

Just the job

Hounslow's SEND Participation & Employment Plan

2025

SEND



About this plan

This plan is based on the presumption that young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will progress to good work, which is possible with the right preparation and support.

Young people with SEND have the same aspirations as their peers, they just want a job they will enjoy and thrive in. We believe this is possible for the vast majority; they are a pool of talent that can be harnessed in a truly inclusive and diverse local economy. Work may not be the destination for some, but they will want to live as fulfilling and independent lives as possible.

Good work provides fair pay and conditions, workplace wellbeing, skills and progression and above all provides people with purpose. We know that it plays a key role in helping young people with SEND to progress to adulthood and lead rewarding lives, something that most people take for granted. That's why it's so important we are ambitious about making this a reality for all young people with SEND in Hounslow.

We believe this means we must strive to ensure they can reach their limitless potential. This can only happen when we hear the voices of young people, and when we come together collectively as a community – parents, schools, colleges, businesses, charities, the Council and our partners in the wider public sector – to make a difference.

This means we will need to do things differently to make our ambition a reality for young people with SEND. We need to build on our successes and be ambitious to 'do new'. This plan sets out what that change will be, outlining Hounslow's priorities for Post-16 Participation and Employment for young people with SEND as part of our approach to Preparation for Adulthood (PfA).

This is just the start. This plan sets out key challenges based on what we currently know, and young people, parents and stakeholders have told us. These are complex and long-standing issues, so we know we need to do more to engage with young people, families and partners to understand the systemic barriers and long term solutions. But we must start somewhere and be impatient to create change that will transform young people's lives.

How this fits with our wider plans

Our plans are the golden thread that help us keep focused on what matters to local people. That's why we strive to make sure these are connected, so we (and our partners) are working as One Hounslow, delivering on outcomes.

Ambitious for Hounslow – Corporate Plan 2022-2026

What matters to local people and businesses sets out six outcome areas - a borough that is greener, healthier, cleaner, thriving, safer, and liveable

✓ A Thriving Hounslow where local people flourish in a borough which is home to good quality jobs and successful businesses and where they live in strong, prosperous communities

- ➔ Ensure all young people and their families have access to the support, education, training or employment they need

Children and Young People's Plan 2023

What young people have told us about what matters most, sets out work to help deliver outcomes.

✓ A Thriving Hounslow where:

- ➔ Everyone achieves their potential (Learning)
- ➔ Economic growth and good jobs (Earning)

A Fairer, more equal Hounslow – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023

What residents, community groups, equality groups, partners and local businesses have told us matters most to become a more equal borough.

✓ Achieving equality for people with disabilities:

- ➔ Improve employment, skills and digital training offer for people with disabilities

SEND & Inclusion Plan 2025-2030

Vision: In Hounslow, children are well-prepared for transitions and supported to achieve their full potential. Their needs are understood, and support is provided at the earliest point in their lives.

✓ Priorities:

- ➔ Children and young people in Hounslow are supported to reach their (limitless) potential
- ➔ Good work: Utilising the opportunities in our community and our economy

What we know

Our young people with SEND achieve well, they vastly outperform peers on a local and national level across all measures of L2 and 3 attainment by age 19 (with Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and Special Educational Needs (SEN) support)

3.2%

of school pupils have social, emotional, and mental health needs, this is the fifth highest rate in London

Diversity is our superpower

Young people with SEND are a huge asset, bringing a wealth of talent and diversity to our community and economy. The number of children and young people with SEND has risen and will continue to increase, with a growing cohort of neurodiversity and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs.

- Over 13% of Hounslow pupils in 2021/22 are identified as needing SEND Support - and a little more than 4% have an EHCP
- 3.2% of school pupils have social, emotional, and mental health needs, this is the fifth highest rate in London
- Our young people with SEND achieve well, they vastly outperform peers on a local and national level across all measures of L2 and 3 attainment by age 19 (with EHCP and SEN Support)

But this talent is not currently realised in the employment market.

Employment outcomes are getting worse for young people, and people with disabilities in Hounslow. Lower proportions of our adults with learning disabilities (aged 18-64) are in paid employment than both nationally (4.8%) and in London (5.2 %). This means the disability employment gap in Hounslow has grown, and it's now at its widest point since 2016/17.

- The number of 16 to 24 year-olds out of work and claiming Universal Credit is a third higher

than pre-pandemic - the number working but earning too little is three times higher

- ➔ The proportion of people aged 16 and above with a disability who are economically active and in employment is 28% in Hounslow, compared to national average of 27.3%. But to put this in context over double the amount of non-disabled people in Hounslow were in employment at 60.7%.

That's why we need to drive a collective approach to promoting more diverse workforces, communicating the business case and the enormous community and societal benefits of young people and adults with SEND being a representative workforce. This means action to promote and help employers to create inclusive routes as well as approaches to recruitment and retention.

That's why Hounslow Council is taking action to become a fairer, more equal employer by making a commitment to young people with our Youth Skills & Employment Guarantee. (www.hounslow.gov.uk/YSEG).





There is opportunity abounding

We're home to good jobs, but these jobs are not taken up by local people as much as we might hope. Hounslow is a place of contrasts, we are a highly productive borough yet not highly paid.

- ➔ 26.6% of employees in the borough earn below the London Living Wage (London average 20.4%)
- ➔ £4,536 - the difference between average workplace and resident wage in Hounslow

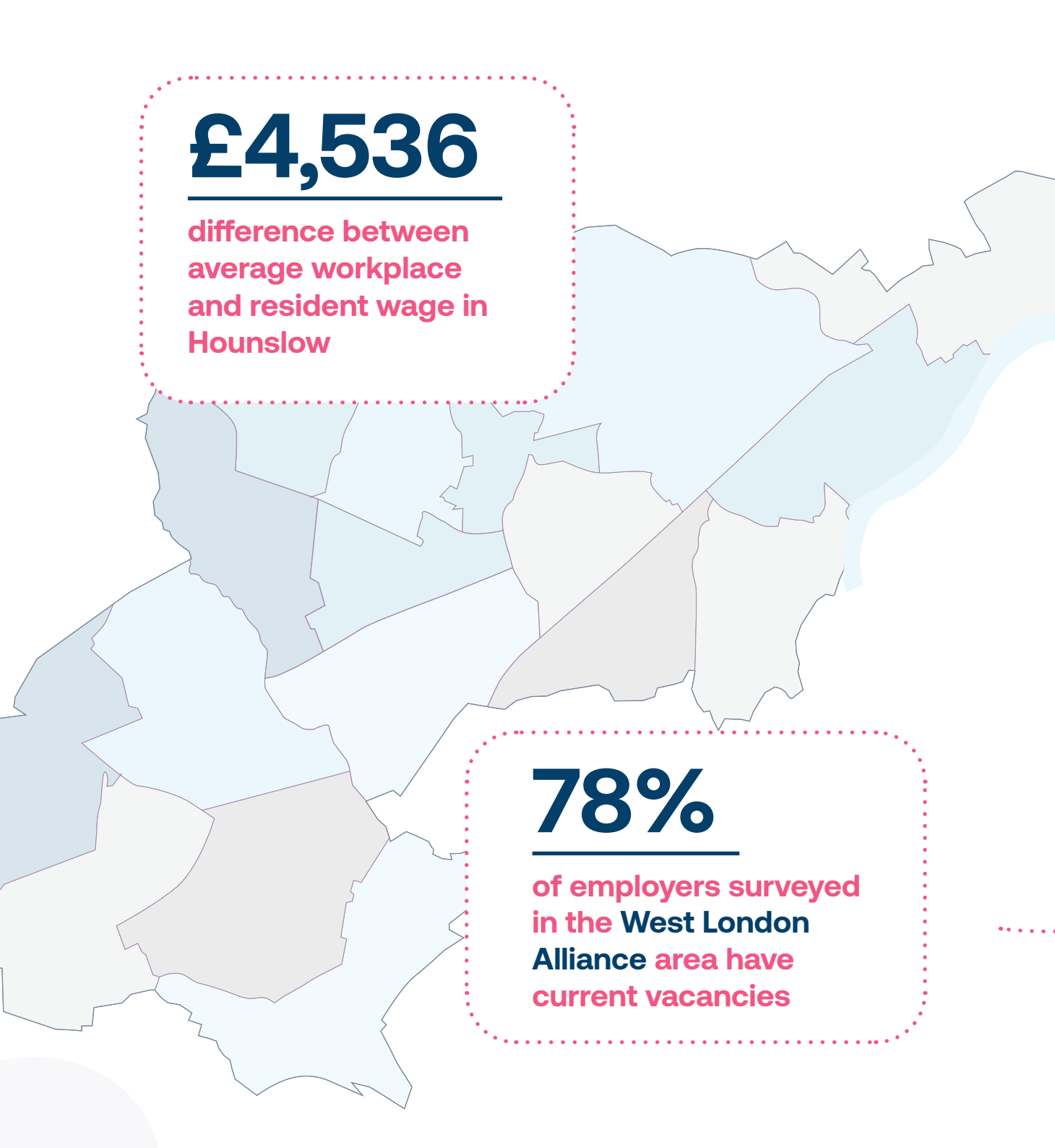
There is increased business demand for a more diverse workforce. We know many employers in our borough and neighbouring areas are likely to continue to face challenges to recruit and retain local people into their jobs, particularly in key sectors. We know there are many employers that want to engage, but just don't know how.

- ➔ 78% of employers in the West London Alliance area have current vacancies and 72% of these report struggling to fill vacancies¹
- ➔ Across England over 22% of people are employed within the public sector, in Hounslow this is only 11%

¹Survation Survey data - West London Annex to the London Local Skills Improvement Plan, 2023

That's why we need to drive a focus on good jobs in borough for our residents, so we can ensure the benefits of economic activity are more equally enjoyed. This means young people with SEND benefiting with access to local good work, but also working with local employers to create more accessible and inclusive routes into good work.

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Our system is not working for all young people with SEND

Participation outcomes for young people with SEND are largely good but tell little about how all young people with SEND are faring on their transition into work beyond age 19. What is available suggests young people with SEND completing 16-18 study in our mainstream schools and colleges fall behind their peers in destination measures.

- ➔ 70.8% of young people with SEND in mainstream schools and colleges in Hounslow sustained their destination (education, employment, or training) after 16-18 study compared to 85.8% of their peers without SEND

We know too many young people with SEND in Hounslow are Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET). Our analysis tells us that that disengagement is one of the key challenges, but this is not in itself a reason young people become NEET or remain so, rather a symptom than a cause. There are often underlying and wider factors that have led young people to become NEET, and they may have a cumulative effect making re-engagement in Education, Employment or Training (EET) more challenging. We also know the point at which young people become NEET coincides with transition points, and for a significant proportion National Curriculum Year 14 (NCY 14) is a critical point.

- ➔ Number of young people with SEND who are NEET is high compared to London with 8.3% (EHCP) and 8.2% (SEN support) in Hounslow, versus 5.4% (EHCP) and 5.8% (SEN Support) in London
- ➔ 1/3 of young people with SEN Support who are NEET are 'not actively seeking' EET due to their circumstances or needs
- ➔ Social Emotional & Mental Health (34%) and ASD (25%) are the largest primary need groups represented within NEET cohort of young people (EHCP)
- ➔ Disengaging with EET (25%) and Mental health (15%) key factors for young people who are NEET



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That's why we need to make sure we collectively provide the right support at the right time to help young people move onto and through the right pathway. This has begun with the development of 'Independent Futures' to enhance and refocus the support young people who are open to Hounslow Council Social Care. But we know more needs to be done to ensure Independent Living and Employment is embedded in their journey right from the start, and we have effective systems in place collectively to ensure we understand the support and provision needed so young people can access the right pathway for them at the right time.

This means a shift in approach, working proactively so we can support if things don't go to plan.

Everything starts with high aspirations

The pathway to work is not always clear for young people with SEND. Whilst we have some good pathways in place to prepare young people to transition into work, the landscape in Hounslow is limited and not clearly understood. Too few of our young people are accessing our supported internship offer despite high success rates and demand analysis showing the existing offer could be expanded by 50%. We know low demand has been driven by a lack of awareness amongst young people, parents and supporters about pathways, but also more fundamentally awareness about work and what's possible for young people with SEND. We know there is growing interest from young people to exploit self-employment and entrepreneurship as alternative and valid career options, but there may be limited awareness or access to these as employment pathways.

- ➔ At least 60% of young people on DFN Project Search Hounslow Supported Internships achieve full-time permanent employment
- ➔ London average percentage for self-employment is 10.6%, in Hounslow this is only 6.8%

Work needs to be the default aspiration for young people with SEND. We know Career Education plays a vital role in helping young people and their families to learn and understand the world of work, to challenge stereotypes and broaden their horizons.

Schools in Hounslow and our colleges are making good progress against Gatsby benchmarks for Careers Guidance. But we know aspirations about careers and work are embedded from an early age, and an understanding of what work and pathways into work look like from direct experiences with employers and their workplaces. Seeing really is believing, so greater opportunities to see people that they can relate to thriving in good jobs really is important. All of this begins with everybody having the presumption of work for young people with SEND.

- ➔ 32% of schools are not providing young people with experiences of employers and workplaces (Gatsby Benchmarks Hounslow)

That's why we know that to really improve access to work for all young people with SEND through a broader range of pathways into work, to meet the changing and range of needs of young people, including those without an EHCP. This means making sure pathways are focused and creating direct access to good work to collectively capitalise on employer interest in a more diverse workforce, supporting those who want to engage, but simply don't know how.

This also means building on work that local partners are already doing to cultivate high aspirations for work. Our Youth Skills & Employment Guarantee provides an opportunity to bring partners together and build a cohesive Careers Education support with Schools and Colleges that is rooted in our collective PfA approach.

What we will do

Create meaningful change and impact for young people means being focused, building on our successes and not being afraid to 'do new'. Set out here are the key priorities we are going to drive forward and fully implement by 2027 in line with our SEND Improvement plan.

Aspirations

Build a culture of high aspirations

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- ➔ Embed aspiration for work as a key thread across all PfA outcomes at all stages to ensure focus on work as the default option, building a culture of high aspirations
- ➔ Build a cohesive careers-related and Careers Education offer with our schools and colleges which gives young people and their parents direct experiences with employers and their workplaces to build high aspirations
- ➔ Develop consistent information and approaches to communicate pathways so young people and parents are aware from an early stage of options to build high aspirations

Support

Provide the right support at the right time to help young people move onto and through the right pathway

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- ➔ Build proactive approaches so we can make sure young people move onto the right pathway at the right time
- ➔ Build more joined up tracking and systems so we know what's working and whether all young people are getting the right support at the right time
- ➔ Develop joined up approach to participation support for young people to provide the right support at the right time

Success

Enable fulfilling lives by equipping young people with skills for good work and independent futures

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- ➔ Establish Independence and Employability Hubs to enable more young people to develop employability skills, engage in workplace experiences and access good work and independent living
- ➔ Expand supported employment pathways to enable more young people to access good work
- ➔ Build focused Employer Engagement approach with partners which maximises work experiences and develop a range of inclusive routes and practices to enable more young people to access good work
- ➔ Develop our approach to measuring what's working for young people in accessing good work

How we will know this plan is working

We will develop a more detailed plan to deliver these priorities. This will be an iterative plan, because we know that whilst we need to start somewhere, we also need to be open to testing and learning as we go about, bringing change and improvement for young people. Our PfA Project Board will oversee and monitor this as part of the wider Hounslow SEND improvement plan. This means we can be assured that progress is being made, but also that changes to this plan are linked to many other changes in our SEND System, ensuring a joined up approach for young people, their families and also supporters.

We will maintain ongoing engagement with young people, families, and partners to ensure the plan and associated actions remain relevant and impactful.

