

## Shropshire Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy for Children and Young People aged 0 – 25

### Why do we need this strategy?

The Children and Families Act 2014 provided children and young people with a special educational need, as well as their parents and carers, with far greater control and choice over how their needs are met. In particular the Act:

- replaced the statement of special educational needs with an education, health and care plan, which will now cover children and young people from birth to age 25.
- provided parents and young people with control of a personal budget to buy additional support detailed in the plan.
- required local authorities to produce a 'local offer' of education, health and social care services it expects to be available in the area for children and young people up to 25 years.

These reforms have required significant changes to how we support children and young people in Shropshire. They require us to gather and analyse robust data, and to work closely with children and young people and those who support them, so that **we understand where our focus and actions should be**. They require us to work together so that **we deliver the right services at the right time**, and to ensure that **our services support children and young people with SEND to live their 'dream life'**.

### Our vision

*We want Shropshire children and young people with SEND to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people. We will achieve this by understanding what children and young people need, working in partnership and with children and young people to meet that need, and measuring our success by whether we achieve a "dream life" for children and young people with SEND*

### How have we produced this new strategy?

Our previous strategy, created in 2016, made a clear commitment to the person centred principles within The Children and Families Act 2014, namely that:

- the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people must be taken into account

- their parents/carers views must be taken into account
- children, young people and their parents/carers must be supported to participate as fully as possible in decision making, and be provided with the necessary information and support to make decisions
- children and young people must be supported to effectively prepare for adulthood

However, a fundamental oversight in our previous strategy was our failure to co-produce it with children and young people, or their parents and carers. This meant that our strategic objectives did not necessarily reflect the aspirations of children and young people. Therefore, our starting point when drafting this strategy was to go to children and young people with SEND directly and ask what a 'dream life' meant to them. A 'dream life', they told us was:

- having a job or vocation
- having friends and being able to play a full part in their community
- being independent and living in their own home
- having a voice on how they live their lives
- having access to good and consistent support, especially in times of transition

We believe that these aspirations should be expected and not be something that our children and young people with SEND are limited to dreaming about achieving. Our success in delivering these outcomes for children and young people will be central as to how we measure the impact of our strategy.

### **How will we organise ourselves to achieve our vision?**

To achieve our vision for children and young people to be healthy, happy, safe and able to achieve their full potential, we need to ensure that:

- we identify children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities as early as possible
- we are effective in accurately assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities
- we involve children and young people and their parents and carers in the process of assessing their needs
- we are clear with children and young people, and their parents or carers, about the identification and assessment processes and the criteria used to make decisions
- we work together to plan and coordinate our work to assess need in Shropshire and to provide necessary and effective support
- we provide a local offer of education, health and social care services to support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities, as well as their families
- we engage children and young people, and their parents and carers in informing decisions about the strategic commissioning of services

- we continually assess our success in delivering the key elements of a “dream life” for children and young people with SEND, and what we need to do further to improve, through continual feedback from children and young people, and their parents and carers.

### **How will we work together to achieve our vision?**

At the centre of our work is our SEND 0-25 strategic board. It works across organisations to understand, develop and coordinate services to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families with a focus on the continuous improvement of outcomes.

The board members include:

- Shropshire Council (including Education Services, Safeguarding Children, Early Help, Public Health, schools and post 16 providers, Adult Social Care)
- Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Shropshire Community Healthcare Trust
- The voluntary and community sector
- Shropshire housing providers
- Shropshire schools
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Shropshire Information Advice and Support Service
- Parent and Carer Council
- The Children’s Trust

We do not include children and young people with SEND on the board. We instead seek their input in developing strategy and practice in ways that are more appropriate for them.

In addition to the board, we have four time-limited subgroups that will focus on our identified areas for development:

- Joint commissioning
- Measuring the impact of our work
- Transition and preparing for adulthood
- Inclusion and reducing school exclusions

### **How will we measure our success?**

We will measure our success based on what children and young people with SEND have told us are the crucial elements of a “dream life” for them. To this we have added a further crucial element of a fulfilling life: good health.

From these we have developed the following measurements of success:

- more young people with SEND in paid employment or voluntary roles
- young people with SEND are more active in their community and spend more leisure time in friendship groups
- an increase in the number of young people with SEND who express satisfaction with their accommodation arrangements
- children and young people with SEND are able to actively participate in decision making both on an individual and strategic level
- children and young people with SEND and their families receive good quality support, especially at transition points, including early intervention
- a reduction in health inequalities experienced by children and young people with SEND

We will need to work differently to measure our success in this way. Rather than relying on **process** or outcome data, we will need to speak regularly with children and young people with SEND, to see whether we are delivering what they have told us is their “dream life”.

We will set up a new sub group of the partnership board, to create a new way to measure the impact of our work