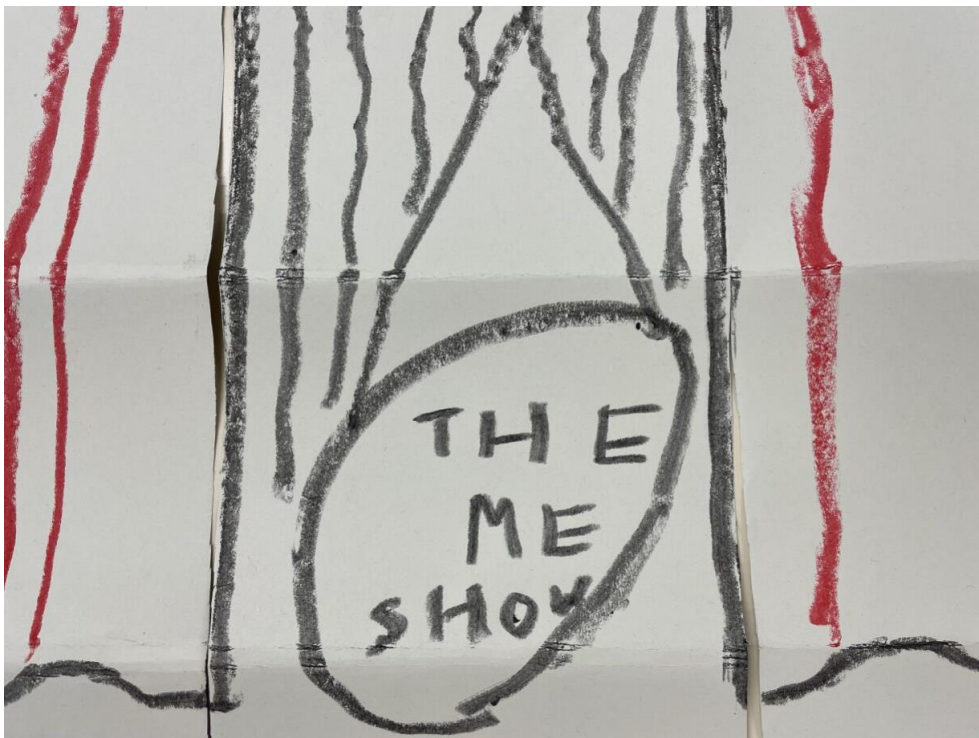




City of London Local Area Partnership

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2029

January 2025



Artwork by a City of London young person

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1. Introduction

**“For me, it is important to be happy and I am happy when I can be in nature and also when I am doing sports outside... I feel happy when I am having a good day...”
City of London young person**

This is the City of London Local Area Partnership Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2029. The Local Area Partnership brings together Education, Health and Social Care colleagues, parent carers and children and young people around SEND and alternative provision arrangements. Our vision for all children and young people, including those with SEND, is that¹:

‘The City of London is a place where children and young people feel safe, have good mental health and wellbeing, fulfil their potential and are ready for adulthood whilst growing up with a sense of belonging.’

We recognise that children and young people with SEND are all unique and have their own individual personalities, likes, dislikes and ambitions. Of the 8,600 residents living in the City of London, 1,975 are children and young people aged 0-25.²

This strategy relates to children and young people with SEND aged 0-25-years-old and their families who live in the City of London. In November 2024, there were 43 City of London-resident children and young people with special educational needs (SEN) receiving SEN Support in their school (either in the City of London or another area) and 26 children and young people with an active Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan).³

Children and young people with SEND have their own experiences, some positive and fulfilling, of moving towards our shared vision. But we know that some children and young people with SEND can face additional barriers. This strategy aims to address some of those barriers by responding to what children and young people with SEND, parent carers and professionals have told us.

This strategy is based on shared principles that we, the Local Area Partnership, have developed and agreed. The principles set out how we will work together to deliver the strategy. They are:

- **high ambition** - support and helpfully challenge each other to achieve the best possible outcomes for all children and young people accessing alternative provision and/or with SEND and their families
- **trust and honesty** - deepen trust between all partners, including families, by being open and honest about our priorities, challenges and what we can achieve
- **mutual respect and acceptance** - value each other’s experiences and expertise, including those of families
- **partnership and transparency** - create positive, transparent partnerships that keep children and young people with SEND and/or accessing alternative provision and their families at the centre of all we do

- **co-design and engagement** - co-design and engage with children and young people with SEND and their families from the start and provide feedback along the way
- **inclusive communities** - support communities that are inclusive of all

The Local Area Partnership has developed this strategy with parent carers and children and young people with SEND. Five priorities have been agreed. The order doesn't relate to importance, they all contribute to our shared vision for children and young people with SEND and/or accessing alternative provision. A commitment to work with families to explore how they can access advice and support as close to home as possible underpins the priorities.

The five priorities are:

1. children and young people with SEND and their families get the right help, at the right time
2. children and young people with SEND and parent carers are supported during transitions, including preparation for adulthood
3. children and young people with SEND and their families are supported and enabled by a skilled, valued workforce
4. children and young people with SEND and their families feel recognised, valued and part of their local community
5. children and young people experience high quality, appropriate alternative provision when needed

An Action Plan will sit underneath this strategy and identify leads for each of the actions. It will keep us on track but also be responsive to change if needed.

We know there can be lots of acronyms and complicated words used around SEND and alternative provision. A glossary at the end of this document provides explanations for some of the words used in this strategy.

A big thank you to all the children, young people and parent carers, particularly members of the Reference Group, who shared their experiences and ideas to help develop this strategy.

**“[Children and young people] want to have fun and have a life,
and not be overwhelmed by all the serious things.”**
Parent carer



Artwork by a City of London young person

2. Strategic context

This strategy sits within the context of national and regional policy, as well as a range of City of London Corporation (City Corporation) and partners' strategies and responsibilities.

2.1 National

The main SEND legislation is found in⁴:

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (First-tier Tribunal Recommendations Power) Regulations 2017

This legislation sits within the context of the Equality Act 2010.⁵

The SEND Code of Practice⁶ provides more guidance on the SEND system and detail on the legal framework however the Code itself is not law.

In 2023, the Government published the SEND and alternative provision improvement plan⁷ which set out 'what we'll [Government] do to make sure more children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision get the support they need.' As part of this, the Government asked the Law Commission to review legislation for disabled children.⁸

The Department for Education statutory guidance⁹ defines alternative provision as:

'Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.'

The Government explained that it had considered alternative provision alongside SEND as '82% of children and young people in state-place funded alternative provision have identified special educational needs (SEN), and it is increasingly being used to supplement local SEND systems.'

In 2023, the Government also published its Children's Social Care Implementation Strategy¹⁰ which aims to ensure 'every child and family who need it will have access to high-quality help' and a Disability Action Plan which aims to 'improve disabled people's lives'.¹¹

2.2 Regional

The City Corporation is represented on the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance which co-ordinates activity around London-wide priorities set through the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS). SEND is one of the

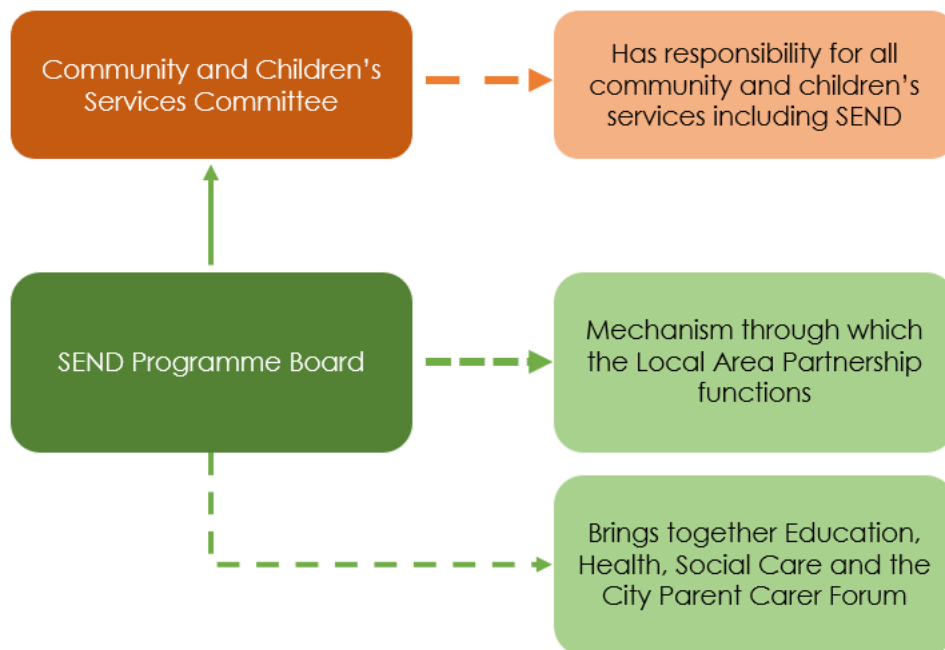
areas prioritised by this group. NHS North East London (NEL), the local NHS covering North East London, contributes to the agreed ALDCS work plan.

The City Corporation’s Head of Children’s Social Care and Early Help is the Designated Social Care Officer (DCSO) for SEND in the City of London and sits on a regional DSCO network. The network is a space for sharing insight, learning and good practice to support children and young people with SEND.

2.3 Local

The Local Area Partnership is driven by the SEND Programme Board which is jointly chaired by the Strategic Education and Skills Director and Assistant Director People both from the City Corporation, along with the Strategic Lead for Children and Young People at NHS NEL. Board members include parent carers and representatives from Health, Education, early years settings, schools, safeguarding, information, advice and support services, and local authority partners to drive ambition and delivery.

The City Corporation operates a committee system. The Community and Children’s Services Committee has responsibility for SEND. There is strong political commitment to supporting children and young people with SEND and their families. There is a City Corporation Carers and SEND Member Champion who advocates for SEND issues.



Health services are commissioned by the City and Hackney Place based Partnership, part of North East London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB). The Children, Young People, Maternity and Families (CYPMF) integrated workstream is part of the ICB infrastructure and enables integrated planning and commissioning arrangements across the ICB, the City of London and Hackney. There are clear

governance arrangements between the CYPMF workstream and the City of London SEND Programme Board. A governance diagram is in Appendix A.

There is also a NEL ICB SEND programme of work that supports local areas to share best practice and supports the ICB's approach to assurance and allocation of resources to meet needs.

This strategy also aligns with the wider City Corporation Corporate Plan 2024-2029.¹² The Plan's objectives include 'providing excellent services' and 'diverse engaged communities'. Themes of inclusion and access to open public spaces and creating a more inclusive City for everyone is included in the draft City Corporation's City Plan 2040.¹³ The strategy also supports the City Corporation's equality objectives.¹⁴

This strategy also aligns with the aims of the City Corporation's Department of Community and Children's Services Business Plan¹⁵:

- **safe:** people of all ages and all backgrounds live in safe communities; our homes are safe and well maintained and our estates are protected from harm
- **potential:** people of all ages and all backgrounds are prepared to flourish in a rapidly changing world through exceptional education, cultural and creative learning and skills which link to the world of work
- **independence, involvement and choice:** people of all ages and all backgrounds can live independently, play a role in their communities and exercise choice over their services
- **health and wellbeing:** people of all ages enjoy good mental and physical wellbeing
- **community:** people of all ages and all backgrounds feel part of, engaged with and able to shape their community

This strategy sits alongside other City Corporation strategies including the Early Help Strategy, Carers Strategy (focused on unpaid adult carers of adults which includes parent carers of children and young people with SEND within that context), the Education Strategy and the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

In 2018, the City Corporation joined the Hackney Autism Alliance Board - which was set up by Hackney and the City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (which existed at the time as part of local health arrangements) – creating the City and Hackney Autism Alliance Board. The City and Hackney All Age Autism Strategy 2020-2025 also provides context for this strategy. There is also the City and Hackney Strategy for Learning Disabled People.

The City Corporation has an Alternative Provision Statement based on making local, joint decisions about the use of alternative provision resources. Commissioning arrangements for alternative provision are usually bespoke given low numbers of need in the City of London. This means placements can be designed to meet the individual needs of the child or young person and are linked to their individual plan. The City Corporation has developed a quality assurance framework for alternative provision to strengthen existing bespoke spot purchased arrangements



Artwork by a City of London young person

3. Background

3.1 SEND children, young people and their families

According to the Family Resource Survey (2021 to 2022) there are 16 million disabled people in the UK and 11% of children are disabled.¹⁶ Each of these children are unique with different needs, interests and aspirations.

The Census 2021¹⁷ found that in England, 18.7% of females and 16.5% of males were disabled in 2021. The percentage of disabled females increased notably between the ages of 10 to 14 years and 15 to 19 years between 2011 and 2021, rising from 6.8% to 12.2% in England.

National SEN statistics for the academic year 2023/24¹⁸ state that there were:

- 4.8% of pupils with an EHC Plan. Up from 4.3% in 2023
- 13.6% of pupils with SEN Support. Up from 13% in 2023.
- the most common type of need for those with an EHC Plan is autistic spectrum disorder and for those with SEN Support it is speech, language and communication needs

These statistics reflect the national trend that the number of EHC Plans has increased each year since their introduction in 2014.¹⁹

National tribunal statistics for July to September 2023²⁰ show that in the academic year 2022/23, 14,000 SEN appeals were recorded, an increase of 24% when compared to 2021/22. Of the 12,000 outcomes recorded, 68% (8,000) of cases were decided by tribunal. Of the cases decided, 98% (7,800) were in favour of the person who made the appeal.

Families will have their own experiences of the SEND and alternative provision system. For some, need is identified early and the right support is put in place. However, research by the Disabled Children's Partnership²¹ highlights the experiences of parent carers who describe having to constantly fight battles to access support they are entitled to. For those parent carers, this can have an impact including on emotional wellbeing; 3 in 4 parent carers have seen their emotional or mental health deteriorate because of not getting the right support for themselves.

There are often different equalities issues which impact and cut across people's lives, e.g. race and disability, and not all disabled people will have the same experiences²²; for example disabled people who belong to more than one marginalised group often report not having access to services that meet their needs.²³ Other national research has found that children of ethnic minority groups are over-represented for some types of SEN and under-represented for other types compared to White British pupils.²⁴

3.2 SEND children and young people in the City of London

Being a parent carer means that we are always on the lookout for inclusive events and things to do with our child.

What's most important to me right now is that the potential that exists in our child is fulfilled.

My hope for the future is that our child is happy and is safe living as independently as possible when we are no longer here.

City of London parent carer

The City of London is home to 8,600 residents of which the majority are working age but also includes 1,975 children and young people aged 0 to 25 (713 aged 0-18) (Census 2021).

In November 2024, 43 City of London children and young people had SEN Support in their school and there were 26 active EHC Plans.²⁵ This number has increased from 14 in 2019 (mirroring national trend) and needs are becoming more complex. Of those 26 with an EHC Plan:

- 72% of the caseload had autism spectrum disorder as their main presenting need
- 85% were male
- 53% were from global majority communities
- 48% had short breaks provision

In November 2024, 38% of children and young people with an EHC Plan were under 12 years of age, the rest were between 12 and 25.

There are no City of London children or young people on the Dynamic Support Register which identifies children, young people and adults (with consent) with autism and/or learning disabilities and 'challenging behaviour' who are at risk of admission to mental health inpatient services without access to timely dynamic support.

The Aldgate School is the one maintained primary school in the City of London. There are also four independent schools and one independent college. There are no special schools, alternative provision or maintained secondary schools. Therefore, most children and young people are educated outside of the City of London across 70 schools as of September 2024.

In November 2024, there was one child in alternative provision outside of the City of London boundaries.

3.3 Local area services and support

Support and services for children and young people with SEND are provided by the Local Area Partnership depending on the individual child's needs. There is an emphasis on early identification of need and the City of London SEND Ranges is a tool that helps with this.

Within the City Corporation, SEND, Early Help, Early Years and Education, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and the Virtual School work together to identify and respond to need in line with statutory and legislative duties.

The first Local Area for SEND Inspection was in 2018. The implementation of recommendations from this inspection supported children in the City of London to get a better start in life and delivered improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The multi-agency SEND and Alternative Provision Panel reviews cases and makes decisions, for example whether to carry out an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment and then issue an EHCP. It also considers the provision that should be made as part of an EHCP and continues to monitor that provision when put in place. This contributes to ensuring that individual needs are identified and responded to appropriately.

A flexible approach to short breaks provides access to neighbouring borough provision or parents can be supported to identify activities tailored to the needs of their child and use direct payments to access social activities.

The Local Offer²⁶ provides information about services and activities for parents, children and young people with SEND, and practitioners supporting them - including information on the City Parent Carer Forum, health services, short breaks, SEND, EHC Plans, personal budgets and Preparing for Adulthood.

Free, impartial information, advice and support to parents and young people with SEND is provided by the Tower Hamlets and City of London SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).²⁷

The City of London Virtual School supports children and young people who are in the care of the City Corporation or on Child in Need or Child Protection Plans, including those with SEND. The Virtual School can also provide support to kinship carers and families of children who have been adopted or placed on special guardianship orders and have SEND. Virtual School staff, as corporate parents, work closely with the City Corporation SEND team to ensure children in care and care experienced young people with SEND get the support they need.

The Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS) Programme aims to improve mental health and wellbeing support for children and young people in schools, colleges, specialist and alternative provision education settings in City and Hackney. A Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service worker is based in the Aldgate School every two weeks.

The City and Hackney Speech and Language Therapy service provides support to the City of London children and young people across the age ranges. A Speech and Language Therapist is based in the Aldgate School every week and Early Years services are also delivered in the City of London with families.

The City Corporation commissions Family Lives to deliver emotional wellbeing and mental health support for families with children under five who access the City of London's Children's Centre. Prospects is commissioned to provide information, advice and guidance to City of London young people, including those with SEND, aged between 13-19 years or 25 years with SEND. Issues covered can include support with transitioning to adulthood and support for college and training applications.

The City Corporation also commissions school transport and travel training services, as well as universal provision such as youth and play services which have a requirement to be inclusive and deliver for children and young people with SEND.

The development of 'family hubs' was a national Government initiative introduced in 2022. In 2023, the City Corporation launched an independent review of its children's centre services based at the Aldgate School to assess how well services met the needs of local families and evaluate whether the existing model supported the establishment of a family hub model in the City of London. In March 2024, the City Corporation's Community and Children's Services Committee decided to transition the children's centre services back in-house to the City Corporation as stage one of developing a family hub.

The goal of the family hub model is to provide a comprehensive range of family support services for children, young people and families aged 0-19 (25 with SEND) addressing social care, education, mental health and physical health needs.

In the City of London, the development of the family hub model will be led by the City Corporation's Education and Early Years team and does not sit within this strategy. However, the actions in this strategy around co-producing family services will feed into the development of the family hub model.

The position and size of the City of London impacts on the scale and provision of services within the Square Mile and means families may have to access some support and provision in different boroughs, for example the Hackney Ark which is the City and Hackney commissioned child development centre located in the neighbouring London Borough of Hackney.

3.4 Local Area Partnership strengths

This section provides a snapshot of the Local Area Partnership's strengths at the time of writing in 2024. We aim to sustain and build on these during the lifetime of this strategy. Our strengths include:

- a flexible and agile approach to responding to need
- good professional understanding of SEND needs across Education, Health and Social Care

- dedicated and experienced staff working with families; with low staff turnover which supports sustained relationships with children and families
- accurate and timely assessment of children and young people's needs; 100% of EHC Plans delivered within the 20-week statutory timescale
- 100% of children and young people were actively involved in their annual reviews in 2023
- children and young people achieve good educational and progression outcomes; 100% of children in City of London early years settings receiving SEN Support achieved the overall good level of development in 2023 and some young people with SEND are going to university
- bespoke services to meet children and young people's needs based on an outcomes and person-centred approach to commissioning services
- strong relationships and regular engagement with parent carers who tell us they feel supported, and the continued development of the City Parent Carer Forum
- the City Corporation's Department of Community and Children's Services supports and promotes an anti-racist approach to practice and service development

3.5 Local Area Partnership challenges

This section provides a snapshot of the Local Area Partnership's challenges at the time of writing in 2024. This strategy aims to tackle these challenges during the lifetime of this strategy. Challenges include:

- the City of London's unique size and location can pose a challenge in providing some support and services physically in the Square Mile, and in having access to provision in neighbouring boroughs outside of NEL integrated care system. Parent carers raised challenges in accessing health services in particular
- increasing inclusion within universal provision for children and young people with SEND and families such as youth and play services
- having accurate, timely data on children with SEN Support who attend education settings outside of the City of London
- gathering and disaggregating City of London specific health data
- increasing the reach and diversity of children, young people and families engaged with as part of co-designing services and support

4. Progress during the 2020-24 SEND Strategy

The Local Area Partnership's key achievements during the last SEND Strategy 2020-2024 include:

- improved identification and assessment of children and young people's needs through initiatives such as delivering SEND support and training for early years providers, implementing the City of London SEND Ranges and developing Verbo - a virtual speech and language toolkit for schools – which has been rolled out at the Aldgate School
- introduced multi-agency referral sessions - which bring professionals together to consider children and young people with SEND's needs - resulting in a joint approach to agreeing support such as the allocation of a keyworker

- amplified the voice of children and young people during assessments for example by using tools such as images and signing when reviewing short breaks
- strengthened support during school transitions for example by offering an Educational Psychologist visit for children and young people with an EHCP in their new school within the first term and support in Year 9 by Prospects
- retained a focus on individual children achieving their potential, for example considering progress and outcomes at annual review meetings
- strengthened, flexible approach to short breaks so families can access provision in neighbouring boroughs or parent carers are helped to find activities their child wants to take part in and use direct payments to fund them
- invested in the development of the City Parent Carer Forum which now has a steering group, 55 members and a widened remit to encourage parent carers of children and young people with SEN Support to engage
- the City Parent Carer Forum influenced planning officers to create an inclusive play area at the St Paul's Gyrotory development in the City of London
- the City Parent Carer Forum influenced extended opening hours at the City of London's libraries to better meet their needs
- development of the WAMHS (wellbeing and mental health in schools) approach in the Aldgate school, leading to excellent collaboration with health partners and integration of well-being in the curriculum and daily practice
- development of local Supported Internships as an additional option for young people with an EHCP

Being a parent carer means that our time is always stretched... The demands of being a parent carer whilst also maintaining a career in the City are huge. We choose to live in the City so that, even whilst at my workplace, I am always close to our children and can easily attend the numerous appointments and meetings that being a parent carer involves. Thankfully, I have an employer who understands my need for flexibility... Time not at work is never “time off” and that even casual experiences that other families take for granted – such as watching the Euros final on TV together – are fraught and stressful. It’s exhausting and frequently isolating. Ultimately though, no matter how many things there are to juggle, having children means there is, as a wise friend once told us, more love in your life.

What’s most important to me (child) right now is when it comes to school it’s being somewhere I feel safe and understood and happy. When it comes to what I love it is my family and Taylor [Swift].

My (child) hope for the future is that I want to go back to school soon and see my friends. I also want to go to the Olympics. And to see Taylor. And Oasis.

City of London family



Artwork by a City of London young person

5. Developing this strategy

Being a parent carer means that I have to juggle between work and supporting my family. Managing time productively and efficiently can be a challenge.

What's most important to me right now is ensuring my children get the support they need to flourish and to help them manage the unknown and their anxieties and friendships.

My hope for the future is that I would like my children to be independent and lead fulfilling lives of purpose, and to use their curiosity to spur their learning and careers, and make friendships on their journey.

City of London parent carer

Central to the development of this strategy were the experiences and ideas of parent carers, children and young people with SEND and professionals from across Education, Health and Social Care. These were captured through various engagement activities including:

- two sessions attended by 30 professionals from across Education, Health and Social Care, joined by two parent carers
- one session with the City Parent Carer Forum where three parent carers and the Forum lead shared their experiences and what they want to see in the City of London
- one session with the Islington Parent Carer Forum, as some City of London parent carers attend there, where four parent carers shared their experiences
- one creative arts session with six children and young people with SEND to find out what is important to them in their lives and in the City of London
- one session with the City of London Youth Forum speaking to four young people (including one with SEND) to discuss what they think about inclusion in the City of London
- one young person with SEND shared their thoughts individually in writing
- one visit to a City of London library to join parent carers and their children at an early years rhyme time session and hear their thoughts on inclusion

Insight from engagement with parent carers and young people with SEND as part of Public Health's Hackney and City Needs Assessment for children and young people with SEND has also informed the development of this strategy.

A public consultation on the draft strategy and easy read version took place between July and September. Information was shared online and hard copies were available in City of London libraries. There were 13 responses to the consultation; including from professionals, parent carers and one person with an EHC Plan. Overall,

feedback on the draft principles and priorities was positive and no significant changes were needed in response. Where permission was given, some responses have been shared as quotes in this strategy.

Five parent carers were members of a parent carer Reference Group which formed part of governance for the strategy development and sign-off.

6. Priorities

The strategy has five priorities. The order does not relate to importance; they all contribute to our vision for children and young people with SEND:

1. children and young people with SEND and their families get the right help, at the right time
2. children and young people with SEND and parent carers are supported during key transition points, including preparation for adulthood
3. children and young people with SEND and their families are supported and enabled by a skilled, valued workforce
4. children and young people with SEND and their families feel recognised, valued and part of their local community
5. children and young people experience high quality, appropriate alternative provision when needed

6.1 Priority 1: children and young people with SEND and their families get the right help, at the right time

By 2029, I hope children and young people with SEND in the City of London “are given support promptly and the parents who advocate for them feel supported and find it easier to navigate the system”
Parent carer

We know how important it is for children, young people and their families across the full spectrum of need, to get the right help when they need it. Some parent carers told us about their positive experiences of this and reflected on how getting the right support for their child not only benefits their child, but also the parent carer. However other parent carers shared how they have struggled to navigate the system and know what support is available to them.

We also heard from parent carers about the importance of having support and services in the City of London or local area. Professionals also reflected on how families may have to travel outside of the City of London to get support or access services, including those that help with emotional wellbeing. The Local Area Partnership is committed to working with families to explore how they can access advice and support as close to home as possible. This commitment underpins the actions below.

We want to build on the successful engagement work we have already done and continue to work with children, young people and their families to achieve this. This co-design approach links with priority 4.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, the Local Area Partnership will:

- co-design inclusive services with children and young people with SEND and their families
- continue to identify children and young people's needs early and provide the right support to meet those needs
- be clear on pathways to support and help families navigate the system
- strengthen advocacy and support for families to have their voices heard
- strengthen support for parent carers' emotional wellbeing

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- co-designing our approach to supporting families - including looking at how therapies and other services could be delivered in the City of London, or as close as possible, and continuing to identify needs through Early Help services. This will also feed into the development of a family hub model in the City of London
- continuing to identify children and young people's needs early and providing the right support ensuring equity across different communities
- continuing to focus resource to minimise waiting times for services and to provide information and advice to support families while waiting (noting that families may often be accessing other services and receiving support)
- continuing to review the support available for children, young people and families following assessment, whether or not a diagnosis is made
- strengthening the information, advice and support offer for families – including reviewing the Local Offer in partnership with the City Parent Carer Forum
- working with parent carers to review and develop support for their emotional wellbeing - such as options around peer support, the CPCF and continuing to review and develop the short breaks offer

Key measures of success are:

- the support offer for families is co-designed with children, young people and their families, including those with SEND
- children and young people with SEND, including those from global majority communities, have their needs identified and met at the earliest opportunity
- families have access to information and support while waiting for assessment
- parent carers report that there is a good information, advice and support offer in the City of London Corporation
- the Local Offer website hits increase following the review
- the emotional wellbeing offer for parent carers is reviewed and co-designed with them

6.2 Priority 2: children and young people with SEND and parent carers are supported during transitions, including preparation for adulthood

By 2029, I hope children and young people with SEND in the City of London “will be achieving well and have a clear pathway to a successful adult life.”
Professional working with children and young people with SEND

Professionals recognised the importance of young people with SEND being able to make choices about their own lives and getting support during key times of change. Parent carers told us that these transition points can start from the early years, e.g. moving through the educational Key Stages, and can also happen unexpectedly or between these defined points, e.g. if a diagnosis is received. Parent carers also reflected on their own experiences of their child growing up. For some parent carers, this can be a smooth transition, however for others, periods of change can be difficult, particularly in terms of emotional wellbeing. Transition to and from alternative provision is included in Priority 2.

We want to help young people have options so they can make decisions and live the life they choose. This includes continuing to support routes into further and higher education, apprenticeships, supported internships, training and employment for young people and empowering them to have the skills they want and need. We also know that by co-designing support with parent carers, we can better understand and meet their needs during transition points. Again, this co-design aspect links with priority 4.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, the Local Area Partnership will:

- empower young people with SEND to live the life they choose
- strengthen information and support available to families during transitions from early years to adulthood
- support young people with SEND to be aware of and make choices around further and higher education, apprenticeships, supported internships, training and employment opportunities
- strengthen the package of support for parent carers around key transition points

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- reviewing the City Corporation’s Adult Social Care Early Intervention and Prevention offer and how it could offer short-term support young people with SEND to learn life skills during their transition to adulthood and what the access pathways would be
- reviewing and strengthening support and information for families during times of transition, including between schools and in-year transitions
- working in partnership to actively promote and deliver supported internship and apprentice opportunities with young people with SEND and support them through the application process
- co-designing the support offer for parent carers to better reflect and meet parent carers’ needs during key transitions, including to and from alternative provision

Key measures of success are:

- the City Corporation’s Adult Social Care Early Intervention and Prevention offer is reviewed with a focus on young people with SEND
- families access and benefit from inclusive information, advice and guidance
- increase in the number of apprenticeships and supported internships offered and taken up
- the support offer for parent carers around transitions is co-designed

6.3 Priority 3: children and young people with SEND and their families are supported and enabled by a skilled, valued workforce

**By 2029, I hope children and young people with SEND in the City of London
“will receive the appropriate assistance to achieve their full
potential and set ambitious goals.”**

Parent carer

Some parent carers told us that they recognise the value of a skilled and trained workforce to identifying their child’s needs and ensuring the right support is put in place. They also reflected that more needs to be done to increase awareness of SEND as this is crucial to a knowledgeable, effective workforce.

We want to build on existing training and development activities and continue to support colleagues across Education, Health and Social Care around SEND. We also want to look at how we can raise awareness of SEND across the wider workforce (including those who don’t work directly with families) to help embed SEND inclusion.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, the Local Area Partnership will:

- strengthen support and signposting for professionals working with children and young people with SEND
- further embed the SEND Ranges to support the early identification and response to needs
- support professional communities of practice across NEL NHS, e.g. autism and speech and language therapy, and networks to share skills and good practice
- raise awareness of SEND within the wider workforce

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- working in partnership with schools that City of London children and young people attend and City of London early years settings to strengthen support and signposting around SEND
- raising the profile of the SEND Ranges across settings within the City of London and where City-resident children received their education if outside of the City of London
- engaging professionals with existing communities of practice and networks - including the SENDCO network, NEL improvement networks, Designated Clinical

Officer / Designated Medical Officer networks - and ensure they take learning back into their organisations

- developing a plan to raise awareness of SEND within the wider workforce

Key measures of success are:

- SEND Panel receives high-quality requests for EHC needs assessments reflecting the timely, accurate identification of needs
- professionals report improved knowledge and skills through engagement with professional networks
- SEND awareness raising plan for the wider workforce developed and delivered
- Parent carers and young people with SEND report improved awareness of SEND in their interactions with the wider workforce

6.4 Priority 4: children and young people with SEND and their families feel recognised, valued and part of their local community

**By 2029, I hope children and young people with SEND in the City of London
“can fulfil their potential and live happy lives.”
City of London resident**

Young people with SEND told us that although they like living in the City of London and there is lots going on, many of those things aren't accessible or inclusive so they can't experience them. It can also be hard for young people with SEND to know what activities or events are going on in their local area. Young people also shared with us their interests and reflected that more inclusive groups and activities would raise awareness of SEND and enable them to show off their skills and talents. Parent carers told us that their families can feel excluded from their communities as they are unable to access places and spaces in the City of London.

We want to use this strategy as a tool to advocate for SEND across the City of London. We want to deliver accessible, inclusive services for families within the City of London. Some of these will be co-designed with young people with SEND and their families, as committed to in some of the other priorities. However, we also recognise that families can feel overwhelmed by requests for engagement so we will work with families to agree an approach to this.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, the Local Area Partnership will:

- advocate for SEND across City of London communities and networks
- strengthen the inclusiveness of universal services, such as youth and play services
- offer engagement and co-design opportunities to families

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- senior leaders in the City Corporation and Health, and the City Corporation Carers and SEND Member Champion advocating for SEND across City of London communities

- reviewing the inclusiveness of existing universal services and where appropriate work with the provider to strengthen specific offers. Where there are gaps in provision, work with providers or the voluntary and community sector to fill them
- working in partnership with the City Parent Carer Forum and young people with SEND to co-design services and other initiatives

Key measures of success are:

- leaders advocate for SEND across City of London communities resulting in more awareness and inclusion
- young people with SEND report universal services made them feel included
- deliver at least three co-designed services and/or activities where young people and/or parent carers are involved from the start, receive feedback and report feeling heard

6.5 Priority 5: children and young people experience high quality, appropriate alternative provision when needed

By 2029, I hope children and young people with SEND in the City of London “are well supported with access to the services they need to thrive.”
Professional working with children and young people with SEND

The City of London’s unique size, location and population means that there are low levels of the use of alternative provision by City of London children and young people. However, policies and processes are in place to ensure that when needed, alternative provision is high-quality and focuses on good outcomes for all children and young people, including those with SEND.

We want to know which City of London children and young people who attend schools outside of the City of London are in alternative provision and retain a focus on high-quality arrangements.

To deliver on this priority over the next four years, the Local Area Partnership will:

- strengthen knowledge of City of London children and young people who are placed in alternative provision by schools outside of City of London boundaries
- only place children and young people in alternative provision that is quality assured by the local authority where the provision is located or by the City Corporation
- continue to put local alternative provision in place to support a child or young person when needed

Key actions to deliver these priorities include:

- strengthen relationships with schools outside of the City of London so that they tell us when a City of London child or young person is placed in alternative provision and we can ensure they are high-quality placements

- embedding the quality assurance framework for alternative provision as part of the SEND and Alternative Provision Panel process to strengthen existing bespoke spot purchased arrangements – including tuition services
- monitoring the quality of support that a child or young person is getting through the SEND and Alternative Provision Panel to ensure they achieve good outcomes

Key measures of success are:

- we know which City of London children and young people are in alternative provision and support high-quality placements that result in good outcomes
- a quality assurance framework for alternative provision is embedded
- high-quality alternative provision is reported at the SEND and Alternative Provision Panel



Artwork capturing ideas from one of the engagement sessions

7. Implementation and delivery

The SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy and associated Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the SEND Programme Board. City Corporation officers will work with the City Parent Carer Forum to explore and agree how they want to be involved in this process, recognising that we don't want to overburden families with engagement activities.

The strategy and Action Plan will be reported on to elected Members through the Community and Children's Services Committee.

Any legislative change or amendments to statutory duties will be reflected in the Action Plan and delivery of services if applicable within the annual review period.



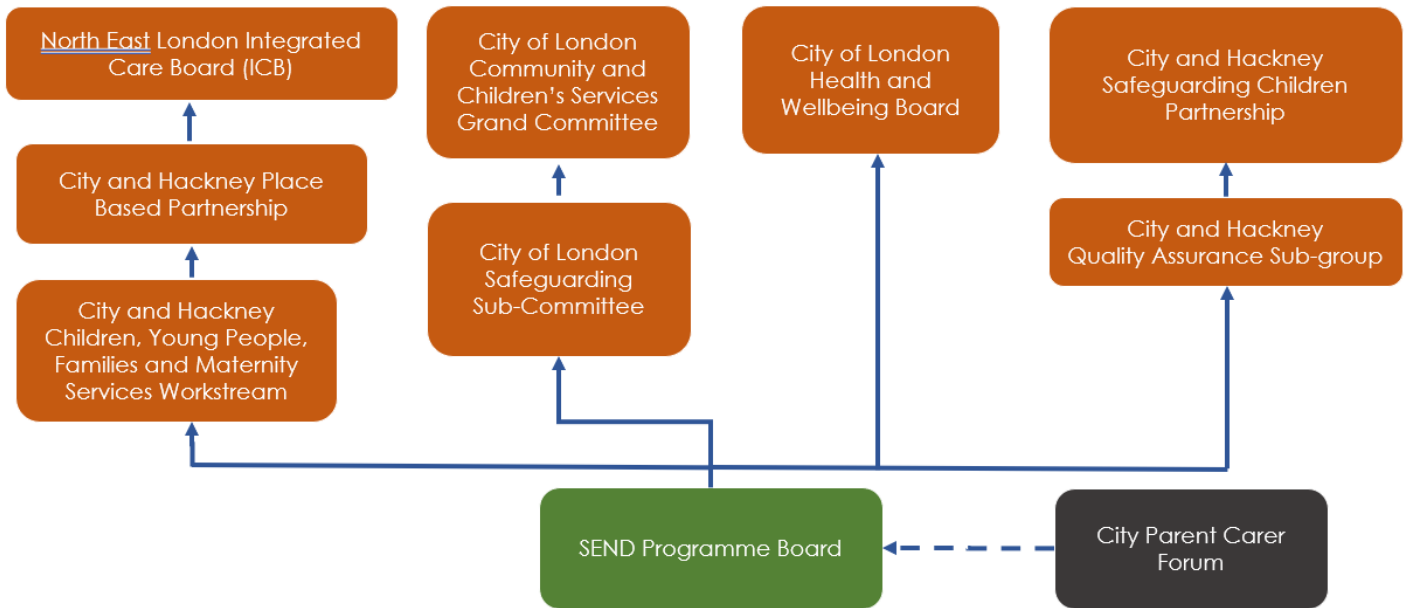
Artwork by a City of London young person

8. Glossary

Alternative provision	The Department for Education defines alternative provision as education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education. ²⁸
Children and Young People’s Plan	The City of London Children and Young People Plan sets out the vision and outcomes for children and young people in the City of London.
City of London SEND Ranges	The City of London SEND Ranges is a tool that helps identify and respond to needs of children and young people with SEND.
City Parent Carer Forum	A Parent Carer Forum is a group of parents and carers of children with SEN and/or disabilities. The City Parent Carer Forum is active in the City of London and works with the local authority, education, health and other providers to make sure services meet the needs of children with SEND and their families.
City Youth Forum	The City Youth Forum is a group of young people who work together to make the City of London a better place to live, work and study for young people.
Co-design	The local authority, Health or Education work together with residents to influence and shape the design of services or activities.
Disability	The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative impact on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities.
Designated Social Care Officer (DCSO) for SEND	The DCSO for SEND works for the local authority and is responsible for leading and developing social care elements of SEND across the local authority.
Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan)	An EHC Plan details Education, Health and Social Care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the local authority after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC Plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies.
Integrated Care Board (ICB)	ICBs are statutory NHS organisations that bring together NHS and care organisations to agree priorities and improve

	population health in a local area. The City of London comes under the North East London ICB.
Local Offer	Local authorities are required to have a Local Offer that sets out information about provision they expect to be available across Education, Health and Social Care for children and young people in their area with SEND. Local authorities must consult locally on what provision the Local Offer should contain.
Maintained school	Schools that are run by a local authority.
National Health Service (NHS) North East London (NEL)	NHS NEL is the local NHS in North East London. It is responsible for buying and managing health and care services to support people living in the London boroughs of Barking and Dagenham, City of London, Hackney, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.
Parent carer	A parent carer takes care of a child with SEND for whom they have responsibility.
Pathways	Where a number of professionals can support an individual to meet their needs creating a route or 'pathway' to support.
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	A child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them when they reach compulsory school age.
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	SEND brings together SEN and disability.
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCO)	A SENCO is a qualified teacher in a school or maintained nursery who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEN provision.

Appendix A – Governance diagram



ENDNOTES

- ¹ City of London Corporation (2022) City of London Children and Young People's Plan 2022-25.
- ² Figures taken from Census 2021.
- ³ City of London Corporation statistics.
- ⁴ Further information on the IPSEA website.
- ⁵ Information on the detail of the Equality Act 2010 is available on Gov.uk
- ⁶ Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care (2014 – updated 2020) SEND code of practice:0 to 25 years.
- ⁷ DfE (2023) SEND and alternative provision improvement plan: right support, right time, right place.
- ⁸ DfE (2023) Children's social care: stable homes, built on love.
- ⁹ DfE (2013) Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities.
- ¹⁰ Department for Education (2023) press release.
- ¹¹ Disability Unit (2024) Disability Action Plan.
- ¹² City of London Corporation (2024) Our Corporate Plan 2024-29.
- ¹³ Further information on the consultation stage of the City Plan 2040 is available on the City Corporation's website.
- ¹⁴ Further information on the City Corporation's equality objectives is available on the City Corporation's website.
- ¹⁵ A revised business plan is due to be agreed in 2025.
- ¹⁶ Statistic taken from Scope disability facts and figures website page.
- ¹⁷ Figures taken from Census 2021.
- ¹⁸ HM Gov (2024) Academic year 2023/24 special educational needs in England.
- ¹⁹ HM Gov (2024) Reporting year 2024 Education, health and care plans.
- ²⁰ Ministry of Justice (2023) Tribunal Statistics Quarterly: July to September 2023.
- ²¹ Disabled Children's Partnership (2022) #SENDABetterMessage: Campaign and SEND Green Paper briefing.
- ²² Wickenden, M (2023) Disability and other identifies? – how do they intersect?
- ²³ Disability Rights Alliance (2024) Inclusion and Intersectionality: An online resource to support Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs).
- ²⁴ Oxford University (2019) Ethnic minority children not equally identified with Special Education Needs.
- ²⁵ City of London Corporation statistics.
- ²⁶ The Local Offer is available on the Family Information Service website.
- ²⁷ Tower Hamlets and City SEND Information, Advice and Support Service website.
- ²⁸ Department for Education (2013) Alternative Provision. Statutory guidance for local authorities.