

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Care, Wellbeing and Learning: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Documents

**REPORT OF:** Sheila Lock, Interim Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

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### **Purpose**

1. This report seeks Cabinet and Council approval of a suite of strategic documents for special educational needs and disabilities, accessibility and services for children, and young people.

### **Background**

2. This suite of documents is presented together to illustrate the considerable level of activity across services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Gateshead, and to fulfil the requirement for the Council to approve and publish a range of documents that addresses the Council's response to its statutory duties for SEND.
3. The documents relate to partnership activity led by the SEND Strategic and Monitoring Groups, Joint Commissioning Group, Special Headteachers Group, Early Years SEND Strategy Group and to a range of Council services.
4. Annual reports are also produced for Overview and Scrutiny related to specific developments for SEND and partnership work with Education, CCG and Social Care.

### **Proposal**

5. To receive the documents to support Gateshead's policy and practice in relation to SEND pupils and young people.
6. **Accessibility Strategy**

The Accessibility Strategy explains how the Local Authority (LA) has adopted a strategic approach to planning for increased access to its schools, to the curriculum and to information. It is a revision and update of the second Accessibility Strategy (2012-2015) and restates the principles and approaches that the Council is taking on accessibility issues in education.

The strategy links with other planning processes in the LA and supports the LA's priorities and principles within the LA Safeguarding Board's strategy and particularly addresses aspects of the guidance document 'Safeguarding Disabled Children 2009'. This policy takes in to account the 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and

disabilities. Schools are required to publish an accessibility plan/disability equality scheme.

## **7. SEND Strategic Aims for Children and Young people 0-25 Working in partnership with education, health and care commissioners and providers and service users**

The strategic aims underpin the Council's work in partnership with education, health, and care services to improve the outcomes for children and young people. They also detail how the Council will consider its success in working to its strategic aims.

## **8. Inclusion Policy**

Gateshead Council has based its policy for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) on the belief that all children, whatever their abilities, share common needs as learners and they should have access to a curriculum that responds to their individual needs.

The Council recognises that most children with identified SEND can, and should be, taught in mainstream schools but also recognises that some children may have needs which are exceptional and that arrangements may need to be made to ensure they reach their potential.

We are taking a look at refreshing our inclusion strategy, we want all provision to be inclusive and while the childcare sufficiency strategy looks at primarily 0-5, we know for parents of older children find additional wrap around difficult in some instances. We will be looking at this in more detail over the next year and our inclusion strategy is an opportunity to do that.

The Council will seek to ensure that its policies, procedures, advice, guidance and resources support a policy of inclusion where this best meets the needs of the child. This will include enabling Gateshead's special schools to increase the range of needs they are able to meet successfully and to contribute to the development of good practice in mainstream schools and settings. Enabling Inclusion will be the key goal in the SEND Strategy.

## **9. Early Years and SEND - The PVI Monitoring Survey, October 2016**

A survey was sent to all of the 55 PVI settings in Gateshead (Day Nursery settings and Pre-schools) during October 2016. 47 settings responded, giving a return rate of 85%. Not all respondents answered every question. The data in the charts reflects the number of settings that answered the individual question. The aim of the survey was to monitor the SEND provision in PVI settings and for the Area SENCos to identify priorities for development and improvement in their support to PVI settings.

## **10. SEND Report Guidance for Schools**

The governing bodies of maintained schools and maintained nursery schools and the proprietors of academy schools must publish information on their websites about the implementation of the governing body's or the proprietor's policy for pupils with SEN. The information published should be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year should be updated as soon as possible. The

SEND Report needs to cover: Improving outcomes, Governance, Teaching, Identification and Assessment to be compliant with the SEND Code of Practice.

## 11. **Joint Commissioning Strategy**

The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on local authorities to ensure integration between educational, training, health and social care provision where this promotes wellbeing and improves the quality of provision for children and young people and those with SEN. Local authorities and CCGs must make joint commissioning arrangements for SEND, including clinicians commissioning arrangements and NHS England for specialist health provision.

The aims of the Joint Commissioning Strategy are:

- To identify all children and young people who have SEND as early as possible;
- To provide empowering support for parents and carers to help them care for, and support the development of their children as early as possible;
- To ensure that all services respond swiftly to the needs of children and work towards agreed outcomes. This includes universal, targeted and specialist education, health and social care services;
- To commission co-ordinated, personalised education, health and care support for individual children and young people, with integrated Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) for those children needing specialist support, aimed at helping them achieve their best at school and in training and employment and enabling them to live as independent lives as possible and support their inclusion in their local communities;
- To offer choice and control to children, young people and their families about how they use the resources that are available to them through the offer of personal budgets where this is available and ensuring that they are fully involved in decision making processes.

## **Recommendations**

11. Cabinet is asked to:

- (i) Recommend the Council to agree and note the following reports:
  - a. Accessibility Strategy
  - b. Inclusion Policy
  - c. PVI Survey
  - d. SEND Report Guidance to Schools
- (ii) Agree to undertake wide consultation with all stakeholders on the SEND strategic aims and to receive a further report on the outcome of the consultations once available
- (iii) Note that the Joint Commissioning Strategy will be submitted to Cabinet early in the Spring Term 2017 to align with the Council and CCG budget strategies.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To continue to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met.
- (ii) To support the key principles of the Equality Act and SEND Code of Practice.
- (iii) To ensure the Council fulfils its statutory duties.

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### Policy Context

1. The proposals in these documents are consistent with Gateshead meeting its statutory responsibilities in relation to the Single Equality Duty 2010, Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and SEND Code of Practice, 2014.
2. The proposals also directly support the delivery of the Council Plan, and Children Gateshead, the plan for children, young people and families in Gateshead.

### Background

3. The Council and its partners remain engaged in the delivery of high quality services to support SEND children and young people across Gateshead.
4. There are statutory requirements around ensuring appropriate identification, assessment and provision for children and young people with special educational needs.

### Consultation

5. A variety of agencies have been engaged in the development of these strategies and documents, details of which are included in the reports themselves.
6. The Cabinet Members for Children and Young People have been consulted.

### Alternative Options

7. There are no alternatives to these reports being presented as they are there to ensure co-production, partnership with children and young people, schools and services.
8. By publishing this suite of documents at the same time, partners have the opportunity to review the wide range of activity across SEND.

### Implications of Recommended Option

9. **Resources:**
  - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms there are no specific implications arising from this report. Specific proposals arising from implementation will be presented to Cabinet for approval as required.
  - b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no specific implications arising from this report. Specific proposals arising from implementation will be presented to Cabinet for approval as required.
  - c) **Property Implications** - There are no specific implications arising from this report. Specific proposals arising from implementation will be presented to Cabinet for approval as required
10. **Risk Management Implication** - The development of effective strategies forms part of control measures for Care, Wellbeing and Learning.

11. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The Council supports the rights of all children, young people and their families to have access to education, including equality of opportunity in terms of accessing support, advice and guidance.
12. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no specific implications for this.
13. **Health Implications** – There are some proposals in the strategy documents which should address the implications for SEND children and young people.
14. **Sustainability Implications** - No major implications.
15. **Human Rights Implications** – These documents are supportive of children and young people's rights.
16. **Area and Ward Implications** - No specific implications.