on virtual communication and so these people maybe be negatively affected.</p>		

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<p><b>Who is intended to benefit and how?</b></p>	<p>The specific cohorts of children and young people who will be impacted by this strategy are as follows; collectively referred to as vulnerable learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children and young people who have been identified as having a Special Educational Need and/or a Disability</li> <li>▪ Children in Need</li> <li>▪ Children and young people who are on a Child Protection Plan</li> <li>▪ Children and young people who are cared for by the local authority</li> <li>▪ Children and young people who are Black, Asian or from an ethnic minority in our borough who may be disadvantaged by the curriculum and unconscious bias in education putting them at additional risk of exclusion, serious youth violence and future opportunity for education, training and employment</li> <li>▪ Children with hidden disabilities who may not fit easily into SEND or diagnostic categories, but who are disadvantaged by not having their needs understood, e.g., Neurodiversity needs</li> <li>▪ Children and young people who have emerged as vulnerable learners following the Coronavirus pandemic.</li> </ul> <p>This strategy will help us to continue the journey of ensuring inclusion for all, build on the good work already put in place, help us to remain vigilant for new needs and ensure we are investing resources into the right places. To enable us to do this, we have established design principles that we will use to guide our strategic approach and operation of the vision for our children and young people in Cheshire East.</p> <p>The strategy has been written with reference to required legislation such as The Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2014 and the Care Act 2014. Children and young people with SEN will be impacted by the changes prompted by the new strategy in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Their parents and carers will have more awareness of the SEN provision and support that is available. This will ensure that appropriate levels of provision are delivered to meet required needs</li> <li>▪ Services across Education, Health and Social care will improve their methods and system to improve early identification to improve the pace of when appropriate provision is triggered and delivered</li> <li>▪ An improved experience as they access services across Education, Health and Social Care. This will be the result of the workforce receiving SEND related training and applying anti-racist/ oppressive methods to combat bias/ prejudice. This will help to reduce any barriers to accessing key services and support</li> <li>▪ There will be clearer guidance about what next steps and services can help them transition into preparing for adulthood including being independent, self-care and enhancing their social skills.</li> </ul>
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<b>Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups?</b>			No. Any individual, their families and carers as the provision is aimed to improve lives, providing support and direct service to children and young people as vulnerable learners, ensuring become a valued member of their community.					
<b>Does it include making decisions based on individual characteristics, needs or circumstances?</b>			Only to the extent of direct provision of support and services to Cheshire East children and young people who have life experiences of SEND as vulnerable learners.					
<b>Are relations between different groups or communities likely to be affected? (eg will it favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others?)</b>			No - all decision and solutions will be based on a fully personalised approach in accordance with policy and procedures.					
<b>Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality? Is there a history of unequal outcomes (do you have enough evidence to prove otherwise)?</b>			Only to the extent of address current inequalities experienced by children and young people with life experiences of SEND as vulnerable learners, their friends, families, parents / carers.					
<b>Is there an actual or potential negative impact on these specific characteristics? (Please highlight)</b>								
Age	Y	N	Marriage & civil partnership	Y	N	Religion & belief	Y	N
Disability	Y	N	Pregnancy & maternity	Y	N	Sex	Y	N
Gender reassignment	Y	N	Race	Y	N	Sexual orientation	Y	N
<b>What evidence do you have to support your findings? (quantitative and qualitative) Please provide additional information that you wish to include as appendices to this document, i.e., graphs, tables, charts</b>							<b>Consultation/ involvement carried out</b>	
							Yes	No
Age			Early identification and support implemented across all ages giving early access to support and intervention. Identification of special educational needs and disabilities across				✓	

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	<p>the 0 to 25 age range will differ according to age and type of need. Improved transition for young people and support for them in preparing for adulthood. The proposals to provide more educational psychology and therapy support in the pre-statutory phase before a request for an EHCP has been made should benefit all age groups to reduce the level of need escalating by delivering more timely support.</p> <p>Increase in post – 16 and post – 19 pathways by creating around 100 additional places and programmes of support over the next two years. We will also work with post-16 providers and special schools to create additional post -16 capacity. Special educational needs may begin to be identified when a child moves into an Early Years setting, such as a nursery or childminder. Many needs are identified once a child has moved to primary school or secondary school.</p> <p>Create more specialist post-16 employment focussed pathways through increasing our adult learning and employment provision and expanding our Supported Internship programme. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years specifically requires the application of a graduated approach to support children and young people with SEND prior to any statutory assessment and planning.</p>		
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Central to the strategy is ensuring that pupils can access and be fully included in school and settings of their choice. Our role is to maintain a strategic overview of admissions, inclusion, special education needs and the educational progress of all children and young people especially the most vulnerable learners, in whatever state-funded school or setting they attend. As part of the council's SEND Strategy and the wider development in creating an inclusive environment better able to meet the needs of vulnerable children is the improvement of the infrastructure when expanding or creating new additional resource provision for SEN pupils.</p>	✓	
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<p>Gender identity and sexual orientation issues may be masked by behavioural and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) difficulties making early intervention and support more difficult to deliver effectively. Gender identity issues may be masked by behavioural and EWMH difficulties making early intervention and support more difficult to deliver effectively.</p>		✓

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Marriage & civil partnership	No adverse impact has been identified.				✓
Pregnancy & maternity	No adverse impact has been identified.				✓
Race	While there remains a risk that the response to the consultation may be low from our BME community, it is acknowledged that we need to do further work to understand the potential impacts that these proposals will have. It is essential to find more robust ways of measuring and validating data.				✓
Religion & belief	The intention of the strategy is to ensure social inclusion of all children, young people, families and parent carers within life experiences and efforts will be made to make links with community leaders to publicise knowledge of support available. A positive impact of the strategy will be to encourage religious groups and church leaders to make their services easier to understand our vulnerable learners.			✓	
Sex	The gender gap requires a strategic plan to ensure continued equality for our vulnerable learners. In 2020/21 in Cheshire East, the total percentage of pupils, as per the school population data shows that of the 4,834 children and young people who have SEN support are 63.4% male [3,066], and 36.6% female [1,768]. For the 2,061 who have a EHC plan the gender split is 72.4% male [1,492] and 27.6% female [569]. With this gender split of children with SEND any service developments or changes that impact across the service will impact more males than females.			✓	
Sexual orientation	The strategy should make a positive impact as it aims to raise awareness of our vulnerable learners, and to promote social inclusion. Information on the sexual orientation of adults living in Cheshire East is not currently available.				✓
Proceed to full impact assessment? (Please tick)	Yes	No	✓	Date: 14 September 2021	

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# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>Lead officer sign off</b>	Dave Leadbetter	<b>Date:</b> 14 September 2021	<i>D. Leadbetter</i>
<b>Head of Service sign off</b>	Laura Rogerson	<b>Date:</b> 14 September 2021	<i>L. Rogerson</i>

**If yes, please proceed to Stage 3. If no, please publish the initial screening as part of the suite of documents relating to this issue**

**Please publish this completed EIA form on the relevant section of the Cheshire East website**

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