



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**

**“Keeping Children and Young People at the centre of all we do, by providing
services built around the child, their family and the community”**

Contents

1. Executive Summary	Page 2
2. Introduction and Vision	Page 4
3. The Policy Context	Page 7
4. Population - Some Key Facts	Page 10
5. Our Challenges and Opportunities	Page 13
6. Our Achievements So Far	Page 15
7. Our Strategic Priorities for SEND in Darlington	Page 18
8. Taking the SEND Strategy Forward – Governance Monitoring and Review	Page 26



1. Executive Summary

The purpose of Darlington's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022 for improving outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND 0-25 giving them the 'best start in life' is to outline our shared vision, aims and key priorities for supporting Darlington's Children and Young People with SEND and their families.

Our aim for all Children and Young People with SEND is that they have the right support and opportunities at the right time so that they become resilient, happy and successful adults. We will develop our strategic approach to preparation for adulthood in the key outcome areas of:

- Independence
- Friends, relationships and community participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Education, employment and moving on

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, ambitious and responsive services within financial constraints.

Darlington Local Authority and the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are fully committed to Children and Young People with SEND and their families and strive to ensure that they receive the highest quality provision, at the point that it is required, 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.

Elected Members, leaders and managers from education, health and social care services are driving our ambition through the Darlington SEND Steering Group, the Children and Young Peoples Joint Commissioning Operational Group, the Health and Wellbeing Board as well as through CCG and Local Authority Governance mechanisms including CCG Executives and Cabinet.

We recognise the wide range of services that play a part in delivering our ambition and that working in a collaborative and multi-agency way is crucial to our success.

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. The local area SEND Partnership Improvement Plan is key to ensuring we take a multi-agency approach to SEND.

We have used the available information and feedback through consultation processes and ongoing engagement with partners to identify our key objectives, priority actions, opportunities and challenges in meeting the growing needs and numbers of Children and Young People who have SEND. The consultation feedback indicated that whilst parents welcomed the new SEND Strategy, the local area still has quite some distance to travel in order to ensure that young people and their families have confidence in the robustness of the proposals to implement and embed positive change.

Ensuring good outcomes for Children and Young People with SEND should be a priority for all agencies and when the Local

Area can respond as a system to get things right for these learners, the SEND Strategy will benefit children with additional needs by embedding and promoting a fully inclusive and fully person centred approach amongst professionals and peers, which will lead to a greater understanding of our local population.

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 support the coherence between all services to respond to newly developed SEND Ranges and to support schools, services 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 in partnership with all stakeholders – it is only then that we

can truly develop the provision for which our Children and Young People with SEND richly deserve. The local area SEND partnership improvement plan is key to ensuring we take a multi-agency approach to SEND

2. Introduction and Vision



Darlington's Children and Young People 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.

These are the key values that underpin this vision:

- Focus on the child's real experience
- Being proactive early
- Investing in local solutions
- Being aspirational on holistic outcomes
- Value Families
- Investment in systems and services that we know work

This SEND strategy 'The Best Start in Life', 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. It 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.

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) and other statutory bodies including the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) 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.

Achieving inclusive education would mean that Children and Young People with SEND are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school life alongside their peers. This Strategy recognises that all partners have a role in supporting this goal. A whole system approach to working is crucial, ensuring that there is a joined-up approach to make a positive difference to the lives of our Children and Young People in Darlington –

this approach is set out in Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan.

Children with SEND in Darlington are prioritized at a strategic level. We know this because we have:

- Strong leadership and governance of the SEND Reforms overseen by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The SEND Steering Group has representation from all key agencies and includes a strong voice from the Darlington Parent Carer Forum.
- Clear strategic oversight from the Director of Children's and Adult Services and Lead Member for Children and Young people.
- Oversight of SEND developments from the CCG Executive Board.
- Cabinet oversight and full public consultation on the updated SEND strategy.

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.

Darlington Borough Council have successfully developed and implemented [SEND Ranges](#) across schools and services so that we can more accurately assess need and to ensure that there is a 'graduated response' to meeting those needs. Strategic partners and stakeholders have been engaged in the discussions around funding and the changes that need to be made to ensure that the system can get 'best value' from all of our resources for example through the SEND Joint Commissioning work and priorities as outlined in the Joint Commissioning Statement of Intent, and in our developing SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy.

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.

Our challenges for this strategy include:

- 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.

- 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.
- Our evaluations of services and liaison with various stakeholders including education settings, has highlighted an emerging need around ensuring that children are arriving at school ready to learn and with the necessary foundations upon which to build skills and abilities.

Partner agencies must work collaboratively and supportively to 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.

This Strategy is for all Children and Young People with SEND and their families, it is also for other stakeholders and organisations who work together to secure high quality provision that is efficient, sustainable and effective.

3. The Policy Context

National Context

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced a set of significant reforms across all education, health and care services. The overall purpose of the reforms is to bring about better outcomes for Children and Young People from birth to 25 by:

- Implementing a new approach to joining up support across education health and care from birth to 25
- Ensuring help is offered at the earliest possible point
- Ensuring children and young people, parents and carers are fully involved in determining their own aspirations and participate in the decisions about the type of support they need to achieve these
- Establishing coherent and efficient ways of working.

There are specific requirements and obligations that are placed on Local Authorities and other statutory agencies that are set out within the Act itself and also implementation guidance is contained within the SEND Code of Practice 2014. The relationships developed between local authorities and CCGs are therefore vital in establishing effective joint commissioning

arrangements for SEND, something which both organisations are under a duty to deliver.

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 assessment, 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.

Local 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 extends to the age of 25 to

ensure the transition to adult services is properly planned and delivered. The principle of extending the provisions and age ranges within services is also reinforced within the national NHS planning guidance and the Ten-Year Plan and within the Darlington CCG Operational Plan.

Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022 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.

4. 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, approximately 24% are Children and Young People (aged between 0-19) and 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 97th 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

disproportionally 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.
- Children with Low Incidence needs in Darlington are supported by a dedicated service and specialist teachers. There has been an increase in children with profound hearing and vision loss.
- Additional information is available within the Darlington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which can be found [here](#)
- In 2017 at the Early Years Foundation Stage none of the small number of pupils with a statement / EHCP achieved a good level of development (GLD) in Darlington. However, the SEN pupils with SEN support achieved better than the national measure at 34.3% (national 27%). Overall for SEN pupils, 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.
- When compared to the national average, SEN pupils in Darlington performed less favourably at Key Stage 1 in 2017. However, maths was stronger for pupils with a Statement or EHCP and reading was a particular strength in Darlington.
- In contrast to Key Stage 1, the achievement of SEN pupils at Key Stage 2 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 / EHCP. The results for SEN Support pupils are higher than those in the North East and Statistical Neighbours with a national ranking of 25. However, pupils with a statement / EHCP are average for these geographical comparators.
- At Key Stage 4 pupils with SEN in Darlington performed less well than their national comparators in all measures. Nationally 26.9% of pupils achieved the expected Attainment 8 score compared with 24.6% in Darlington. Nationally pupils with SEND achieved an average progress 8 score of -0.59% in Darlington this was -1.08%.
- For post 16 learners performance at Level 2 for those with statements / EHCPs at 18.20%, is above that of statistical neighbours (12.33%) and the England average (15.30%). However, for those with SEN support needs, at 26.20%, it is well below statistical neighbours (36.64%) and the England average (37.00%).
- Darlington has a higher percentage of post 16 students with EHCPs in further education provision compared with the national average, although this may be due to the low number of school sixth form places in Darlington. 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.
- Service Self Evaluation processes have enabled us to review performance and activities within therapeutic service settings. Although most of CCG commissioned therapeutic health provision operates within the commissioned 18 week wait, we are aware that often families feel they wait too long to access the services that they need. We are addressing this as a system, to ensure that notification and referral pathways are appropriate, and that Children and Young People can access the right therapeutic services at the right time when they need them.

5. Our Challenges and Opportunities

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

- There are issues with agencies recommending that children are not 'ready for school' this has a greater impact on schools further down the line.
- 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 with ASD diagnosis which impacts on the ability of services and settings to respond effectively to the wide ranging and complex needs. Numbers of Children and Young People (with or without Autism diagnosis) who have 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 of 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.

6. Our Achievements So Far



We have made considerable progress on the implementation of the 2014 Reforms, as set out below but we have more to do to embed our approach.

Accountability

We have a shared culture of accountability through which stakeholders demonstrate robust performance management. We know this because we have:

- Completed a robust multi-agency self-assessment identifying progress in the implementation of the SEND reforms
- Developed a Partnership Improvement Plan which is monitored monthly by the SEND Steering Group with exception reporting against targets and actions
- Held multi-agency development sessions where health and education staff identify opportunities for joint working and develop a shared vision
- Regular, embedded Performance Clinics in place across LA Education Services which inform quarterly DCS Assurance clinics where service development, compliance and quality of LA SEND services are held to account
- A Local Authority Transformation Programme where High Needs strategic planning and system

management is monitored and challenged.

Joint working

- The SEND Steering Group has been established and takes a leadership, accountability and steering role and is the principle mechanism for bringing together our collective work.
- Improved and improving working relationships and engagement between the LA, CCG and schools/colleges and other Stakeholders
- Strong partnership working between Education, Health and Social Care with an increasingly effective sharing of information
- A strong partnership has been developed with Health colleagues and a strategy for mental health provision in schools has been developed
- We have agreed a joint commissioning approach, have an approved Joint Commissioning Statement of Intent and are in the process of formalising a strategy. We have started the process of considering joint commissioning in a specific area and have plans to expand this work.

- Designated Clinical Officer role developed and recruited to by the CCG since June 2018, working closely across the partnership to support services in the identification co-ordination of and strategic oversight of provision for Children and Young People with SEND and has a key in providing training across the system and promoting the SEND agenda
- Early years notification between health and SEN has been developed and is in the process of being embedded
- Strong and effective education and health-based arrangements in place to monitor arrangements for vulnerable children.

Data, Systems and Services Improvement

- A gap analysis with regards to our SEND data across Education, Health and Care
- Data systems and flow across education health and social care agencies is improving, which will enable identification of Children and Young People with SEN or an EHCP across the system.

- Work has been undertaken within North Tees and Hartlepool Foundation Trust to develop the data recording systems to capture the achievement of personal outcomes according to the extent to which outcomes have been achieved (met, partially met, not met) and to enable further narrative to be collected where outcomes are not met. This is being piloted and evaluated within one service prior to expected roll out within the Trust and wider.
- 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 from September 2019.
- Review of Resource Bases and outreach support services to ensure best value.

Education Health and Care Plan Progress

- There has been excellent progress on timeliness, both in the transfer of statements to EHC plans, and on the

proportion of EHC Plans issued in 20 weeks.

- The quality and consistency of EHCPs are improving however further work will be undertaken to assess, evaluate and improve the quality of the content within all plans and to ensure multi agency contribution
- All EHC Plans are reviewed annually. There is work required to improve this process to ensure all agencies can effectively contribute to the review process and that progress in outcomes can be captured.
- Moderation of all EHCPs in all settings against the SEND Ranges which demonstrates excellent practice and commitment, identified good practice is currently being operated.
- Personal Education Plans for children looked after are an area of strength.

Achievement

- Children on SEND support achieved higher than the national average in early years.
- 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.

We have made significant progress towards improving outcomes for young people to stay in education, employment and training.

Working with Children, Young People, Parents and Carers

- Availability of information and advice for parents across services has been improved by the introduction of parent guides and a local guide to health services but to date parents/carers feedback surveys have not captured how useful these have been.
- Work is underway to ensure that Children and Young People with SEN or an EHCP are identified and flagged at the earliest point by the most appropriate professional.
- 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.
- We have improved choice and control through a range of ways Children and

Young People are engaged in the process of assessment and planning resulting in more personalised Outcomes and plans to achieve those Outcomes.

Partnership Working

- We are working with the Council for Disabled Children to develop/delivering/facilitating some training for a multi-agency workforce (education, health and social care) to address the values and principles of aspirational outcomes and to develop local processes.
- Development work has been undertaken with NHS Foundation Trust Provider agencies to develop the infrastructure required to deliver Personal Health Budgets, this has included Service Development Improvement Plan (SDIP) negotiations around notional and indicative costing, to facilitate with resource allocation.
- Successful introduction of the SEND Ranges in schools and across settings and services supported by in depth high quality training and support from agencies as appropriate in response to identified and assessed needs

supported by in depth high quality training and support for the workforce including SENCOs, Governors and other stakeholders.

- Joint moderation has taken place between LA, Schools and Health of all EHCPs in settings against the SEND ranges is in place.

7. Our Strategic Priorities for SEND in Darlington

We believe that every Darlington child and young person should, where possible, 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. We believe that Children and Young People should have the right to fulfilling lives and equality of access to learning and other opportunities as well as appropriate health and care support in response to their diagnosed needs whilst recognising and understanding the specific needs of the families.

Children Young People with SEND and their families have previously told us that they 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.*

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 and reduced 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 for money from all our services through the review and planning of services and development of mechanisms for effective commissioning including joint commissioning arrangements and decision making.

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 aims 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 SEND Ranges are fully embedded 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 aim through effective workforce reform and education, health and social care services that are based on high quality interventions
- Establish clear pathways and 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 practice supporting each other to understand differing views, priorities, skills and talents
- Have effective joint commissioning strategies which will provide greater synergy across services and will ensure accountability at all levels
- Put in place funding and support that is allocated fairly and openly

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 success will look like?

- There are clear, effective processes to identify children's needs early and partners communicate and co-ordinate services well
- 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 the SEND Information Advise Service.
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.
12. Review the role, remit and function of 0-19 universal offer to ensure it is fit for purpose in meeting the needs of the whole local population – including Children and Young People with SEND.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 2

Building capacity in mainstream and specialist settings to support Children and Young People to be educated in their local community and to reduce reliance on out of area placements 0-25

What success will look like?

- Children with EHCPs attend and achieve in high quality local provision and are able to remain with their families in their local communities
- Inclusive education, welcoming Children and Young People into local mainstream settings
- Schools and education settings are appropriately equipped to identify and respond to the needs of the local populations
- Quality First teaching embedded consistently into core service delivery within education settings, ensuring the use of appropriate evidence-based interventions
- Education Health and Social Care Workforce will have the right skills to be able to respond to presenting needs
- Less reliance within the local area on statutory assessment of children and young people's Special Educational Needs and more on getting the right level of support in school when needed.
- 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 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. Build upon the successes of the newly developed SEND ranges and ranges guidance (September 2018) recognising the differences within the healthcare model of delivery – based

around presenting need, functional impact and episodes of care model

2. Ensure through joint commissioning intentions that Resource Bases and mainstream settings 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.
3. 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.
4. Review, further develop and effectively co-ordinate outreach services from specialist and multi-disciplinary settings to support mainstream provision 0-25.
5. Continue to work alongside schools to build capacity and resilience and develop the quality and resourcefulness of the settings in respect of meeting presenting needs.
 - 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 have an effective preparation for adulthood including access to appropriate work, training and leisure opportunities.

What success will look like?

- Children and Young People with SEND (and their families) will have high aspirations of life for themselves (or the people they care for)
- Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures for pupils with SEND are at a minimum
- 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)
- Children and Young People with SEND are fully supported, encouraged and enabled to take part fully in all aspects

of education, community, leisure and fun activities

- All young people with SEND have a clear destination pathway and that are able to make appropriate progress, whatever their starting point
- Transition Points throughout life course are planned, smooth and well managed for Young People and their families
- 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.

Develop 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 success will look like?

- 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, which will be holistic and focus on academic attainment as well as whole life outcomes
- EHCP and SEN Support plan review processes will be outcome focussed

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 challenge to education providers, 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.
6. Monitoring and review of processes to track personal and educational and strategic service level outcomes.

SEND STRATEGY OBJECTIVE 5

Collaboration, Co-Production and Communication

What success will look like?

- 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 – strong multi-disciplinary partnerships are in place and strengthening all the time

Children and Young People with SEND and their families are well informed and have good access to accurate and up to date

information about services and what is available and how it can be accessed.

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 practice 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 levels.
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, services and settings to account when the pupil and parent voice is not evidenced in the assessment and review process and link this to the performance management framework.
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 through the review and planning of services and development of mechanisms for effective commissioning including joint commissioning arrangements and decision making.

What success will look like?

- Effective, efficient and co-ordinated services that meet the needs of Children and Young People with SEND and their families.
- Effective joint commissioning arrangements in place to ensure that services can respond seamlessly to the personalised needs of Children and Young People with SEND and their families
- Information about local needs will be able to tangibly influence service design
- Children and families will be clear on how and when and where to access services and services operate flexibly around the needs of Children and Young People with SEND and their families
- Panel processes are robust and fit for purpose
- Choice and control for families about how individual needs are met
- Children and families report responsive and high quality services and that their needs are met
- System-wide understanding of the services and performance and impact

Why is this important?

- Statutory Agencies have a statutory duty to communicate effectively across the system
- Statutory agencies are accountable for financial resource allocation and must demonstrate best value and appropriate oversight and scrutiny
- 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. Developing and establish meaningful data flow between systems and services.
2. Develop collective systemic understanding of the needs of this group of Children Young People and their families.
3. Joint Commissioning (including collaboratively planning, developing and implementing services) to provide increased targeted capacity for SEND

within the Borough under the agreed commissioning intentions.

4. Develop financial mechanisms and systems of accountability to enable effective Joint Commissioning, including opportunities to pool/align budgets, and to implement and further roll out personal health budgets.
5. Develop systems to record and monitor performance of commissioned services.
6. Implement a new funding arrangement for SEND support in schools.
7. Allocate the SEND Capital Grant in line with the SEND Strategy.
8. Embed the SEND Ranges to ensure funding allocation for individual pupils is needs led.

8. Taking the SEND 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.

