

Appendix 1 - Scrutiny Panel Recommendations and Cabinet Members' Responses

Recommendation number	Scrutiny Panel Recommendation	Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families' response
1	<p>We note the review of the distribution of High Needs Block (HNB) funding in the Camden Council SEND Strategy Implementation Plan. We would urge the working group in its review to ensure that funding follows inclusion.</p> <p>(The ordinarily available £6,000 per pupil per school is clearly essential (and has to be passported to schools under the High Needs Block School Funding System [SFS]) and the developed additional funding (£5,000) provided in Camden for children with complex needs is welcomed, however for those schools with significant numbers of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) the 'top up approach' is insufficient, and whilst we recognise that there is limited funding and that our recommendation may mean taking some money away from some schools we would encourage the review work that, encouragingly, has started, to explore funding following inclusion.)</p>	<p>Since the Panel report was published, the High Needs Block has fallen into deficit, which has driven stronger financial oversight through a Schools Forum sub-group. In 2024/25, there was a £4.9m deficit and a £8.5m deficit is forecast for 2025/26 which would exhaust our HNB reserves.</p> <p>Camden mainstream schools now receive more of their devolved funding upfront, supporting schools to plan effectively and deploy resources earlier in the academic year. This enables earlier intervention for children and more stability in provision.</p> <p>We are consulting on changes to banding arrangements and SEND admissions to ARPs and special schools to ensure funding consistently reflects pupils' needs. This will strengthen inclusion by reducing reliance on top-up funding and ensuring children get the right support in the right setting, first time.</p> <p>As part of the School Sufficiency Programme, Camden has introduced a SEND data dashboard. This tool enhances visibility of pressures across schools, enabling targeted support and intervention where needed, and ensuring resources are directed to improve outcomes for children with the most complex needs.</p>
2	<p>We note that a review of commissioning arrangements of ARPs, special schools, local post 16 specialist provision, post-16 places and Alternative Provision (AP), advisory services, Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and therapeutic services is in the Camden Council SEND Strategy Implementation Plan.</p> <p>We strongly recommend that this review</p>	<p>Mainstream inclusion is a priority locally and nationally. In partnership with schools and Camden Learning, Camden have drafted a 'Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit' providing practical information for mainstream schools on meeting needs before the need for additional funding through the Exceptional Needs Grants (ENG) or EHCPs (58.5% of pupils with ECHP/ENG are in a mainstream setting vs 19.4% in special schools). Locally, we devolve a higher level of funding to schools to meet SEND</p>

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	enables mainstream schools to enrol children with autism or complex needs with greater continuity of funding and staffing.	<p>needs in order to provide continuity of funding and to enable early intervention and school wide approaches.</p> <p>The response to recommendation 9 below sets out our plans for strengthening advisory and support services for schools, which will also support mainstream schools to meet a range of SEND.</p> <p>As part of the School Sufficiency Programme, we are developing a SEND Commissioning Plan which will set out our plans for commissioning special and Additional Resource Provision (ARP) locally for children where needs are best met outside of mainstream education.</p>
3	Consider the possibility of awarding notional funding to early years settings through the Camden Local Inclusion Fund (CLIF) and address inconsistencies between early years and school age funding.	<p>We recommend that no immediate changes are made to the distribution of Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funds until national guidance is published following the forthcoming SEND Review. Early years budgets are already under significant pressure, and increasing deductions from the Early Years Dedicated Schools Grant to expand inclusion funding would reduce the overall resources available to providers. Early Years funding is kept under review, especially in the light of potential legislative changes.</p>
4	Reduce Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo) workload by: aiming for Camden's SEND services to pro-actively communicate with SENDCos; supporting SENDCos with Continued Professional Development providing sufficient time to attend Camden Learning and Camden SEND training and development sessions; clarifying and streamline the ENG application processes.	<p>We are embedding new Service Standards for the SEND and Inclusion Service that prioritise timely, proactive communication with families, SENDCos, and school staff. Case Officers now attend termly planning meetings with their named schools, ensuring SENDCos are supported in managing caseloads and reducing unnecessary follow-up.</p> <p>To address workload linked to processes, the ENG system has been refined with separate decision-making routes for renewals and new applications. In autumn 2025, we will moderate decisions across ENG and EHCP pathways to identify any inconsistencies and inform further streamlining. The introduction of an admissions panel for specialist provision is also creating a clearer, more transparent route for place allocation, reducing administrative burden for schools and ARPs.</p>

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		Camden Learning has expanded its school support capacity, recruiting two former Camden Headteachers to provide direct expertise and guidance. Alongside this, SENDCos continue to access training and professional development, with induction numbers demonstrating that schools are successfully developing new SENDCos from within their existing staff. While recruitment challenges remain post-COVID, these measures are strengthening the pipeline of SEND leadership and building resilience in the system.
5	Deliver comprehensive training and support on person-centred practice for all professionals who support children, young people, and families with SEND across the partnership, maximising the opportunities presented through the development of the newly created Centre for Relational Practice.	Following the SEND and Inclusion redesign, there have been a large number of new starters and so there has been an intensive training programme for the whole team to ensure the service have the knowledge and skills needed. The training programme commenced in June 2025, with 55% of the planned content delivered to the SEND Team to date. Attendance over the summer period averaged 63%, reflecting the impact of annual leave across the team. All training materials have been made accessible to case officers for future reference. Any individual gaps in training will be addressed through supervision to ensure consistent knowledge and practice across the team. Staff satisfaction survey shows that over 86% of participants found the training moderately to highly engaging and relevant for improving practice.
6	Training on autism for all professionals who engage with children. Camden to produce a developmental framework on autism for use by all professionals.	Autism Education Trust (AET) training is currently available for all council and school staff who work with children, and there is an equivalent training offer for partners in health. Approximately 3,000 members of staff have completed this training, including staff from 34 out of our 44 mainstream primary and secondary schools. Training has also been provided to three post-16 providers, 35 early years providers and 15 community providers (for example, holiday activity providers). We are working to ensure that attending training results in improvements to practice and that we are tracking attendance on training across the workforce. Feedback from partners on this training has been positive but

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		<p>schools tell us that they struggle to release staff for external training. Camden Learning and the council are focusing on providing bespoke support to schools as part of the continued professional development (CPD) offer alongside training in order to effectively meet this need.</p> <p>Further training is being identified for staff across the partnership through the recently developed All-Age Autism strategy.</p>
7	<p>Camden Learning to consider further opportunities for peer learning between schools, so that any problematic inter-school inconsistencies are reduced, and all schools play a strong part in Camden's overall inclusive vision. This might include using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing Professional Development • Reviewing the curriculum and pedagogy to ensure the ordinarily available meets all needs • Schools Requiring Additional Support (SRAS) meetings • Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) 	<p>Camden Learning has an enhanced offer for 2025-2026 with increased personnel (two Camden ex-Headteachers). The team is using Camden school data to lead on strategic SEND improvement, including school requested adviser visits, school-led reviews, and providing guidance and support on the implementation of both national and local policy. Specifically, the team will coordinate and deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development through CPD and SENDCo Forums • Strategic input to the Camden Council SEND Strategy and Predictable Needs Toolkit • Leadership of the SENDCo network • Project work to develop a peer review system, a complex needs assessment framework, and research further into effective practice in school based enhanced provision for high need SEND pupils • Liaison across borough networks and hubs, including with Early Years and Post-16 provision. <p>This work will continue to complement existing initiatives such as the 'Every Child A Reader Programme', which this year has increased input from Specialist Settings e.g. Swiss Cottage School and Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children.</p>

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		Cluster Inclusion Forum also provides the opportunities for SENDCos from neighbouring schools to come together, providing the opportunity for peer learning and support.
8	Use school scorecards to understand and improve the SEND offer for schools.	<p>Camden School Reports have now been produced for every Camden state maintained school, and all but one of Camden special schools. These can be found here: https://camden.schoolreport.org.uk/</p> <p>The School Reports give a rounded and nuanced picture of each school -beyond the limitations of Ofsted reports, they are more accessible than a school website and viewed via a phone (app style). Each one contains information about wider aspects of life at the school, including approaches to inclusion, the wider curriculum offer, and the things that are special to the school. They include the most recent Ofsted inspection report and a range of national data about the school's performance, including tests and examinations. Reports are being updated for the new academic year and will be again verified by Camden Learning school improvement consultants in the coming term.</p> <p>As part of the School Sufficiency Programme, the council have also developed a schools dashboard drawing on available data to better understand the pressures facing individual schools and enable the council to offer bespoke support where needed, including around numbers of children with SEND.</p>
9	We note the excellent work of the Inclusive Intervention Team (IIT) in Early Years and recommend that Camden SEND explore an all-age intervention advisory service to support parents and children in statutory school age education.	A review of advisory and support services for schools is taking place through the academic year 2025/26, ready for implementation of a new model of support from September 2026. Ahead of this, we are testing different approaches through our work on the Change Programme, the Department for Education (DfE) funded programme to test reforms to the SEND system. We will be setting up a Local Inclusion Support Offer (LISO) which will consolidate the support available for schools through a range of services to make it easier for schools to access the right

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		support at the right time. The LISO will test providing additional support to children as they transfer from primary to secondary school, using learning from the Early Years Inclusion Team (previously IIT) model. This learning will be used to inform the new model for our outreach and support services to be introduced from September 2026.
10	To reduce wait times for assessment for children with SEND , we urgently request the North Central London Integrated Care Board to provide scrutiny with a plan as to how they are working with commissioned health providers to reduce waiting times for assessment and report to scrutiny on progress towards it.	In December 2024, North Central London (NCL) Integrated Care Board (ICB) confirmed additional resource for the neurodiversity diagnostic pathway as well as changes to the pathway to make better use of resources. There will be a recurrent investment of £625,000 per annum in the pathway as well as one off funding to work through the backlog of children waiting for assessment. A shorter diagnostic pathway has also been introduced for children where diagnosis is clearer. Non-clinical roles in the standard pathway have been introduced to enable clinicians to spend more time on clinical work and less time on administration. The investment includes provision of psychoeducational support for families pre and post diagnosis. All recruitment and commissioning from the new funding has now been completed and the volume of assessments completed has increased. However, the number of referrals for diagnosis continues to rapidly increase. This means that at the current time it is unclear whether or by how much waiting times will reduce by even though the number of diagnoses completed is increasing.
11a	Camden SEND to consider how to help parents and carers to know who to hold to account for what for their EHCP , this would be a person or arbiter who sits above their caseworkers, as this level of accountability is outside the caseworker's role.	The SEND and Inclusion Service Standards provide detail of what families can expect from the service and who are responsible for services as well as routes of escalation if the Service Standards are not being met. These are published on the Local Offer, the website holding all information about SEND services and support, as a whole document, as well as on individual pages, such as pages on education, health and care needs assessment page, to make it as easy as possible for families to access information about what to expect. The introduction of the SEND Duty Line and regular SEND Surgeries have made it easier for families to access the team and resolve any queries earlier.

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11b	Therapists – especially Speech and Language therapists (SALT) /Speech Language and Communications Teachers (SLCN) – to share their plans to recruit, retain and develop their workforce . Providers to also explore/alter their model of delivery to meet the needs of the school-based community.	NCL ICB have launched their community service review which will explore delivery models for community therapies. Retention rates within therapies in Camden are high, with some internal movement between teams and roles. Despite significant national challenges around workforce shortages, the structures of roles and services in Camden mean that vacancy rates are kept reasonably low.
12	Explore the creation of an all-service Camden outreach team to support schools and families . This team should have the aim of providing further specialist support for complex children in mainstream schools and be comprised of professionals from both education and health services.	As discussed above (recommendation 9) the SEND and Inclusion service will review advisory and support services and introduce a new model from September 2026. This review will include consideration of an all-service, multi-disciplinary outreach team.
13	Ensure that the Camden SEND Strategy Implementation Plan develops a strategic plan for Camden schools that considers: the increase in demand for assessment, the increase in positive diagnosis because of the assessments, falling rolls in some schools, need for more reliable supply of Speech and Language Therapists, need for more support to schools/SENDCos/children and families from specialists.	The School Sufficiency Programme recognises the need for a strategic plan for ensuring there are sufficient and high quality school places for every local child. SEND provision is one of the three pillars of this programme. The approach is data driven looking at the information we have already about children attending Camden schools as well as forecasts for coming years. It looks at each individual school so that we can offer the right package of support, as well as looking at what is needed across the borough to meet need.
14	Camden Council and Camden Learning should continue to work with schools in partnership to explore new approaches to meeting the needs of Camden's children. This could include: a. Schools working in partnership	See response to item 7.

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	b. Test and learn projects where schools work together and develop different models to meet the needs of Children and young People with SEND	
15	Explore how best to match the profile of need across the continuum of provision : which could include strengthening inclusive mainstream as well as additional ARPs and Special School places, to ensure there is appropriate, local provision for pupils.	<p>The Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit will set out the level of needs we expect mainstream schools to meet without additional funding. For needs beyond this level, schools will be able to access additional funding through EHCP and ENG routes. The council are working with special schools and ARPs to strengthen SEND Admissions processes to ensure that places are allocated based on greatest need. In the autumn term, there will be a consultation on a SEND Admissions Policy and a panel has been set up to review applications for places.</p> <p>Alongside this, we are reviewing our specialist provision and plan to run a consultation on our SEND Commissioning Plan in December 2025. This will set out how we plan to ensure there are sufficient local places to match needs. We have made some changes in the short term to meet need, including an additional five places at Robson House.</p> <p>Currently we are seeing increases in children attending independent and non maintained special schools, home tuition packages and out of borough placements, showing that our local education offer is not matching needs. We hope to see decreases in these metrics as a result of the work currently underway.</p>
16	Ensure that relational practice is front & centre to improve relationships between all partners , recognising that there may, at points, be differences of views, recommendations and constraints.	<p>Embedding relational practice is a clear priority for the Children and Learning directorate and specifically the SEND and Inclusion service. The framework has been developed and is being embedded across the council Children and Learning directorate, including through a training programme for the redesigned SEND and Inclusion Service. We have recently introduced regular opportunities for families to provide feedback on their experiences so that we can monitor the impact of this approach.</p>

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17	From the parent questionnaire we had hoped to learn more about the specific gaps in provision that parents identify, and several parents did indeed provide their views on this. Specifically, parents wanted to see what services and provision were in place for children and young people without a learning disability.	The refreshed Local Offer website provides improved accessibility regarding the services and provision on offer across the borough, including for children and young people without a learning disability. Our Family Hubs offer provide supports to all children and young people and their families, with a strong focus on providing inclusive services.
18	Camden should set out, for itself and for parents, exactly what provision exists. And ensure this is reflected in the school score cards. There should be a clear, simple statement of what is available, why this is the case, and how Camden's approach to education, including the education of children with SEND, differs to those of other local authorities. Such a statement should set out clearly the reasons for and benefits of an inclusive approach for all children, but especially those with SEND. The statement should make clear what is available within the borough for children with different types and levels of need and clarify the options for children whose needs cannot be met within the borough (either due to an absence of sufficient places, or the absence of appropriate specialist provision).	<p>The refreshed Local Offer acts as the key place for information on local services and support. The restructure includes the new role of Local Offer Officer who will work with services and families on an ongoing basis to continue to improve how the Local Offer is meeting local families' information needs. Regular feedback is captured during parent carer sessions to assess satisfaction levels. Visits to the Local Offer website have increased significantly with 1170 visits in September 2025 compared to 153 in September 2024.</p> <p>The Camden Learning School Reports are now live, providing families with clear, nuanced information about local schools in an accessible format.</p> <p>Further work will be implemented over the coming months to provide increased clarity on the continuum of provision across Camden through the Local Offer site.</p> <p>The Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit will provide clarity for families around how schools support children with SEND.</p>
19	An easy to access guide to 'what is ordinarily available,' in schools. This should be referenced in the school score cards.	Camden have worked with schools and Camden Learning to draft a 'Meeting Predictable Needs Toolkit'. This document will provide practical information for school staff on supporting learning for children with SEND. This will fulfil a similar role to ordinarily available provision

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		documents used in other boroughs by helping to provide a consistent approach between schools across the borough and clarity for families on what they can expect from schools, but with a greater focus on providing information and approaches to meeting needs. It has been drafted in partnership with a working group including Camden Learning, schools and health colleagues. Final consultation will run in September ahead of publication and use in October 2025.
20	Camden SEND to work with Voluntary and Charitable Sector (VCS) and organisations such as SENDIASS to help parents and young people with SEND to become peer mentors/peer champions /hand holder to support others through the SEND educational journey . This could be both operational and strategic support.	The focus has been on improving the information available on the Local Offer to support families to be able to navigate the local system. We continue to work closely with SENDIASS and local VCS to ensure that families have the support in place that they need.
21	Expand the autism journey map to incorporate broader services across the system to help families understand the steps and support along their journey.	The All-Age Autism Strategy has now been approved by Cabinet (September 2025) and it is accompanied by an implementation plan setting delivery. This includes improving information on services available for autistic children.
22	Council departments and parents to co-design a process/system that ensures that families are able navigate much easier resulting in them not telling the same story over and over.	We have recently migrated to a new information system for SEND which will improve how we monitor and share information. As part of our work to implement national reforms to social care, we have focused on improving systems for information sharing to make it easier for professionals to hold a multiagency oversight. Alongside this, there have been specific pieces of work to improve processes, for example, sharing details of families waiting for autism assessment with Family Hubs so that they can offer proactive support. We continue to look for opportunities to improve systems.

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23	A clear 'you said we did,' annual form of communication for parents and as a follow up to any questionnaires put out to parents.	The refreshed Local Offer includes a 'You said, we did' page which is regularly updated with progress on how we are responding to feedback from families. Parent carers also now have the opportunity to routinely provide feedback at key stages in their journey to enable learning from their experiences. Officers have strengthened regular communications with families and partners through a monthly bulletins to partners and one to school leaders, and we are working to set up a bulletin for parents.
24	Camden to review and expand the wraparound support provided specifically to parents/carers with SEND children , to ensure parents feel supported and empowered by the council in their journey to care for their child.	There is a range of support available to parents to help them in caring for their child and to support their own mental health, including one to one counselling sessions. We will continue to improve how we communicate this offer of support to parents, including through the Local Offer. Additional training is now being offered to parents through Family Hubs and through the Educational Psychology service. Camden are also considering testing additional support for parent carers through the introduction of our Local Inclusion Support Offer.
25	Officers in contact with parents/carers with SEND children to follow a relational practice model , with a strong emphasis on ensuring that parents/carers don't experience a sense of being 'blamed' by professionals.	Camden's Children and Learning directorate are committed to embedding relational practice in all our work with families and with each other. The framework for our practice model has now been finalised and training has started to embed this within practice. The training plan for the SEND and Inclusion Service includes embedding this approach within their work with families and partners.
26	To follow the recommendation from the recent Camden SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), which recommended to further improve data collection on those with SEND and protected characteristics and their outcomes to better understand differences in prevalence seen, including overrepresentation in Black ethnic and mixed/	Improving data collection on protected characteristics is a clear priority for the partnership. There is ongoing work to improve how data on protected characteristics is captured through the CNWL single point of referral to enable better data analysis on outcomes and experiences. Within SEND and Inclusion, work is underway to regularly collect feedback on their interactions with the service which can be used to understand and address any differences between children based on

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	multiple ethnic groups and under-representation in Chinese communities.	protected characteristics. This includes making use of London wide information on ethnicity to inform commissioning.
27	Camden council to actively promote more accessible apprenticeships and supported internships within the council and with its partners to do the same.	We will continue to explore the possibility of supported internships within the council and continue to work with partners to develop additional supported internships. In 2024/25, 21 young people completed fully accredited supported internships, with a further 7 taking up alternative supported internships programmes. This is an increase from 15 in 2023/2024 and 18 in 2022/23. Supported Internships are included as part of our Youth Mission and work will continue through the Youth Mission to increase the variety and number of Supported Internships.
28	Camden to explore the sufficiency and effectiveness of the provision for pupils post-18 and that the outcomes of existing provision are meeting the needs of this profile.	The Camden Learning Post 16 Prospectus outlines the strong education options for children and young people with SEND in Camden. Through the Autumn term 2025, officers are meeting with post 16 education providers to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of the local community. This will be followed by a full review through 2026.
29	Camden Local Area SEND Partnership to take a system wide approach in raising awareness of the prevalence of autism amongst girls and its gender-specific manifestations, ensuring that they are identified and receive appropriate diagnosis, intervention and support.	The SEND JSNA found that the gap in autism diagnosis between boys and girls is narrowing in Camden, showing improvements in the work already underway to improve awareness of presentation in girls. However, we recognise that there is still considerable work to be done to increase local understanding of autism in girls and this is a priority for the partnership. The SEND JSNA provided useful insight into when needs were being identified and for whom, and we will work to continue to share this information effectively to inform practice.
30	Camden to explore working with voluntary agencies to improve the quantity of good quality after school and holiday clubs for children/young people with SEND.	No additional update to the Committee's February 2025 update: There is ongoing work to improve inclusivity of breakfast, after school and holiday clubs in Camden. Locally, we have topped up DfE funding for Holiday Activities and Food programme to create additional places for children and young people with SEND. From summer 2023 to summer 2024

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		(including summer holidays in both 2023 and 2024), Camden invested an additional £188,000 to create an additional 573 places, 232 of which were for children and young people with SEND. Further information on our after school and holiday clubs offer will be updated routinely on the Local Offer website.
31a	Based on specific requests that came out of the parent questionnaire, to improve provision for teens and post-16, specifically more comprehensive life-skills training ; better sixth form provision (A-levels/BTEC vocational qualification) in smaller schools; and to provide overnight respite care .	As discussed above (recommendation 28), we will review post 16 education provision in 2026 to ensure that provision is improving outcomes and meeting aspirations of Camden residents.
31b	Government to launch a national consultation on how we might create an inclusive education curriculum for children with SEND , perhaps led by a 'schooling framework commission', and use resulting principle and values that emerge from it to be the measure of success for assessing our education system. This should also take careful note of the soon to be published Oracy report.	The recently published Education Select Committee review “ Solving the SEND Crisis ” report recommended that the Department for Education should establish national standards and expectations for ordinarily available provision and general SEN support—including minimum resources, specialist expertise, and inclusive environments—to ensure that mainstream schools can reliably meet children’s needs before escalating to more formal plans
32	Government to undertake a review of post-16 provision for children with SEND and allocate funding immediately to increase provision for 16-25 years old. This should happen alongside a broader reflection of how we might foster an inclusive society where neurodiverse adults participate fully in community life .	We are waiting for the Government education white paper which will set out their approach on SEND.

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33	A review of the 2014 Family Act and code of practice legislation , creating the legislative protection for SEND with the right funding from the outset.	
34	Ensuring that the legal protections for children and the funding for local government have a mediation process wrapped around for any disputes rather than the adversarial tribunal system that we have at present.	
35	Government to provide immediate funding to increase SENDCo capacity to alleviate their administrative burden and have sufficient time for teaching interventions.	
36	Government to commission research on the causes of the increase in demand and diagnosis of complex needs , especially autism and ADHD.	
37	Revisit an education Covid-19 compensation national funding stream to include a focus on early years and Key Stage 1 intervention , as well as tracking the cohort of children 0-5 years old in the Covid-19 years.	