Oldham’s Strategy for Children and Young People Aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2015 - 2018
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1 Introduction

1.1 Welcome to Oldham’s first joint strategy for SEND children and young people. The strategy covers the period 2015/18 but picks up on local work to implement the statutory SEND reforms which we have been working on for several years being a participant in the Pathfinder programme. The Council and Clinical Commissioning Group together with key partners such as health providers, schools and colleges are working together to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people and their families/carers. We aim to do this in partnership with those who use our services and those organisations such as POINT who represent their interests.

1.2 Whilst the implementation of the SEND Reforms is a huge driver within this strategy and associated action plans, we want a longer term vision based on a real understanding of need and where we have to improve. There are significant challenges not least shrinking budgets and rising demand but local partners can see real opportunities to work better together which should be more efficient and also more effective, improving people’s experiences. We also understand that we have to put people in their own driving seats in respect of their care and support choices as much as possible.

1.3 The Children & Families Act 2014 sets out a sweeping programme of reforms to the statutory framework for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) 0-25.

1.4 The Act sets out principles underpinning the Code of Practice. They are:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and the child’s parents
- the importance of the child or young person, and the child’s parents, participating as fully as possible in decisions, and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- the need to support the child or young person, and the child’s parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood

1.5 The principles are designed to support participation of children, their parents and young people in decision making; early identification of needs; greater choice and control; collaboration between education, health and social care to provide support and high quality provision to meets needs identified.

1.6 The National reforms require the local authority to:
• Introduce an integrated assessment process and single Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan for those aged 0-25 yrs with SEND, which replaces and extends the current statutory SEN Statementing and Learning Difficulty Assessment process for 0 – 19s.
• Set out Joint commissioning arrangements that promote access to Education, Social Care and Health Personal Budgets across the 0 to 25 age range
• Publish a Local Offer – easily accessible information about services and support available and how to access them from across the local authority, education, health, voluntary sectors etc.
• Ensure positive transitions at all key stages, particularly between children’s and adult services

1.7 As one of 31 local authorities involved in the National SEND Pathfinder, Oldham has developed a strategy based on the new statutory requirements as well as on existing good practice within the Borough.

1.6 Oldham is committed to ensuring that disabled children and their families have the support they need to which they are entitled. Disabled people have the same human rights, including the right to the same quality of life as those who do not live with a disability.

1.7 In order to deliver the vision for children and young people with SEND, Oldham is adopting a range of person-centred approaches and working towards a culture of ‘co-production’ of services with service users.

1.8 Co-production means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services and their families. By engaging service users and their families in a more meaningful way we will ensure they have a higher level of choice, control and that outcomes improve.

1.9 Person-centred planning offers an alternative to traditional 'service-centred' models, striving to place the individual at the centre of decision-making. The process focuses on discovering the person’s gifts, skills and capacities, and on listening for what is really important to the person and to support them to be independent and successful in their life.

We will embed a culture of co-production both in strategic decision-making and at an individual case level through adoption of person centred approaches.

2 Definition of Special Educational Need and Disability

2.1 Special educational needs (SEN)

2.1.1 A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

• has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
• has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

2.1.2 For children aged two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers. For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

2.1.3 A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within the definition in paragraph above when they reach compulsory school age or would do so if special educational provision was not made for them (Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014).

2.1.4 Post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The term SEN is used in this Code across the 0-25 age range but includes LDD.

2.2 Disabled children and young people

2.2.1 Many children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. This definition provides a relatively low threshold and includes more children than many realise: ‘long-term’ is defined as ‘a year or more’ and ‘substantial’ is defined as ‘more than minor or trivial’. This definition includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Where a disabled child or young person requires special educational provision they will also be covered by the SEN definition.

3. Oldham’s Vision

3.1 Oldham is committed to developing a co-operative future where local organisations work together with local people to deliver improved outcomes through innovation and new ways of working, and with a particular focus on driving for forward economic growth, job creation and delivering a reformed public service. The overarching ambition for Oldham is “to be a productive place with healthy, aspirational and sustainable communities”

3.2 In specific respect to children and young people, a complimentary vision has been developed. It is a vision of excellent services for all, with the most help for those who need it.

Creating opportunity… our vision is to ensure excellent services for all, working with families so that all children and young people are given the opportunities they need to enjoy a happy, healthy and safe childhood, and to develop into skilled and independent adults able take their productive place in society

Tackling inequality… we know that behind the story of our success there are some real challenges and inequalities between relatively wealthy and relatively poor areas
of the borough and between children with particular needs. Our vision is to target the most support on those who need the most help, ensuring that every child in every part of the borough, no matter what their background or their need, have their gifts and talents recognised and the opportunity to thrive within their families and communities.

3.3 Our vision specifically for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is that they will have a range of support and opportunities available to enable them to become confident individuals, effective communicators, successful learners and responsible citizens, to remain healthy and to achieve the life outcomes to which they and their families aspire. The next three years will see a profound and far-reaching set of changes to services for children and young people with SEND both nationally and locally.

4 The local approach 2015

Key elements of the local approach are:

4.1 Early Years Offer and Health and Wellbeing

4.1.1 The introduction of an Integrated Early Years Offer for families with children under 5 will bring together key services such as Health Visiting, Children’s Centres and Early Years AEN advisors in a single service meaning swifter identification and access to a range of early interventions.

4.1.2 This service will deliver the ‘Right Start 8 Stage Assessment Model’ currently being piloted in Coldhurst and St Mary’s wards. This represents the 0-4 assessment pathway for all young children where all families access a consistent assessment and response pathway from pre-birth up to statutory school age. Assessment tools at each stage of the model will identify any additional support needed with clear pathways into evidence based interventions.

4.1.3 We will also align commissioning arrangements for children’s school nursing functions (5-19) to enable a streamlined approach to service delivery and transitions across the 0-19 age range.

4.2 Early Help in Oldham

4.2.1 The Early Help Offer (EHO) will work to improve physical, social and emotional well-being; to offer support at the earliest possible point, so they are less dependent on support from specialist services. Taking a person-centred place-based approach, Early Help will work with people in their networks and communities, rather than a service-focused approach and will look holistically at health, social and emotional issues. The redesigned EHO will ensure that additional needs will be identified and responded to in a timelier, efficient manner using evidence based interventions and result in sustainable change.
4.2.2 Early Help will support families which have a higher chance of poor health, well-being and social outcomes, working with them to support behaviour change, develop resilience, self-management skills and to manage their own health and well-being.

4.3 Working in partnership with Schools

4.3.1 Schools are essential partners in ensuring both the SEND reforms and wider vision for children and young people are delivered in Oldham. SEND outcomes and the education offer form part of the work of Oldham’s Learning Cooperative Partnership and will be a line of enquiry within the Education and Skills Commission established to ensure the longer term local strategy succeeds.

4.3.2 The next three years will see a profound and far-reaching set of changes to services for children and young people with SEND both nationally and locally.

4.3.3 By 2017 children and young people with SEND and their families in Oldham will see:

- Increased opportunities, via Parent/Carer Forum, to work closely with services to plan how to best meet the needs of their children through widespread adoption of ‘person-centred’ approaches

- A broader and more diverse provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

- The full implementation of Education, Health and Care Plans for those with complex needs thus promoting local integration and co-ordination of services, particularly at key transitions.

- Access to Personal Budgets across social care, education and health for those that want them, providing increased levels of choice and control through personal budgets’

- A diverse offering of information, support and SEND provision that is easy-to-find through Oldham’s ‘local offer’ directory of services

- An integrated Early Years Offer for families with children under 5.

5 Oldham Needs and Trends

5.1 Children and young people in Education

5.1.1 Oldham has a school population of 41,300, of whom around 2.6% (more than 1,070) are children and young people subject to a statement of Special Educational Needs. The number of children subject to a statutory assessment and statement has risen steadily for the last 5 years. Whilst the number identified with ASD has significantly increased, it has been offset by a reduction in the proportion identified with Moderate learning Difficulties (MLD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).

5.1.2 More than half (around 600) of Oldham’s children and young people with statements attend a mainstream school or setting; this figure is close to the national average. Of the children with statements in mainstream schools, just over 20 are placed in Additionally
Resourced Provision, providing them with a specialist placement with opportunities to learn alongside their mainstream peers.

5.1.3 Around 40 of Oldham’s children and young people with a Statement are placed in independent and non-maintained Special schools. Where Oldham makes this type of placement it usually reflects a good use of resources for low incidence needs or where Oldham’s own maintained provision is at capacity. These placements are mainly for children and young people with identified needs falling within Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH).

5.1.4 Whatever the reason for the placement, it means that in all but 0.01% of cases Oldham schools are able to offer provision to meet the special educational needs and disabilities of our children and young people. However, the trend in making out of borough placements is increasing due to increased demand for places in our special schools and increasing levels of complexity and severity which are challenging our current continuum.

5.1.5 The range of courses and access levels available in further education mean that most young people can be supported to continue learning in a local college or specialist 6th form provision. Local FE colleges are committed to developing their provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. A very small number of young people, (currently 5 in total) leave special school at aged 19 and continue their education at a specialist college when it has been identified that no local provision can meet their needs.

5.2 Learning Disabilities and Autism

5.2.1 Improving the health and wellbeing, and having a better understanding of the needs of people with learning disabilities, is a high priority in Oldham. Children and adults with learning disabilities have a wide range of social and health care needs including those generated by social exclusion, such as poverty, lack of housing and unemployment.

5.2.2 The overall prevalence of people with a learning disability is set to rise in Oldham by around 3.5% by 2020, partly due to longer life expectancy (especially those with Down’s syndrome), with more children and young people with complex and multiple disabilities surviving into adulthood, the rise in the reported number of school aged children with autistic spectrum disorder and the greater prevalence of learning disability in some minority ethnic groups.

5.2.3 In response, Oldham Borough Council, Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group and the Learning Disability Partnership Board have commissioned this Health Needs Assessment as part of their continuing work to improve outcomes for people with learning disabilities. The report includes a review of the available data sets on current demand, unmet need and estimated future projections of people with learning disabilities by categories.

5.2.4 Furthermore recent self-assessments for both Learning Disabilities and Autism have highlighted the need for Joint Commissioning Strategies. These are now underway along with the compilation of detailed action plans. They aim to improve both the design and delivery of services and support by working better together to ensure improved outcomes for people and better value for the money that is spent on commissioned services.

5.3 Health

5.3.1 The National Framework for Children and Young People’s Continuing Care (DH 2010) describes the process led by NHS Oldham CCG, that organisations should go through in assessing needs and putting in place bespoke packages of Continuing Care for those
children and young people who require it because their Health needs cannot be met by existing universal or specialist services alone.

5.3.2 A Continuing Care package will be required when a child or young person has needs arising from disability, accident or illness. A wide range of agencies are usually involved in the case of a child or young person with Continuing Care needs.

5.3.3 Children and young people’s Continuing Care needs are best addressed holistically by all the agencies that are involved in providing them with public services or care: predominantly health, social care and education.

5.3.4 In Oldham the numbers of children who are eligible for Continuing Care are relatively low as the majority of NHS care is met via universal services. However, the number of referrals has doubled over the last twelve months, with the majority of children’s Continuing Care packages being fully funded by the NHS, and 50% of these children in receipt of a bespoke package of care due to complex and intense needs. We know from Community Health Services report increasing pressures leading to longer waiting times for specialist paediatric health services.

5.3.5 The Continuing Care process focuses on the child or young person in the context of their family, moving towards a more individual person-centred process during transition from childhood to adulthood. This means that the perception of the child or young person and their family of their support needs, and their preferences in having those needs met, is at the heart of the continuing care process.

5.4 Transitions

5.4.1 We recognise the importance of having the appropriate support at key ‘transition points’ in the lives of children and young people and their families. The 0-25 vision around SEND requires us to review current arrangements and processes and drive improvement where required. In the early years sphere we are planning to improve assessment processes and in April 2016 have in place an integrated model across health and education. The transition of children into school settings will be enshrined into the new offer.

5.4.2 Oldham Council continues to invest in advice and support to parents around the key areas in a child’s life.

5.4.3 Transition planning for adulthood for young people with special educational needs or disability (SEND) begins in school year 9 when the young person is 14 years old. Schools will initially co-ordinate this planning within the annual review processes and include independent careers advisors to consider opportunities for further education, employment and training. If appropriate, schools will include Health and Social Care colleagues as part of the process for transitioning into adult care services.

5.5 Adult Social Care services

5.5.1 The Government has introduced national minimum eligibility criteria for adults with care needs and carer’s with support needs under the Care Act 2014. This replaces Fair Access to Care Services Criteria, FACS.

5.5.2 The eligibility criteria apply to those adults with needs arising from a physical, mental impairment or illness. For young people under the age of 18 and their carer’s the criteria applies if they are ‘likely to have care and support needs’ when they are an adult and meeting these needs will have a significant benefit to the young person or their carer.
5.5.3 We will complete an assessment to determine if the young person or adult has eligible needs, which must be met. Everyone will receive a written record of the decision, whether their needs are eligible or not.

5.5.4 'The Transition assessment' will take place at the most appropriate time for the young person when it causes least disruption. A young person, their carer or someone acting on their behalf can request a transition assessment at anytime. If the young person is not known to services already a referral to adult social care can be made through ‘The Adult Contact Team’ (ACT).

5.5.5 The Local authority must consider any likely need for care and support when the young person or their carer turns 18 not just those eligible in statute under the adult eligibility criteria. The assessment itself may be of benefit and help families find solutions that prevent, reduce and delay the development of needs for care and support.

5.5.6 The local authority must consider whether the ‘likely need ’ and ‘significant benefit’ conditions are met. It may refuse an assessment on this basis but must put its decision in writing stating also when it believes that the conditions for assessment will be met. The onus will then be on the local authority to contact the young person or their carer.

5.6 Careers Information and advice

5.6.1 Oldham commissions career information advice and guidance service is commissioned to an external provider who also delivers a mix of services for your vulnerable young people including those with learning and/or other disabilities to enable them to attain their full potential. Recent reports confirm that the local NEET population has decreased and that our targeted young people are positively engaged and progressing.

6 Current provision in Oldham

6.1 Education Provision

6.1.1 Oldham Council distributes funding to schools using a 'local formula' for both School Budgets and Early Years Funding. Academies also receive Early Years and High Needs top up funding from the Local Authority. High Needs Funding is to support pupils and students whose education cost more than £10,000 per place. In 2013-14, high needs funding was moved to a “place plus” basis. This means that base funding (place funding) is given to local authorities to distribute to educational establishments to provide such places on an on-going basis. This is supplemented with “top-up funding” which follows individual pupils and students. This in turns supports the inclusion of children and young people with a statement in mainstream schools.

6.1.2 There are a small number of places in additionally resourced specialist provision in mainstream schools, supporting the inclusion of children and young people with a statement who are able to access mainstream provision but also need the expertise of staff trained to meet their particular needs and access to a bespoke environment. Oldham has this type of provision available for children and young people aged 4 – 16 years with either a hearing impairment or complex communication and interaction difficulties including ASD.
6.1.3 There are 3 special schools in Oldham, with a 4th currently under construction. The Kingfisher Community Special School is Oldham’s provision for primary aged children with severe and complex learning needs. Spring Brook School special school for children and young people aged 4-16 years with Social, Emotional and Behaviour difficulties operating on 2 sites in the Hollinwood and Failsworth areas of Oldham. New Bridge School is part of the new bridge Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and is a generic special needs school for pupils and students between the ages of 11 and 19 across two sites comprising the 11-16 Roman Road campus and a separate 16-19 provision at St. Martin’s Road. Hollinwood Academy is scheduled to open in September 2015 and is part of the New Bridge MAT. It will provide a specialist learning environment for children and young people aged 4-19 with ASD.

6.1.4 The breadth and quality of specialist provision available locally results in relatively few children and young people being placed in out of borough provision. The majority are day placements however, there are a small number of young people who require residential provision in either a 38 or 52 week placement, some of which are jointly funded by education, social care and health.

6.2 The Further Education and Training Landscape (post 16)

6.2.1 Oldham has two further education colleges, Oldham College and Oldham Sixth Form College. Oldham College offers a range of vocational and technical programmes as well as traineeships and apprenticeships whereas Oldham Sixth Form College offers a range of AS and A level qualifications. Each college has an inclusive ethos and wherever possible is keen to ensure that young people access all facilities at the college regardless of additional needs; however, they are also mindful of the type of learning environment which is appropriate and for some learning programmes, education is delivered in a more discreet setting on-site. Both colleges have a continued professional development programme which ensures that staff are equipped with the right skills and expertise in managing individual needs, for example, both colleges have undertaken Autism specific training to meet the growing needs of the authority.

6.2.2 Oldham also has a number of training providers which offer a range of vocational and technical programmes, as well as traineeships and apprenticeships. In Oldham, the main training providers are YMCA, North Lancs Training Group (NLTG), Rathbone, Oldham Training Centre (OTC) and Mantra. Training provider programmes are generally provided in smaller environments which can be more appropriate for some young people.

6.2.3 Although Oldham has a variety of education and training providers available, many young people with additional needs chose to access provision in other areas such as Hopwood Hall in Rochdale, Tameside College, Rochdale Sixth Form College, Bolton College and Manchester College. Many other providers are available within Greater Manchester but those listed are the more popular options outside of Oldham.

6.2.4 What is common to all of these options is that individual and group learning support, as well as pastoral, mentoring and wellbeing support is available as part of the core offer of each institution. Where the level of support is over and above the standard offer, there are arrangements in place between the local authority and the institution to ensure that the provision necessary to meet learning objectives can be put in place.
6.2.5 In a very small number of cases where local provision is not able to meet need and an educational placement continues to be appropriate, some young people access independent specialist college provision such as Bridge College or Seashell Trust.

6.2.6 Where young people leave school and do not require an educational setting, there are a variety of community options available which are funded through social care in the form of personal budgets, where this is appropriate. Further information about these options can be found on the Council’s local offer website or through discussion with the social care service.

Key supporting processes

6.3 Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans

6.3.1 Oldham Education Access Service is responsible for the EHC assessment and process.

6.3.2 The majority of children and young people with SEN or disabilities will have their needs met within local mainstream early years settings, schools or colleges. Some however may require an EHC needs assessment in order for the local authority to decide whether it is necessary for it to make provision in accordance with an EHC plan. The trigger for the new EHC Plan will be education. This means that if a young person has a health or social care need, they will not get an EHC Plan unless these needs impact on their education.

6.3.3 Therefore the local authority will conduct an assessment of education, health and care needs when it considers that it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made for the child or young person in accordance with an EHC plan.

6.3.4 EHC plans will specify how services will be delivered as part of a whole package and explain how best to achieve the outcomes sought across education, health and social care for the child or young person.

6.4 Local Offer

6.4.1 The Children and Families Act 2014 required Councils to publish a directory of Special Educational Needs and Disability (“SEND”) services called the ‘Local Offer’. This includes how to access those services and is for those aged 0 – 25 years. Oldham’s Local Offer went live in Autumn 2014; the services listed are from a range of providers including Social Care, Health, Schools and educational provisions, private, public and voluntary sectors. There has been a good response from local providers in updating their records for the Local Offer and further engagement is planned throughout 2015 to increase the number of services detailed.

6.4.2 The Local offer is set out in a number of categories for ease of the user. These include Educational Support and Advice; information on services which assist or enable children and young people with educational access and inclusion. SEN support services; this section covers a wide range of services including opportunities in life beyond and outside of education, skilling up for work opportunities, support and peer groups along with local community services and activities. Short Breaks; which outlines a number of activities in Oldham from a range of services areas which offer short breaks. Care; outlines information on relevant care services in Oldham. There are also specific categories for
leisure services, information on grants, Health and Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust services.

6.5 Health Services

6.5.1 Much of the health care for children and young people is delivered through universal, preventative services. Clinicians and therapists in Oldham currently provide health services for children and young people with SEND, from early identification, throughout their school and college years and into the transition to adulthood. However, there will be times when adaptations are required for some pupils in mainstream settings and targeted delivery may be required for the few with EHC plans.

6.5.2 Arrangements for managing the transition of young people from paediatric to adult services will be strengthened and health care providers will ensure as smooth a transition as possible, with primary care providing consistency across key transition points.

6.5.3 Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust provides several of the community health services in Oldham. The Trust provides specialist nursing care and support to children and young people up to 19 years of age, arranged around GP cluster localities across the Borough. This will ensure that children, young people and their families receive an optimum package of health integrated alongside social care interventions, to enhance their quality of life and prevent inappropriate, unplanned admissions. Those which have particular relevance to the 0-25 SEND agenda, include:

6.5.4 Children and Young People’s Nursing

- Community Paediatric Team
- Community Nursing Team
- Positive Steps
- Nocturnal Enuresis
- School Nursing
- Health visiting
- Children with additional needs team
- Epilepsy Service
- Home Ventilation and Complex Needs Team

6.5.5 Children and Young People’s Therapies

- Community Paediatric Physiotherapy
- Speech and Language Therapy Service
- Physiotherapy Service
- Occupational Therapy
- Additional Needs Speech and Language Therapy

6.5.6 CAMHS - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

6.5.7 Children’s Learning Disabilities Team
6.6 Parents of Oldham in Touch (POINT)

POINT Forum

6.6.1 With over 700 members POINT is Oldham’s Established Parent Forum for Parents and Carers of Children and Young People aged 0-25 with Additional Needs, who live in or access Services in Oldham.

6.6.2 We aim to pro-actively represent our families, ensuring that parents and carers have greater choice and control to meet their current needs and have a voice in shaping future services.

6.6.3 This is achieved by ensuring that families have access to up to date accurate information, have opportunities to consult on changes and provision in Oldham, can access peer support networks and by ensuring POINT act as the strategic lead on behalf of parents and carers in Oldham at all decision making levels across Health, Education, Social Care, Voluntary and Private Sector providers.

Oldham SEND IAS Service

6.6.4 Formerly known as Parent Partnership, Oldham Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information Advice and Support (IAS) Service is a FREE confidential, impartial and independent service operated by POINT Services.

6.6.5 Oldham SEND IAS Service exists to help parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities; and young people themselves in matters relating to their Education, Health or Social Care provision.

6.6.6 Our support services are tailored to your individual needs and are both personal and confidential. We can offer you:

- Independent information about Special Needs Education
- One-to-one advice and support
- Details about how Special Education, Health and Social Care is organised
- Advice about working with those involved with you, your child or young person
- Information about local support networks
- Access to Independent Parental Support for Parents, Carers and Young People 16+
- Support to arrange Mediation and Disagreement Resolution
- Support with SEND Tribunal claims
- Opportunities to improve and shape services through our SEND IAS Steering Group

Independent Support (Time limited Until March 2016)

6.6.7 Between September 2014 and April 2018, all statements of Special Educational Needs will be transferred to an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan.

6.6.8 To support this programme, additional support has been made available to parents, carers and young people, so that they can access impartial advice and receive support during the EHC Plan Process. This service is called Independent Support and this page tells you everything you need to know about the service and how YOU can access appropriate support in Oldham.

6.6.9 Independent Support is a FREE, impartial, confidential service which is independent of the local authority. Independent support ensures parent, carers and young people can make informed decisions during the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan process.
6.6.10 Independent Supporters work alongside parents, carers and young people by offering a range of time-limited support specific to the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan process. This can include liaison across different agencies and information about personal budgets.

6.6.11 Independent Support is available to Parents, Carers or Young people who are:
- considering requesting an assessment of need and throughout the process for a new EHC plan
- being transferred from a Statement of Special Educational needs to a new EHC Plan.

Mediation and Disagreement Resolution

6.6.12 The SEND Code of practice states that all Local authorities must make disagreement resolution services available to parents and young people. The service, while commissioned by it, must be independent of the local authority – no-one who is directly employed by a local authority can provide disagreement resolution services.

6.6.13 Oldham local authority have commissioned POINT Services to deliver Mediation and Disagreement Resolution Services in Oldham and all Mediation and Disagreement Resolution meetings are undertaken by a Civil Mediation Council accredited mediator who is employed directly by POINT Services.

6.6.14 Mediation and Disagreement Resolution services vary in terms of the type of disagreement they can hear. It is also important to note that the SEND Code of practice also requires parents, carers and young people to consider Mediation before making a claim to the First Tier SEND Tribunal,

7 Joint Commissioning

7.1 There is a strong commitment between the local authority and clinical commissioning group as lead commissioners for SEND services to move towards and integrated commissioning approach at strategic, operational and individual level as directed in the SEND reforms. This joint strategy is an example of how we intend to work closely together.

7.2 Whilst budgetary integration is not currently envisaged we are moving towards budget alignment and at an individual level the Complex Cases Panel brings together the key funding agencies in order to allocated resources to achieve best outcomes.

7.3 We also intend to establish a Strategic Resource Overview Group to monitor demand, needs and impact of each agency’s resource allocation processes and how they come together to achieve EHC Plans.

7.4 On the basis of what we know we have confidence that a successful implementation locally of the SEND reforms will both improve the experiences of children and their families and also improve their life chances. However, we are aware that against this back drop commissioners will need to focus particularly on:

- Ensuring Oldham’s education provision take into account the rising demographic demand in terms of numbers and increasing complexity
• Funded services demonstrate quality and efficiency delivering best value in a time of reducing resources

• We should strive for seamless service provision and processes and least bureaucratic processes across agencies

• A particular improvement against identified performance challenges. We currently are poorly placed in respect of accurate data to give a full picture of need and outcomes and this will be a key priority in this strategy.
8  Action plan 2015-16

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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<td><strong>Priority one</strong> – Develop Oldham’s Local Offer for SEND families in Oldham</td>
<td>Work with local providers to improve the quality and capacity of local SEND provision and access to services through personal budgets by October 2015. Improve information management systems for SEND provision to meet local requirements and enable multi and single user access by July 2015. Ensure statutory deadlines are met throughout the EHC assessment and review processes. Partner agencies, school, parents and young people are able to engage directly in the process – completed Multi agency panel is established with representatives from Education, health and social care together with other key stakeholders such as parents, schools early years and post 16 providers – May 2015</td>
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<p>| Outcome | Increased choice and control for service users through the implementation of Personal Budgets in education, health and social care by October 2015. Increase the number of young people who meet the eligibility criteria for adult social care to have a well planned and executed transition. |</p>
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<th>Objective</th>
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| **Priority two** – Develop the EHC process and plan for Oldham | Develop a final format for the EHC plan that meets statutory requirements, by the end of the Autumn term 14/15.  
Develop transitional arrangements to support the changeover from statements to EHC Plans, with Social Care, Health and POINT, throughout the transitional period up to April 2018.  
Publish a Transition plan setting out how Oldham intends to meet it statutory requirements regarding the transfer of Statements of Special Educational Needs, to Education Health and Care Plans (EHC), by 1st September 2014.  
Develop a resource allocation moderation panel (RAMP) incorporating Resource allocation systems (RAS) and/or decision support tools (DST), within the academic year 14/15.  
Co-produce EHC plans which outline the aspirations of a child or young person and provide outcomes to achieve their aspirations, in partnership with parents, children/young people, the education setting and all supporting agencies.  
Conduct an assessment around the requirement and development of an ICT solution for the EHC needs assessments, process, by October 2015.  
<p>| <strong>Outcome</strong> | Safe transfer all current Statements of Special Educational to an Education Health and Care Plan in line with the latest transition plan and by the end of the transition period in April 2018. |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Priority three</strong> – To support the implementation of the SEND Reforms within post 16 settings referred to within the SEN Code of Practice</td>
<td>Young people and parents/carers post 16 are fully informed about the potential changes to learning difficulty assessments and the EHC process including who they can go to for further information if required - by March 2015.</td>
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<td>Post 16 education providers have a clear understanding of their role in admitting young people with an EHC and work in collaboration with the local authority to establish arrangements for annual reviews - ongoing.</td>
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<td>Post 16 education providers regularly review the appropriateness of the learning programme in line with the young person’s long term goals and aspirations ensuring a clear link with employment - ongoing.</td>
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<td>All providers of education and training within Oldham and travel to learn areas have up to date information on the Council’s local offer website and arrangements are in place to ensure this is kept up to date - by May 2015/ongoing.</td>
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<td>Provider’s own website clearly shows how they are able to support young people with SEND or additional needs and arrangements are in place to ensure this is kept up to date - by Aug 2015/ongoing.</td>
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<td>Information about the use of personal budgets for education is available on provider’s websites - by Jan 2016.</td>
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<td>Arrangements outlining how providers engage with young people, parents/carers, partners and agencies at post 16 is available on the provider website - by Aug 2015.</td>
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<td>Post 16 providers will ensure that the careers information and guidance support they commission delivers a high quality service which links into routes to employment - ongoing.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>Increase the number of young people with SEND age 16-25 engaged in education, employment and training.</td>
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| **Priority four - Parental and young person engagements** | Take a co-production approach which will set out the vision for parental and young person’s engagement through the development of a robust, sustainable and purposeful local strategy.  

Improve current practice including raising standards to ‘Best Practice’ across Oldham  

Improve access to engaging and relevant information.  

Support parents and young people to be effectively engaged in all aspects of planning, implementation and delivery of SEND provision for themselves or their families.  

Ensure that a wide range of high quality information, advice and guidance is provided to parents, carers and young adults and that all documentation is clear and accessible.  

Support stakeholders to remove and overcome barriers to parental involvement and seek production and appropriate relationships.  

Consider how wider support organisations, voluntary and community sector and local support groups can enhance engagement activity of Education, Health and Care providers, to improve and develop resources, skills and capacity |
| **Outcome** | Ensure the application of the agreed Parental and Young Persons Engagement Values can be demonstrated across all partner organisations.  

Parental feedback demonstrated impact and improved outcomes  

Increase the number of parents who feel actively engaged, involved and consulted in the process.  

Demonstrate greater co-production and partnership working as a result of this strategy.  

Evidence of a commitment to work with POINT Forum at a strategic level and enable them to co-ordinate a parental voice in all decision making aspects of SEND |
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| **Priority five** – Secure integration between educational and training provision, health and social care provision through effective joint commissioning | Align commissioning intentions between the Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and associated partners to secure EHC assessments.  
Agree the level of provision that will be required to secure delivery of EHC plans  
Define and secure integration of provision across the components of Education, Health and Care Plans.  
Agree arrangements for the offer of Personal Budgets across Education, Health and Social Care  
Develop a Strategic Resource Overview Group to monitor demand, needs and impact of each agency’s resource allocation processes and how they come together to achieve EHC Plans.  
Agree procedures for resolving disagreements between LA and CCG  
Consider opportunities for the joint commissioning and development of provision alongside neighbouring local authorities, schools and other agencies.  
Develop effective joint commissioning arrangements to ensure we can make timely and cost effective decisions when we procure placements for children and young people.  
Carry out a JSNA with a specific focus on children and young people with SEND to inform future strategies. |
| **Outcome** | Streamlined, effective/person centred resource allocation processes.  
Co-ordinated approach to strategic and operational resource decisions.  
Performance improvement against established indicators and baselines. |
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<td>Priority six</td>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
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<td>Develop a professional development framework to inform culture and practice across the workforce is aligned with the principles of the SEND reforms by April 2105.</td>
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<td>Develop peer to peer support for SENCO’s across early years and educational settings by September 2015</td>
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<td>Provide a rolling programme of training for all early years providers, including childminders, on the role of the SENCO and person centred planning by April 2015.</td>
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<td>Ensure the Early support approach is embedded with all providers by September 2015</td>
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<td>Ensure that all keyworkers engaged in the assessment process are trained in the resource allocation system by October 2015.</td>
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<td>Outcome</td>
<td>A detailed workforce development programme is in place.</td>
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<td>Training evaluation demonstrate improved staff confidence.</td>
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<td>Plans that demonstrate choice and flexibility around the needs of the individual.</td>
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