

NORTH TYNESIDE

Special Educational Needs  
and Disability (SEND)

# Inclusion Strategy

2025–2029



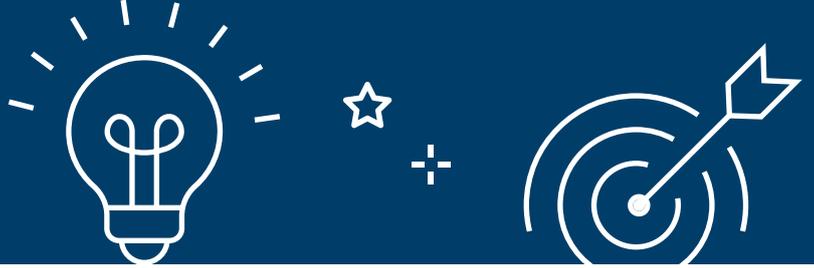
North  
Tyneside  
Council



North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum cc



North East and  
North Cumbria



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Priority 1: Developing a Person Centred, Needs Led System

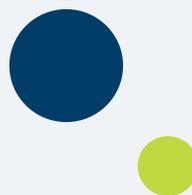
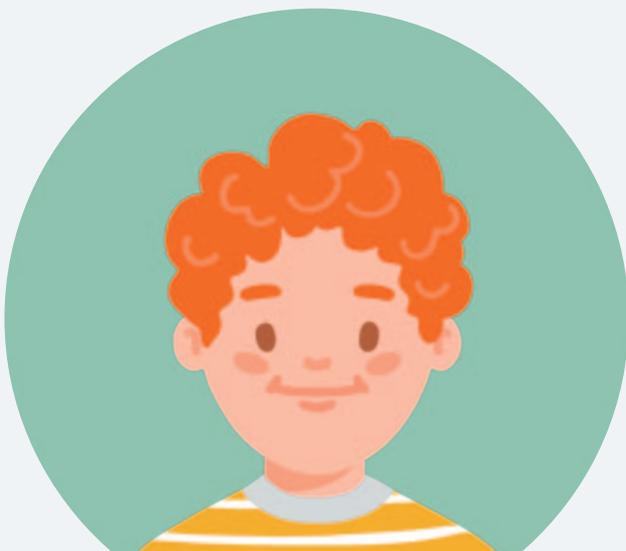
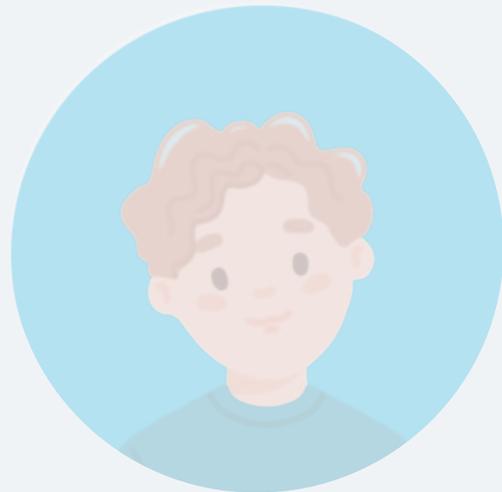
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# Foreword



We are pleased to present North Tyneside's SEND Inclusion Strategy, 2025-29. The strategy is about setting a clear direction for what we want to achieve for all children and young people in North Tyneside. Our ambition is to make North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all, including those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or disabled, are ready for school, ready for work and life, cared for and supported.



We want children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities ('SEND') aged 0-25, to grow up to be confident, independent adults who can live fulfilling lives. This means making sure families are supported, schools and services are inclusive, and professionals across education, health and care work together in a person centred, needs led system.

We would like to express a huge thank you to everyone that has helped to shape this strategy, by telling us what we are doing well and what needs to be improved. To all our children, young people, parents and carers and partner organisations, we look forward to working with you to deliver these shared priorities.

Mark Mirfin, Director of Children Services (Interim)

Cllr Earley, Cabinet Member responsible for Supporting and Protecting Children

Cllr Phillips, Cabinet Member responsible for Education, Inclusion, Employment and Skills

Janet Arris, Deputy Director of Delivery, ICB

Sarah Douglas and Jo Gilliland, Directors of North Tyneside's Parent Carer Forum.



Sometimes targeted and bespoke interventions and provisions put in place actually segregate children with SEND rather than include them as they spend most of their day being taken out alone or in small groups for teaching. Alternative and bespoke pedagogies and strategies for learning should be encouraged at a more universal level so children with SEND can learn alongside their peers in their class and social environments. All children will benefit from this input.

- Partner/Stakeholder



# Purpose of this strategy



This strategy is for children and young people aged 0–25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and their families, across North Tyneside. It is designed to make clear what partners across education, health and care are doing to deliver more inclusive, responsive and joined-up support.

It is also for everyone working with or responsible for services for children and young people aged 0–25 in North Tyneside. This includes all education settings, health services, social care teams, voluntary and community organisations and wider partners. The strategy sets out our shared commitment and collective responsibility to work together differently, so that children and young people with SEND can thrive and achieve their aspirations.

The strategy reflects all statutory duties set out in national legislation and guidance and sets out our shared priorities to drive a continuous cycle of improvement for children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND, and their parents and carers, over the next three years.

- Children and young people with SEND refers to those receiving SEN Support, those undergoing an assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and those who already have an EHCP in place.
- Parent Carer Forum representation and youth voice are recognised as integral partners across the SEND system and are embedded at a strategic level in decision-making and co-production.



I just want my child to be happy. Whatever support needs to be put in place to ensure this is the case, should be put in place!

- Parent Carer



We want a system that works with us, not around us, that recognises and responds to needs early, and that is committed to helping every child thrive, regardless of how they communicate, learn, or interact with the world.

- Parent Carer



A well-supported family is better able to support their child.

- Parent Carer



# Who have we engaged with?



To shape this strategy, we created multiple opportunities for meaningful engagement. We held face-to-face events and online sessions and ran an open online survey to ensure that all stakeholders; including children and young people, parent carers, practitioners and wider partners across education, health and care, could contribute their views. We also built on ongoing conversations and feedback gathered through regular forums, networks and groups, ensuring that this strategy is informed by a wide range of voices and real lived experience.

That our child and others like them will be supported throughout their education journey in a way that builds toward an adulthood where they can live with dignity, independence, choice, and belonging in our community, regardless of their communication or learning differences.

- Parent Carer

A system that listens, reflects, and evolves based on lived experience is key.

- Parent Carer

## Improving outcomes

We want to make a difference. The outcomes we want for all children and young people are to be:

- **Safe** – protected, supported and cared for.
- **Happy** – included, respected and able to enjoy life.
- **Healthy** – with access to the right services and opportunities to thrive.
- **Achieving** – able to learn, develop skills and work towards their aspirations for the future.

## Measuring Progress and Impact

We already have a North Tyneside SEND Quality of Practice Framework in place. This helps us to understand progress and measure impact through a range of figures, findings and feedback. We will use this framework to ensure that we are delivering on our priorities and that we can continue to learn and improve as a partnership.



# Where are we now?



## What are we doing well?

### Strong Leadership & Governance

- Organisations across education, health, and care are working together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Leaders are increasingly committed to strengthening the partnership.

### Engagement & Co-Production

- We have focused on what is important to children, young people and families. Changes have been completed with families, children, and young people (for example the Graduated Approach, expanded Additionally Resourced Provisions, the Neurodiversity Transformation 'Think Differently' Programme and the Early Years Partnership).
- Active listening and meaningful co-production shapes services, based on real needs.

### Education

- Most schools in North Tyneside are rated Good or Outstanding.
- Over 250 new special school places created since 2018 to meet growing demand.

### Early Help & Inclusion

- Additional investment in the Early Years Partnership.
- Further investment in making schools more inclusive through building improvements, SEND audits, and an updated Graduated Approach.

### Health & Wellbeing

- Children and young people have access to a wide range of specialist health services, most rated Good or Outstanding by CQC.
- A wide range of health services designed to meet the needs of children with SEND.

### Social Care & Preparing for Adulthood

- Children's Social Care rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2024.
- Social workers ensure the voices of children with disabilities are heard and acted on.
- North Tyneside has the fourth highest numbers of adults with learning disabilities living independently in the North East.





## What should we work on?

### Strong Leadership & Governance

- We continue to commit to working together with clear and consistent leadership across education, health and care, so that improvements for children and young people with SEND are long lasting and make a real difference.

### Engagement & Co-Production

- Families don't always feel listened to or included in decision-making about their child's support.
- Co-production is not yet consistent across all services, some families feel plans are done to them, not with them.

### Education

- Some mainstream schools still struggle to provide fully inclusive environments for pupils with SEND.
- There is variation in how schools implement SEND support, meaning not all children receive the same quality of provision.

### Early Help & Inclusion

- Delays in identifying needs early enough can result in children and young people missing out on timely interventions.
- Despite investment, not all settings and schools have the capacity or confidence to meet more complex needs.

### Health & Wellbeing

- Families are facing long waits for some essential services.
- Health services can feel disconnected from education and care planning, leading to a fragmented experiences for some families.

### Social Care & Preparing for Adulthood

- The transition from children's to adult services remains a significant gap, with many families unsure what to expect or where to turn.
- Pathways into adulthood are not always clearly communicated or coordinated, leaving young people and families without the support they need at a critical time.

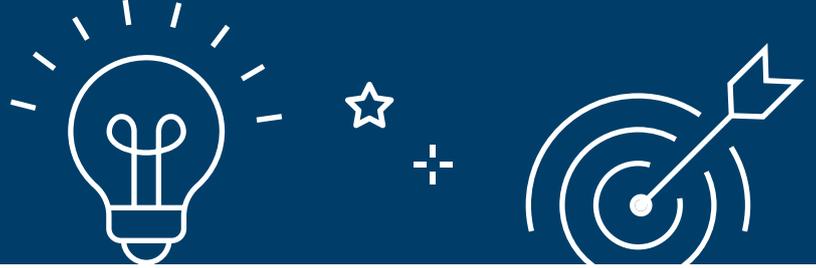


My needs in terms of care, feeding and sensory are important, not just in terms of how people can meet my educational needs.

– Young Person



# About Us

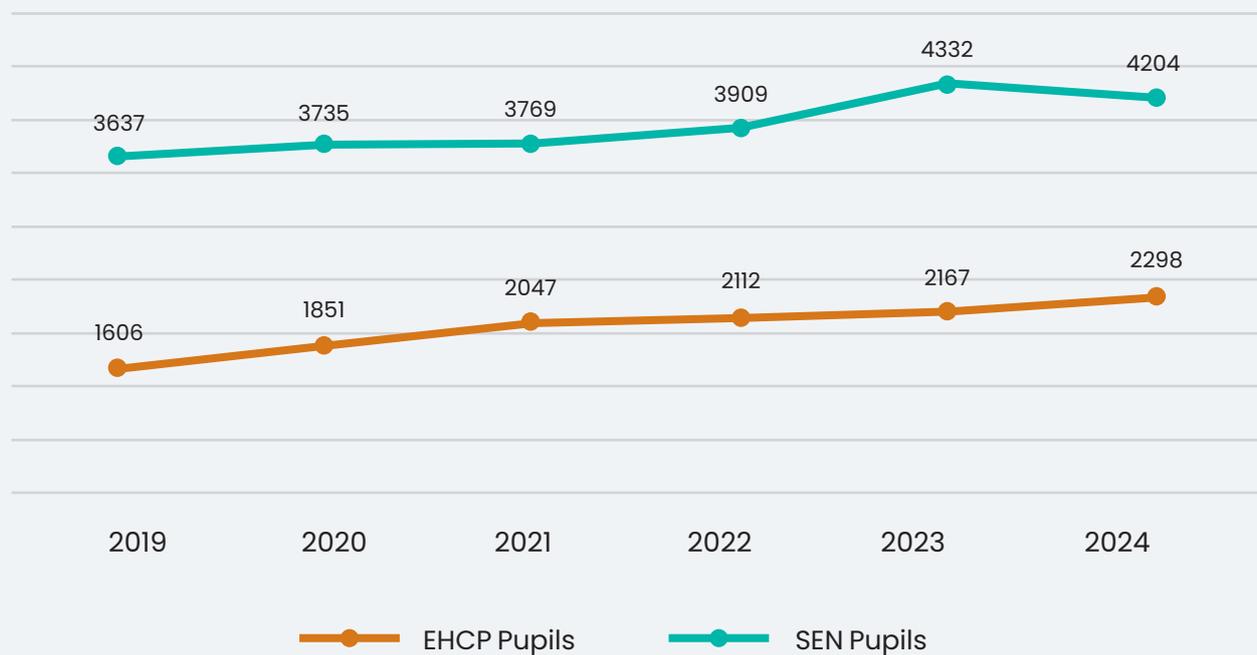


The latest official estimate (from 2024) of North Tyneside's total 0-25 population is 58,354. This includes all children and young people.

Requests for statutory SEND assessment remain high and there is a continued increase in the whole SEND population, both those with EHCPs and those with SEN Support. The chart below shows how SEND numbers have increased over time (as reported in the SEN 2 annual return).

It is also important to highlight that, both nationally and within North Tyneside, there have been significant changes in the primary needs of children with SEND. In particular the greatest number and increase has been for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) Autism, and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The increase in complexity of children's needs is also a key factor.

### Total EHCP pupils and SEN Support pupils by year



# Our Priorities



In North Tyneside we aim to be an inclusive borough that meets our children and young people's needs as early as possible, in a way that is meaningful to them and their families.

Our current priorities to achieve this are:

- 1: Developing a Person Centred, Needs Led System:** Support based on need not labels. Access to therapeutic and sensory support to be earlier, simpler, clearer and more responsive.
- 2: Inclusive Education:** A more inclusive mainstream and specialist offer, with the right training and development offer for staff to meet children's changing needs.
- 3: Preparation for Adulthood:** More local post 16 options for young people with SEND that are varied, inclusive and support preparation into adulthood.
- 4: Local Provision Meeting Need:** The commissioning of education, health and social care services, to be more joined-up, including more accessible services with a personalised needs led approach.



We need support based on need not diagnosis.

- Partner/Stakeholder

All information of what is available should be easily accessible.

- Partner/Stakeholder

Families need support long before a diagnosis is confirmed.

- Parent Carer



## Priority 1: Developing a Person Centred, Needs Led System

We are committed to ensuring that support is based on need rather than labels. As a partnership, we recognise the frustration families experience when delays arise from waiting for a formal assessment or diagnosis before services can be accessed.

Together, we will work to provide a more holistic and joined-up approach across education, health, and care, so that children and young people receive the right support early, before reaching crisis. We will make access to therapeutic and sensory support simpler, clearer, and more responsive.

### Key actions:

- **Strengthen the SEND system** so that it is consistently needs-led and delivers improved experiences for children, young people, and their families.
- **Embed a multi-agency single point of access** through a multi-agency single point of access, providing the first step for early SEND support for children aged 5 and above.
- **Develop a multi-agency Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Collaborative** to ensure children and young people can access the most appropriate support at the right time.
- **Identify and remove barriers to access**, including unnecessary requirements linked to diagnosis.



We need clear, compassionate communication from professionals, a single point of contact where possible, and the chance to be heard as experts in our children's lives

- Parent Carer



### When we get this right, it looks like:

- **Children and families experience timely and appropriate support**, without delays linked to assessment or diagnosis.
- **Families and professionals report improved access** to services and earlier intervention.
- **Fewer families reach crisis point**, with needs addressed before they escalate.



It's vital to prioritise person-centred pathways that recognise the individual strengths, needs, and aspirations of each young person.

- Parent Carer





## Priority 2: Inclusive Education

We are committed to developing a more inclusive mainstream and specialist offer, supported by the right training and development to meet children's changing needs.



As partners, we will work together to increase choice in education settings, including access to smaller, nurturing environments for children and young people who may find large or busy settings difficult.

### Key actions:

- **Continue to embed the Graduated Approach** across schools, ensuring consistent and inclusive practice.
- **Review and strengthen the SEND and inclusion training offer** to better equip schools in meeting a diverse range of needs.
- **Implement a single point of access model** to coordinate support for children aged 5yrs plus, families, and schools.
- **Expand Mental Health Support Teams in schools**, achieving full coverage by January 2026.
- **Deliver the multi-agency Neurodiversity Transformation Programme**, improving pathways and support for neurodiverse children and young people.
- **Further develop Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and SEN Units** in mainstream schools to expand inclusive options.
- **Embed our approach to meeting complex medical needs** both in schools and within the local community.
- **Embed the Early Years (0–5) Partnership model**, supporting earlier identification and intervention.
- **Explore specialist nursery provision** for children with complex care needs.



I go to school and love seeing my friends. They are the only friends I have.

– Young Person

I have a teacher in the home who helps me learn in my own way

– Young Person



### When we get this right, it looks like:

- **Children, young people, parents, schools and education providers** report feeling well-informed and supported.
- **Families have a clear understanding** of what is on offer and how to access it.
- **A greater range of diverse and personalised options is available**, giving families and young people real choice.



### Priority 3: Preparation for Adulthood

We recognise the clear need for more local post-16 options for young people with SEND that are varied, inclusive, and support preparation for adulthood, including opportunities for real-life experiences.

As a partnership, we will work to expand the range of provision available, with smaller, nurturing environments for those learners who need them.

#### Key actions:

- **Review the current post-16** offer for young people with SEND to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- **Expand and diversify available pathways**, creating a broader range of inclusive options.
- **Develop pathways that prepare young people for adulthood**, including independent living, work-related learning, training and employability, as well as academic opportunities.
- **Strengthen and bring forward transition planning**, ensuring it starts earlier and is more effective.



As a young person preparing for adulthood it felt like you either go to uni or you don't (I am at uni), and once I left school there was no help, they didn't care.

- Young Person



Children's needs don't stop at the end of a school year or because of a funding cycle. Commissioned services must be reliable, with continuity of care wherever possible.

- Parent Carer



#### When we get this right, it looks like:

- More young people access work experience, training, paid employment, and voluntary opportunities.
- Participation increases, with a reduction in the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training ('NEET').
- Young people and families report that their needs can be met locally.
- There is greater choice and relevance in the range of options available.



## Priority 4: Local Provision Meeting Need

We are committed to strengthening the join-up across education, health and care services, making them more accessible and ensuring a personalised, needs led approach. Together, we will work to minimise barriers and reduce unnecessary assessment or diagnosis

requirements. As a partnership, we will focus on key priorities, including improving access to sensory and therapeutic support, expanding education provision, and increasing short breaks and community-based activities.

### Key actions:

- **Introduce a robust and accessible sensory processing offer**, ensuring timely and equitable support.
- **Expand places within Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and SEN Units** in mainstream schools, particularly for language and communication needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- **Strengthen the education offer for children in Alternative Provision (AP)** so it is inclusive, high quality, and meets a wider range of needs.
- **Improve access to short breaks**, including both overnight provision and community-based opportunities.
- **Improve access to wraparound childcare and holiday clubs** so that children and young people with SEND and their families have greater flexibility and support.
- **Continue to develop the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme** alongside the local authority's in-house disability playscheme.
- **Explore and promote the wider Community and Voluntary Sector offer**, increasing awareness and take-up of available support.

### When we get this right, it looks like:

- **Education, health and care systems work together more cohesively to meet needs** for example, through the single point of access model.
- **Families and professionals report feeling well-informed and supported** through more accessible services.
- **Robust evidence from performance monitoring and evaluation** demonstrates improved outcomes and impact.

There should be more scope for professionals involved with or commissioned by schools to refer to community agencies to provide offers of more holistic packages of support for the child and their families.

- Partner/Stakeholder

# Relevant information



[Ambition for Education Strategy 2024–2028](#)

[Autism Strategy](#)

[Children and Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Children and Young People Plan](#)

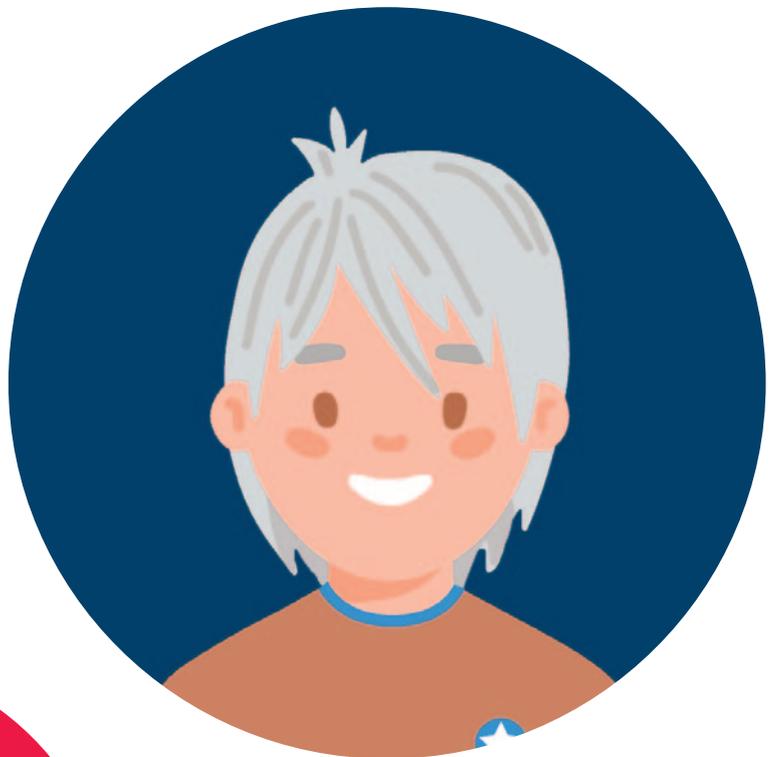
[Graduated Approach](#)

[Joint Commissioning Strategy](#)

[Learning Disability Strategy](#)

[Quality of Practice Framework](#)

[SEF](#)





**AP** Alternative Provision refers to education arranged for students who cannot attend mainstream school.

**ARP** Additionally Resourced Provision is a specialist provision, resourced to provide additional support, within a mainstream school

**ASD** Autism Spectrum Disorder ('Autism') is a lifelong neurodevelopmental condition.

**CAMHS** Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service are trained professionals who assess children and young people with a range of mental health needs. This includes anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ('ADHD') and autism.

**CLDT** Community Learning Disability Team support children and adults with a learning disability and complex health needs in Northumberland and North Tyneside. This includes help with complex health conditions, communication, medication, problems eating and swallowing, making healthy lifestyle choices, everyday life skills and being more independent. They can also support you to see your doctor or dentist.

**CQC** Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator that inspects and monitors health and social care services in England.

**CYP** Children and Young People

**EHCP** Education Health and Care Plan is a legally binding plan which details the education, health and social care support that is to be provided to a child or young person who has special educational needs and/or disabilities.

**HAF** Holiday and Activities Fund provides funding for clubs with meals and activities for children eligible for free school meals and includes those with SEND.

**MLD** Moderate learning difficulties describe a person who learns at a slower pace than their peers and has challenges with understanding, remembering, and applying new skills.

**NEET** Not in Education, Employment or Training

**PCF** Parent Carer Forum is a strategic group of parent carers who work with local authorities and services to improve support for children and young people with SEND.

**SEF** Self Evaluation Framework reviews and evaluates how effectively an area supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

**SEN Unit** A SEN Unit is a specialist provision within a mainstream school that provides targeted support and teaching for pupils with specific Special Educational Needs while still allowing them to access parts of the mainstream curriculum and school community.

**SEND** Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities is if a child or young person (0 – 25 years) has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age

**SENK** A child or young person on the SEN Register and accessing SEN Support within a school

**SLCN** Speech, Language and Communication Needs

