

Children's Services

222 Upper Street N1 1XR

Report of: Corporate Director of Children's Service

Meeting of: Children's Service Scrutiny Committee

Date: 29 November 22

Ward(s):

## Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy

### 1. Synopsis

- 1.1. The Council is committed to supporting children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families as part of the wider corporate mission to create a more equal Islington where everyone who lives here has an equal chance to thrive. We have a vision of every child benefitting from the best start in life. For children and young people with SEND, this can only be enabled by the whole community of parents and professionals supporting our younger community members to be happy, healthy, resilient and thrive in a connected and inclusive community.
- 1.2. The Council also has statutory duties under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Care Act 2014 to provide for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This SEND Strategy therefore sets out a bold and ambitious approach that will support the achievement of positive outcomes for young people with SEND as both part of the Council's wider mission and also to ensure statutory compliance.
- 1.3. To achieve the ambition set out in the Strategy, we need strong, sustainable and inclusive schools offering a first-class education. This strategy therefore also sits as a key pillar of Islington's Education Plan.
- 1.4. The aim of the Strategy is to deliver an ambitious programme of work so that children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) will achieve well in early years, at school and college and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To consider and note the enclosed SEND Strategy Report and Plan which was considered by the Executive on 13 October 2022.

## 3. Background

- 3.1 Our local offer for children and families with SEND has been considered a strength by parents, schools and settings and partners for many years. There has been significant investment and redesign of specialist provision (special schools, satellites and PRU), and there is corporate pride in the high quality of that offer. There are strong, well-established partnerships and collaborative working across education, health and care systems to support children and young people with SEND.
- 3.2 But demand and complexity of need have accelerated, particularly over the last 18 months, and we know that the quality of our mainstream offer is not universal. Our strategic focus must therefore now shift to our mainstream schools and early years settings, where we need to build resilience to meet an increasing complexity of need, and find the best ways to capture existing skills, knowledge, and best practice within our schools to build capacity so that all our schools are equipped to manage 21st century need.
- 3.3 Refocusing intervention and quality inclusion within mainstream schools, will also enable our specialist settings to concentrate on those learners with the most complex of needs as the bar in terms of severity continues to rise.
- 3.4 We also recognise there is a strong view across our schools that the current SEND funding model is not fit for purpose. There are also some strongly held views that decision making regarding placement of children is not transparent or fair.

## 4. Implications

- 4.1 The implications are detailed in the enclosed report.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The proposals set out in Strategy show the commitment in Islington to supporting children and young people with SEND.
- 5.2 We will work with partners and parents to develop a clear programme of work to deliver the necessary culture change to build an inclusive system set out in this Strategy so that more children and young people are supported to thrive and succeed
- 5.3 The SEND Strategy will:
  - Drive inclusive practice in all our schools and settings
  - Support a financial model that enables schools and settings to support children with additional needs appropriately
  - Promote independence and equip young people with SEND for life by enabling them to stay within their local communities attending their local mainstream schools where possible

**Appendices:**

- Executive SEND Strategy cover report and SEND Strategy

**Background papers:**

- None.

**Final report clearance:**

Signed by:

**Corporate Director of....**

Date: **Date the report received final approval**

Report Author: Sarah Callaghan (Director of Learning and Culture)

Tel:

Email: sarah.callaghan@islington.gov.uk

Financial Implications Author: **[name and job title]**

Tel:

Email:

Legal Implications Author: **[name and job title]**

Tel:

Email:

## **FURTHER GUIDANCE FOR REPORT AUTHORS**

This section must be deleted before the report is submitted for approval

### **Equalities Impact Assessments**

It is the policy of Islington Council that all reports for decision must be accompanied by an Equality Impact Assessment. As a local authority, we have a public sector equality duty (PSED) to make sure that our policies, practices, and services do not discriminate against anyone and ensure that Islington's commitment to equality is translated into practice. These assessments are designed to make sure that we use data to effectively identify any changes that could potentially impact our residents.

Guidance on completing Equalities Impact Assessments is available from Izzi here:  
<http://izzi/me/staff-essentials/equalities-fairness/Pages/Equality-Impact-Assessments-2021.aspx>

If an Equalities Impact Assessment is required, it must be submitted alongside the report. This must be completed before the report is submitted for internal approval.

If an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required, there is no need to submit the screening tool alongside your report.

### **Exempt Information**

Information may only be exempt from publication in certain circumstances set out in law and the Council's Constitution. This includes information relating to an individual, information

relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person, and legal professional privilege.

In the interests of transparency, the Council should seek to publish as much information in the public domain as possible. For this reason, any exempt information should be contained in a separate exempt appendix, allowing the majority of the report to be published. For further guidance, please contact Democratic Services – [democracy@islington.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@islington.gov.uk)

### **Approval Processes**

All decision reports must be reviewed by CMB before being submitted to Democratic Services. Please liaise with your departmental report coordinator for advice on the relevant approval processes.