

# SEND Special School Place Planning Strategy



2020-2023



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Meeting the educational needs of children with SEND</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Supporting Children with SEND – The Graduated Response</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The rising demand for special school places</b>	<b>6-7</b>
<b>Special School Forecasts 2020-2025</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) &amp; Profound Neurological Impairment (PNI)</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>Social Emotional &amp; Mental Health (SEMH)</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>Learning Difficulties (LD)</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Hearing Impairment (HI)</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Communication &amp; Autism - children whose needs fall between existing special school sectors (CA)</b>	<b>15 -16</b>
<b>SEND Special School Place Planning Priorities 2020-2023</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>18-22</b>



# Introduction

The aim of the SEND Special School Place Planning Strategy is to ensure that there is sufficient capacity in Hertfordshire special schools, so that children with SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disabilities) have access to high quality local provision that meets their needs.

The strategy reflects the outcomes of the following workstreams of the overarching SEND Strategy 2018-2023<sup>1</sup> as they affect the need for special school places:

## Specialist Provision Workstream

**Vision:** *A pattern of specialist provision is strategically planned on the basis of evidence of what is required now and in the future. This enables the needs of more children and young people with complex SEND to be met as close as possible to their home and local community.*

## Behaviour and Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Workstream

**Vision:** *A flexible continuum of support is in place in each area to ensure that children and young people with significant needs affecting their behaviour and / or mental health can access their entitlement to education provision and their outcomes improve.*

A pattern of special school provision has been identified which will build on the existing provision to improve outcomes for all children with SEND, ensure that there are sufficient places to meet forecast demand and achieve best value for money.

<sup>1</sup>View the SEND Strategy



The special school strategy is informed by evidence-based analysis of need and demography which has identified the number of special school places needed to 2025.

The strategy will be reviewed annually.

# Meeting the educational needs of children with SEND

Our vision for all children in Hertfordshire with SEND is that they will have their needs met with a range of inclusive provision available through our mainstream schools, specialist resource provision (including Education Support Centres and Primary Support Bases) and special school provision.

Children with SEND will have access to a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum which will be holistic and provide support across education, health and social care to meet their needs.

Our approach will always have the child and their family at the centre of what we do and we will co-produce our strategies, working closely with existing schools and our parent carer forum (HPCI)<sup>2</sup>.

Our aim is to ensure that we meet the needs of our growing SEND population. Wherever possible, we will ensure that all children and young people with SEND have access

to high quality local provision that meets their needs and will look to provide equity of provision across the county.

We will clearly identify the type of support available for all children with SEND in our mainstream schools, the targeted support available across mainstream and specialist settings (including SRPs, ESCs and PSBs<sup>3</sup>) and the highly specialist support that could be accessed in our special schools.

We will ensure that we are admitting our children to the correct settings and will monitor their progress to ensure that the provision is meeting their needs.



<sup>2</sup> HPCI – Herts Parent Carer Involvement

<sup>3</sup> SRP – Specialist Resource Provision / ESC – Education Support Centre / PSB – Primary Support Base



# Supporting Children with SEND

## – The Graduated Response

### UNIVERSAL

Children and their families are supported by ensuring that each child's needs are provided for and uniqueness is celebrated. Using this universal approach, most children with SEND will have their needs met at a mainstream school.

### TARGETED SUPPORT

Some children will need a little more targeted support in a mainstream school.

### TARGETED PLUS

For children who will need support from outside agencies.

### SPECIALIST

For children who need something more individual to meet their needs, as well as support from outside agencies.

### SPECIALIST PLUS

Those children who need intensive support in a smaller environment for a short period may be supported at specialist provision including SRPs, AP, ESCs and PSBs. Others will need a special school place.

### SPECIAL SCHOOLS

Hertfordshire currently has 25 special schools. These schools are split into sectors, by need:

**PNI** : two schools for pupils with physical and neurological impairments [1 primary (3 – 11) and 1 all age (3 – 18)] ;

**SLD** : six schools for pupils with severe learning disabilities and profound and multiple learning disabilities [1 x all age (3 – 19), 5 x all age (2 – 19)] ;

**SEMH** : six schools for pupils with social, emotional and mental health disabilities [2 x primary (5 – 11), 4 x secondary (11 – 16)] ;

**LD** : nine schools for pupils with learning disabilities and Autistic Spectrum Condition and Speech and Language Needs [4 primary (4 – 11), 1 secondary (9 – 16), 3 secondary (11 – 16), 1 all age (4 – 16)] ; and

**HI** : two schools for pupils with hearing impairments [1 secondary (11-18); 1 all age (3-16)]. These schools also provide a regional resource for HI pupils.

### INDEPENDENT PLACEMENTS

For a minority of children with very specific needs.

This strategy will focus on meeting the demand for special school places. However, the demand for special school places cannot be viewed in isolation.

Other initiatives, arising from SEND Workstreams, will have an impact on the demand for special school places. These co-dependant initiatives are summarised in Appendix 1.

# The rising demand for special school places

The County Council has a duty to promote high standards of education, fair access to education and a general duty to secure the sufficiency of school places. In addition, it must consider the need to secure provision for children with SEND, including the duty to respond to parents' representations about school provision. These are referred to as the School Place Planning Duties<sup>4</sup>.



As part of the SEND Strategy 2018-2023, a full review of how Hertfordshire meets the educational needs of children with SEND is underway. This review is looking at how the current offer meets demand now and in the future. While the review is ongoing, evidence gathered has clearly shown that there is a need to re-align some provision to meet both the current and future needs of children in Hertfordshire with SEND.

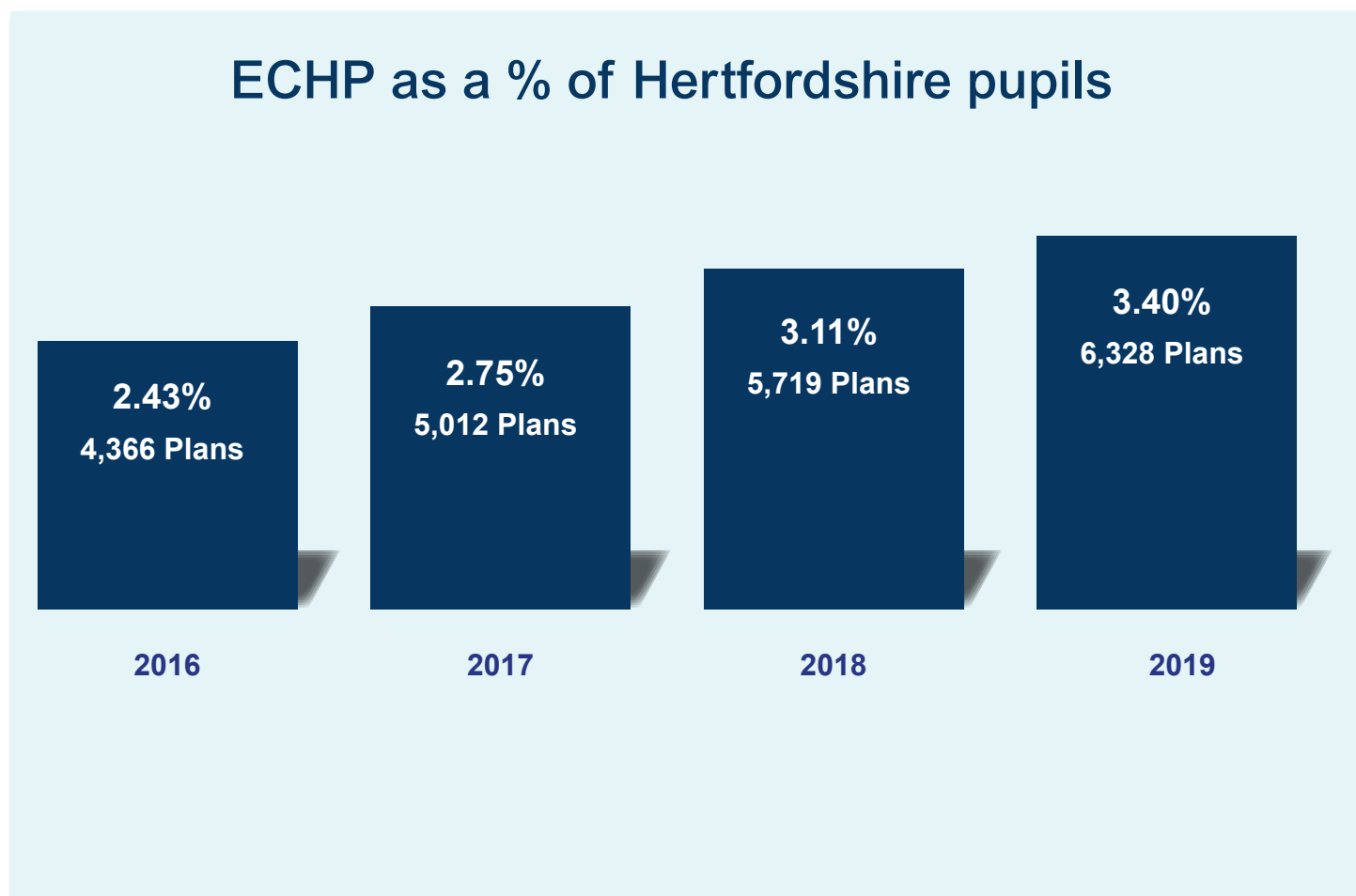
There is a demonstrable need for more special school places to meet some specific needs. Where it is demonstrated that need cannot be met for these children and young people within Hertfordshire, they are increasingly being placed, either by the County Council or as an outcome of a tribunal, at independent placements often far from their home and community. Being educated close to home is clearly desirable as it helps the child to develop independence and social networks that will support them as they prepare for adulthood.

This strategy looks to build the right capacity across Hertfordshire special schools, to meet these specific needs. This additional special school capacity will reduce the reliance on independent placements, ensuring that the educational needs of most Hertfordshire children with SEND can be met locally.

In addition to the need to build capacity so that Hertfordshire can meet specific needs, there has been an increase in the demand for special school places across the county, due to demographic growth.

<sup>4</sup> School Place Planning Duties (s13-14 Education act 1996)

As outlined in the SEND Strategy 2018-2023, Hertfordshire's 0-19 population is projected to rise by 11.9% between 2017 and 2026. As one would expect, the number of children with SEND will also increase. This increase in the population has already led to increased demand for special school places. The table below shows the increase in the number of Hertfordshire pupils with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP<sup>5</sup>) since 2016.



In the past two years an additional 233 places have been created in Hertfordshire special schools. However, increased capacity has been unable to meet the rising demand for special school places. This unmet demand has resulted in an increasing number of children being placed at independent provision, in 2019/20 financial year the number of children placed in the independent sector had increased to 220.

In addition some children have been placed in settings that do not best meet their need or are out of education, or on reduced timetables, because their needs cannot be met.

Hertfordshire special schools are now reaching capacity and, as demand continues to rise, new capacity must be built into the system to ensure that we are able to meet the needs of children with EHCPs into the future.

<sup>5</sup> EHCP - [www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ehcp](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/ehcp)

# Special School Forecasts 2020-2025

The County Council has produced special school forecasts to help understand short-term demand for special school places across Hertfordshire. These forecasts cover a 5 year period and will be updated annually.

## They include an assessment of :

- the 3 year rolling average in numbers in a year group from the previous year to provide cohort forecasts moving forward;
- the number of year 6 pupils who will require a secondary special school place; and
- an assessment of additional pupils that may arise from housing growth.

The forecasts do not include any contingency or 'margin'. The County Council would normally plan for a small surplus across an area to allow for fluctuations in forecast demand and to ensure children can secure a local place.

The special school forecasts cannot be viewed in isolation. Short term demand can be more accurately assessed using awaiting placement data held by the County Council. The forecast can, however, help to prioritise medium to longer term strategic projects to ensure that the right capacity is built into the system at the right time to meet forecast need. This work will increasingly need to take account of the growth agenda in Hertfordshire, by meeting the demand for special school places arising from approximately 100,000 new homes planned in the longer term for Hertfordshire, the impact of which will extend beyond the range of the current special school forecast.

## Sector analysis of the forecast need for special school places

The following section identifies the forecast for special school places, by sector. It also explores the needs of a specific cohort of children, whose needs will be met through the creation of a new Communication & Autism sector.

The SEND Special School Place Planning Strategy is one of several initiatives arising from the wider SEND Strategy 2018-2023. As previously mentioned, some of these other initiatives will have a bearing on the future demand for special school places. The impact of these initiatives is considered in the following sector strategies.





# Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD) & Profound Neurological Impairment (PNI)

Profound Neurological Impairment (PNI)										
School Name	Places Available 2020-21	Actuals			NOR January 2020	Forecast				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Lonsdale	95	81	86	104	108					
Meadow Wood	36	27	30	35	33					
<b>Total PNI Demand</b>		<b>108</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Total PNI Places Available</b>	<b>131</b>					<b>131</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of PNI Places (No.)</b>						<b>-25</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-46</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>-52</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of PNI Places (%)</b>						<b>-19.1%</b>	<b>-26.7%</b>	<b>-35.1%</b>	<b>-38.2%</b>	<b>-39.7%</b>

Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)										
School Name	Places Available 2021-22	Actuals			NOR January 2020	Forecast				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Breakspeare	91	76	78	86	85					
Woodfield	120	85	90	96	105					
Watling View	89	90	92	90	91					
Greenside	156	136	142	143	148					
Lakeside	75	67	68	70	70					
Amwell View	144	135	136	139	148					
<b>Total SLD Pupil Demand</b>		<b>589</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>876</b>
<b>Total SLD Places Available</b>	<b>675</b>					<b>675</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>675</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of SLD Places (No.)</b>						<b>-10</b>	<b>-64</b>	<b>-111</b>	<b>-157</b>	<b>-201</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of SLD Places (%)</b>						<b>-1.5%</b>	<b>-9.5%</b>	<b>-16.4%</b>	<b>-23.3%</b>	<b>-29.8%</b>

For strategic school place planning, the demand for these two sectors are combined: to understand the demand and potential strategies that could be employed to meet demand across these sectors.

PNI & SLD Combined										
School Name	Places Available 2020-21	Actuals			NOR January 2020	Forecast				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>Total PNI Demand</b>		<b>108</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Total SLD Pupil Demand</b>		<b>589</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>876</b>
<b>Total PNI &amp; SLD Demand</b>		<b>697</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>841</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>1,013</b>	<b>1,059</b>
<b>Total PNI &amp; SLD Places Available</b>	<b>806</b>					<b>806</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>806</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of PNI &amp; SLD Places (No.)</b>						<b>-35</b>	<b>-99</b>	<b>-157</b>	<b>-207</b>	<b>-253</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of PNI &amp; SLD Places (%)</b>						<b>-4.3%</b>	<b>-12.3%</b>	<b>-19.5%</b>	<b>-25.7%</b>	<b>-31.4%</b>

Currently there are six SLD schools across the county offering 675 places. There are two PNI schools offering a further 131 places. In total there are 806 places available across the SLD/ PNI sectors (Appendix 2).

Demand for SLD/PNI places has been rising and continues to do so at a significant rate. In January 2016 there were 697 pupils in these schools. This number had risen to 788 by January 2020, a rise of 13%.



The combined forecast indicates that demand for places from 2021 will exceed capacity and continues to do so for the life of the forecasts. There is a forecast deficit of 253 places by 2025.

This rising demand is partly due to demographic growth. However, medical advances in recent years have also led to more children surviving premature birth with PNI/SLD needs. Similarly, advances in trauma care have led to children surviving serious injuries but with PNI/SLD needs. The increased demand in this sector is consistent with growth seen nationally and the forecast indicates that demand will continue to rise for the life of the forecast.

To date, the County Council has managed the rise in demand in this sector by increasing capacity in existing special schools. In the past two years an additional 79 places have been created at the SLD and PNI schools. From September 2020, all schools in the sectors are at capacity and there is no further expansion potential.

### Assessment of other initiatives that may influence demand

- The needs of children with SLD and PNI are mostly evident from birth or before the child starts school. There is little movement from this sector into other sectors or mainstream settings.
- The initiatives to increase the number of children with SEND who can be supported

in mainstream and the introduction of SRPs for children with autism and communication needs is unlikely to significantly affect demand in this sector.

- There is potential that *Early Years SEND* and *Post 16 SEND* and *Preparing for Adulthood* initiatives may free up some limited capacity in this sector. These initiatives are at an early development stage. It is assessed that the impact is likely to be relatively low in comparison to the number of places required in the SLD /PNI sectors.
- The number of independent placements will increase significantly, as all schools in the sector are at capacity.

### SLD/PNI strategy

The delivery of additional local SLD/PNI capacity is a clear priority. All schools are now full and there is no further expansion capacity. It is important that new places are delivered appropriately across the county, to ensure equity of provision so that as many children as possible can be placed near to their home and local community.

Considering there is a forecast deficit of 253 places across the life of the forecast, it has been assumed that at least 300 places are required. This will allow for a level of capacity across the schools, ensuring that most children can be placed close to home and to allow for fluctuations in demand during the life of the forecast and beyond.

New SLD/PNI places will be distributed across the county, through the delivery of up to 3 new schools delivering at least 300 new places. These additional places will give children equity of access, wherever they live in the county.

The earliest that new places can be delivered is September 2023. In the interim, an increased number of children may need to be placed at special schools outside of Hertfordshire or at independent placements.

# Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)

Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)										
School Name	Places Available	Actuals			NOR January 2020	Forecast				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Larwood	86	64	65	75	80					
Brandles	54	48	50	50	54					
Hailey Hall	70	65	64	69	70					
Haywood Grove	56	38	51	50	55					
Batchwood	72	68	72	72	78					
Falconer	85	79	90	86	83					
<b>Total SEMH Demand</b>		<b>362</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>484</b>
<b>Total SEMH Places Available</b>	<b>423</b>					<b>423</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>423</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of SEMH Places (No.)</b>						<b>-13</b>	<b>-30</b>	<b>-44</b>	<b>-55</b>	<b>-61</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of SEMH Places (%)</b>						<b>-3.1%</b>	<b>-7.1%</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>	<b>-13.0%</b>	<b>-14.4%</b>

Currently there are six SEMH schools across the county offering 423 places (Appendix 3).

There has been a steady increase in demand across the sector. In January 2016 there were 362 children in SEMH schools. This number had risen to 420 by January 2020, a rise of 16%. To date, the County Council has managed the rise in demand in this sector by using existing capacity in the schools and increasing capacity where needed. An additional 49 places have been created in the past two years.

The forecast indicates that demand for places from 2021 will exceed current capacity and continues to do so for the life of the forecasts. There is a forecast deficit of 61 places by 2025. This does not include the number of pupils who are placed out of county due to our inability to meet their needs currently.

## Assessment of other initiatives that may influence demand

The *Behaviour and SEMH Workstream* is conducting a full review of Behaviour and SEMH provision across the county. The outcomes of this review are expected in the summer of 2021. The forecast demand for SEMH places is likely to be volatile going forward, as demand will be affected by a number of other initiatives.

- A recommendation from the Specialist Provision workstream, to develop Specialist Resourced Provision (SRP) in mainstream schools, would create up to 176 places to support children with communication needs, including autism. It is expected that some children, who would have been placed in an SEMH school, would have their needs better met in an SRP at a mainstream school, potentially reducing the future demand for SEMH places.
- Other recommendations arising from the Specialist Provision workstream aim to increase the support for children with SEND in mainstream schools. Any increase in the number of children remaining in mainstream would reduce the demand for SEMH places across the county.
- A review of the SEMH residential offer is underway. The outcomes of this review have an impact on the number of day places available.
- A new SEMH secondary school in Harlow is scheduled to open in 2022. This will reduce the current inflow to Hailey Hall SEMH school from Essex, freeing up SEMH places for Hertfordshire children in the east of the county.

- A new 60 place special school, for secondary aged children with Communication & Autism needs, is scheduled to open in Welwyn Garden City in September 2022. This school will meet the needs of a specific cohort of pupils. Due to the current lack of provision for children with these needs, some of the children have been placed in SEMH schools but their needs would be better met at the new school. Once this school opens some capacity will be freed up in the SEMH secondary schools.
- A new 60 place special school, for primary aged children with Communication & Autism needs, is planned for in this strategy. This school would mirror the designation of the secondary school above. Should this school open, some capacity would be freed up in the SEMH primary schools.

## SEMH strategy

Any medium to long term strategic decisions to address the forecast shortage of places in this sector will be taken once the recommendations of the Behaviour and SEMH review are known in 2021. The recommendations will be incorporated into the next version of this strategy.

In the meantime, short term demand (2021 and 2022) will be closely monitored and the County Council will be working closely with special schools, specialist and alternative settings and mainstream schools to ensure that the short-term needs reflected in the forecast can be met locally wherever possible.





# Learning Difficulties (LD)

Learning Difficulties (LD)										
School Name	Places Available 2021-22	Actuals			NOR January 2020	Forecast				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Woolgrove	125	125	125	125	124					
The Valley	150	120	133	142	153					
Middleton	90	86	88	93	95					
Pinewood	160	157	162	162	168					
Southfield	80	73	80	80	80					
St Lukes	160	105	121	149	160					
The Collett	128	126	128	127	127					
Colnbrook	110	100	101	101	99					
Garston Manor	140	131	139	143	141					
<b>Total LD Demand</b>		<b>1,023</b>	<b>1,077</b>	<b>1,122</b>	<b>1,147</b>	<b>1,173</b>	<b>1,180</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1,163</b>	<b>1,152</b>
<b>Total LD Places Available</b>	<b>1,143</b>					<b>1,143</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>1,143</b>	<b>1,143</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of LD Places (No.)</b>						<b>-30</b>	<b>-37</b>	<b>-35</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-9</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of LD Places (%)</b>						<b>-2.6%</b>	<b>-3.2%</b>	<b>-3.1%</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>	<b>-0.8%</b>

Currently there are nine LD schools across the county offering 1,143 places (Appendix 4). There has been a steady increase in the number of pupils in LD schools in Hertfordshire. In January 2016 there were 1,023 children in LD schools. This number had risen to 1,147 by January 2020, a rise of 12%.

To date, the County Council has managed the rise in demand in this sector by using existing spare capacity in the schools and increasing capacity where needed. In the past two years an additional 102 places have been created in the LD sector.

The forecast indicates that demand for places from 2021 will exceed current capacity. Forecast demand peaks in 2022 at 35 places above capacity and then drops to show a close match between existing capacity and forecast demand.

## Assessment of other initiatives that may influence demand

The actual demand for LD places is likely to be volatile going forward as demand will be affected by other initiatives.

- As with the SEMH sector, it is expected that some children who would have been placed

in an LD school would have their needs better met in an SRP at a mainstream school, thereby reducing the demand for LD places.

- As with the SEMH sector, any increase in the number of children with SEND being supported to remain in mainstream would also reduce the demand for LD places across the county.

## LD strategy

It will be necessary to maintain and marginally increase capacity in LD special schools. Short term demand (2021 and 2022) will be closely monitored and the County Council will be working closely with special schools, specialist and alternative provisions and mainstream schools, to ensure that the short-term needs of children can be met locally wherever possible.

The planned rebuild of The Valley school will create an additional 15 secondary places in the LD sector from January 2023. This will increase capacity across the sector to 1,158. There would then be a close match between forecast demand and capacity for the life of the forecast, a forecast deficit of under 2% for the remainder of the forecast.

# Hearing Impairment (HI)

Hearing Impairment (HI)										
School Name	Places Available 2021-22	Actuals			NOR January 2020	Forecast				
		2017-18	2018-19	2019-20		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Knightsfield	46	39	37	44	46					
Heathlands	110	102	97	109	113					
<b>Total HI Demand</b>		<b>141</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Total HI Places Available</b>	<b>156</b>					<b>156</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of HI Places (No.)</b>						<b>-2</b>	<b>-14</b>	<b>-24</b>	<b>-32</b>	<b>-27</b>
<b>Surplus or Shortage of HI Places (%)</b>						<b>-1.3%</b>	<b>-9.0%</b>	<b>-15.4%</b>	<b>-20.5%</b>	<b>-17.3%</b>

The two schools in this sector admit significant numbers of pupils from other authorities: around a third at Knightsfield and over half at Heathlands (Appendix 5).

Both schools are at capacity and the forecast indicates a gradual rise in demand to 2024 and then a slight reduction from 2025. An additional 3 places have been created in the past 2 years.

## Assessment of other initiatives that may influence demand

Due to the very specific needs of this cohort, it is unlikely that the other factors will have an impact on demand for HI places. It is, however, possible that the changes to funding for mainstream schools to support children with SEND may see demand for HI places reduce but any drop is likely to be minimal.

Due to the low numbers in the HI cohort it is possible that actual demand will vary considerably to the forecast demand. For example, the impact of pupils arising from housing growth may not impact on this sector as forecast.

## HI strategy

The number of places forecast for 2021 is around the level of current capacity. With a slight deficit forecast at Knightsfield. Placement data will be closely monitored to identify actual short-term demand for 2021 and 2022.

The forecast will be monitored and the County Council will work closely with both schools to agree contingency plans, should additional places be required for Hertfordshire children in the short or medium term.



# Communication & Autism - children whose needs fall between existing special school sectors (CA)

The County Council needs to respond to an increasing number of children with a specific need profile that can be described as including :

- Autism and/or social communication needs (diagnosed or otherwise)
- Academically able – working at age related expectations (ARE), above ARE or below ARE due to difficulties in accessing learning or gaps in education (not those with SEN recognised as Learning Difficulties)
- High levels of anxiety
- Mental health needs
- Sensory needs

These children are not included in the special school forecasts currently. However, Analysis of current pupil placement data indicates a significant and increasing demand for places to meet this specific need.

These children have often experienced trauma and show behaviour that is challenging. This behaviour inhibits their ability to access the curriculum and make good progress. These pupils may experience multiple exclusions from mainstream and specialist settings.

As, it is a priority of the SEND Strategy 2018-2023 to reduce the reliance upon the independent sector, by creating high quality provision close to the child's home and local community, the County Council has started to take action to meet the needs of this group of children.

A new 60 place special school, for secondary aged children with Communication & Autism needs, is scheduled to open in Welwyn Garden City, in phases from September 2022.

This new school will support children with this need profile.

## Assessment of the demand for a primary special school for children with Communication & Autism needs

There are currently 15 primary age children in independent placements whose EHCPs indicate they meet this need profile.

There are also several children in Hertfordshire's primary SEMH schools whose SEMH needs stem from their autism and associated sensory needs/difficulties in accessing learning. Many of them experience difficulties in emotional regulation, which can manifest as behaviours which led to placement in SEMH settings. These children would benefit from attending a setting which is better suited to their underlying needs. It is estimated that there are at least 9 children in Haywood Grove School who would fall into this category and a further 10 children at Larwood School.

There are currently 3 primary age children receiving home tuition (through ESMA), as they are unable to attend school due their autism-related anxiety which has led to long-term school absence. They would benefit from a smaller school setting, which is equipped to support their anxiety and mental health needs. Often children who have reached this stage are unable to return to mainstream school resulting in children being placed at independent placements.

As demonstrated above, there are currently at least 37 children who meet the identified need profile.

In addition to these 37 children, there will be other children with this specific need in the following categories:

- children awaiting placement in specialist out of county placements
- those currently seeking independent placements
- those who are not attending school due to autism-related anxiety, but who do not meet the criteria for ESMA tuition (e.g. When CAMHS support is not in place/available)
- those in a mainstream or special school whose needs could be better met in a more suitable specialist school or setting
- children missing from education (CME)
- children who are currently Educated at Home (EHE) as parents feel that there is not a suitable school provision available locally
- children who have 'coped' in primary school with significant levels of intervention & support but are anticipated to struggle when reaching secondary school. Many of them may have benefitted from early intervention support in a specialist setting, either as a long-term placement or to better-prepare them for a mainstream secondary setting.

Many of the children in the categories above are supported through personalised educational support packages, funded 1:1 support and/or social care packages.

## New Communication & Autism sector - for children whose needs fall between special school sectors – Strategy

As demonstrated above, there is a need to provide accessible primary special school places in Hertfordshire to meet the needs of these children. These places will form part of a new special school sector.

A planned new Communication & Autism special school in Welwyn Garden City will offer 60 places for secondary aged pupils. The earliest the phased opening of the school could be delivered is September 2022.

A second new Communication & Autism special school, which will be easily accessible from across the county, is now proposed. This school, which will be easily accessible from across the county, is now proposed. This special school will offer 60 places for primary aged pupils. The earliest the phased opening of the school could be delivered is September 2023.





# SEND Special School Place Planning Priorities 2020-2023

As evidenced in this strategy, all Hertfordshire special schools are reaching capacity and demand for places continues to rise. Demand for special school places is forecast to rise by 364 places between January 2020 and January 2025.

While other initiatives are likely to have an impact on that demand it is clear that new capacity must be built into the system, particularly in some sectors, to ensure that Hertfordshire can continue to meet need locally now and into the future.

The proposals in this SEND Special School Place Strategy 2020-23 are informed by evidence-based analysis of need and demography which has identified the capacity needed now and in the future.

The recommendations in this strategy will improve the outcomes of children with SEND, building capacity to meet local need and achieving best value for money.

They are:

## 1 : Building capacity in SLD/PNI sectors

It is clear that there is sustained pressure for places in the SLD/PNI sectors, 229 places at SLD and a further 42 at PNI. This equates to 75% of the overall increase in demand. 300 new SLD/PNI places are needed to ensure that forecast demand can be met in Hertfordshire : with approximately 200 places planned for delivery by September 2023.

## 2. Maintaining and marginally increasing places in the LD sector:

Places in this sector will be maintained and marginally increase places via the planned rebuilding of The Valley Special School, Stevenage, with 15 additional places, from January 2023.

## 3. Ensuring that short-term demand for special school places is met locally wherever possible :

Working with special schools, specialist and alternative provision and mainstream schools, the County Council will develop contingencies to ensure that there are sufficient local places to meet need in the short term, as other initiatives that will affect demand are embedded.

## 4. Delivery of two new Communication & Autism schools to meet the needs of children whose needs fall between current special school sectors

It is a priority to focus on meeting the needs of children with autism (ASC), or a social communication difficulty, who have higher academic ability, but significant anxiety, mental health issues, and gaps in their education and associated underachievement. The needs of these children will be met through the development of :

- a new approved 60 place secondary special school in Welwyn Garden City, phased opening from 2022 at the earliest; and
- the provision of a new 60 place primary special school in the centre of the county, phased opening from 2023 at the earliest.

# Appendix 1

Other factors that may have an impact on the demand for special school places  
The development of the SEND Pupil Place Planning Strategy is one of many initiatives commissioned by the SEND Senior Leadership Group, through its various Workstreams.

Some of these initiatives are listed here :

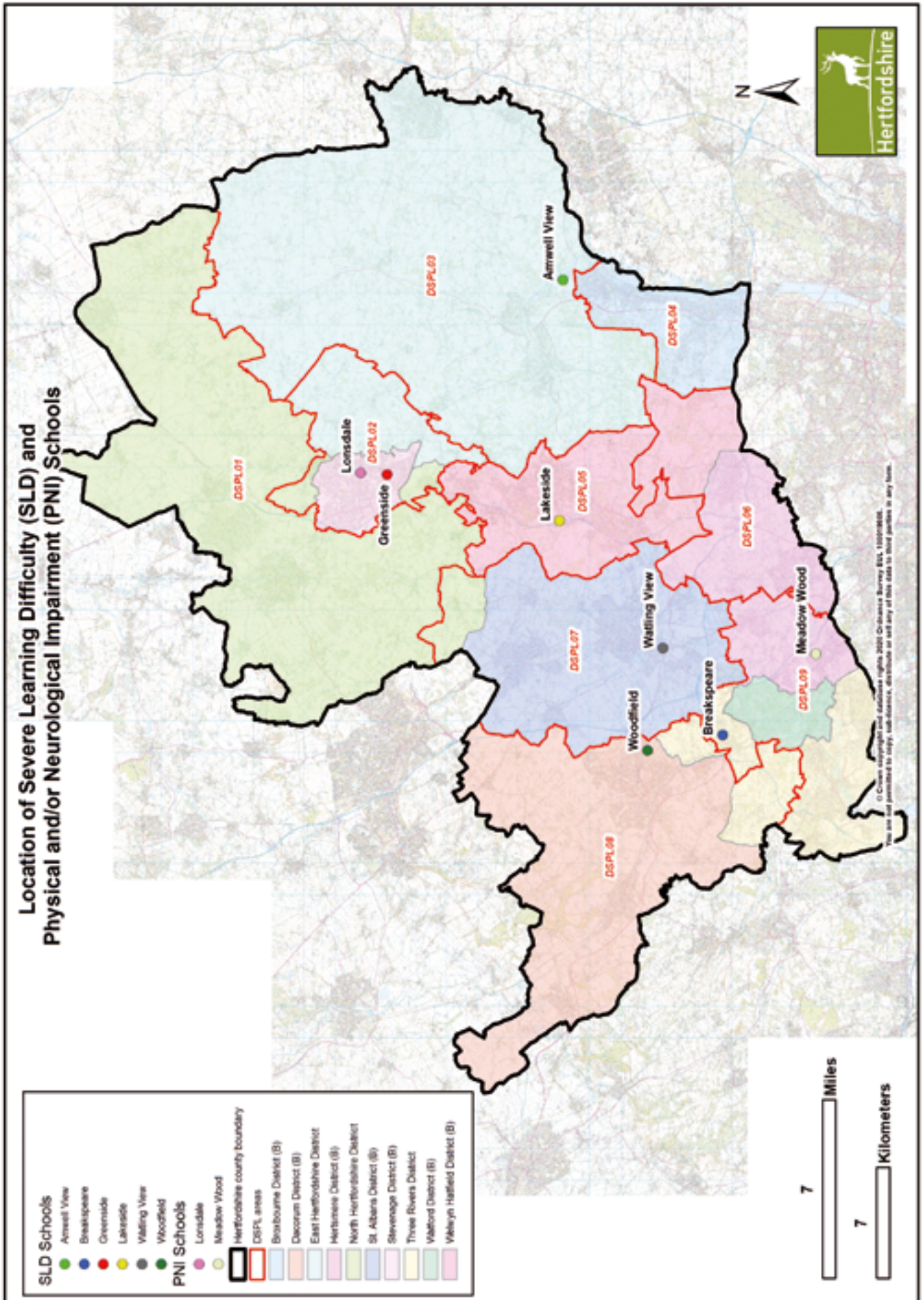
## UNIVERSAL

- Further development of the universal offer in mainstream through Whole School SEND programme
- Changes to school funding through High Needs Funding in Mainstream Schools
- Development of banding descriptors

## SPECIALIST PLUS (including special school initiatives)

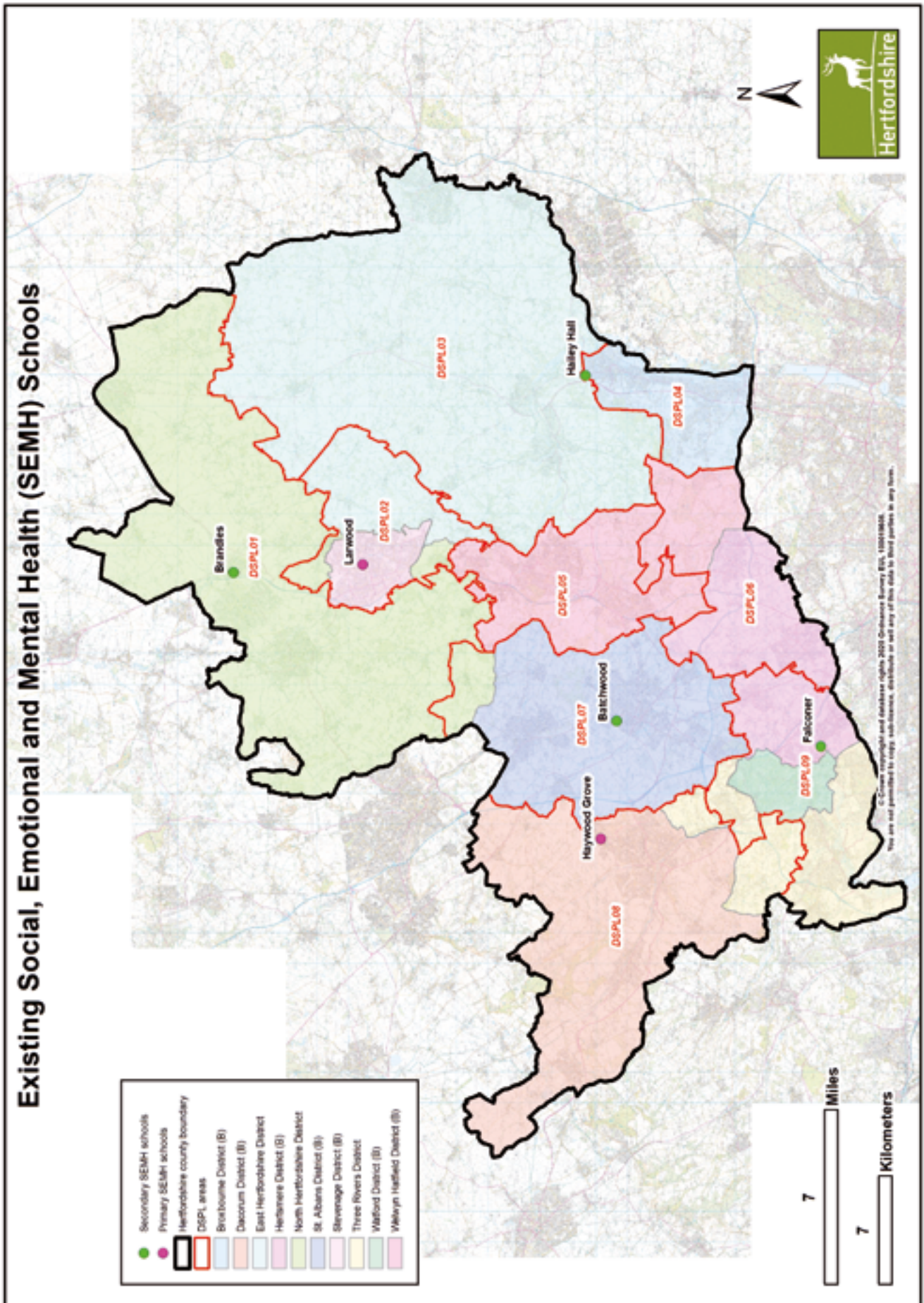
- Development of Specialist Resource Provision in mainstream schools for children with communication needs
- SEMH & Behaviour review
- Review of SEMH residential offer
- Specialist nursery schools for children with SEND who are unable to access universal offer
- New schools planned for children whose needs currently fall between special school sectors
- Increasing the number of children who can access a local special school place and reducing the number of out of county independent placements
- Preparing For Adulthood - strategies including developing the Post 16 college offer for young people with SEND
- Children Looked After residential strategy
- Cross border activity – new schools and other strategies in other areas that may impact on inflows and outflows to HCC special schools

# Appendix 2 : SLD/PNI



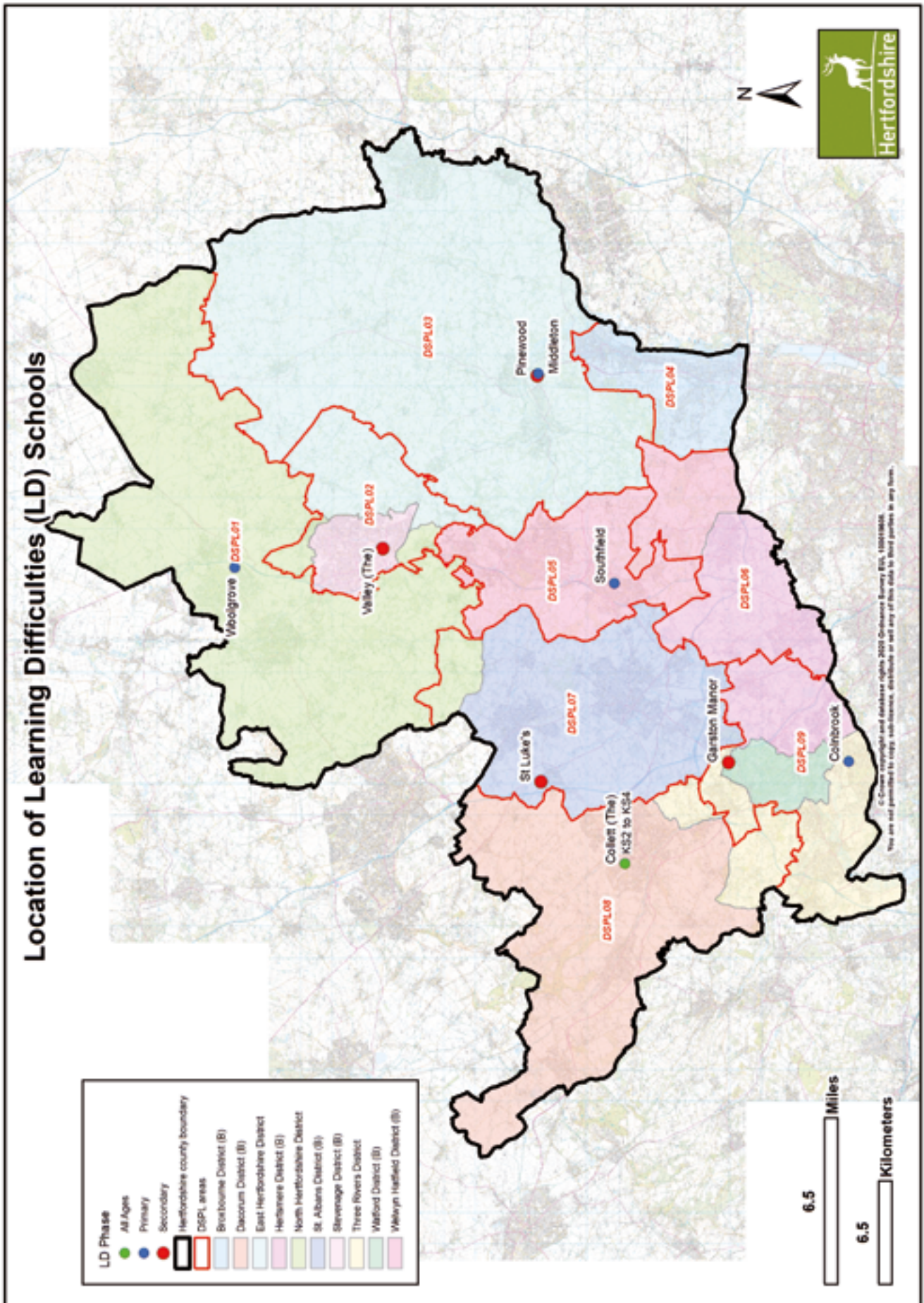


# Appendix 3 : SEMH





# Appendix 4 : LD





# Appendix 5 : HI

