

# Joint Commissioning Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2023 - 2028







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# INTRODUCTION

As a partnership between Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Integrated Care Board it is important that we understand the challenges and issues facing the local area in order to effectively support residents and to enable the joint commissioning of **the right support at the right time, delivered by the right people**. Not only does this statement support this strategy but also feeds into the key wider local outcomes identified in the “To be the best I can be” priorities and outcomes have been developed by children, young people and families.

We aim to provide the best opportunities for every child in our city, inclusive of those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and we know that there is a lot of good practice happening across the City of Stoke-on-Trent. However, the global COVID pandemic and the subsequent economic challenges has meant significant disruption and immense pressure for children and young people.

For some families these have lessened resilience, increased poverty, and increased mental health difficulties across the population. For some children and young people with SEND and their families the impact will have delayed access to learning, access to social support and health provision. Services are also operating with increasing local need and amid significant challenges. Therefore, our ability to develop and adapt provision in line with demand will be essential to meet the outcomes of our children and young people in the future.

We have got improvements to make to ensure that in Stoke-on-Trent, joint commissioning can take centre stage so that we work more closely and creatively with communities to understand need, shape the best possible co-produced solutions with our families and meet ambition and hope.

## **What this Strategy does:**

Identifies a set of shared principles and priorities that will set a road map for all joint planning and commissioning decisions for SEND. This has been informed by local data, [Explore education statistics \(external link\)](#) and feedback from our communities and is in line with the requirements of the SEND Code of practice:0-25 years.

## **Working in Partnership:**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (ICB) will work in partnership, which will be set out within this Joint Commissioning Strategy for SEND. We will co-produce with parents, carers, children and young people, the voluntary sector, service providers, professionals and other stakeholders to ensure inclusion plays a part of every service that is to be jointly commissioned or accessed across communities. We will directly address priority areas that matter most to children, young people and their families.

### **We are committed to Joint Commissioning:**

This Strategy, which is part of a suite of strategies that have a link to children and young people with SEND (see Appendix 1) sets out our current arrangements and the ambitious plans we have to improve. We need to maximise the same opportunities for all our children, young people and families and we will align joint commissioning activities with all actions identified through other strategies and legislation. This will ensure individual needs are recognised and support has a personalised focus.

As a partnership we have reflected upon what children and young people, parents and carers have told us and with this feedback has helped to shape our Joint Commissioning Strategy for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities;

### **Parents tell us that .....**

Families who we support are not familiar with the language and processes of commissioning

Parents will only see what impact joint commissioning has when they can see improved changes to the services they access

### **They want to.....**

See improved joint working to improve services

Be allowed to be parents and not a professional



## **OUR VISION**

**“Children and young people with special educational needs, disabilities and social, emotional and mental health, living in Stoke-on-Trent will have the opportunity to be the best that they can be, live their best life and be as aspirational as they want to be’**

# OUR VISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND IN STOKE-ON-TRENT

This Strategy will provide a roadmap on how collectively we will jointly commission and work towards this vision, ensuring high quality, joined up services across education, health and social care. We will build upon our strengths, working closely with our community to understand and listen to what matters most to them, to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of young people with SEND and their families.

As a partnership, The City Council, the ICB and other key stakeholders on our Inclusion Partnership Board share a common vision that this Joint Commissioning Strategy combines the overarching vision and road map to jointly design, develop and deliver better services for SEND.

We need to remove barriers to opportunity, to improve equality of access to services and to provide care and support to enable children to enjoy and achieve life to the maximum of their potential. Joint commissioning is just one element of how the vision can be achieved and we must do this through the best use of our available resources, planning and commissioning wisely to achieve the greatest impact.

In addition to this vision within Stoke-on-Trent “Pots of Positivity” have been developed with children and families as part of the Room to Grow and the Inclusion Strategy to ensure a joined up consistent approach within the City. These outcome statements will be the centre of all decisions that involve and impact children, young people with SEND and their families including joint commissioning.

## Pots of Positivity

Outcome	What this means for children and young people
Live Well	I want to feel valued and part of a community and be respected by the people I meet.
Good Education	I want to have a good quality education that is meaningful to me.
Preparing for Adulthood	I want to feel confident about growing up and look forward to being as independent as I can be.
Employment Opportunities	I want to have opportunities for work experience, apprentices and the chance to have a job I enjoy.
Be Healthy	I want to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy as I can be.
Skilled Workforce for support	I want the people who support me to have the right skills and knowledge and for them to work together to help me be the most I can be.

# PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

During the life of this Strategy and on this journey to where we want to be as a partnership these are the principles and values that will underpin how we jointly commission and how we will work.



**Put children, families, and young people at the heart of everything that we do by using participative and co-production methods.**



**Continuously monitor and review services for children and young people with SEND to ensure they are of high quality and achieving the outcomes required**



**We commission together, examining our priorities, look at opportunities to align work jointly or joint commission where we are buying the same or similar provision.**



**Focusing on an outcomes-based approach for commissioning, will allow us to deliver effective, integrated, and person-centred support, and build services that are holistically focused on the person rather than around organisations.**



**We will ensure that the foundations of joint commissioning are strong and well led. We will enhance and improve those relationships that we already have in place and where they don't exist create new ones.**



**We will commission wisely by considering quality as well a cost and will forward plan to ensure we are commissioning at the right time. We will use a graduated approach to ensure we have the right care, in the right place, at the right time.**



# WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SEND IN STOKE-ON-TRENT

A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is a review of the current and future education, health and social care needs of a defined community. Demographics and statistics enable us to understand the local population and the support already in place and support needed for the future in order to improve outcomes for all. We can also compare how we are doing nationally and regionally.

The full report can be accessed at

[Data directory - Joint strategic needs assessment | Stoke-on-Trent \(external link\)](#)

Our City has a large population of children and young people.



The child population makes up over

# 24%

of the current population, over 18 percent being between 0-15 years

As of January 2022



# 18.9%

of the school population in Stoke-on-Trent have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Special education needs (SEN) support. This is higher than the national average of 16.5%\*.

The number of children in primary and secondary school most likely to have support for SEN.



Primary

# 13%

compared to the national average of 17.7%



Secondary

# 13.8%

compared to the national average of 11.9%

122 pupils in year 12,13 and 14 have SEN support or an EHCP.



Amongst all school-age children with an EHCP in Stoke-on-Trent, most are educated in:

LA Mainstream **681**

LA Special School **908**

Independent Schools **157**

\*Totals include state funded nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, Non-maintained schools, pupil referral units and independent schools.

## SEN support and EHC Plan data in Stoke-on-Trent

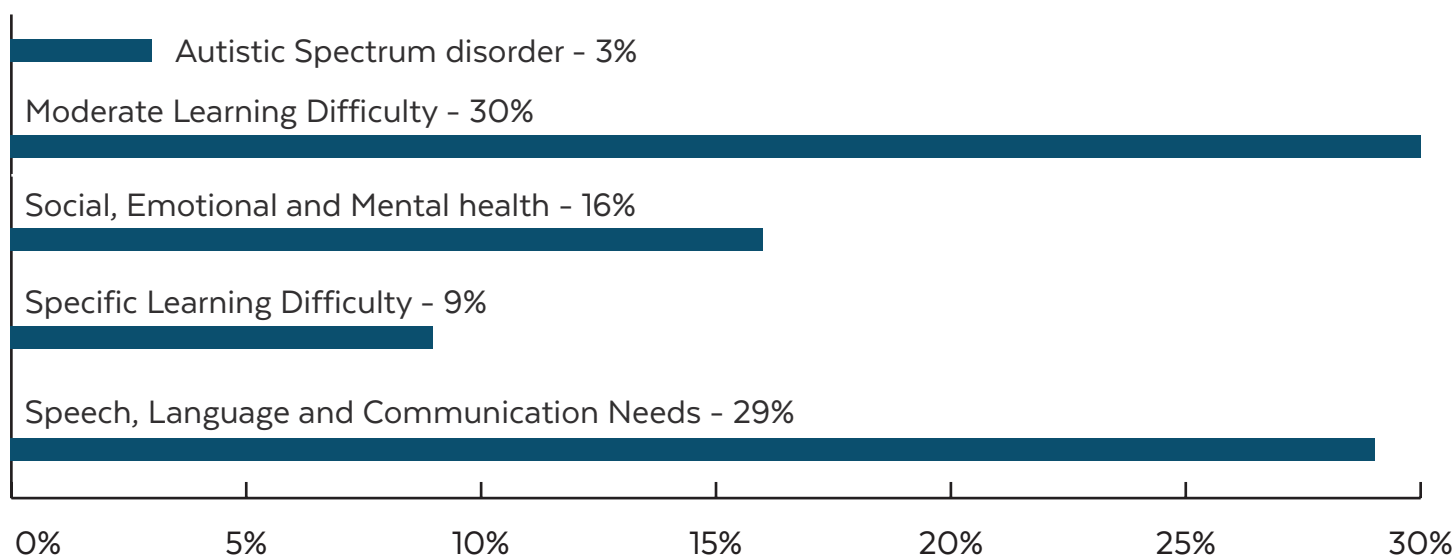
ECHP and SEN Support 2021/22	Stoke-on-Trent	England
EHCP	1,746	355,566
SEN Support	6,058	1,128,843
Total SEN Support and EHCP population	7,804	1,485,409
Total school population	41,244	9,000,031
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>16.5%</b>

Data published in 16 June 2022

Source: Academic Year 2021/22 Special educational needs in England publication.

[Special educational needs in England, Academic Year 2021/22 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(external link\)](#)

## The most common primary needs of SEND (SEN support and EHCP) in Stoke-on-Trent



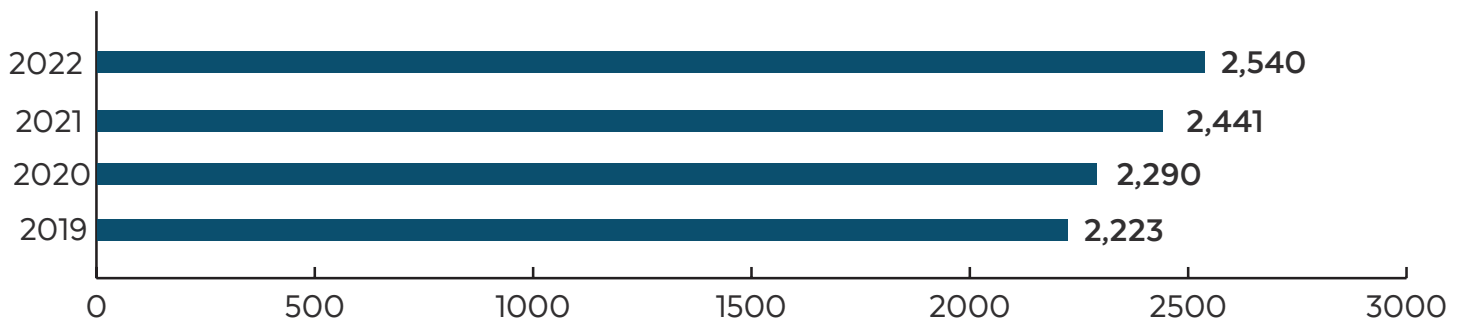
Percentages based on a SEN Support and EHCP population of **7,804**

Data published in 16 June 2022

Source: Academic Year 2021/22 Special educational needs in England publication

[Special educational needs in England, Academic Year 2021/22 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK \(external link\)](#)

## Number of EHCPs in Stoke-on-Trent

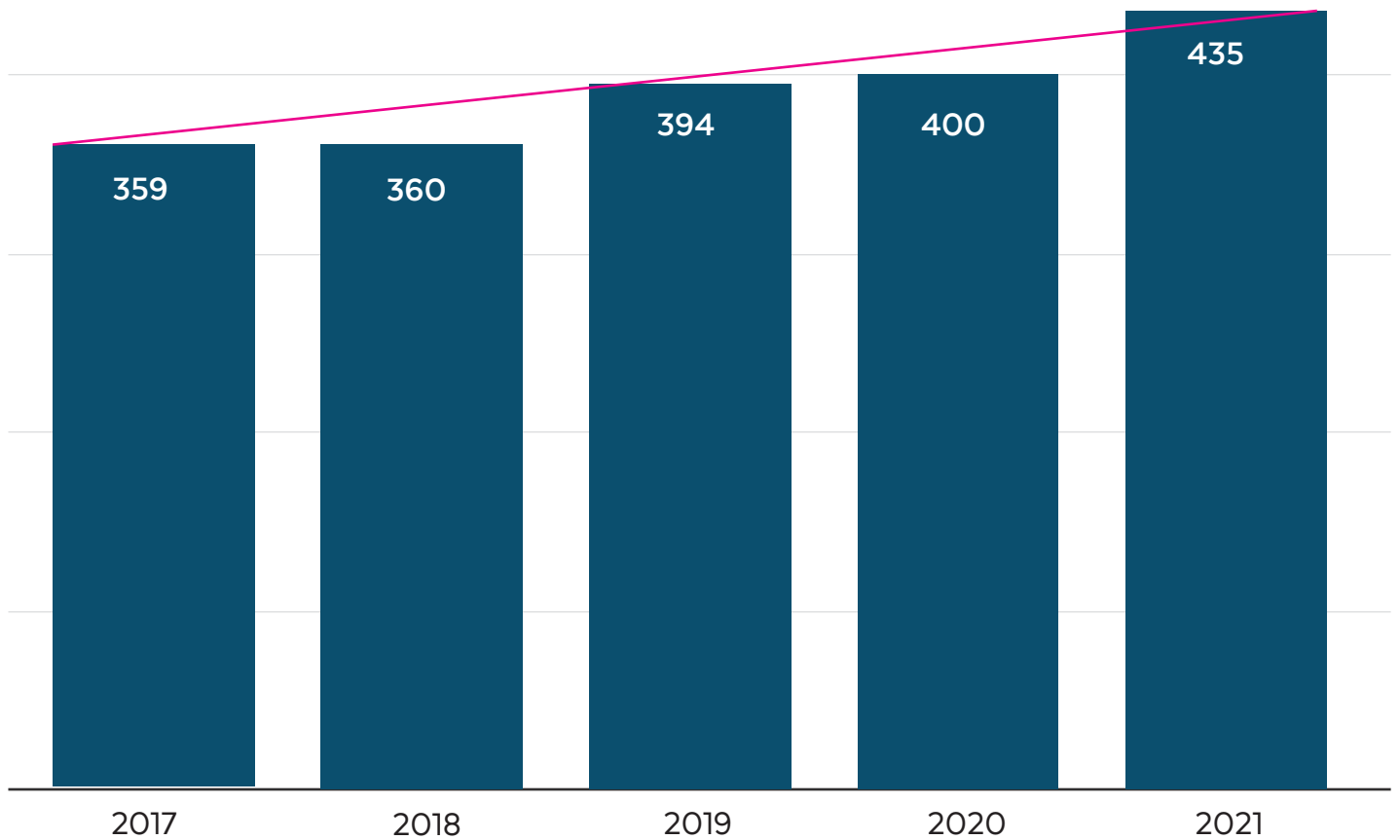


Data published: 12 May 2022

Source: Reporting Year 2022 Education, health and care plans (SEN2 Data).

[Education, health and care plans, Reporting Year 2022 - Explore education statistics \(external link\)](#)

## Initial EHCP requests



Data published: 12 May 2022

Source: Reporting Year 2022 Education, health and care plans (SEN2 Data).

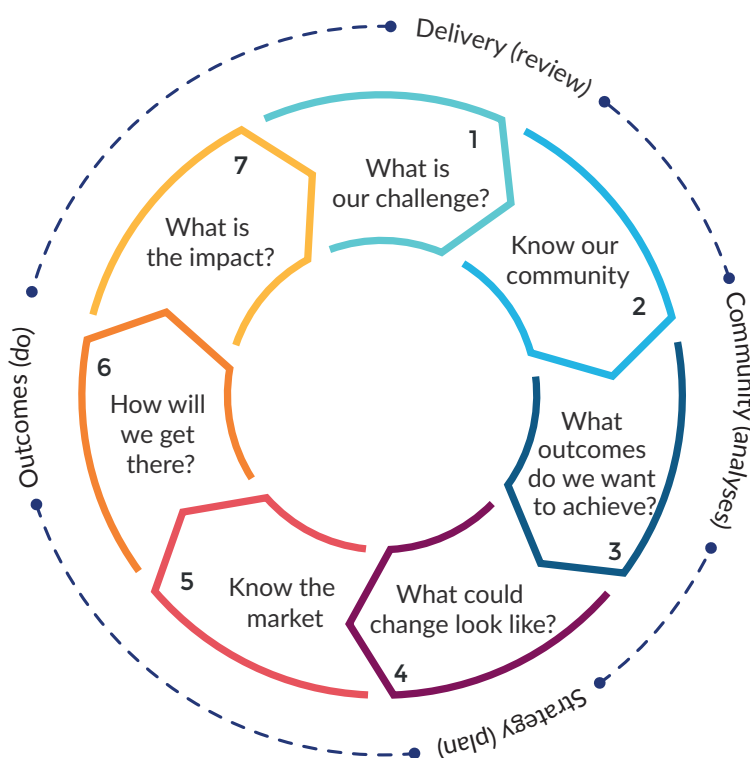
[Education, health and care plans, Reporting Year 2022 - Explore education statistics - \(external link\)](#)

# WHAT IS JOINT COMMISSIONING AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Commissioning is a way of understanding need, planning a response to meet this need and reviewing the effectiveness of action taken. It is often viewed as a cycle and is commonly described as having 4 stages which are described in more detail below.

## The Commissioning Wheel

How are decisions about changes to services made



- What do Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Integrated Care Board need to do differently and what money do we have jointly to spend?
- What is our understanding about the people who use the services and are more services needed in the future?
- What needs to change for Stoke-on-Trent City Council and The Integrated Care Board?
- What is our joint vision for the future?
- Which stakeholders or Partners provide these types of services?
- What does good look like and how will our plan to change services look like?
- How do we check if our plans are working?



Joint Commissioning is a whole system approach to the planning and delivering of services. This approach to commissioning should be done at the strategic, service or individual level and supports better outcomes by meeting the needs of our children, young people and their families in a more joined-up way.

Families benefit when services communicate well and work cohesively together. This ensures that children's needs are usually identified early and that provision is effective in meeting those needs. The effective working relationships between services are productive, so they ensure that identified needs in the local area are appropriately prioritised.

Effective joint commissioning for SEND generates efficiencies and value for money and enable partners to:

- Agree local priorities – linking with and informing the Children and Young People's Strategic Plan.
- Have a shared understanding of the range and effectiveness of current service provision across public, private and voluntary/community sectors.
- Achieve a shared understanding of the current gaps or duplication in service provision, including areas that need to be developed in order to meet local needs.
- Bring together a variety of commissioning expertise and professionals' experts all working to achieve common outcomes
- Speak to children and their families and other stakeholders with a single voice.
- Improve our ability to forecast and respond to the needs of the local area, so we can improve planning and commissioning of our local SEND services.
- Have a joined or aligned contractual and performance processes for all commissioned services to ensure better outcomes and the inclusiveness of SEND services.
- Ensure that the resources and funding available within the area can make the most difference.



## ENGAGEMENT AND CO-PRODUCTION

Effective and meaningful participation and co-production is critical to the success of this strategy and improving experiences of services and pathways and by extension improving outcomes. Working with children and young people and their families will be at the core of our joint commissioning activities across education, social care and health.

The City Council and ICB are committed to listening and responding to the voice of the child and their families/carers. We shall gather regular feedback about the services we provide and commission in order to improve them.

There are several methods or tools that can be considered for effective participation and engagement. These are broadly based on two models the 'Rogers Harts Ladder of Children's Participation'<sup>1</sup> and the 'National Co-production Advisory Group's Ladder of Participation'<sup>2</sup>. In any engagement we carry out, we shall use the most appropriate method and strive and aspire to use that approach.

As well as having engaged on this Strategy, we shall engage and co-produce the accompanying Action Plan, prioritising actions according to feedback, evidence and needs analysis.

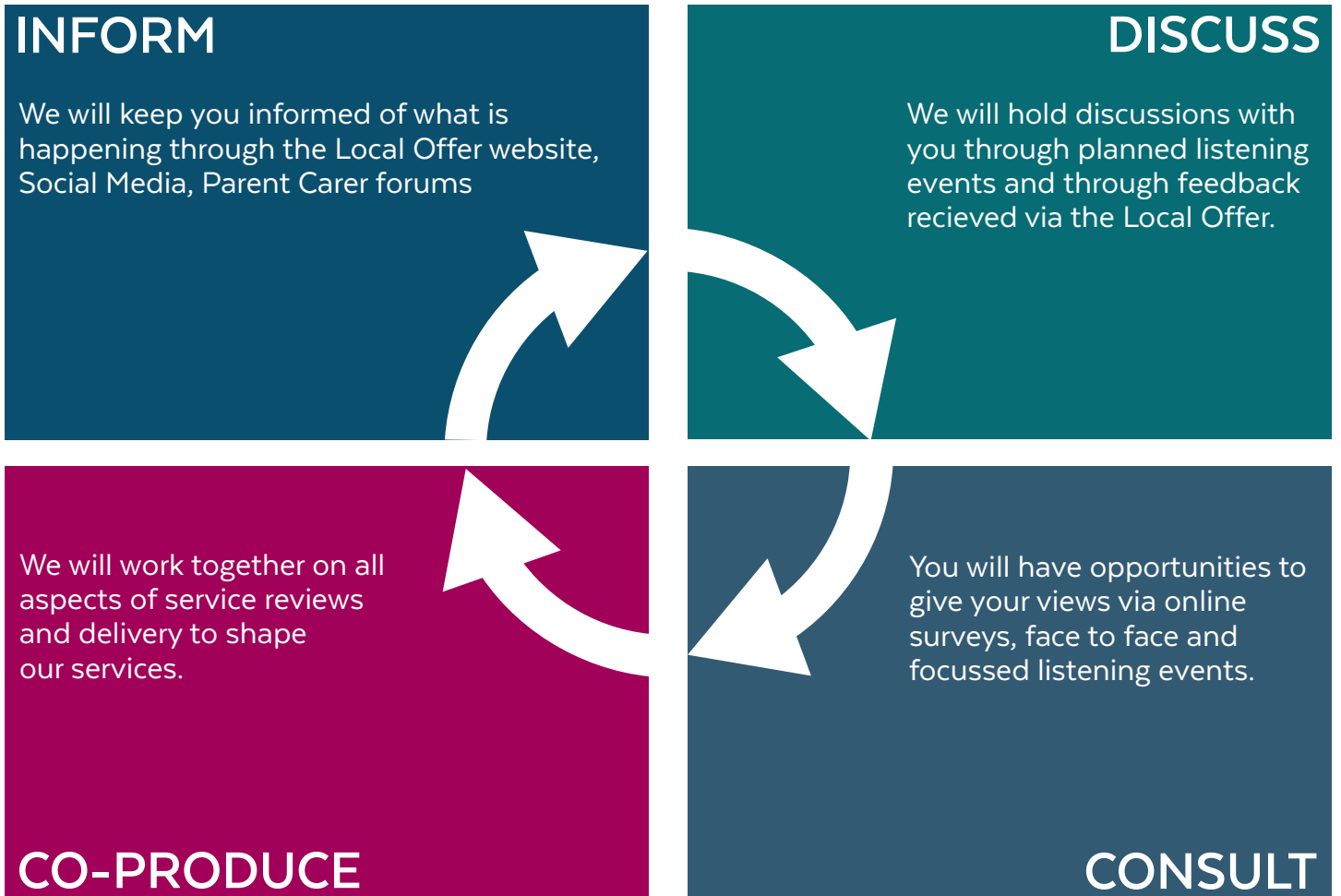
### Cycle of Co-production

Where we do co-produce, the approach that is used shall be based on Stoke-on-Trent Five Pillars of Wisdom, that has been developed by the City Council. This along with People Supporting People (Co-production for SEND) shall be the basis of our co-production and the broader engagement and participation for all aspects of Joint Commissioning in SEND.

<sup>1</sup>Hart, Roger A. (1992). Children's Participation: From tokenism to citizenship, Innocenti Essay, no. 4, International Child Development Centre, Florence

<sup>2</sup>[Ladder of Coproduction | TLAP | social care \(thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk\)](#)

## Engagement and Participation Cycle



## Who we will Co-produce with

- 1) Co-production with Community Partnerships (Widening Networks)
- 2) Co-production with Stakeholders (Improving Services)
- 3) Co-production with local partners (Sharing Outcomes and Shared Responsibility)
- 4) Co-production with Our Children and Young People (Getting Involved)
- 5) Co-production with Parents and Carers or Responsible Adults (Using a voice)

# WHAT YOU SAID

## Commissioning through a different lens

In order to better understand how as partners we see joint commissioning through different lenses, we have undertaken a number of engagement events, one to one sessions and on-line surveys with children and young people, parents, carers, partners and stakeholders.

This feedback has influenced our priorities for the “Joint Commissioning Strategy”.

### What you said;

#### Hearing the voice of children and young people:



“No one talks to each other when discussing my needs and wishes ”

“I want to access a school that is close to me that meets all my needs ”



#### Listening to parents and carers:



“Better communication between services.”

“Local schools who can meet the needs of CYP”



“Waiting lists are too long.”

“Parents want to be listened too.”



“Better early years support and intervention is needed.”

“The system needs to work together. ”



“Support following diagnosis for families, young people and children.”



## Communicating with Professionals:



A graduated approach to ensure the correct level of support at the right time, that all professionals understand.

Workforce development programme.



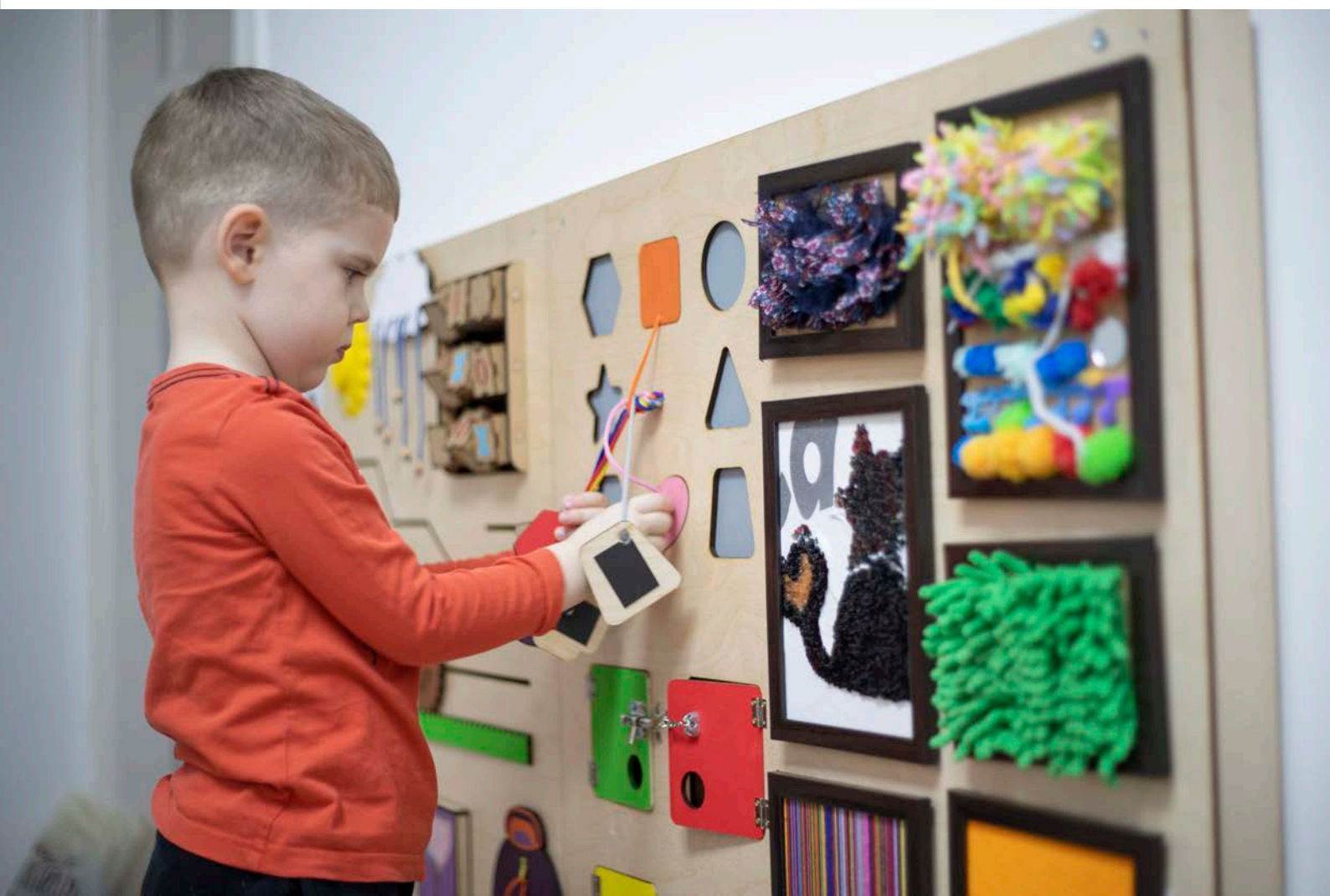
Pathways between LA and health that are seamless

There is a large gap in supporting sensory needs. A position statement would be helpful.



Lack of community-based support

Better training needs to be in place to recognise additional needs



# OUR COMMISSIONING PRIORITIES

This section details our Joint Commissioning priorities and key areas for improvement over the lifespan of this strategy (2023-2028). It is worth noting that these are not all the priorities for SEND in the city but specifically for better joint commissioning.

These have been developed through conversations with children, young people, parents, carers, stakeholders and partners through a number of engagement events, one to one sessions and surveys.

## Priority 1

Understanding our SEND population need and current/future service demand and capacity

### Why?

- To identify where the graduated approach is working well and where improvements are required
  - To ensure that the relevant services are supporting where necessary and there is no duplication.
  - Good data can support and drive improvements and ensure that resources are utilised where there is the most need
  - To encourage 'right service at right time'
  - So that children and young people feel confident that we understand them.
  - So there is a shared understanding across partners
- 

## Priority 2

Meeting the needs of our neurodiverse population.

### Why?

- Early intervention is necessary in order to ensure the right support is given to parents and also the educational environments.
  - Parents and carers tell us the waiting times for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is too long.
  - Professionals tell us that there is an increase in referrals, but this does not always translate in an increase in diagnosis rates
  - The data tells us that there is a gap between the numbers we see with ASD and what we would expect to see.
  - To ensure that children and young people are getting the provision and support for their SEND need.
  - To limit the distress to children and young people and their families.
  - Current services are based on diagnosis rather than presenting need.
-

## Priority 3

Developing a joint graduated approach that meets the speech, language and communication needs of our SEND population

### Why?

- We need to improve early intervention as staff are not always aware of the support that can be put into place at an early stage.
  - Individuals that require a more structured, targeted support programme need to be identified better.
  - Professionals tell us that partners commission individual services, unintentionally creating silos of provision.
  - Data tells us that speech, language and communication is one of the top 3 the primary needs of children with SEND across the City.
  - To ensure that children and young people are getting the provision and support for their SEND need.
- 

## Priority 4

Improving access to therapy and integrated equipment provision.

### Why?

- We need improve early intervention as staff are not always aware of the support that can be put into place at an early stage.
  - Individuals that require a more structured, targeted support programme need to be identified better.
  - Professionals tell us that partners commission individual services, unintentionally creating silos of provision.
  - Professionals tell us that the process for obtaining and maintaining equipment to support in education is fragmented.
  - Clear policy and process around equipment that is shared between social care, health and education.
-

## Priority 5

Nursing provision for children and young people with SEND

### Why?

- To ensure children and young people can attend school safely and have their health needs met.
  - So that parents and professionals have a shared understand of each partners statutory obligation to delegate and deliver.
  - So that there is joint working for the most complex children to ensure clear information and assessment outcomes are shared.
  - Professionals tell us that partners commission individual services, unintentionally creating silos of provision.
  - To ensure that the delivery is child centred.
- 

## Priority 6

Improve communication between agencies, professionals, children and young people and families

### Why?

- Parents tell us that communication between professionals is disjointed
  - Poor communication can escalate matters unnecessarily that can lead to disputes resolution, mediation and tribunals processes.
  - To ensure that information is shared in a timely manner between professionals and families.
- 

## Priority 7

Ensuring the workforce is skilled, knowledgeable and feels supported and equipped to support children and young people with SEND.

### Why?

- Parents tell us that that joint decision processes are not always clear.
  - Professionals tell us that EHCP processes need to be streamlined.
  - As a system we need to retain our skilled staff and ensure they feel valued and are making a difference.
-

## Priority 8

Children and young people with SEND are supported with their social and emotional mental health

### Why?

- Parents are concerned about the impact COVID 19 has on children and young people mental health.
  - Parents and carers have told us that navigating the SEND system has a negative impact on parent's mental health.
  - There are pockets of good practice within the City and this needs to be replicated wider.
  - Data tells us that social and emotional mental health is one of the top 3 primary needs of children with SEND across the City.
- 

## Priority 9

Improve the early identification of SEND needs, in early years, as well as intervening when issues start to arise

### Why?

- A consistent offer between all educational settings is required across all ages.
  - If a timely response is given, needs can be met not escalated further.
  - Professionals tell us that referrals have increased since COVID 19, especially in early years services.
  - Parents and carers tell us that getting early help makes a big difference.
- 

## Priority 10

Make improvements in the attainment of children and young people with SEND

### Why?

- There is a gap in the number of children and young people with SEND reaching the expected standards in reading, writing and maths, compared to their peers
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the attainment gap
- Raising attainment leads to the improving life chances of our children and young people and provides the opportunity for them to be as aspirational as they want to be

# HOW WE WILL MONITOR PROGRESS

## Next Steps

As part of our first steps in achieving positive outcomes for our SEND population, a co-produced Action Plan will be developed, that starts to take a more practical approach in how this can be delivered. There will be specific actions detailed that we would take over the life span of this Strategy

The Action Plan shall be based on the initial data analysis, engagement and feedback that we have obtained from a range of stakeholders in the development of this Strategy. Over time the detail of the Action Plan will continue to be co-produced and developed in partnership with key stakeholders across the system. The Action Plan will be refreshed annually.

It is imperative that we measure how successful we are in making progress against our commissioning priorities. We will identify key indicators linked to each of the priorities and pots of positivity outcomes. This will reflect and measure the impact our joint commissioning decisions have on the lives of the individual children, young people, and their families.

## Governance

Good governance enables organisations to build a sustainable and better future for all of us. It adds value, is open, transparent, and ethical. Good governance focuses on achieving the best outcomes for our children and young people by helping to address any of issues, challenges and obstacles (operational or otherwise) to progress. There are clear and established governance arrangements across both the City Council and ICB that will monitor the progress of this Strategy and its Action Plan.

While the Executive Board for SEND and Inclusion in the City, will have the overall oversight and accountability to ensure WHAT WE WILL DO is carried out, it is the SEND delivery group that will have responsibility, oversight and manage improvements in services, systems and processes that are detailed in the Strategy and Action Plan.

Quarterly updates will be provided from the SEND delivery group to the Executive Board SEND and Inclusion so that progress can be measured, and achievement highlighted. This will also provide the vehicle for when there are risks or underperformance that are required to be escalated. The Executive Board for SEND and Inclusion will in turn report to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the ICB Quality & Safety Group.

In time, workstreams, will be put in place to support the priorities identified in the Strategy and that align with the detail and emerging need within the Action Plan. In addition, we will put in place mechanisms by which we can regularly review whether the changes that are happening are having a positive affect for children, young people, families, schools and other professionals across the SEND system.

# APPENDIX 1 – LINKED STRATEGIES

## **Room to Grow Children and young people Strategy 2020 – 2024**

Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Room to Grow Children and young people Strategy 2020 - 2024 | Stoke-on-Trent

## **Inclusion Strategy for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities 2021 – 2024**

Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Inclusion Strategy for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities 2021 - 2024 | Stoke-on-Trent

## **Early Help and Prevention Strategy**

Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Early Help and Prevention Strategy | Stoke-on-Trent

## **Children’s Commissioning Strategy**

Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Children’s Commissioning Strategy | Stoke-on-Trent

## **Children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy**

Policies, procedures and strategies directory - Children and young people’s mental health and emotional wellbeing strategy | Stoke-on-Trent



# APPENDIX 2 – GLOSSARY

## Glossary of Terms

### **Accountability**

Governance that is in place to ensure that responsibility is being taken for implementation.

### **Autistic Spectrum Disorder**

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a diverse group of conditions. They are characterised by some degree of difficulty with social interaction and communication. Other characteristics are atypical patterns of activities and behaviours, such as difficulty with transition from one activity to another, a focus on details and unusual reactions to sensations.

### **Co-production**

The term ‘co-production’ refers to a way of working where the people who use services (in this case children and young people with SEND, their parents, carers and service providers all work together to create a service that works for them all).

### **Education Health and Care Plan**

A legal document that set out the education, health and care need of a child or young person. It is for children or young people who have a disability and or special educational needs that cannot be met by support that is usually available in school or college

### **Governance**

Corporate governance is the structure of rules, practices, and processes used to direct and manage organisations.

### **Mainstream Schools**

In a mainstream school a child with Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND) would be supported in following the National Curriculum alongside peers without SEND. All state maintained educational settings including nurseries, schools and colleges have a legal obligation to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND).

### **Outcomes**

The outcome of an activity, process, or situation is the situation that exists at the end of it.

### **Pathways**

A Pathway is interconnected navigated support, a number of professionals can support an individual to meet their support needs.



## **Speech, Language and Communication Need**

Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) is an umbrella term. Children with SLCN may have difficulty with many aspects of communication. These can include difficulties with fluency, forming sounds and words, formulating sentences, understanding what others say and using language socially.

## **Special Education Needs and Disabilities**

A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice**

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice provides statutory guidance on the SEND system for children and young people aged 0 to 25.

## **Neurodiverse**

Neurodiverse or neurodiversity is the idea that some people's brains are 'wired' differently and that these differences are simply variations of the human brain. This means that there are different ways in how a person's brain processes information. It often used as an umbrella term to describe conditions such as Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia.

## **Occupational Therapy**

Therapy that aims to develop skills and improve a child or young person's ability to engage with day to day activities, including education, play, and personal care, which in turn develops, their long-term independence.

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## **Acronyms**

ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASC - Autism spectrum disorders

CYP - Children and young people

EHCP - Education Health and Care Plan

ICB - Intergraded Care Board

JSNA - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

LA - Local Authority

SEND - Special educational needs and disability

SEN - Special educational needs

SLCN - Speech language and communication needs

