****

# Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE)

# Strategic Plan 2019-2022

## Alliance for Inclusive Education 336 Brixton Road London SW9 7AA Registered Charity Number 1124424 Company Number 5988026

About ALLFIE  
  
Our Vision:A world where inclusive education is recognised as a right not a struggle  
  
Our Mission:ALLFIE is a Disabled people led organisation, which seeks to build alliances with individuals and organisations who share our vision.

Our mission is to work with our allies to end the segregation of Disabled learners within the education system in the UK. We aim to ensure the rights of Disabled learners to inclusive education, with appropriate support to enable equal participation and fulfilment of potential.  
   
  
Our Strategic Priorities:

* To lead the lobby for change in legislation and policy to ensure inclusive education as a right for all
* To build the capacity of the inclusive education movement to become a more effective voice of influence
* To promote a wider understanding of the benefits of inclusive education for all, and improvements in existing inclusive education practice

### Our Values:

Underlying all of ALLFIE’s work are two core principles:  
  
1. Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[[1]](#endnote-1) states that Disabled children have rights to education and that an inclusive education system is the basis for full development of potential and self-worth, strengthening of human rights, and enabling effective participation in a free society  
  
2. The Social Model of disability[[2]](#endnote-2) states that people are “disabled” not by their impairments (such as blindness or autism) but by society’s failure to take their needs into account. Being Disabled is part of the normal spectrum of human life: society must expect Disabled people to be there and include us. In education, this means the system must recognise that it creates barriers for Disabled learners which need to be solved, rather than expecting Disabled learners to adapt to the system.

We believe:

* Inclusive education- also called inclusion - is a human right and the basis of lifelong equality

“Many of my friends have been ground down and think they do not have any choice but a special school, surely this is wrong.” Parent

* All learners can be successfully included in mainstream settings. Inclusive education is education that includes everyone, with non-disabled and Disabled people (including those with “special educational needs”) learning together in mainstream schools, colleges and universities.

### “Inclusion doesn't mean sometimes, it means always... all students. This is how the atmosphere in school changes and everyone starts to treat one another better.” Student

* Inclusive education is incompatible with segregated provision. Segregated provision includes special schools and colleges *and* separate units within mainstream settings

### "Our little boy Luke has learning disabilities. We decided that we wanted to send him to his local mainstream primary school, why wouldn't we? It is close, he is there with his sister and in our local school, after all this is where he lives and is part of our community." Parent

* All children and young people should be educated together as equals in their own community. All learners need friendship and support from people of their own age

### "I did a BTEC 1st and National Diploma in Performing Arts. When I was 19 I went on to do an HND. I think what it felt like being in mainstream schools and colleges are that you get to meet your best friends in life. In mainstream school and college you get support all the way - which is what I've had, and that's why I think it's great to be in an inclusive learning environment." Pupil

* Inclusive practice ensures that all learners feel welcomed and valued and get the right support to develop their talents and achieve their goals

“William has been fantastic for Natasha. She began by being frightened of him, but now he is one of her closest friends. She now understands that he is no threat, just has different needs… She is more sparkly when she knows William will be in school.”

* Truly inclusive education benefits everyone. Diversity enriches and strengthens all communities. Children who learn and play together will grow into adults who can understand and respect each other’s differences

“Life isn’t harder [for my daughter] because she’s suffering, life is harder because the facilities for her to have the same choices in life are not always there.”

* Disabled learners placed in mainstream provision but without appropriate support to meet their needs is not inclusion.

### "University was a truly liberating and empowering experience. The way support is arranged through Disabled Students Allowance gave me far more say in how I was supported and what support I actually got which enabled me to get the most out of my course. University was a space I could just be me and acknowledge my whole identity as well as building my knowledge and skills." **Student**

* Real choice for parents and disabled learners is about being able to choose from a range of properly supported placements in mainstream schools, colleges and universities, confident that learning support needs will be met in a timely and appropriate way.

“I see my daughter as an important part of the community as a whole. If you syphon off one type of child it’s making a statement about how welcome they are in the area.” Parent

* Inclusive education requires a fundamental shift in the existing education system from seeing difference as a problem to be fixed to celebrating the diversity of learners and providing all necessary supports to enable equal participation and fulfilment of potential.

Everything ALLFIE does is guided by our values. We aim to  
  
Be Welcoming

This means being friendly and polite to everyone who contacts us. We **will try to help you, be positive and do our best**

### Be Non-Judgemental

We recognise that people will have different views to us. We will not judge you for the opinions that you hold and the decisions you make

### **Value Allies**

We are a Disabled person led organisation. This means we are run by Disabled people with the support of allies that include parents and family members, education professionals and decision makers. We believe that our shared experience means we can support you better.

### **Fight for Inclusion**

We are passionate about supporting the people we work with to stand up for their right to be included. We will challenge discrimination and segregation.

### **Learn**

We will always try to get things right, but no one is perfect. If things go wrong, we will try to learn from that and do things better next time. We take an evidence-based approach to all of our work

### **Value the next generation**

We are passionate about supporting the voice of Disabled young people to be at the heart of decision making in their lives and in the campaigning work we do. Disabled young people are the next generation of decision makers and we will do everything we can to encourage their participation and inclusion.

What makes ALLFIE unique:  
ALLFIE leads the lobby for change in inclusive education as the only Disabled people led national campaigning organisation working on this issue. ALLFIE is controlled and led by Disabled people. All of our Trustees and 80% of our paid staff are Disabled people. ALLFIE lives and breathes the ethos of the Disabled People’s Movement: **“Nothing about Disabled People Without Disabled People”**. Being powered by lived experience makes us stand out because:

* We have greater understanding and insight into the needs and issues of Disabled learners
* Our campaigns, and the design and delivery of our training and resources benefit from the lived experience of our Disabled trustees, staff, volunteers and members
* We know how to actively involve Disabled learners in campaigns and in service and resource development

ALLFIE sits within a regional and national framework with other Disabled people led organisations (DPOs). We work together to gather evidence and influence policy on Disabled people’s human rights and equality. ALLFIE plays an essential part in ensuring that inclusive education is part of that agenda, since DPOs have traditionally mainly focused on working with Disabled adults.

We successfully work with Disabled learners and parents and carers across a very wide range of educational needs, backgrounds and experiences and gain strength from that diversity.

Our networks of relationships and influence stretch over a wide range of networks and alliances interested in education, inclusion, Disabled children’s services, Disabled People’s rights and equality, and human rights more generally, and we have an impressive track record in successfully influencing change and a positive reputation nationally and internationally.

ALLFIE’s Track Record:

The Alliance was set up in 1990 to work towards the right of all Disabled learners, with or without SEN labels, to attend their local mainstream school, college or university with appropriate and resourced support.   
  
Building and using alliancesALLFIE has always valued our allies and supporters, including the many non-disabled people who share our vision and our commitment to inclusive education. Alliances make change happen through building understanding and aspiration, interrupting the oppression and changing the conversation!

We have over 200 members and our allies and supporters include:

* Disabled learners
* [Parents and families](http://www.allfie.org.uk/audiences/parents/) of Disabled children and young people
* Education and related professionals
* DPOs working towards Disabled people’s rights and equality
* Decision makers and parliamentarians
* Service providers and the wider voluntary and community sector

We are part of a number of broader networks to influence change:

* We influence the children’s services sector through our work with the [Council for Disabled Children](https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/) and engagement with the Office of the Children’s Commissioner
* We are part of networks working on wider improvements in education such as the [Reclaiming Education Alliance](http://www.reclaimingeducation.org.uk/), and work with teaching and education unions
* We raise inclusive education as one of the 12 pillars of independent living through our partnerships with [Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance](http://www.rofa.org.uk/) (ROFA)[[3]](#endnote-3), European Network on Independent Living and the [Disabled people’s movement](http://www.allfie.org.uk/audiences/disabled-people-and-organisations/) in the UK and beyond.
* We share our expertise and influence internationally through working with UN Disability Committee and partnerships with international groups working on inclusion.

Key Campaigns successes  
The impact of ALLFIE’s work is out of all proportion to its size. Over the course of two decades we have had a significant impact on policy, nationally and internationally:

**UNCRPD**ALLFIE’s work with the United Nations helped secure an unequivocal right to Inclusive Education as part of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), agreed in 2006 and ratified by the UK Government in 2009. As a key partner of ROFA, ALLFIE went on to present evidence to the UN Disability Committee during their scrutiny of the UK Government in August 2017, which concluded that the Government is failing in its obligation to implement Article 24 relating to inclusive education.

**UK Law**The Children & Families Act 2014 remains committed to a ‘presumption for mainstream’ principle as a result of ALLFIE’s work with politicians and civil servants. It is also down to ALLFIE’s efforts that Further Education and apprenticeships are now included in this legal principle.  
  
**London Campaigns Work:**Before the GLA and Mayoral elections in 2016, ALLFIE worked with allies Inclusion London and Transport for All to launch a manifesto “Disabled People’s Challenge to the next Mayor of London”[[4]](#endnote-4) All three Mayoral candidates supported ALLFIE’s inclusive education demands. The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has pledged his support for ALLFIE’s asks on inclusive education and apprenticeships. ALLFIE and allies produced a Disabled People’s Roadmap for the GLA and influenced a decision by the GLA to investigate SEN provision across the capital.   
  
**Apprenticeships and Disabled Students Allowance:**ALLFIE successfully campaigned for removal of discriminatory set minimum entry requirements for apprenticeships and our threat of legal action forced government to review planned changes to Disabled Students Allowance.  
Research and resources promoting benefits of inclusion and inclusion good practice:  
  
ALLFIE has extensive experience of research and producing high quality resources promoting the benefits of inclusion and inclusion good practice. These valued resources are particularly powerful as they are produced directly by Disabled people with lived experience of the education system, and by current Disabled learners.

“I spent some time on your site earlier and I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate all the great resources you have for parents of kids with special needs. It isn’t always easy for us to find helpful and accurate information. We’re truly grateful” Parent

Our **How was school?** project was an oral history project which collected the real experiences of over 50 Disabled people in education from 1900 to 2000, documenting the progress in accessibility and inclusivity of the English education system, through the eyes of Disabled people, and resulting in a toolkit and lesson plans sent to over 1000 schools and testimonies archived at the British Library.   
  
Since 2000 we have produced a range of publications to support education professionals with their practice. We trained over 200 professionals with our **Inclusion Assistant training pack**. We worked internationally with Professional Partnerships for Inclusive Education to produce publications sharing good practice and shared barriers to inclusion with professionals across Europe. For nearly 20 years we have been producing **Inclusion Now** magazine in partnership with World of Inclusion and Inclusive Solutions. This publication collects positive stories to showcase good practice and includes opinion on current education debates and calls to action on particular campaigning issues.

Our **Pushing for Change[[5]](#endnote-5)** , **Hear Us Out** [[6]](#endnote-6) and recent **Knowledge is Power**[[7]](#endnote-7) toolkits draw together our work with young Disabled people on including Disabled people in decision making and promoting leadership skills development and participation by young people.

Our current work-2018 highlights:  
  
**Engaging and leading our allies:**  
In the last year we have invested time and energy in developing and implementing a strong communications strategy to revitalise how we engage allies. We have improved our public profile and have seen noticeable upswing in press interest, ALLFIE featuring in mainstream news and education related publications. After research with our main audience groups about what they are interested in and what they are looking for, our website has been redeveloped leading to an increase in members, more enquiries, and 43,500 website views this year. We have improved our social media use to engage with over 2000 users on Twitter and 1000 on Facebook.

**Campaigns and policy influence:**ALLFIE’s **“Educate Don’t Segregate”** campaign continues to promote full adoption of Article 24 and to challenge legislation and polices which undermine Disabled learners’ right to inclusive education.

Our recent focus has been on:

* opposing plans for more grammar schools - selecting children by academic ability discriminates against children with SEN. We are pleased the government has now dropped these proposals.
* submission of evidence to the GLA Investigation into SEND provision in London which found that Disabled pupils in London are more likely than those from anywhere else in the UK to face barriers to mainstream, and to end up in segregated education [[8]](#endnote-8)
* submission to the Education Select Committee SEND inquiry 2018 and DfE Consultation on high needs funding
* response to LB Newham’s plan to build a new special school
* involvement in the National March against SEN and EHC failures
* supporting local groups campaigning against SEN cuts
* contributing evidence to legal challenges related to inclusive education in the UK and European courts
* continuing to contribute to ROFA’s role in gathering **evidence for the UNCRPD Disability committee** for their continued monitoring of the UK Government on implementation of Article 24 (education).

**Influencing and training the DPO sector:**DPOs play a key role in protecting and advancing Disabled people’s rights, but currently few work directly with children or focus on inclusion. Our Inclusion Champions Network Project is building the capacity of DPOs to start working in this area. This is a constantly evolving and improving service to DDPOs as we learn what training and support they need to more effectively engage with and support Disabled young people and parents

“The Knowledge is Power Toolkit, in particular, has really given me an excellent starting point to help recruit the next generation of Disabled young people to be involved in ECIL” Staff member

Involvement in the Global Disability Summit, International Deaf and Disabled People’s Solidarity Summit, European Network on Independent Living conference and Freedom Drive have all helped us raise the importance of education to the independent living movement.

**Research and evidence**We are aware that we need to build up our evidence base for how the UK education system is failing to uphold Disabled learners’ rights to inclusive education. As well as more systematically collecting evidence from families, in the last year we have appointed a researcher. Initially she is working alongside the RIP:STARS, a group of Disabled young people (aged 17– 25) trained to be co-leaders and co-researchers on research into whether school accessibility plans required by the Equality Act 2010 are effective in promoting inclusion. This project has helped us engage more directly with many more people interested in inclusion, with focus groups held nationwide and over 300 parents and education professionals responding to our survey. The findings and recommendations for change will be published in Autumn 2019.

**Ensuring people are more aware of rights and benefits of inclusion**  
With the closure this year of one of our partners, Parents for Inclusion, we have had a big increase in the numbers of parents contacting us for advice and information. We have responded by producing information to keep people updated on campaigns and policy issues, and briefings on legal rights and inclusive education judgements in the UK and in the European Court of Human Rights. We record stories from parents about their experiences of the education system to inform our campaigns.  
  
We continue to produce Inclusion Now magazine. The articles are fresh, sometimes controversial, sometimes funny, always informative. The magazine brings the voice of excluded people into the heart of the debate about educational change[[9]](#endnote-9). We have also introduced more dynamic ways to promote positive stories and good practice through videos on our website.

# The environment we work within:

Demographics:Across all schools in England, there are more than 1.2 million children with special education needs (SEN) representing 14.6% of the school population (and rising year on year since 2016). In 2018, 2.9% have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of SEN, with a further 11.7% on SEN support.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Pupils with SEN are more likely to live in poverty. 25.8% of pupils with SEN (compared to 11.5% of pupils without SEN) and 30.9% of pupils with EHCPs are eligible for free school meals.

Political, economic, legal and social policy environment:  
**The UK’s political position on Inclusive Education:**The UK has taken some measures to end institutional discrimination, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014, but has stopped short of embracing an inclusive education system. The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)[[11]](#endnote-11) provides an internationally recognised standard for Disabled people’s human rights, which governments who ratify the UNCRPD must work within. Article 24 guarantees Disabled learners a right to participate in all forms of mainstream education with appropriate support but when the UK government ratified the UNCRPD in June 2009 it placed restrictions on its obligations, changing the UK’s definition of a ‘general education system’ to include segregated education, and reserving the UK’s right to send Disabled children to special schools outside their local area “where more appropriate education provision is available elsewhere”.

The current Conservative government is moving towards increasingly selective and segregated education within an education 'marketplace’ where education providers compete against each other for students, funding and resources under the guise of parental or student ‘choice’. More resources going into more selective schools will mean reduced support for non-selective schools, which will take a disproportionate number of Disabled pupils or pupils with SEN.

**The legal position on inclusion[[12]](#endnote-12)**Under the Children and Families Act 2014, there is a strong legal presumption that children should be educated in a mainstream setting. This is almost unqualified for children with SEN but without an EHCP. For those with EHCPs, a Local Authority has to comply with most requests for a particular school or college, unless it would be “incompatible” with the efficient education of others or efficient use of resources. The Local Authority would have to prove an adverse effect on other children’s education that could not be resolved with reasonable steps. Cost is not an acceptable argument and neither is lack of a suitable local school (that would oblige them to make a school suitable). The Act also generally prevents segregation *within* mainstream schools.  
  
Acting alongside this is the Equality Act 2010 duty to pay “due regard” to eliminating discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity for Disabled children, and to make “reasonable adjustments”. However, it is not supported by effective mechanisms to monitor school compliance.

**Evidence of poor quality education experience for Disabled children:**The Ofsted and Care Quality Commission report, 'Local Area SEND inspections: One year on'[[13]](#endnote-13) October 2017, found that pupils with SEND had a much poorer experience of the education system than their peers. They were more likely to be excluded, absent or missing from school with additional use of illegal “unofficial exclusions”; access to coordinated services and information was poor; identification and assessment of needs was poor beyond the early years and especially for children with more subtle needs; and there was a very low use of personal budgets giving parents more control over choices.  
  
**Difficulties with assessment and funding for appropriate support:**A 2016 survey of over 1100 school leaders by The Key (an organisation providing leadership support to schools in England) found 68% of surveyed schools were calling for a greater focus on children with SEND in “mainstream” education policy making. In particular, 82% reported insufficient funding and budget to provide for these pupils with 89% seeing support affected negatively by local authority cuts[[14]](#endnote-14), with primary schools affected the worst. In addition 75% of schools had pupils waiting longer than expected maximum timeframes for EHCP assessments, with the situation worse since 2014 SEND reforms.  
  
For mainstream education to be a positive learning experience, Disabled learners may need support with their studies and engaging with student life, but Disabled learners do not have automatic entitlement to support. A Disabled student with an EHCP has legal entitlement to Local Authority funded SEN support, but those without EHCPs must rely on funding via the school’s budget. The Key’s 2017 State of Education report[[15]](#endnote-15) showed budget pressures remained the most significant challenge for school leaders - with higher levels of SEN funding as well as higher base funding the most needed change. 68% of leaders said that they have to respond to funding challenges through reductions in support staff and less investment in professional development.

**Inaccessible buildings and learning environments**With an increasing premium placed on building space, there has been a tendency for education providers to compromise on the standards of access for Disabled students. Inclusive design is often neglected in education building projects. As well as continued barriers to physical access, many disabled students find the educational environment a difficult one to navigate, with poor colour schemes, no induction loops, no appropriate signage, inadequate lighting and noise levels.

### **Lack of training on inclusion for education professionals:**

Education students often receive little training in how to include Disabled learners. The language of “special educational needs” makes it appear a specialist area, someone else’s problem, not core knowledge for all. Established models of educational provision often result in Disabled children’s learning becoming the responsibility of support staff who may lack the necessary knowledge and experience. 88% of school leaders surveyed by The Key in 2016 felt initial teacher training did not adequately prepare teachers to support pupils with SEND[[16]](#endnote-16)‘ A new framework for initial teacher training launched by the DfE in 2016 includes compulsory SEND training but this focuses on knowledge of impairments and specific health conditions and interventions to fit children into the existing system, rather than on inclusive teaching methods which promote equality responsiveness to diversity.

**Focus on targets and academic achievement**The whole thrust of education policy, with schools measured in performance tables focused mainly on their ability to achieve academic results, forces children out of the mainstream. Recent changes to the OFSTED inspections regime have increased pressure on schools to deliver academic progress across the pupil population or be labelled as a “coasting” school. OFSTED now gives little attention to the work schools do to welcome and support a diversity of learners.

Narrowing focus in the curriculum on “academic” subjects, and inflexible exams and assessments makes it less and less inclusive. The Key’s State of Education report for 2017[[17]](#endnote-17) shows that 79% of school leaders do not think the national curriculum delivers best long term outcomes or includes enough life skills. 73% think children with aptitude in vocational or technical subjects are not best supported. 81% are increasingly concerned about the impact of overfocus on academic achievement, testing and narrowing curriculum on the mental health of students.  
 **Evidence of trend away from inclusion**There has been a steady decline in the number of children with EHCPs or SEN Statements attending state funded schools from 54.6% in 2010 to 47.2% in 2018, particularly at secondary age. Over that period increasing percentages of these children have been going to state funded special schools (rising from 38.2%-44.2%) and independent schools (rising from 4.2%-6.3%)[[18]](#endnote-18).  
  
For children with SEN but no EHCP, there is an even more marked decline in the percentage attending state secondary schools, with a 9.7% decrease to only 33.9% in 2018. There has been an increase in percentage of children attending state primaries from 51% in 2018 to 57% in 2018 (although this increase seems to be levelling off since 2016). Again, there has been an increase in numbers attending state funded special schools or independent schools.  
  
Within London there has been a 23% increase of students in special school provision between 2011 and 2016[[19]](#endnote-19)  
  
In 2017, Ofsted and Care Quality Commission local area inspections[[20]](#endnote-20) found decreasing parental confidence in the ability of mainstream schools to meet their children’s needs or provide adequate support. This makes a fallacy of parental choice. A BBC investigation in 2017 found a 57% increase in the number of children with a Statement or equivalent being home educated in England, Wales and Northern Ireland over the previous five years, with 1000 children identified as being home educated whilst waiting for a school place.  
  
Meanwhile the DfE’s report on Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions in England: 2016 to 2017[[21]](#endnote-21), shows an overall increase in these in mainstream schools. Children with SEND make up 46.7% of all permanent exclusions and 44.9% of all fixed period exclusions. They are 6 times more likely to be permanently excluded, and over 5 times more likely to get a fixed term exclusion than children with no SEN.   
  
Establishing more special schools directly opposes UNCRPD recommendations which includeensuring ‘that mainstream schools foster real inclusion’ of Disabled children. Yet, in 2018, the DfE announced £350million funding for children with “complex SEND”, £100million of which will be focused on creating more “specialist” places.   
  
**Long term impacts of lack of inclusion:**Separating Disabled learners from their non-disabled peer-group is discriminatory. It limits individual life-chances and produces an unfair and unjust society. Our experience of education shapes both who we are and the type of society we want. From early years, children learn about inclusion and segregation from their experiences whilst at school. The influence of this cannot be underestimated.

Disabled children are growing up into adulthood where they will face significant disadvantages, and their rights are being eroded. In August 2017 the UN Disability Committee scrutinised the UK government’s implementation of the UNCRPD. Their concluding recommendations highlighted major failings across all convention articles concluding that the UK Government is causing a “human catastrophe” for Disabled people[[22]](#endnote-22). Disabled people are disproportionately affected by welfare reforms; 30% less likely to be in employment; 3/4 times less likely to be in further, higher education or an apprenticeship; more likely to be socially isolated; and are experiencing increasing levels of hate crime[[23]](#endnote-23).   
  
Inclusive education is the key to changing these disadvantages and discrimination. As one parent puts it:

“Placing all children who cannot access mainstream education together in a separate place will emphasise difference and ensure a segregated life with ‘their own kind’ (whatever that means). When all children regardless of difficulties occupy the same space, the mainstream children learn about difference. These children will be the decision makers of the future and can change the future for the children with disabilities!”

## 

## Summary of ALLFIE’s strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats (2019)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Strengths** | **Opportunities** |
| |  | | --- | | Strong and clearly communicated mission, values, and strategic objectives  Controlled and led by Disabled people and working within Social Model of disability, thus benefiting from the lived experience of Disabled trustees, staff, volunteers, members   Well developed communications strategy which analyses key audiences for campaigns work and considers how they might connect with ALLFIE. Newly developed website and strong social media following  Good track record of influence through campaigning, representation and production of high quality resources  Excellent reputation and respected involvement in regional and national advisory boards  Highly experienced staff. HR, operations, and accessible premises that support engagement and employment of Disabled staff, volunteers, members, trustees  Strong level of reserves at end of 2018/19 (4 months running costs) | | Strong connections to DDPO sector and wider disability movement provides opportunity for promoting collective Disabled people led voice on inclusion.  Number of existing resource and training products. Expertise and experience in training, consultancy and research. All could be developed as sources of new income  Growing acknowledgement of the wellbeing concerns for all children within current education system, importantly shared by school leaders who could be potential new allies  Growing lack of confidence by parents in education system could be converted into campaigning energy  Growing interest in the value of “lived experience leadership” amongst a number of key funders such as Trust for London and National Lottery Community Foundation, and within Social Enterprise funders can be capitalized on |
| **Weaknesses** | **Threats** |
| Gradually reducing income since 2012/13. Over reliance on income from a small range of trusts. Reduction in training and consultancy income in last 2 years. Use of some of reserves in 2018/19 to cover deficit not sustainable  Improved skills in business modelling, including costing and selling services needed to improve efficiency and possibilities for growth   Communications and marketing strategy needs improving for areas of work apart from campaigning: to be clearer what you are offering each of your audiences and why they should support and invest in you.  Investment needed in member engagement to increase support for campaigns  Improvements needed in data management and impact measurement to improve evidence of ALLFIE’s value  Staffing structure needs reviewing to address lack of operations support and to free up Director for strategic development and external relationship building  Investment required in trustee development to improve governance of organization and ability to respond to ever changing environment | General erosion of Disabled people’s rights  Trend away from inclusion in policy and practice  Leaders in DDPOs and wider disability movement not recognizing inclusion as essential aspect of Disabled people’s rights  Stresses within current education system reduce parental confidence in ability of mainstream to meet needs and could erode their support for inclusion  Reduced funding for schools reduces market for training and development resources  Increased competition for trust funding  Hard to be competitive and attract investment and scale up successful work with weaknesses in current business and finance modelling, and current staffing structure  Limited employment prospects for Disabled people mean small pool of people to draw on who have preexisting work experience and skills in areas we need to develop like business modelling/income generation Planned departure of our current Director- loss of her skills, relationships and standing in the world of inclusive education |

Key Strategic Priorities:Having taken into account priorities highlighted by our members and allies, the current context we are working in, and our own particular strengths and weaknesses, ALLFIE has identified 3 strategic priorities for the next 3 years, each with a set of specific objectives. In addition, there is a further underpinning priority to ensure maximum effectiveness of ALLFIE and its future sustainability

Our Priorities for 2019-22:

1. To lead the lobby for change in legislation and policy to ensure inclusive education as a right for all
2. To build the capacity of the inclusive education movement to become a more effective voice of influence
3. To promote a wider understanding of the benefits of inclusive education for all, and improvements in existing inclusive education practice

## Priority 1: To lead the lobby for change in legislation and policy to ensure inclusive education as a right for all

## Evidence of need:

The qualifications set by the government on Article 24 of the UN Convention are unacceptable and the UK remains out of step with the rest of the world in this. The UK is one of only two countries in the world to place restrictions on Article 24 (the other being Mauritius). Inclusion is a social justice issue that will benefit everyone and is particularly relevant in the current social environment where we are seeing a rise in hate crime and intolerance of difference:

“It creates the possibility that children will not simply accept the segregationist attitudes so prevalent today. Teaching disabled and non-disabled children together provides a solid foundation for inclusion more generally in society”. Parent

There is increasing appetite for education policy change in areas that are related to inclusion, such as funding for schools; the crisis in SEN support; curriculum and testing; mental health and welfare of students. Parents, educational professionals and other allies interested in improving the education system for all clearly need support to rally and unify in their calls for change. This presents an opportunity for ALLFIE to engage more allies.  
  
Market analysis of potential partners and competitors in January 2019 clearly indicates that ALLFIE needs to protect its role in leading the lobby for inclusive education, as the only Disabled people led voice. Any options for closer collaboration with other organisations needs to protect that position.  
  
It is clear that stable and growing campaigns organisations are ones which combine their campaigns and policy work with tangible services and products offered to supporters and allies, which helps organisations keep people engaged with campaigns and are also a source of sustainable income. We have therefore looked at how objectives across our 3 priority areas work together to engage allies and sustain progress towards our vision.

Specific objectives within current capacity:

* 1. Continue and step up our campaign to get Article 24 fully adopted without conditions. With Disabled learners, members, education professionals and allies, draw up a Transitional Plan which outlines legal, policy and practice changes required to realise an inclusive education system as defined in the UNCRPD, and the process for achieving that
  2. Review our Manifesto and relaunch to gain more support and signatories in the build up to the next General Election
  3. Continue providing education related evidence to the UNCRPD Committee
  4. Further development of our Communications Strategy with emphasis on:
     + securing strategic communications support to reframe our inclusive education message in a strongly human rights way, and to incorporate messaging about wider benefits of inclusive education aimed at changing ‘hearts and minds’ particularly of inclusion sceptics
     + developing communications materials that clearly define what impacts we are offering to each of our key groups of supporters in exchange for their involvement in campaigns

Growth objectives:

* 1. Build our membership and engagement capacity by

securing funding for a dedicated new post from April 2020, so we can engage more people in the movement and widen our base of allies, including targeting key groups currently underrepresented in our membership such as student’s unions; Disabled students; Disabled education professionals; MPs with a recent positive track record on disability or education related issues; other education campaign groups, education professionals and governors concerned with general trends in education and the welfare of students (see market analysis report)

* 1. Expand our policy and legal capacity and expertise from 2020 to allow us to take strategic legal challenges on inclusive education issues.

## Priority 2: To build the capacity of the inclusive education movement to become a more effective voice of influence

# 

Evidence of need:ALLFIE does not provide an official advice helpline but in the last 18 months has received an increasing number of requests for support from parents and Disabled students about cuts to local SEND support services, decline in the quality of SEND provision in mainstream schools, or resistance to inclusion by schools or local education authorities. ALLFIE has expertise and track record in building the capacity of young people and parents to have a more effective voice and clearly there is an increasing need for this in the current climate.   
  
There is an increasing acknowledgement amongst some major funders and within the social enterprise sector of the value of “lived experience” in achieving social change, backed up by recent research by Baljeet Shandhu[[24]](#endnote-24). This provides ALLFIE with an opportunity to gain support and investment in our capacity building, leadership, and coproduction work with Disabled students, parents and DPOs.  
  
We know there are limited opportunities for children and young people’s voices to be heard in building good inclusive practice. For example the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission report, 'Local Area SEND inspections: One year on'[[25]](#endnote-25) 2017 found Disabled learners are frequently not even involved in the production and review of their EHCPs.

We know from our Inclusion Champions Project that ALLFIE needs to continue working on DPOs’ understanding of how to work with parents and young people, but also on DPOs understanding of how Article 24 works integrally with Article 19 as the basis for a truly inclusive society for Disabled young people/children transitioning into adulthood.

## Specific Objectives within current capacity:

* 1. Continue ALLFIE’s Inclusion Champions Network which is building the capacity of DDPOs to work with Disabled children and young people and their families and their knowledge of the needs and issues of children and young people related to education and wider social inclusion. This includes supporting DDPOs to use our existing Knowledge is Power resource to developing young people’s leadership and participation skills
  2. Develop more of a voice of Disabled students on our website, with case studies and articles written by young people
  3. Build up an e-hub for sharing resources and information on inclusive education available to DPOs, parents and families and education professionals (including students)

## Growth Objectives:

* 1. Increase the capacity of ALLFIE’s Director over the next two years by growing the post to full time and introducing more Operations support. This will free the Director up for more conference presentations and training and consultancy on inclusive education
  2. Build a new generation of Disabled young leaders through our “RipStars Lived Experience Leadership project”, which we aim to start in May 2019. This will bring the young people from our current RipStars research project together with a group of Disability rights leaders of the Disabled People’s Movement to share intergenerational experiences of what makes a good leader, what the barriers are for Disabled people and what Disabled people have done to challenge Disablism and discrimination and to create solutions that have created change. Following on from this 18 month project we aim to develop further ongoing models for developing young people as inclusion campaigners and activists
  3. Develop a project for a Disabled young person led inquiry into the state of inclusive education (findings and recommendations to be fed into the transitional plan in objective 1). Aim to start secure funds and start this programme by autumn 2019.
  4. Build capacity of local parent campaign groups
  5. Build relationships with Disabled teachers through teacher’s union disability groups and equalities representatives in student’s unions to analyse what support and training they need to advance inclusive education. Coproduce solutions and funding proposals with them.

## **Priority 3: To promote a wider understanding of the benefits of inclusive education for all, and improvements in existing inclusive** education practice

Evidence of need:  
Current education legislation and policy does not foster a consistent and coherent approach to supporting Disabled pupils into mainstream education. From ALLFIE’s experience good practice is too often determined by the good will of the individual authority, education institution or service provider.

To have a real commitment to inclusion school leaders and professionals need to understand the benefits and believe inclusion is achievable. We know there is a gap in training provision for education professionals, particularly in rights based approaches to inclusive education. We know school leaders are worried about the mental health of their students with 66%[[26]](#endnote-26) working actively with parents around mental health concerns. This presents an opportunity for research and development of resources for education professionals that help them understand the links between wellbeing and inclusion.

To have a real choice of inclusion we know Disabled learners and their families need to understand the benefits of inclusion and have confidence that local mainstream provision will be welcoming and responsive to their needs.

To engage more supporters in our cause, and for our own sustainability,  
ALLFIE need to improve our effectiveness in marketing and selling the range of products and services we already have on offer that promote inclusion and inclusive practice. At the moment we offer all our resources, training and consultancy products, and advisory services for free, and they reach a very small audience.

## Specific Objectives within current capacity:

* 1. Continue to produce Inclusion Now to share examples of good practice
  2. Expand the range of inclusion top tips, good practice examples, case studies on our website. Make sure that there are web based resources relevant to each supporter group
  3. Develop visual materials for ALLFIE’s website that more clearly demonstrate the benefits of inclusion, and parent “welcome to inclusion” pack
  4. Improve the ways we measure, evidence and market our impact to support growth and attract investment. We will develop evaluation plans for each of our three strategic objective areas, identifying a small number of key impacts we can measure realistically within our current capacity. We will ensure that data is collected systematically to measure these impacts and will use examples of good practice within the DPO sector to develop light touch visual tools such as infographs to quickly improve how we market our impact on our website

## Growth Objectives:

* 1. Aim to sustain and develop ALLFIE’s research capacity beyond the end of the current DRILL funded research project in October 2019. Prioritise researching the link between wellbeing and inclusion
  2. Engage service design and business modelling support to look at which of our toolkits we can sell and/or secure investment to develop into income generating training offers to schools and universities (in particular Knowledge is Power, How was School, and Schools Accessibility Plan Training that can be developed from our current project with RipStars); and to develop a plan for gradual increase in our training and consultancy offer
  3. Review our Inclusion Assistant Training and analyse whether it can be redeveloped into marketable CPD product for education professionals. Analyse whether there is a market for developing rights based inclusive good practice training modules and webinars to sell directly to schools and colleges, or to sell via partnerships with teacher training providers, school leadership support providers, or wider education networks (see market analysis report for potential customers)
  4. Following from Disabled young people led inquiry in objective 3, work with young people and existing network of schools to develop an ALLFIE inclusive practice best practice award scheme so schools can get accreditation and recognition for their good practice
  5. Work with a group of parents to consider how to set up a peer inclusion support network to share inclusion good practice stories and solutions, and to build confidence in inclusion

### **Underpinning Priority:**

### **To ensure maximum effectiveness of ALLFIE and its future sustainability**

Evidence of need:  
ALLFIE have identified a number of areas where we can improve our ability to work effectively and sustainably towards our visionSpecific Objectives: **4.1** **Governance**The planned growth of the organisation, including development of our income generating services and products will require new skills on the trustee board. We will:

* update our trustee skills audit to ensure recruitment and training of trustees tailored with new needs raised by this Strategic Plan
* continue our commitment to leadership development of Disabled people, by investing in ongoing training and coaching for trustees
* ensure our new treasurer is trained in particular issues for SMEs in the DPO sector  
  1. **Financial Security and Sustainability**

To sustain the organisation ALLFIE needs to immediately diversify its funding sources. A financial projection and fundraising strategy have been developed which aim to sustain current levels of turnover in 2019/20, initially through diversifying trust funding income by widening its services to members and supporters (see objectives above). Business models have been developed and potential funders identified to secure the remaining income needed within the 2019/20 financial projection. It is planned that ALLFIE will gradually increase its services and sales of income generating products over the next two years to improve its sustainability.   
  
In addition to this planned gradual growth strategy, ALLFIE has undertaken a detailed market analysis to consider options for closer working relationships with another organisation to secure the future of ALLFIE’s brand and lead role in the campaign for inclusive education. We have identified a suitable partner and are actively exploring options for collaboration including options for shared contracts, shared back office and communications functions, or potential merger.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ALLFIE Budget Projections** | | |
|  | |  | | --- | | **Annual Budget** | | **2019/20** | | |  | | --- | | **Annual Budget** | | **2020/21** | |
| Leading the lobby for change | 49780 | 50673 |
| Building the capacity of the movement | 124639 | 127264 |
| Promoting understanding | 44402 | 47236 |
| **Totals** | 218821 | 225173 |
| Percentage secured at Feb 2019 | 59% | 50% |

**4.2** **Staffing Structure and skills**  
The imminent departure of our longstanding Director is a considerable threat to the organisation. This is a pivotal point of change at a time of planned growth for the organisation. ALLFIE will therefore proactively engage a short term interim Director who has experience and skills in business modelling and developing income generating services, which is currently a skills gap in the organisation. Their role for 2019-20 will be to focus on ALLFIE’s immediate plans for service development and growth to stabilise its funding base, as well as working on more detailed plans for beyond this period. This will include reviewing the staffing structure to ensure further planned growth of the organisation is achievable. We already know that as we grow we need to increase the Director’s capacity to full time; increase operational support; introduce dedicated support for membership engagement and relationship building; and maintain our research capacity.  
  
We will secure external consultancy support for areas where staff cannot be expected to have the required level of skills e.g. strategic communications.

1. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/article-24-full-text/> [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/definitions/models-of-disability/social-model-disability/> [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. <http://www.rofa.org.uk/> [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/act-now/disabled-peoples-challenge-to-the-next-mayor-of-london/> [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Pushing-for-Change-Summary.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/uncategorised/hear-us-out/> [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/uncategorised/knowledge-power-participation-toolkit/> [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/london-assembly/london-assembly-publications/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-provision-london> [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. <http://www.allfie.org.uk/pages/inclusion-now>. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729208/SEN_2018_Text.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx> [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/uncategorised/legal-guide-right-inclusive-education-english-law/> [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-one-year-on> [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. <https://thekeysupport.com/press/children-send-let-system-wide-failings-june-2016/> [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. <https://view.joomag.com/state-of-education-report-2017/0676372001494577623> [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. <https://thekeysupport.com/press/children-send-let-system-wide-failings-june-2016/> [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. <https://view.joomag.com/state-of-education-report-2017/0676372001494577623> [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729208/SEN_2018_Text.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. <https://www.allfie.org.uk/news/briefings/submission-to-the-gla-investigation-into-send-provision-in-london/> [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-one-year-on> [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/726741/text_exc1617.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/how-well-uk-performing-disability-rights> [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IL_Inequalities-experienced-by-Deaf-and-Disabled-People-Factsheet-20152.pdf> [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. <http://thelivedexperience.org/report/> [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-one-year-on> [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. <https://view.joomag.com/state-of-education-report-2017/0676372001494577623> [↑](#endnote-ref-26)