



We support and challenge each other to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children and young people with SEND and their families.

Our vision

We want the City of London (the City) to be the best possible place for children and young people to grow up.

We will work in partnership to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment where all our children and young people, regardless of background and circumstance, feel they belong.

We will provide high quality services, world class education and excellent opportunities that enable children and young people to be healthy, develop resilience, achieve their potential and thrive.

(The City of London Corporation Children and Young People's Plan 2018-21)

Our aim

Our aim is to provide an inclusive and safe environment where children and young people with SEND can learn, achieve and participate in activities with other children and young people. To create a City where the City Corporation and the City and Hackney CCG march together with children and young people with SEND and their families to give them real choices and to guide them on their future pathways. A City where everyone is welcome and children and young people with SEND feel they belong as equal members of our community. A City where we consider working with children and young people with SEND to be a privilege rather than a challenge.

In order to achieve our vision, we have three key outcomes for 2024:

- We have a robust and inclusive multi-agency approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.
- All children and young people with SEND are well-prepared for and have successful transitions to adulthood.
- Children and young people with SEND are integral and valued members of the City of London community.

These key outcomes accord particularly with three outcomes in the Corporate Plan; these outcomes are:

- Outcome 1 people are safe and feel safe
- Outcome 3 people have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
- Outcome 4 communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

The key outcomes link into the Corporate Plan and the Children and Young Peoples Plan. They are based on what our families tell us, issues identified through the Co-production Workshop, and feedback from partners including health, social care, education settings, and community organisations.

In line with the SEND Code of Practice 2015, our SEND Partnership includes: the local authority and partner commissioners from across education, health and social care. This includes clinician's commissioning arrangements and NHS England for specialist health provision.

This is a joint strategy that will be adopted by all partners. The term 'schools' is inclusive of all education settings in the City of London family of schools including academies. In partnership, we will jointly commission SEND services and work towards meeting our aims for all children and young people with SEND.

Our key partners • The City's Education and Early Years' Service

- Children Social Care and Early Help
- **Adults Social Care**
- City and Hackney CCG
- City Parent Carer Forum
- City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership
- City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board

We also work with

- Parents, carers, children and young people with SEND
- Education providers in the City, including the independent schools and early years providers
- The City of London academies and education providers/settings where City resident children and young people are on roll
- Commissioners
- Community groups and leisure facilities
- Housing
- Local employers
- City of London Police

We will offer a SEND development programme for the school/setting and children's service workforce. The programme will provide training for professionals to improve identification of need, consistency of approaches and delivery of services.

Our well-established partnerships with the City of London Parent Carer Forum (CPCF), Contact and voluntary and community organisations are central to the implementation of this strategy. This strategy is based on liaison with CPCF over the past couple of years, including a commissioning mapping exercise, regular feedback from parent carers, and a coproduction day that involved representatives from all stakeholder organisations.



We can and and together we will?

Background and context

1.1 The purpose of this strategy

The SEND Strategy sets out the City of London Corporation's ambitious vision for children and young people with SEND from birth to 25 years and sets out what we will do to achieve this vision. It builds on the previous SEND Special Educational Needs and Disability Joint Strategy 2017- 2020.

The strategy should be read alongside the 2020 SEND Self-Evaluation and 2020 SEND Action Plan.

- The 2020 SEND Self-Evaluation is a tool for us to use to assess where we are on the road map, how far along the road we have travelled and how far we have yet to go.
- The 2020 SEND Action Plan sets out the things we need to do if we are to achieve our vision.

The City of London's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 sets out twelve outcomes, under three key areas. These key areas are:

- · contributing to a flourishing society
- support a thriving economy
- · shape understanding environments.

The outcomes in this strategy are aligned to the outcomes for contributing to a flourishing society:

- People are safe and feel safe
- People enjoy good health and wellbeing
- People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential
- Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need

Children and Young Peoples Plan 2018-2021 sets five priorities that are the following outcomes for children and young people.

- Safe: Our children and young people are safe and feel safe.
- Potential: Our children and young people have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and are well prepared to achieve in adulthood.
- Independence, involvement and choice:
 Our children and young people are co producers of cultural and support services
 and they will have the resources to develop
 independence and the empowerment to
 play an active role in their communities and
 exercise choice over their services.

- Health and wellbeing: Our children and young people enjoy good health and wellbeing.
- Community: Our children and young people grow up with a sense of belonging as part of cohesive and resilient communities. They are able to create and participate in the cultural and creative opportunities available in the Square Mile.

The strategy is also informed by the:

- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017/18

 2020/21 Working in partnership to achieve longer, happier, healthier lives in the City of London
- The Borough of Hackney & City of London All Age Autism Strategy 2019-2024 - Autistic people living and working in the City of London and the London Borough of Hackney should be able to live fulfilling and rewarding lives within a society that accepts and understands them
- Early Help Strategy 2019-2021: The right help, at the right time, in the right place
- Short Breaks Policy and Guidance
- Early Years Strategy 2019-2022: Quality and Inclusion for all children under five Education, Cultural & Creative Learning and Skills Strategies 2019-2023 – Preparing people to flourish in a rapidly changing world through exceptional education, cultural and creative learning and skills which link to the world of work
- City & Hackney Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CHSCP)
- City & Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board (CHSAB)

1.2 National Strategic Context

The legal framework

The following primary legislation and guidance specifies or duties and governs our practice:

- the SEND Code of Practice (0-25years) 2015
- the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014
- Equality Act (2010) -Section 6 Disability
- The Education Act 1996/2002/2006
- The Children Act 1989/2004
- The Mental Health Act 2010
- The Care Act 2014

The Children and Families Act, 2014 established a clear programme of SEND reforms which developed best practice in service quality and service delivery into a set of robust requirements:

a person-centred, joined-up approach to

- identifying and meeting the needs of children, young people and their families;
- increased engagement and participation of young people and families so that they have greater choice and control, are listened to and their concerns are resolved swiftly;
- a published Local Offer of support, services and provision, how to access it and how to raise concerns or seek redress:
- the use of effective practice, data and wider intelligence and independent assessment to drive improvement;
- clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities;
- increased integration of services and joint commissioning across the LA and Health.

This legislation sits in the context of the Equality Act 2010. Public bodies must give due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

1.3 The national impact of the Coronavirus / Covid 19 pandemic

This SEND strategy was at the final stage of being formulated during the first acute phase of the global Coronavirus epidemic. In March 2020, a new disease, Coronavirus (or Covid 19) swept across the world leading to the World Health Organisation pronouncing a global pandemic. The UK government responded to this threat by imposing a nationwide lockdown which

included the temporary closure of many businesses, all educational establishments and restrictions on travel and outside activity. Many people, including those in Local Government, switched to working from home meaning that some services were necessarily curtailed while others had to be delivered in different ways. Children and young people continued their studies at home using resources from their schools reinforced with online and television resources.

In May 2020, the Department for Education made modifications to the law on Education, Health

and Care needs assessments and plans due to Coronavirus. Whilst there is no change to the legislation covering special educational needs, the government has introduced some flexibility around aspects of the Children and Families Act 2014 through the recent Coronavirus Act 2020.

The modifications are:

- Rather than an 'absolute duty' to provide the provision contained in an Educational, Health and Care (EHC) plan in Section 42), the Local Authority now has to make 'reasonable endeavours' to provide this provision during the period of the pandemic. This should be reviewed regularly as situations change for families and services.
- Where there is a reason related to coronavirus, the usual statutory timescales within the EHC process are replaced by the requirement that it must be completed as soon as possible. This was in place until the 25th September 2020.

The City of London will continue to have the highest aspirations for all children and young people resident in the City, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. However, the uncertainties

> around the future will mean that some services for these children and young people and their families will need to be shaped and developed around the priorities and restrictions applicable at any one time.

There are also opportunities to consider different ways of working that have emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic. The partnership should draw on national, regional or local evidence of any improved outcomes that might have emerged. The increased use of technology in multi-agency working has been central to

our work practice and keeping everyone safe during the early stages of the lockdown.

created which means that professionals in the local area work well together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people."

Local Inspection report

"...a culture has been

1.4 Local Strategic Context

The City of London Corporation is the smallest local authority area in London. Its population of children with SEND is also small and, partly because of this, our families enjoy well-resourced, tailored services and a stable team of professionals, some of whom have worked with the children and young people for many years. We are deeply committed to

maintaining the quality of services and the strength of our relationships as we move forward to go beyond service improvement to achieving true excellence for our children and young people with SEND and their families.

Since the introduction of the SEND reforms in 2014, the City of London Corporation has introduced a number of changes. All statutory assessments are completed within 20 weeks of commencement (the legal timeframe) compared with 65% nationally and 58.5% in London as a whole (2017 figures).

A SEND Local Area Inspection in March 2018 concluded that 'leaders and professionals have a detailed understanding of the needs of children, young people and their families. Professionals involved in meeting the needs of children and young people work well together, sharing information and communicating effectively. Strong support is also provided to parents and carers where needed.'

Our school and settings provide excellent services and support to children and young people with SEND and their families. The 2018 inspection identified that, due to its small size, the local area faces significant challenges. A large proportion of children and young people in the City who have SEND are educated outside the local area. Although the inspection judged that 'leaders have effectively mobilised resources and staffing, and used joint commissioning, to manage these challenges effectively,' we still need to understand much more about all children and young people with SEND, including those at SEN Support, to make sure they have the high-quality services they need. We want to know what is working well for them and what additional or different support and advice they might need. We also want to make sure that that they know how to access the support and opportunities necessary to enable them to meet their individual life outcomes. Achieving this goal is highly dependent on the quality and effectiveness of partnership working in the City.

There is a very high satisfaction rate among our families. The 2018 Local Area Inspection reported that 'parents find professionals and leaders in the local area friendly, responsive and welcoming. There were numerous examples where parents explained to the inspection team professionals working in the local area listened to their concerns and responded quickly.' Children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan enjoy a comprehensive suite of services and feel that they have their needs well met. Parents meet regularly with City Corporation officers - and children often come along too.

Our one school in the City, The Aldgate School (formerly known as Sir John Cass Foundation

Primary School), has an outstanding judgement from Ofsted (April 2013) and offers a rich curriculum and inclusive learning environment for all its pupils. In addition to The Aldgate School we work closely with the wider City of London family of schools that includes the City of London academies, the early years providers and independent schools in the City, through the SENCO forum and other informal networks.

The City of London Corporation's published Local Offer (everything that is offered to children and young people with SEND and their families at a local level) was refreshed in coproduction with parents, children and young people. We know we still need to go further to make the information even more accessible, to highlight opportunities, and to facilitate greater participation. The Local Offer contains a comprehensive level of information, but we need more children, young people and their families to give us feedback on how we can make it even more useful.

The Local Offer can be found here: http://localoffer.cityoflondon.gov.uk

Families tell us that they experience good multiagency working. Often this means that they have a close relationship with one agency or individual within an agency who then acts as a gateway for other agencies. The Local Area inspection reported that 'leaders have ensured there is effective multiagency working...... a culture has been created which means that professionals in the local area work well together to identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people.' However, working in partnership across agencies can have its challenges in the City. For example, the sharing of information by and with early years providers and related agencies is an area still be developed further. The City's children receive their healthcare services through either the Tower Hamlets CCG or the City and Hackney CCG, so the City of London's partnership with both CCGs is equally important. The Ofsted Local Area inspection also acknowledged that 'with some commissioning that relates to health needs there is confusion as to how arrangements work for families that live in different parts of the City'. Since the inspection, the joint work across the City Corporation, the City and Hackney CCG and Tower Hamlets CCG has been strengthened. As a result, health and care pathways are now more aligned and families receive a more coherent and consistent service wherever they live.

Because of the size of the City's resident population, joint commissioning activity has been reframed specifically to meet the needs of the City's children and young people, particularly where there is a joint commission of services targeting large numbers

across two boroughs. Innovative governance arrangements and multi-agency participation at SEND Programme Boards have created a new paradigm in which the voice of the City child and young person is the first voice in all that we do. The Ofsted Local Area inspection highlighted that 'leaders use joint commissioning effectively' and recent coproduction with the CPCF means that commissioned services now better reflect the requirements and aspirations of children and young people with SEND and their families.

One of outcomes in The City of London's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 is that people have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. The SEND strategy 2020-24 fortifies this outcome for the City SEND community. We believe that education is the pathway for all children to reach their potential and achieve their dreams and ambitions in life. The belief that all children have the right to their education, their identity and the right to be proud of their heritage, culture and who they are. All children from black and minority ethnic backgrounds will always be treated with dignity and respect and the SEND City community will not be silent witnesses to any form of discrimination and harassment within our community.

1.5 The 'new normal': the impact of the Coronavirus / Covid 19 pandemic on services for children and young people with SEND in the City of London

The City of London Corporation has addressed the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic with its customary sensitivity and vigour. All children and families who are vulnerable were quickly identified and offered support and the necessary resources to enable them to continue their schooling at home, including the provision of laptops and Wi-Fi capability. The small number of children and young people in this category meant that social care teams and the Education

and Early Years team were able to contact all families of vulnerable children and young people including those with special educational needs and disabilities to identify their particular and individual needs.

The welfare of children and young people with Education, Health and Care plans was very closely monitored including regular contacts made with their families and their schools. Risk assessments were carried out by all schools for each of the children and young people and records kept of the provision made for them throughout the period of school closures.

The Aldgate School (formerly known as Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School) and the City child & family centre remained open throughout the 'lockdown' for the children of key workers and children with Education, Health and Care plans. The Aldgate School and the City of London School also provided education hub facilities for children whose own schools were closed.

A significant priority has been the support of children and young people who are about to face a major transition in education or out of education and into training or employment. The key groups for this support were those children about to enter school for the first time, children who are transferring from primary to secondary school, and those transitioning into further education or training. Alongside the support for children and young people to prepare them for transitions, support was offered to parents to help to alleviate their anxieties regarding their children returning to education in their usual settings and schools.

In addition to supporting children, young people and their families, the Education and Early Years team has had to address significant limitations and challenges, especially in how the team works with children, young people and families to assess

> individual needs and to provide therapeutic, emotional support. This means, for example that an educational psychologist has to conduct psychological assessments and other personal interviews using an online video link. This inevitably has some impact on both the accuracy of assessments, given that some children with SEND will find the unfamiliar virtual medium challenging. There are also challenges around ensuring that sensitive information is kept private and secure.

[During the coronavirus pandemic, the team has had] Regular and effective communication with children and young people, families and key partners...

1.5i Communication

Regular and effective communication with children and young people, families and key partners are crucial throughout the global crisis. The FYi and City of London websites have proved to be valuable modes of communicating with City residents. The SEND Local Offer is updated frequently so as to offer parents of children and young people with SEND the latest guidance and information on all aspects of their

children's education and wider welfare.

The City of London has well-established working relationships with local partners such as the City and Hackney CCG and SENDIASS. This has meant that children and young people with EHC plans have been able to continue to receive some therapeutic provision, albeit delivered virtually, and parents have continued to have access to specialist advice. Equally important throughout the crisis has been the wider communication network with other organisations and national charities working in the field of SEND, such as the Council for Disabled Children, Contact and I Can. These networks have helped us to stay abreast of the latest information and to access additional resources for families.

2. Our Key Outcomes

Outcome 1

We have a robust and inclusive multi-agency approach to identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

This means that:

- we listen to and act on the voices of children and young people with SEND and their families to develop a shared vision for the future
- children and young people with SEND and their families are full partners in all discussions and developments regarding SEND
- provision and opportunities are created around both individual needs and aspirations and on community level data from families, partners and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- we have a shared determination with key partners to evaluate and improve our services
- children and young people with SEND enjoy good health and well-being
- we communicate openly and with honesty

Our current practice and successes

We are committed to working with our key partners and the local community to ensure that we accurately identify, assess and meet the special educational needs, the heath needs and social care needs of the children and young people who live in the City of London. The needs, aspirations and interests of children and young people with SEND and their families are at the heart of all decisions about joint commissioning of SEND provision. As a result, services increasingly support families to have greater choice and control of their own lives while offering a high level of personalised support where and when it is needed. We work with our family of schools, particularly through the SENCO network -and schools

in other boroughs where City children and young people are educated- to identify special educational needs and disabilities as early as possible and put in place effective, evidence-based provision in a timely manner.

Contact has been commissioned to support the further development of our small parent carer forum and a representative from CONTACTsits on the SEND Programme Board that has overview of the progress and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. A number of children and young people with SEND are members of the City of London Youth Parliament and they are active and vocal representatives on behalf of others.

A Co-production Working Group met regularly during the academic years 2018/19 and 2019/20 to develop new or to review existing policies and procedures. The work of this group included the development of a shared vision for SEND, the 'Expectations of all schools' document for the SEND Local Offer, contributions to the SENCO Toolkits for early years provision, primary and secondary schools, and a provision mapping exercise with commissioning. Significant progress was made as a result of our coproduction workshop event in October 2019 that involved colleagues from early years provision, schools, health services, social care and the voluntary sector. This facilitated workshop captured the feelings, views and aspirations of representatives from across the City and the output from the workshop forms the basis of this SEND strategy.

In partnership, we want to build on this success by:

- Working with key partners in health and social care to strengthen our team around the child approach for children and young people with SEND:
- Increasing the participation of families of children and young people with SEND with the CPCF and wider parent carer and family events;
- Developing a charter with the parents and carers of children and young people with SEND;
- involving more children and young people with SEND to find out about their hopes and aspirations for the future and how we can help them to achieve these;
- Improving the consistency of identification of children and young people with SEND across education, health and social care:
- Developing an effective system to evaluate the outcomes achieved across education, health and social care by children and young people with SEND;
- Supporting our family of schools to become even more inclusive the better to meet the

needs of children and young people at SEN Support and those with EHC plans.

Our measures of success

- Children start school with their needs identified and appropriate provision in place.
- Children and young people with SEND and their families report that the range of services offered matches their needs and aspirations.
- New services are in place that have been developed and commissioned jointly across health, education and social care, including the development of personal budgets.

Outcome 2

Children and young people with SEND have good preparation for adulthood and are well supported through all major transitions.

As a result:

- children and young people with SEND and their families can live 'ordinary' lives as independently as possible
- flexible options are available to young people across housing, training, employment, health and leisure
- all young people with SEND have meaningful and fulfilling work and/or training and children are well prepared to achieve this.

Our current practice and successes

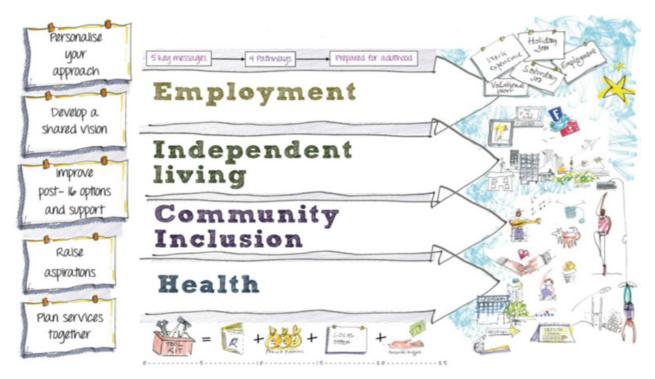
We want all children and young people with SEND to have the opportunity of paid employment and/ or voluntary work, to enjoy good health, to be able to live as independently as possible, to have friends and meaningful relationships and to be part of their community. These aspirations align with the

Preparing for Adulthood outcomes that inform and guide our development of services and opportunities for young people with SEND.

We work with our early years settings, schools and colleges to support them to prepare our children and young people with SEND for adulthood from their earliest years. This means ensuring that pupils receive high quality provision that is delivered effectively. All children and young people with SEND are educated in schools and early years settings that are good or better and make good progress towards their individual outcomes and aspirations. They have access to an inclusive and inspiring curriculum so that they can achieve their outcomes and so realise their aspirations for the future.

Transitions at each stage, from early years through to adulthood, are carefully planned and coproduced with children, young people and their families. Clear transition pathways have been established in partnership with young people with SEND and their families, both when they have an EHCP and when they are at SEN Support and, in the early years, even before they are at SEN Support.

A multi-agency Transitions Forum has been established to make sure that young people who previously received services as a child have their future needs as an adult assessed long before they become one. This enables a fresh assessment to be made in which the young person's needs are central. This assessment is used to secure resources, maintain continuity of service, and to offer an early introduction to any new professionals and services before the current ones stop supporting the young person and their family.



cultural life of the City

In partnership, we want to build on this success by ensuring that:

- Embedding the Preparing for Adulthood outcomes in all our planning for children and young people with SEND, from the earliest years;
- EHC plans contain SMART and aspirational outcomes that are linked to individual aspirations and that are important to the child or young person;

The City of London

has well-established

working relationships

with local partners

such as the City and

Hackney CCG and

SENDIASS.

- All children and young people with SEND have access to high-quality careers advice;
- Opportunities are increased for young people to access work experience and supported internships;
- There is a robust system to evaluate young people's progress against their individual outcomes;
- All young people with SEND are well supported by services from education, health and social care to have a smooth transition into adulthood.

Our measures of success

Children and young people with SEND make good progress above national expectations at all levels. Young people with SEND report that they are satisfied with the support they receive through and after transition to adulthood

All young people with SEND aged 16 to 25 are in education, training, supported internships, paid employment or supported voluntary work

Outcome 3

Children and young people with SEND are integral and valued members of the City of London community.

This means that:

- the City celebrates diversity and all services have a shared intent to make the lives of children and young people with SEND richer and more fulfilling
- the City is a safe and accessible place to play, learn and work for children and young people with SEND
- children and young people with SEND are welcomed and supported to participate in the

Our current practice and successes

The City of London is a vibrant and exciting place for all children and young people to live and learn. There is a rich offer of cultural and community activities from visits to world-class museums and art galleries to participating in amazing events such as the Lord Mayor's Show and the Aldgate Festival. Many families of children and young people with SEND participate in leisure, creative and sporting activities such as play schemes, youth clubs, art classes, yoga

and swimming lessons.

In addition to these activities that are open to all children and young people, the City commissions additional activities specifically for children and young people with SEND. The specialist activities are designed around what the children and young people with SEND and their families tell us they want.

The City of London Corporation has a joint contract with Hackney Council with commissioned specialist Short Breaks

providers. Although, many of these activities take place in neighbouring boroughs, often requiring families to use public transport- and this can be difficult for some families. Most activities also require parents to stay with their children. Parents tell us that they want us to provide more activities within the Square Mile and more activities in which siblings can join in too.

Many residents of the City of London live very close to the border with Tower Hamlets or Islington. For this reason, some families may prefer to access provision within these boroughs. The City commissioning team has built links with these Local Authorities and providers within both areas that are happy to accept City of London resident children.

Where there are no opportunities appropriate for a particular child or young person, the City of London Corporation will consider designing bespoke provision around the individual's needs and interests.

In early 2020, the SEND Team commissioned a short film of children and young people from the City talking about their interests, likes and concerns. This film has been shared across the City Corporation, including with members, and the views expressed are now being used to inform and shape policy and practice.

In partnership, we want to build on this success by:

- Introducing the SEND Friendly City audit to build awareness, understanding and capacity and to identify our strengths and areas for development;
- Building commissioners' relationships with providers directly to enhance the offer for families of children and young people with SEND;
- Increasing the number and range of activities available for children and young people with SEND within the Square Mile;
- Further developing the participation of children and young people with SEND in City of London groups, such as the Youth Parliament, so that we hear their voices clearly and their views and opinions shape all developments;
- Increasing the number of parents / carers of children and young people with SEND engaged in the City Parent Carer Forum, especially parents of children and young people at SEN Support.

Our measures of success

- There are 50% more universal and specialist activities available within the Square Mile for City children and young people with SEND;
- The City Parent Carer Forum has at least 10 active members and a functioning committee;
- At least 10 children and young people with SEND participate in City groups, such as the Youth Parliament;
- The SEND Friendly City audit evidences continuing improvements over time in the life experiences and opportunities of children and young people with SEND and their families.
- Colleagues from all teams across the City Corporation, including the City of London police, are supported and trained in how to approach and deal with children and young people with SEND with sensitivity and compassion.



SEND Local Offer Education and Early Years Service

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