



CITY OF
YORK
COUNCIL

A city that works for all

**York Inclusion and Belonging
Special Educational Needs and
Alternative Provision Strategy**

2025-2030

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Welcome to York's Inclusion and Belonging SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030

Welcome to York's Inclusion and Belonging SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2025-2030

'York will be a city that works for all. We are committed to all children in York living, learning and growing in a city, which values every unique contribution, and ensures they achieve well, belong and thrive within inclusive settings and schools, and are supported by a strong professional local partnership, with a deep connection to place.'

Our ambition is clear: for every child and young person in York to grow up feeling they are safe, that they are known and that they matter.

Families have told us that this strategy is about helping children and young people feel they belong. We also know that the term 'Special Educational Needs' does not always reflect the full picture of need. Some children and young people may not be identified as needing support, as they can sometimes mask their difficulties. This ability to hide their needs can make it more challenging for adults to recognise when help is needed. In some cases, children may not attend school because their underlying needs have not been recognised or addressed.

This strategy is bold because it must be. It strengthens inclusive practice in all settings, works to reduce poverty, supports the development of flexible, joined-up provision, and sets a clear direction for early help and a strengths-based approach to family resilience. It focuses on prevention and reducing inequalities, delivering more services in a community and neighbourhood-based settings. It is about radically improving children and young people's health and wellbeing.

It values the voice of our children and families, our voluntary sector and the expertise and leadership of our York schools, settings, and place-based health services.

These strong local partnerships are the foundation for driving innovation and long-term change. Together, we will create a city where inclusion is not an aspiration, but a lived reality.

We thank everyone who helped shape this strategy, it is underpinned by the York Children and Young People plan 2024-2027 and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032.

The Autism and ADHD strategy which is an all-age strategy is being published alongside this strategy. These two documents have been developed together, with shared opportunities for engagement and consultation, and aim to complement one another.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Partnership Board will oversee the implementation. When we get this right, children, young people, and their families feel heard and have greater trust that their needs will be met.



Cllr Webb



Martin Kelly



Dave Hewitt, Chair of
Schools Forum

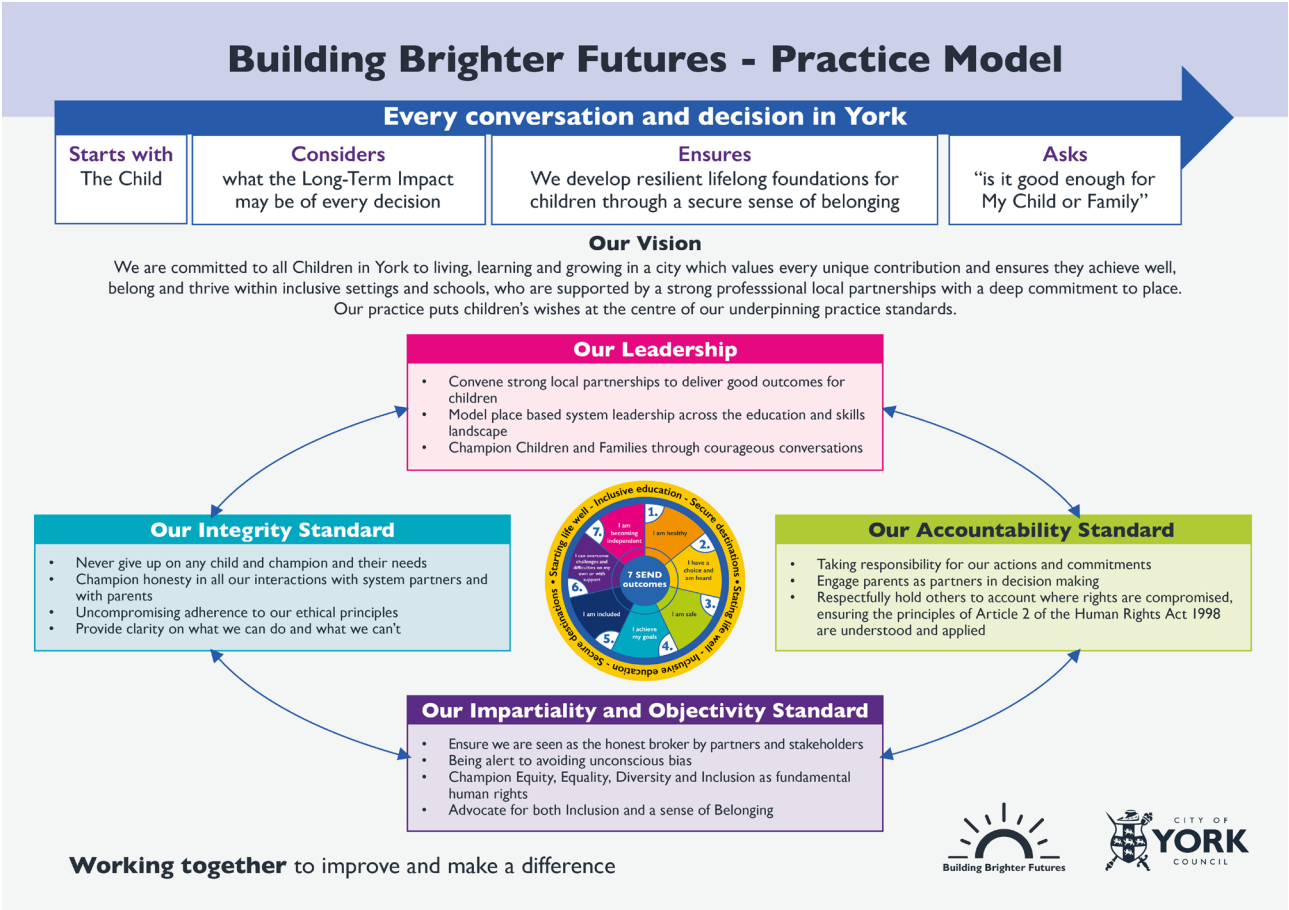


Paula South,
Director of Nursing



Jennie Hitchens

Our Inclusion and Belonging Strategy is underpinned by our York practice model and our work together across our education, health and care partnership. This starts with our child or young person and is underpinned by our leadership, integrity, accountability, impartiality and objectivity standards





Context

Context

Children and young people in York

44,705



Black and ethnic minority

11.3%



(Jan 2025 census)

Total population of York

21.4%



Children in care

11.3%



(Jan 2025 census)

Percentage of girls

49%



Percentage of boys

51%



(Jan 2025 census)

How many children are EHE

16



% of all school pupils with SEND Support

11.4%



Number of EHC plans

1776



Number of new EHC needs assessments

317

total requests in the last year (24/25)



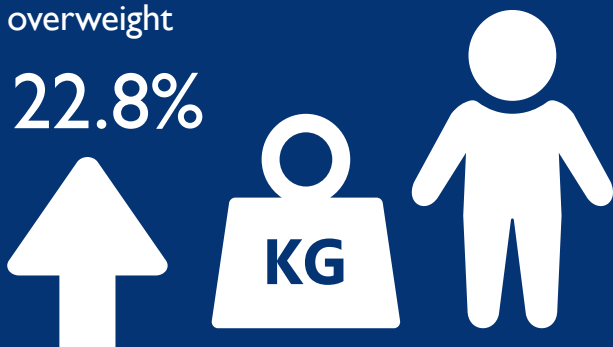
Number of EHC plans issues within 20 weeks (24/25)

85%



Children in Reception as being overweight

22.8%



Children in Year 6 as being recorded as being overweight

33.5%



The Secondary School Health and Wellbeing survey ran from November January 2024. Children in years 8, 10 and 12 across 10 secondary schools responded that:

51.9%

eat breakfast every day



65.6%

have tried alcohol



19.7%

were active for one hour or more in the last 7 days



11.6%

have been offered cannabis



20%

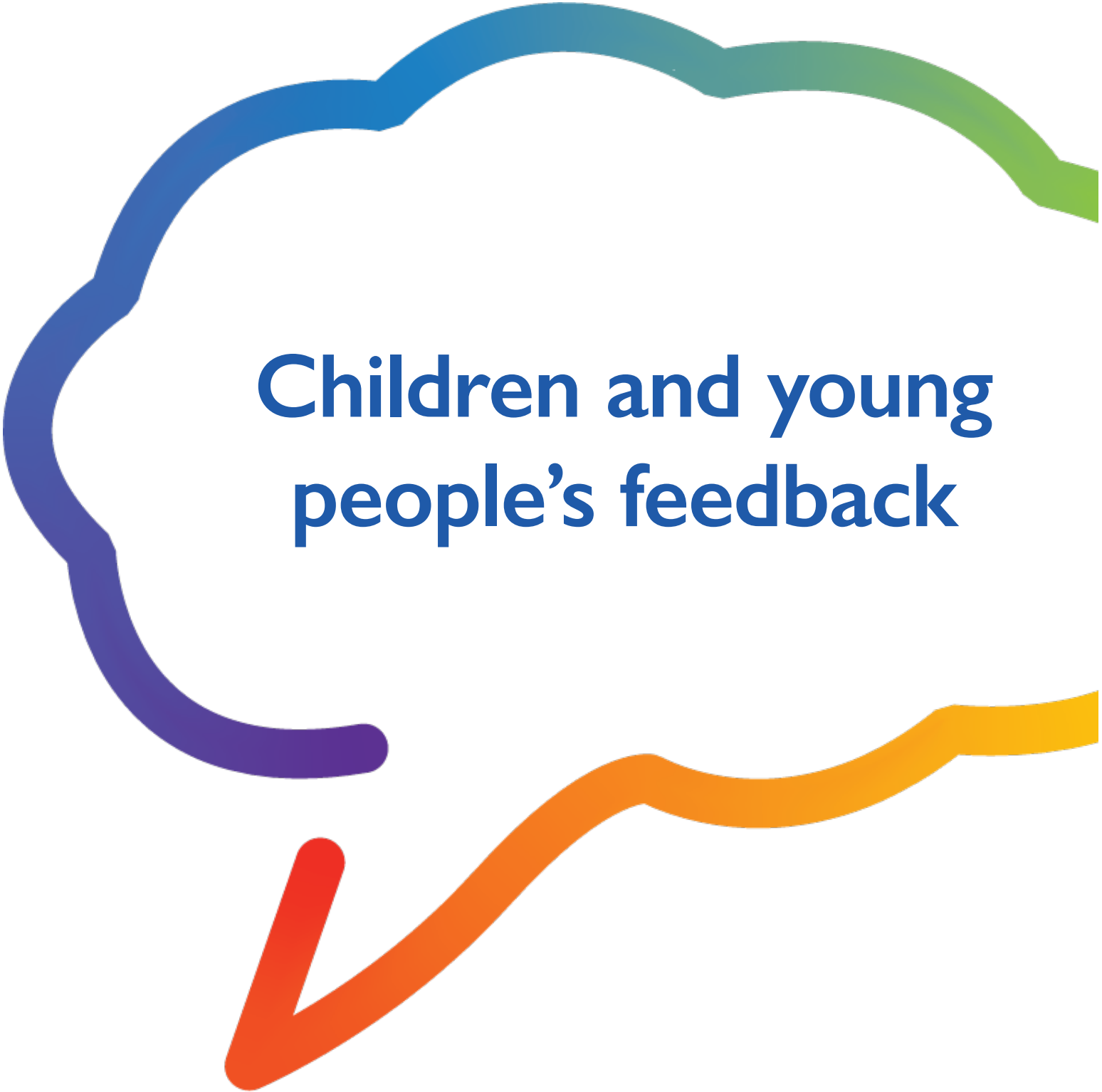
use or have tried an e-cigarette/vape



5.1%

have taken cannabis





Children and young people's feedback

Children and young people's feedback

Feedback from Children and Young People

'Nothing About Us Without Us' is a children and young people's mental health advisory group they told us that they want:

- More communication across the health, schools and education system is imperative to moving things forward, as we all want the same thing.
- Better understanding of mental health and how it impacts upon school life.
- More acceptance over the fact that SEND students aren't always going to have the best attendance rates and instead checking in on the families more and to check in with them
- Improved access to mental health support in comfortable, community-based settings, particularly for young people with SEND and neurodiversity.
- Shared record system, shared values, and shared ownership
- Provide support for children and young people whilst on waiting lists for diagnostics.
- Share more information about activities, groups, and social opportunities.
- Greater integration of Speech, Language and Communication (SLCN) and mental health is needed.

What our families have told us they need

- A clear explanation of the reasonable adjustments that are available to people with or without a diagnosis, including in schools and mental healthcare services
- Settings to listen more to families when we need help. Schools to have more training on meeting the needs of children
- Clarity on the mental health care that they can expect to receive before and after a neurodevelopment diagnosis
- More specialist Enhanced Resource Provisions (ERPs) within schools
- More activities to do in the holidays
- More quiet and inclusive spaces that meet the sensory needs of neurodivergent communities in the city.
- More part time apprenticeships/ internships

What our practitioners across the partnership have told us they would like to:

- Reduce the paperwork for reviews and assessments so we can focus on supporting children
- Develop the Send Hub and other agencies to work on a universal programme - where they talk about hot topics, behaviour, wellbeing, sensory, diet, toilet training, sleep.
- Work more closely with our Post -16 providers so there are more choices for pupils after Year 11
- See more opportunities for sharing good practice in York.
- Have more understanding of the challenges faced by schools and to have practical support available



In York we want our children and young people to say:

- I am healthy
- I have a choice, and I am heard
- I am safe
- I achieve my goals
- I am included
- I can overcome challenges and difficulties on my own or with support
- I am becoming independent



Our focus is on our families and our partnership priorities

- The voice and visibility of children and young people and their families is paramount.
- Children and young people's needs are identified and met as early as possible
- The right support is in the right place at the right time.
- Effective preparation for independence and adulthood strategies secure opportunities for young people and adults to reach their full potential.



Our enablers of delivering an effective system are:

- Co-production and relationships so that there is a strong focus on the lived experience of children and young people and their families. With effective co-production at the heart of our partnerships work
- An agreed shared vision and priorities informed by shared evidence, data and feedback. We are targeting our resources to aligned priorities
- A stable and knowledgeable leadership and robust governance where we will have broad and distributed leadership across our partnerships with buy in from leaders across the system
- Effective communication is embedded in our work across the SEND partnership
- There is a well organised and skilled workforce that is well trained, supported and appropriately supervised,
- Making good quality decisions. Lived experience is part of the learning that feeds into training and learning for the workforce

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Our SEND Partnership Priorities

Our SEND Partnership Priorities

I. The voice and visibility of children and young people and their families is paramount

” You have a chance to say what you want” - Young person

Our ambition: Every conversation starts with the child or young person. We ask what the long-term Impact may be of every decision. Ensures we develop resilient lifelong foundations for children through a secure sense of belonging and asks **“is it good enough for my child or family”**

We will:

- Ensure that all children, young people, and their families know what support is available, so that they can make informed decisions and review the navigation of the Local Offer to make it easier to use and ensure information about referral routes, timeframes, key contacts, and support is accessible.
- Ensure we reach as many families as possible and our Parent Carer Forum to ensure a wider reach of engagement.
- Set up SEND Central which will establish a welcoming space where children, young people, and families can access support, training, and social activities.
- Improve service design with input from children, young people, and families across all services, via the Young People’s Voice and Joint Partnership Action Plan.
- Ensure all individual plans for children and young people are ambitious and consistently informed by the views and opinions of children, young people and their families when making decisions.
- Support young carers to come forward to ask for help and to know what support is available to them.
- Ensure that all settings and practitioners are aware of the good practice guidance on supporting Asylum Seeking Children and Young people
- Ensure information contains signposting for children, young people and families who need financial support including information on discounts, foodbanks, and support with transport.

If we achieve this priority what will success look like?

- Families and children and young people will consistently feel listened to and will have developed trusting, long-term relationships with practitioners and their community
- Families and practitioners will have a clearer understanding of the services that can offer support for families with children with SEND and have a positive view of support
- That there is an increase in local services jointly commissioned, shaped by our local communities
- Simple and clearly explained referral routes and timeframes, with help to navigate referrals

Glossary	
Asylum seeker	A person seeking asylum has left their country and is unable to return due to fear of persecution.
Joint Partnership	The model of partnership and self-audit in York involves all stakeholders who provide support to children, young people and families assessing the quality of working practices.
SEND Central	A hub where everyone is welcome to pop in to access information, advice, be signposted to additional support, or find out more about the Local Offer, whether or not their child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

2. Children and young people's needs are identified and met as early as possible

'Inclusion is not an outcome. Inclusion is an ethos, a set of values and a philosophy that we should all promote from within'
- Primary school, York

Our ambition: We will build an inclusive system that supports individual needs to be met as much as possible within universal services and we will work across education, health, and care to provide timely, appropriate support that meets the needs of children and young people at the earliest opportunity.

The partnership will:

- Reduce variability in inclusion practices and improve consistency across all settings (ages 0-25)
- Focus on developing an Inclusion culture through courageous leadership, utilising best practice including adaptive teaching, inclusive classrooms, and trauma-informed approaches.
- Prioritise work to advance the development of Best Start local plans through the provision of accessible high-quality early years and childcare, ensuring sufficiency of places to meet the needs of families, alongside the further enhancement of Family Hubs
- Reduce suspensions and internal exclusions in schools and clearly define the continuum of alternative provision, encompassing in-school alternative provision, short-term placements, and longer-term provision. We will ensure this provision is commissioned more consistently and strategically, in alignment with identified needs and demand
- Conduct an audit of the current use of alternative provision across educational settings through school and local authority commissioning to inform and strengthen the delivery of high-quality support.
- Coordinate current training programmes to design and implement a comprehensive Education, Health, and Care Workforce Partnership Training Plan that enhances the collective capacity of the partnership to effectively support the needs of children and young people.
- Develop and implement the Families First work across social care fully integrating with health and education.

- Review the EHC needs assessment process and reviews to reduce bureaucracy and improve service delivery.
- Further develop the SEMH pathway to support earlier intervention and promote greater inclusion in mainstream.
- Build on the early intervention models of speech, language and communication support for children and young people for York. This will meet individual needs, include regular monitoring, reduce escalation and potential future needs for speech and language therapy.
- Agree clear shared approaches on key policies including behaviour, attendance, and uniform policies that are informed by trauma informed and inclusive practice and meet equality guidance and law
- Implement a coordinated multi-agency response where children and young people are not attending school.
- Widen our deep-dive approach to fully understand the underlying needs to better identify effective, tailored strategies to support re-engagement with education
- Enhance the work alongside colleagues in the police to provide a co-ordinated offer and raise awareness of child criminal exploitation and vulnerability.
- Further develop the provision of the Learning Support Hub outreach model to upskill staff in settings to meet the needs of children and young people.
- Revise the neurodevelopmental pathway and associated support for children pre-assessment, post diagnosis and without diagnosis with ASC, ADHD/other neurodiverse presentations.”
- Ensure clarity for children and young people and their families around what to expect when receiving out of area support through Health services right-to-choose, including subsequent consequences on prescribing.
- Ensure that there is health screening through health visitors’ mandated health checks, Care experienced children health checks, and increased take-up of learning disability health checks at ages 14-25.
- Develop and support training for professionals to understand and use the Dynamic Support Register across the partnership to reduce risk and the need for young adults to be in tier four hospital provision.

If we achieve this priority what will success look like?

- Improved children and young people's health, including fewer children at an unhealthy weight, improved oral health and reduced hospital admissions
- Academic progress will be measured alongside academic attainment, we will see more engagement in learning, not just attendance
- Children and young people will be able to remain in their local schools wherever possible
- Families and practitioners will be clear on provision that is ordinarily available in settings, reasonable adjustments and the EHCP process
- SEND advice across the system will include support and upskilling to professionals and parents and carers. There will be more consistency on how settings implement specialist advice
- Suspensions will reduce and low permanent exclusions will be maintained

Glossary	
Alternative Provision (AP)	Education arranged for pupils who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend mainstream or special schools. This includes in-school AP units, short-term placements, or long-term provision outside of school settings.
Learning Support Hub	The Learning Support Hub is the process whereby schools and settings can request either learning support for a specific child or young person (Targeted Support for a child or young person) or for staff training, group learning or guidance (Universal Offer Targeted Training).
Inclusive mainstream school provision	Support and interventions that should be available in all mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people.

3. The right support is in the right place at the right time

*‘Every child is valued. Every child is included in all aspects of school life. Every child is accepted by all. Every child has a true sense of belonging and feels to be a valuable and loved member of the school community’
- York School*

Our aspiration is to achieve the right support at the right time for children with special educational needs. This support will be provided early to promote inclusion and belonging, and to maximise each child or young person’s potential.

The partnership will:

- Systematically use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to identify priorities for improvement and to support joint commissioning
- Review the sufficiency and type of specialist placements in York, from Early years, Primary, Secondary and Post-16.
- Ensure that the process for allocating SEND capital is clear and transparent and criteria for allocation meets identified need.
- Increase Enhanced Resourced provisions and increased employment pathways and supported internships.
- Improve the quality and consistency of statutory decision making for EHC needs assessment and Education, Health & Care plans and ensure delivery of provision within settings. Improve the communication between services and families to give regular updates throughout the statutory process.
- Improve the EHC needs assessment experience for families creating a process that is clear, easy to navigate and is supportive to families
- Increase the number of jointly commissioned SEND provisions between the Integrated Care Board and the Council, including a jointly commissioned core offer for children and young people, with sensory processing difficulties.
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are in place for children and young people on reduced timetables.
- Improve school attendance and engagement in learning through further developing a multi-agency strategic and operational partnership response.
- Provide support for children and young people who are struggling to attend school to reintegrate into schools. Increasing support and flexibility within schools

- Review the Short Breaks offer through consultation and co-production and provide innovative short breaks to meet high level individual needs.
- Extend the Mental Health Support Teams, working in York schools to support emotional well-being and mental health in school.
- Make effective use of effective digital transformation and AI to support our systems to be as efficient as possible.
- Ensure early years and childcare sufficiency across the city to ensure that equitable access to the extended entitlements.
- Create more affordable and safe spaces for young people to meet.
- Further develop quality assurance and oversight of children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE), children who are educated other than at school (EOTAS), those in alternative provision and children who are missing education in line with changes in legislation and statutory guidance.
- Review the EHC needs assessment process and reviews to reduce bureaucracy and improve service delivery.

If we achieve this priority what will success look like?

- All our children and young people to be accessing education in a way that best meets their needs and their social networks so that they can achieve well, they feel that they belong
- There will be better access to sensory integration and speech and language therapy
- There is a well-established three tier approach to Alternative Provision which provides targeted support in mainstream schools to help at-risk children and young people stay in mainstream education where possible.
- There is an effective partnership with local schools to enable children and young people to successfully reintegrate where this is appropriate
- There will be a reduced need for families to go to SEND mediation and tribunals
- There will be Improved flexibility in curriculum and more specialist places within mainstream settings

Glossary	
Joint Commissioning	Buying and monitoring of services across multiple agencies, for example, education and health services
Short Breaks	A range of short breaks for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities. There are different levels of support available: • Universal Support • Early Help Short Breaks • Short Breaks
Integrated Care Board	An NHS organisation responsible for planning and delivering local health services, including managing the NHS budget and commissioning services for its population
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	a process used by local authorities and NHS to identify the current and future health, care, and wellbeing needs of their local population.

4. Effective preparation for independence and adulthood strategies secure opportunities for young people and adults to reach their full potential

“I have made a lot of progress since joining in Year 7 through support from my teacher” Young person, York school

We want to support young people in becoming well-prepared for the next stage of learning to foster a strong sense of belonging in their new educational environment.

The partnership will:

- Enhance the transition process across all phases, drawing on best practice models. This includes guidance on how transition works between children and adults' services.
- Preparing for Adulthood information and drop-ins will be available within SEND Central
- Improve the effective data sharing and forecasting taking place between children and adult services. Including information that enables better planning for employment pathways for young people
- Provide training and upskill professionals across education, health, and social care to result in improved quality contributions to reviews of children and young people's plans.
- Make sure that all EHC plans focus on preparation for adulthood and consistently specify the type of health and care support that should be available at different stages of a child or young person's life.
- Work with post-16 providers to review the city provision map to ensure that the curriculum offer meets the needs of all learners and supports city and combined authority priorities for employment and skills.
- Reduce the numbers of young people who are NEET at 17 by targeted work with vulnerable groups to better support their transition from school to post 16 study, work, or training.
- Further develop routes to employability, including increasing the number of and quality of supported internships in York.
- Support settings will adapt their approaches so that children and young people with SEND receive high-quality individualised independent careers advice to support their transitions, aspirations and next steps in education, employment, or training and continue to roll out and embed vocational profiling

If we achieve this priority what will success look like?

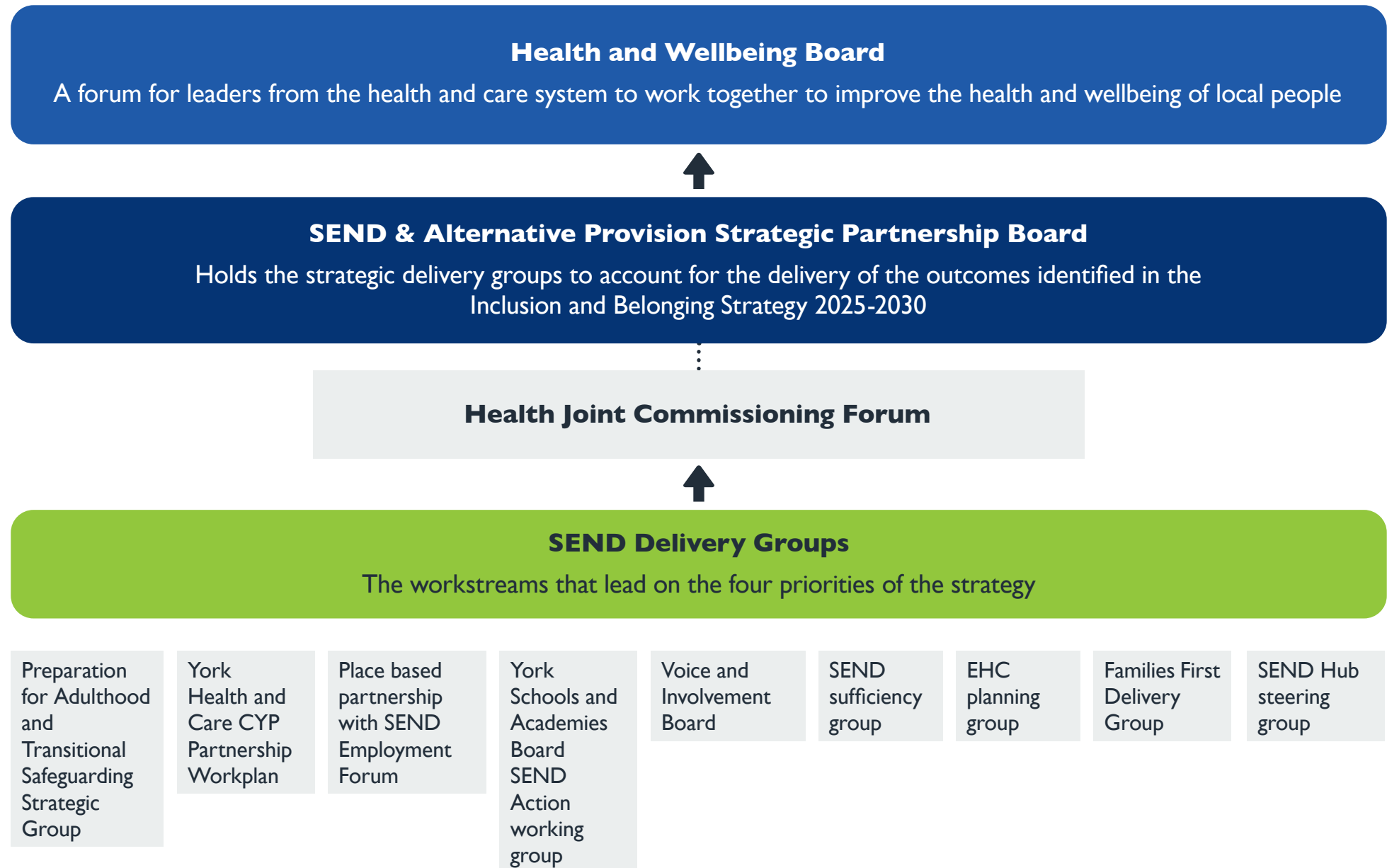
- Stronger, trusted relationships between young people, families and health professionals
- Children and young people have stable, supported journeys into adulthood
- Seamless transitions with evidence of integrated pathways between within and between services and settings
- Increased post-16 pathways and apprenticeships and supported internships and more young people living or semi-living independently
- Young people will report that they have been supported to plan for their future
- Young people will report that they are looking forward to their future as an adult

Glossary	
NEET	Young people not in Education, Employment, or Training
Supported Internships	It is a full-time study programme, mainly based at the employer’s workplace, where young people learn on the job with support from a workplace mentor, job coach and tutor.



Governance

Governance



Appendix I – Inclusion and Belonging strategy steering group members

Inclusion and Belonging strategy steering group members	
CYC Children's Services – Principal Social Worker	CYC Healthy Child Service – Head of Public Health
Haxby Road ERP – Head of Communication and Interaction	CYC SEN Services – SEND Casework Manager
CYC Disabled Children's Team – Head of Service	Parent Carer Forum
Danesgate School – Headteacher	NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB – Designated Clinical Officer for SEND
Fulford School – SENCO	CYC Children's Services – Head of Integrated SEND
Tang Hall Primary School – Headteacher	Elvington Primary School – Headteacher
CYC Education and Skills – Project Manager	CYC Children's Services – SEND Family Hub & Integration Manager
CYC Effectiveness and Achievement – Inclusion Advisor	CYC Education and Skills – Early Years and Childcare Inclusion Advisor
CYC Specialist Teaching Team – Head of Specialist Teaching Team	

If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact:



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It is available in the following languages:

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim (Polish)
własnym języku.

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

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For further information: West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA