

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families' response on the investigation into the effectiveness of children SEND provision in Camden.	
REPORT OF Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE 16 October 2025
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>This report and appendix provide an update on the activity taken to improve outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND following the publication of the final report of the SEND Provision Scrutiny Panel. There has been significant activity to make improvements in the areas highlighted in the report, and further work is planned. The evidence and recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel were gratefully received and have informed forward plans.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Vikram Hansrani, Director of Education Commissioning and Inclusion 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG vikram.hansrani@camden.gov.uk</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Committee is asked to note the report.</p>	



Signed:

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families

Date: 3 October 2025

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. In October 2024, a report which investigated the effectiveness of provision for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND was presented to the Children, Schools and Families (CSF) Scrutiny Committee. This investigation has supported officers in their self evaluation of the local system and planning of work to best support children and young people with SEND locally.
- 1.2. This report provides our response to the recommendations made by the panel investigation and how we plan to meet the needs raised through the panel's investigation. The panel's assessment has strengthened our own work on self evaluation of the local SEND system and the recommendations are complimentary to our local implementation plans.

2. Key questions for the committee

- Within the constraints of the national system we are working within, are members satisfied with our planned work to meet needs and aspirations?
- Is there more that Camden can do to influence improvements to national policy?

3. Background and context

- 3.1. In October 2024, the CSF Scrutiny Committee was presented with the final report of the SEND Provision Scrutiny Panel, which investigated the effectiveness of provision for meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND in Camden. The Scrutiny Panel was made up of elected members and co-opted members from the Committee. The Committee requested that the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families prepare a response to the Scrutiny Panel's recommendations from the investigation and to report back to the Committee. The first report was made to Committee in February 2025, and this report provides a further update on progress.
- 3.2. The findings of this investigation revealed that there were areas where provision was not meeting families' needs and expectations. They found that many of the issues faced locally are national and driven by insufficient resource and increases in demand and need. The report recognised that Camden has worked innovatively its budget but that there was still work to be done to improve local provision. The report made recommendations to improve practice on a local level as well as recommendations for changes that are needed nationally.

4. National context:

- 4.1. Since the publication of the Scrutiny Panel report, there have been significant local and national changes in context. Firstly, the Government are planning on

publishing an education white paper in autumn 2025 which will set out their approach on how best to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. While any legislative changes will take considerable time to come into force and so are unlikely to be operationalised for several years, non-legislative changes will come in more quickly. The Department for Education (DfE) have already asked local authorities to be ready to develop plans for strengthening mainstream inclusion in line with the white paper in autumn 2025.

5. Update on local plans – strategy implementation:

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Panel's investigation was gratefully received. Officers have been drawing on the evidence in the report to shape our local area partnership SEND strategy implementation plan and our priorities, which are focused on: empowering families through collaborative support; achieving excellence in SEND; developing excellent provision and services; and strengthening mainstream inclusion. Officers recognise the need to improve families' experiences and are implementing a transformation programme to improve local services. The majority of the recommendations are agreed upon and included in our work plans.
- 5.2. Camden are part of the Change Programme, testing potential reforms to the SEND system, which means that we are likely to be in a strong position to respond to reforms
- 5.3. In July 2025, officers launched the School Sufficiency Programme, working to ensure that there are sufficient and high quality school places for every Camden child. This work centres on three pillars: admissions, school finances and how schools are meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.
- 5.4. Ensuring that we have appropriate specialist provision for pupils with SEND is an area of focus within the school sufficiency programme. Through the Autumn term, officers will be working in partnership with schools to develop a SEND Commissioning Plan setting out how we intend to further develop strengthening SEND provision across the borough which will be consulted on later in the academic year.
- 5.5. This sits alongside Camden's wider SEND strategy implementation work taking place through this academic year. In the autumn term, officers will launch a Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit which will be a practical resource for schools to provide a consistent approach to meeting SEND needs. The Toolkit has been developed in consultation with a Working Group including Special Educational Needs Coordinator's (SENDCo), Headteachers, Parents, Outreach Services, Health Service, Sensory Team, Camden Learning and Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).
- 5.6. As part of our work to strengthen mainstream inclusive practice, we are reviewing the outreach and advisory support services available to schools. The

redesigned outreach offer will be operational from September 2026, building on learning from the prototyping that is taking place this year. As part of the Change Programme, officers will be running pilots of an Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce (APST) and Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO).

- 5.7. The LISO is a consolidated offer of support for schools around supporting children with SEND. It will bring together existing services and provide both school level and pupil level support. The focus of the service will be to support schools to increase their capacity and capability to meet needs and support children to thrive in education, an area of focus in both the SEND strategy and school sufficiency programme of work. This offer will develop through the 2025/26, in response to local needs and preferences. There will also be additional outreach capacity to support children moving from primary to secondary school. This will be provided by specialist teachers and educators.
- 5.8. The APST will be run from Heath School providing multiagency outreach support to pupils in mainstream schools who are at risk of exclusion. The team will include multiagency support from a range of professionals.
- 5.9. While significant progress has been made, there is still work to be done to ensure that every child with SEND is supported to thrive. Officers are ambitious in the scale of change to be achieved, and so there is still much to be done to achieve this ambition. There is now a clear plan ahead to improve families' experiences and outcomes, and the summary of this plan is shown below.

Table 1: SEND Strategy implementation 2025/26

Implementation Plan for 2025/26

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term	Sept 2026	Sept 2027
Empowering Families	Local Offer roadshows	Strengthened engagement with children and young people			
	Routinely gather and respond to feedback from families				
	Embed service standards and quality assurance processes				
Achieving excellence in SEND	Strengthening performance monitoring of SEND partnership, including quantitative and qualitative measures on quality of interventions				
	Develop SEND Commissioning Plan for specialist provision in borough	Operationalise SEND Commissioning Plan		Some additional SEND provision	Full changes to commissioned SEND Provision
Excellent provision and services	Set up Local Inclusion Support Offer and Alternative Provision Specialist Taskforce			Launch new outreach and advisory service model	
	Review outreach and advisory services offer, drawing learning from LISO				
Strengthening mainstream inclusion	Finalise Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit	Embedding toolkit with schools			
	Strengthened support from Camden Learning				

6. Finance Comments of the Director of Finance

The Director of Finance has been consulted on the contents of this report and has no comment to make at this time.

7. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

The Council is required to comply with the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014, associated regulations and the statutory SEND Code of Practice. If there is a duty set out in the legislation, such as in Section 42 of the 2014 Act which states the Council must provide the special education provision set out in an EHC plan, the Council has to meet its legal obligations.

8. Environmental Implications

This proposal has no environmental implications.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Panel Recommendations and Cabinet Members' Responses.

REPORT ENDS