

# Darlington Council Strategy for Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

2019 - 2022



**“THE  
BEST  
START IN  
LIFE”**

**OUR STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING OUTCOMES  
ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**AGED 0-25 WITH SEND 2019 - 2022**

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## 1. Executive Summary

Darlington's SEND Strategy 2019-2022 for improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND 0-25 giving them the 'best start in life' outlines the vision and key priorities for supporting Darlington's children and young people with SEND and their families.

Our vision for all children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is that they have the right support and opportunities at the right time so that they become resilient, happy adults.

This is set within the national context and our statutory requirement to meet the needs of children and young people under the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014 and our local context with the rising numbers of children who have a range of complex needs and the need to provide high quality and responsive services within financial constraints.

Darlington is fully committed to the children and young people with SEND and their families and strives to ensure that they receive the highest quality provision wherever possible. We have analysed our gaps in provision, used a range of data across services and settings and improved partnership working with a wide range of

stakeholders. We endeavour to work closely with the Parent/Carer forum in all that we do.

We have identified our key objectives, priority actions, opportunities and challenges in meeting the growing needs and numbers of children and young people who have SEND. Our analysis of local need suggest we need to consider future commissioning to meet the following need:

- A revised role and remit for the Additional Resource Bases and outreach support in Primary and Secondary schools to reflect the growing numbers of children with communication and interaction, moderate learning difficulties and those with social, emotional and mental health needs
- A greater emphasis on an integrated therapeutic approach to the work in the resource bases and across all settings
- Multi-disciplinary Early Years Hub based in a primary school which has a remit for early identification and assessment to ensure that children can follow wherever possible mainstream provision across the Key Stages
- Increased emphasis on supporting children and young people who have mental health needs across all settings

- Vocational provision in Key Stage 4 for those young people who find the demands of the curriculum difficult and for whom a more practical and vocational route is more appropriate

It will be important that we have high quality specialist staff with the right skills, knowledge and experience in our settings who will be supported by a comprehensive workforce reform strategy across all services. We will need to align our services in line with our new SEND Ranges and to support schools and settings to effectively implement high quality interventions.

We will strive to ensure that there is equality of access to our services and that we have consistency and a continuum of high quality provision 0-25. Our children and young people with SEND and their families are pivotal to the success of this strategy. One of our key strategic objectives is effective collaboration, co - production and communication. We must always listen, communicate effectively and develop our current and future services together and in partnership – it is only then that we can truly develop the provision for which our children and young people with SEND richly deserve.

## 2. Introduction



The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced the biggest changes to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in a generation; a new statutory duty on the Local Authority (LA) to ensure that the views, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of decision making and that they are given the right support and information in a timely manner to ensure they are able to participate in decisions which help them to achieve good outcomes.

Darlington's vision is to enable children and young people to have the best start in life. Our aspiration is that Darlington's children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND will aim high and achieve their full potential, grow up to be as independent as possible and become active citizens within their community. Our aim is to ensure that children and young people with SEND are well prepared for adulthood through access to employment, leisure and social activities that provide independence and high quality support for adult living. This document is our shared vision across Education, Health and Care in partnership and co-production with our families and young people. It sets out our next steps for improving outcomes and opportunities for

every Darlington child and young person with SEND.

This strategy aims to meet the requirements of the Children and Families Act in a way that is ambitious, inclusive, realistic and person centred within a challenging financial context. It was developed with stakeholders responsible for implementing changes and with parents, carers and young people at the core.

Darlington was part of the Department for Education's Pathfinder programme which supported best practice in the implementation of the SEND reforms. Over the past year we have started to review all our provision for SEND to ensure that it is 'fit for purpose' and meeting the growing and complex needs of our young people. We have worked closely with schools, settings and services to engage all stakeholders and to start planning collectively and effectively together. We are using our analysis of our SEND data and will be seeking the views of our parents, carers and young people to 'future proof' our services and to recognise where our gaps are and to find solutions to our challenges. We have successfully developed and implemented our SEND Ranges across schools and services so

that we can more accurately assess need and to ensure that we have a 'graduated response' to meeting those needs. We have engaged partners in the discussions around funding and the changes that need to be made to ensure that we can get 'best value' out of all our resources.

We have good links across our multi-disciplinary services and recognise that we need to work more consistently. We are above the national average in our completion of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within the 20 week deadline but we need to improve our quality of plans, systems and processes and the involvement of parents and carers in the process.

All statements of special education need were successfully converted to Education, Health and Care Plans by the statutory March 2018 deadline.

Going forward we recognise that there is much to do to keep pace with demand, to improve the quality of provision further and to ensure that more children and young people can have the specialist support they need in local schools, post 16 providers, work placements and early years settings. We have a higher than average number of children and young people with EHCPs when compared with

both regional and national averages and our growth in the number of plans over the past 4 years has been high.

Children and young people with SEND are achieving well in the Early Years and in Key Stage 2 with children with an EHCP and SEN Support making better progress than the EHC plan cohort nationally. Progress at key Stage 5 is good. However the performance at Key Stage 4 is a concern.

Some of our biggest challenges for this strategy are to ensure that we can improve support for children with Autism (ASD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMH), reduce the number of children with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) in our special schools, increase our capacity in mainstream schools and in particular in our secondary schools to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and to reduce our dependence on out of authority placements.

We must deliver this strategy in a way that is affordable and provides best value for money, whilst recognising the unprecedented increase in the number of children and young people supported by high needs funding and the corresponding

increase in pressure on broader health and care services for those aged 0-25 years and beyond.



### 3. Our Vision and Philosophy for SEND Support and Provision in Darlington

Where possible we believe that every Darlington child and young person should be supported in the community where they live. We will achieve this through access to good quality local Early Years provision, schools, post 16 settings, work based training providers and employers. In addition to the right learning opportunities children and young people with SEND should be offered access to appropriate health and care support in response to their diagnosed needs whilst recognising and understanding the specific needs of the families.

We are committed to the following key priorities in order to deliver our vision:

- Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support
- Building capacity in mainstream settings to reduce reliance on specialist and out of authority placements 0-25
- 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

- Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND
- Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication
- Achieving 'Best Value' ( human, physical and financial resources) from all our services

We are committed to safeguarding and protecting all children and young people with SEND. We want to provide a well-planned continuum of provision from birth to 25 and beyond. This means high quality and well-integrated services across education, health and social care which work closely with young people, their parents and carers and where individual needs are met without unnecessary bureaucracy or delay. We want the journey from childhood to adolescence and through to adulthood to be a good experience for all with young people taking informed risks, making choices, being challenged and challenging boundaries as part of their growing up journey.

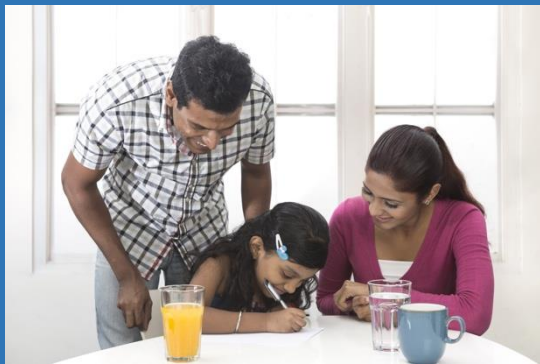
In order to deliver our vision and key priorities we will:

- Ensure a person centred approach to service delivery and that all our plans, services and policies are co-produced with families
- Have a local offer which helps children, young people and their families to plan and make choices about their support
- Ensure that the SEND Ranges are fully embeded and utilised in all settings and continue to focus on a 'Quality First' approach in our universal settings
- Provide systematic, proactive and appropriate early identification, early help and provision which will be available locally
- Ensure successful preparation for adulthood including supporting independence, independent living, training and employment

- Support the vision through effective workforce reform and outreach support services that are based on high quality interventions
- Establish clear pathways and effective transition between and across services
- Have a strong commitment at all levels to ensure effective partnership working and co-production happens
- Active involvement of all partners in developing excellent practice supporting each other to understand differing views, priorities, skills and talents
- Have effective Joint Commissioning Strategies which will provide greater synergy between and across services and will ensure accountability at all levels
- Put in place funding and support that is allocated fairly and openly



## 4. Outcomes



The partnership between Education, Health and Social Care is strong and developing. Significant work has been undertaken to pull together data from various sources and to highlight where the gaps are in information so that this can be used to future proof services and provision.

The proportion of children and young people living in poverty is increasing and there is evidence of an increasing impact of alcohol on the population of Darlington. The proportional uptake of Free School Meals in Darlington is higher than the national average. Darlington has a significant Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community with a higher than average number of pupils from this community being electively home educated.

### Education/Attainment

Educational attainment is the foundation for opening future opportunities for all children and young people with SEND; however resilience, social networks and involvement in community activities are also key factors for a fulfilling and independent life.

In 2017, none of the small numbers of pupils with a statement/EHCP achieved a

Good Level of Development (GLD) in Darlington. However, pupils at SEN Support level achieved better than the national average at 34% (national 27%). Overall for pupils with SEN, this equated to a higher percentage of pupils achieving a GLD than similar pupils nationally. In 2017 a higher proportion of SEN pupils in Darlington met the expected standard of phonic decoding when compared with the national average. The gap between Darlington and national results was particularly high for pupils with a statement/EHCP.

### Key Stages 1 and 2

Key Stage assessments for KS1 and KS2 were reformed in 2016 with resulting outcomes being measured by 'Expected Standards' rather than the previously measured national curriculum levels. When compared to the national average, SEN pupils in Darlington performed less favourably at KS1 in 2017. However, maths was stronger for pupils with a statement or EHCP and reading was a particular strength in Darlington. Writing was a weakness overall across those pupils with SEN support and those with a statement or EHCP. In contrast to KS1, the attainment of SEN pupils at KS2 was stronger in Darlington for 2017 compared

to the national average. This was the case in all subjects with the exception of writing for pupils with a statement or EHCP. The results for SEN support pupils were higher than those in the North East and Statistical Neighbours with a national ranking of 25. However, the attainment of pupils with a statement or EHCP were at average when compared to regional neighbours.

#### **Key Stage 4**

New attainment indicators, including Attainment 8 and progress 8 were introduced in 2015/16. All SEN pupils in Darlington performed less well than their national comparators in all measures. For pupils with a statement or EHCP, Ebacc Attainment and English and Maths (basics) are the only two measures where Darlington were above the national average. Those on SEN support fell well below national averages on all measures.

#### **Post 16 – Attainment by age 19**

In 2017 attainment at Level 2, including English and Maths, by age 19 improved for young people without SEN needs. Attainment also improved for those with SEN support, whilst there was a decline for those with a statement or EHCP. In 2017 performance at Level 2 for those

with a statement or EHCP was at 12.20 % and is below that of statistical neighbours (13.15%) and national average (14.90%). For those with SEN support needs performance was at 27.0% which is well below our statistical neighbours at 35.65% and the national average at 37.0%. A similar pattern was seen for those whose attainment is at Level 3.

#### **Preparation for Adulthood**

##### **Participation for 16 and 17 years olds**

In 2017 (January) 91.58% of 16-17 year olds with SEN who were resident in Darlington were in education and training compared with 86.58% for our statistical neighbours and the national average being 87.52%. Darlington has a higher percentage of Post 16 students with EHCPs in Further Education provision compared with the national average. There is a higher than average percentage of Post 16 students with EHCPs in Post 16 specialist institutions than the North East and national averages.

In January 2018 Darlington was below its North East neighbours in the number of students with EHCPs undertaking supported internships (3), traineeships (0) and apprenticeships (0). Darlington

however was the highest in the region in respect of students with EHCPs remaining in sixth form.

#### **Employment Opportunities**

Developing an improved process to ensure more effective tracking of students into sustained destinations and work is a priority. Young people with special educational needs and disabilities often struggle to get paid work when they leave education. This could be due to a lack of work experience opportunities and a lack of accessible information. There are a lack of work opportunities and career pathways for young people with SEND in Darlington. This remains a key priority in this strategic plan.

#### **Good Health Outcomes**

Young people with disabilities may experience greater vulnerability to secondary conditions, co-morbid conditions including for example age related conditions or illnesses. Barriers to good physical and mental health can include for example a lack of availability and access to leisure, cultural and other public facilities and transport. The JSNA has highlighted the significant emotional and mental health needs particularly in secondary for those students on SEN

support and those with EHCPs. Considerable work is being undertaken in this area across Health and Education. The Future in Mind programme has supported schools to be better skilled through the delivery of training in mindfulness and mental health first aid.

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## 5. Achieving our Vision and Outcomes – The Key Enablers

### 1. Processes

- A well planned continuum of provision 0-25
- Effective EHCPs that accurately reflect the needs and targets for the child and or young person with individual needs being met without unnecessary bureaucracy and delay
- SEND panels and steering groups that meet regularly, have clarity over purpose, roles, remit and that are coherent with the child's needs at the centre
- Ensuring local SEND services are inclusive of and integrated with high quality NHS, community and voluntary services so that the experience of families accessing services is positive and children and young people's learning, development, safety, well-being and health outcomes are promoted alongside their educational progress and achievements
- Embed the use of the SEND Ranges across all settings

### 2. Infrastructure and Resources

- Business intelligence, systems of gathering data and ease of access to

data will be key in delivering the strategy

- Effective monitoring, tracking and analysis of data and outcomes by stakeholders will be pivotal
- Strong strategic leadership across Education, Health and Social Care
- Utilising the SEND Capital grant and other SEND grants effectively in line with the SEND Strategy key Principles
- Effective partnership working with schools will be fundamental to develop more effective and innovative ways to use high needs funding in mainstream schools

### 3. People

- Effective workforce training and support from Early Years through to work based training providers and employers so that they have the capacity and skills to deliver a high quality provision
- A commitment from all to achieve the very best outcomes possible for children and young people which support inclusion, develop independence and successful preparation for adulthood

#### 4. Joint strategic leadership and management

- Strong governance, clear commitment, accountability and challenge through the LA, schools governing bodies, SEND Steering Group, the Clinical Commissioning groups and the Health and Well Being Board
- A robust delivery plan that is published and effectively communicated and contributed to by all
- All teams and services working towards our strategy with budgets aligned to our strategic priorities

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## 6. How the strategy was developed – Consultation & Data Analysis



### Phase 1. Data and evidence gathering

#### Key hypothesis

1. Is our pattern of provision for children and young people with SEND suitable to meet changing needs?
2. Is this what parents and families want?
3. Is it affordable?

We have gathered and analysed:

- Data on the range of SEND in the area, recent trends and likely changes in the future
  - Evidence on how effectively the current pattern of specialist educational provision meets needs in the area – through an analysis of resource base and specialist outreach provision
  - Data on those children and young people who are in independent specialist provision and the reasons for this
  - Patterns of attendance, punctuality and behaviours of children and young people with SEND including fixed term and permanent exclusions
  - The needs of schools with regard to therapy requirements and what they commission already
  - Our position with regard to the statutory requirements of the SEND Code of Practice
- The pattern of new assessments and the needs coming through from Early Years
  - Health data and where the gaps are
  - Comparisons within our NE region and how we compare with them and with national averages
  - The various funding streams that support the services, resource bases, schools and specialist provision to assess an outline view of whether we are achieving 'best value'
  - The various funding streams that are supporting mainstream provision
  - Differing funding models that can be allocated to schools using the SEND Ranges as a guide

Close working partnerships have been established between schools, post 16 providers, services and the LA. The LA has led two key conferences on High Needs Funding and the findings of the review of the resource bases in schools and the outreach support services.

A core element was to gather evidence about what works well across the current system, areas for improvement and SEND provision mapping for the future across the whole life cycle from birth to young adulthood. The SEND Ranges have been developed to capture current evidenced based good practice and parent/carers, young people and



professionals views on what works well. All EHCPs have been moderated across all schools by the LA using the SEND ranges.

### **What Children Young People with SEND and their families have previously told us**

‘we want’

- To be listened to and have our views valued
- To have the needs of the whole family considered to help families have more choice and control to develop independence and resilience
- Competent and well trained staff with a good understanding of SEND
- Professionals to work collaboratively so that there is one conversation to support the family preventing duplication and fragmentation
- Help to navigate the system
- For children and young people with SEND to have a mentor to discuss how, where and when support should be provided
- Transparency about the range of services and support available and how to access them
- Clarity about accountability and what we can expect services to deliver

### **Phase 2: Analysis and shaping of emerging themes**

Our analysis identified a number of common issues, falling into six overarching strategic themes and priorities and form the basis for this SEND Strategy:

- **Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people with SEND are in the right placement with the right support**
- **Building capacity in mainstream settings to reduce reliance on specialist and out of are placement 0-25**
- **Ensuring that Children and Young people are educated in their local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood and access to work/leisure opportunities**
- **Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for all**
- **Ensuring effective collaboration, co-production and communication**
- **Achieving Best Value for money across all our services: human, physical and financial**

The SEND Strategic Partnership was established with key partners including parents, health, schools, and other stakeholders. Senior Officers visited a wide range of schools and settings to gather thoughts and ideas from staff and leaders as to ways forward for the future.

### **Phase 3: Engagement**

The Local Authority have organised a number of engagement events to seek views from a wide range of key stakeholders on the vision and priorities

## 7. Population: some key facts

Darlington is a unitary authority and covers an area of approximately 200 square kilometres. Darlington's current population is 105,396, having risen by over 6% since 2001. Of this population, 39% are of working age (16-64 years old). Within this working age population 79% are economically active (in work or unemployed), 58% of these people work in the Borough and 21% commute out of the Borough to work.

Darlington is in the top 30% most deprived local authorities in England. It is ranked as the 97<sup>th</sup> most deprived area out of 326 on the index of multiple Deprivation 2015. The level of child poverty is worse than the England average with over 1 in 5 children under 16 years living in poverty. The concentration of children living in low income families is disproportionately evident in certain wards in the Borough. There are health issues in the borough relating to alcohol, smoking and diet resulting in differing life expectancies between electoral wards.

Darlington is an aspiring town with big ambitions for all of its children and young people to have the best start in life ( Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022). This plan supports the vision of creating the local sustainable community strategy 'One Darlington: Perfectly Placed' through building strong communities, growing the economy

and achieving best value from all its resources. ( Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2026 revised in 2014)

Darlington and the other four Tees Valley local authorities have collaborated to establish a Tees Valley Combined Authority ( TVCA). The TVCA unites the five local authorities on key decisions that affect the Tees Valley, helping to strengthen the area and accelerate economic growth. In almost all indices, Darlington's economy has outperformed regional and national growth trends. Recent trends show an improving picture regarding the skills and productivity of Darlington residents with an increase in employment rate, average earnings, coupled with dramatic reductions in the claimant count and unemployment rate.

### SEND facts and Figures – as of August 2018

- There are currently 731 active EHCPs for those SEND pupils who are the responsibility of Darlington Borough Council ( as opposed to those EHCP pupils in Darlington Schools) these are broken down as follows – Pre-school 14, Primary 245, Secondary 266 and Post 16 206
- Over the last three years there has been a significant rise in assessments with

- currently 122 new requests to date this year as opposed to 161 for the whole year 2017 and 122 for 2016
- Darlington is above national and regional average for the numbers of EHCPs. The numbers have risen significantly since 2014 from 410 to 731
  - The most prominent primary needs are Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) and Autism (ASD) followed by Social Emotional and Mental health needs ( SEMH) and then Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
  - In the Early years the primary needs are mostly ASD and MLD in terms of those children with EHCPs. However, current caseloads for the Early Years Service show there is a high proportion of young children coming presenting with communication and interaction as their broad area of need with the majority having a social communication need
  - In the primary phase ASD and MLD are the highest areas of need followed by SLCN and SEMH. In the secondary phase the highest need is SEMH particularly in Years 10 and 11 followed by MLD and ASD. However, in the Post 16 phase the number of SEMH pupils decline and ASD and MLD are again the highest need
  - The 2018 SEN2 published data shows that 39.1% of Darlington EHCP pupils were in a special school. This is 4.3% above the national average. 27% of Darlington EHCP pupils were in mainstream provision (excluding resource bases) and this is well below the national average of 34%
  - There is a high incidence of MLD secondary aged pupils in special school placements of which the moderation of plans against the LA SEND ranges indicate that many of these pupils could be catered for in mainstream provision
  - There is a high incidence of SEMH secondary aged pupils in independent placements. Moderation of these pupils' EHCPs suggests a number of these pupils may only be in independent provision due to a lack of suitable local provision
  - The numbers of EHCP pupils in independent provision is only 2% of the EHCP cohort but costs are disproportionately high for this group. An increase in numbers is expected
  - New assessment requests reflect the current primary need profile of ASD, MLD and SEMH however there has been a spike in SLCN requests and those are generally from Early Years
  - There is one secondary Resource Base which supports Social and Communication Difficulties including ASD. There is a significant demand for SEMH and MLD specialist provision in the secondary phase
  - For those Post 16 young people with EHCPs who are engaging in education, over 72% are learning in the college sector, 15% are in special school and just under 6% are in the independent sector
  - Darlington has a higher than average persistent absence rate and this includes pupils on SEN support. 48% of the pupils with fixed term exclusions had SEN and the number of days lost because of fixed term exclusions was higher for children with SEN than those without. Half of the SEN students excluded had a primary need of SEMH
  - In line with national trends there has been a significant rise in the number of parents electing to educate their children at home

## 8. The Policy Context



Our priorities for Children with SEND are shaped by the Children's and Families Act 2014 and within that the SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years. The Act sets out the responsibility to improve services, life chances and choices for vulnerable children and to support families. It underpins wider reforms to ensure that all children and young people can succeed, no matter what their background. The Act extends the SEND system from birth to 25, giving children, young people and their parents/carers greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring that their needs are properly met.

The new approach to special educational needs and disability makes provision for:

- children and young people and their families to be at the heart of the system
- close co operation between all the services that support children and their families through joint planning and commissioning of services
- early identification of children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities (SEND)
- a clear and easy to understand local offer

- support provided in mainstream settings where possible for children with more complex needs
- a co ordinated assessment of needs and a new 0-25 Education, Health and Care plan for the first time giving new rights and protection for the 16-25 year olds in further education and training comparable to those in school.
- a clear focus on outcomes and planning for a clear pathway through education into adulthood, including paid employment
- a focus on living independently and participating in their community
- increased choice and opportunity overall and families to be able to express a preference and the offer of a personal budget for those children and young people who have an EHC plan.

### The Local Policy context

Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022 – The Best Start in Life covers all services for children, young people and their families. For young people leaving care, responsibility extends beyond the age of 20. For those with learning difficulties it extend to the age of 25 to ensure the transition to adult

services is properly planned and delivered. The plan sets out the following vision:

**We will improve the quality of life for all and reduce inequality by ensuring we have:**

- **children with the best start in life**
- **more business and more jobs**
- **a safe and caring community**
- **more people caring for our environment**
- **more people active and involved.**
- **Enough support for people when needed**
- **More people healthy and independent**
- **A place designed to thrive**

To do this we will:

- Build strong communities
- Grow the economy
- Spend every pound wisely

We can only achieve our aspirations for the future if we recognise that children and young people are our future. We need to ensure that Darlington is a place where:

- All children and young people are safe from harm

- All children and young people have the tools to do well at all levels of learning and have the relevant skills to be prepared for life
- All children and young people enjoy a healthy life
- All children and young people enjoy growing up
- All children and young people are listened to

The SEND Reforms are an important cornerstone for this work and ensures that the Children and Young People's plan is realised and embedded in all that we do.

This **SEND Strategy** aims to ensure that:

- we have a collective and shared vision and an agreed action plan across all services in partnership with families and their children.
- we have an effective needs analysis evidence base across education, health and care to help us plan and decide how best to use our resources
- we are constantly listening to the views, aspirations and ambitions of children and young people and their parents and carers. We aim to ensure co-production with parent/carers and young people when we develop and commission person centred services

- resources are used where we can measure best value and where they make the biggest difference
- pathways for children and young people and their families are clear, easy to understand and support effective planning in preparation for adulthood
- all our provision – settings and services are of high quality and are accessible across universal, targeted and specialist support
- we have speedy resolution of problems and disagreements

## 9. What We Have Achieved So Far – August 2018

### Up to date our achievements include:

- Good performance on meeting the 20 week timescale for the completion of Education, Health and Care assessments
- Good working relationships and engagement between the LA and schools/colleges
- Effective training and support with SENCO's, Governors and other stakeholders
- The successful introduction of the SEND Ranges in schools and across settings and services supported by in depth high quality training and support
- Moderation of all EHCPs in all settings against the SEND Ranges which demonstrates excellent practice and commitment
- A review of the panels and an establishment of a vulnerable pupil panel. Panels have clear criteria and remit for operation
- A thorough review of the funding to schools and services which has been shared with schools and a plan/timeline in place for a revised funding formula to be in place next year
- Review of Resource Bases and outreach support services to ensure best value
- A gap analysis with regards to our SEND data across Education, Health and Care
- Strong partnership working between Education, Health and Social Care with an increasingly effective sharing of information
- Previous Parent/Carer feedback shows that the majority of parents feel that their views were taken into account by Education, Health and Care when their child is identified with SEND
- The quality and consistency of EHCPs is improving
- Joint commissioning statement of intent is in place and joint commissioning priorities are agreed
- Strong partnership with Health in developing a strategy for mental health in schools
- Designated Clinical Officer works closely across the partnership to support services in the identification and provision for of children and young people with SEND and in promoting the SEND agenda
- Personal Education Plans for children looked after are an area of strength



- Good Level of Development for SEND children in Early Years is 25% (national 23%), Key Stage 2 progress is strong with pupils with an EHCP and SEN support making better progress than the EHCP cohort nationally. Progress and retention at key Stage 5 is good with positive feedback from students and parents

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## 10. Our Challenges and Opportunities



### **We continue to face a number of challenges, many of which reflect the national position:**

- Attainment and progress for children and young people with SEND requires improvement in Key Stage 4
- There are a rising number of students with SEMH identified as their primary need
- There are a significant number of children being diagnosed with ASD and this is putting pressure on services. Those with communication and interaction needs are growing fast and our services are not in the right shape to respond
- Our Resource Bases require a new remit and focus alongside effective outreach support provision
- A lack of provision in the secondary phase for pupils with an identified need of SEMH and MLD
- The need for mental health support at universal and targeted level is evident
- Significant rise on the number of EHCPs
- Need to have an increase in employment opportunities and supported employment practice Post 16 and increase access to supported internships and apprenticeships
- Access to personal health budgets

- The increase in demand for specialist placements has meant there is significant pressure on High Needs Block funding
- A rise in the number of parents choosing to electively home educate their children

### **We can also take advantage of the following opportunities:**

- Strong working partnerships across services and with schools and colleges and stakeholders
- Strong commitment to joint working and joint commissioning
- The creation of more local services and reduction in external placements would allow us over time to invest in more preventative and early intervention services for children with SEND
- The SEND Capital Grant presents the opportunity to increase capacity
- The SEND Ranges gives us a good start to hold settings to account and to ensure that the interventions are part of a graduated response with accountability
- A reshaped funding process for SEND in Darlington will give greater accountability for spend with improved consistency of funding across the Borough and savings on out of area placements

## 11. Our Strategy Priorities for SEND in Darlington (2019-2022) and High Level Action Plans

### SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 1

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

#### What outcomes do we want to see?

- The percentage of children with SEND assessed in Early Years as achieving a Good Level of Development to increase year on year
- Children are better able to engage with the school's curriculum and more likely to reach their full potential at school
- Children and young people with SEND achieve well at every stage of their learning
- There is effective transition from each setting and each key stage
- All agencies working together in partnership to ensure that early identification and assessments have clear synergy
- Clear, accessible and up to date information is available through effective Local Offer and informed staff

#### Why is this important?

- Parents and carers have told us that it is their most important priority for their

children to get the help and support they need at the earliest opportunity.

- Early identification and intervention is essential to prevent underachievement and improve outcomes and improve children's life chances
- Delay in the above can give rise to further learning difficulties and subsequently to a loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and possibly to behaviour/ emotional difficulties

#### Key Priority Actions to achieve our objectives

1. Ensure support and intervention services are fully engaged in delivering the SEND agenda
2. Consideration to be given to developing an Early Years Hub with specialist support to ensure that the LA identifies needs through a multi-disciplinary approach at the earliest stage
3. All schools and settings to embed the SEND Ranges into practice and ensure that provision maps are detailed, costed and demonstrate the impact of interventions and pupil outcomes
4. Ensure the process of identification and assessment of need is effective and statutorily compliant and that effective training is in place across all services

5. Review panel structures to ensure that settings are held effectively to account
6. That all outcomes in EHCPs and Annual Reviews are clear, measurable, achievable and in line with the SEND Ranges
7. Review the designation of all specialist settings (Resource Bases and schools/colleges/work placement and employment) and support services to ensure that children and young people access the right provision with the right support
8. Further develop the positive work with parents, carers and families in ensuring that provision for the most vulnerable groups is of the highest quality
9. Parents, carers, families to receive high quality advice and support from SENDIASS to ensure their needs are being met
10. Review the Local Offer to ensure that it is accessible, easy to manage and to navigate
11. Develop more effective communication between Education, Health and Social Care services so that the right provision is commissioned and there is a joint approach to future planning.

## SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 2

### Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to reduce reliance on specialist out of area placements 0-25

#### What outcomes do we want to see?

- Most children with EHCPs attend and achieve well in high quality local provision and are able to remain with their families in their local communities
- Children remain in contact with local services, as a result of remaining within local provision and so have continuity of support.
- There is an enhanced range of local specialist provision and reduced reliance on external specialist placements
- Reduced costs on out of area placements so that these monies can be more effectively utilised developing local high quality provision

#### Why is this important?

- Previously children and their families have told us us that they want high quality local services and choice
- 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

- Children and young people with SEND previously told us that they want to make friends locally and access local facilities with their families

#### Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Ensure through joint commissioning intentions that Resource Bases meet the growing complexity and increasing numbers of children and young people presenting with communication and interaction, social emotional and mental health, cognition and learning needs with a strong multi-disciplinary therapeutic input from Early Years through to Post 16/Post 19
2. Put in place an effective workforce reform strategy that will include training, mentoring, coaching and an action research programme highlighting the sharing of best practice
3. Review, further develop and effectively co-ordinate outreach services from specialist and multi-disciplinary settings to support mainstream provision 0-25
4. All settings have targets and expectations that effective inclusion and equality permeates throughout the organisation

### SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 3

**Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their own local community and have an effective preparation for adulthood including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.**

#### What outcomes do we want to see?

- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures for pupils with SEND are at a minimum
- The percentage of children and young people with EHCPs who are being educated in mainstream settings as opposed to specialist provision to increase
- Parents report increasing confidence in the ability of mainstream schools/colleges/work based training providers to meet their child's needs
- Provision available to all young people with SEND aged 16-25 to access purposeful activities (including education, work experience, supported employment, supported internships, apprenticeships, training including voluntary and community projects)
- All young people with SEND have a clear destination pathway and that are able to make appropriate progress, whatever their starting point

- All young people have access to work related learning activities, as appropriate to their level of ability, to enable them to work towards paid employment wherever possible
- Through partnership working and joint commissioning arrangements for Post 16 SEND services are delivered in a co-ordinated and personalised way

#### Why is this important?

- Improved sense of worth and value for each young person
- Gives a clear pathway of opportunities and choice
- Enables greater independence and sense of contributing to our local community

#### Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Establish a clear pathway and effective transition arrangements 0-25 for all children and young people with SEND
2. Develop a wide range of opportunities and choice focusing on work, suitable employment and leisure activities
3. Ensure that children and young people with SEND have opportunities to engage in independent travel training and access support for independent living

4. That schools and specialist settings have a curriculum that prepares young people for the world of work and making effective contributions to their community
5. Close partnerships with work based training providers and employers to support their capacity to utilise the skills of young people with SEND

### SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 4

**Increasing achievement and improving all outcomes for children and young people with SEND**

#### What outcomes do we want to see?

- Increase attainment and achievement across all Key Stages
- All children and young people with SEND make at least good progress relative to their starting points
- The overall gap between attainment of children and young people with SEND and all children to reduce
- The number of children with SEND being excluded from school to reduce
- Good attendance of children and young people with SEND
- Children and young people with SEND to make clear, evidence based progress against their EHC Plan outcomes

The following outcomes that form the focus of this objective are written from the young person's perspective are:

- I have information about my health provision clearly explained to me
- I am learning how to manage my own health and well being
- I feel I am involved in planning and decision making about my health
- I have effective support networks with friends and family and in my school/college
- My care is co-ordinated and connected so people understand my needs and jointly meet them so that I don't have to keep telling my story.

#### Why is this important?

- All children and young people with SEND will be able to achieve their full potential

#### Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. 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

2. Implement and embed a quality assurance framework across the LA to ensure that all EHCPs are of high quality
3. Ensure that all settings have high quality first teaching
4. Embed the SEND Ranges to ensure that all settings have an effective graduated response
5. Encourage schools to share best practice

#### SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 5

#### Collaboration, Co-Production and Communication

#### What outcomes do we want to see?

- Transparency of all decision making
- Agreed common approaches
- A whole organisation/area approach where we all feel part of a team delivering the SEND Strategy

#### Why is this important?

- We want everyone to have 'trust' in all that we do
- We want all , but particularly parents, carers and young people to have confidence and respect in our future going forward together

#### Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective

1. Develop a communications policy in order to analyse and implement actions required to ensure that there is effective communication between all partners, parents, carers and young people
2. Ensure that all partners are aware of best proactive and supporting each other in understanding different views, priorities, skills and talents
3. Ensuring that the pupil and young people's voice is heard at all level.
4. Ensuring that all policies, practices are co-produced with all stakeholders and with the active involvement of the parent/carer forums and the children and young people
5. Demonstrate commitment at all levels to collaboration in partnership with parents, carers and families
6. Review the effectiveness and impact of the Local Offer and make change as appropriate
7. Hold schools and settings to account when the pupil and parent voice is not evidence in the assessment and review process
8. Provide on-going training and support to schools and other stakeholders in promoting pupil and parent engagement.



9. Young leaders and Parent/Carer groups to collaborate to produce a charter on excellence in co-production

## **SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 6**

**Achieving Best Value for money from all our services – human, physical and financial resources with clear agreed commissioning intentions**

### **What outcomes do we want to see?**

- Effective, efficient and co-ordinated services that meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and their families

### **Why is this important?**

- The High Needs Budget is finite
- We must ensure best value from the public purse
- With the increased numbers of children and young people coming through with significant needs we must ensure that the right resources are going to the right children in the right place

### **Key Priority Actions to achieve this objective**

1. Joint Commissioning to provide increased targeted capacity for SEND within the Borough under the agreed commissioning intentions

2. Opportunity to pool budgets
3. Implement a new funding arrangement for SEND support in schools
4. Allocate the SEND Capital Grant in line with the SEND Strategy
5. Embed the SEND Ranges to ensure funding allocation for individual pupils in needs led

## 12. What Will Success for Children and Young People with SEND Look Like in 2021



### The strategy will be deemed successful if:

- There are clear processes to identify children's needs early and partners communicate and co-ordinate services well
  - We rely less on statutory assessment of children's special education needs and more on getting the right level of support when it is needed
  - Reviews are thorough and lead to improvements in outcomes for the child or young person
  - Children and young people with SEND can take part fully in all aspects of education, community, leisure and fun activities
  - We meet children and young people's needs in mainstream settings wherever possible and when more specialist help is needed we are able to provide this in Darlington
  - We use appropriate evidence based interventions so all children and young people with SEND make good progress with their learning, achievements and social and emotional development over time
  - There is a well co-ordinated transition for children and young people at all key points
- Children and young people with SEND have high aspirations and we support them to be independent and well prepared for adult life
  - We know that provision is improving outcomes; that aspirational yet realistic targets are agreed and progress towards them monitored; and that children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carer have been involved in setting and reviewing goals and outcomes
  - The Local Offer is informative and accessible
  - Our SEND provision forms part of a clear continuous high quality pathway where children and young people can access the right support and determine their destinations
  - Children and young people with SEND and their families tell us that they are satisfied with services and that their needs have been met appropriately
  - Our workforce have the right skills and competencies to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND
  - There are strong multi-disciplinary partnerships in place which have mutual trust and respect and where communication is truly effective and decision making transparent

### 13. Taking the SEND Review Strategy Forward - Governance, Monitoring and Review

The delivery of our SEND Strategy is not the responsibility of a single agency or person. It is a partnership approach with collection accountability and collective responsibility owned by all stakeholders working with children, young people and their families. These include Health, Education, Social Care, work based training providers, employers, voluntary and community organisations and those responsible for the development of leisure and social activities.

Governance for the strategy will be provided by the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board and the SEND Steering Group. The SEND Steering Group will provide the strategic drive, co-ordination and oversight by receiving regular performance and outcome indicator reports on progress against objectives.

The Health and Wellbeing Board will be responsible for ensuring that the SEND issues are embedded effectively throughout the relevant plans and in the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.