

# Joint Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy



**September 2022 - September 2025**



Together improving  
outcomes for SEND



[www.luton.gov.uk](http://www.luton.gov.uk)

**Luton**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Executive Summary

Luton's children and young people are the future of Luton. They are entitled to the best possible life opportunities that we can give them at every stage through from their birth and early childhood through education and then as they transition into adulthood and employment.

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) is the same as for all children and young people in Luton. We want them to:

- lead happy, purposeful lives as part of their community in Luton
- have choices and know that their voices are heard about decisions that affect them
- flourish and thrive so that they can continue to achieve their full potential and aspirations in their early years, at school, college and as adults.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out how we will do this for those children and young people with SEND. It has been informed by and aligned with the following:

- [Local Area Joint SEND Needs Assessment](#)
- [SEND co-produced outcomes framework](#)
- findings from the [2018 Ofsted inspection](#)
- co-production meetings, workshops and consultation
- aligned strategies/plans including the:
  - [Luton 2040 Vision](#)
  - **Children and Young People Strategy (ICB Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes (BLMK))**
  - [Luton Council Education Strategy](#)
  - [Luton Council Behaviour, Inclusion and Wellbeing Strategy](#) (Education)
  - [Effective Support for Children and Young People in Luton](#)
  - [Luton Council Children's Services Improvement Plan](#)
  - [Luton Sufficiency Strategy - Children in Care](#)
  - [Joint Commissioning intentions](#)

This document describes our vision and the outcomes we want for our children and young people with SEND. It describes the context within which we work, the principles underlying how we will work and our strategic priorities for the next three years to help deliver improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Diagram 1 sets out how all the various elements fit together to support the delivery of the vision.

This strategy builds on the work of the previous strategy, published in 2020, and has been jointly developed by Luton Borough Council and the NHS in collaboration with children and young people, parents and carers, EPIC (Empowering Parents, Influencing Change) and other key stakeholders.

When Ofsted and CQC (Care Quality Commission) undertook their inspection of our local area in 2018, they highlighted that too many children and young people with SEND do not get the support they need in Luton. This strategy forms part of Luton's response to our local area ambition to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

## Priorities:

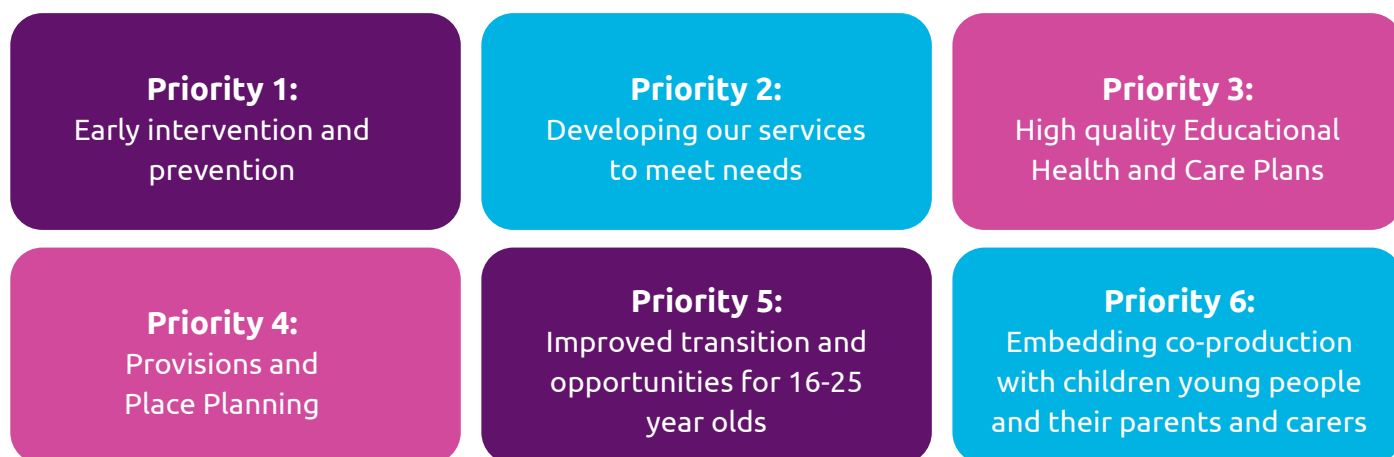
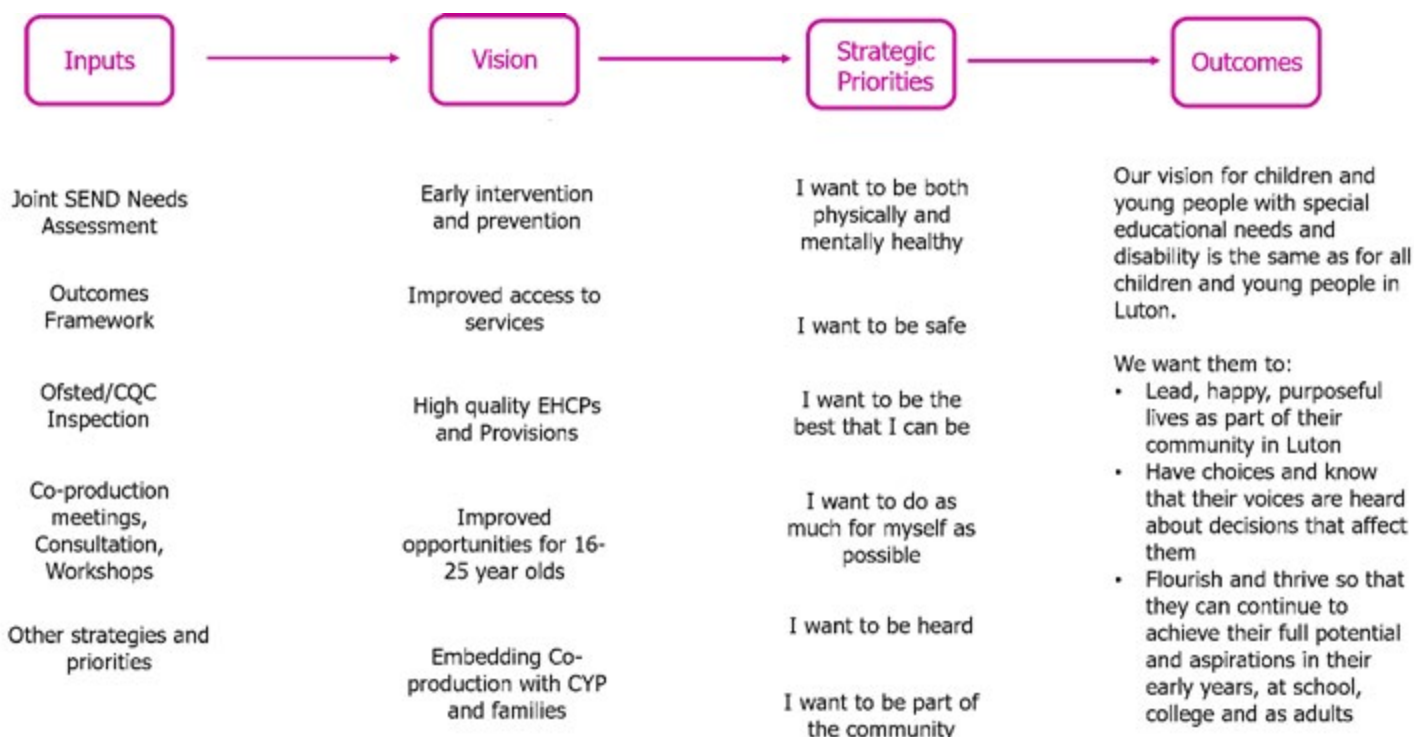


Diagram 1:



## 1.2 What are Special Educational Needs?

A child or young person can be described as having special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child and young person is considered to have a learning difficulty if they have:

- significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream school or mainstream post-16 institutions.

Children and young people may have needs in one or more broad areas of need and these can change over time:

- communication and interaction including children with autistic spectrum disorder
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- sensory and physical difficulties.

Most children and young people will have their needs met at an early stage and they will access support through their school or setting (in schools this is called SEND support). Children and young people with the most severe needs will have an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This plan is statutory and sets out clearly the child or young person's SEND, along with the provision they need to help them overcome the barriers to learning that these needs present.

## 1.3 SEND Reforms

The Children and Families Act 2014 and supporting SEND Code of Practice, January 2015, required Local Areas, made up of the Local Authority (LA) and Integrated Care Board (ICS), to implement a set of reforms to support children and young people with SEND and their families. The Act aimed to fundamentally change the relationship between professionals and children and young people with SEN and their families while maintaining the existing protections in the system. It did not change the definition of SEND but placed the views of children, young people and parents at the heart of the system. Education, health and social care services were expected to work together to ensure that they achieved the best possible outcomes for young people, including the skills and confidence to live and work independently.

Relevant legislation

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014
- Breaks for carers of disabled children regulations 2011
- Care Act 2014
- Children Act 1989/ 2004
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Education Act 1996/ 2011
- Equality Act 2010



## 1.4 Why are we creating this SEND Strategy?

We are ambitious for all of Luton's children and young people and want to provide the highest quality support and provision to ensure all children can thrive. All of our local area special schools are good or outstanding and over 85% of local area schools are graded as being good or better by Ofsted. We want to keep pace with demand and practise innovations improvements in response to local needs, which has seen the number of children and young people with EHC plans across the local area steadily increase in recent years: from 900 in 2013/14 to almost 2200 in 2022.

We want to make sure that we have the best possible arrangements in place to make the right plans for our children and young people. It will drive an ambitious programme of work that will be overseen by representatives of the accountable bodies through a Strategic Board and will change the ways in which we work with children, young people, parents/carers, and as professionals together. Luton's children deserve the best and we will continue to drive forward improvements to offer the best possible provision and multi-agency services to provide the highest quality start to our children and young people's lives.

## 1.5 Co-production

An essential and valuable contribution to this strategy came from our discussions and co-production consultations, meetings and workshops with a wide range of people including parents and carers, young people, the EPIC (Empowering Parents, Influencing Change) Luton, education, health and social care services. Two strategy refresh workshops were held in March and May 2022 and the outcomes used to inform this update.

As a Local Area we are committed to working together with children, young people and their families to both co-produce individual plans and support as well as service and strategic developments. We will continue to do this in a range of ways which includes supporting the development of the new Luton Parent Carer Forum EPIC, which established itself in July 2020, and who are taking an active role in supporting SEND transformational work going forward.

Our co-production activity will be underpinned by the values and principles that were developed with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, their families and representatives from education, health and social care services. These now form our Working Together Charter and are set out in diagram 2. [Click here](#) to access the Luton SEND Working Together Charter.

Diagram 2:



## 2. Vision, Principles and Outcomes

### 2.1 Our Vision

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disability is the same as for all children and young people in Luton.

We want them to:

- lead happy, purposeful lives as part of their community in Luton
- have choices and know that their voices are heard about decisions that affect them
- flourish and thrive so that they can continue to achieve their full potential and aspirations in their early years, at school, college and as adults

Underpinning our vision for children and young people with SEND is a set of jointly agreed and owned principles. We want Luton to be a place where all children, young people with SEND and their families:

- feel welcomed, valued and respected
- have high aspirations for their future
- have access to the best childcare, education and training opportunities consistently across the Town
- have a voice, are listened to and are equal partners in decision-making about their own lives
- have choice and control over their lives
- receive the right support and advice at the right time, with early identification and support a priority
- are included in and can make a positive contribution to the wider community
- are communicated with in a timely, transparent and clear way
- Benefit from working with skilled practitioners who understand their needs and how these can be best met
- Benefit from working with joined up services across multiple agencies

A key aim is to develop quality local provision so that parents have confidence in the local system and children and young people with SEND can play, learn and work with their families and within their local communities. This is a multi-agency approach embraced by education, health and care services working together because we believe that this is right for our Luton children and their families. Linked to our Behaviour, Inclusion and Wellbeing and Strategy (BIWAB), Luton Borough Council supports an inclusive approach to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities wherever appropriate:

### Vision

For all Luton schools and educational settings to have the capacity in terms of staff training and understanding of support needs to offer outstanding, quality first education that meets the full range of needs, complemented by additional, specialist, local provision for those children with the most challenging and diverse needs.

## 2.2 Principles

To support the delivery of this vision, a set of system service delivery principles were developed; these principles will underpin all the actions of everyone supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Luton:

- children, young people, and their families, will be at the heart of everything that we do and their best interests will drive decision- making
- children and young people will be encouraged to express their views and to take an active part in making decisions for themselves and the wider community
- all children and young people are entitled to the same opportunities to learn and be included in the social life of the community so that they can achieve their full potential
- the emotional well-being and mental health of children and young people is important and can also have a significant impact on the capacity of children and young people to learn and achieve their potential
- all children and young people must be kept safe from harm and this is a joint responsibility
- there should be a focus on early intervention to ensure that the needs of children and young people are met well in a timely manner and to prevent escalation to costly higher-level services
- children and young people should have their needs met locally wherever possible so that they can remain within their community (either through maintained provision or through bespoke packages of support)
- there should be a continued focus on outcomes including preparing for adulthood outcomes<sup>1</sup> throughout the child and young person's education and training
- there should be an assess-plan-do-review approach that promotes a continual process of development and improvement
- there will be a focus on building positive relationships and listening to each other with respect
- continued learning and professional development for everyone involved is essential for the development and maintenance of high-quality services and support
- all provision should be based on evidence and regularly reviewed to make sure that children and young people continue to make progress
- specialist services and resources will focus on children and families with the highest level of need
- resources will be allocated fairly and the impact monitored to ensure efficiency and valued for money.

## 2.3 Outcomes

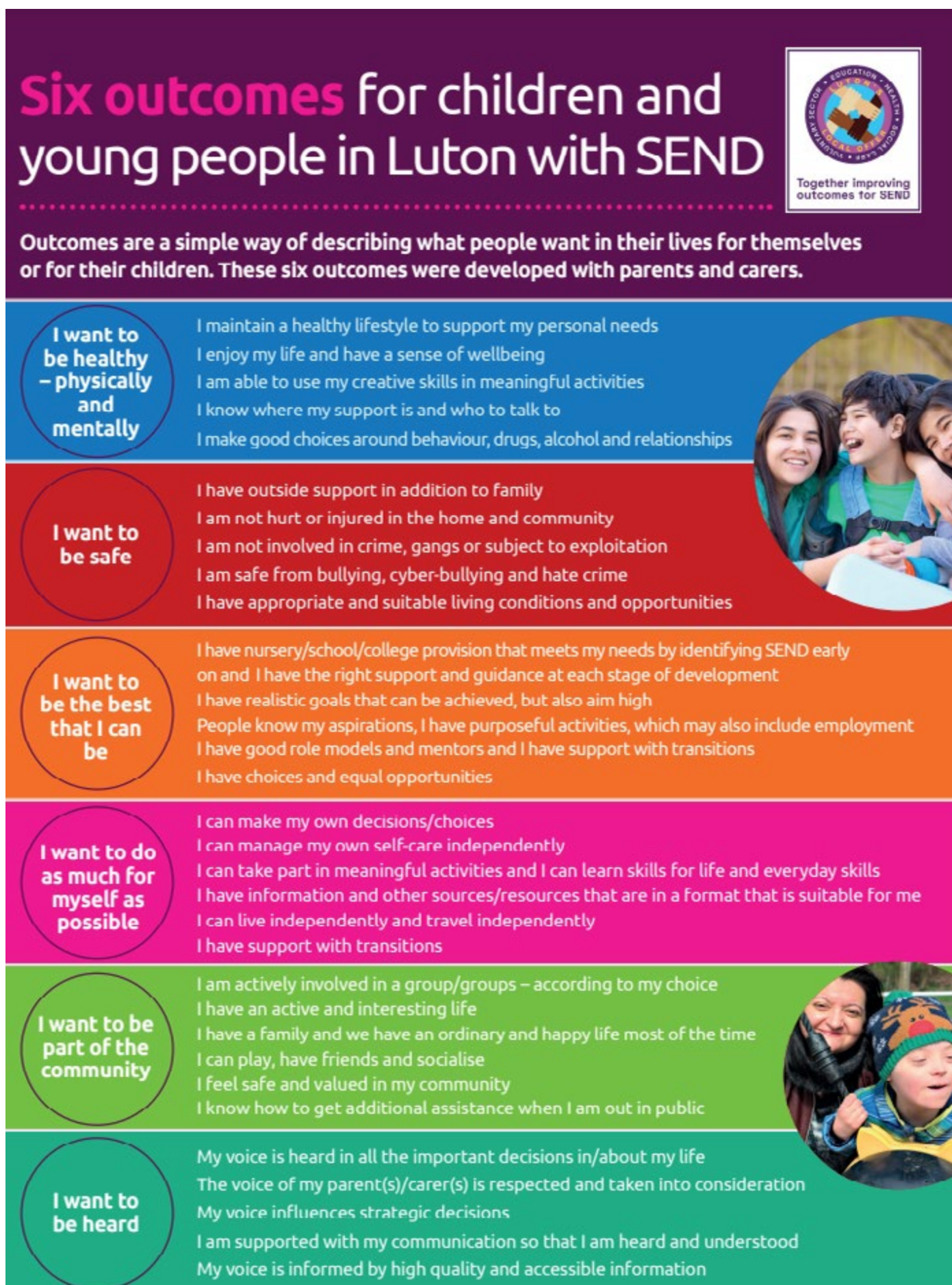
We have co-produced a set of outcomes that we want for our children and young people with SEND. These were reviewed with our parent carer community in May 2022 and agreed as the outcomes we are striving for. Achieving these outcomes will enable us to deliver the vision as shown in diagram 1 above. The outcomes are set out in diagram 3 below and for each we have developed a set of measures that will be monitored as a Local Area to assess progress.

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1. Preparing for Adulthood Outcomes (Department for Education Updated 2017) include employment, independent living, community inclusion and health.



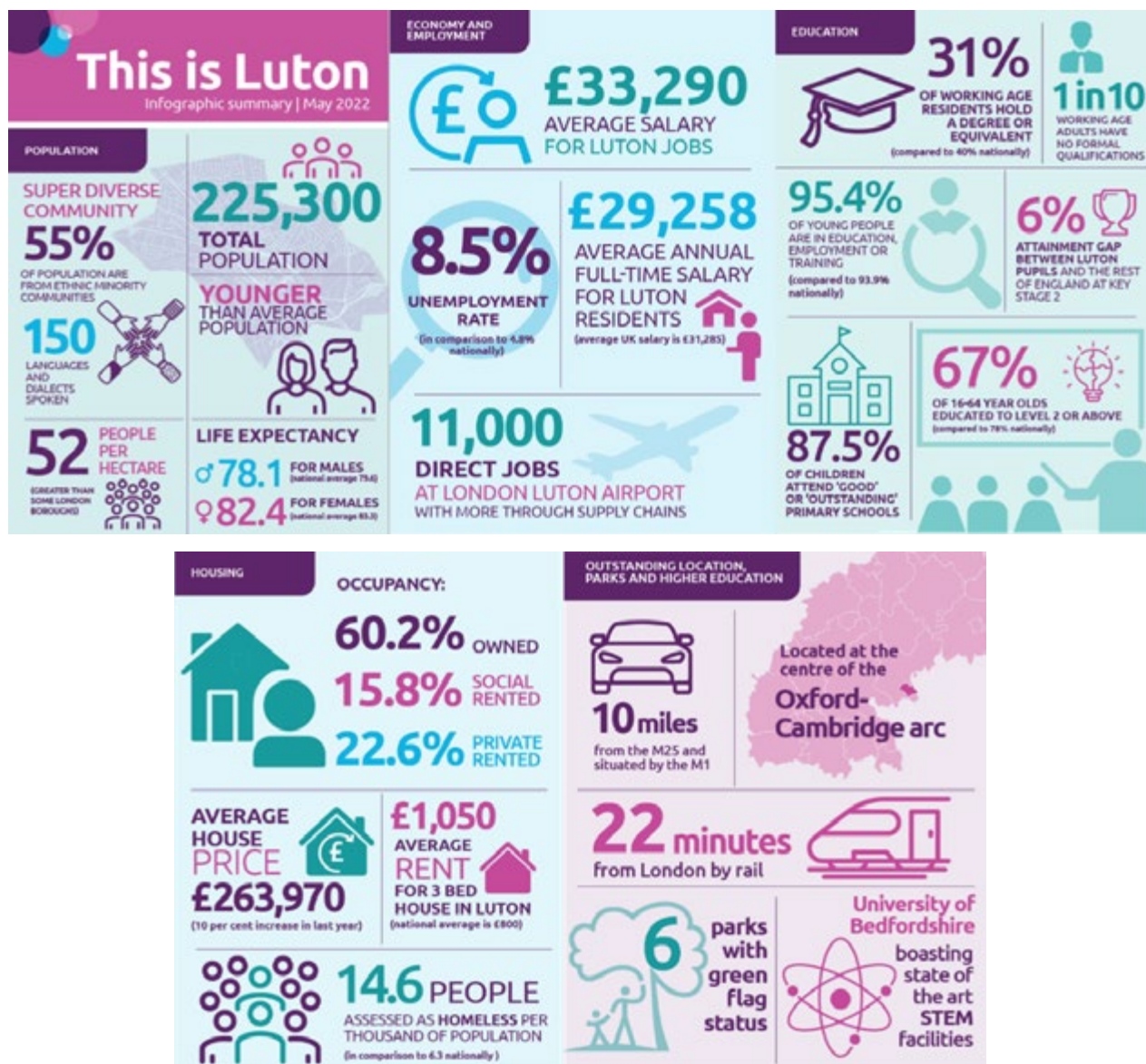
Diagram 3: What this looks and feels like for Luton's Children and Young People with SEND





## 3. Local Context


### 3.1 About Luton



Luton is a densely populated and culturally diverse 'World Town'. It has excellent transport networks, including an airport and regular trains to London, just 30 miles and half an hour away, and proximity to the M1.

Luton is home to 225,300 residents (Source: 2021 Census, Office for National Statistics) and we have a younger than average population (29% under 20), compared to national figure (23%). In Luton 64,500 are aged 19 years and under, of whom 16,000 are under five years of age. After a period of sustained growth, the size of the child population has recently fallen due a drop in the birth rate. Population is projected to rise by 19% within the next 20 years.

It is estimated that more than 160 languages and dialects are spoken in Luton. In a number of our schools, over 20 languages are spoken in a single school. English is the most prevalent language spoken in Farley, Northwell and South wards; in Biscot and Dallow, the most prevalent first language is Urdu. Polish, Romanian and Bengali are also common, as is Punjabi and Bangladeshi. (Source: 2011 Census & Luton School Census, 2021)



Luton experiences a high population turnover and analysis of population data indicates that approximately 50% of current Luton residents were either not born or not living in Luton at the time of the 2011 Census with South and High Town wards having the fastest rates of population change.

Luton is currently ranked the 70th most deprived out of 317 local authorities, in 2015 Luton was ranked the 59th most deprived area from 326 local authorities. The proportion of areas in Luton in the top 10 per cent most deprived parts of the country has fallen with Luton having four areas in the top ten per cent most deprived. These are in Northwell, South and two in Farley. Previously Luton had nine areas in the top ten per cent. (Source: 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation, MHCLG).

Unemployment has been decreasing in Luton with the rate at 5.8% but this is bigger than the national rate of 3.7% and still larger than the rate of 3.4% prior to the covid-19 pandemic. The areas with the highest unemployment rates are South, Biscot, Dallow and Northwell. (Source: Claimant Count, Office for National Statistics).

In Luton it is estimated that 45 per cent of children (23,000 children) are living in poverty after housing costs. Luton has the 5th highest rate of child poverty of all the local authorities in the country. (Source: DWP/HMRC, 2021). Biscot and Dallow wards are in the top ten wards in the country for the proportion of children living in poverty. (Source: Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University, 2019).

### **3.2 Luton's 2040 Ambition and Child Friendly Town Strategic Objective**

Through the ambitions set out in the Luton 2040 Strategic objectives and our shared aims for the Town, we are working towards progressing our UNICEF's Child Friendly programme intentions. The Luton Child Friendly Town ambition is likely to be a three to five year programme with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as its foundation. A child friendly community is where the voices, need, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of public policies, programmes, and decisions. We recognise the specific needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, and those who need support to promote inclusion. We are committed to ensuring their voices and lived experiences underpin the programme and will employ a range of methodologies to ensure this group are fully part of this work.

We recognise the role of schools, settings and wide range of services that play a part in delivering our vision and Child Friendly Town ambitions. Elected Members, leaders and, professionals, clinicians and managers from education, health, social care services and the voluntary and community sector are driving our ambition forward through the Luton SEND Strategic Improvement Group. We have listened to what children and young people with SEND and their families have told us about their experiences and developed this strategy as part of our commitment to working together to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND across the Luton local area. We need to make sure our young people know that we are here to help them overcome any barriers and give them the skills and opportunities to meet their aspirations – and those aspirations should have no limitations.

The priorities will also aim to build a more inclusive economy and tackle inequalities, as well as meeting our commitments to ensure that Luton is a fair and sustainable town where our young people can grow up happy, healthy and secure.

We have high ambitions and expectations of all our young people and want to ensure they have the right support at the right time, to thrive and be the best they can be. We are committed to addressing where it may arise forms of disproportionality in the identification of SEND and are working with partners to develop culturally responsive services.

**Luton 2040**  
**A place to thrive**

## Joint Target Outcomes for Children with SEND:

### **All of our children and young people will be able to access services that keep them safe and secure**

– This target outcome is essential to making sure that all our children and young people are able to grow up feeling safe and secure. Building on our improvement plan for children's services, we will work with everyone in our town to protect all our children and young people from harm and enable them to enjoy happy and fulfilling childhoods.

### **Reduced health inequalities for all our children and young people**

– Previous analysis, including the work of the Inclusive Growth Commission, has highlighted the impact of poorer health outcomes for many of our young people, including high rates of child poverty. These poorer health outcomes are also linked to poverty and poorer outcomes in later life. This target outcome will therefore focus on reducing health inequalities for children and young people across Luton and in comparison to the rest of the country.

### **Children and young people with SEND will have the same opportunities as non-disabled children and young people**

– To provide the best start in life for all, we must ensure that this is inclusive for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Luton's SEND strategy is aligned to this strategic priority with six specific outcomes to ensure that children and young people with SEND can grow up happy and healthy, with a voice that is heard and the same opportunities to play, socialise and reach their full potential as other children and young people.

### **Excellent educational outcomes and increased aspiration and achievement for our children and young people**

– For our young people to thrive in later life we will focus on raising aspirations as well as achievement to match. Through our education strategy we will work collaboratively to broaden the aspirations of our young people and to ensure that all children in Luton attend good or outstanding schools that enable achievement.

**Our young people will have a voice that is heard and that matters** – Like all of our residents it is important to provide young people with a voice that is listened to and that can make a real difference in shaping the future of our town. To deliver on this target outcome we will build on the creation of our young people's council to ensure young people feel they have a voice that matters.



#### Target Outcomes

- All of our children and young people will be able to access services that keep them safe and secure.
- Reduced health inequalities for all our children and young people.
- Children and young people with SEND will have the same opportunities as non-disabled children and young people.
- Excellent educational outcomes and increased aspiration and achievement for our children and young people.
- Our young people will have a voice that is heard and that matters.



## Target outcomes 2023-2028:

- Our children and young people will have access to good quality services that keep them safe and secure.
- Every child has an excellent education that raises aspiration and achievement and reduces educational inequalities.
- More opportunities for our children and young people to develop, play and socialise.
- Greater and more equal opportunities for children and young people with SEND.
- All of our children and young people will have a meaningful voice that is heard and that matters.

## Tangible Achievements by 2028:

Luton will be recognised as a UNICEF child-friendly town

Luton will have a good or outstanding Ofsted rating for children's services

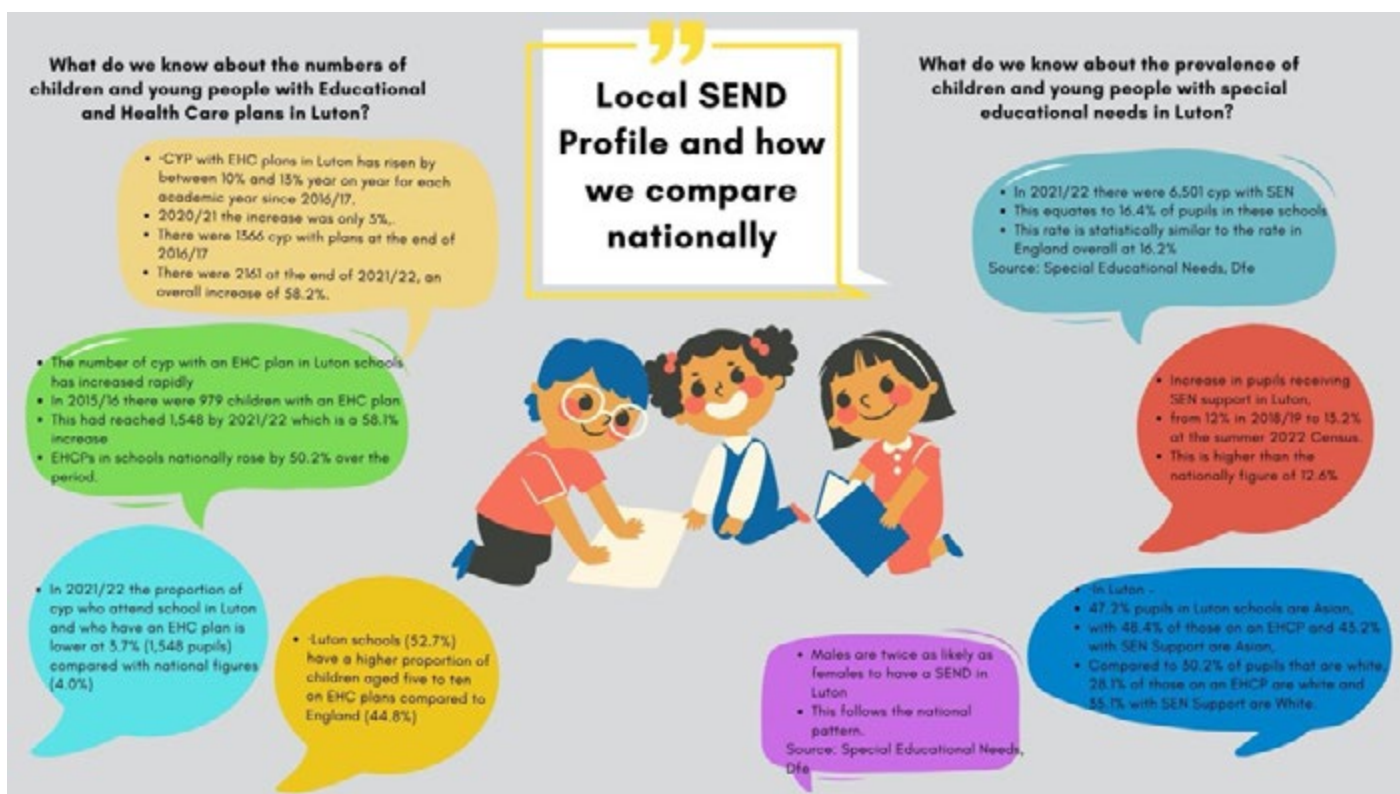
Opening of a new Children with Disabilities Resource Centre of Excellence

More special school places and special educational provision to enable children with SEND to reach their full potential

An active young people's council and young people's citizen's panels



### 3.3 Local SEND Profile and how we compare nationally



### 3.4 Our Strengths

The SEND inspection of Luton in 2018 identified a number of strengths of the local area. Here are some examples:

- Children looked after are being well supported to have their needs identified within a timely manner
- The local area met the statutory deadline of April 2018 for the conversion of statements of special educational needs to EHC plans
- staff in the early years educational settings speak highly of the guidance and training that they receive from the local area's special educational needs support service (SENS service)
- The children's community nursing team offers a broad range of specialist services to meet the needs of children and young people with the most complex health needs. The work between the community nursing team and the continuing healthcare services is ensuring that children and young people are benefiting from individual healthcare provision
- School leaders and parents value the work of the early help service and school improvement teams within the local area. These services are helping to meet the needs of children and young people better.
- There has been the introduction of a rapid response service that is starting to reduce the need for families to visit the accident and emergency department and the paediatric assessment unit.
- There were some strong examples of individual children and young people being well supported through multi-agency work between the school improvement team, ACE, BISS, the SENAT, the virtual school and social care teams. The children and young people are having their needs better met because of this joined-up approach.
- The school improvement team has a strong understanding about the underperformance of children with SEND in schools in the local area. There are signs of gradual improvement for the children and young people through long term work with schools, most notably in key stage 2.
- There are children and young people who are accessing personal budgets, direct payments, supported accommodation, apprenticeships and supported internships. Around 230 children receive direct payments, and there are an increasing number of young people who are accessing supported internships. For these children and young people, this is effective support that is improving their outcomes.
- There are several specialist provisions, including outreach support and alternative provision that are improving the outcomes for children and young people. These providers create high-quality experiences, and support for greater levels of independence both within school and within the wider community.

### 3.5 Our Successes

Since the Ofsted Inspection in 2018, we have achieved a number of successes and this strategy will build on these:

- wider engagement with parents and carers through focus groups in settings and schools as well as with the Parent Carer Forum and their members. A new PCF has been established following the previous PCF as this folded in March 2020. A new Forum called EPIC (Empowering Parents, Influencing Change) was established and is now developing with a growing membership.
- significant investment in tier 2 CAMHS service
  - Neighbourhood Community Hub Model, which in addition to the school's liaison team includes workers who interface with schools and primary care.
  - Online support from Kooth and texting support via Chathealth
  - Counselling from CHUMs and Tokko
- the implementation of a Special Needs Pathway for the under-fives
- children's Integrated Commissioners (ICB/LA) and the health provider (CCS) have worked in partnership to develop improved pathways for access to Speech and Language therapy and sensory processing support
- every child now attending a Special School in Luton has an initial Health Assessment with associated care plan when required within the first term of attending school
- the School Nurses work with the special needs team to deliver appropriate health promotion sessions in special schools
- new Quality Assurance Framework for EHC Plans to improve the quality and consistency of plans across the area
- reductions in the number of local area fixed term exclusions, with figures for Luton schools substantially below national levels (5.8% LBC/ 14.4% national)
- Luton is challenged as a place to recruit Health staff, this has been the case in School Nursing and Speech and Language therapy however, both of these teams are currently fully recruited
- improved timeliness and quality of health advice provided for EHCPs
- new engagement approach to enable the voice of children and young people to shape service delivery and strategic improvements
- uplifts to the Element 3 Top-up funding for children with EHC plans in Luton maintained mainstream and special schools and academies
- increasing number of young people with EHC plans are participating in supported internships and gaining paid employment.
- Increased number of resourced places available in the resourced maintained nursery schools for children with severe and complex needs.
- Figures for SEND tribunal appeal rates for Luton are significantly below national (LBC 0.7/ national 1.6). Luton also has lower numbers of SEND mediation cases (8) that have been upheld compared to national (20).

### 3.6 Challenges

- The estimated population of Luton is 213,500 with a younger than average population.
- Luton is densely populated with a higher population density than some London boroughs.
- There are an estimated 160 languages and dialects spoken in Luton.
- Luton is ranked as the 70th most deprived (out of 317) local authority in the country.
- Areas in Farley, Northwell and Farley are in the 10 per cent of most deprived areas in the country.
- Luton has high levels of child poverty with more than half of children in Biscot and Dallow wards estimated to be living in poverty.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately hit the more deprived areas, with some of the more affluent areas experiencing an increase in wealth through rising house prices and increased savings.
- Luton benefits from having one of the youngest populations in the country, providing enormous potential to the future of our town as a vibrant community where businesses look to invest for the future. Having a young population also brings enormous challenges however, with Luton experiencing one of the highest rates of child poverty outside of London.
- Life expectancy is lower in Luton than the national figure for both males and females - Female life expectancy is higher than male life expectancy in Luton.
- There are high levels of over-crowding in the town.
- High levels of complex and severe SEND needs within our under 5 year old age group.
- Since March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted the impact of poverty on the town and its residents, with those from the most deprived backgrounds likely to be at increased risk of poorer health outcomes and financial hardship.
- House prices and rental costs have been rising, putting pressure on household budgets.
- Luton has high levels of homelessness.



## 4. Strategic Priorities

### 4.1 Strategic Priorities Overview

To support the delivery of the above outcomes we have identified the following key priorities. These have been co-produced using the following sources of data:

- information from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- SEND Outcomes Framework
- Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection
- co-production meetings, workshops and on-line consultation with parents
- other relevant strategies and plans to ensure that the priorities made sense in the context of other work and that the common threads were recognisable.

#### **Strategic Priority 1**

Early intervention and prevention

#### **Strategic Priority 2**

Developing our services to meet needs

#### **Strategic Priority 3**

High quality Educational Health and Care Plans and provisions that meet needs

#### **Strategic Priority 4**

Provision and Place Planning

#### **Strategic Priority 5**

Improved services for 16-25 year olds

#### **Strategic Priority 6**

Embedding co-production with children, young people, parents and carers



## 4.2 What we will do to implement these Strategic Priorities

### Priority 1: Early intervention and prevention - Right support, right place and right time

**This is important because:** There is an increasing demand for services and support at an early age. Accurate and timely information will help to ensure that robust and evidence-based decision making is undertaken and services are delivered at the earliest opportunity to best meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

An early response to a concern and early identification and intervention are key to helping children and young people with SEND to reach their potential. Early intervention services can impact a child's developmental path and improve their outcomes and are part of the ICB commitment to the strategic priority "Start Well". This means that there is both a place-based and a BLMK wide approach to ensure that health needs of children with SEND are met.

We will improve our early intervention and prevention support by:

- further promote our current universal services that provide information and support to address identified concerns such as speech, language and communication
- providing information and resources on the online Local Offer to support self-management and support for families and young carers
- working with parents and carers so that they can reinforce learning strategies and techniques used in school and at home
- Create a graduated approach framework for supporting children and young people with SEND
- Integrate the LA SEND services (SEND Assessment Team, SENS Advisory service, Behaviour and Inclusion Support Service and Educational Psychology services) to create a new Integrated SEND service – this will create better joined up services and a single senior manager to oversee effectiveness of all services
- create a new pre-statutory funding stream for schools to apply to for children who require short term additional funding to close the gap at an early stage
- work closely with nurseries and PVI settings, with the support of Early Years outreach support, to identify children with additional needs earlier and to support these children to close the gap
- supporting schools to have robust internal measures to identify those children who are not making adequate progress or are at risk of exclusion and support schools with increased information, training and support to identify appropriate interventions based on research to close the gap
- providing support to SEND families through the new Family Wellbeing Service (CHUMS) and through further targeted sessions with our PCF EPIC to support families and children/ young people
- embedding and implementing Talking Takes Off to ensure families can access support for their child and young person's speech, language and communication needs
- ensuring that Early Help support is available to families as part of the Complex Care panel at the Edwin Lobo Centre
- further embed the work of the Family Partnership Service and the new Family Hubs model to extend the reach of its support for families with SEND
- create a mental health strategy to support needs based on the Young People's Mental Health needs assessment

## Intended Outcomes:

**Luton 2040**  
A place to thrive

### Reduced health inequalities for all our children and young people:

- ✓ Children will be assessed accurately in schools/ settings and additional needs identified at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ Parents, carers and schools can reach out for the right support at the right time
- ✓ Support will be acutely attuned to the children's needs and rapidly put in place
- ✓ Support will be effective and will demonstrate improved outcomes
- ✓ Schools can access short term early support funding for children at an early stage without needing to apply for an EHCP, where appropriate
- ✓ Schools will have the knowledge and expertise to identify evidence-driven interventions to close the gap at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ Stakeholders will be able to reach out to services without delay to arrange support needed, which will be high quality and individual to needs
- ✓ Data will continually be used to drive service offers to meet the needs

## Priority 2: Developing our services to meet needs

**This is important because:** In order to enable children and young people with SEND and their families to succeed, we must ensure that the right support is available at the right time.

Our Local Offer of services to support children, young people with SEND and their families, should meet their needs. Services need to be transparent, easy to access and enable support to be put in place in the quickest time possible.

Education, social care and health Partners come together to ensure the needs of the respective young people are commissioned and met, the group also provides the governance and assurance of delivery of our joint commissioning intentions.

We will further develop the range of support and services available to children and young people with SEND and their families by:

- improving access and support from children's community, health and social, emotional and wellbeing services
- completing a system-wide review of our Neuro-Developmental Diagnostic Pathway and outcomes to inform next steps and consider respite services, after school provision and leisure activities
- promoting the pathways available to parents and professionals to ensure support can easily be accessed
- continuing to embed links between the Consortia and EPIC to ensure that service development includes co-production

- develop Local Authority Short breaks service to continue to grow and develop, with a focus on Early Help and support
- increasing uptake on annual health checks on the GP LD register
- enabling families to make best use of personal health budgets, personal budgets and direct payments to meet their child's needs
- supporting our local facilities, local clubs and organisations to be disability aware and DDA compliant
- ensuring accessibility and develop awareness of the Local Offer website among parents, carers and practitioners. Create a continuous improvement and quality control process via consultation
- delivering our joint commissions intentions
- continuing to develop the SEND training offer and market across the system with training to be developed based on identified needs of the staff and robustly evaluated to ensure it meets the needs of professionals

## Intended Outcomes:

**Luton 2040** All of our children and young people will be able to access  
A place to thrive services that keep them safe and secure:

- ✓ Data will continually be used to drive service offers to meet the needs
- ✓ The local offer will be a clear, effective resource which signposts families and professionals to the services and support available
- ✓ Parents, carers and professionals will know how to find out more about available services
- ✓ Children's health needs are met consistently and in a timely manner – e.g. Assessments for ASD/ ADHD are processed using Luton and Bedfordshire's Neurodevelopmental Disorder (NDD) Pathway without delay and used to inform SEND needs as part of early identification along with SEND sufficiency
- ✓ Local facilities, clubs and organisations are DDA compliant
- ✓ Support will be acutely attuned to the children's needs and rapidly put in place
- ✓ Support will be effective and will demonstrate improved outcomes
- ✓ Families can access the services they require without delay
- ✓ Local services meet the needs of Luton's transient population

## Priority 3: High quality Educational Health and Care Plans

**This is important because:** High quality EHC plans with clear objectives, appropriate support and provision will enable children and young people to reach their full potential at the earliest opportunity.

Improving the quality and timeliness of Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP) and the annual review, is a key priority for our local area. Whilst we have made some good progress with this, there is further work that needs to be done.

We will do this by ensuring:

- person-centred planning is fully embedded and the voice/aspirations of the child and the young person are clearly reflected in their plans and authentically co-produced
- all plans will be outcomes focused and will be clear regarding the needs and provision for children and young people
- EHCPs and Annual Reviews are issued within the set timescales with effective monitoring in place
- robust quality assurance of EHC Plans to ensure that they reflect every child's strengths, needs and provision accurately over time, keeping step with maturity and developmental age appropriate outcomes
- learning from the EHCP quality audits is embedded across all services
- ensure Health, Social Care and Early Help assessments inform and influence outcomes and provision for children and young people with Education Health Care Plans, specifically focusing on use of CAMHS assessment and establishing pathways for Community Children's Nursing involvement in the content of EHC plans
- ensure that, from Year 9, EHCP outcomes reflect and support the aspiration that young people with all but the most complex needs will move towards employment or volunteering, and will seek to maximise independence for all
- continually engage with the EPIC forum to seek views to drive forward further improvements and co-production opportunities
- The implementation of EYES by November 2022 will improve the information sharing across LA colleagues as they will all be able to see child's record as "one family, one view"
- Closely monitor the performance of multi-agency partners' input to ensure that EHCPs are processed in time to meet statutory deadlines

## Intended Outcomes:

### **Luton 2040** Excellent educational outcomes and increased aspiration and achievement for our children and young people. A place to thrive

- ✓ EHC plans are developed with full involvement of the child/ young person and their families and are shaped around their aspirations and ambitions
- ✓ EHC plans accurately capture the child/ young person's needs and detail a range of effective support measures with clear intended outcomes
- ✓ EHC plans improve outcomes for all children/ young people
- ✓ Audits drive forward improvements to ensure 100% EHC plans are good or outstanding
- ✓ 100% of EHCPs are produced in the statutory timescales
- ✓ 100% of annual reviews are completed on time
- ✓ Assessments and advices from partners are high quality and finely tuned to meet the needs of the children and young people
- ✓ Multi-agency partners work seamlessly together to meet needs
- ✓ Children and young people with SEND will have the same opportunities as non-disabled children and young people

#### Priority 4: Provisions and Place Planning

**This is important because:** having the right range of provision to meet the local needs of the children and young people in Luton is essential to ensure they receive the most appropriate support targeted to their needs.

Key to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND is ensuring they have the right educational provision that meets their needs. We want to ensure that we have the appropriate number, range and quality of provision so that pupils:

- can be supported wherever possible in mainstream and inclusive settings
- CYP in need of more specialist support will be placed in the most appropriate provision and wherever possible within Luton so that travel time is minimised and contact with local community networks maximised

We will do this by:

- create a new SEND Sufficiency plan to ensure appropriate numbers of places in SEND resource bases and special schools are available to suit the needs of our children and young people
- review the use of SEND resource bases and develop additional capacity to support inclusion across mainstream schools



- support mainstream schools to be inclusive and further develop the outreach support available from special schools to ensure mainstream settings have the right skills and expertise to support a wide range of needs in a mainstream environment
- establish new secondary special school provisions
- addressing gaps in provision for the children and young people who have:
  - Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Severe Learning Difficulties and challenging behaviour
  - Social Emotional Mental Health difficulties
- Undertake a regular strategic review of SEND placements for Luton children and young people, including SEMH and behaviour provision to inform future planning in partnership with key stakeholders
- Continue to improve accessibility to buildings in Luton to ensure all settings are DDA compliant and accessible

## Intended Outcomes:

- ✓ **All settings in Luton are fully inclusive**
- ✓ **Professionals in education settings are highly trained in SEND needs and can quickly and accurately recognise when additional support is required**
- ✓ **Luton has a range of settings to meet the needs of the population, including inclusive mainstream settings, additional resource bases for a range of needs to promote more specialist needs whilst maintaining inclusion, as well as sufficient special schools to meet the needs of Luton's children and young people with more specialist needs**
- ✓ **Data is effectively used to strategically plan sufficient school places for the future and plans are quickly underway where additional capacity is required**

## Priority 5: Improved transition and opportunities for 16-25 year olds

**This is important because:** We need to work in partnership to ensure that children and young people gain as much independence as possible, preparing them for adulthood and empowering them to reach achieve their full potential.

In Luton, we want to promote high expectations and aspirations for all of our children and young people with SEND. For our young people aged 16-25 years, this means that they have opportunities for further learning or employment, living independently, have choice and control over their lives and are participating in their community.

We will do this by:

- embedding the Preparing for Adult Outcomes across all services for children of all ages
- ongoing promotion of the importance of young people aged 14 years+ with Learning Disabilities having a health check

- improving transition from children's services to adult services by ensuring that we start planning transition when young people are 14 years of age so that support can be planned in advance
- Through the programme of work associated with our employment and skills strategy, we will develop clear multi-agency pathways for young people with complex needs and for those who can move into education, vocational or work settings
- Develop more local area options for quality post-19 provision by working with secondary special schools and local providers
- increasing opportunities for ongoing training, supported internships, employment and volunteering
- increasing opportunities for independent living
- increasing the number of young people aged 19 years+ who are in positive destinations
- The implementation of EYES by November 2022 will improve the information sharing across LA colleagues as they will all be able to see child's record as "one family, one view"
- further embed the involvement with Adult Services in planning and decision making at an early stage, increasing consistency for the young person
- develop transition checklists with Cambridge Community Services
- work with EPIC to support parents around transitions and how they can find out more information and support around transitions
- involve children and young people at all stages so they are clear on their options and can make the best choices for them, linking with their aspirations
- further embed the Preparing for Adulthood group ( established in Feb 2021) with children and adult social care commissioners and managers, housing managers and health commissioners to look strategically at young people's needs through transitions, to inform commissioning

## Intended Outcomes:

**Luton 2040** Children and young people with SEND will have the same  
A place to thrive opportunities as non-disabled children and young people.

- ✓ All young people with Learning Disabilities will have a 14 years + health check
- ✓ Young people will experience a seamless transition to adulthood
- ✓ The transition between children's and adults' services will be smooth with no impact to the young person
- ✓ Young people with SEND will be effectively supported to fulfil their ambitions
- ✓ A range of post 19 options will be available
- ✓ Families and young people know what options they have for employment, training or education and receive the right support to understand which options would suit them best
- ✓ Young people with SEND needs are able to live independent lives where appropriate
- ✓ Luton is in the top five areas for young people with SEND in employment, education or training

## Priority 6: Embedding co-production with children young people and their parents and carers

**This is important because:** Key to improving the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families is ensuring that their voice is at the centre of decision making and that plans, and services are developed in collaboration.

We are committed to working with children, young people and their families in a way that involves them from the beginning as equal partners. We have developed a [Working Together Charter](#) in partnership with children, young people, their families and stakeholders across education, health and social care. This sets out the principles of how we want to work together at both an individual and service/strategic level.

We will embed co-production by:

- ensuring as many as possible organisations in Luton sign up to the seven principles in the Working Together Charter. Make sure that children and young people with SEND and their families are included in all decisions about their support, together with those key agencies that support them
- ensuring that authentic person-centred planning is integral to the development of all Educational Health and Care Plans
- working with the new Parent Carer Forum EPIC to become a key strategic co-production partner
- placing children, young people and their families at the centre of what we do through a personalised approach to the planning of support. More co-production - including parents, carers, children and young people in the review, design and improvement of services
- continuing to employ different ways to engage parents and carers who are not members of the Parent Carer Forum
- implement our new approach to engaging with children and young people
- continually seek feedback on the processes for applying for and maintaining EHCPs and use themes identified to shape our approach to co-production

We recognise that our priorities cannot be delivered by individual organisations alone and we are committed to working together in partnership to achieve our collective outcomes and vision for children and young people with SEND.

## Intended Outcomes:

**Luton 2040**  
A place to thrive

**Our young people will have a voice that is heard and that matters**

- ✓ Children and young people with SEND and their families feel fully involved in shaping their futures and feel heard
- ✓ Children and young people with SEND contribute meaningfully to all decisions at a local level of services offered and strategic decisions
- ✓ Families of children and young people with SEND feel they are listened to and actions are taken to respond to their input meaningfully
- ✓ EPIC is a highly effective parent carer forum who support many families across Luton to understand how to get support and how to contribute to strategic planning
- ✓ Children and young people with SEND feel empowered to share their thoughts and feel confidence that they will be listened to

## 5. How will we know if we have been successful?

It is essential that we evaluate our success against the differences we make to the lives of our children and young people with SEND. Progress against this strategy will be monitored and scrutinised on a quarterly basis by the Strategic SEND Improvement Group (SSIG). The SSIG is a local area (multi-agency) strategic group that is co-chaired by the Director of Children's Services (Luton Borough Council) and the Chief Nursing Director (Integrated Care Board). Membership comprises Senior Leaders across education, health and social care.

### Success criteria and making a difference

The following are a co-produced agreed set of high-level measures that will tell us that the strategy is making a difference:

1. Children and parents feel listened to and understood
2. Children can be educated in their local mainstream provision wherever it is possible and appropriate
3. Schools are a friendly place for children with additional needs; they are part of the whole school community and are offered differentiated learning opportunities to support their academic achievement
4. Parents have confidence that schools can support their child
5. EHCPs are completed within 20 weeks
6. Effective early intervention – the right support, in the right place, at the right time ensures a rapid improvement in outcomes, leading to less EHCPs being issued because support and advice is available earlier to prevent needs from escalating
7. Children with SEND are able to access more community activities (without their parents needing to stay with them)
8. Parents are resilient because they are appropriately supported
9. There is true partnership working between professionals and parents with solutions developed together
10. Our children are more independent and young people are prepared for adult life

We have developed a SEND Quality Assurance and Performance Management framework that we will use to inform us on how well we are performing, what is working well and where we need to take further action to achieve change.

This Quality Assurance and Performance Management framework comprises both qualitative and quantitative data.

To evaluate the quality of our work across the local area we will:

- undertake a cycle of multi-agency audits including audits of the quality of Educational Health Care Plans
- use a range of mechanisms to gain feedback for parents and carers, children and young people (e.g. surveys, workshops, focus groups, consultation, feedback on the Local Offer)
- seek views from practitioners who are working to support children, young people with SEND and their families.

To assess how well our services for children and young people with SEND are performing we have developed a SEND Scorecard. The Scorecard considers a range of information from education, health and social care and includes all of the key impact measures our local area needs in order to measure performance

Finally, we have developed a SEND Dashboard. This is based on the one that has been developed by the Council for Disabled Children. The Dashboard will be used as a commissioning tool. It has been designed from publicly available datasets specific to the SEND population. The Dashboard will provide us with an understanding of the Luton Profile and will also enable us to compare ourselves against regional/national data.

We will revisit and refresh our priorities in 3-years to ensure we continue to develop our services in response to what is most important and makes the most difference to our children and young people with SEND.





## 6. Appendices

### 6.1 Glossary of Terms

#### Primary Needs:

**ASC/ASD:** Autism Spectrum Condition/Disorder/Autism

**SEMH:** Social, Emotional and Mental Health

**HI:** Hearing Impairment

**MLD:** Moderate Learning Difficulties

**MSI:** Multi-Sensory Impairment

**PD:** Physical Difficulties

**PMLD:** Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties

**SLD:** Severe Learning Difficulties

**SpLD:** Specific Learning Difficulties

**SLCN:** Speech, Language and Communication Needs


**VI:** Visual Impairment

#### Broad Categories of SEND:

**Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH):** Children and young people may experience a wide range of social and emotional difficulties which manifest themselves in many ways. These may include becoming withdrawn or isolated, as well as displaying challenging, disruptive or disturbing behaviour. These behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties, such as anxiety or depression, self-harming, substance misuse, eating disorders or physical symptoms that are medically unexplained. Other children and young people may have disorders such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactive disorder or attachment disorder.

**Sensory and/or physical needs:** Some children and young people require special educational provision because they have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the educational facilities generally provided in a mainstream setting. This includes pupils with visual impairment (VI), hearing impairment (HI) or a multi-sensory impairment (MSI) who are likely to require specialist support and/or equipment to access their learning or support. It also includes those with a severe physical disability (PD).

**Cognition and Learning:** Learning difficulties cover a wide range of needs, including moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD) - where children are likely to need support in all areas of the curriculum and have associated difficulties with mobility and communication - through to profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Children with PMLD are likely to have severe and complex learning difficulties as well as a physical disability or sensory impairment. This range of needs also includes specific learning difficulties (SpLD), which encompasses a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.



**Communication and Interaction:** Children and young people with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) have difficulty in communicating with others. They may have difficulty with one, some or all of the different aspects of speech, language or social communication at different times of their lives. This area includes those children and young people with autism who also are likely to have difficulties with social interaction, and with language, communication and imagination, which can impact on how they relate to others.

## **Other Terms or Acronyms:**

**Academy:** Schools controlled and funded directly by the Secretary of State for Education and include: academies, free schools, UTC schools, studio schools, academy special schools, alternative provision academies and academy boarding schools

**ACE:** Avenue Centre for Education – this is a local setting who provides Alternative Provision (see below) for pupils at risk of exclusion/ have been excluded (school referral required)

**Alternative Provision:** Alternative provision is usually a temporary placement for a child until they can return to mainstream education or move to specialist provision. For some pupils it may be a longer-term solution. The provision can be part time and be part of a broader curriculum delivered alongside education at a school, further education college or other provider (i.e., when specialist facilities are required for vocational courses)

**Annual Review:** a meeting that takes place at least once a year to look at the details of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and to record the child's progress and plan for the year ahead

**BISS: Behaviour and Inclusion Support Service** – part of Luton Council: Education arranged by the local authority for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education

**CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services:** These services assess and treat children and young people up to the age of 17 with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties

**Code of Practice (CoP):** the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2015. A document designed to help families, schools, local authorities and other organisations make effective decisions regarding children with special educational needs (SEN)

**Co-production:** Co-production is a way of working which builds on the strengths of families, communities and services and involves everyone from the beginning as equal partners


**Developmental delay:** A delay in reaching normal development milestones, for example talking and walking

**DfE - Department for Education:** The government department that is responsible for education and children's services in England

**Early Help:** Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life from birth through to 25 years

**Educational Psychologist (EP):** a professional employed to assess a child or young person's special educational needs and to give advice to schools and settings on how the child's needs can be met

**Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP):** An EHCP details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has SEN or a disability. It is drawn up by the Local Authority, after an EHC needs assessment of the child or young person has determined that an EHC plan is necessary, and after consultation with relevant partner agencies



**EPIC (Empowering Parents, Influencing Change) Luton:** The official Parent Carer Forum for the Luton Borough. A group of parents and carers of disabled or additional needs children who work with local authorities, education, health and other providers to make sure the services they plan and deliver meets the needs of disabled and additional needs children and their families

**Global development delay (GDD):** when a child takes longer to reach certain development milestones than other children their age. This might include learning to walk or talk, movement skills, learning new things and interacting with others socially and emotionally

**Graduated Response:** A model of action and intervention in early education settings, schools and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs. The approach recognises that there is a continuum of special educational needs and that, where necessary, increasing specialist expertise should be brought to bear on the difficulties that a child or young person may be experiencing

**Independent Mainstream School:** Schools that charge fees instead of being government funded

**Independent Special School:** The DfE defines an independent special school as a private school that specialises in teaching children with special educational needs

**Key Stages:** the different stages of education that a child passes through

- Early Years Foundation Stage - age 0-5 - Nursery and Reception
- Key Stage One - age 5-7 - Years 1 and 2
- Key Stage Two - age 7 - 11 - Years 3, 4, 5 and 6
- Key Stage Three - age 11 -14 - Years 7, 8 and 9
- Key Stage Four - age 14 - 16 - Years 10 and 11
- Key Stage Five - age 16+ - Sixth form or college

**Learning Difficulties:** when a child has educational abilities which are significantly lower than children of a similar age. Basic reading and number skills are well below average

**Looked After Child (LAC):** A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child. Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care, a term which many children and young people prefer

**Mainstream School:** School provision other than special schools, hospital schools, alternative provision, i.e., mainstream community schools, voluntary-aided, trust, foundation, or grammar schools

**Maintained School:** A school that is funded by a local education authority

**Maintained Nursery School:** A nursery school that is funded by the local education authority

**Mediation:** a method of seeking to resolve disagreements by going to an independent mediator. Mediation must be offered to a parent or young person in relation to an EHC Plan. Mediation is not compulsory for the parent or young person but they will need to consider mediation before appealing the education section of an EHC plan in most cases

**Non-maintained Special School:** Non-maintained special schools are defined by the Department for Education as schools for children with special educational needs that the Secretary of State for Education has approved under Section 342 of the Education Act 1996. They are independent of the local authority and operate on a not-for-profit basis



**ONS:** Office for National Statistics

**Person Centred:** a way of working that makes sure a child or young person and their family are central to and involved in all aspects of planning and decision-making with the professionals and services working with them

**Personal Budget:** is money set aside to fund support as part of an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan for a child or young person with special educational needs or disabilities. It can include funds from Education, Health and Social Care

**Pupil Referral Unit (PRU):** A type of alternative provision that caters for children and young people who are not able to attend a mainstream school and may not otherwise receive suitable education. This could be as a result of illness, or they may have been excluded or need more specialist intervention or support

**Resourced Nursery Place:** When a child has been identified as having severe and complex needs they can access additional support within a mainstream nursery school

**SENCo:** Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. Every school is required to have a teacher responsible for special educational needs to enable children and young people to achieve the best educational outcomes. This teacher has additional qualifications in order to support the provision for children with SEND in school

**SEND Information, Advice and Support (SENDIAS) Service:** All local authorities, by law, have to provide free impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEN or disabilities, and their parents/carers. Hillingdon SENDIAS Service is the information, advice and support service here.

The service is free, confidential, impartial and at arm's length from Hillingdon Council

**SEND Local Offer:** Local authorities are required to set out in their Local Offer information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled. Local authorities must consult locally on what provision the Local Offer should contain

**SEND Resourced Provision (ARPs):** Resourced provisions are where places are reserved at a mainstream school for pupils with a specific type of SEN, taught mainly within mainstream classes, but requiring a base and some specialist facilities around the school

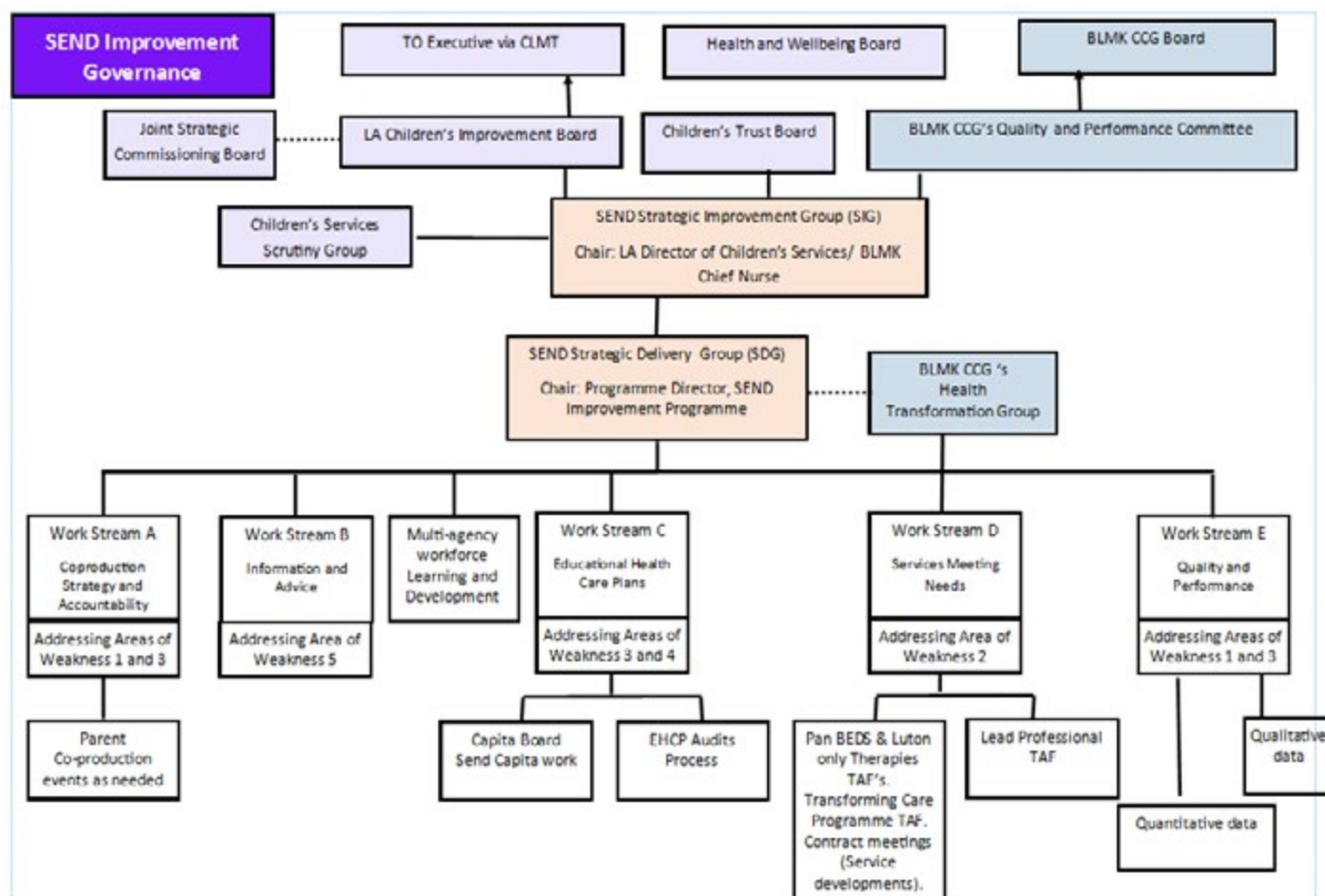
**SEND Sufficiency Strategy:** Local Authorities have a statutory duty to ensure there is sufficiency of school places available to meet the needs of all children and young people within the borough, including those with SEND. To ensure the best educational outcomes for all children and young people the report reviews historic demand for school places. This enables future demand to be assessed and monitored to ensure the correct provision is in place to continue to best meet the needs of all children and young people within Luton

**SEN Support:** SEN support is the approach that all education settings are required to provide for children with SEND. It has four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review. This graduated approach aims to ensure that progress is regularly monitored, and appropriate interventions are made to support the child or young person to achieve their goals

**Special School:** A school which is specially organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEN

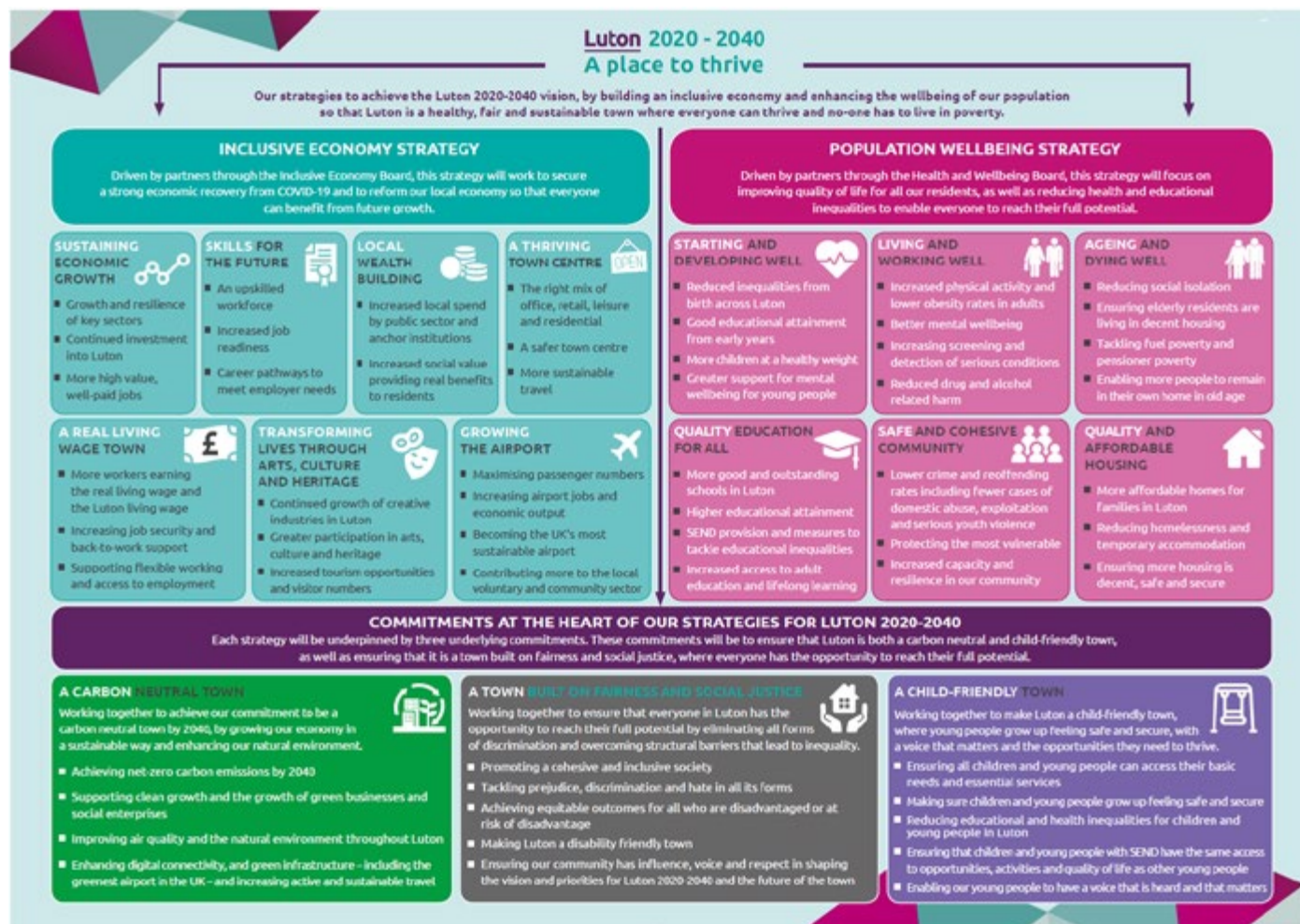
**Tribunal:** an independent body that determines appeals by parents or young people against LA decisions on EHC needs assessment and EHC plans.

## 6.2 SEND Local Area Governance Structure





## 6.3 Luton's 2040 Vision Overview





## 6.4 Joint Commissioning Priorities

### Our Luton Joint Commissioning Intentions 2022 – 2025

Our multi-agency stakeholder joint commissioning workshop co-produced the joint commissioning intentions which support the priorities we are looking to achieve for children and young people with SEND.

Education, social care and health Partners come together to ensure the needs of the respective young people are commissioned and met, the group also provides the governance and assurance of delivery of our joint commissioning intentions.

Below are the high level joint intentions, along with the other commissioning activities, that will support the delivery of the priorities contained within the strategy.

#### **1. Joined up and accessible pathways to services which support children and young people to receive the right support at the right time**

We will review service pathways and access to key services together, including those which assess and support Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), to identify gaps and needs.

#### **2. Inclusive community activities that meet the needs of children, young people and families across Luton**

We will undertake a comprehensive review of our short breaks offer, in consultation with families and partners across the local area. We will work with the Consortia to further understand and develop the universal short breaks offer and identify any gaps in provision.

#### **3. A collaborative system that supports young people to move successfully into adulthood (Preparing for Adulthood)**

We will be aspirational and work together, aligning plans and outcomes, to ensure that all commissioned services are working to ensure that children and young people are being enabled to prepare for adulthood and transition to independent living and/or adult services.

#### **4. An accessible emotional health and wellbeing offer for children, young people and their families**

Improving access to emotional health and wellbeing support through a comprehensive review of our universal, targeted and specialist services and providing guidance for professionals to identify and support emotional health and wellbeing needs in children and young people.

Thank you for reading



Together improving  
outcomes for SEND



[www.luton.gov.uk](http://www.luton.gov.uk)

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