

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY 2018-2021



INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This document describes Brent's strategy for children and young people aged 0-25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It replaces the previous SEND strategy.

In 2014 the Children and Families Act introduced some wide-ranging reforms in how services for children with SEND are delivered. A new code of practice came into force in January 2015 and this underpinned the reforms.

The key aspects of the reforms were to:

- Extend the age range of children and young people with SEND to 0-25 years
- Replace statements of special educational needs (SEN) with education, health and care (EHC) plans that are co-produced with parents/carers and with transition arrangements to convert all existing statements of SEN by March 2018. EHC plans must now be produced within a shorter timescale of 20 weeks
- Ensure that the views of children and young people and parents and carers are at the centre of what we do and that they are fully involved in decision-making enabling greater choice, control and co-production
- Identify and meet needs as early as possible and make high quality provision for children and young people with SEND
- Have a clear focus on long-term outcomes that help young people make a smooth transition to adulthood, enabling them to achieve higher education or employment, independent living, participation in society and being as healthy as possible



- Establish a Local Offer, which sets out all the opportunities for children and young people with SEND and their families
- Ensure that local authorities and health services work together to commission services for children and young people with SEND.

In May 2017, the Brent local area underwent an OFSTED/CQC inspection of the arrangements for children and young people with SEND in the borough. The report highlighted many strengths in the provision across Brent and the quality of support that is made through good services. It acknowledged the high quality SEND provision in Brent schools, early years settings and the College of

North West London, and the progress that children and young people with SEND make.

It also commended the strong partnership between the local authority and schools, including the good and outstanding special schools in Brent. There were some areas that needed to improve and a Written Statement of Action was required as an outcome of the inspection. Brent Council and Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have responded to this requirement through the strong partnership of the Brent Children's Trust and they are working with all partners and parents on an action plan to bring about yet further improvements in 2018/19.



WHO IS THE STRATEGY FOR?

In this strategy it is recognised that SEND encompasses children and young people who have a broad range of needs. For some, the focus of support will be mainly educational. Other children and young people and their families will need support from a number of services and this may continue throughout their childhood and for some, into adulthood. A child or young person may have special educational needs or a disability or both. The new SEND Code of Practice (January 2015) sets out the definition of SEND, linking it closely to the Equality Act (2010).

SEND IS DEFINED AS:

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Has a disability, which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions.

For children age two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to,

or different from, that which is made generally available for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post 16 institutions or by other early years providers. For a child under two years special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

Children and young people may have needs in one or more broad areas of need and these needs can change over time.

The broad areas include:

- Communication and interaction including children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and physical difficulties.

Most children and young people will have their needs met at an early stage and they will access support through their school or setting (in schools this is called SEN Support stage). The children and young people with the most severe needs will have an EHC plan. The plan is statutory and will set out clearly the child's or young person's special educational needs, along with the provision they need to help them overcome the barriers to learning that these needs present (SEND Code of Practice January 2015).

CONSULTATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

An essential and valuable contribution to this strategy came from our discussions and co-production meetings with a wide range of people including parents and carers, young people, Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF), headteachers, governing bodies, services that work with children and young people, families and voluntary groups.



They told us that they wanted:

- Schools to be more local with more special school and nursery places so that children do not need to travel long distances
- Staff who are skilled with better joined up working between services and partners and multi-agency training.
- Support to develop inclusive practices in mainstream schools
- Closer involvement of parents/ carers and children and young people in the design and delivery of services.

Come on Brent, you have some good people who come to work to make a difference - well, let's do that together - be creative and target those limited budgets to make successful outcomes rather than poor, expensive ones. We could be great - trust us, work with us.

(Parent comment to the OFSTED inspector during the area wide SEND inspection in May 2017.)



HOW DO WE COMPARE?

Analysis of SEND data in January 2017 shows us that the proportion of children and young people who attend school in Brent and who have an EHC plan is higher at 3% compared with nationally (2.8%) and in London (2.9%). However, children and young people at SEN support stage is lower (9.5%) than the national picture (11.6%) and in London (11.0%).

The number of children and young people with an EHC plan in Brent is continuing to rise. In January 2016 there were 1,804 children with an EHC plan or statement. In January 2017 there were 1,960 and in January 2018 this had risen to 2,076, which is a 5.9% increase since 2017 (source: SEND 2 returns).

The percentage of children with an EHC plan who attend specialist provision has increased to 52% compared

to 48% three years ago. This is putting pressure on the demand for specialist school places in the borough.

The areas of highest need that continue to grow are autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH) and complex moderate learning difficulties (MLD).

In the early years the highest area of need is speech language and communication needs (SLCN), which often is later diagnosed as ASD.

The main need has been growing in early years and primary school-age children and this reflects population growth, but there is now a need to plan for the rise in secondary-age pupils over the next three years.

Improving the outcomes for Brent children and young people with SEND is a priority. Whilst attainment and progress in 2016 compared well to pupils with SEND nationally, middle attaining Brent pupils with SEN Support made less progress than the national average in both the primary and secondary phases.

Brent performs well nationally in relation to the percentage of 16-17 year old young people who are not in education employment or training (NEET). This was 1.6% (119 young people) on average from December 2017 to February 2018, compared to 2.7% nationally and 1.8% in London. Of these 119 young people, 10% (12 young people) had an EHC plan.

OUR VISION



Brent Children's Trust is a board of senior managers from Brent Council, Brent CCG, the Brent Safeguarding Children Board and other partners. The Children's Trust has developed a vision for children and young people with SEND, co-created by parents, carers and professionals and other partners, which is:

“To ensure that all children and their families have the fullest possible range of support and opportunities available to them in order to improve their life chances and realise their aspirations.”

Alongside our local vision is the SEND Code of Practice, which underpins the cultural change we want to achieve. Trust partners are committed to developing inclusive communities that are welcoming to all.

To deliver this vision, Brent Children's Trust is committed to the following principles and will:

- Put children and young people and their families at the heart of service design and delivery and ensure a person-centred approach
- Enable children and young people and their families to only have to tell their story once and be able to rely on long-term relationships with professionals who work seamlessly together
- Break down the cultural and structural divisions between agencies in the interest of improving outcomes for children and young people
- Work together to jointly identify, plan, change and improve
- Improve outcomes and life chances for children and young people with SEND.



WHAT WILL IT MEAN FOR BRENT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES?

Whilst being clear in this strategy about what we want to achieve with partners over the next three years, we will be flexible in our approach so that we can respond to on-going legislation and funding changes and emerging needs.

Brent Children's Trust has co-produced with parents and carers the following ambitions for the delivery of services:

- Skilled teachers deliver effective interventions, meaning children and families get swift access to support, reducing the need for specialist services
- A consistent therapist/therapy team supports children throughout the time when support is needed, building strong relationships with the family which help children thrive



- Paediatricians, social workers and other professionals are supported to develop their expertise, acting as case holders and not referrers, ensuring consistency for children and families and building more effective joined up intervention
- Integrated working means that young people experience seamless pathways to independence
- Children and families have places to play and activities where they feel safe and happy.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

There have been a number of key achievements since the previous SEND strategy and the introduction of the SEND reforms in 2014. The following are examples:

- Brent has made good progress in implementing the SEND reforms and this has changed the way we work with parents, ensuring that they are fully involved in co-producing the EHC plan for their child and that the voice of the child/young person is captured in every EHC plan.
- Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) is now fully established and reaching out to many parents of children with SEND, running workshops and drop-in sessions as well as undertaking surveys of parents.
- The Inclusion Strategic Board, which reports to the Children's Trust, has established four multi-agency groups with parents participating in the design of services. These workstreams are looking at EHC plan processes and quality; the transition to adulthood pathways; joint commissioning and design of specifications for new paediatric services; the Local Offer and the Short Breaks offer.
- The transition to adulthood workstream has produced a draft transition protocol for all professionals that identifies good practice in helping children and young people and families at key times of change.
- Brent performs well compared to other local areas in delivering EHC plans within the required timescales of 20 weeks. Data in January 2018 shows that we delivered **79%** of EHC plans without any exceptions and **100%** with exceptions on time.



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- The SEND inspection report noted many strengths about how services are delivered in Brent for children and young people and their families and commended a number of services including Brent Outreach Autism Service (BOAT), Early Years Inclusion Support Team, Targeted Mental Health Services In schools (TAMHS) and services that provide independent advice and support for parents.
- 96% of pupils attend good or outstanding Brent schools and the four special schools in Brent are all good or outstanding.
- A multi-agency training programme has been put in place to train staff on EHC plans and the statutory process. This was well attended and received – 97% of staff were satisfied with the quality of the training.
- A programme of supported internships is in place with up to 12 young people per year gaining work experience and for many this leads to a permanent job.
- Waiting times for paediatric therapy, audiology, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and ASD services have reduced so children are seen more quickly.
- We have increased the capacity in occupational therapy services, recognising the growth of need in this area.
- We have invested in increasing the number of special school places, with satellite provision from the Manor School and the Village School now open. Two new Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) for children with ASD have been opened in primary schools and one unit for children with SEMH. Brent River College has expanded its age range and is now offering places for primary-age children with SEMH. We are working closely with Brent Specialist Academy Trust (BSAT) to establish a new free school (the Avenue) with plans to open in 2019.
- We have established an Inclusion Support Fund for schools to develop their provision within schools for staff training and development so that they can meet the needs of children and young people with a wide range of SEND needs. There is also a fund to help with the costs of building new provision or improving existing facilities.
- We are bringing together the Children with Disabilities Team (0-13), with the Transitions Team (14-25) to create an all-through social care service for children and young people with disabilities aged 0 to 25. This will reduce the number of changes and handovers for young people and families and provide greater continuity.

There continues to be significant financial pressure on public sector services and we are required to achieve much greater value for money from the resources available to us and health.

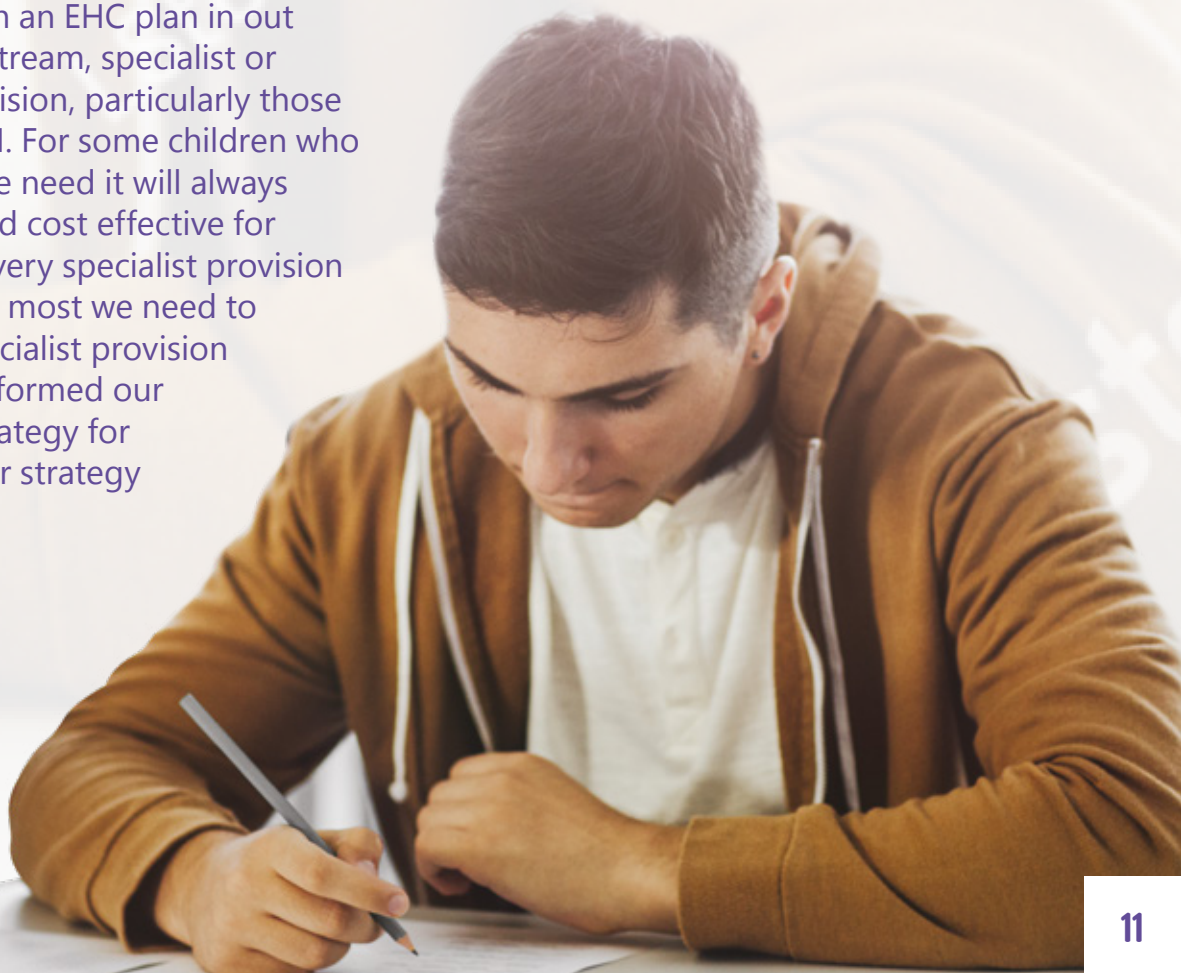


KEY CHALLENGES

Together with the rise in the number of children with SEND in the borough and the growing complexity of need, as well as the extended age range of 0-25, budgets are under pressure to meet the demand. There is also pressure on schools' budgets to meet the needs of all children with SEND.

A review of the number of specialist places for children and young people with SEND in the borough was undertaken in 2017. It estimated that by 2020 there will be a need for 1,027 specialist places, leaving a shortfall of 276 places. In 2017 there were 751 special school and ARP places locally, with 413 children and young people with an EHC plan in out of borough mainstream, specialist or independent provision, particularly those with ASD or SEMH. For some children who have low incidence need it will always be appropriate and cost effective for them to attend a very specialist provision elsewhere, but for most we need to develop more specialist provision locally. This has informed our place planning strategy for 2018 onwards. Our strategy

for increasing specialist provision locally in the borough involves expanding special schools where possible, working with mainstream schools and settings to develop ARP and also working with other providers to support the establishment of provision that fits with our needs in the borough. If this planning strategy is successful it will result in 200 new specialist places by 2020.



OUR 5 KEY PRIORITIES

There was overwhelming support from the Brent Children's Trust, the Inclusion Strategic Board and Brent Parent Carer Forum for the proposed key priorities.

PRIORITY 1

Ensure early intervention at all ages and support for children and young people and their families to prevent escalation to more specialist services.

PRIORITY 2

Provide services that are integrated and co-ordinated in a multi-agency approach so that families only need to, "tell the story once" and find it easy to navigate the system with effective information sharing and advice.

PRIORITY 3

Make provision of the highest possible quality through effective joint commissioning, so that children and young people can have their needs met locally wherever possible.

PRIORITY 4

Ensure the participation of parents and carers and children and young people in the design and delivery of services.

PRIORITY 5

Improve outcomes and life chances for children and young people with SEND to enable greater independence and effective transition to adulthood.



WHAT WE WILL DO TO MEET THESE PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1

Ensure early intervention at all ages and support for children, young people and families to prevent escalation to more specialist services

- Develop a highly skilled workforce of professionals from all services and agencies who are knowledgeable and confident on the wide range of SEND. This will include multi-agency training and workforce development programmes for staff in schools, settings and services, through both specialist training from outreach services and special schools as well as school-to-school support.
- Target support both in the early years and in universal services to identify and meet a wide range of needs as early as possible.
- Implement a programme of integrated two-year-old checks for children to identify needs early.
- Reduce waiting times and ensure timely access to specialist services for paediatric therapy, services and diagnosis for ASD and mental health interventions, and build up the confidence of children and families to be less reliant on statutory services.
- Provide effective joined-up post diagnosis support for families so that parents/carers receive the right information, help, training and advice.

“ Now that my daughter was joining my son at his junior school, I was really anxious about how I should tell him that his sister is autistic. I was worried he might start hating her or taunting her. I spoke to a BOAT caseworker, who then came into school to talk to him and she explained it in such a perfect way that he never had any further questions for me. He sees being autistic as a good thing and said that before the BOAT caseworker spoke to him he knew nothing about autism and after the talk he knew a lot more. He knows that some people who don't like noise put headphones on their ears and can understand his sister more and why she does different things to us. (Parent of child with SEND). ”

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PRIORITY 2

Provide services that are integrated and co-ordinated in a multi-agency approach so that families and young people need only “tell the story once” and find it easy to navigate the system with effective information sharing and advice.

- Establish clear co-ordinated referral systems and pathways – a single point of referral for as many services as possible, ensuring this is effectively communicated through the Local Offer.
- Professionals work in a joined-up way through a team around the child and family approach, with a named lead professional and effective information sharing between agencies.
- Provide a co-ordinated range of targeted services to support families and schools and settings to meet needs effectively, to reduce duplication and make effective use of resources, with the aim of reducing the need for more specialist services.
- Work with mainstream schools and early years settings to develop a range of specialist provision with a particular focus on ASD, M/SLD, SEMH and other complex needs.
- Develop high quality alternative provision and vocational pathways for young people with SEND that lead to positive outcomes.
- Implement outcome based joint commissioning arrangements for the provision of paediatric therapy services and CAMHS to ensure best value, reduce fragmentation of service delivery and ensure that all vulnerable groups have access to health/education so they are better supported in their own communities to maintain their wellbeing.
- Ensure that EHC plans are holistic and of high quality, through effective auditing and feedback from service users.
- Implement the Inclusion Support Fund and the SEND specialist provision fund to invest in staff development in schools as well as improving facilities.

PRIORITY 3

Make provision of the highest possible quality through effective joint commissioning so that children and young people with SEND can have their needs met locally wherever possible.

- Provide more specialist school places within Brent to reduce the need for costly out of borough placements – this includes developing satellite provision within mainstream schools.

“Great presentations, great multi-agency working and networking. All parts of the training were useful.”

(Health worker comment on evaluation of the multi-agency EHC plan training)

PRIORITY 4

Ensure the participation of parents, carers and children and young people in the design and delivery of services.

- Parents/carers, children and young people participate in the workstreams of the Inclusion Strategic Board and are actively involved in shaping policies and strategies and evaluating service effectiveness and impact that leads to service improvements.
- Further embed all aspects of the SEND reforms, particularly co-production of EHC plans with parents/carers, to ensure the voice of the child/young person is at the heart of the process.
- Work with parents and carers to continue to expand the Local Offer and Short Breaks offer, ensuring that it is accessible, well publicised and communicated, for example by developing an app.
- Continue to work with Brent Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) to develop parent champions and support that enables wide participation in service design and delivery.

“Do nothing about us, without us.”

(Parent of child with SEND)

- Develop a participation forum for children and young people with SEND and establish a programme of ‘big conversations’ with senior managers and the Inclusion Strategic Board to inform service design and delivery.

“This training is really interesting and really helpful for parents to support their child. Training made us know our child’s strengths.”

(Feedback from a parent at Attention Autism parent/carers training)



PRIORITY 5

Improve outcomes and life chances for children and young people with SEND to enable greater independence and transition into adulthood

- Work with schools and settings to have high aspirations for children and young people with SEND to raise attainment and ensure they make appropriate progress, with a particular focus on the middle attaining groups.
- Ensure all young people with SEND, including those who do not meet the threshold for social care,

have the necessary skills, advice, information and support to make a smooth transition into adulthood so they are able to make informed choices and lead an independent life wherever possible.

- Develop and create more post-16 opportunities and pathways for young people with SEND through, for example, an increased number of supported internships working with a wide range of employers.
- Undertake the mapping exercise of provision for young people age 19-25 in the borough and develop pathways and providers to secure good provision and opportunities.



“ I got an internship and was given opportunities to gain work experience ”

(Young person with SEND responding to what has gone well during transition).

“ I’m really independent and well supported now. ”

(Young person moving from school to college)

HOW WILL WE KNOW THE STRATEGY IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

The delivery of the Brent Children's Trust vision and this strategy will make the following positive impacts for children and young people in the borough. These outcomes will be monitored monthly through the improvement plan put in place by the Inclusion Strategic Board that reports quarterly to the Children's Trust, to ensure that the actions taken make the expected difference for Brent children and their families.

- All children and young people with SEND, including vulnerable groups, receive timely support and access to services that help them maximise their potential.
- Professionals feel more confident in identifying SEND, have the skills to assess need and develop SMART outcomes for children and young people.
- Parents/carers are meaningfully participating in the design and delivery of services – "Do nothing about us without us".
- All parents/carers are actively engaged in the co-production of EHC plans and agreeing outcomes for their child/young person.
- More young people with SEND have access to employment and community activities to support them to lead independent lives.
- The local authority and the CCG jointly commission services for children and young people with SEND to ensure that the right provision is in place and children and young people have access to the services they need.
- Children and young people with SEND make appropriate progress and outcomes are improved.
- Waiting times for access to services are reduced in line with national guidelines.
- EHC plans are holistic in setting out all the needs of the child/young person, and are completed within required timescales.
- Parents/carers have access to support and services through the Local Offer, including a range of short breaks.
- Parents/carers report improved satisfaction with services that are better co-ordinated and reduce duplication – "tell the story once".

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GLOSSARY

SEND – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

This is the term used to describe children and young people who have an assessed need because of a barrier to their learning. This is the target group of children and young people for this strategy.

EHC Plan – Education, Health and Care Plan

Some children or young people with more complex needs who require more help than would normally be provided in a mainstream education setting receive support through an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan. This is a legal document that describes a child or young person's special educational, health and social care needs for those aged 0-25. It explains the extra help that will be given to meet those needs and how that help will support the child or young person to achieve what they want to in their life

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

This term used to describe young people who have not yet achieved a post school aged destination of Education, Employment or Training.

DfE – Department for Education

The DfE is the government department that is responsible for the laws and guidance on education that

are given to schools, Local Authority and parents.

Ofsted – Office for Standards in Education

CQC – Care Quality Commission (Ofsted and CQC carried out a Brent local area inspection of SEND in May 2017)

BOAT – Brent Outreach Autism Team supports children and young people who have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) work with children and young people up to the age of 18 in Brent with complex mental health difficulties

TAMHS – Targeted Mental Health Services in schools

Local Offer – a single point of information and advice for children and young people from 0 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.

BPCF – Brent Parent Carers Forum The group aims to give Parents and Carers a voice in how services for children and young people with SEND, aged 0 - 25, are shaped and delivered locally, as well as an opportunity to come together and talk in a relaxed atmosphere.

Special educational needs (SEN)

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition in paragraph above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).

Post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The term SEN is used in this Code across the 0-25 age range but includes LDD.

(from SEND Code of Practice 2015)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/.../SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

Types of special need which are referred in Education, Health and Care Plans

ASD – Autistic spectrum disorder

SEMH – Social, emotional and mental health difficulties

MLD – Moderate learning difficulties

SLD – Copy missing please supply

SLCN – Speech, language and communication needs

