

Meeting needs together, ambitious for all

Our plan for children and young people with
SEND or in Alternative Provision in Wiltshire
2024 – 2029

DRAFT



Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire Together



Wiltshire Council

Meeting Needs Together, Ambitious for All – Our Plan for Children and Young People with SEND or in Alternative Provision in Wiltshire

Welcome to the Wiltshire SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024-29

Wiltshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2023-32) sets out the vision that 'People in Wiltshire are empowered to live full, healthy and enriched lives.'

Our ambition to achieve this vision rests on ensuring that children and young people get a good start in life, build resilience and get the very best from their education. Offering support to all children, young people and their families, as well as focusing on those who need the help the most, reduces inequalities and improves outcomes.

We are committed to improving our services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and their families. We believe that SEND is everybody's business and are focused on providing excellent educational opportunities including alternative provision (AP) for those who need it. We are determined to do everything we can to provide better experiences and outcomes for all our children and young people with SEND in educational settings as well as for those that attend Alternative Provision.

A key to achieving this is placing children, young people and their families at the centre of our work, by ensuring joint working is at the heart of our services. Partners across the local area of Wiltshire are committed to working together with the Wiltshire Parent Carer Council as well as children, young people, parent carers and partner organisations. We know that this approach will mean improved support for children and young people with SEND, so that they have full, healthy and enriched lives.

'Meeting Needs Together, Ambitious for All' sets out our vision, the priorities we will focus on as a partnership and how we will do this work over the next five years. Our aim is to work together to deliver cohesive, holistic support to our children and families and to have the child or young person's aspirations and needs at the centre of our work.

We are developing our plan to reflect the priorities in this strategy. As we implement and measure our progress against each of the priorities, we will provide regular reports to the [SEND and AP Partnership Board](#) on the delivery of this strategy. We will regularly publish the outcomes of our actions on the [SEND Local Offer](#) website, and through an annual report, so that children and young people with SEND, their families and the wider public are fully informed on our progress.



Councillor Laura Mayes – Lead Member for
Children and Young People and Deputy Leader,
Wiltshire Council



Councillor Jane Davies – Cabinet Member for SEND,
Wiltshire Council



Lucy Townsend – Corporate Director of People Services,
Wiltshire Council



Strategic Director, Wiltshire Parent Carer Council



Gill May – Director of Nursing & Quality, B&NES, Swindon & Wiltshire Integrated Care Board



Kathryn Davis
Director of Education and Skills,
Wiltshire Council

How we produced our strategy, its scope and purpose

We worked jointly on this strategy with the [Wiltshire Parent Carer Council \(WPCC\)](#), our children and young people with lived experience of SEND and AP, our Young Pioneers group, our early years settings, schools and colleges, practitioners, the voluntary and community sector and the [Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire NHS Integrated Care Board](#).

Over the past year, we have worked together with our families at face-to-face events, through online discussion groups, surveys to our schools and settings, and with children and young people through polls and group discussions. In doing so, we have ensured that the voice of our local area has fully informed the priorities identified and shaped our collective vision.

We are dedicated to working together for better outcomes, through embedding the priorities in this strategy into a delivery plan. We understand that for us to deliver cohesive, holistic support to our children and families we must work together to keep aspirations and needs at the centre of what we do.

A child and young person guide can be found in easy read on the [Wiltshire Local Offer](#) webpages.

Our Working Together Agreement

The 'Meeting Needs Together, Ambitious for All' Strategy has been developed by working together with parents, carers, children, young people, services and teams within Wiltshire Council, health partners, schools and settings. The title of our strategy was chosen by parent carers and young people, to reflect the commitment to working together. The priorities and actions within the strategy have been formed as a direct result of the work we have carried out together in partnership.

We have written a 'Working Together Agreement', coproduced with families in Wiltshire to reflect the commitment to joint working at the heart of everything we do.

We talked together about what true partnership working looked like and this is our commitment:

Working in partnership

We will all:

- Agree what each partner will contribute
- Listen and accept that people have different views and perspectives
- Ensure that everyone's contribution is heard and valued equally
- Ensure partners are involved and agree outcomes together
- Do what we say we will do and be accountable

Communicating well

We will all:

- Be honest, transparent and clear
- Show active listening
- Let everyone have a voice that is heard
- Be open and respectful
- Share information promptly and clearly and keep everyone informed when things change

Feeling valued and included

We will all:

- Celebrate strengths, successes, differences
- Have a whole-system holistic understanding
- Recognise and care about lived experiences
- Empower everyone to express their voice so that children, young people and their families feel 'heard'
- Include families in decision making, in the shaping of services and in all planning

Feeling welcomed and cared for

We will all:

- Invest time and sufficient resources
- Be open and welcoming to all
- Treat parents as true partners
- Show empathy, understanding and emotional intelligence
- Give continuous feedback – 'you said, we did'

Our shared vision

Our shared vision and priorities have been built with young people, parent carers and professionals from across the local area.

‘To create a future where every young person in Wiltshire has the tools and support needed to thrive and achieve their dreams. We want to support children and young people to be aspirational and hopeful, to increase their confidence, to have the resources to live the futures they want to live and to foster a culture of empowerment and inclusion.’

Meeting the needs of every child and young person with SEND in Wiltshire is the responsibility of everyone.

- We aim to change culture by embedding our shared vision and values into the practice of everyone who works with children, young people and families, ensuring good communication and a system that makes sense.
- We aim to identify and respond to needs at the earliest opportunity, in ways that value lived experience and expertise, offering personalised care and support.
- We will strive to deliver our services and support in the right place at the right time, ensuring good provision is provided locally and there is an inclusive approach across Wiltshire SEND system, making the best use of resources and ensuring best value for money.
- We will implement this integrated strategy, delivering quality and timely support for those who need it.

Our vision will be delivered through six priority areas:

Priority 1: Children and young people and their families will be at the centre of planning, their views and aspirations heard and acted upon, as true partners.

Priority 2: Getting the right support at the right time, identifying and acting on our children’s needs at the earliest opportunity and through promotion of inclusive approaches and practice across the local area.

Priority 3: Provide opportunities for timely planning, reflective of the views of the child or young people and parent carers’ current needs, that have clear outcomes.

Priority 4: Ensure good quality communication and information, for families to have a positive experience when navigating services, with information that is easy to access and use.

Priority 5: Professionals and officers across the SEND system will have the skills, knowledge and training to enable effective collaboration across services, joint assessments and sharing of good practice.

Priority 6: Children and young people will be prepared for adulthood and experience timely transitions, leading to increased skills, greater independence and a greater range of opportunities in life.

Priority 1:

Children and young people and their families will be at the centre of planning, views and aspirations heard and acted upon, as true partners.

What have children and young people and their families told us about this priority area?

“Help me plan for my future...I want to decide how to share my skills, needs and interests”

Young Pioneers feedback 2023

“Make decisions with us, not to us”

Parent Partnership event 2024

Why is it a priority?

We must value the lived experience and expertise of children, young people, and their families when we plan together and make decisions about individual needs and support.

We want all children in Wiltshire to be aspirational and hopeful and we know we need to build a culture of empowerment.

We want all children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) to feel valued and welcome and in their communities. We know that by giving families a greater voice and by listening and acting upon those views, we can build trust so that parents have more confidence in the services and support they receive.

What children and young people and their families will see as a result:

- They will feel heard within the local area and be able to access help, where required, to express views, wishes and choices.
- Planning and reviews will be person-centred, with the voice of the child, young person and family integral to all planning.
- They will talk confidently about the future and the chosen pathway to adulthood, from school or alternative provision and feel like true partners in the decisions made.
- Opportunities to design new services will be available for all.

Priority 2:

Getting the right support at the right time, identifying and acting on our children's needs at the earliest opportunity and through promotion of inclusive approaches and practice across the local area.

What have children and young people and their families told us about this priority area?

"I want to have my options listened to and I want to get support when I need it"

Young person's questionnaire 2024

"The key to all this is prevention... to identify issues and solutions early"

Parent Partnership Event 2024

Why is it a priority?

We know that if we work together with families to identify needs, difficulties and challenges early, we can be proactive in putting timely and appropriate action in place to improve a child's life chances.

By continuing to develop a co-ordinated approach to prevention and early intervention, we know we can enable children, young people with SEND and their families to access the right help and support in the right place at the right time.

What will children and young people and their families see as a result?

- An integrated system of early support and intervention with holistic support available across education, health and social care.
- High quality SEN Support will be available in all education settings for those with needs that do not require an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- More families and children with SEND will be able to find and engage with services, advice and guidance through our SEND Local Offer website.
- Families will see their community is growing a better network of coordinated local help, that enables them to feel strong, safe, happy and healthy.
- Fewer children and young people with mental health or emotional wellbeing concerns will be escalated to specialist services, as support will be accessed at the point of need.

Priority 3:

Provide opportunities for timely planning, reflective of the views of the child or young person and parent-carers' current needs, that have clear outcomes.

What have children and young people and their families told us about this priority area?

“Know my interests.... let me share my goals for the future”

Young Pioneers Group 2023

“Forward planning for the family – describe what other key things will happen and when, during the year.”

Parent/Carer Discussion Group 2024

Why is it a priority?

We recognise that holistic and timely planning across education, health and care leads to stronger individual outcomes.

We know that when we work together, we are more joined up, efficient and timely in our work, and produce a better experience for our children and young people and their families.

The local area must continue to develop provision in response to emerging demand.

What children and young people and their families will see as a result:

- Children and young people and their families will tell us that their experience is improving and that our plans to support them are timely, person centred, meet their needs, and are jointly produced with them.
- Review meetings that are timely, ensure the child or young person is central to the process, with parent/carers confident in what is planned for their child.
- The local area partnership will use robust evidence to inform the commissioning of provision and services for our children with SEND, including the use of Alternative Provision.

Priority 4:

Ensuring excellent quality communication and information, for families to have a positive experience when navigating services, with information that is easy to access and use.

What have children and young people and their families told us about this priority area?

'Know how to communicate with me'

Young Pioneers Group 2024

"Take time to talk to us"

Parent Carer Discussion Groups 2024

Why is it a priority?

Families have told us how important it is to have good and easy access to information including for families of children who have an emerging need or are new to our processes.

They have told us that they would like to be able to contact the right person or service quickly, at the point of needing advice.

We must also demonstrate that when we receive feedback, we communicate back how we have listened and improved services as a result.

We want to be better at communicating with children and young people with SEND using their preferred way and by giving them a range of ways to express their needs.

What children and young people and their families will see as a result:

- They will tell us that we have a clear system of consistent and easy to access support services across education, health and care.
- Families will tell us that we are more transparent and open in our approach and that they feel respected and valued as partners.
- We will receive positive feedback from families regarding our advice and guidance in terms of accessibility and quality of information.
- Children, young people and their families will see evidence of planning and provision that reflects their views.
- Parents will feel more confident and less dependent on professionals and services.

Priority 5:

Professionals and officers across the SEND system will have the skills, knowledge, and training to enable effective collaboration across services, joint assessments and sharing of good practice.

What have children and young people and their families told us about this priority area?

“I wish all the adults who work with me understood my needs”

Young Person’s Questionnaire comments 2024

“We need for families and professionals to jointly access and share information”

Feedback from parents at SEND Engagement Event 2023

Why is it a priority?

We want everyone working with and for children and young people to be knowledgeable about SEND and Alternative Provision and to have the appropriate knowledge, training and skills to be confident in their role.

We need more opportunities for professionals and families to work and learn together, to share skills, knowledge and experience.

We want parent/carers to feel more confident in the support offered in the mainstream school or setting.

We recognise that parent/carers should be seen and treated as ‘experts by experience.’

What children and young people and their families will see as a result:

- Improved parental confidence in the inclusive practices within our Wiltshire schools and educational settings.
- A reduction in number of suspensions and permanent exclusions for children and young people with SEND enabling children and young people to be included in their settings.
- Alternative provision used in a planned way to support children and young people to be successful.
- A confident, skilled and knowledgeable workforce.
- Practitioners reflective in understanding the strengths we already have in our partnership, to seek out best practice elsewhere and evidence regarding what works, bringing these elements together to create the best possible arrangements for our local context.

Priority 6:

Children and young people will be prepared for adulthood and experience timely transitions, leading to increased skills, greater independence, and a greater range of opportunities in life.

What have children and young people and their families told us about this priority area?

“People need to understand my needs and help me plan for my future”

Young People consultation groups 2024

“There should be clear pathways for young people when preparing for adulthood”

Parent carer discussion groups 2024

Why is it a priority?

For all young people with SEND, preparation for adulthood should be well planned. We want to ensure that every young person has the support and encouragement they need to get ready for the challenges, so that they can experience increased independence in preparation for adult life. This will need to be at a pace that is right for them and their family.

We want to ensure that there is breadth in our SEND and Alternative Provision Post-16 offer so that young people can work towards their personal goals and aspirations. As they grow up, we want them to feel accepted and valued in their local communities.

We aim for all our children and young people to achieve optimal health in adulthood, including their mental health, and we recognise that collaboration as partners is essential to achieving this goal.

What will children and young people and their families see as a result?

- Young people and their families will see a greater choice of local options, including alternative provision, communicated in a clear and accessible way.
- More young people will meet their outcomes and achieve their aspirations and goals.
- A joined-up approach to employability so that young people can see clear pathways into jobs and careers that are in demand in the local economy.
- More young people will have the confidence and independence to successfully transition to the next stage of their journey to adulthood.

How we will deliver our strategy, priorities and outcomes and monitor our progress

Professionals in Wiltshire with representative groups and local voluntary organisations understand that we must work together in partnership across education, health and social care, to deliver our strategy.

The priorities identified in our strategy will be included in the [Wiltshire SEND Needs Assessment](#).

We will produce a joint delivery plan that will set out our actions and an outcomes framework to monitor the effective delivery of our action plan.

Our joint strategy will also steer our [SEND Transformation Programme](#) and associated budget recovery plan. The plan links to the strategic priorities and supports improvements in quality.

Our SEND and AP action plan will be overseen by the [SEND and AP Partnership Board](#) with regular reporting on progress against each priority. This group meets on a monthly basis and is attended by professionals across education, health, social care and commissioned services, alongside parent carer representation and youth voice. The Local Area Partnership has set up a new integrated dashboard that will tell us if we are achieving our vision linked to each of the priority areas.

We will also publish regular reports on the Wiltshire SEND Local Offer website at www.localoffer.wiltshire.gov.uk/. We will continue to consult with children and young people with lived experience of SEND and AP so that they can tell us how we are doing.

