

Blackburn with Darwen SEND Strategic Partnership

SEND Self-Evaluation

Summer 2024

SEND Strategic Partnership Board Approval

Name	Role	On behalf of	Date
Jo Siddle	Strategic Director of Children's Services & Education	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	11/09/2024 Approved at meeting
Professor Sarah O'Brien	Chief Nursing Officer	NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board	11/09/2024 Approved at meeting
Christina Cramsie	Co-Chair	Blackburn with Darwen Parents in Partnership (BWDPIP)	11/09/2024 Approved at meeting

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Contextual Information

Our Vision for Children and Young People with SEND

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) are working with partners to support children and young people with SEND and their families to realise our vision that children and young people with SEND will live happy, healthy, and fulfilled lives wherever possible within their local community and it is a place where they will have every opportunity to:

1. Achieve your goals for being independent
2. Be and feel safe
3. Be and feel respected and supported
4. Achieve your best health and wellbeing
5. Belong and enjoy being in your community
6. Learn and achieve in everything you can do
7. Find a job that you want to do

The Local Area

In 2021, the population was around 154,700, making Blackburn with Darwen the largest borough in Lancashire. The borough has a younger than average age profile with 28.3% of the population aged 0-19 years (compared to 23.1% of England) and 14.5% of the population aged 65 years and over (compared to 18.4% of England). As a multicultural borough, the area is home to people with diverse ethnicities and identities; in 2021, 35.7% of Blackburn with Darwen residents identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category, 60.4% of people in Blackburn with Darwen identified their ethnic group within the "White" category while 1.7% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category.

Of the 28,372 school aged population, 4.3% have an EHCP compared with 4.8% nationally and 15.3% of pupils are registered as SEN support compared to the 13.6% nationally. 54.8% of pupils with EHCPs are educated in our mainstream schools; this compares with 43.3% nationally. In the year to January 2024, we have seen a 12.6% increase in the number of EHCPs; resulting in a total increase of 33.3% over the past 3 years.

Blackburn with Darwen's 0 – 25 SEND Strategic Partnership Board

The 0 – 25 SEND Strategic Partnership Board was established to ensure that the responsibilities set out within the SEND Code of Practice (CoP) 2015 are delivered and that positive progress is made towards securing the local area's vision for children and young people with SEND. The Board has responsibility for SEND programme governance and holds the SEND Improvement Group and other working groups to account for the delivery of the actions, benefits and outcomes identified in the SEND Strategy and its implementation plan.

The Board's core membership includes strategic representation from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council's Adults' and Children's Social Care, Education and Public Health, the Integrated Care Board and wider health partners, Blackburn with Darwen's Parent Carer Forum and education settings.

Summary

Our Journey

In line with our vision for Children and Young People with SEND and to enable them to successfully achieve the 7 outcomes detailed in our fully co-produced SEND Strategy outlined above, over the last 18 months, as a SEND partnership we have:

- Ensured that SEND continues to have a high profile in Blackburn with Darwen (BwD), through developing a shared understanding that SEND is everyone's business and the BwD Local Area SEND partnership is well established. There are strong working relationships across Health, Social Care and Education and the governance structure enables partners to provide support and challenge across the partnership. The SEND Strategic Partnership Board meets bi-monthly and focuses on the impact partnership work has for children and young people's (CYP) lived experiences. There have been some changes in leadership across the partnership and this has been viewed as an opportunity to work more closely together. The change from CCG to an ICB is now more established and as part of this work, BwD partners now meet more regularly to address and/or escalate any partnership risk or concerns.
- We have worked hard to ensure that CYP consult, participate, engage and co-produce strategies, services, pledges, etc. in BwD.
- The SEND partnership has co-produced the new SEND Strategy on a page, a full strategy for the next three years 2024-2027 with 7 refined strategic outcomes which underpin the improvement work of the partnership.
- Partners regularly share, scrutinise and review SEND data alongside progress reports aligned to the 7 outcomes. As part of this work, local area partners have all agreed to the production of a new SEND Strategic Needs Assessment (SSNA). Strategically this has been acknowledged as a priority development area resulting in the creation of an education SEMH team, a new referral process for AP and the work of Mental Health Support Teams within schools.
- Through voice and engagement work with CYP and their families, we knew the Local Offer website was proving difficult to navigate. As a result, we have coproduced a new website which includes a dedicated children and young people's zone which is being designed by CYP for CYP. The Local Offer details all support and services available to CYP and families with SEND.
- BwD have over many years developed a highly skilled SEND workforce, and this is maintained through a strong training offer, supported by the partnership's workforce development plan. We have a termly training offer across all SEND services via multi-disciplinary teams. Training needs are established through consultation and regular feedback from SENDCos, school settings, parents via Parents in Partnership (PIP) and wider partner membership. In July 2023 and July 2024, we held annual SEND conferences with over 200 attendees from the partnership.
- BwD are committed to early identification – 1.2% (119) of all under 5's commenced formal education with an EHCP, with 107 issued in 2023. Statutory Assessment Lead and Deputy Director attends NW EHCP events. Moderation of EHCPs has resulted in compliments around evidencing Pupil Voice through the one-page profile, co-production, and quality of information
- We have reviewed, invested in, and increased specialist places within our existing special schools to help address the continued increase in children who need specialist provision. SEOs have been assigned to offer support with Specialist provision and Pupil Referral Unit place planning. A pupil place sufficiency strategy has been drafted which will support the creation of a further 120 places within 2 of our current specialists 4-18 all through settings. This alongside, stronger multi-agency and cross service working between Children's Social Care, Adults Social Care, Health and Education is beginning to improve transitions for CYP with SEND. Collaboratively we have produced a 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions in Schools and Settings' working framework.
- The BwD local area partners have also revised and updated our 'Joint Commissioning Framework' across the partnership to secure timely support for CYP with SEND.
- We know that speech, language and communication is a key area of need for our CYP. Health with partner support commissioned a full review of their service by Maria Gascoigne. There is now a Speech, Language and Therapy place based group chaired by Health to provide waiting well support and easy access to services. In addition, Education and SEND have developed an SpLC audit tool for settings and rolled out WellComm (a language screening and intervention toolkit) across the borough with 100% of schools using it. The impact of this shows significant progress has been made in SPLC – seeing 58% of Early Years (EY) children achieving age-appropriate language levels in June 2024 compared to 34% in September 2023. This helped improve outcomes in children achieving a good level of development in EYFS rising from 63.7% in July 2023 to 64.4% in July 2024. In phonics screen 79.2% of children met the expected standard – compared to 77.7% in 2022.

- We know, through data and engagement work, that preparing CYP with SEND for adulthood is an area of development. As a result, we have established a multi-agency Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) Strategic Board to support developments across the 4 PfA pathways and a PfA Pathways and EHCP Transitions group (PET) that focuses on planning and supporting individuals/groups of CYPs' transition.
- Families of EY children wanted more specialist support in nurseries and as a result we have developed SEND EY support hubs within our Family Hubs. We have reviewed the use of SENIF funding, ensuring that more EY settings access and use the funding to target SEND needs. In consultation we have developed a system for ensuring that High Needs funding can be used by EY providers to support early identification of SEND needs.
- Schools and settings across the borough are inclusive with over half of pupils with an EHCP being educated in mainstream provision (54.8% BwD vs 43.3% England - June 2024).
- Absence for EHCP CYP is below national averages at 10.8 compared to 12.4, with persistent absence at 35.4 compared to 36.3 and severe persistent absence at 3.5 compared to 6.0 nationally.

Our 4 Key Priority Areas

To continue to ensure our Children and Young People with SEND have every opportunity to live happy, healthy, and fulfilled lives wherever possible within their local community the Partnership is working on 4 key priorities that will help our CYP to achieve the 7 outcomes they tell us are important.

- To ensure children and young people are well prepared for adulthood to include transitions within education, health or social care.
- To align commissioning priorities across all services to ensure they reflect and meet local needs
- To ensure sufficiency of SEND educational specialist places to meet needs
- Strong multi-agency working to accurately identify and meet children and young people's needs without delay