



**Barking &  
Dagenham**

# **Just Say Conference**

**4<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

**Barking & Dagenham Council Update**

**Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director Education**

**Denise Watts, Head of Statutory SEND Services**

**Joy Barter – Head of Early Years**

# Jane Hargreaves – Commissioning Director Education

## Introduction and Overview – Education Focus

Image source: Riverside Bridge School

one borough; one community; no one left behind

**Barking &  
Dagenham**

# **Statutory SEND Update**

**Denise Watts, Head of Statutory SEND Service**

# Performance (since start of January 2026) **Barking & Dagenham**

- 3462 EHC Plans maintained
- 77 EHC requests received
- 149 EHC Plans issued
- 288 Annual Reviews considered, with 13% actioned within statutory timescale
- 20 children and young people with an EHC Plan (or undergoing assessment) have moved into the area
- 13 SENDIST appeals received
- 14 requests for formal mediation

# Staffing and Recruitment

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- We continue to manage significant demand alongside active recruitment and interim arrangements to maintain service continuity. This includes recruitment to eight permanent officer roles across assessments and reviews, in addition to a Review Lead Officer, and interim Operational Lead,
- To improve clarity, accountability and statutory compliance, the SEND Service has been re-organised around a statutory activity model.
- This means work is structured around **key statutory functions**, with **clear lead officers** responsible for oversight, quality and timeliness in each area.
  - **Manzoor Razan:** Assessment Team - 5.0 FTE (average caseload 69 cases)
  - **Amila Sarwar:** Review Team – 4.6 FTE (average caseload 512 cases)
  - **Joseph Cox:** Preparation for Adulthood Team – 4.0 FTE (average caseload 278 cases)
- Every statutory function has clear leadership and accountability
- Families can expect greater consistency in how decisions are made
- Work is prioritised according to legal timescales and risk
- This structure supports more transparent communication and service improvement as recruitment continues

Remit	Responsible Lead Officer	Reporting Officer(s)
<b>Children Out of School and Vulnerable Cohorts</b> (includes interim education arrangements; New to Borough; Children Looked After)	Amila Sarwar (Team Manager) <a href="mailto:amila.sarwar@lbbd.gov.uk">amila.sarwar@lbbd.gov.uk</a>	Saira Kassana (interim) ( <a href="mailto:saira.kassana@lbbd.gov.uk">saira.kassana@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Vacancy
<b>EHC Assessments 0-25</b> (and associated placements) <i>(includes initial and re-assessments)</i>	Manzoor Razan (Assessment Lead) <a href="mailto:manzoor.razan@lbbd.gov.uk">manzoor.razan@lbbd.gov.uk</a>	Fatma Hassan ( <a href="mailto:fatma.hassan@lbbd.gov.uk">fatma.hassan@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Gulshanara Begum ( <a href="mailto:gulshanara.begum@lbbd.gov.uk">gulshanara.begum@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Lisa Gatt ( <a href="mailto:lisa.gatt@lbbd.gov.uk">lisa.gatt@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Simbiat (Joy) Lana (interim) ( <a href="mailto:simbiat.lana@lbbd.gov.uk">simbiat.lana@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Elly Kincaid (interim) ( <a href="mailto:elly.kincaid@lbbd.gov.uk">elly.kincaid@lbbd.gov.uk</a> )
<b>EHCP Reviews (and associated placements) (Nursery to Year 10)</b>	Vacancy  Amila Sarwar (Team Manager) <a href="mailto:amila.sarwar@lbbd.gov.uk">amila.sarwar@lbbd.gov.uk</a>	Aaliyah Burns ( <a href="mailto:aaliyah.burns@lbbd.gov.uk">aaliyah.burns@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) David Barrows-Langford ( <a href="mailto:David.barrows-langford@lbbd.gov.uk">David.barrows-langford@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Sarah Sibbons ( <a href="mailto:sarah.sibbons@lbbd.gov.uk">sarah.sibbons@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Siobhan Rice ( <a href="mailto:siobhan.rice@lbbd.gov.uk">siobhan.rice@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Lucy Sinclair (interim) ( <a href="mailto:lucy.sinclair@lbbd.gov.uk">lucy.sinclair@lbbd.gov.uk</a> )
<b>EHC Reviews (and associated placements)</b> (including NEETs and EOTAS) <b>(Year 11 to Year 20)</b>	Joseph Cox (Preparation for Adulthood Lead) <a href="mailto:joseph.cox@lbbd.gov.uk">joseph.cox@lbbd.gov.uk</a>	Daniel Fletcher (interim) ( <a href="mailto:daniel.fletcher@lbbd.gov.uk">daniel.fletcher@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Joanna Zarkadoulas (interim) ( <a href="mailto:joanna.zarkadoulas@lbbd.gov.uk">joanna.zarkadoulas@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Nazmin Uddin ( <a href="mailto:nazmin.uddin@lbbd.gov.uk">nazmin.uddin@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Vacancy
<b>Mediation and SENDIST Appeals</b>	Rebecca Tuffield (Dispute & Resolution Lead) <a href="mailto:rebecca.tuffield@lbbd.gov.uk">rebecca.tuffield@lbbd.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Service Support</b>	Samuel Salim (High Needs Tracking Lead) <a href="mailto:samuel.salim@lbbd.gov.uk">samuel.salim@lbbd.gov.uk</a>	Owen Oriakhi (interim) (Finance) ( <a href="mailto:owen.oriakhi@lbbd.gov.uk">owen.oriakhi@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Nyiemah Metzger (New to Borough) ( <a href="mailto:nyeimah.metzger@lbbd.gov.uk">nyeimah.metzger@lbbd.gov.uk</a> ) Catherine Ralph (interim) (Requests and Reviews) ( <a href="mailto:catherine.ralph@lbbd.gov.uk">catherine.ralph@lbbd.gov.uk</a> )

## **Nursery to Year 8 - Lead Officers: Amila Sarwar (Team Manager) and Nicolle Rowson (SEND Lead Professional)**

- We have now completed the first phase of our internal quality assurance of the Annual Review paperwork and overall process. To ensure the revisions reflect the needs and experiences of all stakeholders, our next priority is gathering feedback from schools, alongside obtaining parent carer and young people's views. Our intention is to **finalise and implement** the **new paperwork and guidance by the start of the autumn term 2026**.

## **Year 9 Onwards - Lead Officer: Joseph Cox (Preparation for Adulthood Lead)**

- **Newly updated paperwork and guidance**, which has been designed to strengthen our Preparing for Adulthood approach will be implemented **from 31 March 2026**.
- The revised documentation places a clear emphasis on the core PFA outcome areas: Employment and Education, Independent Living, Community Inclusion, and Health. It includes built-in guidance for both families and professionals to support meaningful, forward-looking discussions from Year 9 onwards, enabling early identification of strengths, aspirations, and areas requiring development.

- **Reception (September 2026 entry):** 100% of children with a final EHCP have an identified setting.
- For children currently undergoing assessment, transition discussions are underway with parents and Early Years professionals, with a focus on identifying children with significant and complex needs who may require specialist provision.
- **Junior phase transfer:** 75% of children have an identified setting. The remaining 25% require specialist arrangements, with ongoing liaison with special schools to maximise capacity.
- **Year 7 transition:** 68% of children have an identified setting. 22% have been identified as requiring specialist provision. The remaining 10% are under further consideration following initial consultation responses.
- **Post-16 (Years 11, 13 and 14):** 64% of annual reviews have been completed. 55% of parental preferences have been received.
- Dedicated panel meetings held in February 2026 are supporting progress towards the statutory deadline of **31 March 2026**

# Coproduction and Collaboration

**Embracing** in genuine partnership and collaboration:

**BUILD ON ACHIEVEMENTS AND TRUST**



## Our 2025 Collaboration Journey Highlights

## Impact and 2026 looking forward 🧡

★ Parents Evening with SEND Local Offer Network at Trinity, Riverside Bridge, and Mayesbroke Park School with Just Say

Our partnership with schools effectively connected many new families, include children and young people in alternative provision, with the SEND community services. [2026: ongoing collaboration and partnership with schools and community services 🧡 ]

★ 1<sup>st</sup> Parents Eventing with SEND Local Offer Network at a mainstream school with ARP (James Cambell Primary School) with Just Say

This event deepened our understanding of the available provisions and strengthened meaningful connections and encouragement among us all - Education, Family and Community Care and Health NHS NELFT. [2026: ongoing working hand-in-hand with schools to get support to children within their communities 🧡 ]

★ Attended and promoted Just Say Open Forums e.g. BDSIP Parent Training on Understanding and Supporting Autism & Adolescence

The parent training sessions captured the essence of learning to learn and learning to support our children, merging invaluable knowledge with shared real-life experiences shared have been invaluable. [2026: support more parent-to-school partnership to help parents to support their child's learning and wellbeing at home 🧡 ]

In 2026, we will continue open communication and collaboration with Just Say, as we embrace new challenges and opportunities to empower our children and young people on this SEND reform journey, ensuring they shine brightly.



# **Education and Schools**

**Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director Education**

**Joy Barter, Head of Early Years**

Jane & Joy

## Placements

1741 CYP educated in mainstream schools (1,115 in 2023) – 53% of children & young people with plans.

822 CYP are educated in special schools (585 in 2023) – 25%

# Council Investment 2024 - 26

22 projects in mainstream schools to enhance SEND provision completed or in progress.  
A further 10 projects planned



## Special

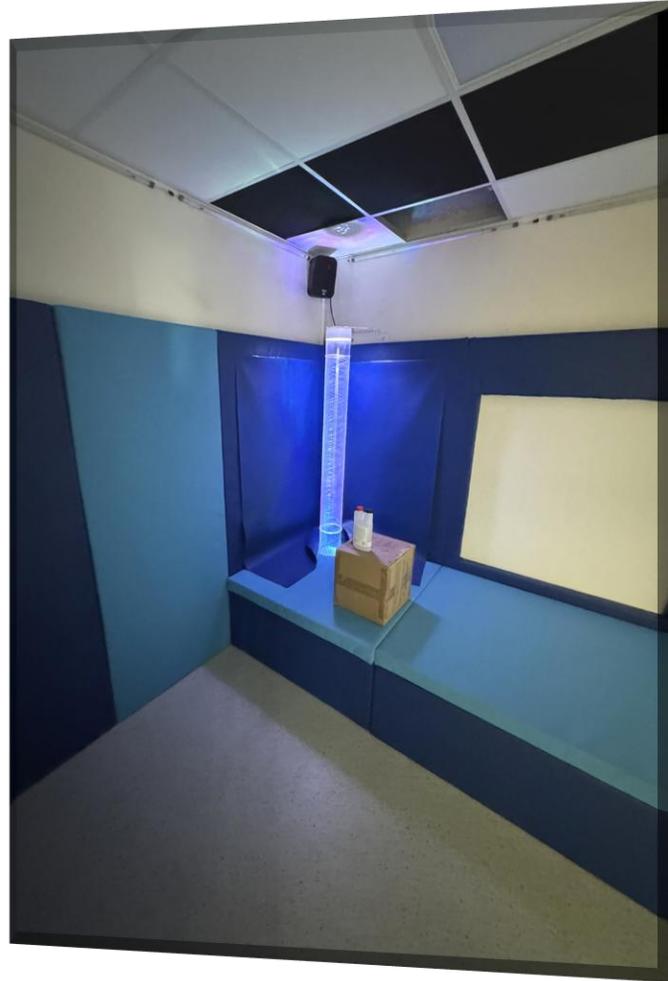
- New provisions/major projects at Riverside Bridge, Trinity School and Oxlow Bridge
- Riverside Bridge – City Farm and Campus
- Trinity School – New 36 place Living & Learning provision – House refurbishment to create family centre
- Oxlow Bridge – Open and number of places increasing each year to 90.

Trinity



# Projects Mainstream Schools

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# Quality, oversight and support for Schools

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Joy Barter, Head of Early Years

## How do we know about quality?

OFSTED Inspections

LBBB Commissioned Annual Review for ARPs

Annual visit from BDSIP to all schools with SEND/Inclusion focus

## How do we support quality?

BDSIP support for ARPs

BDSIP Training programme

Annual Conference for SENCOs

SEND professional team training programme and support for all school

Support from Virtual Head & lead professional team – advising and responding

Training since September 2025:

- Interview techniques for the steering group to be able to support LA interviews.
- Safeguarding training to the steering group via an online platform
- Social safety training for member parents who have children SEND.
- Access to BDSIP's online training platform which is until Sept 26.

There is a further commission with BDSIP beyond April

# Finally

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**SEND Reforms: Putting Children and Young People First**

Please advise us how members of Just Say Parents' Forum would like us to engage with you to respond to the consultation and prepare for the SEND reforms.

Thank you