

# Twenty Strands

Securing good educational provision  
and outcomes for children and young  
people experiencing vulnerability



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# Statement of intent

A wide range of work is already underway across Children's Services Education and Inclusion Branch (CSD E & I) and in liaison with other teams/partners to improve outcomes for children and young people experiencing vulnerability. By 'outcomes', we refer largely to education outcomes which help equip children and young people to experience happy, healthy, prosperous and fulfilling lives, both in childhood and adulthood. This goes beyond academic education progress and attainment measures alone, also encompassing factors such as good mental health and wellbeing, strong participation and engagement both in education and wider society, respectful behaviours and relationships, and aspirations both for now and in the future. We recognise that the education system alone – and even with wider service/partner engagement – cannot provide all the answers and solutions for those children and young people who have

faced or are facing adversity. Family and wider societal issues undoubtedly play a significant role and present many challenges. Education is, however, key in helping to drive societal change; to break cycles of poverty and deprivation in its many forms, to champion inclusivity and diversity, to promote high aspiration for self and for others. Education should support greater social mobility and cohesion.

Across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, we consider a strong education for every child and young person as fundamental to good life chances and choices. Our work is predicated on the following Principles of Inclusion, established and agreed across the Branch:

- The entitlement of every child and young person to receive a good education that enables them to maximise opportunity and success in learning and life, irrespective of need, prior attainment, background or circumstance
- Strong pathways for every child and young person into further education, training, employment and independent living





- Successful and fulfilling participation in society, economic prosperity, good physical and mental health
- Access for every child and young person to suitable, high-quality provision, which meets diverse need and diminishes barriers to participation and engagement
- Equity of access and onward life chances; those who need something more or something different in order to realise this ambition do receive something more or something different
- A rounded education for every child and young person; each having access to and benefitting from a breadth of experience and cultural capital
- A strong commitment to early intervention and prevention to tackle, diminish or avert potential barriers to success
- A strong commitment to partnership working which actively seeks and values the contributions of parents/carers and child and young person
- A happy and memorable childhood for all

Across the education system in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, both settings and the Local Authority have deep-rooted ambition for children and young people, with a determination to secure high-quality provision and outcomes for all. Education provision is generally strong and improving, and this serves the vast majority of our children and young people very well, both during their time in schools and colleges and as they move to adulthood. Their strong platform for the future is testament to the system, to which every setting makes a contribution. For our groups of most vulnerable children and young people, however, there is a compelling imperative to serve them better.

The terms ‘vulnerable pupil groups’ and ‘children and young people experiencing vulnerability’ need clarification in the context of this statement of intent. In its broadest sense, educational vulnerability relates to any child or young person who is more susceptible to under-achievement in their progress and learning, be that academic, personal or social. For the purposes of this statement, there is a particular focus on children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, those open to social care, and those with an identified special need. This is because these are the pupil groups that appear across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight overall to have experienced the greatest negative impact on outcomes in recent years.





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## **‘Vulnerability can be in many forms and can manifest itself in many different ways.’**

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Whilst the identification of specific groups of children and young people which typically experience vulnerability and poorer outcomes is important, we must also be mindful of stereotypes and unhelpful separation of children and young people into particular categories or labels. We are keen to get beyond narrowly defined groups to look at the common barriers and challenges experienced across these groups, in order to intervene early and identify mitigations and solutions. There are undoubtedly a number of themes that typically cross all or many groups experiencing vulnerability; for example, the imperative for high-quality teaching and learning and the evidenced disproportionate impact on these groups when this is not their experience.

Vulnerability can be in many forms and can manifest itself in many different ways. The ‘categories’ of vulnerability can often overlap, and their interaction can exacerbate the adverse impact on one another. This can add to the complexity of meeting need and securing good outcomes; however, sometimes the key strategies which are effective are common across multiple vulnerabilities.

This statement of intent draws on much of the work which is already on-going and seeks to bring the various strands together into a more cohesive and holistic approach, such that teams can

enhance and extend existing activity and bring new solutions and approaches in focus. Central to the statement is strengthening the conditions in which children and young people experiencing vulnerability can thrive. They should all have access to the wide range of pathways to academic and personal development and to further learning and employment.

There are some statutory functions and levers which the Local Authority can use to drive the agenda for children and young people experiencing vulnerability. However, the Local Authority role is also very much about influencing the system; working within the system to provide leadership, support and challenge in the context of positive, professional partnerships with autonomous settings, to effect change. In order to maximise the impact of our work and recognising the existing strengths across settings and the wider system, it is important to draw on the benefits of collaboration, shared expertise and good practice. Wider research and guidance, for example that which is produced by the Education Endowment Foundation, is used to add strength and depth to knowledge and practice.

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## **‘...it is important to draw on the benefits of collaboration, shared expertise and good practice.’**

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# Twenty strands of influence

This statement of intent identifies twenty strands which we believe can have the most significant influence on educational outcomes for children and young people experiencing vulnerability. These strands are grouped within four overarching themes:



The twenty strands are outlined below. They represent the focus areas the Local Authority will use to drive improved provision and outcomes for children and young people experiencing vulnerability. The purpose of this document is therefore to ensure the twenty strands are known and translated into a statement of intent which underpins the work of the Local Authority, in support of children and young people experiencing vulnerability in education.

# Inclusive provision to understand and meet need

## 1 High quality teaching and learning for all

Undoubtedly, being exposed to the highest quality of provision through skilled, expert teaching and environments conducive to maximising learning are fundamental to children and young people securing strong outcomes, both academic and personal. Building capacity in this respect, both that which is Local Authority driven and that which is sector-led, is central to this statement of intent.

### We will:

- Offer support and opportunities for settings to access current, relevant, good quality professional development for all staff; and encourage this as an integral part of the setting's planning for continuous improvement
- Support and challenge settings to be responsive in their professional learning and development, to meet the sometimes-changing needs of the children and young people they serve
- Offer advice and support in the recruitment and retention of a skilled, inclusive workforce
- Provide support and challenge to settings in respect of their overall performance, improvement and outcomes for all children and young people
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



## 2

# Accurate, informative assessment of need

A key part of effective, high-quality provision and worthy of highlight in its own right is accurate, informative assessment. A skilled workforce uses a range of formative assessment approaches and diagnostic tools to gain a picture of what a child or young person knows, understands and is able to do. This should enable practitioners to plan effectively to address misconceptions or gaps in learning and skillset, to build on the current, and inform the way ahead. The distinction between a learning gap and a learning need is important. Strong, effective assessment will help to make this distinction and therefore to identify early when a child or young person has a learning need that requires additionality and/or adjustment to universal provision. Where assessment is strong, it recognises both academic and personal need. It therefore looks at the 'softer' indicators; the personal qualities, the social skills, attitudes and behaviours, to form a more holistic view of need.

### We will:

- Offer settings support and training to secure strong assessment practice
- Signpost settings to assessment support, strategies, materials and resources from a range of services
- Fulfil statutory assessment functions and use findings to inform future practice
- Quality assure sample assessments and use findings to inform future practice
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



### 3

## Breadth of high-quality curricular provision for all

All children and young people should have access to a broad and rich curriculum offer as an entitlement. Too often, those experiencing vulnerability see their provision narrowed, for example to core subjects, in an attempt to strengthen attainment in these areas; yet this can be counter-productive in terms of engagement, motivation and indeed attainment outcomes. Equity of curricular provision is vital and for those with vulnerability can fill gaps in their experiences, knowledge and understanding which may arise due to their circumstances away from the school environment.

### We will:

- Promote and expect a broad, rich and rounded curriculum offer in all settings
- Support and challenge settings to ensure equity of access to a rich and relevant curriculum, which best matches children and young people's rounded needs
- Provide support, training and resources across the full range of curriculum areas, for example through Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service (HIAS) subject inspector/advisors
- Promote the sharing of subject expertise through facilitated subject networks for schools
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

## 4

# Personalised learning and development pathways

Most settings will have a universal offer which is available to all. In order for that to be relevant and well-matched to the needs of all children and young people, it should have flexibility, be adaptable, and be responsive. Children and young people make progress at different rates, find some aspects of learning and development easier than others and often have varying needs at different times. They may not experience vulnerability throughout their education; it may be historic and leave a legacy, it may be current, sometimes it will have a negative impact and other times it may not. This is why accurate, on-going assessment as highlighted previously is key; however, it will only have impact if it leads to a tailored response. There should be different options for children and young people to best meet their needs both current and future, whilst not being limiting of their life chances.

### We will:

- Offer guidance and training for settings on how to develop and implement adaptive, responsive provision
- Offer support materials to settings which suggest strategies and approaches to respond to needs through personalisation of the universal offer; for example, the SEN Support Guidance for Schools 2021
- Advocate structured interventions as appropriate to need and through the person-centred approach
- Signpost to key services which can help settings to develop a personalised approach; for example, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Education Psychology (HIEP)
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



## 5

# The importance of oracy, speaking and listening skills, and building vocabulary from an early age

Vocabulary knowledge, depth and breadth is fundamental to a successful education and good onward life chances. The academic curriculum makes increasing demands on children and young people's knowledge and use of vocabulary, their ability to read and to write. Without good vocabulary, children and young people can struggle to access learning or make connections in their thinking and development. The correlation between vocabulary and academic success is widely evidenced, as is the impact of the 'word gap' on children and young people experiencing vulnerability, notably related to socio-economic factors or special need compared to their peers. Children and young people also need to be taught the skills of speaking and of listening, in addition to that which they acquire through their everyday experiences.

### We will:

- Promote and offer training on explicit vocabulary teaching and creating word-rich environments from an early age and throughout education
- Promote and offer training on the teaching of reading from an early age and throughout education
- Support and challenge settings to close gaps in vocabulary and literacy attainment from an early age
- Support settings with the explicit teaching of speaking and listening skills
- Facilitate action research-based projects across settings, designed to support sector-led improvement
- Use data to inform targeted training and development in localities of greatest need
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

# Inclusive cultures, environments and practice

## 6 Strong, inclusive leadership

From the smallest of Early Years settings through to the largest of post-16 providers, strong, inclusive leadership is needed to set the direction, values, ethos and culture that then become the lived experience of the child or young person. We aim to achieve a fully inclusive system and to do that we need inclusive leadership within every setting and across communities. A culture of inclusivity that permeates staff and pupils alike is critical to a child or young person's sense of self-worth, belonging and identity and creates the conditions conducive to maximising learning. Leaders need the moral imperative and ambition to be fully inclusive alongside a workforce that has the knowledge and skills to see that ambition through to fruition. It is therefore important to recognise that inclusive leadership is more than moral imperative alone. Leaders need also to know how to implement their intentions and enable the workforce to deliver.

### We will:

- Model inclusive leadership through our own processes, for example through the Leadership and Learning Partner Review (LLPR) in schools, and through our interactions with settings
- Offer training which helps settings to be inclusive because the workforce has the knowledge and skills to meet all needs
- Support and challenge leaders at all levels in respect of the practices which contribute to an inclusive culture for all
- Promote strong self-evaluation systems, processes and skills, such that settings have a true picture of their inclusivity, including from the perspective of different stakeholders
- Promote collaboration and cohesion across communities of settings, such that each offers an inclusive environment for all children and young people
- Foster the commitment to 'local schools for local children and young people'; helping parents to have confidence in the local setting being as inclusive for their child as the one with a stronger reputation beyond their immediate community
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

## 7

## Aspirational cultures and high expectations for all

High aspiration for all children and young people is expected to be a core aspect of a setting's vision and values. How that vision is then implemented and experienced by children and young people is again influenced significantly by the attitudes, behaviours and practices of staff. It is really important that labels, stereotypes, groupings and typical barriers do not feed low expectation; this can sometimes happen sub-consciously. Perceived generic 'ability' which effectively boxes a child or young person into one space for their entire knowledge, experiences, understanding and skillset across all areas of learning and development – sometimes for successive years through their education – serves only to feed ill-matched learning and development opportunities. It can also be of much detriment to a child or young person's self-worth and their own expectations of themselves. High expectation must be a given for every child or young person.

### We will:

- Support and challenge settings to communicate strong aspiration and intent for all children and young people; for example, through the curriculum provision and ways in which it is made accessible to all
- Offer support to settings to secure fair and equitable access to appropriate provision for all children and young people
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice





## 8

# Positive behaviours and good behaviour for learning

To learn well, children and young people need to develop good behaviours for learning. They also need to develop positive, productive general behaviour; the ability to self-regulate in a range of contexts, including in their relationships with other children, young people and adults. The higher rates of suspensions, exclusions and violent incidents involving children and young people with special educational needs, socio-economic disadvantage and/or open to social care suggests those experiencing vulnerability need greater adjustments, additionality and support to regulate and to exhibit positive behaviours. Unmet need can manifest itself in unproductive behaviour, hence it is important to both identify need accurately and to then meet it effectively. Unregulated behaviour is invariably a form of communication, an emotional response to experiences or events and, undoubtedly, there is a close correlation with strands relating to emotional wellbeing, social interactions and relationships, and feeling safe.

### We will:

- Provide strong early intervention services and outreach offers to support settings in meeting social, emotional and mental health needs and in managing behaviour
- Offer training and support to settings in understanding behaviour, the root causes of unproductive behaviour, and approaches/strategies to promote positive behaviour at both whole setting and pupil level
- Offer support and advice on the skillset of a setting's workforce
- Offer and signpost to multi-agency training on social and emotional wellbeing and good mental health
- Offer training to secure accurate identification of need and matched provision
- Provide support and challenge to settings to respond to and meet the needs of the children and young people within their communities, including making adjustments to universal provision where appropriate
- Increase the sufficiency of specialist placements to meet more complex need
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

## 9

## Effective deployment, designated roles, everyone a champion of children and young people experiencing vulnerability

A trained and skilled workforce requires effective deployment in order to have maximum impact across the setting. Matching skillsets and expertise to need is important, in order that children and young people experience the highest quality support for their learning and development. Whilst it is important that every member of staff champions every child or young person and plays an advocacy role in their needs being met, identifying those with specific responsibilities and ensuring they are equipped to fulfil those responsibilities is also important. For example, every setting should have a designated teacher for looked after children, a special educational needs co-ordinator and a designated safeguarding lead. Similarly, there are specific roles within governing bodies or their equivalent which have particular responsibilities for groups of children and young people experiencing vulnerability.

### We will:

- Champion and model advocacy for children and young people experiencing vulnerability through appointments to our workforce, alongside our work and interactions with settings and with wider services
- Offer advice, training and support to settings in their deployment and use of staff to maximise impact on provision and outcomes for all children and young people
- Offer expert, role-specific training and advice to those with dedicated roles, including the facilitation of local support networks in response to demand
- Advocate for postholders in dedicated roles being of sufficient seniority and status to have influence and contribute to decision-making within the setting
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



Both Local Authority and setting resource needs to be used and targeted appropriately to ensure there is maximum impact and gain for the benefit of children and young people experiencing vulnerability. Ensuring all in the workforce have sufficient skill, knowledge and understanding to champion children and young people's needs is essential; so too is the need for staff with particular expertise and foci. Similarly, resource which supports both the universal offer and targeted/bespoke provision tailored to specific need and circumstance is important.

Where additional funding is available for specific groups of children and young pupil, for example the Pupil Premium for those eligible for free school meals or in Local Authority care, its use must be carefully determined, and impact judiciously reviewed.

Structured interventions can be highly effective in tailoring provision to best meet need and personalise learning. Determining the right intervention at the right time is critical to success.

### We will:

- Secure skilled Local Authority staff with expertise in the field to lead work with settings focused on building capacity to better support children and young people experiencing vulnerability
- Support settings in skilling the workforce appropriately and deploying staff judiciously
- Offer support and challenge to maximise the impact of dedicated funding such as that linked to an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and funding through Pupil Premium
- Offer training and support in identifying and implementing low cost, high impact structured interventions
- Support settings in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their resource on provision and outcomes for children and young people experiencing vulnerability
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

# Inclusive relationships, wellbeing and feeling safe

## 11 Emotional wellbeing and good mental health

Settings that are successful for all children and young people develop an ethos, environment, structures and curriculum that encompass the proactive development of the whole child or young person. We know that emotional wellbeing and good mental health are important in their own right, as well as being fundamental to academic success. Helping children and young people develop skills and attributes such as resilience, self-worth, self-regulation and independence is a key aspect of our work universally but even more so for those experiencing vulnerability. This group can be at heightened risk of the negative impact of their current or past circumstance, requiring early and proactive intervention to target their emotional wellbeing.

### We will:

- Work proactively with partner agencies to promote strong provision and support for good emotional wellbeing and mental health in settings
- Work with partners to develop and signpost settings to a directory of support and advice for children and young people, their families, and professionals
- Promote and support the roll out of mental health support teams across localities
- Ensure a proportion of the E & I workforce is trained in Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and attachment/trauma awareness
- Offer training and signpost to multi-agency offers relating to ACEs, attachment/trauma awareness and mitigating the emotional impact of adversity
- Offer training on curriculum content, including for example Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) in schools
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



## Positive social interactions and good, healthy relationships

Supporting children and young people to develop their social skills, their sense of belonging amongst their peers and communities and developing positive, respectful relationships is another fundamental aspect of a good education leading to better life chances. Once again, the culture within a setting plays a key role in fostering the interactions, attitudes and behaviours which develop and which influence children and young people. For some children and young people experiencing vulnerability, positive social interaction and a sense of belonging can be particularly challenging; they may, for example, feel 'different' to their peers in a negative sense, they may perceive themselves to be of less 'worth' or feel their barriers and challenges are exposed to others in a way which compounds their vulnerability further. Some children and young people have a specific special education need in the area of social and communication skills; others may have had little or poor modelling within their environment, for example.

### We will:

- Promote the explicit teaching of social and communication skills from an early age and throughout education
- Offer expertise in the teaching of social and communication skills through training and support for settings
- Support and challenge settings in respect of the practices and environments which contribute to positive, healthy relationships for all children and young people
- Provide and signpost to materials and resources which support strong social interaction and healthy relationships
- Offer training to settings on curriculum content, including for example RSHE in schools
- Facilitate action research-based projects across settings, designed to support sector-led improvement
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

## 13 Physical health

Much research suggests that active children and young people are more likely to become active adults, leading to healthier lifestyles. Physical wellbeing can also encourage healthy growth and development in children and young people, have positive impact on concentration and mental health, and provide opportunities to interact with others. For a child or young person experiencing vulnerability, physical exercise can bring a sense of release, belonging or achievement that they may struggle to gain in other ways at that point in time. Healthy eating is also a factor; educating children and young people about how and why good nutrition is important can help to break familial cycles and promote greater social mobility. Good nutrition will also support better learning.

### We will:

- Work with partners, for example Public Health, to promote and signpost to training on fostering good physical health in settings
- Encourage the targeted use of resource, for example Pupil Premium, to offer additional opportunities in settings to take part in physical activity
- Offer HIAS-facilitated projects which bring expertise in physical education and tackling educational disadvantage together to build capacity in settings
- Promote the work of the Local Authority outdoor education team and use of the natural environment as a source of learning and personal development
- Offer training to settings on curriculum content, including for example RSHE in schools
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



## 14 Feeling safe, keeping safe

Children and young people need to feel protected and safe to be able to learn well. In every setting, there should be a range of ways in which this imperative is fulfilled for all children and young people. These relate to the environment, the procedures and practices of the setting, and to the ways in which children and young people are taught and learn how to protect and keep themselves safe. For those experiencing vulnerability, there may need to be adjustments or additionality to support, protect and safeguard them further.

### We will:

- Keep abreast of best practice in the protection and safeguarding of children and young people to help inform our work with settings
- Prioritise the protection and safety of children and young people in our work with settings
- Work in close partnership with colleagues in the Children and Families Branch and wider partners/agencies, for example through Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships
- Offer training to settings on the protection and safety of children and young people, including that which is multi-agency
- Offer training to those with designated responsibilities for safeguarding, including governing bodies or their equivalent and designated safeguarding leads
- Offer training to settings on curriculum content, including for example RSHE in schools
- Offer training to settings on mitigating the impact of adversity
- Challenge and address practice which potentially puts a child or young person experiencing vulnerability at greater risk, for example off-rolling, long-term reduced hours provision, exclusions
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



## 15 Successful transitions

It is widely recognised that points of transition, for example changes within the school day, a change of teacher/critical adult and particularly a change of setting, can have a marked impact on any child or young person, which can be exacerbated for those experiencing vulnerability. In particular but not exclusively, children and young people who are experiencing, or have experienced, issues of attachment and/or trauma are more susceptible to challenges brought about by change and uncertainty. A critical aspect of any child's development is fostering their social and emotional skills, their resilience and independence, their communication skills and their sense of identity and belonging. These are just some of the areas which will assist smooth and successful transitions. Understanding how issues of attachment and/or trauma may manifest themselves and the approaches to help overcome them are also fundamental for many children and young people, to support both their personal and academic development. A child or young person experiencing trauma is unlikely to make strong academic progress; settings must therefore recognise the importance of personal development both in its own right and as a means to accessing good academic outcomes.

### We will:

- Offer training on the development of social and emotional skills, on personal development learning and on successful transitions
- Encourage and facilitate cross phase work across settings to support effective, positive transitions for all children and young people as they move from one setting or context to another
- Promote the adoption of a whole setting approach to attachment and trauma-informed practice
- Provide resources which support curriculum-based support for personal development learning and the RSHE curriculum
- Promote strong liaison with onward/intended destinations including, for example, further education, employment and training post-16
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



# Inclusive partnerships, participation and engagement

## 16 Early intervention including family support

Ensuring children and young people, and their families, receive the right support at the right time plays a role in avoiding escalation of need through early intervention and prevention. Supporting a child or young person and their family at an early stage is beneficial both to them and, invariably, to the setting and other services, reducing the demand for more intensive, higher skilled and often higher cost resource. Further, early intervention and prevention work can halt the widening of gaps in attainment levels; the longer a child or young person's needs are not met, the more they will struggle to access learning, compounded potentially by issues of self-esteem and confidence.

### We will:

- Engage with work across CSD E & I and with settings to further strengthen the Early Help offer
- Provide high quality services which operate at an early intervention stage to help prevent the escalation of need
- Support settings with the early assessment and identification of need
- Promote the family approach across all settings
- Foster positive multi-agency partnerships and signpost to support beyond CSD E & I
- Build capacity to provide high quality early intervention through sector-led improvement projects
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice

## Parental involvement and partnership – the family approach

Strong partnerships with parents/carers and acknowledgement that children and young people's family contexts and experiences at home and at school can have a strong inter-connectivity can play a crucial role. Sometimes, the family of a child experiencing vulnerability is also experiencing challenges and is in need of help, guidance and support. Working together and with the family as a unit can help to bring shared understanding, strategies and solutions to overcome the challenges, with greater strength in a collaborative and holistic approach.

### We will:

- Ensure parent/carer representatives are able to contribute as appropriate to decision-making, strategy and the co-production of key materials, as they were, for example, with the School SEN Support Guidance
- Offer services which work both with children and young people and their parents/carers, for example the Primary Behaviour Service, to promote and model working through a family approach
- Advocate with settings the strength and value in parent/carer partnership and the family approach
- Offer training to settings in working with parents/carers and developing whole setting ethos, policies and procedures which value partnership working and the family context
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice.



## The lived experience of the child or young person

It is important for settings to understand the context and experiences of any child or young person to form strong relationships, be responsive to their needs and identify barriers to their development, in order to navigate them successfully. Listening to the 'voices' of children and young people is important. Recognising that 'voice' can be communicated in a variety of ways such as through their behaviours, attitudes and emotions, not simply through their spoken word, is important. For some children and young people experiencing vulnerability, the spoken word can be difficult or indeed not possible. Seeing our work through the lens of a child or young person experiencing vulnerability will help inform our work and that of settings; the strategic direction, the decision-making, the activities we undertake and the judgements we make in relation to performance and effectiveness.

### We will:

- Advocate for the voice of the child and model this in our work
- Ensure the voice of the child plays a role in our evaluation of settings' performance and effectiveness and informs our own practices; seek their views and experiences in relation to their provision
- Promote the voice of the child and their lived experiences in playing a central role in settings' own self-evaluation of performance and effectiveness
- Seek and value the views of children and young people when shaping direction and guidance as appropriate
- Be represented in, and contribute to, multi-disciplinary work which promotes, listens to and responds to the voice of the child, for example, the task and focus group for action in respect of violence against women and girls

## 19 Inter-agency working

Whilst the focus of this statement of intent is on the educational outcomes of children and young people experiencing vulnerability and therefore the provision within education settings, it is clear that there are wider influences which benefit from inter-agency and multi-agency working. As well as finding and exploiting the 'joins' across the Branches of Children's Services to maximise our positive impact on children and young people experiencing vulnerability, reaching across to other partners will bring the benefits of collaboration, sharing of expertise and a whole system approach to the same children and families with whom a number of partners are often working.

### We will:

- Promote and model positive inter-agency working, forging good relationships at all levels
- Identify and share areas of expertise in order to enrich the support and training offered to education settings
- Signpost settings to the work of partner agencies as appropriate
- Identify some key areas of foci common to a range of partners and use the commonality to strengthen our offer to settings
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice





## Good attendance, participation and engagement

Good attendance, participation and engagement in education and learning, both academic and personal, is an important contributor to strong outcomes. Unfortunately, we know through data that the groups in focus – and particularly those with socio-economic disadvantage and those open to social care – generally experience low attendance in education relative to their peers. Legal routes to tackle poor attendance can be counter-productive for a number of these families; issuing a fine to a family in poverty may well have consequences which have further negative impact on the child or young person. Tackling the causes of non or irregular attendance is important, with this generally being unique to each family, albeit with some common typicality. At a setting level, an inclusive environment with strong relationships and relevant, engaging learning which interests the child or young person to participate is a key aspect.

There is a strong multi-agency and family-centred element to improving educational attendance which means partnership work, particularly at the child and family level, is important. Settings need to consider the needs of all children and young people with whom they work, and their families, in determining the composition and skillset of their workforce, in order to maximise learning and development opportunities. If the child or young person is not in the setting, undoubtedly there will be an adverse impact on outcomes and, potentially, their protection and safety too.

### We will:

- Work with colleagues in the Children and Families Branch and the wider department/council to develop a cross-departmental/council attendance strategy
- Advocate the family approach to improving attendance
- Offer advice and support to settings on attendance legislation and its implementation
- Offer advice and support to settings on the composition and skillset of the workforce; for example, the value and impact of dedicated family support/attendance workers in a setting, or shared across a cluster of settings
- Offer good practice attendance networks in response to demand for those leading on attendance in schools
- Offer support, advice and training to attendance/inclusion/pastoral leads in schools
- Act as a conduit for sharing and disseminating best practice



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