

# London Borough of Barking & Dagenham

## Children's Autism Strategy – 2015 – 2018

### Foreword

Welcome to the Children's Autism Strategy.

This strategy has been developed to align with the Adult Autism Strategy, so that children & young people receive support that is consistent and appropriate for their age and enable a smooth transition into adulthood. The strategy sets out how we will work to increase autism friendly provision across the Borough and its different agencies to improve services for children and young people in Barking and Dagenham over the next two years. The strategy seeks to promote equality of opportunity for young people with autistic needs, so that they are able to access, as full a range, of inclusive provision, as possible.

Barking and Dagenham provides services on an equality rights basis and children and young people are not expected to wait for a diagnosis prior to their needs being recognised and met. We will ensure that all children and young people with autism have the opportunity to access the highest quality education in their local environment, and that support and interventions are available as early as possible following recognition of their needs, or diagnosis of their disability by:

- increasing awareness.
- providing the highest quality provision for autism.
- promoting inclusive multi-disciplinary practices.
- providing a range of educational opportunities, ranging from quality first teaching and care that meets a wide range of needs to more specialist provision.
- excellent differentiated education and personal support for children and young people as they transition to adult life.

For very young children, prior to attending school additional support is accessed from the portage service or the specialist nursery assessment provisions. Support and advice is provided by multi-agency teams, which all early years settings have access to.

At school age, children and young people with autism attend their local schools where additional support may be provided if required. School staff can access specialist multi-agency advice, support and training. The borough also provides six Additional Resourced Provisions within mainstream schools, and a range of specialist provision, located at one of two local authority special schools.

There is a clear care pathway provided by the Health Service for identifying Autism at a young age and offering support to children and young people, parents and families.

Councillor Evelyn Carpenter  
Cabinet Member Education and Schools

Councillor Bill Turner  
Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Social Care

## **Background and Introduction**

The Barking and Dagenham Autism Strategy Group was set up in 2002 in order to bring together the service providers for children with autism and their families, to agree and set out a consistent offer and approach running from early years through to the end of the secondary phase.

Initially a five-year plan was agreed with representatives from the health services (paediatricians, speech therapists), social care and education (head teachers, advisors) and voluntary groups (Sycamore Trust). This group has met approximately three times per year since it was established.

The group has promoted autism awareness and has initiated the setting up care pathways for children and young people and their families, ensuring a consistent approach is followed in educational settings and a quality Continued Professional Development (CPD) pathway is available to a range of professionals and that there are purposeful leisure activities for individual children and young people.

## **Vision and Aims**

Our vision is to provide a range of quality provision for all children and young people within their local community with a consistency of approach from early years into adulthood where they feel safe and valued and are enabled to become independent.

To achieve this consistency our provisions implement TEACCH pedagogy (ref: University of North Carolina TEACCH Autism Programme) which provides children and young people with autism excellent learning opportunities that support them with independence skills that will best equip them for adulthood. We believe that this approach to learning should be available to children and young people throughout their education, equipping them to live as independent adults in Barking and Dagenham. This approach does not see autism as a deficit, but uses the inherent strengths of those affected and develops children and young people throughout their lives. All educational settings in Barking and Dagenham have access to training in this approach and use it as their main method to teach and support children and young people with autism. Parents also have access to this training.

All children and young people's needs will therefore be met in local schools to enable our families to stay close together and acquire skills which further supports their ability to help their children and young people to live independent lives within the community.

In order for there to be a continuity of approach from all service providers we will continue to ensure that a rigorous training programme is available to staff working directly with children and families living with autism. We also ensure all staff receive disability rights and autism awareness training.

## **Aims**

We will ensure;

- there is a clear and effective diagnostic pathway for autism with information and advice on the support that is offered.
- children and young people and their families are involved in their education and in planning for their futures.
- there are local schools catering for the needs of local children.
- children and young people with autism feel safe from harm and abuse at home, at school and in the local community.
- all services increase the opportunities for children and young people with autism in the community.

- the needs of children and young people with autism are met by education, care and health staff who are appropriately knowledgeable, skilled and experienced in autism.
- children and young people are effectively supported through key transition points, including the transition to adult life.

## **What is Autism?**

Children and young people with autism may have impairments at a variety of levels in the following areas of development:

### **Social interaction**

They may have difficulty understanding social rules, making and maintaining friendships, holding conversations, being in close proximity with others and managing typical social situations.

### **Social Communication**

Some children and young people will have no functional language, others will have limited functional language and some will have an extensive vocabulary, but will struggle with the social elements of conversation such as reading body language and facial expressions effectively.

### **Flexibility of Thought**

Children and young people with autism will struggle to manage changes to routine, have a limited range of interests and will pursue stability and predictability.

Many children and young people with autism will also have learning difficulties, ranging from profound to mild. Many children and young people with autism will have average or well above average intellectual abilities but will have impairments in areas described above.

Children and young people with autism will often have strengths in their visual skills, their ability to apply logic and their focus on activities that are of interest to them.

## **National Context**

### **The Children and Families Act 2014**

This Act introduces a single assessment process to support children, young people and their families from birth to 25 years. Statements of Special Educational Needs will be transferred, where necessary, to Education, Health and Care Plans by April 2018.

### **Autism in Barking and Dagenham**

In January 2015 in Barking and Dagenham, there were 400 children and young people with a diagnosis of autism in our school settings. The majority are educated in local schools with a very small percentage educated in out of borough provision. Our aim is that there will be suitable educational provision for all, within the local community.

The needs of the children and young people vary with the severity of their condition, some may have managed successfully without diagnosis, some are learning effectively with little adjustment to their educational provision, and others require a high level of curriculum adaptation and supervision at all times to learn and be safe.

The number of children and young people with autism and additional complex needs has risen significantly in the last 10 years. The local authority has responded in a number of ways: providing additional training to support the staff; creating Additional Resourced Provisions within mainstream schools and additional places at Trinity Special and Riverside Bridge School.

## Priority 1

### Independent Voice and Involvement in Planning Provision

Children and Young People with autism and their families to be able to voice their views and have their views at the forefront when decisions are made regarding provision

Number	Objective	Action	By when	By whom
1.1	Parents and carers views about local services are central to the development of increasingly accessible services for people with autism.	Commission the 'Just Say' parents' forum to provide their report on what services currently exist, challenges being faced by those accessing services and suggestions for future developments.	December 2015	'Just Say' Parents Forum  Group Manager- Early Years
1.2	The views of young, autistic people about local services are central to the development of increasingly accessible services for people with autism.	Consult young people via groups such as Youth Parliament, to ascertain their views on what services currently exist, challenges being faced by those accessing services and suggestions for future developments.	December 2015	Progress Project  Principal Policy & Performance Officer
1.3	Children and young people and families are actively encouraged to give their views about their own needs, written or otherwise, at EHC planning and review meetings.	Person Centred Planning training will be provided for school staff responsible for the statutory review of pupils' special educational needs	January 2016	Group Manager- Disabled Children's Team. Principal Adviser- Inclusion
1.4	Young people and families to be represented and encouraged to contribute fully at Autism Strategy meetings.	Youth groups will be consulted to identify how representation can be ensured. Minutes of meeting demonstrate that views are sought and recorded and actions taken.	July 2015	Erik Stein
1.5	The voice of the young people will form an essential part of autism awareness training.	Autism Ambassadors to be invited to give presentations on autism awareness enhanced training sessions and in other settings where training takes place	Minimum of 5 per term	Sycamore Trust

1.6	All children have their views recorded at their SEN planning and review meetings.	Training to be provided to school regarding obtaining pupil views where language, communication and other barriers can hamper this.	ongoing	SENCo Teacher in Charge Senior Manager- EHC Team
1.7	Views of people with autism are reflected through the formal governance of the Learning Disability Partnership Board	Representation will be encouraged from people with autistic spectrum disorders and their family carers on the partnership board consultative forums.	April 2015	Learning Disability Partnership Board

## Priority 2

### Safeguarding Access and Rights

The council and its partners continue to see safeguarding people from harm and abuse as their key priority. The borough has a well-developed safeguarding adults' board and Local Safeguarding Children's Board which are chaired independently to ensure there is robust scrutiny and challenge to its performance and delivery. The boards will continue to have responsibility for keeping all vulnerable children and adults safe and ensure that all preventative measures are in place. In terms of the strategy, the Boards will ensure that children and adults with autism and their families are kept safe and well and are free from fear of harm or abuse.

Number	Objective	Action	By When	By Whom
2.1	All Learning Disability Partnership Board papers are in an accessible, easy to read format.	Ensure all papers for service users are free of professional jargon and accessible to those with literacy difficulties, disabilities and available in community languages.	Ongoing	Learning Disability Partnership Board
2.2	Service users and providers feel confident in providing challenge to local authority and health colleagues about services.	Ensure that future Local Accounts report on the services and support are available to people with autistic spectrum disorders via ( <a href="http://careandsupport.lbbd.gov.uk/localaccount">http://careandsupport.lbbd.gov.uk/localaccount</a> ).	December 2015	Health and Wellbeing Board
2.3	The agreed priorities and actions within this strategy are regularly monitored.	LDPB to monitor progress at the Board every six months.	From April 2015	Group Manager (Chair of Autism Strategy Group)
2.4	Engagement strategy produced for LDPB.	Ensure that there are processes for engagement with Service users and their families about service design, development and tendering.	November 2015	Learning Disability Joint Commissioner Group Manager- Learning Disabilities



### Priority 3

#### Access to meaningful activities, during the day, in the evenings and at weekends

The Barking and Dagenham Children and Young adults Autism Plan describes the vision, aims and outcomes for young people with autistic spectrum disorders (Autism) who live in the borough. It seeks to shape the local approach in implementing the requirements of the National Autism Strategy 'Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives' (2010).

As this is a three year plan and it is hoped that opportunities will arise to allow for improved use of existing resources or for new investment to be sought improving access to meaningful activities for our young people with autism in Barking and Dagenham and the surrounding area.

No	Objective	Action	By When	By Whom
3.1	All children and young people with autism will have appropriate educational provision, locally where possible.	To continue to develop the range of education provision reflecting the needs of children and young people with autism.	Sept 2015 & annually	Principal Adviser- Education Inclusion  Group Manager- Disabled Children's Team
3.2	Appropriate provision is available at point of need for all children and young people with autism.	Objective, moderated data is collated and used to inform commissioning of appropriate educational provision across a range of settings.	Reviewed termly	EHC Team  Principal Adviser- Inclusion
3.3	Improved access to leisure and culture services including sports centres and libraries is available to people with autism.	Monitoring report on increased take up of leisure services for people with autism to be presented to the Autism Steering group. Target 10% increase per year, in take up of people with autism.	December 2015	Group Manager Culture and Sport
3.4	Increase in number of local service providers that complete awareness training designed to remove the barriers which may exclude people with autism accessing meaningful activities.	Delivery of improved autism awareness training for all professionals engaged directly or indirectly with young people with autism.	January 2016	Group Manager Employment and Skills

3.5	Develop opportunities for children and young people and their families to access personal budgets to support their move to independence.	A key focus of the council's work will be the expansion of the Personalisation Agenda within service planning.	December 2015	Commissioning Lead Officer
3.6	Key information is available through the Local Offer.	Ensure information and details of support organisations/ local mainstream and universal services are available to people with autism, their parents, families and carers.	April 2016	Group Manager- Early Years  Principal Adviser- Inclusion Group Manager, DCT
3.7	Children and families affected by autism have access to specialised services for those that are unable to access mainstream and universal opportunities.	Effective contractual arrangements developed by involved group managers in collaboration with commissioning teams. Commissioners to monitor services provided through the Voluntary Sector by organisations including Sycamore Trust and DABD.	April 2016	Divisional Director- Commissioning Safeguarding Lead Education
3.8	All service providers understand and follow LBBD Safeguarding policies and processes.	Publicise training programmes Commissioners to request evidence of compliance. LBBD safeguarding self assessment.	Feb 2015 and ongoing	Divisional Director Commissioning Safeguarding Lead Education

## Priority 4

**The needs of children and young people with autism are met by education, care and health staff who are appropriately trained to identify and support those with autism.**

There will be a well trained workforce with competence in our key pedagogy via access to high quality staff training. We will further develop our model of best practice to share with colleagues across the council to ensure there is continuity of approach for people for whom access to services and support will be lifelong.

The delivery of quality services in health and social care is key to ensuring that children and young people and families are effectively supported and prevented from falling into crisis. The Child and Families Act (2014) have placed new duties on local authorities regarding the provision of information and advice to those using their services, regardless of disability or impairment, in making decisions about their current and future care and support needs.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
4.1	Commissioners continue to monitor and evaluate contracts and ensure that reasonable adjustments are being made to services for all users, including those with autism.	Contractors continue to comply and provide evidence of reasonable adjustment for children and young people with autism, through quarterly monitoring.	Ongoing on quarterly basis	LBBB health and social care integration team, Disabled Children's Team School Improvement Service EHC Panel and Team  Children's Commissioning and Procurement
4.2	Young people with autism are identified at the earliest possible opportunity and appropriate actions are taken to reduce any gaps in provision.	Annual mandatory reviews to be undertaken of current provisions for children and young people with high functioning autism to ensure services are meeting their needs.	January 2016	Jane Hargreaves
4.3	All complaints are investigated and	Monitoring of service quality		Group Manager-

	recommendations and actions followed to improve services. Complaints overview to be published in annual Local Account. All complaints will be investigated using the relevant policies and procedures.	complaints made by service users about accessibility. All complaints investigated via the available frameworks, as well as the LADO process and section 47 of the Children's Act.		Disabled Children's Team SIS
4.4	The managers of all specialist resourced ASD provisions have successfully completed a suitable post-graduate qualification in autism.	All have completed and gained a pass.	September 2017	Principal Adviser-Inclusion
4.5	At least one senior member of staff in every LBBB school has successfully completed a 5-day training course in structured teaching (TEACCH). At least 1 member of staff from each setting has successfully completed Enhanced Autism Training.	Appropriate CPD is available to all educational settings re autism awareness, understanding and expertise and strategies. All educational settings to have received Autism Awareness training.	September 2017  Ongoing Reviewed annually	Principal Adviser-Inclusion Trinity School. Inclusion Advisers. Early Years Advisers. SALT and Health Commissioning. Community Paediatrician.
4.6	A member of staff from all settings (pre school, school, health settings have attended the Enhanced Training programme in autism (six sessions), which includes Autism Awareness, TEACCH, PECS, communication, sensory needs, intensive interaction, PIVATS.	Course registers demonstrate that a members of staff from all early years and school settings have successfully completed the course.	September 2017	Principal Adviser-Inclusion Group manager-EYs. School leadership teams
4.7	Training is available for all schools and settings in autism awareness.	The EIT and EPS, Sycamore Trust and ARP managers have training materials available and provide training when requested by schools.		Principal Adviser-Inclusion. Group Manager-EYs. Sycamore Trust
4.8	The TEACCH approach to learning is	Staff from all setting have received	Reviewed	Principal Adviser-Inclusion

	promoted and used in all educational settings where suitable, incorporating elements of other successful, evidenced based approaches.	training regarding TEACCH and are using it effectively taking into account individual pupil's needs.	annually	Commissioning
4.9	All schools participate in a termly monitoring meeting with an inclusion advisor to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements and local authority expectations for effective teaching in our schools.	Termly meetings held and minuted and compliance reported.	Termly	Principal Adviser-Inclusion

## Priority 5

### Transition Planning

The council and its partners are committed to implementing a robust transition process for the future needs for all young people with a recognition that transition planning can be difficult for young people and their families as plans need to be made about their future as a young adult.

Number	Objective	Action	By When	By Whom
5.1	Current and regularly updated pupil related information about the numbers and needs of young people identified by Children's Services continue to be shared to support good planning.	Adult services to receive updated pupil related information on a quarterly basis for young people from year 8 (aged 14).	Quarterly basis	Group Manager-Disabled Children's Team
5.2	All pupils with autism will have a transition plan and review in year 9.	All essential information from year 9 transition plans are forwarded to Adults' Services.		Group Manager-Disabled Children's Team EHC Team
5.3	Local Offer to continue to be monitored, reviewed and developed.	Identify clear transition processes and publish information through the Borough's Local Offer The Local Offer to continue to be monitored and reviewed. The Local Offer to link to the Care and Support Hub.	November 2015	Group Manager-Early Years
5.4	Statements of Special Educational Need are being converted to EHC Plans where necessary, in an efficient, person centred way.	Continue to develop effective pupil information systems bringing together education, social care and health information where needed to fully inform EHC assessments.	September 2018	Group Manager-Disabled Children's Team.

		Avoid repetitive processes for young people with autism and their families by ensuring that medical and social history are clear within EHC Plans.		
5.5	All young adults with autism entering adult services are supported by the SEND Career Advisor and Social Workers within the EHC team.	SEND career Advisor and Social Worker. Young People remain engaged in Employment, Education & Training Post 16.	April 2015	Principal Adviser-Secondary.

## Priority 6

**There is a clear and effective diagnostic pathway for autism with information and advice on the support that is offered and to ensure that parents/carers have access to appropriate advice and information throughout processes.**

Children's Services and Health Services (NELFT) worked together to establish clear care pathways for undergoing the diagnostic process with the Child Development Team (CDT). A priority is to establish a similar pathway for children and young people who engage with CAMHS and other services which provide diagnosis and for this information to be shared with other services providers (awaiting response from RO)

<b>Number</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
6.1	CDT to continue to work with local authority Education Services to provide information at point of diagnosis.	Information clearly available regarding range of educational provision, contacts from the local authority, Local Offer.	July 2015	CDT manager and EIT manager
6.2	Information is clearly available regarding range of educational provision, contacts from the local authority, Local Offer.	CAMHS and local authority education services to work together to provide clear information at the point of diagnosis.	July 2015	CAMHS manager and EIT manager
6.3	Specialist advice regarding special educational and autism needs is available to be bought in by all local schools.	The Education Psychology Service and early years teams to provide early assessment and advice to families and settings regarding complex social communication needs and Education Inclusion specialists to provide advice to schools.	Ongoing	EPS. Principal EP. Divisional Director, Education, Youth & Childcare
6.4	Early Years settings and schools identify children who have complex social and communication needs that are a barrier to learning.	Early years settings and schools alert parents, health and the local authority early so that information is available and to ensure suitable early intervention.	Ongoing	Group Manager - EYs All school SLTs



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