



Buckinghamshire
Children & Young
People's Partnership

Working together to reach our goals

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2025 – 2030

August 2024

Table of Contents

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2025 – 2030 1

Foreword 3

Introduction 4

Aspirations 5

Local Area Shared Principles 6

The Buckinghamshire Context Error! Bookmark not defined.

Governance 10

Impact and Outcomes 11

Strategic Priorities 11

Priority 1: Early Support 12

Priority 2: Education Provision and Decision Making 13

Priority 3: High Support Needs 15

Priority 4: Preparation for Adulthood 16

Conclusion 18

Associated Strategies and Programmes: 18

Glossary 20

Foreword

This strategy has been made with the SEND young people of Buckinghamshire at its heart. Shout Out for SEND is a county-run youth project that aims to give SEND young people a voice. In this case, it's given me an opportunity to write this foreword. But as a group, we also had several meetings focussing on the strategy and many of the statements written in the work streams have come directly from us, in our own words.

Still, when I read this for the first time, I was emotional to see such a strong youth voice present. We live in a world that isn't built for those with SEND and many of us work through daily challenges that we feel totally alone in facing. This leads to a lot of us feeling like we do not matter and aren't respected. But the statements are centred around individuals for a reason, because the work you do, impacts us directly. Behind every statement is a SEND young person's lived experience and it matters. This strategy listens to us, includes us and in turn, respects us as well. It sends a message that Buckinghamshire values its SEND young people in a way I haven't seen or felt before. So, I urge you to continue that narrative in your work and prove to the SEND young people of Buckinghamshire that we matter. That we have a place in our community. And that when we are given a chance to have a voice, it creates positive change for everyone.

Pippa Hiles

Shout Out for SEND (Young People's Participation Group)

Buckinghamshire's local area partnership is pleased to present this Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy.

This strategy demonstrates the commitment of partners to improve services for children and young people with SEND in Buckinghamshire, working collaboratively to drive change. It is this shared commitment that has enabled the Local Area to make progress in improving services and outcomes for children and young people with SEND since the Local Area SEND Inspection in March 2022.

Our SEND Strategy 2025 – 2030 has been developed with a wide range of stakeholders across the local area and we strongly believe that our culture of co-production will enable us to deliver this strategy.

The strategy has high aspirations and aims to narrow the achievement gap by providing the right support at the right time. It has a focus on early support, reflecting a needs-based approach to supporting children and young people with SEND. Our shared ambition is for every child and young person with SEND to feel included and supported when they access education and be able to take part in meaningful opportunities within the community as they transition into adulthood.

We will review the strategy and associated action plans on an annual basis to ensure that we remain focused on the right things and continue to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND in Buckinghamshire.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy.

John Macilwraith, Director of Children Services (TBC)

Rachel Corser, Chief Nursing Officer, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (TBC)

Introduction

In Buckinghamshire we are ambitious to continue to improve the support we provide to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families.

‘Local area partnership’ is a term used throughout this strategy. This partnership includes children and young people with SEND, their families/carers, and those in education, health and care (including the voluntary and community sector) who are responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of arrangements for children and young people with SEND who live in Buckinghamshire.

This strategy builds on our 2021 – 2023 strategy and reflects the progress Buckinghamshire has made since the publication of the [Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission SEND Inspection outcome report](#) in March 2022. It sets out our key priorities and the steps we are taking to achieve our goals. This strategy is delivered through the local area partnership’s SEND Strategic Delivery Plan which incorporates the:

- [Buckinghamshire Delivering better Value \(DBV\) programme](#)
- [Buckinghamshire Written Statement of Action \(WSOA\) \(March 22\)](#)
- [Early Identification and Intervention to Better Support Children and Young People’s Therapy Needs | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](#)
- [All Age Autism Strategy](#)

Buckinghamshire’s financial position of the High Needs block is challenging; this is due to the increase in demand for SEN support against the smaller increase in funding. Although this is recognised as a national issue, there is a requirement for Councils to manage this. The strategy sets out the key priorities to meet the demand for SEND. These priorities contribute to reducing the High Needs deficit through better use of resources linked to the Education Provision and High Support Needs workstreams and sufficiency activities. The 5-year strategy will not, however,

address the growing High Needs deficit, although the strategy will contribute to managing the growth in the deficit and increase in demand being seen within the number and complexity of requests for support for SEND needs across the partnership, alongside the increased pressure on local provision and increased reliance on high cost independent placements. This strategy will support the development of Buckinghamshire's SEND Sufficiency Plan to provide local provision that meets the needs of children and young people, allowing our children and young people to remain part of their local community. The financial impact of this demand has been evidenced in the Local Government Association report [Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England](#) published in July 2024 which is calling for national reform of the SEND system.

Buckinghamshire is committed to maintaining an accurate and honest self-evaluation of our SEND system, so we know what is working well and what needs to improve. This strategy has been written in response to our self-evaluation.

We will continue to engage children and young people with SEND and their families, through our partnerships with young people's groups (including [Shout Out for SEND \(SOFS\)](#) and [Article 12](#)), Buckinghamshire's Parent/Carer Forum [FACT Bucks](#), and broader stakeholder engagement. We commit to ensuring that voices are heard and to provide updates on changes made. We will use the feedback to help inform us of our strengths, and to shape the improvement actions we take.

The local area partnership has worked collaboratively to develop this strategy and commits to co-production in delivery of these ambitions in line with Buckinghamshire's [Co-production Charter](#).

Aspirations

Buckinghamshire's local area partnership is committed to making changes that we believe will make a real difference to the lives of children, young people, and families in our SEND community.

Our aspirations are to:

- Embed an early intervention and needs led approach. We want children, young people and their families to be supported at the earliest possible stage, and for this support not to be dependent on a clinical diagnosis.
- Integrate and strengthen service delivery so that the whole system works in a coherent way.
- Strengthen communication, providing clear advice and guidance so that families access the right support at the right time.
- Develop a consistent approach to decision-making about the support provided for children and young people with high support needs. We will use a multi-disciplinary team approach, to make sure the right expertise informs the decisions.

- Develop our SEND Sufficiency Plan to provide local provision that meets the needs of children young people, allowing our children and young people to remain part of their local community.
- Strengthen our approach to Preparation for Adulthood, ensuring there are clear pathways for children and young people to access meaningful opportunities at post-16 and post-19.

Local Area Shared Principles

The following 7 principles underpin the delivery of this strategy.

We will:

1. Continue to seek feedback from children, young people and their families so that we understand their **lived experience** and take steps to continually improve it.
2. Further develop **co-production** at all levels (individually, operationally and strategically) in line with the [Co-production Charter](#)
3. Support and develop the **workforce** so they can deliver excellence in SEND. This will include developing interpersonal skills and a learning culture across the local area.
4. Champion **early intervention**, engaging families at the earliest opportunity when needs are identified, providing the right support at the right time.
5. Adopt a solution focused approach that values **creativity and flexibility** in meeting the needs of children and young people.
6. Ensure **efficient use of resources** through sharpening our focus on the impact and outcomes for children and young people.
7. Embed a culture of **trust, openness and transparency** which encourages mutual support and constructive challenge.

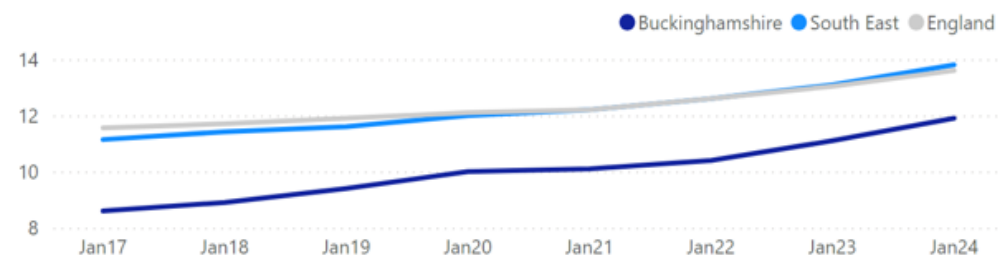
The Buckinghamshire Context

SEN Support

The number of children and young people receiving SEN support in Buckinghamshire is below the national average. The gap between Buckinghamshire, the South-East and England has narrowed slightly since 2017 but figures are still significantly lower.

Across the academic year 2023/24, 11.4% of Buckinghamshire school age children were identified to require SEN support, compared to the national average of 13.6%. This suggests that needs are not being identified as early as they could be.

% of CYP with SEN Support in Buckinghamshire schools



KPI	Jan17	Jan18	Jan19	Jan20	Jan21	Jan22	Jan23	Jan24
% of CYP with SEN Support in Buckinghamshire schools	8.6	8.9	9.4	10.0	10.1	10.4	11.1	11.9

Latest published benchmarks - % SEN Support

Buckinghamshire	South East	England
11.90	13.80	13.60

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

In June 2024, 7008 EHCPs were maintained in Buckinghamshire. This is an increase of 14% on the previous year and equates to 4.8% of children and young people. This is in line with the England and South-East averages.

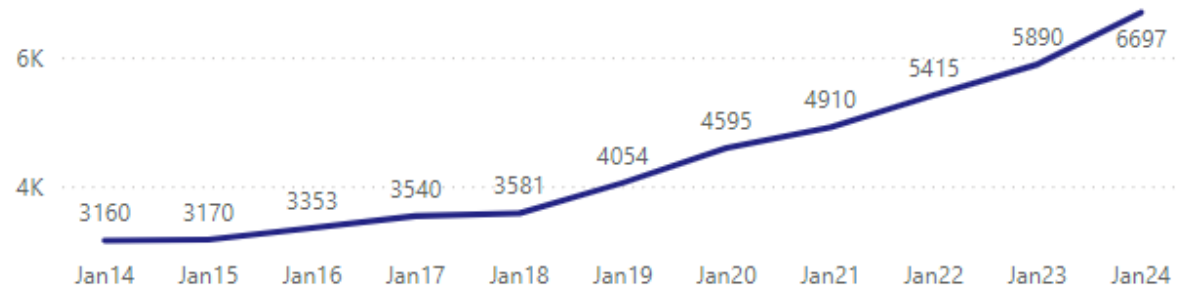
The number of EHCPs maintained in Buckinghamshire has increased by 112% compared to 10 years ago. Nationally, the number of EHCPs maintained has increased by 143% in the same period, and across the South-East has increased by 157%.

The figures here demonstrate continued growth and demand across the system and indicate that numbers in Buckinghamshire are in line with national data trends.

This increase in demand is being seen within the number and complexity of requests for support for SEND needs across the partnership, alongside the increased pressure on local provision and increased reliance on high-cost independent placements. The cost of meeting these demands has caused and continues to cause vast financial pressures on the Buckinghamshire Local Area with action needing to be taken to work towards an effective and financially sustainable approach.

The financial impact of this demand has been evidenced in the Local Government Association report [Towards an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England](#) published in July 2024 which is calling for national reform of the SEND system.

Number of EHCPs maintained



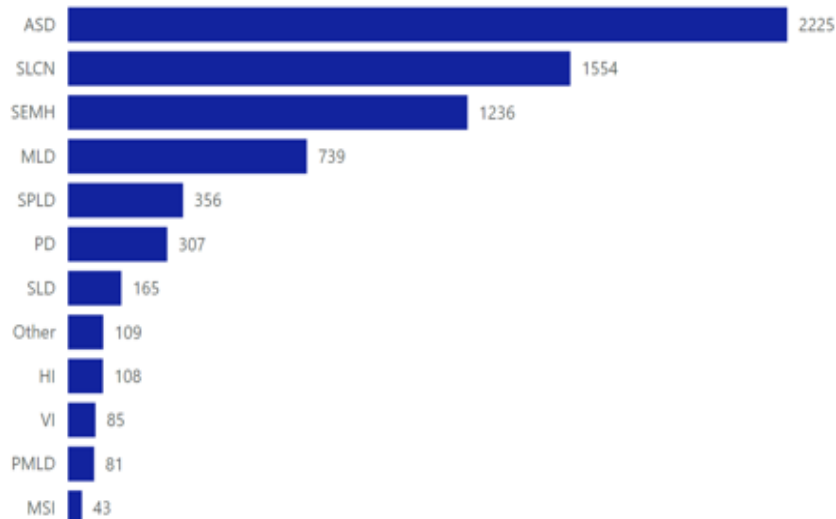
trend data includes statements as well as EHCPs

Placements

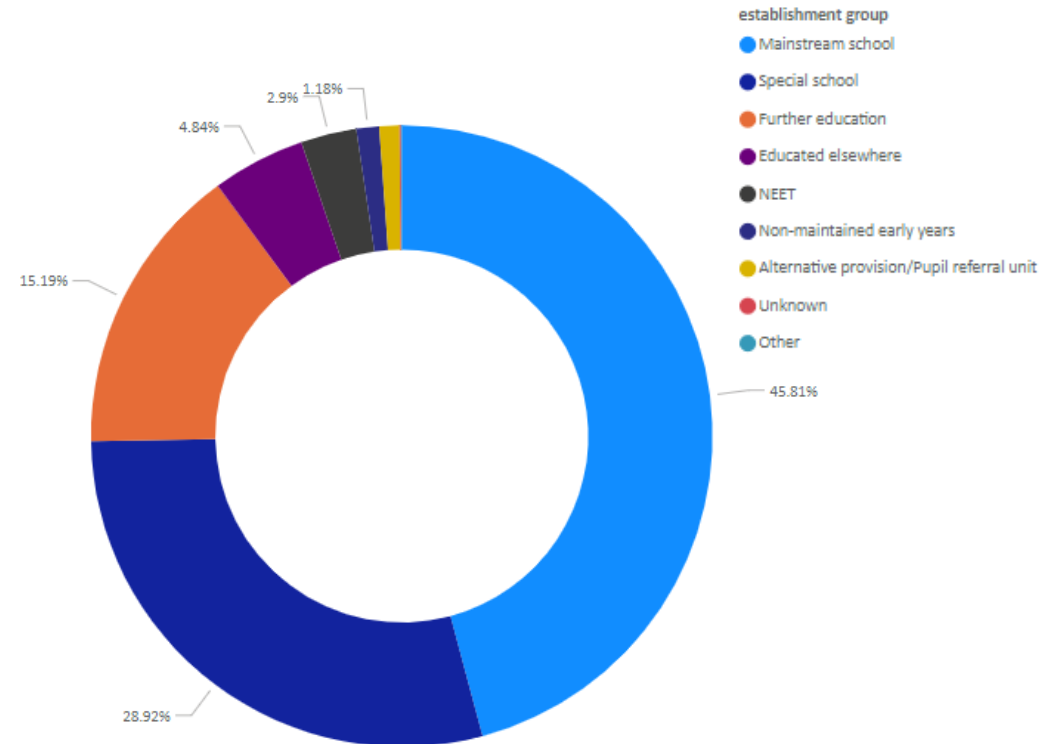
In 2024, 1937 (29%) of Buckinghamshire CYP with EHCPs were placed in special schools. Nationally 32% were placed in special schools, and in the South-East 34%. 10 years ago, 43% of CYP with ECHPs in Buckinghamshire were placed in special schools, compared to 44% nationally and 48% in the Sout-East.

Between 2014 and 2024 the number of Buckinghamshire CYP with EHCPs placed in independent special schools has increased from 95 to 175 – an increase of 44%. Nationally, independent special school placements increased by 66%, and in the South-East these placements increased by 71%.

Current maintained EHCPs by primary need



PERCENTAGE OF PLACEMENTS BY ESTABLISHMENT GROUP



Areas of Need

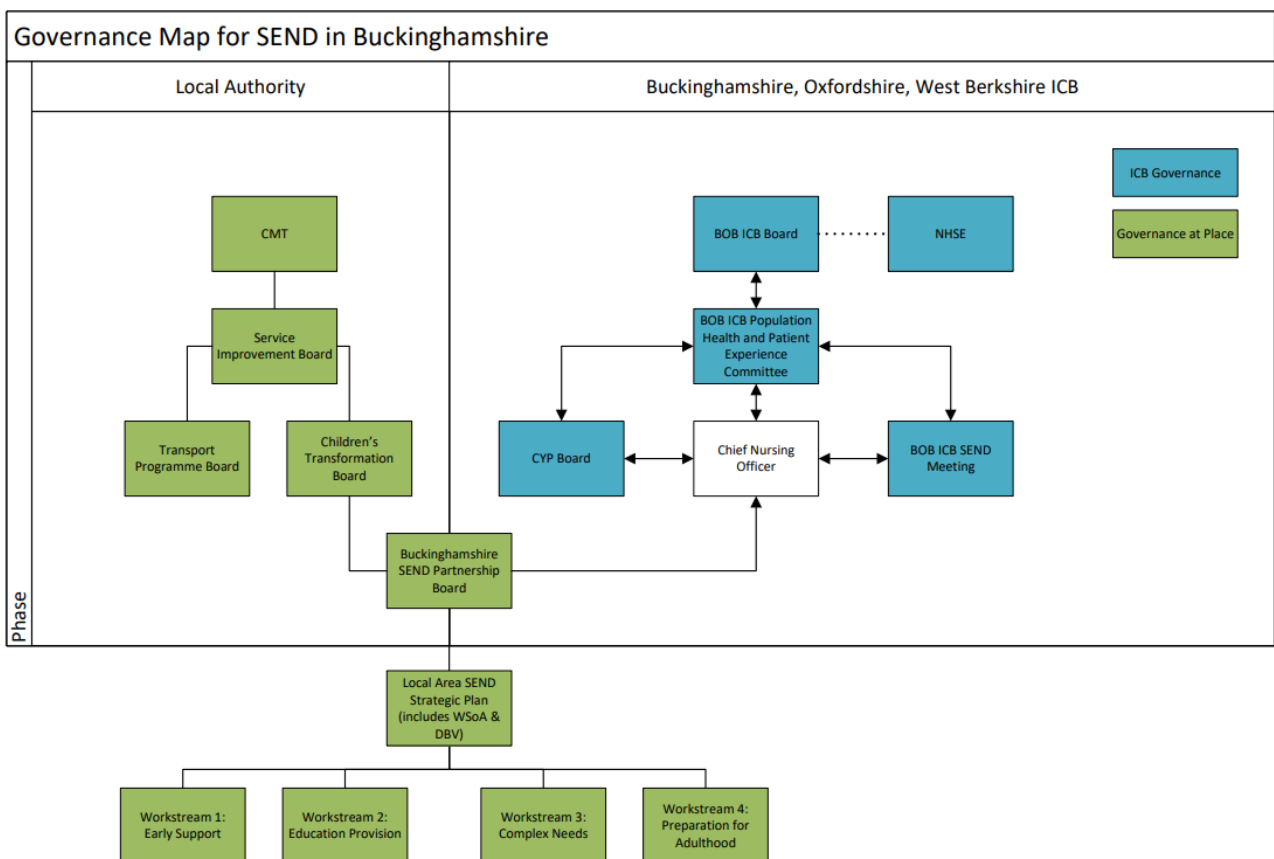
Over 50% of pupils with an EHCP in Buckinghamshire have a primary need linked to Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties. 32% of pupils with an EHCP have a primary need of ASD which is line with the national average of 33%.

The [local offer](#) for children and young people with SEND (0-25 years) provides information for families about the support available in Buckinghamshire.

Governance

The SEND Partnership Board provides multi-agency governance of SEND in Buckinghamshire, driving change and improvement. The Board has ownership of this strategy and has a critical role in scrutinising and challenging the progress made against its priorities. It ensures there is a collaborative approach to understanding local need and the delivery of services for children and young people with SEND and their families.

The Board sits within a broader governance structure across Buckinghamshire Council and the Integrated Care Board, detailed below.



Impact and Outcomes

The impact of this strategy will be reported through the SEND Partnership Board which provides multi-agency governance of SEND in Buckinghamshire. This board role is to hold the partnership to account for the delivery of the outcomes, to ensure actions are leading to positive changes for children, young people and their families.

The SEND Partnership Board will monitor the impact of this strategy using the following tools:

- The Children and Young People's **Impact and Outcomes Framework**. This is aligned to our priorities and aims to triangulate quantitative and qualitative information so we can understand the difference any changes have made to the lived experience of children and young people with SEND, and their families.
- The **Local Area Outcomes Dashboard**. This will measure key performance indicators that tell us how well services are performing to meet children and young people's needs.

Children and young people with SEND have helped us to identify what good would look like. Their feedback is integral to measuring progress, and we have used their direct quotes to shape the success measures for each priority.

Strategic Priorities

Buckinghamshire's Strategic Plan* provides the detail for how the Local Area will deliver our 4 strategic priorities which are:

*(Hyperlink to be provided to Strategic Plan once published on the local offer)

1. Early Support
2. Education Provision and Decision-making
3. High Support Needs
4. Preparing for Adulthood

Progress against this plan is report bi-monthly at the SEND Partnership Board.

Priority 1: Early Support

Children with SEND and their families will have their needs met at the earliest opportunity and be able to easily access a wide range of effective support to help them thrive.

Children and young people have shared the following aspirations:

- “I feel in control of how I receive support”
- “I know about what support from health services I am entitled to, including mental health support through CAMHS, and won’t wait a long time to access this”
- “I access specialised support if I received trauma at an early age”
- “I can access my GP with no barriers for me to receive the support I need”
- “I won’t experience trauma that can be prevented, which impacts on the rest of my life”
- “I will be safeguarded by the people that support me, which will reduce further disabilities or trauma”
- “My mental health needs are supported on an ongoing basis, not only at crisis point”
- “I access age-appropriate activities with the right support”
- “I am allowed to engage in activities that don't match my peers”

We will:

- work across the whole system to make sure children and young people’s needs are understood as early as possible so that all partners can provide the right support at the right time.
- deliver the graduated approach. Early years settings and mainstream settings will be able to clearly demonstrate how Ordinary Available Provision (OAP) is implemented and monitored.
- communicate with professionals and families more effectively by developing a consistent approach. This will mean that parents, carers and professionals will know about the support and training available and be able to signpost appropriately.

We will know we have been successful when families tell us:

- Their child’s needs were identified at the right time.

- It is easy to access the services they require for information and support.
- They are aware of the Local Offer which is comprehensive, accessible and includes information about employment and other meaningful activities.
- Waiting times, and/or clinical diagnosis are not a barrier to accessing the information and support they require.
- Training and information is making a positive difference to their lived experience.
- The EHCP is reflective of their child's needs and provision has been appropriately identified.
- They feel supported and are able to access early help.

We will know we have been successful when data tells us:

- Sustained numbers of professionals, families and CYP accessing the revised training offer and universal support services
- Increase in the percentage of CYP with SEND on the SEN Support Register with consideration surrounding type of setting

Priority 2: Education Provision and Decision Making

There will be sufficient high quality education provision to meet the continuum of SEND educational needs including post 16 mainstream, ARPs and units, specialist and alternative provision.

Children and young people have shared the following aspirations:

- "I have teachers who read my EHCP, understand my needs and have the time to support me"
- "I can access timely and consistent mental health support, which includes 1:1 drop-in support when at school"
- "I can access extracurricular activities and school trips"
- "I feel safe in school"
- "I feel my peers understand my needs and include me in school life"
- "I am supported effectively by school when moving to a new class, educational setting, or employment"

- “If I can’t attend school, I receive the same standard of education and support at home”
- “I have opportunities to have a say in how my school supports me and my peers with SEND”
- “I want to learn beyond the school curriculum and shouldn't be measured solely on this”

We will:

- Ensure that all children and young people with SEND can access high quality education provision as close to home as possible that meets their needs and helps them achieve positive outcomes.
- Support settings and partners to have confidence in the graduated approach.
- Develop strategic plans for alternative provision to ensure partners have the right type, quantity and range of alternative provision to meet children and young people’s needs.
- Develop a culture of inclusivity across educational settings and wider community providers in Buckinghamshire.

We will know we have been successful when families tell us:

- Their child has access to the right learning environment, at the right times, helping them to thrive and achieve their aspirations.
- The network of professionals, and the wider community around them really understand their needs and can offer the right support when required.
- The EHCP represents a holistic view of their child’s needs and provision has been appropriately identified.
- Their voice is seen as important and heard by the local area.
- Training they have accessed has made a tangible difference to their lived experience.

We will know we have been successful when data tells us:

- There are sufficient educational placements to meet growing demand at all levels.
- That SEND children and young people are achieving their identified outcomes
- Quality assurance processes highlight and influence good quality annual reviews, and EHC Plans

- Increase in the percentage of SEND CYP accessing provision in Buckinghamshire

Priority 3: High Support Needs

Agencies will work together to ensure that children and young people with high support needs or wider vulnerabilities receive timely, appropriate and integrated support.

Representatives of children and young people with high support needs have shared the following aspirations on their behalf:

- I am able to socialise in appropriate groups/activities outside of school with confidence, which I am currently unable to do.
- I can access a strong support network to assure my well-being both now and in the future.
- I am supported outside of the family home in an appropriate setting that will cater for my needs but also nurture and enable me to grow.
- I can lead a happy and fulfilling life despite my difficulties, with the right support.
- I am part of a society that treats me with the respect I deserve.
- I am seen for who I am, and not my complex needs.
- “I am valued as an individual who will have varying needs across a wide range of services”
- “I can live in in-patient care which is closer to my friends, family and community who can also act as support for me”
- “I am seen as someone with high support needs, not complex needs”
- “The people who support me (family/carers, friends and professionals) will be supported to help me in achieving my potential”
- “My achievements are not graded on a checklist but against my personal goals”

We will:

- Develop systems to enable services to work together to ensure we are effectively supporting children and young people with high support needs.
- Improve access to short breaks, respite and wider care provision.
- Review and simplify processes and systems so it is easier to access the right support at the right time.

- Contribute to education sufficiency planning for those with high levels of need.
- Contribute to key strategic priorities linked to Preparation for Adulthood for those with high levels of need.

We will know we have been successful when families tell us:

- Their child has access to the right learning environment, at the right times, helping them to thrive and achieve their aspirations.
- The network of professionals, and the wider community around them really understand their needs and can offer the right support when required.
- It is easy to access wider support for the family for education, health and/or social care needs.
- They feel valued and heard by the network around their child.
- Training they have accessed has made a tangible difference to their lived experience.
- The EHCP represents a holistic view of their child’s needs and informs future planning.

We will know we have been successful when data tells us:

- Quality Assurance measures highlight good quality health and social care contributions to new EHCPs and annual reviews
- Increase in the percentage of children and young people with high support needs accessing provision in Buckinghamshire
- A reduction in the percentage of children and young people with SEND who are NEET (Not in Employment Education or Training) or unplaced in Buckinghamshire

Priority 4: Preparation for Adulthood

Young people will be able to access a range of suitable post 16 progression routes and support for independence where necessary. Transitions to adult services will be smooth and effective.

Children and young people have shared the following aspirations:

- “I understand my own citizenship, including budgeting, paying taxes and my rights”
- “I meet new people, build positive relationships, and explore new opportunities”
- “I can access the relevant training and qualifications I need in my chosen career path”

- “I am given support and resources to find the career path that is right for me”
- “I have full autonomy over my decisions about my future”
- “I have the skills to ask for help when I need it”
- “I am given opportunities to socialise outside of education settings”
- “I achieve independence through affordable housing that meets or is adapted to meet my needs”
- “I can buy the things I need to live my life (by making OT equipment, etc. affordable)”
- “I have the choice to live in supported living, close to where I work”
- “I have a variety of choices for my supported internship, not just in hospitality or business admin”
- “I feel supported by my employer who will understand what I need to succeed in a role”
- “I am aware of what employers and jobs are the right match for me”
- “I am given the proper care in the present moment, to allow me to prepare for adulthood”

We will:

- Support settings in Buckinghamshire to use the Preparation for Adulthood framework to develop the knowledge, skills and independence of children and young people with SEND.
- Develop pathways and processes to facilitate children’s services and adult services working together, promoting positive transitions for young people.
- Ensure children and young people are supported to advocate for themselves, make choices and benefit from being part of inclusive communities.
- Develop the post 16 offer, including further education, work with training, volunteering and/or meaningful opportunities and improve the support provided for transitions.
- Develop the work with post-16 providers so they can prepare young people for increased independence ahead of post-19 transitions.

We will know we have been successful when families tell us:

- They have been able to easily access the most appropriate provision for the child/young person throughout their journey.
- They are supported and heard by a knowledgeable network of professionals around them to manage transition periods throughout their journey.
- Information and support was easily accessible for key transition points throughout their journey.
- They feel connected to their community.
- They have been supported to live their most independent lives.

We will know we have been successful when data tells us:

- Young people are experiencing positive transitions (health, education and care) and accessing meaningful opportunities.
- Increase in the percentage of children and young people with SEND post 16 accessing provision in Buckinghamshire
- Increase in the percentage of children and young people with SEND entering higher education, employment or meaningful activities within their local communities
- A reduction in the gap between children and young people with SEND and non SEND in Employment Education or Training (NEET) CYP in Buckinghamshire
- Quality assurance processes highlight and influence good quality annual reviews and EHC Plans with a clear focus planning across the four pillars of preparation for adulthood

Conclusion

In summary, this strategy aims to keep driving improvements in the SEND system. It will ensure children and young people with SEND are well supported and able to achieve their aspirations. We are committed to working collaboratively with families and professionals on the identified priorities.

Associated Strategies and Programmes:

- [Children's Services Transformation and Improvement](#)

- [Early Identification and Intervention to Better Support Children and Young People's Therapy Needs | Family Information Service \(buckinghamshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/early-identification-and-intervention-to-better-support-children-and-young-peoples-therapy-needs-family-information-service)
- All Age Autism Strategy
- [Buckinghamshire's Education Strategy](#)
- BOB ICB Joint Forward Plan

Glossary

- **SEND**

Special Education Needs and Disabilities

- **Local area partnership**

This refers to those in education, health and social care who are responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of arrangements for children and young people with SEND who live in a local area.

- **FACT Bucks**

FACT Bucks is the Parent Carers Forum for Buckinghamshire (Bucks PCF). It is an independent, pan-disability, parent-led charity.

- **Shout out for SEND (SOFS)**

Shout out for SEND (SOFS) is a group for young people with a Special Educational Need or Disability to represent the wider 'youth voice' in Buckinghamshire.

- **Preparation for Adulthood**

Preparing for Adulthood (often shortened to PfA) is about planning and taking steps so that young people with SEND can enjoy independent living as much as possible, achieve as much as possible, reach their goals, dreams and ambitions in adult life.

Abbreviations:

- ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder
- SLCN - Speech and Language Communication Needs
- SEMH - Social Emotional Mental Health
- MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulties
- SPLD - Specific Learning Disability
- PD - Physical Disability
- SLD - Severe Learning Disability
- HI - Hearing Impairment/Hearing Support

- VI - Vision Impairment
- PMLD - Profound Multiple Learning Disabilities
- MSI - Multi-Sensory Impairment
- CP - Child Protection
- CWD - Children with Disabilities
- CLA - Child Looked After
- CIN - Child in Need

More common SEND terms can be found [here](#)