

Meeting: Policy Development and Decision Group **Date:** 21st February 2017

Wards Affected: All

Report Title: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2016-20

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

Executive Lead Contact Details: Julien Parrot, Executive Lead for Adults and Children, julien.parrot@torbay.gov.uk

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Andy Dempsey, Director of Children's Services, 01803 208949, andy.dempsey@torbay.gov.uk

1. Proposal and Introduction

- 1.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the most significant changes in policy for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for over 3 years and aimed to provide simpler, improved and more consistent help for children, young people and families. The new system extends the rights and protections to children and young people by introducing streamlined, integrated education, health and care plans, extending provision from birth to 25 years of age and strengthening co-production principles.
- 1.2 The reforms, which came into force in September 2014, require:
- A cultural change in the way in which we listen to and engage with children, young people and their parents and carers enabling them to make informed choices.
 - The local authority to develop and publish a Local Offer, and to work closely with the NHS, schools and post-16 settings to use resources through joint commissioning to improve the range of support available in a local area.
 - A more flexible model of joint commissioning that promotes access to personal budgets, focuses on specific groups of children or areas within the borough and ensures that children and young people's needs are met.

- Better commissioning of new provisions to ensure needs are met in local schools, post 16 settings and by local community services.
- Positive transitions at all key stages within a 0-25 age range, especially a more successful transition to adult life.
- A skilled workforce that is able to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and those who are disabled.
- Services that support families to meet their children's needs and help children to remain in their local community.

1.3 The revised Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Strategy 2016 – 2020 sets out a vision for how local services will develop, within a significantly changed operating landscape, in order to improve outcomes for some of our most vulnerable young people. A copy of the strategy and associated action plan is attached at Appendix 1. The action plan will be populated in partnership with local area stakeholders in order to ensure a consistent and shared approach towards delivery and service improvement.

2. Reason for Proposal

- 2.1 There are currently 26,745 children and young people under the age of 18 living in Torbay (ONS mid-year 2015), with 20,055 children and young people attending state- funded schools in Torbay (January 2016 school census).
- 2.2 Torbay has a high proportion of children and young people with Statements of Special Educational Needs/Education, Health and Care Plans. This equates to 4.4% of the pupil population compared to 2.9% nationally, although the number of children with some level of additional need (usually supported through school action or school action plus) are in line with statistical and national comparators. This figure includes all types of schools including free schools and independent schools (school census 2016 as reported in Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT)).
- 2.2 Torbay has a good mix of special schools (3) and mainstream providers with enhanced resource provision to enable children with hearing impairing, speech and language difficulties and autistic spectrum condition to access their learning in a mainstream setting. Schools' Forum has also dedicated funds from the Dedicated Schools' Grant towards a range of projects to improve outcomes for children with additional needs. This has included the development of autism champions and the funding of a vulnerable learners co-ordinating post to work across the wide range of activities and services.
- 2.3 The challenges faced by Torbay are common to many other areas. They arise in the main from the increasing numbers of requests for the assessment of young people, the increases in the numbers of children receiving a service, the increasingly complexity of needs of some children, the ongoing budgetary pressures these create and the need to develop specialist provision within Torbay in an affordable and sustainable manner.
- 2.4 The revised strategy seeks to build on the good work to date and provide a sustainable response to the ongoing increase in the numbers and complexity of children being identified with special educational needs. It identifies 5 key priorities:

Priority 1: Integrated Agency Working

Agencies will work together effectively to improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Priority 2: The Local Offer

Partners and service providers will meet the needs the children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities as part of the Local Offer.

Priority 3: Joint Commissioning

Joint commissioning arrangements will contribute to the right services being in place for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities within Torbay.

Priority 4: Co-Production

Clear co-production pathways will enable children, young people and parents to make a significant contribution to identifying and planning the local offer available to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Priority 5: Preparing for Adulthood

Young people moving into adulthood will be offered a variety of opportunities to help them realise their potential.

- 2.4 The strategy will be supported by a detailed action plan developed with input from key partners and stakeholders during the Spring Term. The completed action plan will be subject to regular review by Children's Services' Senior Leadership Team, Executive Lead and regular collaborative meetings with schools.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1 That the SEND Strategy 2016/20 attached at Appendix 1 be approved and that the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Executive Member and key stakeholders, be authorised to make any final changes to the Strategy and provide regular updates on progress.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Strategy Vision & Priorities 2016 – 2020)