

Hertfordshire County Council

Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy

2015-2018

Shaping the Future of SEND in Hertfordshire



Our Vision: All children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 have access to high quality local provision that meets their needs. Schools, early years settings, colleges, services, families and the Local Authority work together to support children and young people to make good progress and achieve outcomes that prepare them for adulthood.

Introduction

The success of this strategy relies on collective commitment and responsibility between the Local Authority (LA), schools, colleges, early years settings, services and other partners including health. Parents and the voluntary sector have a shared commitment to the strategy and are partners in ensuring that it meets the needs of children and young people.

An SEND Executive Board has been established to drive the strategy forward and monitor progress (see Appendix 1). The full governance and engagement structure is included at Appendix 2.

Context

There have been national policy changes affecting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities since the last refresh of our strategy.

The Children and Families Act, 2014 has established a clear programme of SEND reforms:

- a person-centred, joined-up approach to identifying and meeting the needs of children, young people and their families;
- increased engagement and participation of young people and families so that they have greater choice and control, are listened to and their concerns are resolved swiftly;
- a published local offer of support, services and provision, how to access it and how to raise concerns or seek redress;
- the use of effective practice, data and wider intelligence and independent assessment to drive improvement;
- clearly-defined and understood roles and responsibilities; and
- increased integration of services and joint commissioning across the LA and Health.

Changes in school funding arrangements have been introduced, including significant changes in funding for special educational needs and alternative provision.

National education policy means schools are more autonomous and the relationships, accountabilities and expectations between LA, schools, parents and other stakeholders continue to be redefined.

The financial context is increasingly challenging and will continue to be so. Demands and pressures on services are increasing while resources become more constrained. There are likely to be further changes during the life of this strategy that we will need to take account of.

In this context it is more important than ever that all partners work together to share information, expertise and resources to meet needs and ensure positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

National developments help steer our work but we will continue to identify the specific issues we need to address in Hertfordshire. Our SEND strategy is linked to other key plans (Appendix 3).

Our Jointly Agreed Commitments

- every child and young person will have their needs identified and assessed
- every child and young person is entitled to high quality provision appropriate for her or his individual needs
- schools, early years settings, colleges, services, agencies and the LA have a shared accountability for ensuring children and young people achieve good outcomes
- there will be a continuum of provision matched to need, with as many children and young people as possible having their needs met in universal settings
- roles and accountabilities will be clear and focused on the needs of the child and young person
- information, funding and decision making will be transparent and without unnecessary bureaucracy
- resources will be used effectively and equitably
- there will be a focus on developing preventative and early intervention approaches
- children, young people and their parents participate fully in decisions about provision and services
- schools, early years settings and colleges will work collectively to share effective practice and make best use of resources
- the LA will facilitate capacity building so that local schools, early years settings and colleges are able to meet the needs of children and young people
- co-ordinated and integrated approaches will be developed and maintained with other agencies and voluntary organisations

What we want to achieve

We have agreed a set of outcomes with stakeholders that will help us determine the success of the SEND strategy:

1. All schools, early years settings, colleges and services provide quality provision that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND locally
2. Short and long term outcomes for children and young people with SEND are improved and there is evidence of their achievements and progress socially, emotionally and academically
3. Communication between parents, children and young people, and schools, early years settings and colleges is good, engendering trust, confidence, respect and constructive partnership working
4. Available resources for SEN are managed through a transparent approach that is fair, meets local needs and achieves best value for money
5. The local authority works proactively and collaboratively with parents, young people, schools, early years settings, colleges and other partners using co-production to improve service planning, design, delivery and review.

Going Forward

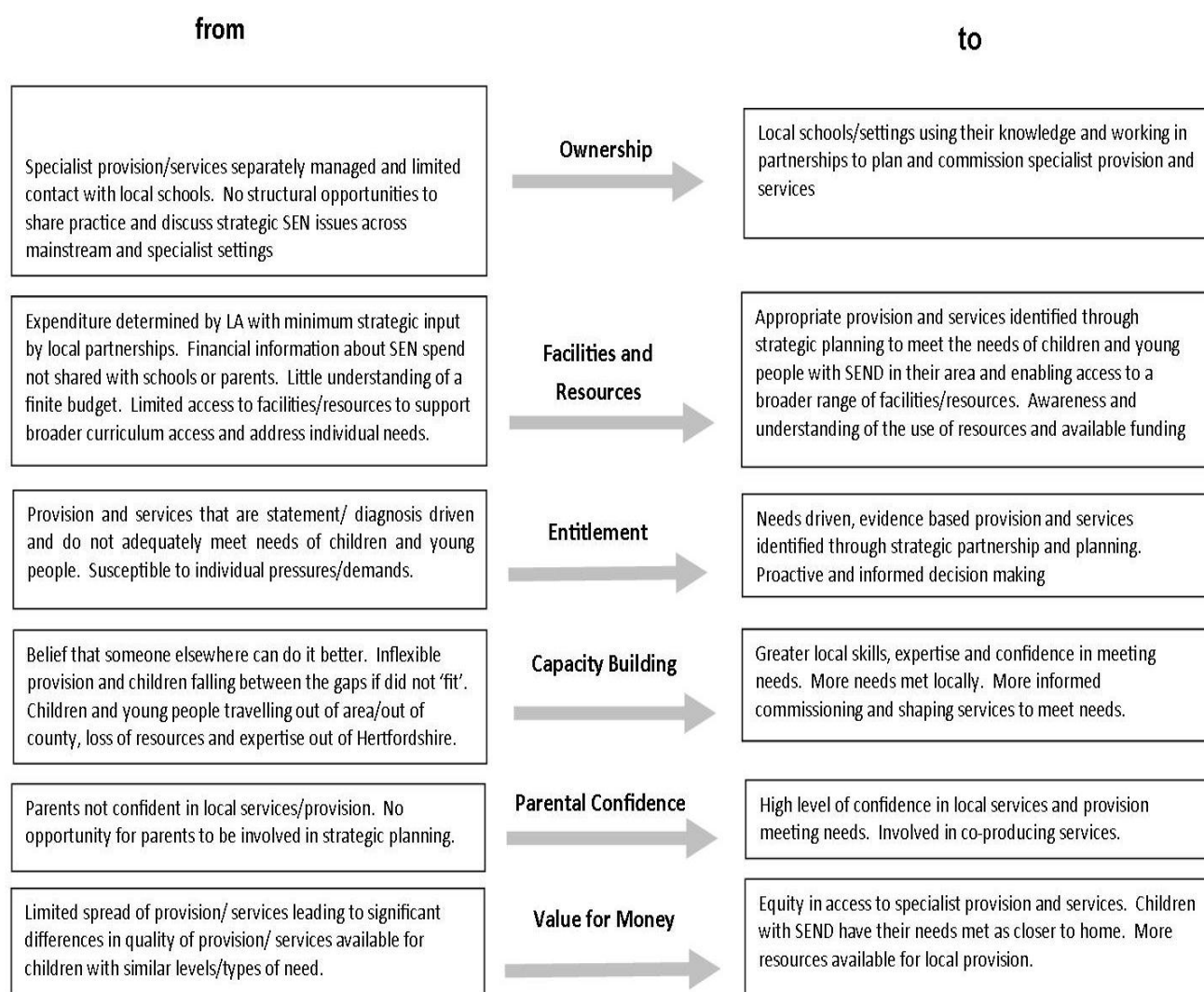
This strategy builds on the direction of travel established in our earlier strategies.

A key feature of our strategic approach is the Delivering Special Provision Locally (DSLPL) mechanism. Local stakeholders work together in nine area groups, each led by a mainstream headteacher, to reshape and commission SEND provision in their area.

Through the hard work of schools, early years settings, colleges, services, parents and officers we have moved a considerable way from the historic picture on the left towards the right hand side of the continuum below (see Appendix 4 for examples).

The SEND Executive Board has confirmed the commitment to continue in this direction over the next 3 years.

Direction of travel



Key Themes

There are three cross cutting themes that we now need to build on and strengthen:

Theme 1 – Ensuring quality and effectiveness

Aim: To develop clear expectations and an evaluation framework for the quality of SEND provision in all schools and settings

This is important because there is a great deal of good practice in Hertfordshire but it is not consistent. The approach, quality of provision and welcome that children, young people with SEND and their parents experience is variable. We expect all schools, and settings, to provide a core quality offer as an entitlement for any child with SEND. We will develop arrangements for evaluating this, including seeking feedback from the experience of children, young people and their parents. We will also make sure that all centrally and locally commissioned services are delivering good quality outcomes, making impact and adding value.

Theme 2 – Making best use of resources and building capacity

Aim: To maximise the value of our resources

This is important because we need to have a sustainable SEND financial strategy that supports early intervention and inclusion in schools, early years settings and colleges.

The budget for high level SEND, which includes behaviour and alternative provision, is considerable (£95.4m in 2015-16). In the current economic climate we must make informed decisions about priorities for expenditure. We will manage and monitor the equitable use of this funding to make sure we get the best outcomes for children and young people with higher level needs and the most value for money. Where appropriate we will continue to pilot and review devolution of resources to schools and partnerships in line with DSPL.

Our resources also include all those working with children and young people with SEND, parent/carers and young people. We need to ensure there are structures to build their capacity, skills and confidence including access to good quality information, advice, support and training.

Theme 3 – Engaging stakeholders

Aim: To further develop communication, consultation and engagement of stakeholders

The engagement of stakeholders and partnership working is a strong feature of our approach. DSPL will continue to provide the mechanism for schools, settings, parents and others to work together on strategic SEND issues, putting our agreed co-production principles into practice. Area DSPL groups play a key role in the development and evaluation of local services. We want to ensure broader engagement of stakeholders through the DSPL mechanisms. In particular we will seek the involvement of some currently under-represented groups including secondary headteachers and SENCOs, colleges, parents, young people, other agencies and work based providers.

Workstreams

The following workstreams have been identified as priorities for the next 2-3 years. The details (named leads, intended outcomes, action plans, timescales and stakeholder involvement) will be published in a separate document.

Progress will be monitored by the SEND Executive Board. Explicit links need to be made across the workstreams to ensure services are developed in a co-ordinated way as some areas of work/provision will cross more than one workstream. The Board will need to ensure overall coherence in service developments across the workstreams.

The workstreams will cover the 0-25 age range as appropriate and Early Years and Preparing for Adulthood developments will be incorporated where relevant. In addition there is a separate Preparing for Adulthood workstream that relates to this strategy but is currently subject to separate governance arrangements.

All workstreams will incorporate the three cross cutting themes (i) Quality and effectiveness, (ii) Best use of resources and (iii) Engaging stakeholders.

Quality SEND Offer

- Develop and publish a core quality offer expected from all schools, early years settings and colleges
- Develop, pilot and implement an evaluation framework at individual setting, DSPL Area and County level

Exceptional Needs Funding

- Review Hertfordshire's funding approach for meeting the most complex and exceptional needs in mainstream schools
- Determine whether it is still fit for purpose and make any necessary recommendations for improvements or alternative approaches

Behaviour and Alternative Provision

- Review and publish a refreshed strategy for Behaviour and Alternative Provision
- Continue to review existing provision for behaviour and alternative provision across all phases and implement changes to ensure local services meet the needs of children and young people
- Continue to roll out a consistent positive behaviour management approach to mainstream and special schools, early years settings, colleges and families through Hertfordshire Steps
- Ensure a flexible and co-ordinated continuum of provision is in place in each area to support children and young people with the most significant needs

Autism

- Respond to the review of educational provision for children and young people with autism
- Develop an autism strategy and a clear local offer of services
- Deliver high quality provision and services in each area to meet the needs of children and young people with autism

Specific Learning Difficulties

- Respond to the review of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) provision and make any necessary recommendations for change
- Ensure children and young people with SpLD have their needs met effectively

Speech, Language and Communication

- Review the current use of resources for children with speech, language and communication needs (including provision in mainstream and special schools, early years settings, colleges, specialist bases, services and Speech and Language Therapy) and make any necessary recommendations for change
- Develop a flexible and co-ordinated continuum of services in each area that meets the needs of children and young people and makes best use of resources

Sensory and Physical Needs

- Review the services and provision for meeting sensory and physical needs and make any necessary recommendations for change
- Ensure resources are targeted appropriately and are value for money

Special Schools

- Complete the evaluation of outreach from special schools and make any necessary recommendations for changes in future commissioning and delivery of services
- Identify further ways in which special schools can enhance mainstream capacity
- Review areas of pressure and relative under-use in the special school sector to ensure existing and emerging needs can be met
- Further develop strategic work across mainstream and special schools to ensure available resources are used effectively, efficiently and creatively

Educational Psychology Service

- To review the provision of ISL EP services and make any necessary recommendations for change
- To ensure the service is targeted to maximise the resources available to meet its objectives

DSPL Area Groups

- Review the DSPL framework to ensure that there is greater local involvement in implementing the SEND Strategy

Monitoring

The progress against the five agreed outcomes (page 3) will be monitored against a set of high level proxy indicators. An annual report outlining progress will be produced.

- a. Percentage of population (0-25) with statement of SEN/ EHC Plans
- b. Percentage of pupils with statement of SEN/ EHC plan educated at home (EHE)
- c. Percentage of appeals to SENDIST (SEND tribunals)
- d. Percentage of pupils that attend a state funded school in the same DSPL area as they live in
- e. Percentage of providers rated outstanding or good in Leadership and Management by Ofsted
- f. Percentage gap making a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage
- g. Percentage gap achieving level 4+ in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2
- h. Percentage gap achieving 5+ A*-C (incl. Eng & Maths) at Key Stage 4 (GCSE)
- i. Overall absence
- j. Persistent absence
- k. Fixed period exclusions
- l. Permanent exclusions
- m. Percentage of pupils post Key Stage 4 and 5 in sustained education
- n. Percentage 16-18 not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- o. Confidence of stakeholders

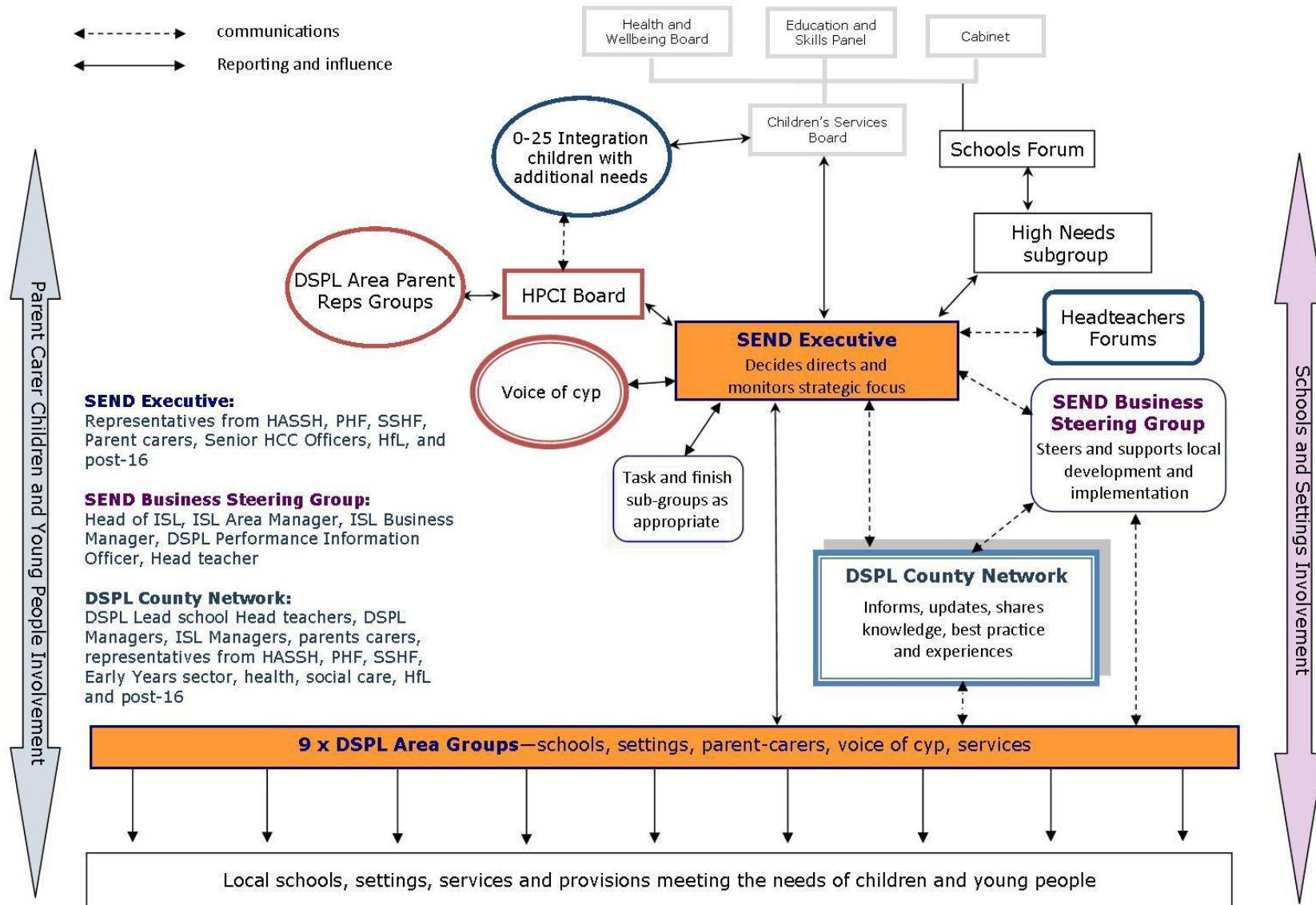
Outcome	Evidenced by:	
	Main Proxy Indicators	Other Evidence
All schools, early years settings, colleges and services provide quality provision that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND locally	a,b,c,d,e	Local offer evaluation framework
Short and long term outcomes for children and young people with SEND are improved and there is evidence of their achievements and progress socially, emotionally and academically	f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m,n	Case studies
Communication between parents, children and young people, and schools, early years settings and colleges is good, engendering trust, confidence, respect and constructive partnership working	c, o	Feedback at individual and strategic level
Available resources for SEN are managed through a transparent approach that is fair, meets local needs and achieves best value for money	a, o	Evidence of equity of access to available resources
The local authority works proactively and collaboratively with parents, young people, schools, early years settings, colleges and other partners using co-production to improve service planning, design, delivery and review	o	Evidence of co-production in practice

Appendix 1: Membership of SEND Executive Board (May 2015)

- 1 x Chair (LA Officer)
- 1 x Secondary school Headteacher
- 2 x Primary school Headteachers
- 1 x Special school Headteacher
- 1 x FE College Principal
- 3 x Parent-Carers
- 3 x LA Officers
- 1 x Herts for Learning representative

Other members may be co-opted for specific periods of time or for particular items, such as representatives from the Early Years sector, and the standing membership of the Executive Board will be kept under review.

Appendix 2: Strategic Governance and Framework



Appendix 3: Other Relevant Strategies and Plans

- Hertfordshire's Corporate Plan 2013-17
- Children's Services Strategic Plan 2015-18
- Hertfordshire's Strategy for School Improvement 2014-17
- Shaping the Future Programme, Children's Services, Hertfordshire 2014
- Joint SEND Commissioning Strategy 0-25 2015
- CAMHS Strategy 2015

Appendix 4: Direction of Travel - Key Achievements of our SEND Strategic Approach

Towards:	Achievements so far:
<p>Local schools using their knowledge and working in local partnerships to plan and commission specialist provision and services.</p>	<p>Schools, parents and services are working together in DSPL Groups to review, reshape and commission the local offer of services for SEND.</p> <p>Regular structured opportunities are in place for schools, parents and services to come together to share achievements, ideas and issues. An annual DSPL conference brings together the 100 plus active members of county and area groups.</p> <p>A number of areas have established local networks of SENCos and are holding conferences to engage a wider constituent of local stakeholders and gather views.</p> <p>Partnership work between schools and colleges with some bespoke provision.</p>
<p>Appropriate provision and services identified through the strategic planning to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND in their DSPL area and enabling access to a broader range of facilities/resources.</p> <p>Awareness and understanding of the use of resources and available funding.</p>	<p>Fewer children and young people are educated outside of Hertfordshire (from 250 in 2009 to 100 in 2015).</p> <p>Significant savings from the reduction in independent/non-maintained placements have been reinvested into SEN locally (over £5m).</p> <p>Special schools are meeting more complex needs, have been re-designated and the same types of school now have the same core offer so more pupils attend their nearest school.</p> <p>A programme of accreditation for autism (NAS) and speech, language and communication training (ELKLAN) has been rolled out to increase local expertise across settings.</p> <p>The distribution of residential resources linked to special schools has been reviewed in the light of national funding changes and resources have been redistributed more equitably. Some funding of the reallocated budget has enabled a number of engagement support workers have been appointed in our 5 special schools for severe behavioural and emotional difficulties to work with pupils and their families to help sustain engagement in learning, attendance and resilience. The impact of this work and use of resource will be evaluated over the next year.</p>

Towards:	Achievements so far:
<p>Needs driven, evidence based provision and services identified through strategic partnership and planning. Proactive and informed decision making</p>	<p>Good quality data profiles are provided to support strategic planning and are used by Area DSPL groups and at County level to monitoring changes year on year.</p> <p>Increased headteacher involvement in commissioning of behaviour services with significant levels of funding devolved to two areas to commission high needs behaviour services for primary schools. Other areas are now reviewing their local services along the same lines.</p> <p>There is a better shared understanding of local needs, available resources and service provision through the structured clusters, collectives and partnerships that are now in place.</p> <p>There is a greater understanding of SEN budgets and expenditure with a notional budget distributed on a 'need to spend' model indicator across areas.</p> <p>3 DSPL Area groups have piloted materials and ideas as part of the Autism Review. Their feedback has contributed to the review.</p>
<p>Greater local skills, expertise and confidence in meeting needs.</p> <p>More needs met locally. More informed commissioning and shaping services to meet needs.</p>	<p>More children and young people with SEND are being educated in their local area and closer to home year on year .</p> <p>In line with the national expectation that schools will become the commissioners of alternative provision (AP) three secondary partnerships now have the available devolved high needs funding to commission AP for their Area. Secondary headteachers and ESC heads in these areas have taken part in an independent review of these pilots. This has just been completed and recommendations for next steps will be considered.</p> <p>More of the available resources have been devolved to schools through our SEN funding system to support early intervention, strategic planning, inclusion and reduced bureaucracy.</p> <p>Special schools continue to make a strong contribution in supporting mainstream schools and outreach resources have been more equitably distributed. A new service level agreement is in place with the involvement of the DSPL groups. This is being evaluated to determine any necessary changes.</p> <p>Hertfordshire Steps, a positive behaviour management approach, has been developed and a county lead is working closely with schools, settings and DSPL groups to roll this out to consistent, high quality.</p>

Towards:	Achievements so far:
<p>Parents with a high level of confidence in local services and provision meeting needs. Involved in co-producing services.</p>	<p>Parents are represented on all DSPL area and county groups.</p> <p>Parents, Schools and officers have jointly developed a model of co-production following an independent review into Parental Engagement in DSPL. The impact of this will be evaluated over the next year.</p> <p>An integrated framework (keeping Children in Local Provision) has been developed to help services co-ordinate their interventions and work with families, so that more children and young people with complex multi-agency needs remain supported in local schools.</p>
<p>Equity in access to specialist provision and services. Children with SEND having their needs met closer to home. More resources available for local provision.</p>	<p>Some real budgets have been devolved to groups (development budget, leadership and management budget, nurture budgets, exceptional needs funding and in some areas high needs behaviour/alternative provision budgets).</p> <p>A range of Early Years developments have taken place. Early Years Special Development Centres are established for children 0-3 and the support is well received by their families; Early Years Action Groups are following Early Support principles, PVI settings are working in clusters to develop SEND practice and are also now part of exceptional needs groups.</p> <p>A range of successful transition and post 16 developments and initiatives have taken place across schools and colleges.</p> <p>Funding rates for young people with SEND across the 4 colleges have been agreed. This has been recognised by other LAs.</p>