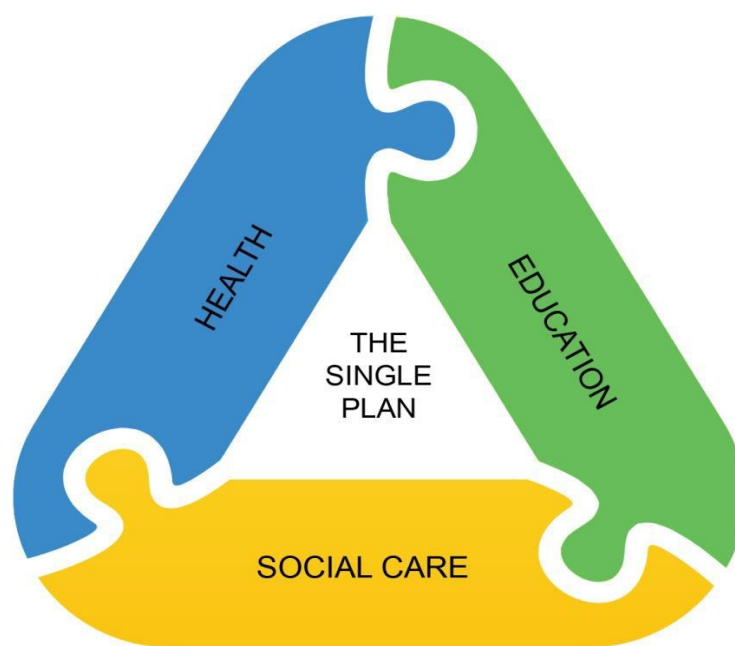
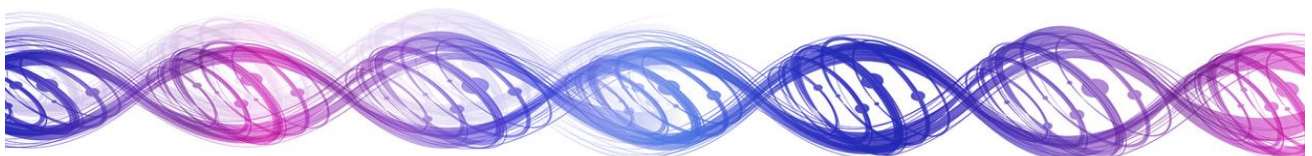


Darlington Strategy for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) 2017 to 2020



Vision

Darlington's children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with SEND will: have the best start in life; aim high and achieve their full potential, grow up to be as independent as possible, and become active citizens within their community.



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1. Foreword

Darlington's vision is to enable children and young people to have the best start in life; to be provided with opportunities to achieve their personal best, and to become successful citizens.

Darlington is an aspiring place with big ambitions for *all* its children and young people.

Recognising the challenges that children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) face, this strategy sets out how we will enable children and young people with SEND to develop their skills, abilities and strengths in order to achieve their full potential.

The introduction of the SEND reforms in the Children and Families Act 2014 provided an ideal opportunity to improve our support for children and young people with SEND and their families and to develop provision to meet their needs. Children, young people and their families are at the heart of these reforms, and at the centre of all that we do.

There are a number of key drivers for the changes introduced by the reforms, notably:

- Supporting the independence of children and young people so that they may enjoy more fulfilled lives and positive outcomes
- Reducing the cost to local authorities and NHS of lifetime support by supporting that independence through early intervention
- The system for assessing SEN has not changed for many years and is no longer seen as fit for purpose
- Children, young people, parents and carers rightly want more say in what services are available to them and support in accessing those services
- Avoiding duplication of effort by joint working

This Strategy has been developed by the following partner agencies:

- Darlington Borough Council
- Clinical Commissioning Group
- Darlington Parent Carer Forum
- Darlington SIG (Voluntary Sector Provider Forum)
- Darlington Schools and Colleges Representatives

All of the above organisations have agreed to work collaboratively with each other and where appropriate commission services jointly to ensure children and young people with SEND and additional needs are well prepared for skilled employment and independent or supported adult living.

Signatures and photos of chief officers across partnership

DBC
CCG
PC Forum
SIG
Schools/Education
Darlo Care Crew Logo

2. Introduction

The Darlington SEND Strategy is connected to several other pieces of work which it informs or is informed by, notably:

- Darlington Borough Council's Sustainable Community Strategy: One Darlington Perfectly Placed (2008 – 2026)
- Health and Wellbeing Plan (2017 – 2022)
- The Children and Young Person's Plan (2017 – 2022)
- Darlington's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- Darlington SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy (2017 – 2020)
- LAC Strategy and LAC Sufficiency Statement (2017 – 2020)
- Early Help Strategy
- NHS Five Year Forward Plan
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions 2015

All key partners are committed to working collaboratively to maximise opportunities and support to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and their families/carers.

This strategy also acknowledges the reality of the financial constraints under which public sector organisations are operating. Resources across the council and its partners, including health, are under pressure and must be focussed on helping children and young people with SEND to reach their full potential and grow up to be as independent as possible. We also need to consider the developing the Local Authority to act more as a commissioner of provision and a champion of vulnerable children and families and less as a provider of services. When required partners should commission services which enable children, young people and their families to access the right support at the right time.

Education, health and social care organisations must work closely together with providers including the voluntary sector, to address the challenges we face. This strategy is designed to address these issues and to bring about the necessary improvements in the quality of provision for children and young people with SEND, from the earliest years of childhood, through the school years and into early adulthood. Ultimately the success of this strategy will be judged on the outcomes delivered for children, young people and their families.

Education, Health and Care Plans

Darlington was a pathfinder for One Plans (Education Health Care Plans), which are enhanced support plans which show clearly the assess-plan-do-review process in schools and keep in one place all references to outside agencies targets and identified area of need.

One Plans are non-statutory documents that replace statements of special educational needs and learning difficulty assessments (LDA) and are used as best practise in terms of a holistic collaborative approach to developing support plans for students with multi-agency involvement.

The new plan looks at all of a child's needs and brings together education, health and care services to identify, work towards and achieve agreed outcomes. The focus is very much on what is important for children and young people – what they and their parents want to achieve now and in the future. One plans are available from birth to 25 years. Information about needs and gaps in provision can be used to inform service development and future commissioning.

The new plans put children, young people and families at the centre of the assessment and planning process (person centred planning) and is all about increasing their choice and control. Sixteen to 25 year olds should be especially involved in the formulation of their plans.

The decision to compile an EHC Plan for a particular child is based on a formal assessment of their needs. Not all children and young people will require a plan to ensure that their needs are met, just those whose needs or circumstances are the most complex. However, the Local Offer is available to everyone regardless of whether a plan is in place.

Each plan would include the aspirations and outcomes we wish to achieve for the child/young person as well as a description of their needs, barriers to learning and any provision required to overcome these. The plan can cover health and social care services alongside education if appropriate for the individual child.

There is a timetable in place to ensure that existing statements and LDAs will all have been converted to EHC plans by 2018.

Plans are reviewed annually to ensure the child or young person is making progress towards the identified targets, but also to take account of any changes in their needs as they grow up. Parents are involved in every stage of the EHC process which is designed to be both collaborative and supportive.

Personal Budgets

Personal budgets are used within:

- Education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- Where an Education Health and Care plan assessment has been agreed. A parent or the young person can request the support to be provided as a Personal Budget which gives the option of using the budget more flexibly to meet the child's learning support needs
- Health and Social Care for people of all ages who have assessed health and care needs

You can choose to have:

- the organisation providing the budget arrange services on your behalf
- take the budget as a direct payment and arrange support yourself or
- have a mixture of the two

3. Vision, values, philosophy and aims

VISION

Darlington's overarching vision for children and young people, is set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy: One Darlington, Perfectly Placed (2008 – 2026):

Darlington's children and young people should be given the best start in life

Our aspiration is that:

Darlington's children and young people aged 0 – 25 years with SEND will: have the best start in life; aim high and achieve their full potential, grow up to be as independent as possible, and become active citizens within their community.

VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

Pupil and Parent Voice

- For children, young people and their families to feel listened to and heard within the process and practise of education

Preparation for Adulthood

- For children and young people to have the skills and confidence to flourish in the next phase of their lives and become as independent as possible

Build Capacity and improve outcomes for all children with SEND and additional needs

- To ensure that inclusion and specifically SEND performance is at the centre of commissioning services and understanding the needs of schools in terms of improvement of process so that children and young people have an increased chance of success

Collaboration and co-production

- For all partners to be involved in excellence in practise, supporting each other to understand differing views, priorities and skills and talents
- When needed, partners will commission services which enable children, young people and their families to access the right support at the right time

Early identification and intervention

- For children and young people to have their needs understood, recognise the benefits of early identification and have interventions quickly and efficiently.

AIMS

- A Local Offer, which is accurate, easy to use and understandable for parents.
- Increased participation for parents, children and young people
- The needs of children and young people with SEND are met as close to home as possible
- To promote a spirit of partnership to ensure that all voices are heard in moves to improve SEND Provision in Darlington
- Children and Young people who are prepared for the challenges and rewards of adulthood
- A system which recognises the needs of Children and young people and responds quickly and effectively.
- An active community of parents/carers, families, children and young people who feel supported by professionals who act in the best interests of the child.
- Increase liaison between agencies with the needs of the child at the centre of process.
- Health inequalities are reduced and educational attainment gaps are prevented

This Strategy is informed by:

- a needs assessment of children and young people with SEND
- a scoping exercise of current provision in Darlington
- feedback from Local Engagement Events

The strategy is also set within the context of national policy, legislation and guidance, and addresses the needs of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) from birth to the age of 25.

The following primary legislation governs our commissioning in relation to SEND:

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as when a person has a physical or mental impairment:

- Which is substantial and long-term (for over a year);
- This has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This broad definition covers physical disabilities, sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, learning disabilities and some specified medical conditions.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The SEND Code of Practice 0 - 25 years (January 2015) states that: A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

The broad areas of need described are:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical

Principles underpinning the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years

The Code of Practice states that Local Authorities must have regard to the:

- views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person, and their parent/carers
- importance of the child or young person, and their parent/carers, participating as fully as possible in decisions; and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- need to support the child or young person, and their parent/carers, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood. And that Local

Authorities must ensure the following:

- the participation of children, their parent/carers and young people in decision making
- the early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- greater choice and control for young people and parent/carers over support
- collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support 19
- high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN
- greater choice and control for young people and parent/carers over their support
- a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

The Specific Duties of the Equality Act relating to Education

The main specific duties are:

- not to treat pupils/students with SEND less favourably
- the reasonable adjustments duty - to take reasonable steps to avoid putting pupils/students with SEND at a substantial disadvantage.

4. National Context

National best practice was defined in 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' (2004). This paper set an agenda of enabling all children and young people, including those with SEND, to be able to learn, play and develop alongside peers and within their local community of schools.

In June 2010 the coalition Government began a series of reforms relating to processes and provision for children and young people with SEND. Areas for action included:

- Improving diagnostic assessment for school children
- Preventing the unnecessary closure of special schools
- Extending the personal budgets to give young people and parents/carers more choice and control

The Ofsted 'SEN and disability review' in September 2010 was commissioned to evaluate how well the legislative framework and arrangements were serving children and young people with SEND. Outcomes influenced the March 2011 Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to SEND' which set out proposals to improve outcomes for children and young people, minimise the adversarial nature of the system for families and maximise value for money. It emphasised the importance of the following:

- early identification and assessment
- providing parent and carers and young people with more choice and control
- learning and achievement / improving teaching standards
- preparing for adulthood
- services working together for families

Recommendations from the Green Paper were incorporated into the 'Children and Families Bill' in February 2013. After consultation, the Bill received assent and became the Children and Families Act in March 2014. It must be implemented from September 1st, 2014.

Specific to children and young people with SEND the new Act will:

- ensure more effective integrated working across agencies and joint commissioning by local authorities and health services
- reform the statutory assessment system, replacing statements and learning difficulty assessments focused , with new integrated Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plans) addressing wider needs across education, health and social care. These can be available for young people aged up to 25 in education or training, extending support that previously ceased at 16 or 19.
- give families more choice and control in decision making
- offer families more personalised services including personal budgets
- require local authorities to involve children, young people and parents in reviewing and developing SEND services
- require local authorities to publish a 'Local Offer' detailing support available and how it can be accessed, informed by the views of children, young people and their families

Significant reforms also took place in 2013 to arrangements for funding for schools. A new system for funding for SEND needs was established as follows:

- local authorities are given a budget for children and young people with higher level needs. This budget is called the High Needs Pupil Block and will fund all additional provision across early years, schools and post-16 education and training.

- mainstream schools are generally expected to spend up to £10,000 out of their existing 'base' budget to meet SEND needs before the local authority provides additional 'top up' funding out of the High Needs Pupil Block.
- all state funded special schools will be funded for a set number of places at £10,000 for each child. Local authorities who wish to name that school in a child's statement must agree the 'top-up' amount for each child.

Legislation and statutory guidance:

'Removing barriers to achievement' (2004)

http://www.education.gov.uk/lamb/resources/Universal/removing_barriers.pdf

The Ofsted SEN and disability review (September 2010)

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/special-educational-needs-and-disability-review>

The Green Paper 'Support and Aspiration: A New Approach to SEND' (March 2011)

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027>

Children and Families Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents>

SEN Statutory Code of Practice

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

School Funding Reform: Current system and proposals for 'fairer school funding' 2017

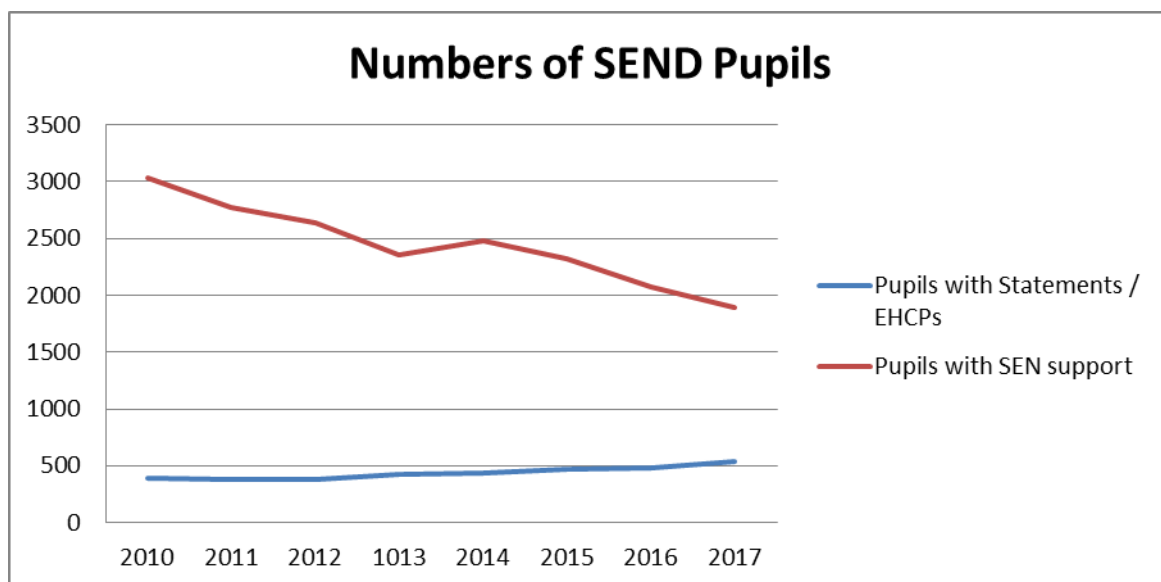
<http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06702/SN06702.pdf>

5. The Darlington Context

Darlington became a Unitary Council in 1997, moving away from Durham County Council and taking responsibility for education and social care services. Partnership working has been a particular strength across all sectors, with Darlington playing a key role in sub-regional and regional relationships and collaborations within social care and education. Darlington also works closely with Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Stockton, Redcar and Cleveland as part of the Tees Valley sub region.

A Strategic Analysis of Special Educational Needs was undertaken in July 2017 (See Appendix 1).

Overall the number of pupils with SEN in Darlington has fallen from 3,428 in January 2010 to 2,430 in January 2017. The number of pupils with a statement or EHCP has risen by 36.8% since 2010, whilst the number of pupils requiring SEN support has declined by 37.6%. There are 32,679 children and young people aged 0 to 25 years living in Darlington which represents 31% of the population. Of these children 19.6% are living in poverty¹.



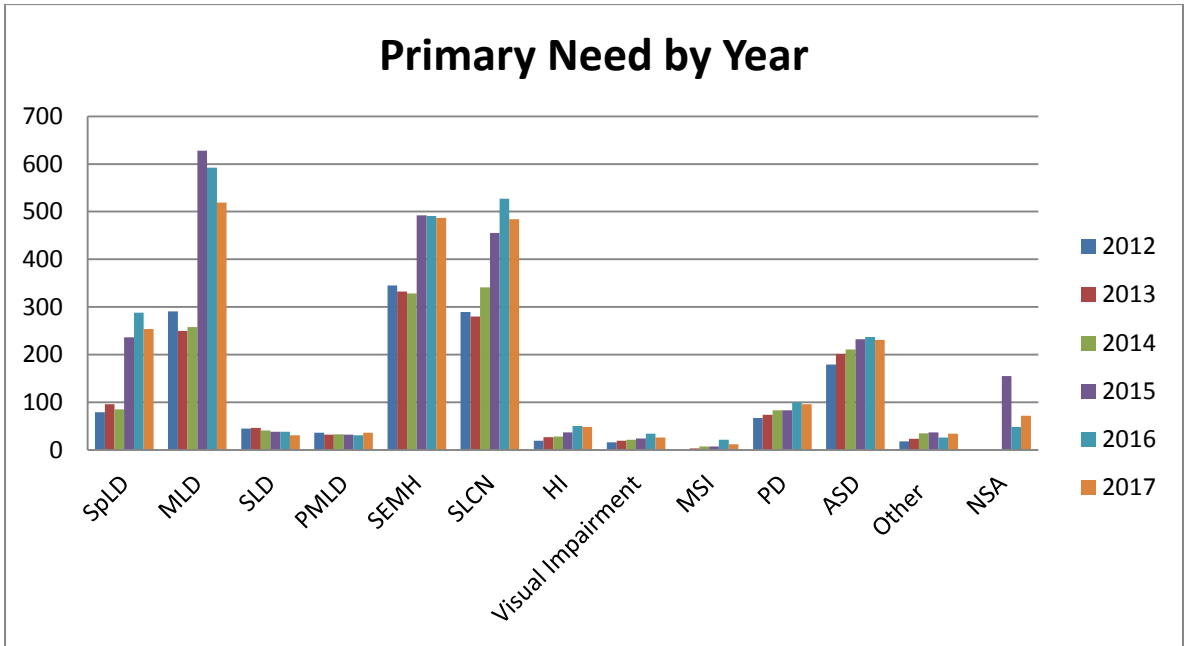
In 2017 the percentage of pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or EHC plans in Darlington schools stood at 3.3% of the total cohort (535 pupils), this was above the North-East average (3.0%) and the England average (2.8%).

The percentage of pupils who were identified as requiring SEN support in Darlington schools stood at 11.6% of the total cohort (1,895 pupils), this was below the North-East average (12.4%) but in line with the England average (11.6%).

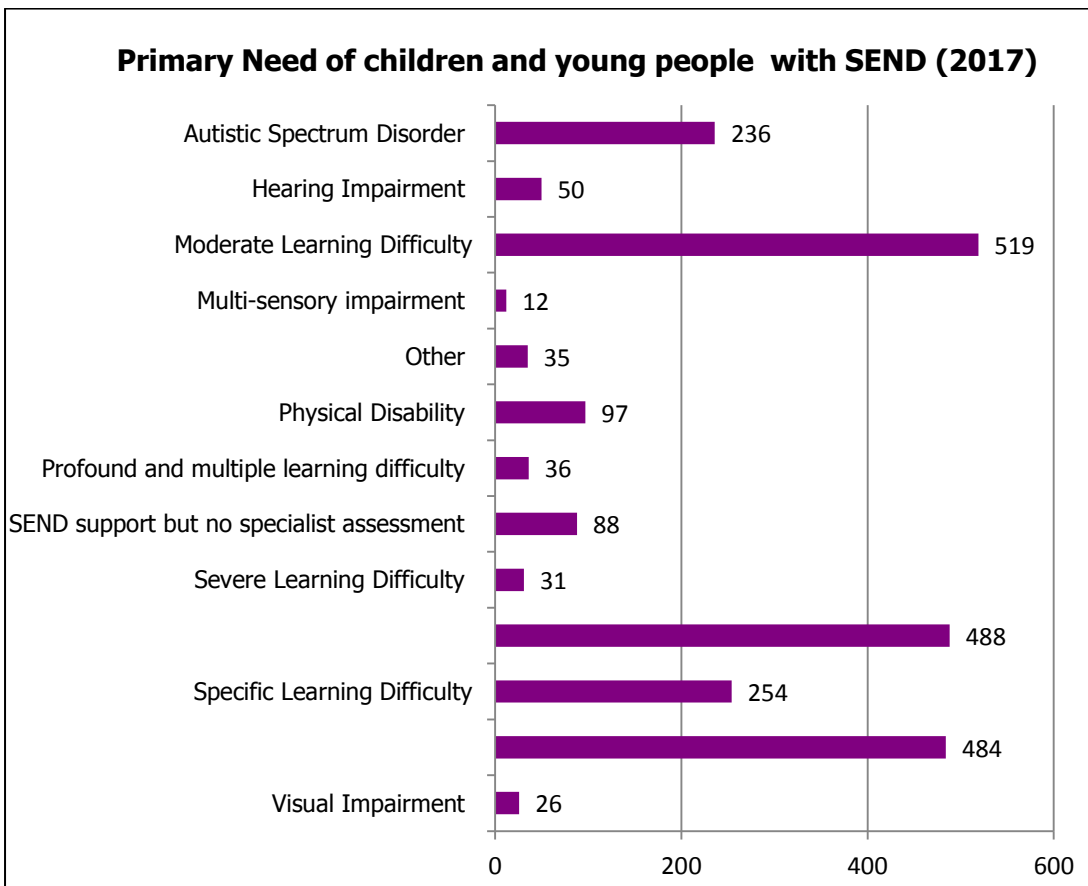
There were 103 primary pupils and 58 secondary pupils who had a statement or EHCP. This compares with 281 in special schools with a statement or EHCP.

Moderate Learning Difficulty (MLD) is the most common type of primary need (22.27% of the total number of children and young people with SEND) followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH – 20.90%) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN – 20.77%). All three areas increased significantly in 2015 and 2016 but decreased slightly in 2017.

¹ IMD 2015



See Appendix 2 for explanation of abbreviations of “primary need”



Social Care

The local authority has a statutory responsibility towards disabled children as, under s17 Children Act 1989, they are classified as 'children in need' and so eligible for an assessment regarding service provision. In August 2017 there were 135 children and young people under the age of eighteen recorded as having some form of disability who were open to social care.

Looked After Children

The educational needs of children, aged 2 to 18, who are looked after by the local authority are closely monitored and progress tracked by the Virtual School Head teacher. There are 144 looked after children in Darlington schools from reception to Y11 and of these, 29 have an EHCP and 33 have SEN Support Services.

The rates for both EHCP and SEN Support for looked after children are lower than national figures:

- SEN Support 29% which is in line with the national figure of 30.4%²
- EHCP or Statement 21.5% which is lower than the national figure of 27%³

The majority of looked after children have social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs as their Primary Need.

Although the majority attend schools in Darlington, 46 attend outside the borough, primarily in County Durham, North Yorkshire and Lancashire.

Education

Darlington's education provision differs from neighbouring authorities in so much as the majority of schools have converted to academies. There are only two local authority maintained nurseries, four primary schools and a Pupil Referral Unit. All local authority maintained schools are graded 'good or better' by Ofsted.

In addition to the two nursery schools; Darlington has 17 primary schools with a nursery class. Children also attend day care, pre-school playgroups and child-minders to access their early year entitlement.

Darlington has two Infant Schools and two Junior Schools; all are graded good or better by Ofsted and 25 Primary Schools, of which six are judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding', 15 'good', four 'require improvement' and one has an 'inadequate' grade from Ofsted.

There are seven Secondary Schools, two of which are judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding', two 'good' and three 'require improvement'.

There are two 'Free Schools'. One focuses on the behavioural needs of primary age pupils and the other that provides mainstream education for children from ages 4 to 18.

Special School provision is provided by one Academy Trust and covers the primary and secondary age range. The Special School is currently graded 'inadequate' by Ofsted.

² DfE 2016 – Outcomes for LAC

³ DfE 2016 – Outcomes for LAC

Post-16, there is a general further education college, a sixth form college and the local authority's Learning & Skills Service, as well as a small number of private training providers which operate in Darlington. All three main providers are judged to be "good". Two of the secondary schools also offer sixth form provision.

- 93% of Darlington Early Year Providers are rated as good or better by Ofsted
- 86% of eligible 2 year olds are accessing their free 15 hours nursery provision
- 96% of eligible 3 and 4 years olds are accessing their free 15 hours nursery provision
- 56% achieved the expected level in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2

For 2017/18 academic year the local authority has commissioned high needs placements at the following institutions:

School	Age Range	Needs provided	Number of Places*	Current placements**
Marchbank Free School (Special)	5-11	Social Emotional and Mental Health	42	45
Beaumont Hill Academy (Special)	2-19	Various	240	239
Heathfield Primary School (Resource Base)	5-11	Complex Learning Disability	16	12
Mount Pleasant Primary School (Resource Base)	5-11	Social & Communication Difficulties	20	18
Northwood Primary (Resource Base)	5-11	Speech & Language	9	7
Hurworth School (Resource Base)	11-16	Social & Communication Difficulties	14	13

* This is the number of places commissioned for academic year 2017/18 for all local authorities.

** This is the number of pupils registered on the January 2017 school census

School	Age Range	Needs provided	Number of Places*	Current placements**
Beaumont Hill Academy (Special)	Post 16	Various	28	28
Darlington College	Post 16	Various	86	86
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form	Post 16	Various	2	2

Health

Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) was established in 2011. It is made up of 11 member GP practices which cover a total population in excess of 100,000 people, the majority of which are located in the urban area (85%) and the remainder living in villages within the borough boundary.

The CCG is responsible for a range of commissioning responsibilities previously carried out by Primary Care Trusts. They work in partnership with agencies to ensure the services needed by the community are available and are the right ones for the residents of the local area.

Current Services and Support Available in Darlington

Darlington offers a range of services that aim to increase engagement and outcomes for children and young people with additional needs or vulnerabilities. We have a very active educational community with a multi-agency approach to understanding for the needs of young people, reducing disengagement and increasing participation.

The services outlined below work hard to ensure that the principles of early intervention, collaboration, preparation for adulthood and the voice of children and their families are at the centre of catering for the needs of the children and young people of Darlington.

Information and Advice

Local Offer

The Local Offer is an online directory which outlines the support which the local authority has available for children and young people with SEND. It includes information about education, health and care provision. It also gives links to and details on training, employment and independent living opportunities available for young people with SEND.

Parent/Carer forum

Parent/Carer forum exists to represent the views of parents and carers at strategic level to help shape services to meet the need of families. The Parent Carer forum in Darlington is very active and recently held its first full conference. It is the aim of the Local Authority to engage with parent carers more fully.

SENDIASS

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service or SENDIASS is a free, confidential and impartial service for parents and carers, children and young people (up to 25 years).

Early Help

Early Help Assessment Model

The Early Help Assessment is the single assessment tool used by Darlington's multi-agency partnerships then includes Schools, Colleges, Health, Childcare settings, the Voluntary sector as well as across all Children's Social Care teams. The Early Help Assessment provides a standard and co-ordinated approach for practitioners across all partner agencies and services and is designed to ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right support at an early stage to reduce the chance of escalation to a specialist services. This tool should be used at the earliest opportunity when a family's needs are not able to be met by universal services.

Early Years Inclusion Team

The Early Years team support the inclusion and development of provision for children 0-5 who have disabilities.

Health Services

Darlington CCG commissions paediatrics and A&E locally, paediatric therapies including physiotherapy, speech and language and occupational therapy; as well as Continuing Care for Children. It also commissions mental health services and learning disability services.

NHS England – commissions' specialised services, some of which are involved in the treatment and care of the most severely disabled children: For example, Psychiatric PICU, Inpatient Mental Health and Learning Disability units; neurology and genetic disorders. Local GP practices are commissioned by both NHS England and Darlington CCG, though NHS England holds the funding for local GP practices.

Health Visitors and School nurses

To deliver the Healthy Child Pathway to children and families within Darlington and Co. Durham, through which every school has a named school nurse who has responsibility to work together with all key stakeholders, children, young people and their parents: Adhering to Standards 1,2,3,5 and 8 of the NSF for children and young people and maternity services, Every Child Matters and Health for all Children, 4th Edition.

The service ensures a standardised approach for the assessment of Child and Family Health Needs, NICE guideline 37v1. Packages of care which meet and deliver both universal and targeted specialist services are offered. The Framework for Assessment allows the identification of needs, when such needs are identified additional services and support can be offered.

CAMHS

The CAMHS team in Darlington provides specialist child and adolescent mental health services and has three main functions:

- Assessment and treatment of children and young people 0-18 years of age with mental health problems
- Advice, support and consultation for family members, carers and workers from health, social services, educational and voluntary agencies
- Promotion of positive mental health in children and young people.

Education Provision

Darlington is presently unique in that we are an almost entirely Academised Local Authority. This means that SEN is now that last statutory area in which we must engage with our schools. It is however a priority for all stakeholders to maintain the relationships that we have with individual schools and develop strong working relationships in the face of increased presence of MATS from outside the LA.

SEN Partnership

We have invested in the creation of a new Special Needs Partnership Link service, which aims to offer practical support and guidance to schools and other stakeholders in improving policy and practise in schools and specialist services for pupils with SEN. This service has established a new SENCO Network and also runs a half termly training offer for professionals in Darlington.

Looked After Children – Virtual Head

In Darlington our Virtual Head Teacher has responsibility for championing the education of children looked after (LAC). He provides targeted support for children looked after as part of the Virtual School and leads the drive to improve educational and social care standards for children in the care of the Local Authority.

The Virtual Head is focused on ensuring that the education for this group of pupils is as good as that provided for every other pupil and that looked after children receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible.

Post 16

Our Post 16 service aims to reduce the number of those young people not in education, employment or training, while running a varied and very successful Post 16 programme. We promote a full apprenticeship programme and work collaboratively with Darlington College, Queen Elizabeth's Sixth form College and other Post 16 providers.

The service is focused on the Preparing for adulthood agenda and offers support to schools to embed this earlier in a student's education.

Educational Psychology

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) is part of Darlington Borough Council. We are a traded service which means that schools can purchase our time depending on the needs of their pupils, staff and families. The service is also asked by the Local Authority's (LA) Special Educational Needs (SEN) department to become involved when children are undergoing an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment.

Educational Psychologists (EPs) work with children and young people aged up to twenty five years and with their teachers, parents/ carers and other professionals. Much of our work is focused on exploring solutions to problems that occur in education settings. Typically, such problems involve children/young people experiencing issues with learning, communication, emotional wellbeing, and behaviour. Sometimes EPs work with children and young people, whilst other times we work only with the adults in their lives. EPs also work closely with other services like Speech and Language Therapy and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)

Learning and Skills

Learning and Skills are an Ofsted rated grade 2 provider offering a wide range of learning opportunities for all ages from children within our Family Learning provision, to young people embarking on Elev8, Diplomas, Traineeships and Apprenticeships, to adults who want to develop their careers, have a love for learning or are coming back to learning after many years.

Independent Travel Training

School Transport and the Sustainable Transport Team has recently won grants via Tees Valley combined authority access fund to establish a travel service that will develop Independent travel training for young people aged 5 to 24 who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP), or are currently undergoing an assessment for an EHCP.

Trainees will learn to travel by themselves on public transport to and from school or college and will be matched with their own dedicated Travel Buddy. The Travel Buddy works through a training plan with the young person. The plan is specifically tailored to the young person and aims to develop their independence along their own route to and from school or college.

LINS

Advisory teachers supporting children in mainstream schools with visual and hearing impairments (from birth to 16), physical or medical impairment (school age 4- 16) and Down's Syndrome (from age 2 -16).

Outreach services

- Cognition and Learning – Beaumont Hill
- SCOS – Social Communication Outreach Services based at Hurworth for both primary and secondary.
- Speech and Language Outreach – primary based at Northwood.
- LINS – Low Incidence Needs, Visual Impairment, Physical Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Downs Syndrome based at Hurworth Primary

Resource Bases

- Northwood speech and language KS1/2
- Heathfield Nurture Unit KS1
- Heathfield Cognition and Learning KS2
- Hurworth – ASD – Secondary
- Mount Pleasant – ASD – Primary

Social Care Provision

The Children's Access Point Team

Ensures that children, young people and their families receive the correct support when needs are identified and at the most appropriate level. The team supports other practitioners by advising them of how they can access support to families and children. The focus is to make safe decisions about children at the earliest opportunity.

Looked after through care team (LATC)

This team comprises of a full-time Team Manager, full-time Senior Practitioner, six full-time social workers, and three full-time Personal Advisors. In addition there is also an LAC Education Coordinator, LAC Health Coordinator and a Participation Officer within the team. The team are responsible for working with children and young people who are being looked after on a long term basis. The team also supports young people during their transition and after they have moved onto independent living.

The team supports the child/ young person within placement, promote family contact, support the child in their education and ensure their health needs are met. The team work with young people until their 21st birthday and beyond if they are in full-time education.

Life Stages Team

The Life Stages Service will support both Disabled Children and Adults to maximise their independence and participation within their locality. Wherever possible we will support individuals to use facilities available within their local community. Some of these may be universal services, which are available to anyone, or services which are commissioned by the Local Authority.

The Life Stages Service recognises the need for individuals to have access to advocacy services and support. Darlington Association on Disability is currently commissioned to provide this support within Darlington.

The Council can now provide a range of items that can help people to live more independently within the community. It can include items to help with visual and hearing impairments as well as helping to maintain the safety of those with a learning disability.

Residential Short Breaks

Harewood Hill Lodge is a purpose built detached bungalow, situated in a quiet residential area of Darlington, offering short breaks for disabled children. They are able to provide accommodation for up to five children of either sex from 6 - 17 years. It has been judged as Good by OFSTED in their most recent inspection and continues to maintain this by their extremely high standard of care.

Other Short Breaks

Short Break Services are currently provided under a framework agreement with a number of providers. Through the framework agreement the Council wishes to ensure the range of provision that is required to give the children, young people and families of Darlington the choice and control over what services they access.

The overriding priorities for the framework are:

- Access and empowerment of the individuals accessing the Services
- Responsive services and timely support
- Improved quality and capacity

Mental Health awareness Training

Mindfulness in schools, Mental Health first aid and peer support projects have all been funded through Future In Mind, the local transformation plan. Students with SEN are more likely to be represented in fixed term and permanent exclusions, and so this project, whilst open to all vulnerable students is targeting many of our young people with complex social and emotional and mental health needs.

41 schools out of 44 are completing the mindfulness programme and it will be completed by the end of December 2017, after schools have delivered courses in school to children and young people.

Voluntary/Independent Organisations

There are a range of organisations providing services aimed at supporting children and young people with additional needs. These include:

- Darlington Young Carers – DISC
- Darlington Association on Disability - DAD
- Barnardo's
- YMCA

Behaviour and Attendance Partnership

The Darlington Secondary Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Panel is a subgroup of the Darlington Behaviour and Attendance Partnership. It is therefore responsible to the Darlington Behaviour and Attendance Partnership and is supported by the Local Authority. The Local Authority will have a supportive role, enabling schools / colleges / academies to take greater responsibility for provision that is both flexible and responsive to the needs of the student encountering barriers to learning.

The Local Authority will remain responsible for ensuring that statutory requirements are met and that the secondary partnership panel is working towards the agreed outcomes.

Feedback from engagement and participation work - what do our children, young people and their families want?

A number of consultation events and a range of associated engagement work with families have been undertaken with young leaders, parents and carers and front line staff from all partner organisations. Some of the common responses centred on the following issues.

- To be listened to and have their views valued
- To have the hopes and aspirations of the child and young person shape the solutions and outcomes and plan for the support needed
- To have the needs of the whole family considered, to help families have more choice and control to develop their independence and resilience
- Competent and well-trained staff, with an understanding of SEND and the possible impact on education, health and care needs for children and young people
- Professionals to work collaboratively so that there is one conversation around a child to support the family, preventing duplication and fragmentation (Person Centred Approach)
- Embedding of a key worker approach
- Help to navigate the system, and for young people to have a mentor to discuss how, where, and when support should be provided
- Transparency about the range of services available and how to access them; this enables choice and control for children/young people and their families
- Clarity about accountability and what can be expected from services and provision
- Flexible and responsive services to identify and support emerging needs and allow creative solutions to improve outcomes
- Communication to be clear and maintained throughout the journey of the child
- Improve the Local Offer to make it easier to use and contain up to date information
- Ensure high quality plans with children at the centre

6. Priorities and Commissioning Intentions

Commissioning in the context of SEND consists of two types of commissioning:

Joint Commissioning for the Individual

Joint Commissioning uses a person-centred joint approach to identifying and meeting the needs of an individual child or young person and their family. The Education, Health and Care (EHC) Planning pathway provides a clear oversight of this approach and represents a joint commissioning plan for an individual.

Joint Commissioning for the Population

The process whereby key organisations work together to identify outcomes that matter to and for children with SEND and their families, and plan, deliver and quality monitor services effectively against how the outcomes are being achieved.

Following analysis of the local needs assessment, current provision and feedback from local engagement and consultation, we have identified the following five key priorities that we are aiming to promote and embed over the next 3 years (as outlined in section 8 of this strategy):

- Pupil and parent voice
- Early Identification and Assessment
- Collaboration and co-production
- Preparing for adulthood
- Build capacity and improve outcomes for all children with SEN and additional needs

A High Level Action Plan has been developed to meet these priorities (see Appendix 3).

Joint Commissioning intentions that we aim to pursue in the next three years, are summarised below:

1. To develop a 'School Place Sufficiency Strategy' to understand sufficiency requirements based on demographic trends facing Darlington in the next five years and identify any gaps in provision. This would include both mainstream and special schools and could have implications for other services, such as School Nursing and Therapies
2. Review post 16 destinations and NEET data to understand the effectiveness of current post 16 provision
3. Undertake a review of SEN Funding and provision in Darlington to ensure that systems are fit for purpose and in the best interests of the child.
4. Review School Nursing and Therapy provision. This would include a review of Speech and Language Therapy provision) to identify and respond to speech and language needs, and also to identify specific language impairments (SLI) which require referral to the Speech & Language Therapy Service.
5. Review residential short breaks provision to be undertaken to ensure the most effective use of resources. This will include an analysis of unmet need and structured feedback from children, young people and their families

6. Review of community based short break provision to include a requirement for improved information gathering. This will include input from service recipients, and also from families who might need, but do not take up, services and will also investigate the shortfall identified by families in opportunities for children with profound and multiple learning disabilities
7. Work with partners across Local Authority Culture and Leisure services, the third sector (including organisations delivering cultural services) and youth services to promote access to and further develop universal and voluntary activities and clubs for disabled children & young people.

How we will know we have been successful

SEND Steering Group

The SEND Steering Group is looking at ways to improve SEND services in Darlington; there are representatives from schools, health, social care and parent and carer groups. The aim of the group is to empower all parties to work collaboratively in the interests of children and young people and Head Teachers and SENCOs are encouraged to understand the role that they play in modelling best practise in their own school settings.

Expected Outcomes

- A reduction in the achievement gap for students with SEND and additional needs
- Completion of the transfer of systems to comply with the new Code of Practise 2015 by April 2018
- Positive feedback from parents/carers, children and young people about their experiences of the services and school

Key Performance Measures

The numbers of pupils with a Statement or EHCP in the Early Years cohort is low at 10, and none of these pupils achieved a good level of progress for the Foundation Profile Stage, although nationally the percentage was 4% in 2016. However, children with SEN support achieving a good level of development in 2016 is 24% against the national average of 26%.

In 2016, the attainment of pupils at KS2 who have an identified SEN need but no EHCP or Statement is above national levels for a similar pupil group. 19.25% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths compared to 15.14% nationally. Pupils with a Statement or EHCP also exceeded national levels with 10.25% achieving the expected as opposed to 6.95% for similar pupils nationally. However, the gap with **all** pupils nationally is 33.9% for pupils with school support, rising to 42.9% for those with a statement or EHCP.

At KS4 changes to methodology for collecting data mean that direct comparison year on year is not possible at the moment. In 2016 the proportion of pupils with an EHCP or Statement of SEN achieving 5 or more GCSEs A*-C (E&M) decreased from 12.2% in 2015 to 5.0% which was below the national average of 8.2%. New performance measures for Attainment 8, Progress 8, A*-C in English & Maths and achievement of the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) were all lower for Darlington pupils with a statement of SEN or EHCP in comparison to the national average for similar pupil groups in 2016. The exception to this was the percentage of entries to the EBacc for pupils with school support with 7.5% against the national average of 4% for a similar pupil group. However when compared to **all** pupils nationally (39.7%), this was still considerably lower.

Darlington performs well against statistical neighbours and the England average for the progress of transferring children and young people with SEN statements to EHCPs. The rate increased to 45.6% in 2016 from 40.8% and is currently ranked 30 out of 152 local authorities for this measure. The England average for 2016 was 32.7%.

The Parent Carer Forum provides accurate information and support for parents whose children have SEND. However, the Forum has identified the need to extend the reach and influence of the PCF. An action to improve the reach of the PCF and improve engagement of more parents/carers has been included in the Partnership Improvement Plan.

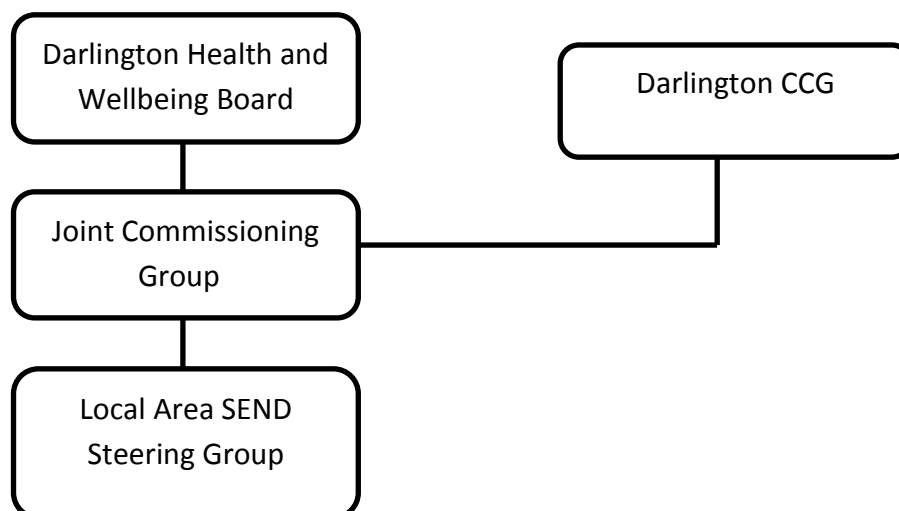
Governance, Monitoring and Review

The most recent Code of Practice sets out very clearly that the responsibility for ensuring effective support for children with special educational needs and disabilities is shared between education, health and social care. It is therefore critical that partnership arrangements need to be robust and rigorous to ensure that children and their families receive the right service at the right time regardless of organisational boundaries.

The Health and Wellbeing Board is responsible for the oversight of this SEND strategy and it is expected that the Darlington SEND Steering Group will be the partnership group that oversees the effectiveness of this plan.

This plan will be reviewed in six months to monitor initial impact and adapted to ensure stated aims and values are being prioritised. (December 2017). Following this, this plan will be reviewed annually.

The flowchart below identifies the overall governance routes from the Steering Group.



High Level Action Plan

Key Priority	What will we do	Key Performance Indicators
Pupil and Parent voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close working relationship with parent/ carer groups • Encourage schools to share best practise • Hold schools to account when pupil and parent voice is not evident in the assessment and review process • Provide on-going training and support to schools and other stakeholders in promoting pupil and parent engagement • Review and update the content of the Local Offer to ensure that parents have access to up to date information that can help them make better choices. • SENDIASS to lead on creation of a new post of Childrens voice lead. • Maintain the SEN Steering Group links to Parent groups – ensure that directives on parental involvement are supported and filtered through appropriate working groups. • Schools representatives on SEND Steering group to work with Heads and gather information at a school level on best practise. • Ensure that involvement of parent/carers happens at both a strategic and ground level. • Support the efforts of parent/carers groups to inform and empower parents to understand systems and process. 	
Preparation for Adulthood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the bidding process for Independent travel training grant, hire staff member and set up service. • Update this section of the Local Offer to ensure that parents and young people have access to high quality information. • Training offer for schools on the new preparing for adulthood toolkit. • Set up and embed the independent travel service. • Encourage employers to take advantage of the new apprenticeship levy. • Regular analysis of NEET figures to understand trends. 	
Collaboration and co-production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN Steering group to collaborate with all partners. • Young leaders and Parent/Carer groups to collaborate to produce a charter on 	

Key Priority	What will we do	Key Performance Indicators
	<p>excellence in co-production.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEN partnership to create opportunities for school to school support for vulnerable students and those with Special Educational needs. • SENDIASS to lead on promotion of student voice through new temporary post of Independent advisor in role to support students in explaining their rights and expressing their views. 	
Early identification and intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued regular liaison between the Early Years Inclusion Team and statutory SEN Educational Psychology Team. • SEN partnership to develop a training offer around early identification. • Training offer for schools on the new exclusions guidance to embed the philosophy of a coordinated response for students with additional needs. • To review the structure of the placement panels to ensure that schools recognise their duties in terms of early identification of students with additional needs. • Key performance measure 	
Build capacity and improve outcomes for all children with SEN and additional needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND are reflected in the commissioning plans. • Identify schools with space and capacity to expand their SEND service offer • Continue to embed a Quality assurance cycle for EHC Plans, Resource base placements and additional services offered through education and SEND Statutory Team. • Consider the use of the grant from Dfe on capital expenditure • Key performance measures from formal examinations and tests to be analysed at a school level and Local Authority level to understand the picture of our communities' achievement – analysis and feedback to ensure schools understand the areas for development. • Training offer on LA data through Joint Heads and 11-19 and Primary Forum. 	