

Title of service being assessed	ECC Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2013-18
Directorate	SCF
Name and role of officer completing this assessment	Adam Thompson (Senior Policy and Strategy Officer)
Contact Telephone Number	01245 430230 (20230)
Date Assessment Completed	05/08/13

1. What are the aims and objectives of this service, policy or function? (e.g. what is the likely impact and the relevance?- State whether this EIA relates to an existing, to a proposed change or new service, policy or function and include whether any changes are linked to an efficiency programme)

Essex's Lifelong Learning Strategy 2013-18 was developed in order to meet two key objectives. Firstly to develop an approach to learning from cradle to grave encompassing all people across the County; and secondly to support and develop world class provision and outcomes in Essex. Essex County Council's five year strategy for young people (aged 0-25) with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), the need for which was identified as a key driver within the Lifelong Learning Strategy's implementation plan.

Essex is already proud of the services provided to these young people and yet despite significant investment, is aware that more can be done to improve outcomes for young people and to ensure provision keep pace with changing needs (e.g. increasing autistic spectrum disorder needs) and legislative requirements.

The strategy's overarching vision is "To ensure that all Children and Young People with SEND have a full range of support and opportunities available to them and are provided with opportunities to maximise their life chances, goals and aspirations"

In order to achieve this vision the following four priorities were identified and for each the delivery approach and success criteria identified: -

- Ensure every child with SEND can go to a good or outstanding school or education setting.**
- Commission/deliver a range of high quality provision for all children and young people with SEND.**
- Ensure a smooth progression to adulthood for all young people with SEND**
- Improve the assessment and identification of SEND across agencies**

Accompanying the strategy is an implementation plan which will be reviewed and refreshed on an annual basis.

2a. Which strategic objective does this service support? Please state	2b. Is this service provided under a statutory or discretionary duty? Please state

'Vision for Essex 2013 -17' sets out ECC Cabinet's overarching vision and priorities for the next four years and will inform the development of a revised corporate strategy, This SEND Strategy's vision and priorities are clearly in keeping with the corporate priorities identified, these overarching ECC priorities are as follows: -

1. Increase educational achievement and enhance skills
2. Develop and maintain the infrastructure that enables our residents to travel and our businesses to grow
3. Support employment and entrepreneurship across our economy
4. Improve public health and wellbeing across Essex
5. Safeguard vulnerable people of all ages
6. Keep our communities safe and build community resilience
7. Respect Essex's environment

While the SEND strategy is relevant to most of these corporate priorities the most relevant ones are underlined in the bullet list above.

This strategy cuts across many service areas. Many priorities within the strategy relate to statutory duties for the service however there are also some discretionary elements.

2c Please state whether this EIA will:

- support a business case development,
- provide evidence for scrutiny decisions,
- provide evidence to support policy, functions or service reviews and efficiency programmes

*Note all papers for presented for scrutiny and business case development require, as a minimum, a supporting Section One EIA form. (screening)

This EIA will provide evidence to support the development of the strategy and its associated implementation plan.

3. Describe which policies and/or guidelines control how you deliver the service and who is eligible to receive it?

The SEND Strategy applies to all Essex residents with SEND aged 0-25. It also has implications for their parents, carers and families.

A massive influence on how the strategy will be delivered is the changing legislative landscape surrounding SEND. Essex and all other Local Authorities will be required to implement the reforms laid out in the Children and Families Bill, which should achieve royal assent by the spring of 2014. A summary of the main requirements can be found below:

- To produce a 'local offer' which details the services to support children and young people with SEND and their families in a clear and transparent way so they can understand what is available.
- To undertake joint assessment, planning and commissioning of services for these children between education, health and social care to ensure more streamlined and integrated support through a streamlined assessment process and single plan (EHC Plan) covering a child and young person from birth to age 25.
- To introduce a duty for joint commissioning to ensure joint responsibility for providing services.
- To provide an entitlement for parents and young people to have a personal budget to extend their choice and control over the services they receive.
- To ensure positive transitions at all key stages within a 0-25 age range, especially in preparing for adulthood. Providing greater powers for the LA to continue services post 18 and introducing new protections for young people aged 16-25.
- To extend then SEND legal obligations of maintained schools to Further Education Colleges and academies (including free schools).

4. Now think about how you actually deliver the service, for example how do people find out about your service? How do they access or use it? Most teams have developed processes to allow them to deliver their service efficiently. Describe all processes here:

The actual delivery of the priorities contained within the SEND Strategy are detailed within a series of annual implementation plans which constantly evolve and develop the first of which will be signed off with the strategy and has been informed by an extensive consultation process. These plans outline the specific actions required to deliver the strategy and include dates and named owners. This will be subject to an annual review and refresh. The delivery of these actions will cut across a number of service areas and providers.

In the future the Local Offer will essentially provide a route map for people to find out about how to access the range of services. This will essentially be an online portal but will also include mechanisms to access this information for those who are unable to go online.

5. Could anything in the existing/ proposed policy, service or function mean that any group could be excluded or disadvantaged (albeit inadvertently)? To help you make this decision think about the governance and delivery of your service in respect of each of the equality protected characteristics (groups), list below brief notes outlining the negative impacts that the service may have on each group. Determine how detrimental these impacts are in accessing services and/or engaging with ECC. High, Medium or Low impact? E.g. High relevance may allude to Discriminatory actions such as inability to access service or undue difficulty in accessing services.

- a. **Race and Culture-** Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

Need to be careful that Travellers are not inadvertently excluded from parts of the strategy due to their transient nature. For example one delivery objective within the strategy is to 'Provide all parents and carers and service providers in Essex with information, advice and guidance to

support assessment, referral and early intervention', which can be harder to achieve when families regularly move across Local Authority Boundaries.

Travellers have limited access to the internet and low rates of literacy which will need to be taken into account when communicating. This will be considered as the Local Offer is developed.

We must also ensure that those residents who are not English speaking are not disadvantaged. For example missing out on communications that relate to the provision of advice and guidance because they are not available in a range of languages. One step we will take is ensuring that the publication of the local offer through an online portal includes the relevant mechanisms to quickly and easily translate into other languages (Google Translate).

Dealing with bullying has the potential to be an issue as this can have an impact on the ability to learn and to achieve especially for those with SEND. This will be addressed in the implementation plan under the following delivery objective 'provide SEND pupils with a positive and inclusive educational experience'

The strategy includes success measures relating to educational achievement and also post 16 transition data regarding percentages remaining in full time education or those that are NEET. It is important that the future monitoring of success continues to measure and consider race and culture disparities within the data and considers ways in which this can be remedied in future implementation plan. An action within the first implementation plan is already being used to undertake a comprehensive needs analysis for SEND which will bring such issues to the fore.

b. **Age-** including older and younger people

All priorities in the strategy relate specifically to the 0-25 age group which is in keeping with changing legislative requirements outlined within the Children and Families Bill.

c. **Sexual Orientation-** Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People

See paragraph three under 'Race and Culture regarding bullying.

d. **Disabled people**

The entire strategy is focused on ensuring that this group is not disadvantaged or excluded.

e. **Carers**

During the drafting process the strategy has already been amended to ensure that all previous references to 'parents' are changed to 'parents, families and carers' otherwise it could exclude groups such as children in care or those raised by other relatives such as grandparents. On-going effort is required to ensure this is also reflected through the implementation plan development.

f. Gender- Men and Women

The strategy includes success measures relating to educational achievement and also post 16 transition data regarding percentages remaining in full time education or those that are NEET. It is important that the future monitoring of these success measures continue to consider gender disparities within the data and considers ways in which this can be remedied in future implementation plan. An action within the first implementation plan will be to undertake a comprehensive needs analysis for SEND which will bring such issues to the fore.

g Gender reassignment – including transgendered people

Same should apply to all groups above.

h. Pregnancy and maternity

Local offer will sign post to support services

i. Marital Status and Civil Partnership

A single parent may find it harder to provide SEND children with the support they require and may therefore need additional support – this may need to be considered as part of the development of the implementation plan.

Furthermore additional provision to improve the social side of the school experience including extracurricular activity has the potential to inadvertently discriminate against children from single parent households who may find it more difficult to attend afterschool activity. The action schools need to take to address this will need to be considered as part of their 'Local Offer' in accordance with their duties under the equalities act.

j. Religion and Belief

Activities to promote the social side of school life including for example afterschool clubs must be careful not to inadvertently discriminate against certain groups who may be unable to attend due to religious reasons/obligations.

k. Addressing Socio-economic and / or health inequalities

The strategy actually seeks to reduce inequalities in educational attainment which can have a knock on effect on health inequalities and socio-economic status. .

6. Your Service may already be meeting the needs of the equality strands in some areas. Please list, group by group, the positive actions you have already taken to address possible inequality.

ECC's SEN service delivers a broad range of services which give consideration to all equality strands. It does not feel appropriate to catalogue these individually within this document and would indeed be a massive undertaking – and possibly duplicate any EIA's relating to specific service areas (as this one relates specifically to a new strategy document).

The strategy will be delivered through 5 annual Implementation Plans, the first of which is now seeking approval from Cabinet, and has not yet been delivered. The implementation plans are to be reviewed and revised annually and it therefore seems appropriate to consider the equality strands below as part of this annual process.

- a. **Race and Culture-** Black, Asian and Minority ethnic groups including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

[See comment above](#)

- b. **Age-** including older and younger people

[See comment above](#)

- c. **Sexual Orientation-** Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People

[See comment above](#)

- d. **Disabled people**

[See comment above](#)

- e. **Carers**

[See comment above](#)

- f. **Gender-** Men and Women

[See comment above](#)

- g **Gender reassignment** - including transgendered people

[See comment above](#)

- h. **Pregnancy and maternity**

[See comment above](#)

- i. **Marital Status and Civil Partnership**

[See comment above](#)

j. Religion and Belief[See comment above](#)**k. Addressing Socio- economic and / or health inequalities**[See comment above](#)

Conclusion of section 1: You should now have a clear idea of why your service, policy or function is provided by Essex County Council, you should have spent some time thinking about the equality groups and how your service might impact on them, or perhaps why members of these groups are less able to make the best use of the service. Please give a summary of your conclusions and assess the EIA status as High, Medium or Low. The next stage for a High or Medium EIA is to consider the data you could use to help you to support or dispute your initial conclusions. Think about how you will collect this data and/or how you will check your presumptions by consulting with our communities.

Complete the consultation and data plans below. Identify the sorts of data you need and the questions that you need answer to. If you feel that particular organisations or community/ voluntary groups will be able to help you please list these too.

Summary – High/medium impact – Please proceed to gather further data (if necessary) and all High EIAs need to progress to a section 2 EIA.

This equality impact assessment is assessed as LOW impact and a key driver of this is that a considerable amount of consultation has already taken place which has informed changes to the strategy as detailed in the earlier sections of this form.

The development of the strategies implementation plan has paid specific attention to the issues raised in this impact assessment as it was developed.

DATA PLAN FOR MEDIUM/HIGH ADVERSE IMPACTS

What data do you want?	Where are you going to look or who are you going to ask?	What will you do with the data/answer?	Name of planned source (if known)
N/A			

CONSULTATION PLAN FOR MEDIUM/HIGH ADVERSE IMPACTS

What do you want to know?	Who are you going to ask?	What question will you ask?	What will you do with the answer?	Name of planned source (if known)
N/A				

The Next Stage - Section 2:

We need to ensure that the consultation process is managed. Please submit Section 1 of the EIA with the consultation and data plans completed. It is likely that some of the data will be available to you without the need for external consultation and /or other officers may have already sought the views of community groups. This will reduce the level of work that will be required by you to complete the final EIA stage. We also need to control our approaches to partners and community/ voluntary groups so that they are not inundated by Essex officers asking them for help and information. We will be able to co-ordinate these approaches. The equalities team will be able to offer support and advice during the consultation process. Once the consultation stage is complete you will need to complete section 2 of the Equality Impact Assessment using your initial thoughts and the consultation information to develop an effective action plan for your service.

Completion date for consultation and data collection	N/A
Start date for Section two EIA- if necessary	N/A

Please submit this form to the equalities team: equalities@essex.gov.uk