

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1- Policy details	
Name of policy	Leicestershire Local Area SEND and Inclusion Strategy
Department and service	Children and Family Services, Education Quality & Performance
Who has been involved in completing the Equality Impact Assessment?	Renata Chantrill, Head of Service Education Quality, Performance and Business Support
Contact numbers	01163050356
Date of completion	6 th December 2024

2- Objectives and background of policy or practice change	
<p>Use this section to describe the policy or practice change</p> <p>What is the purpose, expected outcomes and rationale?</p> <p>Include the background information and context</p>	
What is the proposal?	A refreshed partnership strategy for SEND and Inclusion across the Leicestershire local area for 2024-27 which replaces the previous SEND and Inclusion strategy 2020-23. The purpose of this strategy is to set out the vision and priorities in Leicestershire for developing support and provision for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND.
What change and impact is intended by the proposal?	

Our strategy will be delivered through our five overarching SEND principles which have been co-produced by the Leicestershire SEND and Inclusion Partnership following an evaluation of what is working well and current barriers to achieving our vision for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire.

- **The child and family are at the heart of what we all do**
- **We will have an accurate understanding of the needs and lived experiences of children and young people with SEND**
- **Children and young people with SEND are prepared for successful transition throughout their life**
- **Leaders across the SEND partnership will work together to plan, deliver and quality assure Leicestershire’s offer**
- **We will provide timely and effective support to enable children and young people with SEND to thrive and belong in their communities**

We are committed to making positive change happen. We know there is history where children and families have felt let down and feel that promises have not been fulfilled. We are determined to change this. We also know that this will take time, but we will work diligently, co-produce quickly and effectively to make positive change happen.

This strategy sets out our ambitious vision, aims and priorities to ensure that we effectively identify and meet the needs of the children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) age 0 to 25. It also demonstrates our commitment to delivering consistently better outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We will ensure children with SEND across Leicestershire have access to the right support at the right time enabling them to thrive and succeed.

What is the rationale for this proposal?

Our SEND strategy demonstrates the collective commitment and responsibility between our parents, community, Local Authority (LA) education and social care support services and settings, including health services across the spectrum of health provision. Parents and the voluntary sector have a shared commitment to the strategy and are partners in ensuring that it meets the needs of our children and young people.

	<p>Children and young people achieve better outcomes when we have a clear focus on working together. Whilst there is significant pressure and challenge, our vision is for all children, including those with SEND to thrive, fulfil their potential, belong, and live their best lives within their communities.</p> <p>The strategy builds on data and evidence from across Leicestershire partners captured within our Local Area Inclusion Plan (LAIP) about what is working well and what could be improved to ensure children and young people with SEND are supported to thrive and succeed. The areas identified for improvement within the LAIP are cross-referenced against the key principles within the strategy and incorporated development plan.</p> <p>Leicestershire has been subject to an Accelerated Progress Plan following the last Local Area SEND inspection in 2020 and revisit in 2022. The learning from this inspection and ongoing support from the DfE has also been included both within the LAIP and as areas for improvement where not yet achieved within the strategy.</p>
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<p>3- Evidence gathered on equality implications - Data and engagement</p> <p>What evidence about potential equality impacts is already available? This could come from research, service analysis, questionnaires, and engagement with protected characteristics groups</p>	
<p>What equalities information or data has been gathered so far?</p>	<p>The SEND and Inclusion Strategy itself contains a summary of the key equalities information around children and young people in Leicestershire, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Key points from the strategy are included below. Additional information has been taken from the LAIP.</p>
<p>What does it show?</p>	<p>Leicestershire’s population was 712,336 at the latest census in 2021, a 9.5% increase to the county’s population over the last 10 years. This makes Leicestershire one of the fastest growing areas in the country in terms of population (national average 6.6%). Understandably, this has placed added pressures on services for Children and Young People in the County. The County has approx. 201,250 children and young people aged under 26 years (29% of the total population). This is expected to grow to 234,329 by 2033.</p>

Population of Leicestershire	2023 estimate	2033 estimate
Total population for Leicestershire	722,155	806,906
Total number of children and young people aged under 26 years	210,255	234,329
Percentage of children and young people aged below 26 against the total population	29.1%	29%
Split across SEN2 age bandings:		
0 to 4	36,160	39,982
5 to 10	48,762	51,466
11 to 15	41,981	44,661
16 to 18	24,470	29,340
19 to 25	58,882	68,880

There are 107,413 children and young people educated in Leicestershire schools (aged 3-18). Children and Young People from minority ethnic groups account for 23.6% of all children living in Leicestershire, compared with 37% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups are Asian or Asian British and Mixed.

From our School Census in January 2024, we know that		
Total number of pupils in Leicestershire schools	107,413	
Percentage of Black Asian and other ethnic communities of the total school population (excluding unclassified)	23.6%	
Total number and percentage of EHCP's for Black, Asian and Ethnic groups	Number	Percentage

Asian/Asian British	19	3%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	5	0.8%
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	30	4.7%
Other ethnic groups	3	0.5%
Percentage of pupils that have English as an additional language	8.6%	
Total number of looked after children (March 2023 903 return)	681	
Total number of looked after children as a percentage of the total population aged 0 to 17 years	0.48%	
All pupils eligible for free school meals	15.5%	
SEN support pupils eligible for free school meals	12.9%	
EHCP pupils eligible for free school meals	32.5%	

The latest School Census, which includes all pupils on roll at a school within Leicestershire (aged 4 to 16 years), reports that there are now 13,983 pupils on a SEN Support plan and 6,377 with an Education, Health and Care Plan. SEND pupils account for 17.2% of the Leicestershire school population. Leicestershire has a proportion of children and young people with SEND (identified through EHCPs and SEN support) broadly in line with the English average.

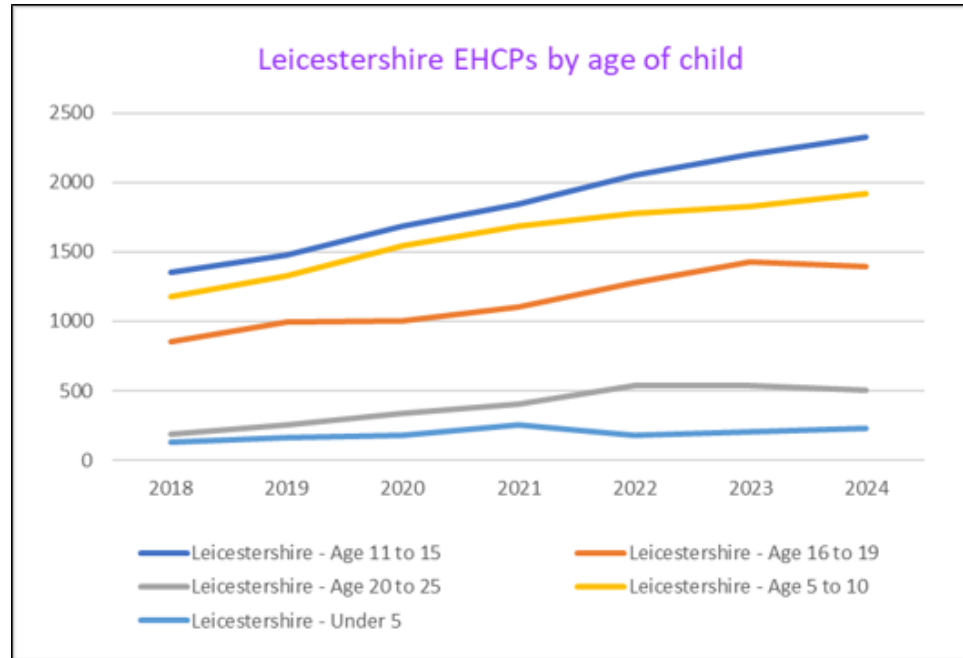
In 2024, the annual school census (Spring term) reported that 12.9% of children and young people were identified at SEN Support level in the County, just below the England average. Previous longer-term trends had indicated a lower-than-average level in Leicestershire, but this gap has now largely closed.

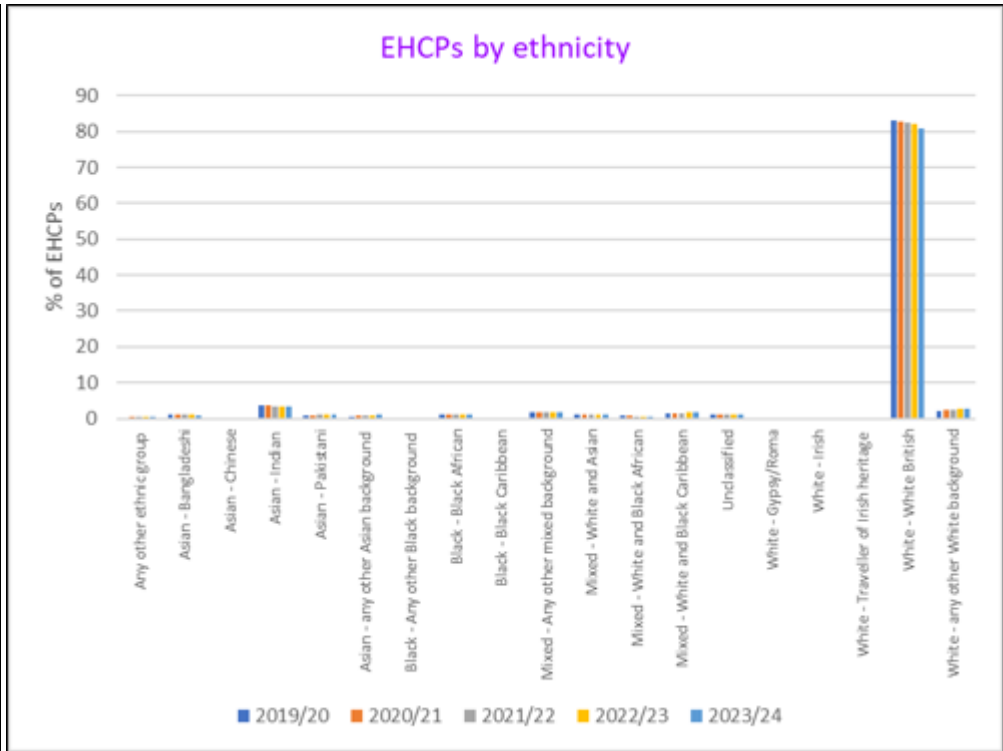
Within SEN Support assessment, most schools identify Moderate Learning Difficulties (28%) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (21%). These exceed the regional and national averages, with a lower number of children and young people identified with Speech, Language and Communication needs than average regional and national trends, particularly at Primary school.

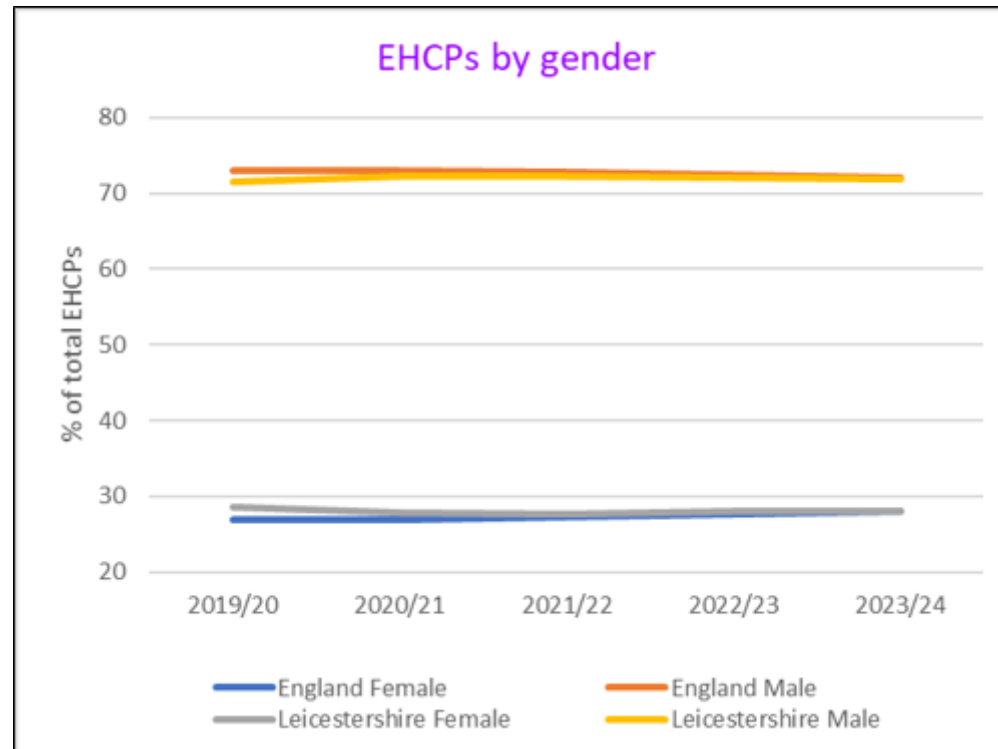
It is notable that the identification of Speech, Language and Communication needs is rising for SEN support and aligning more closely to national trends, reflecting work across the County to appropriately identify. The Code of Practice SEND 2015 identifies Cognition & Learning as a category rather than MLD - Moderate Learning Difficulty, which is identified most at Key Stages 2/3/4 in Leicestershire.

Primary needs (most prominent presenting need of the child or young person) within EHCPs in Leicestershire in 2023 were 23.5% of children/young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder; 18.4% with Speech, Communication and Language needs. At EHCP level, there is little change from the five-year trend of Autism Spectrum Disorder being the most likely source of assessments resulting in an EHCP which aligns with the national picture.

The following charts set out the cohort of Leicestershire children and young people with EHCPs and how this has changed over time by age, ethnicity and gender.







Over a third of children with EHCPs with a primary need identified as Moderate Learning Difficulty, Social Emotional and Mental Health, Severe Learning Difficulty and Specific Learning Disability were also eligible for free school meals compared to 15.7% of those without SEND. These figures reduced for SEN support where just under a third of Social Emotional and Mental Health needs were made up of children eligible for free school meals.

In terms of gender, more male children were identified with a predominant need in every type of SEND need category aside from Hearing Impairment where males make up 44% of EHCP and 47.1% of SEN support. We

	<p>know that Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty needs are up significantly for male children across both EHCPs and SEN support, and males now make up 100% of children with this as a primary need identified for SEN support. Male children made up more than 70% of EHCPs for needs identified as Autism Spectrum Disorder, Severe Learning Difficulty, Social Emotional and Mental Health, and Speech Language and Communication needs.</p> <p>By ethnicity, more than three quarters of children identified with SEND/LDD needs across all categories were White British. Of particular note, a higher proportion of White British children had a predominant need of Moderate Learning Difficulty, Physical Disability, Social Emotional and Mental Health, Specific Learning Difficulty and Speech Language and Communication needs across EHCPs, and over 90% of children with SEN support for Multi-sensory impairment and Specific Learning Difficulty were White British.</p> <p>As with the previous strategy, the Leicestershire Local Area SEND and Inclusion Strategy will be applied across all children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND in Leicestershire.</p>
<p>What engagement has been undertaken so far?</p> <p>What does it show?</p>	<p>The strategy has been co-produced with the Leicestershire SEND and Inclusion Partnership Board, which includes representatives from Health, Social Care, Education, Schools and Parent/Carers for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire. The key principles and actions driving the plan have been agreed by the Board and the strategy builds on the data we have collected around the experience of services for children and young people with SEND, both in terms of outcomes, and satisfaction with services including hearing directly from children and young people and their families around what needs to be improved.</p> <p>The strategy incorporates the voice of those experiences of services and the impact when we get it right as well as understanding how we can do more. We have used this feedback to help us to shape the strategy and to set out improvement actions within the strategy.</p>

4- Benefits, concerns and mitigating action

Please specify if any individuals or community groups who identify with any of the '[protected characteristics](#)' may *potentially* be affected by the policy and describe any benefits and concerns including any barriers. Use this section to demonstrate how risks would be mitigated for each affected group. If a group will not be affected by the proposal please state so.

Group	What are the benefits of the proposal for those from the following groups?	What are the concerns identified and how will these affect those from the following groups?	How will the known concerns be mitigated?
Age	Improvements to partner services will support all children and young people aged 0-25 with identified SEND in Leicestershire.	The strategy does not consider services for people aged over 25 with identified SEND in Leicestershire although does seek to improve outcomes for children and young people under 25 with SEND including the pathway to adulthood.	Adults with SEND in Leicestershire can seek support where eligible from Adult Social Care.
Disability	<p>Improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with identified SEND in Leicestershire. .</p> <p>This strategy aims to deliver our vision for all children, including those with SEND to thrive, fulfil their potential, belong, and live their best lives within their communities. Improvements to service provision should also benefit the parents,</p>	The strategy seeks to improve services for children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire. Current challenges of funding against demand for assessment and support across partner services mean some improvements will need to be prioritised where the biggest improvements can be made for	Partners acknowledge that resource challenges mean a bespoke improvement offer on an individual child basis is not possible however the actions proposed will deliver measurable benefits in the areas prioritised within the strategy. Alternative approaches to existing offers as well as new service offers will be

	<p>carers and families of children and young people with SEND.</p>	<p>the greatest number of children and young people. Consequently the strategy proposes how partners will prioritise improvement activity. It should be noted that improvements are being planned on a cohort basis which will result in improvements being felt by individuals in different ways depending on their needs (ie improvement of the neurodevelopmental pathway will directly impact those children and young people with neurodevelopmental needs).</p> <p>The strategy is a comprehensive document that may be difficult for some people with SEND to access.</p>	<p>trialled which could prove more effective at addressing existing challenges and barriers experienced by children and young people with SEND and their families. A public consultation on the new strategy will seek to agree that the priorities identified are the right focus for improvement activity over the next 3 years.</p> <p>An easy read version of the strategy will be produced to ensure it is accessible for more people with SEND. Visual ways of explaining the proposals will also be developed.</p>
Race	<p>No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>A higher proportion of children and young people with SEND in Leicestershire are White British compared to other ethnicities (aligned with national trends)</p>	<p>None identified.</p>	<p>Not required.</p>

	who are likely to experience a higher positive impact of the strategy as a result.		
Sex	<p>No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.</p> <p>A higher proportion of boys than girls are identified with SEND in Leicestershire (aligned with national trends) who are likely to experience a higher positive impact of the strategy as a result.</p>	None identified.	Not required.
Gender Reassignment	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.
Sexual Orientation	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.

Pregnancy and Maternity	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.
Religion or Belief	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.
Armed Forces (including veterans)	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.
People with lived care experience	The strategy proposes to improve the coordination of support for children and young people who have had traumatic experiences and is therefore likely to have a direct benefit for children and young people with lived care experience where this is a concern.	None identified.	Not required.
Other groups: e.g., rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum	No direct impact identified, improvements to partner services will support all children and young people with SEND.	None identified.	Not required.

seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, deprived or disadvantaged communities	Children and young people with SEND who are eligible for free school meals have a higher likelihood of having an EHCP and associated support for SEND and are likely to experience a higher positive impact of the strategy as a result.		
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5- Action Plan			
Produce a framework to outline how identified risks/concerns identified in section 4 will be mitigated.			
What action is planned?	Who is responsible for the action?	Timescale	Expected outcome
Seek approval to consult on the SEND and Inclusion Strategy	Education Quality & Performance Service	C&FS Scrutiny Committee – 21/1/25 Cabinet – January 25	Ensuring priorities for partnership improvement activity are agreed with elected members prior to wider consultation.
Public consultation on the SEND and Inclusion Strategy following approval to consult by Cabinet	Education Quality & Performance Service	Jan-Mar 2025	Feedback on proposed strategy to ensure priorities and direction of partnership improvement activity for children and young people with SEND is understood and agreed.

Produce easy-read version of the SEND and Inclusion strategy and consider visual ways of explaining the proposals	Communications team	Jan-Feb 2025	Ensure strategy can be more accessible to a wider group of people including those with SEND.
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6- Approval Process	
Departmental Equalities Group	Agreed electronically by Chair of C&FS DEG on 27/12/25 noting the EIA indicates a positive overall impact.
Corporate Policy Team	Please set out comments from the Corporate Policy Team
Sign off by the Senior Responsible Officer for the Project.	