

**SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report asks the Board to consider the content of the updated Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy (2019-2022) (**Appendix 1**) which summarises the strategic plan for delivering better outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs.
2. The report also provides details of the outcome to the recent public consultation which sought views on the draft.

**Summary**

3. This report seeks to inform the Board of the content of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022. The strategy proposes a local vision along with priorities for the future provision and development of services to support children with SEND.
4. Further work on the draft strategy has commenced with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to develop the draft strategy so that it can be adopted by the Local Authority and CCG as a local area strategy for Darlington.

**Recommendation**

5. It is recommended that the Board:-
  - (a) agree to the key objectives outlined in the draft SEND Strategy and support the development of a local area strategy; and
  - (b) endorse a joint approach to delivering the SEND Strategy and the opportunity to work together on an integrated approach to SEND.

**Reasons**

6. The strategy provides a framework to drive the work of the SEND partnership in Darlington through to 2022 to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

**Suzanne Joyner**  
**Director of Children and Adults Services**

## Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough
Wards Affected	Children and young people with SEND may live in any ward.
Groups Affected	Children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision
Urgent Decision	Yes, so as not to delay start of consultation and meet various timescales.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy Priority 'the best start in life'.
Efficiency	There are no direct efficiencies to the Council from the information contained within this report.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	The SEND Strategy will contribute to improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or a disability in the borough a number of these children are Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

## MAIN REPORT

### The SEND Strategy

7. Darlington's Special Educational Needs Strategy 2017-2020 was approved by Cabinet on 5 December 2017. This updated version builds on progress to date, identifying what has been achieved and our priorities for action up to 2022.
8. The vision for the strategy is that it promotes inclusion, maximizes young people's opportunities to be independent and enables young people with special educational needs and disabilities to be recognised as fully integrated citizens with the ability to contribute to their local community.
9. The strategy has been written to respond to the key priorities set out in the SEND code of practice, and highlights local strategic aims associated with each priority area for implementation. These are set out below:

(a) **Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support**

Early identification and intervention is essential to prevent underachievement and improve outcomes and improve children's life chances.

(b) **Building capacity in mainstream settings to enable children and young people to be educated in appropriate settings locally**

Children and young people with SEND need to have good quality support in their mainstream and local settings so that they can achieve their academic potential and maintain their self-esteem and confidence.

(c) **Ensuring that children and young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities**

Being educated in their local area enables pupils with SEND greater independence and a sense of contributing and belonging to their local community. Children and young people with SEND tell us that they want to make friends locally and access local facilities with their families.

(d) **Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND**

Address the underperformance in educational achievement across the Key Stages but particularly at Key Stage 4 through targeted interventions, appropriate curriculum, high quality training and effective quality assurance, monitoring and moderation.

(e) **Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication**

Ensuring that all policies, practices are co-produced with all stakeholders and with the active involvement of parent/carers and children and young people.

(f) **Achieving 'Best Value' (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services**

Effective, efficient and co-ordinated services that meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. With increasing demand we must ensure that the right resources are going to the right children in the right place.

10. The SEND Strategy sets out our vision in Darlington for a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to age 25 that meets the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families, and that we expect every early years setting, post 16 provider, mainstream school and academy to have the capacity and confidence to deliver effective provision.

11. The strategy aims to identify children with SEND at the earliest possible opportunity and provide them with the support they need to make good educational progress and achieve good outcomes so that they and their families feel well supported. It recognises the importance of providing good training for all staff, whichever setting

they are working in, using the best expertise and knowledge, sharing best practice and by promoting a model of collaborative working and shared responsibility.

12. The strategy aims to ensure education, care and health services are delivered in an integrated way so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children and young people's learning and development, safety, well-being and health outcomes are well promoted alongside their educational progress and achievement.

## **SEND in Darlington**

13. The most recent published national data (from January 2017, published in SEN in England in July 2018) shows that 3.3% of Darlington pupils have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). This is above the North East average of 3% and above the England average of 2.8%.
14. The published data shows the profile of primary need in Darlington is different to that seen nationally. Most notably a higher proportion of school age children have social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) identified as their primary need than is the case nationally (19.9% of pupils in Darlington compared to 15.7% across England and 16% across the North East) (**Appendix 2 Figures 1 and 2**).
15. The contrast is particularly stark in the data for pupils with SEMH placed in specialist provision. Across England 13% of pupils with SEMH as a primary need are placed in a special school compared to 28.8% in Darlington. Darlington has the 4th highest proportion of pupils with SEMH as a primary need placed in a special school in England (**Appendix 2 Figure 3**).
16. Darlington has seen a significant rise in the total number of EHCPs in the last 3 years (**Appendix 2 Figure 4**). The number of plans has risen from 385 in January 2013 to 683 in January 2018. This equates to a rise of 77% during this time.
17. The increasing levels of EHCPs are more significant since the profile of placements for pupils is skewed towards high cost provision. Darlington places a smaller proportion of young people with EHCPs in mainstream schools than is the case across England (**Appendix 2 Figure 5**). In England 41.9% pupils with EHCPs are placed in mainstream schools compared with 30.6% in Darlington. Darlington also places a higher proportion of young people with EHCPs in Independent Special Schools (5.1% compared to 2.3% across the North East and 3.7% across England). The average cost of a placement at an independent special school is £70,000 per year.
18. This trend is more pronounced in relation to EHCPs issued in 2017. Darlington placed 9.8% of new EHCPs in Independent Special Schools in 2017 compared to 2.7% across the North East and 2.9% in England (**Appendix 2 Figure 6**). In 2017 Darlington had the 5th highest proportion of new EHCPs placed in Independent Special Schools in England.

## **Developing Local Provision**

19. The SEND strategy identifies the key priority of providing high quality local provision. One of the key drivers for the placement of pupils in high cost out of borough independent placements is the lack of suitable local specialist provision.

20. The strategy identifies key areas of consideration of commissioning local provision to meet need and manage demand.

Type of Need	Phase	Delivery
Pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Primary	Resource base in a primary schools setting
Pupils with Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH)	Secondary	Resource base in a secondary setting or Alternative provision

## Public Consultation

21. Following approval from Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018, a public consultation commenced on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and ran to the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The general public and key stakeholders were invited to participate in the consultation. A series of public consultation events were held at which the draft strategy was presented which outlined the key challenges and opportunities identified and questions for consultation. Surveys and key documents were also available online.
22. Consultation with Children and Young People was organised through the LA's participation officers and this included representatives from "Voices", "Next Steps", "Young Leaders" and school councils.
23. Health professional e.g. service leads (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Ophthalmology; etc.) were contacted directly as well as the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the North of England commission support unit.
24. A summary of the responders is outlined in the table below:

**Table 1: Summary of responders to SEND public consultation**

Response Type	Numbers
Total survey responses (including hard copy surveys received)	108
Public Events (including open health, social care and school meetings) number of attendees	99
Children and Young People Events – number of attendees	50
Total number of detailed written responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teachers of Deaf and Visually Impaired, Darlington Low Incidence Needs Service</li> <li>- National Deaf Children Society</li> <li>- Federation of Mowden Schools</li> <li>- Traveller Education and Attainment Service, Darlington</li> <li>- Parent/Carer</li> <li>- The Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools</li> <li>- Darlington CYP Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>- Carmel Education Trust</li> <li>- Darlington Association on Disability</li> <li>- Parent Carer Forum</li> </ul>	11

25. The SEND strategy survey was built around the 6 draft key objectives. The table below outlines the responses received through the formal surveys received.

**Table 2: Summary of responses to strategy objectives**

<b>Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft strategy objective of:</b>	<b>Total agreed</b>	<b>Neither agree nor disagree</b>	<b>Total disagree</b>
Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support	92.41%	5.06%	2.53%
Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of area placements 0-25	80.00%	4.29%	15.71%
Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their local community and have effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities	82.36%	5.88%	11.76%
Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND	90.77%	3.08%	6.16%
Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication	92.31%	1.54%	6.16%
Achieving Best Value (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services	87.30%	6.35%	6.34%

26. The consultation outcome will be considered by Cabinet on 5th February 2019.