

West Sussex SEND Pathways to Adulthood Strategy

Foreword

Dear Resident/Colleague,

West Sussex County Council with its partners, young people with SEND and their parent carers, began work in February 2016 on the development of the *West Sussex SEND Pathways to Adulthood Strategy* in response to the Children & Families Act 2014 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reforms

Prior to this there was no over-arching vision for the improvement of outcomes for young people with SEND or an agreed approach to empowering and enabling them to achieve a successful transition into adulthood. Our direct work with young people and parent carers in the development of this Strategy has provided a valuable insight into how this actually impacts on their lives and therefore what needs to change to improve things in the future.

As a result of multi-stakeholder input, the vision at the heart of the West Sussex Strategy is for each young person with SEND to:

- have more control over their lives;
- achieve as much independence as possible – including how to keep themselves safe and healthy;
- realise their ambitions, and
- progress successfully into adult life.

This includes enabling, empowering and supporting them to:

- develop independent living skills;
- make a positive contribution to the community they live in;
- take part in more learning, training or employment opportunities;
- access housing options that mean they can live safely and successfully on their own or with others, and
- enjoy the best possible health and emotional well-being.

This document is integral to the County's wider SEND Strategy and will be closely aligned with the County's Life Pathways work (for children and adults with disabilities) as it develops.

We welcome everyone who believes they have a role to play in improving outcomes for young people with SEND to join with us in delivering West Sussex's commitment to transform the Strategy's vision into reality for each and every young person.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Hillier, West Sussex County Council Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life

Deborah Myers, Director for Education and Skills

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Introduction and Context

The West Sussex Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Pathways to Adulthood Strategy is focused on young people with SEND between the ages of 16 – 25 and their families and has been produced as part of the County's implementation of the SEND reforms.

The system for supporting children and young people with SEND changed in September 2014, with the implementation of Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. The Government introduced these reforms to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and radically change the experience of parents/carers seeking to access help and support to meet their children's needs. The new system, which is for children and young people with SEND from 0–25, places families at its heart; engaging parents/carers and young people with SEND in the design and improvement of services and in decisions affecting how their needs are identified, assessed and met.

The extension of statutory responsibilities up to the age of 25 require those supporting young people to focus on ordinary life outcomes such as paid employment; independent living (choice and control over your life and support, and good housing options); community participation (friends, relationships and community inclusion); and health and wellbeing.

Links with other work

The WSCC SEND Strategy 2016-19 was approved by the Cabinet Member Children - Start of Life in October 2016. It was co-produced with education, health, early years, voluntary sector and parent representatives. It aims to provide high quality local education provision for children and young people with SEND and optimise value for money from the high needs block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. The SEND Pathways to Adulthood Strategy is not a stand-alone Strategy but an integral and interdependent part of the wider SEND Strategy.

It will be integrated with the County's Life Pathways initiative which aims to improve outcomes by providing a consistent approach to working with people with lifelong disabilities and autism of all ages, and their families. This will build on their strengths to develop skills and independence; promote and maintain safety and good health; encourage and facilitate employment, valued roles and relationships within their communities; and make best use of public money. It will also be linked with work happening within the NHS locally related to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence.

Even without the reforms, Post 16 provision in the County was recognised as a key area for development in the County; as its "life after school offer" lacked a coherent vision and approach to enabling young people with SEND to achieve their desired outcomes as they progress into adulthood. This Strategy sets out the missing common vision for that offer and priorities for achieving it and its supporting plan says how this will be translated into reality over the next 3 years. The underpinning aim of the Strategy is to enable, empower and support all young people with SEND to have a successful transition to adulthood.

How the Strategy was developed and will be implemented

This Strategy has been generated through a co-production and design model which began with the formation of a stakeholder Steering Group that was responsible for

its production. The steering group included representation from parent carers; representatives from Health, Communities, Education and Social Care – both adults and children’s services; schools and colleges; and the voluntary and community sector. That co-production and co-design approach continued as we went ‘out on the road’ to raise awareness about the developing Strategy and sought wider input from parent carers, young people and service providers into its focus and content.

This approach will continue throughout the development of plans for the implementation of the Strategy; as a means of ensuring that it is continually informed by those it is intended to benefit and to maintain the dynamic nature of the work. Consideration will be given to how this work links with Life Pathways and the membership of the Steering Group will be reviewed so that it can change into a planning and implementation group tasked with working up the detailed plans to translate the Strategy into reality and ensuring these are implemented on the ground.

At a time when the Council and its partners have limited and diminishing financial resources the implementation of this Strategy will, as far as possible, be achieved without additional resources, through new and innovative ways of working; targeted partnership working on shared objectives and initiatives and through careful planning, prioritisation and re-prioritisation of existing resources.

The Strategy needs to be recorded so that we are all aware of what has been agreed and can unite in ensuring its implementation, but we recognise that it is only genuinely valuable when its intentions are successfully manifested and making a positive difference to the day to day lives of young people with SEND and their families.

Why a strategy is needed

The SEND Pathways to Adulthood Strategy is concerned with improving outcomes for all young people with SEND. Its vision and primary focus is to enable young people to have more control over their lives; achieve as much independence as possible – including how to keep themselves safe and healthy; realise their ambitions and progress successfully into adult life.

A Strategy is needed to:

- Set out how we will put in place all the elements of the Children and Families Act, 2014; and the Care Act, 2014 that apply to young people between the ages of 16 – 25 and ensure that the approaches taken are sustainable and effective further into adult life.
- Help everyone who with an interest in this area of work to know and understand what we are seeking to achieve; and how, together we aim to achieve it.
- Help us focus on doing the right things; in the right place; with the right people; at the right time.

How the Strategy will be used

The Strategy will be used by the Local Authority and its partners to drive the systematic improvement of outcomes for young people with SEND (between the ages of 16 – 25) and their families.

It will do this, through its implementation plan which will provide clear expectations of what should be in place; how this can be accessed; which organisations, services or groups (commissioned or non-commissioned) will be responsible for delivery; and in working towards consistency in the quality and range of the offer provided, how the work will be monitored, measured and evaluated.

Principles underpinning the Pathways to Adulthood Strategy

At the outset, The Local Authority and its partners agreed to define a set of key principles that would not only underpin the way in which the Strategy was developed, but also its content and subsequent implementation.

The Strategy:

- Is a priority for the work of the Local Authority and all its partners and its themes and priorities will be evident in a range of high level plans that seek to improve outcomes for children/young people and families.
- Is owned and promoted by the Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education Directorate and all partners involved in its design and delivery.
- Includes all relevant strands of work as set out in legislation and national good practice guidelines.
- Builds on the work already taking place.
- Is representative of the 0 – 25 age range, ensuring a seamless transition into provision and support beyond the age of 25.
- Is based on a person-centred approach leading to improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Has been co-designed and developed with those impacted by it.
- Will be used to influence the wider landscape e.g. employment, education, health, social care, work with communities, voluntary and community sector, in order to improve outcomes for children, young people with SEND and their families.
- Has clear governance arrangements for its design, development and implementation.
- Will be implemented with support from the Local Authority and partners' resources, recognising that capacity will come from both existing resources and new ways of working that are in keeping with the Future West Sussex vision.
- Will be monitored and evaluated throughout its implementation to ensure its success.

Vision for the Strategy

Our Vision statement

'The West Sussex Pathways to Adulthood Strategy's primary purpose is to enable all children and young people (0 – 25) with SEND to have more control over their lives; achieve as much independence as possible – including how to keep themselves safe and healthy; realise their ambitions and progress successfully into adult life. They will be supported to do this through building on their strengths and thinking creatively with them about the outcomes they want to achieve; connecting them to their local communities and where required through service provision informed by young people's needs and aspirations.'

The Scope of the Vision

The broad scope of the vision for this Strategy is what is required to enable, empower and support each young person to achieve individually appropriate success in terms of their successful transition to adulthood. This includes their capacity to live independently; achieve employment; be an active member of their community; and keep themselves healthy and safe.

This means enabling, empowering and supporting them to:

- Acquire the skills they need to move successfully through their education; and pursue vocational opportunities through participation in volunteering opportunities; work experience; supported internships; apprenticeships; job coaching; and paid or unpaid employment.
- Develop the skills and confidence they need to become as independent as possible in relation to: travel; managing their finances and activities of daily living such as cooking and cleaning; living on their own or with others; and forming and sustaining positive relationships with friends and others into adult life.
- Become and remain active citizens; living and participating in their local communities and making a positive contribution to the development and improvement of these.
- Be able to keep themselves safe and healthy and know what health services are available to support this- including mental health services, and how to access what they need to maintain or achieve good health and well-being.

Priorities

This Strategy does not include reference to all the work that is currently being undertaken in this area, to improve outcomes for young people with SEND, by agencies and services, organisations and by parent carers and young people themselves, but its supporting plan will build on what is already in place to help achieve the priorities identified in this Strategy.

This Strategy concentrates on a number of priorities, that are believed will make the biggest difference to the lives of young people with SEND and their families and are those that can be best achieved by working together. To help us decide what these should be we used a range of information and data that was already available, including intelligence that could be gathered from the membership of our Steering Group and the views of parent carers, young people and organisations and services who work to support young people with SEND in this age range.

The priorities that form the focus of this Strategy are written from the young person's perspective and are:

- 1) I will be able to live as independently as possible;
- 2) I will be able to make a positive contribution to the community I live in;
- 3) I will be enabled, empowered or supported to take part in more learning, training or employment opportunities;
- 4) I will be able to access housing options that mean I can live safely and successfully on my own or with others;
- 5) I will be enabled, empowered or supported to enjoy the best possible health and emotional well-being.

The first priority: *I will be able to live as independently as possible* should, perhaps, be viewed as the key priority, as this is central to our vision, with the other priorities being those that will enable this to be achieved. However, all our priorities are interdependent – by addressing one, we are automatically helping to address another.

Scope of Priorities

Our work to identify and select the key priorities that this Strategy would focus on provided us with a rich source of information about what each priority could and/or should include in practice. This is provided below and will inform the detailed plans we use to implement the Strategy and how we measure our progress.

Priority 1:

I will be able to live as independently as possible

This priority includes the scope of all the other priorities and is inclusive of the skills young people with SEND need to manage their finances; live in their own accommodation; form and sustain positive relationships with friends and colleagues in work-related environments; and know how to access and make good use of mainstream adults' services:

- Young people have opportunities to develop skills that promote and optimise independence in the context of their individual circumstances and conditions.
- Young people and adults with disabilities are able to take risks in their progress towards independence and are encouraged to learn through both their successes and failures.
- Families are actively engaged in the planning of how a young person could move towards independence.
- There are a range of accessible support services available across the county which can be accessed on a short or long term basis, with the aim of further developing independence.
- Independent travel training and use of the Access Card enable young people to see friends and stay connected with their communities;
- Carers and independent living programmes enable young people to learn how to shop and cook for themselves.
- The focus on independence is on-going; allowing levels of support to reduce as a young person's independence grows.
- A commitment that if a person will become less independent, either short term or in the longer term, support will be adapted to maximise well-being and promote regaining of independence.

Priority 2:

I will be able to make a positive contribution to the community I live in

This priority includes the scope of all the other priorities and is about enabling young people with SEND to have information, advice, guidance and support on elements of active citizenship; living as part of and making a positive contribution to a community; forming and sustaining relationships (friends and other relationships); and to feel respected and valued by others:

- Young people with SEND have an active social life and know how to make and sustain a range of relationships including those with family, friends and work colleagues.

- Young people with SEND feel a part of their local community and participate in activities that inform decision making and can help to improve their own life; the environment in which they live and the lives of others.
- Young people with SEND participate in the National Citizenship Scheme.
- Young people with SEND participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award and other Award schemes.
- Information is available on the Local Offer, Your Space and Connect to Support about the range of opportunities available for young people to develop their capacity for independence and what support is available for them and their families in preparing for and accessing these.

Priority 3:

I will be enabled, empowered or supported to take part in more learning, training or employment opportunities

This priority includes access to learning, training and access/ supported access to volunteering; paid and unpaid employment, supported internships, apprenticeships, work experience and personalised study programmes.

- Appropriately high expectations regarding participation in learning, training and employment will be formed, from an early age, in young people with SEND; and in parent carers; staff in learning settings; and employers.
- Young people with SEND have opportunities to develop their confidence and skills in work-related environments including volunteering, work experience, apprenticeships and supported internships.
- The strengths that young people with SEND can bring to the workplace will be demonstrated through successful work placements and publicised to local businesses to encourage employment of young people with SEND.
- A strengths-based approach will be promoted in respect of recruitment processes for vocational opportunities.
- Young people are supported to find meaningful paid and unpaid work that makes best use of their abilities.
- Training and support will be provided at community level, for young people with SEND who are keen to set-up their own businesses;
- Young people with SEND are welcomed and included in post 16 schools and colleges.
- Planning for progression to the next level of study and pathways to adulthood outcomes is embedded in courses of study in schools and colleges, from year 9 upwards.
- Post-16 provision meets student demand within West Sussex and providers are able to meet the needs of individual students.
- Pre-enrolment activities support transition and student access to courses.
- Schools and colleges provide programmes of study focused on independent living skills.
- Peer mentoring; buddying and advocacy systems are in place to support young people with SEND in accessing learning, training and employment opportunities.

- Information is available on the Local Offer, Your Space and Connect to Support about the range of learning, training and vocational opportunities available for young people; and the support available in accessing these.

Priority 4:

I will be able to access housing options that mean I can live safely and successfully on my own or with others

- There are a range of accommodation solutions available across the County corresponding to current and forecasted needs.
- Young people and their families know and understand the range of options available, any criteria for these, and how and when they need to express and plan for their preference.
- Young people will have enough information to make informed decisions about where they want to live and what support they need to achieve this.
- Young adults who are supported in transition through a social care pathway will have their housing needs assessed as part of this process.
- Partnership working with Districts and Boroughs helps to improve housing outcomes for young people with SEND.
- Information is available on the Local Offer; Your Space and Connect to Support about the range of housing options available for young people and what support is available to help them access these.

Priority 5:

I will be enabled, empowered or supported to enjoy the best possible health and emotional well-being.

This priority includes young people's physical, emotional and mental health and young people knowing what support they are entitled to and how to get it in a timely way.

Community organisations at local level welcome, promote and actively support the participation of young people with SEND in a range of social and leisure activities *e.g. dance groups; discos; swimming and access to soft play and sensory rooms appropriate for young people.*

- Organisations provide designated staff to champion and meet the needs of young people who want to participate in their activities/use their facilities.
- Young people are empowered/supported to independently carry out daily activities that maintain their health and well-being and know how to get help if they need it.
- Young people know and understand their own health needs and can navigate the systems that enable them to self-manage these. They also know how to get help when they need it.

- Young people know and understand the impact of lifestyle choices on their health including the benefits of choosing to reduce smoking; avoid alcohol misuse; engage in exercise and have a healthy diet.
- Young people are supported to develop determination, resilience and the "ability to cope" with day to day life and successfully manage their particular problems and difficulties and the consequences of these. They also know how to get help if they need it.
- GP surgeries provide health checks for young people from the age of 14.
- Transition health outcomes are set at every transition Annual Review (Year 9).
- Organisations at community level are set up to support and provide facilities to help young people with lifelong conditions to self-manage them.
- Each young person has a suitable "self-owned" health passport for transition (e.g. through Ready, Steady Go or My Wiki).
- Every parent of a young person with SEND is offered the support of an *expert parent*.
- Peer mentoring, buddying and advocacy systems provide support for young people with SEND across health and well-being domains.
- Information is available on the Local Offer, Your Space and Connect to Support about the range of help and support available to young people in achieving and maintaining health and emotional well-being and how they (and their families) can access what they need.

Translating the Strategy into reality

At a strategic level, the Pathways to Adulthood Strategy needs to be owned and recognised by the local area of West Sussex, both the agencies, services and organisations that will take action to ensure it is able to address its priorities and those who will benefit from it. It is not solely a County Council Strategy but a West Sussex SEND Local Area Strategy and one of the primary challenges will be to ensure that as many people as possible understand the contribution they can make to its implementation.

The implementation of this Strategy will formally begin from 1st April 2017 and will be in place for 3 years.

Alongside the Strategy is a high level plan for its implementation. This sets out in outline how the Strategy's priorities will be addressed over the 3 years and the key indicators against which progress will be monitored and reported.

This will be followed by a more detailed Action Plan that will set out in relation to each priority the actions that will be taken; the timeframes for their delivery; who will be responsible for taking the actions forward; and the resources required. This Action Plan will be co-produced with parent carers; young people; representatives from Health, Communities, Education and Social Care – both adults and children's services; schools and colleges; and the voluntary and community sector.

Work to monitor and review the progress of the Action Plan's implementation is overseen by the Vulnerable Children's Sub Group of the Education & Skills Forum.

This group will be responsible for ensuring the Strategy is delivered and will aim to mitigate risks or issues that may compromise this.

Key ways of working to support the implementation of the Strategy

Recognising that work associated with the successful implementation of this Strategy is everyone's business, the Steering Group has suggested that the following ways of working need to be adopted by everyone involved and interested in its success, and should be visible in everything we do.

The successful delivery of this Strategy requires a commitment from all those involved to:

- Focus our energies and work together on the key priorities identified in the Strategy to make the best use of time and resources.
- The continued use of co-production and design methods with all those affected by the Strategy, in our approach to how it is put into practice.
- The use of a personalised, strengths and an assets-based approach to how we work with and support all young people with SEND and their families.
- Raise the aspirations of young people with SEND and those who support or work with them, regarding their capacity to achieve a fulfilling adult life.
- Ensure the right protections are in place to safeguard young people with SEND; and enable them to know and understand how to keep themselves safe from harm and exploitation and what to do if they are concerned about themselves or others.
- Enable young people with SEND to keep themselves healthy and active.
- Enable access to a wide range of Post 16 educational provision to support young people with SEND in achieving their aspirations.
- Facilitate access to high quality information about what is available and how to access it, through a range of channels and in accessible formats for young people; their families and those who work with them.
- Have a systematic approach to collecting and analysing the right information and data about what is available and the quality of provision and practice so we can make the best planning and commissioning decisions.

Glossary of key terms

There are a number of terms being used in this document that may be unfamiliar to some, or could be interpreted in a number of ways. To ensure that their meaning is clear we have included below a brief description of how and why we are using them.

1) Young person

The primary beneficiaries of this Strategy are those people with SEND who are between the ages of 16 – 25 who are often collectively termed either young people or young adults. The term young person seems to be the one most frequently used in West Sussex to describe people in this age range so we have chosen to use this term throughout.

2) A strengths-based approach

We are using the term *strengths-based approach* (taken from the Care Act 2014) to emphasise, not the *needs* of young people with SEND, but what they *can* do with the help of their own resources and those of others (e.g. in their social networks) to manage the challenges of everyday life and achieve their aspirations.

3) Education/educational settings

The terms education setting and educational setting may be used interchangeably and will be taken to mean any location where formal education takes place e.g. a nursery, a school, or a college or a specific place of learning within one of these settings, such as a classroom.

4) Transition

Transition applies to any and all of the life changes that children and young people go through including for example changing from one educational setting to another; moving from an educational setting into training or employment; moving from children's services to adults' services in social care or health environments. The aim of this Strategy is to help each young person with SEND to experience a smooth, seamless and successful transition into any and all of the different environments and circumstances they may need to move into in order to meet their needs and achieve their aspirations as adults.

Acknowledgements

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