



**Nottingham City Local
Area Partnership
Special Educational
Needs and
Disabilities(SEND),
Inclusion & Alternative
Provision (AP) Strategy
2025-2028**

**Taking a Children's & Young People's
outcomes-based approach**





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Welcome to our SEND, Inclusion & AP Strategy for 2025 to 2028

We are privileged to oversee local services working to support and meet the needs of children and young people and their families.

Moving forwards from our Joint local Area SEND inspection outcome in November 2021, the Nottingham SEND local area partnership recognises that for children and young people to achieve their potential, all services need to work together, with parents, carers, children and young people, to shape and deliver the right health, care and education support, in the right place, at the right time and to enable young people to transition into adulthood and independence, when able to do so.

We are committed to working with all our partners; those across education settings (including alternative provision), health and social care, voluntary sector, and our local employers; to improve outcomes and lived experiences for our children and young people, with SEND (0–25-year-olds)

Our local area partnership involves two large organisations, Nottingham City Council and Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) alongside the local area Parent Carer Forum – Rainbow (PCF).

The SEND, Inclusion & AP Strategy will be supported by an annual Action Plan, subject to review year on year.

We would like to offer thanks to all those who have co-produced the strategy and engaged in supporting children and young people with SEND and their families in Nottingham. We remain committed to continuing to strengthen relationships with our partners and many agencies to ensure positive experiences for our children and young people living and growing up in Nottingham.



Foreword from Nottingham City Parent, Carer Forum (Rainbow PCF)



We are pleased to introduce you to the new Nottingham SEND, Inclusion & AP Strategy which sets out our collective vision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND living in Nottingham city.

We want to see the best possible educational and other outcomes for all our children and young people. Supporting the City Council, and as part of the SEND local area partnership, we are all committed to working together to improve the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families.

We recognise that in Nottingham our local partnership is supported by a hard-working workforce and engaged stakeholders, all working in Genuine Partnerships to make improvements and support our families.

Our collective ambition for our families to thrive, lies within the success of this strategy. To the parent carer forum, this means children, young people and their families being equal partners and receiving the right support, in the right place at the right time. Experiencing the 4 cornerstones of Genuine Partnerships – welcome and care, value and include, communicate and work in partnership are fundamental to this.

Foreword from Councillor Barnard

I am pleased to introduce you to the new Nottingham SEND, Inclusion & AP Strategy which sets out our vision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND living in Nottingham.

I want to see the best possible outcomes for all children and young people in Nottingham and the City Council, as part of the SEND local area partnership, is committed to working together to improve the lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families.

In Nottingham, our local partnership is supported by a highly motivated and hard-working workforce and engaged stakeholders working together to make continued improvements and support children, young people and families.

This Strategy clearly sets out our collective ambition for the future so that our children and young people receive the right support, in the right place and the right time.



Councillor Cheryl Barnard
**Portfolio Holder for Children and
Young People.**
Nottingham City Council

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**The foundations which
underpin the SEND, Inclusion
and AP Strategy**



Our Vision

Our vision is to champion and improve the experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and those who may require alternative provision (AP) to make sure that every child and young person in Nottingham is heard, healthy, feels safe and feel they belong, are valued and prepared for their future.



Our Local Area Partnership Commitment

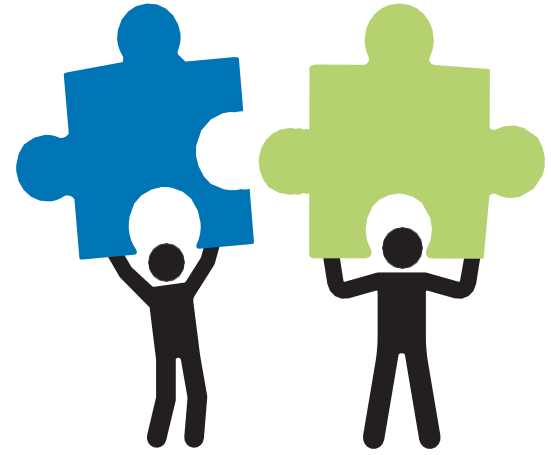
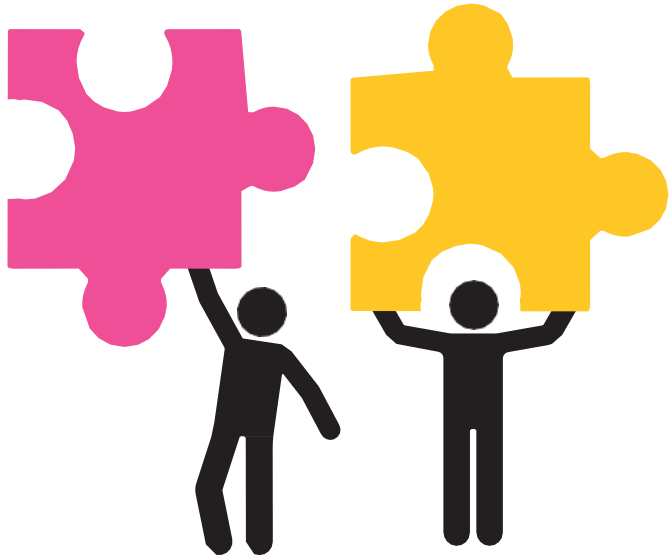
Partners are committed to the following principles of how we will work together in Nottingham:

- SEND is everyone's responsibility
- Children, young people and their families are at the heart of the SEND system
- What we do makes sense to all stakeholders
- We respond to new and emerging issues
- We measure and monitor the delivery of key priorities
- We have a governance structure with clear routes for monitoring, challenge, and assurance
- We work collaboratively as a partnership across the local area
- We ensure strong communication across the partnership with all stakeholders
- We focus on the impact on children and young people with SEND and their families, their lived experiences
- We create a sustainable system in line with High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) recovery plans

Partners across Nottingham City are committed to working together with openness, honesty, and accountability to drive meaningful improvements




We are fully committed to embedding the Genuine Partnership Principles, which guide how we work together in Nottingham



The local landscape for SEND, Inclusion and Alternative Placement



Local Area SEND Inspection



Our government has tasked Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to work together to inspect local areas across England, to see how well the local area partnership work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND (0–25-year-olds).

In 2023, a new SEND inspection framework was developed to support this assessment. Nottingham City's local area SEND inspection took place in November 2021 and the report outcome is detailed here [Nottingham City Local Area SEND inspection report 2021](#)

- As part of our SEND development approach, we have co-produced a SEND Self-evaluation Framework ([SEF](#)) which identifies areas for development, informing our SEND, Inclusion & AP Strategy.
- We implemented a new structure of multi-agency workstreams and arrangements where partners from education, health and care can come together with parents and carers to oversee our local SEND arrangements and monitor our progress towards our overall vision and outcomes.



Nottingham High Needs Cohort: Pupils with SEND Support & EHCPs

In 2025 14.8% of pupils in Nottingham were recognised as needing SEND Support which is slightly higher than the National average of 14.2%.

In 2025, 2.9% of Nottingham City pupils had an EHCP compared to a national average of 5.3%.

In Nottingham City, pupils do not require an EHC plan in order to receive high needs top-up funding, which explains the significantly lower levels of EHCP's issues within Nottingham City.

Alongside this, high levels of deprivation is also a contributing factor to the lower EHCP rates.

- The most prevalent primary need in Nottingham is Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).
- Numbers of pupils with Autism receiving High Needs Top-Up funding has doubled since 2018, and this increase accounts for nearly 50% of the overall increase in high needs spending over a 5-year period.
- The second highest increase, accounting for a further 22% of the growth, relates to pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).
- As of January 2025, 1,909 children and young people for whom Nottingham City maintains an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is an increase of 678 or 55% compared to 2022.
- As of January 2025, Nottingham City saw a 120% increase in the number of EHC Needs Assessment requests compared to 2019.


The development of an outcome-based SEND, Inclusion and AP Strategy





Our commitment to co-production

- The Nottingham City local area SEND partnership is committed to the vision, outcomes and aims set out within this strategy.
- Our strategy has been developed with stakeholders, including parents, carers and children and young people with SEND.
- Engagement activities have included surveys, nine engagement events open to all partners and feedback from groups of children and young people attending a range of education settings in Nottingham.
- The vision and the actions in this strategy are led by the six co-produced outcomes that children and young people with SEND tell us what is important to them and their families living in Nottingham.
- While recognising these are outcomes we want for all children and young people, those with SEND often need additional help and support to achieve them.
- Our Joint Commissioning Strategy, Self Evaluation Framework and previous SEND Inspection have shaped the six outcomes into three aims.



The transition to
adult looms and they
need to have a clear
plan to work
towards their
independence

It's important to
support children
early so they feel
hopeful and ready for
what's ahead

I need to be
supported and
prepared for a
good life

I need to be given
the best chance to
succeed whatever
my future looks
like

I shouldn't need to
be accepted.
Everyone has value
no matter what

If you're not safe you
won't be able to enjoy
your life

What children, young people and their families told us

If my child does
not feel safe,
they're too
stressed to learn

I need to be
valued and feel
like I belong

I feel
comfortable
with people that
understand me

Feeling valued
helps my self-
esteem

I need to be safe
and feel safe.

If you feel safe with
people, you have
better relationships
with them

What children, young people and their families told us

I need to enjoy life and have fun with family and friends

Everyone should be heard – it isn't fair for everyone and leaves some people out

I need to be the healthiest I can be in mind and body

It's important that I can look after myself.

Having fun is part of learning

To thrive, people need to enjoy what they are doing, but this should come with suitable provisions in place.

I need to be listened to and understood

To be listened to will prove you are valued; to be heard, will also create room for solutions

Health is life - no health is no life.

It's important to be healthy so you can do sports and the things you want to do. And good mental health is needed.

People our age will bottle it up and people will be willing to listen when it is too late

Enjoying life and having fun brings out the best in everyone



**The
outcomes
young people
have told us
that they
want:**



I need to be listened to and understood



I need to be the healthiest I can be in mind and body



I need to be safe and feel safe



I need to be valued and feel like I belong



I need to be supported and prepared for a good life



I need to enjoy life and have fun with family and friends

Our local area SEND partnership's three key aims

The local area's expectation is for our six new outcomes to be embedded across all areas of the local SEND and AP system. To achieve these outcomes, we have developed three key aims:

1. **Creating an inclusive, child-friendly city.**
2. **Building a responsive system that meets the needs of our young people at the right time and in the right place.**
3. **Embedding collaboration and co-production at the heart of everything we do.**

This strategy illustrates how the local area partnership will deliver and measure the impact against the aims for all children and young people with SEND at a strategic level.

To support this, an annual Action Plan will outline what the local area partnership will do and who will deliver the required actions for improvements.

Three key aims driving the outcomes for children and young people

Aim 1 – Creating an inclusive and child-friendly city **Outcomes:**

- *I need to be valued and feel that I belong*
- *I need to be safe and feel safe*
- *I need to enjoy life and have fun with my family and friends*



Aim 2 – Building a responsive system that meets the needs of children and young people, at the right time and in the right place **Outcomes:**

- *I need to be supported and prepared for a good life*
- *I need to be the healthiest I can be in mind and body*
- *I need to be safe and feel safe*



Aim 3 – Embedding collaboration and co-production at the heart of everything we do **Outcomes:**

- *I need to be listened to and understood*
- *I need to be supported and prepared for a good life*
- *I need to be valued and feel that I belong*

Aim 1 – Creating an inclusive and child-friendly city

Key Actions:

- Develop an Inclusion Charter for schools and the partnership.
- Launch the new INclude service which aims to improve transition between primary and secondary school, reduce the number of children being permanently excluded from school and increases the number of excluded children being reintegrated back into mainstream school.
- Develop a single dataset for children not in education or missing out on full-time education.
- Deliver consistent, effective preparation for transition into post-16 opportunities.
- Update the Graduated Response and Ordinarily Available Provision offer collaboratively.





Aim 2 – Building a responsive system that meets the needs of children and young people at the right time and in the right place

Key Actions:

- Our local Health, Care and SEND system will improve waiting times and the experiences of those waiting for assessments.
- Fully implement and embed a Nottingham and Nottinghamshire local area data dashboard.
- Refresh the SEND Sufficiency Strategy (2023–28) and develop an implementation plan in line with the Joint Commissioning Strategy (2024–27).
- Ensure the workforce across the Local Area Partnership, Education, Health and Social Care are appropriately skilled.
- Implement a refreshed local offer, underpinned by a community directory.

Aim 3 – Embedding collaboration and co-production at the heart of everything we do

Key Actions:

- Local Young People's Assembly, including student alumni, to be established to represent the views of children and young people with SEND, to create meaningful ways to influence change at partnership governance level.
- All partnership services will ensure that children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers are actively involved in service design, evaluation and improvement within education, health and social care provision.
- Develop a Co-production Charter with clear prerequisites that every setting and provider must evidence.



Outcome

Progress Measure



I need to be listened to and understood

- Increased Confidence in Local SEND Systems**
Children, young people, and their parents/carers report growing confidence in how local SEND systems listen to, understand, and act on their views, supported by case studies and feedback from Rainbows PCF and other stakeholders.
- Embedded Genuine Partnership in Co-Production**
Genuine Partnership principles are consistently embedded across Local Area Partnership (LAP) activities, forming the foundation for service design and community engagement, as evidenced in annual delivery and evaluation reports.
- Youth Voice Driving Change**
The Young People’s Assembly is active and influential, with members reporting that their voices are shaping decisions and driving positive change across the Local Area Partnership.
- Improved Preparation for Adulthood**
More young people with SEND feel supported in planning for their future, with clearer understanding of available options and pathways, reflected in EHCPs and Annual Reviews that capture their aspirations and outcomes.
- Positive Impact on Wellbeing and Inclusion**
Children and young people report that being heard and understood improves relationships, provision, and support — contributing to better mental health, attendance, and reduced exclusions.

I need to be the healthiest I can be in mind and body

- Improved Access to Health Services**
Children and young people with SEND, along with their families, report that appropriate health services are available, accessible in a timely manner, and delivered by professionals with the right expertise.
- Effective Multi-Agency Support**
Families report that multi-agency support is effective, especially for children and young people without or awaiting diagnosis — contributing to reduced neurodevelopmental waiting lists.
- Data-Driven Commissioning**
Nottingham City’s current and accurate data dashboard informs strategic commissioning decisions, ensuring services are responsive to local needs.
- Enhanced Support for High-Need Families**
More families with the highest levels of need are accessing short breaks, and trauma-informed practice training across all LAP settings is improving capacity to support complex needs.
- Health Confidence and Whole-School Commitment**
Parents, carers, and young people feel confident in accessing health support, and all schools/settings have committed to the NCC Healthy Child Vision, as evidenced by the Achieve Well annual survey.

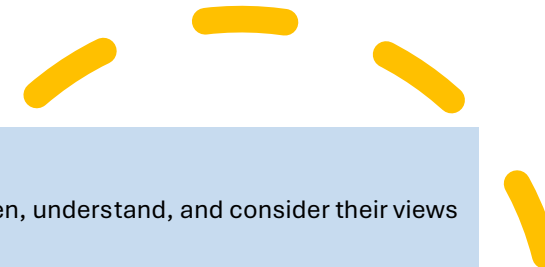
Outcome

Progress Measure

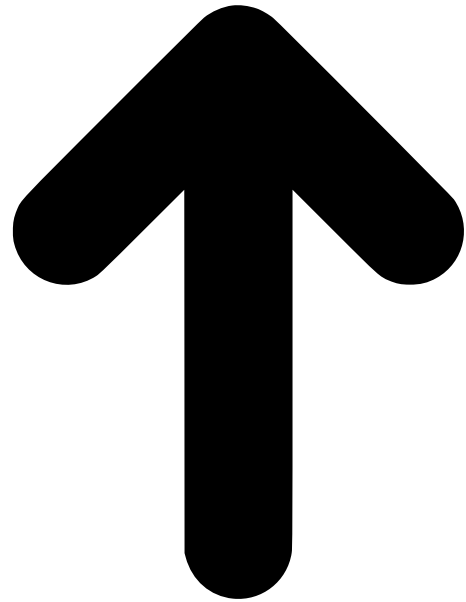
<p>I need to be supported and prepared for a good life</p>	<p>Supported Transitions into Adulthood Children and young people with SEND, and their families, report feeling well supported through transitions, with clear plans, guidance, and access to appropriate education, training, and transport options.</p> <p>Improved Early Years Outcomes More children achieve age-expected communication milestones at 2-year health checks and reach a ‘Good Level of Development’ at the Early Years Foundation Stage, supported by effective EY SEND service oversight of Section 23 data.</p> <p>Rising Attainment Across Key Stages More pupils with SEND are achieving expected standards at KS2, Progress 8 at age 16, and accessing full-time education — including alternative provision — with increasing parental satisfaction.</p> <p>Clear Expectations and Equitable Provision There is a shared understanding of the Local Authority’s expectations for Ordinarily Available provision, with schools, settings, and families reporting consistency and equity across areas of need.</p> <p>Accessible Information and Timely Support Families report improved access to clear information and advice via the Local Offer website, with EHCPs issued within 20 weeks and enhanced quality through Annual Reviews.</p>
<p>I need to enjoy life and have fun with my family and friends</p>	<p>Inclusive Access to Leisure and Community Activities More children and young people with SEND are participating in leisure services, after-school clubs, and community groups — reporting that they feel welcomed, have fun, and build friendships.</p> <p>Positive Family and Social Experiences Families report regular opportunities to enjoy time together in the community, supported by increased access to short breaks and specialist social care services.</p> <p>Improved Awareness and Use of the Local Offer The Local Offer is well-known and widely used by families, with user metrics showing improved access to relevant services and reduced gaps in information.</p> <p>Effective Support Through Family Hubs Service data and family feedback indicate timely and appropriate referrals to Family Hubs, with families receiving the right support when they need it.</p> <p>Support for Social Inclusion and Independence More families report that their children and young people receive the right help to join clubs, go on holiday, make friends, and access public spaces confidently.</p>

Outcome

Progress Measure



I need to be safe and feel safe	<p>Confidence in Local SEND Systems Children, young people, and their families report increased confidence in the ability of local SEND systems to listen, understand, and consider their views — supported by case studies and feedback from Rainbows PCF.</p> <p>Embedded Co-Production and Genuine Partnership Genuine Partnership principles are embedded across Local Area Partnership (LAP) activities, forming the foundation for service delivery and community engagement, as reflected in annual plans and evaluations.</p> <p>Youth Voice and Influence The Young People’s Assembly is established and active, with members reporting that their views are influencing meaningful change across the LAP.</p> <p>Future Planning and Aspirations More young people with SEND are supported to prepare for their future, with EHCPs and Annual Reviews increasingly capturing their voice, aspirations, and desired outcomes.</p> <p>Positive Impact on Wellbeing and Inclusion Children and young people feel better understood, leading to stronger relationships, improved support, better mental health, increased attendance, and reduced exclusions.</p>
I need to be valued and feel that I belong	<p>Sense of Belonging and Feeling Valued Children and young people with SEND, and their families, report feeling valued in their educational settings and a growing sense of belonging as citizens of Nottingham City.</p> <p>Whole-School Commitment to Co-Production All schools and settings adopt the Co-production Charter, with annual SEND information reports evidencing how co-production is embedded in practice.</p> <p>Trusted Relationships and Emotional Safety More children and young people with SEND report having someone they trust at school — whether a friend or adult — to talk to when they feel worried.</p> <p>Clear Access to Support for Families Parents and carers increasingly report knowing who to contact for support, improving access to help when needed.</p> <p>Skilled and Confident Workforce More staff engage with the SEND workforce competency framework and report increased confidence in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.</p>



Strong Governance to Drive Progress

Accountability for Delivery

Over the past year, we have worked to establish a new structure and strengthen partnerships that ensures accountability and keeps the needs of children and young people with SEND at the center of our work.

The Nottingham City SEND Partnership brings together key organisations from education, health, care, and the voluntary sector to deliver high-quality services for children and young people with SEND.

Our partnership includes:

- Nottingham City Council (NCC)
- Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board (ICB)
- Parent Carer Forum (PCF) – Rainbows

The Nottingham City SEND Partnership Improvement Group (PAIG) is responsible for driving progress, providing assurance, and reporting directly to the Nottingham City SEND Executive Leadership Group.

Key accountable executive leaders include the Director of Children's and Education Services (NCC), the Director of Nursing (ICB), and the CEO of Rainbows (PCF).

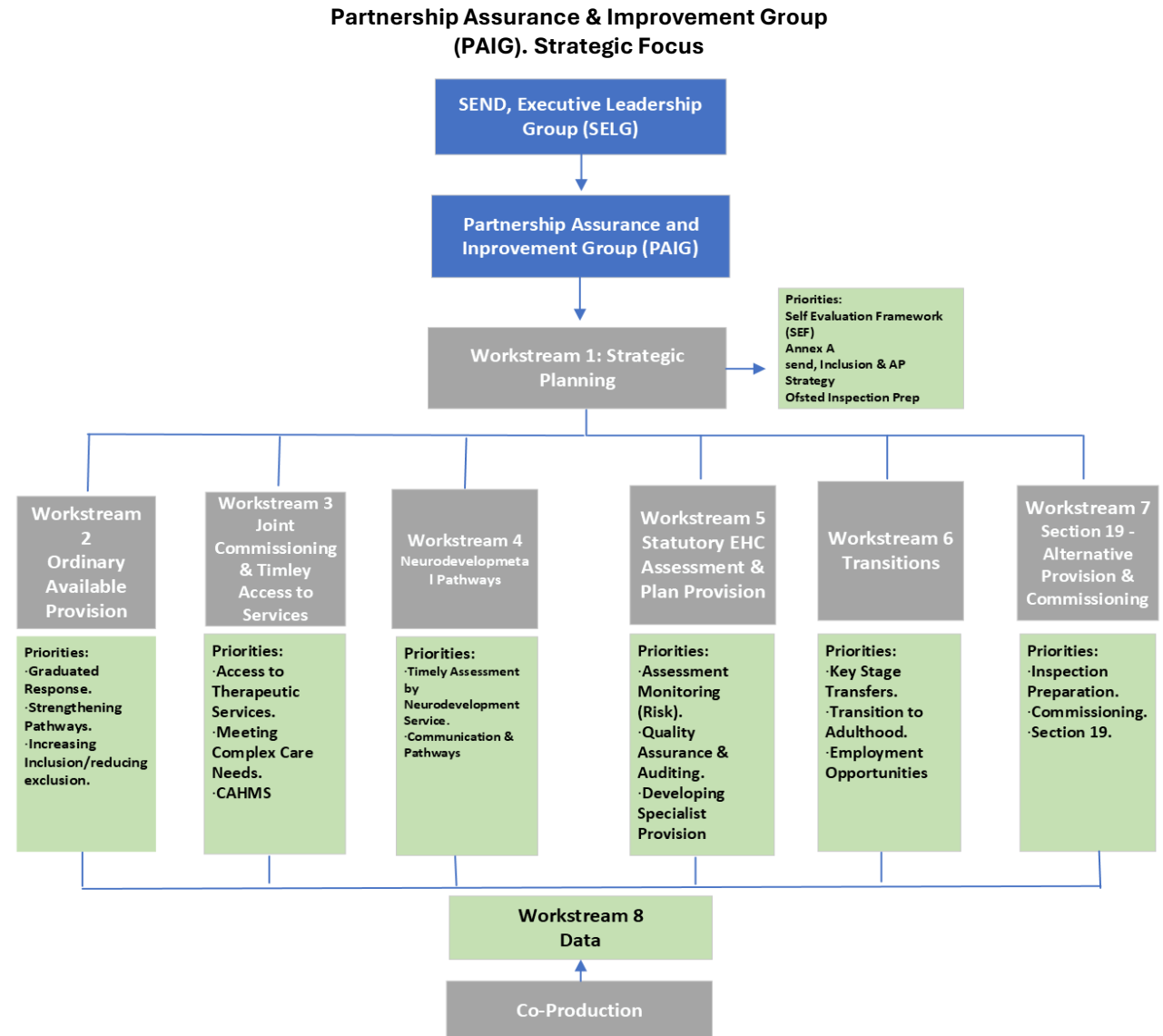
These groups meet regularly to review priorities, track progress, and drive improvements across education, health, and care services.



Nottingham City Local Area Partnership

SEND, Inclusion & AP Governance Structure

- The Nottingham City SEND PAIG will have direct oversight of this local area SEND Strategy and the annual delivery plan.
- PAIG are accountable to SEND Executive Leadership Group (SELG), where all key partners and stakeholders across the Local Area Partnership are represented.
- SEND Executive Leadership Group reports to Nottingham City Council's Scrutiny Committee and the ICB Quality and Peoples Committee.





NEXT STEPS

Following on from the publication of the SEND, Inclusion, and AP Strategy, the local authority will set out a clear delivery plan—detailing how progress will be measured—by March 2026.

National Key Drivers that underpin the SEND, Inclusion & AP Strategy

The Local Area Partnership are committed to ongoing alignment with national policy. It plans to review and update this strategy in response to the forthcoming Government SEND Education White Paper, expected in early 2026, ensuring local priorities remain consistent with national reforms and statutory guidance. It also recognises potential structural changes by acknowledging that this strategy spans a period where Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) may occur, and therefore a further review and adjustment of priorities may be required before 2028 to reflect any new governance arrangements.

The strategy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- [The Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The Children and Families Act 2014](#)
- [The Care Act 2014.](#)
- [The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice \(0-25\)](#)
- [Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England](#)
- [SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan,](#)
- [Health and Care Act, 2022](#)

These national frameworks hold our local SEND Inclusion and AP system to account.



Useful Links and Resources

The SEND Strategy supports the delivery of a range of current strategies produced by the council and other partners. These include:

- [SEND Local Offer](#)
- [CDC weblink](#)
- [Self Evaluation Framework](#) (includes helpful glossary of terms)
- [Joint SEND Commissioning Strategy 2024-2027](#)
- [SEND Sufficiency Strategy 2023-2028](#)
- [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\)](#)
- [Parent and Carer Website](#)
- [SENDIASS \(Futures\)](#)

