

# Equity in Education: No Learner Left Behind

Surrey's Lifetime of Learning Strategy

# Vision and Context

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**Our Vision is to achieve the best education for all children, young people and adults whatever their background, challenge or need so they belong and thrive.**

In line with the Community Vision for Surrey by 2030, we want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where all children have a great start to life, and everyone receives education that allows them to achieve their full potential to become contributors to their communities throughout their life.

One of our young people told us:

*'Education means everything to me, it's part of life that you will always need, and it opens up more opportunities for you in the future, and knowing that you will be living comfortably in your dream job, dream house, all because you stuck to education is amazing'*  
(Surrey young person aged 18 years).

Surrey has a diverse and vibrant education landscape and has outcomes at each key stage above the national average. Whilst most of the children, young people and adults in Surrey achieve, thrive, belong and live well, this is not the case for everyone.

In Surrey, many children from disadvantaged homes often start school behind their peers, and this gap persists through school and into further and higher education. In many instances outcomes are weaker than similar learners in England.

In some areas of Surrey adults are less able to secure economic well-being because of skills and qualification gaps. We are aware that attendance is a significant factor in achieving the best outcomes, and that in Surrey exclusion from school and poor attendance is too high.

This strategy aims to ensure that we mitigate and remove barriers to enable us to close the gaps in terms of outcomes, exclusions and attendance. It will also ensure that Surrey adults can access learning opportunities, in high quality provision, that develop new skills or secures new qualifications to help them succeed at any time they need to.

Through initial work with early years, schools and college leaders' working groups, we have identified five key objectives that we want to achieve as a result of this Strategy.



We aspire to have an education vision, strategy and action plan that allows us to ensure that:

- everyone benefits from the right education, skills and employment opportunities that help them succeed in life at the time they need it
- we overcome inequalities, ensuring that no one is left behind and we strive to increase equity for all
- reduces and removes barriers to education and participation
- whatever their background, belief or culture our children, young people and adults, are respected, feel that they are treated fairly and are valued in Surrey.
- brings together collaborative partners and stakeholders to work together to improve outcomes for children, young people and adults.
- considers the aspirations and needs of an increasingly ethnically diverse population.

We will achieve this by working together as a partnership across all phases of learning from early years to adulthood.

## Coproduction

The approach to a co-produced Lifetime of Learning Strategy for Surrey is new. The shift in the national education landscape with greater autonomy for education settings requires a different collaborative approach to setting out our ambition for learners. This strategy provides an opportunity to highlight what we will focus on to reduce the inequity in Surrey.

We want our education leaders to understand the whole system and to collaborate and support each other in taking the responsibility for the changes that we need to make. Partnership and shared accountability for all our learners will ensure we deliver this ambitious Lifetime of Learning Strategy.

The principles that will shape how we work together are:

- We will bring together leaders from all Surrey settings, schools, colleges and other learning providers and partners to improve attainment and opportunities for all.
- We will take shared accountability for improving standards and the educational outcomes and life chances of all residents.
- We will promote a culture of openness, trust, partnership and collaboration that improves outcomes, shares best practice and contributes to system led improvement.



- We will ensure no education or learning settings are left isolated.
- We will put the interests of residents first at all times.
- We will ensure no child should fail to reach their educational potential because of disadvantage or vulnerability.
- We will ensure that adults have opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge when they need them.
- We will ensure all our joint actions add value, are evidence based and as far as possible are proactive rather than a response to a crisis.

We will work together to ensure that:

- All children and young people are seen and heard, feel safe and can grow.
- We use a whole family approach to ensure families get the help and support they need from different professionals working as one team.
- Adults and those who are over school age, have access to education at times in their life when they need it.
- We ensure that the services we offer considers the accessibility to those who have poor health.
- Our work helps to close the employment gap for disabled residents and for residents from some ethnic backgrounds.

This strategy will sit alongside other key strategies that support our broader ambitions for children, young people and adult residents in Surrey.

- Surrey Community Vision for 2030
- Surrey Skills Plan 2022
- Surrey Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy
- Surrey All Age Autism Strategy
- Best Start to Life Strategy
- Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Children and Young Peoples Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy

This Education and Lifelong Learning Strategy has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders: phase councils; further education and skills providers; the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) partnership board; Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Board; Schools Alliance for Excellence and wider Council services.

We are now able to learn more about what our children and young people, parents and carers and community groups want from this strategy, and this will be an area we will focus on over the coming months.



# Connecting the Lifetime of Learning

We will take a holistic view of a learner's journey from early years, through school and post 16 learning into adulthood. We believe the phases of learning are connected and we know that the transition points in learning can impact on a learner emotionally, socially and economically.

## Foundations for Life

We want every child to access high quality early education that secures physical, verbal, cognitive & emotional development, and establishes positive attitudes to school and learning. Early identification of need and planning for the future ensures that all children have access to the right advice and support including during the crucial first 1001 days. The outcome gap between children growing up in disadvantage and poverty in Surrey and the national average will be narrowed.

## Thriving in learning

We feel that all our schools should be ambitious and inclusive providing curricula that are, inspiring, creative and broaden horizons. All young people will leave school having secured the skills, knowledge, curiosity and confidence to achieve their goals. Children and young people's needs are identified and met and through a relentless focus on inclusion and equity, we will improve the learning and outcomes of children and young people from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups so there is no gap between them and national averages.

## Flourishing Young Adults

We aspire to have all young people moving into adulthood as confident lifelong learners, progressing towards fulfilling lives in work, training or education contributing to a thriving economy. Exceptional personal development provision enables young people to contribute positively to society. In their October 2023 survey 24% of Surrey Youth Voice respondents said that self-improvement was important to them. This included the learning of new skills, developing communication and finding appropriate work experience.

Engagement with all young people and re-engagement with those who have dropped out of work and/or learning means that the number of people not in education, employment or training lower than the national figure.



## **For economic growth and personal well-being**

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We want all adults in Surrey to be able to access and engage with learning to achieve their ambitions and potential. The adult education curriculum continues to be agile and ambitious, improving social inclusion, mental well-being and confidence. Adult learning provision is inclusive & accessible to adults who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and least likely to participate in education.



# Our Priorities for 2024 - 2026

**Our priority for this strategy is to improve educational outcomes for under-served groups.**

We will do this by:

## **1. Improving communication, language and literacy across all ages and phases for all groups.**

### **What is our challenge?**

Communication, language and literacy have significant impact on achievement and progress throughout all phases of education and beyond. Whilst we do well for most, many of our vulnerable children, young people and adults continue to struggle to achieve the key skills of reading, writing and oracy needed to succeed in education and life.

### **What do we want to achieve?**

#### **Foundations for life**

- Effective provision enables children to develop strong spoken language skills

#### **Thriving in learning**

- The continued development of the teaching of reading, including a focus on the importance of the robust teaching of phonics and early reading skills leads to improved outcomes at primary particularly for those children identified as disadvantaged
- Improving literacy at transition points for every phase of learning
- Developing reading and disciplinary literacy at secondary school

#### **Flourishing young adults**

- Ensuring improving literacy and communication is embedded in all aspects of post-16 provision including secure and successful intervention programmes for those in need

#### **For economic growth and personal well-being**

- Adult learning provision is accessible to the needs of those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and least likely to participate in education



## 2. Understanding and addressing issues that result in low and non-attendance and engagement in education settings.

### What is our challenge?

Regular attendance and engagement are an important part of giving children and young people the best possible start in life, enabling them to make a significant positive contribution to society. Missing learning means they are less likely to make the best academic progress. Poor attendance and engagement can also lead to social isolation and low self-esteem.

### What do we want to achieve?

#### Foundations for life

- Early years professionals and settings actively involving parents in supporting their children's learning and development

#### Thriving in learning

- Improvement in the attendance of children and learners particularly those that are vulnerable through working in partnership

#### Flourishing young adults

- The number of young people and adults is lower than the national figure. in particular for those with SEND through re-engagement with vulnerable young people who have dropped out of work and / or learning

#### For economic growth and personal well-being

- All adults in Surrey can re-engage with learning to achieve their ambitions and potential

## 3. Ensuring education settings have the skills, confidence and understanding to support children, young people and adult emotional wellbeing to enable them to thrive and learn.

### What is our challenge?

In the wake of the pandemic and the challenges of our current society the physical and mental health of our children, young people and adults is more challenged than ever.

To make real impact in this area of work, health and well-being needs to be built into the ethos, curriculum and practices of our early years, school, college and post-16 life.





## What do we want to achieve?

### Foundations for life

- Families are empowered to have the best emotional wellbeing, physical health and mental health
- Practitioners have a common understanding of how to promote families living healthy, fulfilling lives with good emotional wellbeing
- Families who have communication difficulties or needs are given a voice to communicate health, wellbeing and relationship concerns in a way of their choice
- All professionals in the early years have a strong understanding of trauma and trauma informed practice

### Thriving in learning

- Joint working between health and education improves health and well-being of learners in particular mental health.
- Pupils in most need have access to mental and healthy lifestyle improvement programmes including targeted interventions
- Relational practice is at the heart of our schools' behavioural practices

### Flourishing young adults

- Access to exceptional personal development so that young people can make a positive contribution to society

### For economic growth and personal well-being

- In line with Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we want to prevent poor mental health and supporting those with mental health needs to have access to early, appropriate support to prevent further escalation of need. We support the ambition to create communities and social environments that tackle isolation and build good mental health

## 4. Recruiting, retaining and growing the best teachers, practitioners and leaders. Providing them with high quality continuing professional development opportunities through their careers.

### What is our challenge?

We will not achieve our ambitions without ensuring we have sufficient education practitioners and experts across all phases and ensuring deep and long-term support to improve the quality of leadership and teaching. Early years professionals, teachers and learning providers are our most



precious resource. We know too that support staff play a key part in helping our education system thrive.

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## **What do we want to achieve?**

Knowledgeable and skilled leaders, teachers, practitioners, learning providers and support staff who love working and learning in Surrey.

## **Surrey Education Partnership (SEP)**

Over the last 18 months, we have brought together learning providers and other groups from across Surrey to support the development and implementation of the Lifetime of Learning Strategy. The partners included schools, colleges, early years, higher education, skills, adult learning settings along with Surrey County Council, Schools Alliance for Excellence, the Department for Education, members of the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board and the Dioceses.

The SEP has appointed an independent chairperson, and the chairperson will support partners to work together to champion the ambitions of the strategy. Working collectively, we are committed to building a connected education system that is better for all where equity and excellence are not divided.

The SEP aims to share good practice both within and between sectors, challenging providers to keep Equity in Education at the heart of what they do and focus on the impact of our work for underserved learners.

The SEP will build on a strong platform of collaborative working in the county supporting partners across the education, health and the business community and between phases and stages to deliver the Strategy. It will monitor the impact of the work and will evaluate progress highlighting areas where targeted support might be required.

