



SEND Consultation Findings Report – SEND Strategy and Funding (including SEND Provision and SEND Capital Funding) December 2018

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to feed back the key findings of this consultation to the SEND Consultation project board, Head of Education and Inclusion and Education Senior Management Team and to inform the Head of Education and Inclusion's paper to Cabinet on 5th March 2019.

SEND Strategy

There has been overwhelming support from the consultation on the six key themes of the Strategy.

“Your vision and key principles are an encouraging model and I look forward to seeing how this Strategy is put into practice” (parent of a child with SEND)

The key themes that are of concern to consultees are:

- Multi-disciplinary working needs to be seen on the ground, as well as within the Strategy as a key aim.
- Access to specialist support is needed at the earliest stage.
- Effective and proactive involvement of families and young people has to be in all decision making.
- Importance of the early years services and support in identification, assessment and provision.
- Ensuring there is more choice locally for specialist education provision.
- There must be clear communication at transition points from all involved in the Child/young person's life.
- Young people have a desire for independence and high aspirations, however their voice is not always heard. Young people with SEND do not have access to as many social opportunities as their peers and there have been closure of various groups to support them to do this.
- Our services must be developed collaboratively with parents.
- There is real concern over the current performance at KS4.
- Workforce development is key to making the Strategy work.
- More resources are required.
- The Local Offer website needs to be immediately improved.
- An urgent focus is required on preparation for adulthood.
- The need to act swiftly on the next steps.

Funding

- There has been overwhelming support from the consultation on the key principle of money following the child/young person.
- There has been support for the bandings, however there have been issues regarding whether the funding allocated is sufficient or correct.
- The funding methodology was seen as honest and transparent.
- Clarity on whether cost of specialist equipment for CYP who do not have an EHCP (eg CYP with hearing impairment/radio aids) could be covered under the bandings is sought.

Provision

- Most agreed with the expansion/review of resource bases, vocational support and early years hub and the need to expand specialist provision.
- Overall more detail was considered as important as to 'what does this mean' however this needs to be considered in the Strategy action plan.

Main Report - Introduction

1. Proposed Approach

Approval to consult on the Draft SEND Strategy (including use of SEND Capital for development of new SEND provision for Children and Young People with EHCPs); and Funding arrangements; with key stakeholders, partners and children, young people and their families was granted by the Darlington Borough Council Cabinet on 9th October 2018. The consultation ran from 17th October 2018 to 28th November 2018.

2. Consulting on the Proposed Approach

The public consultation questions focused on the six SEND Strategy Objectives, proposed changes to 'top up' funding model and bandings, and developing new SEND provision and use of the DfE SEND Special Provision Grant.

The consultation documents including the survey can be found at **Annex A**.

3. Methodology

The general public and interested parties were invited to participate in the consultation. To reach as many people as possible, a range of consultation methods were available.

3.1 Consultation Documents

There was a series of public consultations through both events and survey which was available on line www.darlington.gov.uk/SEND and the survey was available in hard copy at all events.

The draft strategy was provided alongside the presentation which outlined the key challenges/opportunities, and questions for consultation.

A funding summary document which supported the consultation was provided at an early stage during the consultation to support the completion of the on line survey. The document and survey can be found in Annex A.

3.2 Stakeholder Consultation Events

There was a whole variety of professional fora pre-consultation to brief colleagues and stakeholders on the consultation including the Parent Carer Forum, and Darlington Association on Disability (DAD).

During consultation we were able to inform stakeholders of the consultation themes at meetings that had already been organised by the Local Authority (LA) and stakeholders, for example, events for parents and carers, hosted by the Parent Carer Forum; the SEND Steering group; School Forum; SENCo network training; Primary Schools Forum; 11-19 Forum (secondary schools and post 16 providers); Joint meetings with health and other partner meetings.

A list of who we consulted with and in what way can be seen in Section 5.

3.3 Publicity

In order to reach as many people as possible, the consultation was advertised through the following channels.

We directly emailed all parents/carers of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and emailed key stakeholders in addition to early years providers, schools, colleges and health and social care professionals. This included members of Darlington's Children Young People Plan steering group, SEND Steering Group, and Healthy Lifestyle steering group.

All stakeholders were encouraged to respond in ways appropriate, including writing formal responses to a dedicated email address.

A poster was circulated within key locations in Darlington town centre including the Library, One Stop Shop and sent to other locations attended by the public eg children centres, Head of Steam etc. The LA Communications team organised social media and press releases, such as through Darlington and Stockton Times as well as regular reminders on the DBC website. The Local Offer pages were updated to include information to post readers to the SEND consultation page.

All DBC staff were alerted through publicity on "The Bulletin" and posters.

Consultation with Children and Young People was organised through the LA participation officers and this included representatives from 'Voices'; 'Next Steps'; 'Young Leaders'; Primary and Secondary school Councils. 50 Children and Young people attended these various meetings.

The Parent Carer Forum, the Children and Young People Scrutiny and SENDIASS Officer were all instrumental in sharing the information with their forums/contacts.

School Governors were all alerted to the consultation along with other education professionals such as resource base heads of teams, outreach service heads and SENCOs.

Requests via social care team leaders were made to share wider and support when engagement with parents and young people.

Health professionals eg service leads (Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Audiology, Ophthalmology; etc) were contacted directly, as well as Clinical Commissioning Group and the North of England commissioning support unit.

3.4 Quantitative Data

As well as the respondents who completed the online survey, all hard copy/paper versions of the questionnaires completed by individuals were entered into the survey results.

It was evident of the answers directly entered by respondents on the online survey that the majority of responses were individual responses. The hard copy/paper versions of the survey were mostly on behalf of organisations.

The data was extracted onto an excel spreadsheet and the closed questions were analysed to establish what proportion of respondents agreed or disagreed. Group public data and feedback was not entered onto the on line survey, but was recorded separately, and the quantity of participants at public events was recorded in accordance with attendance lists and headcounts as not all participants recorded attendance due to personal choice.

3.5 Qualitative Data

For the feedback, the survey open questions with qualitative responses were analysed manually to establish particular themes and enable key findings to emerge. Feedback from group meetings was noted long-hand, typed up and analysed for key themes. These key themes were separate to the survey responses. Due to the nature of the format for events and discussions raised, not all the questions were necessarily covered but these have been added to the appropriate part of the Key Findings section 4.

In addition to the 79 respondents to the survey, overall 99 more took part in public meetings which presented the opportunity to ask questions and express views and there were 11 written responses (please see section 5).

Darlington Parent Carer Forum and Darlington Association on Disability submitted written responses to the consultation. The Parent Carer Forum raised the need to provide more detail in particular on the top up funding model in order for an informed response to be made. This was addressed and a briefing was provided and made available on the website and at public meetings. Additional public events were organised in response to requests by parents and carers. All parents and carers of children and young people with EHCPs were individually contacted to let them know about the consultation.

4. Key Findings

The Key Findings from the consultation are presented as a table of quantitative data about the closed questions from the survey, and then key themes from both the qualitative feedback from the open survey questions and events, about why respondents agreed or disagreed and any particular impact raised has been noted.

4.1 SEND Strategy and Funding

The SEND Strategy and Funding survey was built around the 6 draft key objectives (Questions 1-13), provision and use of SEND capital provision funding (questions 14 and 16), and the proposed SEND 'top up' funding model (questions 17-23). Questions 24-28 asked about the respondent, these are summarised in **Annex B**.

Under each draft key objective there were two questions posed; one to indicate the respondents agreement/disagreement; one 'open' question to provide any other information.

57 of the 79 respondents to the SEND Strategy and Funding survey identified the capacity in which they were responding:

A parent / carer	35.09%	20
A young person	0.00%	0
An education professional	45.61%	26
A health professional	1.75%	1
A social care professional	5.26%	3
A governor	7.02%	4
A charity	0.00%	0
A voluntary organisation	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	5.26%	3
	Answered	57

Skipped

22

Question 1 and 2 – SEND Strategy Objective 1**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of****“Early identification of need ensuring that the right children and young people are in the right placement with the right support”.**

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	73.42%	58	Total agree	92.41%
Agree	18.99%	15	Neither agree nor disagree	5.06%
Neither agree nor disagree	5.06%	4	Total disagree	2.53%
Disagree	0.00%	0		
Strongly disagree	2.53%	2		
	Answered	79		
	Skipped	0		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Importance of early years provision in terms of identifying need before the children get to full time schooling.
- Importance of multi-disciplinary coordination in the early years particularly the need for therapeutic input at this stage.
- The whole process of early identification must be multi-disciplinary.
- There is an increasing awareness of the complexity of needs coming through particularly in the early years and we need to get the right expertise in to assess children and young people at earlier stages.
- We need to ensure that all our early years children have a high quality 2 year check by the health visitor, currently there is a feeling that we need a more robust system in place.
- Many expressed the need to have a portage service within and part of a multi-disciplinary hub.
- There was an acknowledgment that some young children are not ready for school and that some of those are being kept down a year thereby not being with their peers for the rest of their school experience.
- There are some examples of best practice in terms of early years specialist play groups run by social care, these only run once a week and parents would like to see these being developed further.
- We need to look at the thresholds of services, some services cannot be accessed by some needy children because the threshold is too high.

- Transition points expose a lot of vulnerability and some children's needs are not met at these times particularly at early years, primary to secondary and post 19.
- The role and function of resource bases is inconsistent.
- We need to use specialist support more effectively to target needs better.
- There is best practice in screening for early years for the Low Incidence Needs groups.
- There have been many comments that services need to be correctly funded.
- Early identification does not just mean early years it can take several years for it to be confirmed.
- Concern was expressed by some parents that the SEND ranges should not drive the Section F (placement section) of the EHC Plan.
- Some parents and professionals commented upon the need to differentiate the 'One Plan' from the EHC Plan.
- There needs to be a better early identification of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller children and young people who have SEND.
- There needs to be an opportunity to review the provision of the social, emotional and mental health needs of Deaf children.
- National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) would welcome a review of the communication options/support for children and young people who are deaf as well as the provision of Assistance Listening Devices (ALDs).
- Specialist staff at the earliest time should be involved with clear communication channels.
- There is some good work undertaken by Darlington between education and social care to develop a regional approach to the assessment and provision of funds for Multi-Sensory Impairment (MSI) low incidence group of children. There has been a qualified assessor to undertake this work.
- There are a range of early screening/identification processes for children and young people with a hearing loss but this is not carried through in reception which means that children with progressive or acquired hearing loss will remain undetected. This is not commissioned by Darlington.
- The importance of multi disciplinary working with parents/nursery settings at the earliest stage – daily conversations, providing the opportunity to promote nurturing support to the family and thus provoking a positive experience of school as many of parents have not had a good experience of the education welfare systems.
- The importance of a specialist outreach service attached to the provision with therapeutic services *'blended into the offer'*.
- Services need to be co-ordinated and efficient.

"my son may not have been in mainstream education now if it was not for early educational intervention"

"early identification of need is essential but not just identification of primary need but also any secondary and/or tertiary needs, in addition that identification must be wholly accurate and must be completed by suitably trained and qualified professionals"

"too often identification is not early enough as services overwhelmed and so slow to respond"

"processes seem to delay support for as long as possible as there are so many hoops to jump through"

"all too often in the past diagnosis has not been wholly accurate and/or understanding of settings has been limited leading to placements breaking down"

“we need to ensure that staff are appropriately trained to both identify and deal with children with complex needs, we need to ensure that there is collaboration between settings across the authority to do this”

“our children in Darlington need a choice of placement not just the offer of the Education village”

“an early years hub sounds a great addition to the offer, it would be great to have parent sessions run from there”

Question 3 and 4 – SEND Strategy Objective 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

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

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	58.57%	41	Total agree	80.00%
Agree	21.43%	15		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	4.29%
	4.29%	3		
Disagree	10.00%	7	Total disagree	15.71%
Strongly disagree	5.71%	4		
Answered		70		
Skipped		9		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Very supportive of the SEND Ranges in terms of building up expertise, giving a framework for agencies and parents to work with but they need time to be embedded.
- There is a need for more therapeutic support wrapped around individual pupils' needs and to train staff within settings.
- We must reduce reliance on out of authority placements, we need to monitor the out of authority better, outcomes and cost.
- General agreement that we need to expand places for additional resource and placements in borough as there was acceptance of limited options and opportunities for choice in Darlington
- Off rolling pupils a particular concern in KS4.
- There was concern raised that some breakdown in school placements in primary as well as secondary settings.
- There is a need that the curriculum meets the needs particularly of children with SEND.
- There is recognition that some children with highly complex needs will need to be educated out of authority.
- A multi-disciplinary workforce reform strategy required, with consistent training to cover not only professionals, governors, but parents and young people themselves.
- We need to have outreach that encompasses the full range of pupils needs.

- There is concern that some mainstream schools are too large to meet the needs of children with SEND and that some may be ridiculed or bullied.
- In surveys and meetings concern was expressed that there is a need for a detailed Strategic action plan.
- The Low Incidence Needs (LINS) team to be involved in the decision making of all children and young people who are deaf and who go to out of authority schools.
- With more children and young people with complex needs coming through we need more specialist placements.
- Teachers will need more support in areas such as effective use of technologies, effective ways of communication, improving listening conditions, assessment of need and strategies that work well for deaf children and young people.
- Specialist support in the early years is essential for all children and young people with additional needs.
- Need to keep LINS under review as well as the other needs mentioned (SEMH, ASD, MLD).

“Darlington is in its current mess in respect of high needs funding precisely because of a lack of strategic leadership and foresight in this area dating back several years”

“It is imperative that additional local, publically owned provision is created as a matter of urgency to drive greater financial efficiencies and to better meet the needs of children and young people”

“schools need to understand that the life chances of those who have been off-rolled will be affected as many have significant needs”

“the mainstream setting I chose for my child through the EHC process is proving to be one of the best decisions I have made, being in our home area was important to us both”

“a mainstream approach does not suit all and I believe the focus should be on what is best for the child”

Question 5 and 6 – SEND Strategy Objective 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Ensuring that children and young people with SEND are educated in their local community and have effective preparation for adulthood and access to work and leisure opportunities”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	63.24%	43	Total agree	82.36%
Agree	19.12%	13		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	5.88%
	5.88%	4		
Disagree	7.35%	5	Total disagree	11.76%
Strongly disagree	4.41%	3		
Answered		68		
Skipped		11		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. The comments of young people on their experiences are also sighted in this section.

Consistent messages included:

- Preparation for adulthood (PFA) should start as early as possible.
- The EHC Plan outcomes need to respond to the PFA outcomes proactively.
- Harewood Hill Lodge is really helpful short break and day care provision.
- The DASH groups are very helpful in getting CYP together undertaking activities.
- Independence skills should be taught and developed from early years.
- Services for young people 19-25 seem only available for those with more complex needs, whilst many without these needs fall under the radar.
- We need to encourage advocacy for young people post 19.
- Parents have raised concerns about their children travelling on their own and have heightened anxiety with regard to this.
- There needs to be more effective coordination between children and adults services to develop true PFA.
- There is very clear support for development of local provision so that friendships and social opportunities are available as long as the placement is the right one.
- Clear plans between and across services going forward to support LINS.
- Young people with a hearing impairment post 16 are not on the case load of LINS. More needs to be in place for transition and Post 19 work with children and young people with Low Incidence Needs.
- There are no deaf youth clubs or facilities for deaf young people to mix and socialise with hearing impaired peers.
- NDCS are developing deaf-friendly standards which clubs can use to offer deaf children equal access to their activities.

*“DASH is a lifeline for the young person and parent, we need DASH all year”
“As the feedback is so positive we should look to making DASH activities a global offer”*

“The more we can support independence the better, travel training should be part of the right of passage”

“further investment is needed, particularly in leisure opportunities”

“Fully agree and we need the infrastructure and communication of events/activities so that families can access through a more accessible website for information and sharing activities through schools”

Responses to 2 and 3 were very similar and some responses to 3 could have been related to mainstream capacity.

The Voice of the Children and Young People

In the Children and young people interviews, the responses were very much focussed on this objective. The feedback from the interviews includes the following key themes:

Employment Aspirations - There is flexible and versatile provision at Darlington College but no real move into employment other than doing some voluntary work. Many students are involved with the pupil’s parliament and national projects but still do not have access into employment. Many have ideas about their future but state that there is very little careers advice. Many have aspirations but these do not lead into reality, *“I have a job but Im bored”*. They feel the courses they offered are limited and do not always match their aspirations.

CYP Voice - All feel safe and listened to, but some professionals *“speak to mum and dad, not me”*, they would like professionals to be involved with them. The young people feel they want to be involved far more in their own care plans and EHC Plans. One pupil who is in an out of authority school would like to be nearer friends and felt that his voice was not listened to when he had to move across two secondary schools.

Independence - The PIP tends to be managed by parents and the young people state that they’ve not got enough money to live on.

Social opportunities - Overall most like school and have varied interests and opportunities outside such as dance, church, DAD, young leaders, C:The Box, knitting club at the Pennyweight and cadets on Neasham Road, and other project work.

Provision - There is a general mixed view of the quality of support that they get but overall the children are mostly happy at school but it cannot be underestimated the importance of teachers as someone they go to for help. Young people are very supportive of the DAD play schemes which gives them good opportunities to socialise. The closure of the Gateway Club has affected many. Some talk about good quality support particularly from the occupational therapist and the equipment that they have plus the importance of the school counsellor. *“I’m happy I’ve found a school I like”*, however, they say there are few choices after and there is a lack of choice in Darlington and they have said they *‘loose friends’*. They have experienced difficult transitions, which makes them anxious about the future. One pupil mentioned that although the current placement was the right one, socially this pupil wanted to be at one of the ‘old’ schools, as this pupil would have liked to have stayed if the right support had been provided.

“At my last school I was very angry and would get annoyed at people. I don’t do that here, I just wished it was in my village so I could walk there.”

Question 7 and 8 – SEND Strategy Objective 4

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Increasing achievement and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	66.15%	43	Total agree	90.77%
Agree	24.62%	16		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	3.08%
	3.08%	2		
Disagree	1.54%	1	Total disagree	6.16%
Strongly disagree	4.62%	3		
Answered		65		

Skipped

14

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Data is not the only measure of success but life skill outcomes are really important to consider.
- In terms of measuring outcomes a lot of the plans/targets lack clarity and need to be SMART'er.
- The quality of EHCPs need to be improved overall and some ECHP assessments take longer than they should.
- Transition is key there is a concern that information is not passed readily from setting to setting.
- The SEND Ranges are supported and should give in the long term a consistent approach.
- There are serious concerns about the curriculum framework particularly at KS4.
- There are fears from parents of some children with SEND as to what the future holds for their children in secondary in light of the current poor performance.
- Difficulty in accessing some services particularly CAMHS because of very high thresholds, there is a large 'gap' in service provision.
- There should be alternative options in the secondary curriculum.
- In surveys and at all events the importance of workforce reform was highlighted as critical to drive the objective forward.
- There is a large Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community in Darlington, they are still the lowest performing ethnic group nationally. These are a distinct group in the borough who do have additional needs.
- Very few GRT children transfer to secondary school and very few reach KS4. A significant number of GRT children are on the Home Education register and have few opportunities for GRT in accessing employment, training and education post 16.
- NDCS Healthy Minds programme is being developed to support social, emotional needs and academic development for hearing impaired children and young people.
- Nationally deaf children and young people on average under achieve by a whole grade per subject compared to children and young people with no identified SEND.

“Fully funded will be required to enable staff to meet the full and ever increasing range and complexity of need. The Local Authority has an important role in this regard.”

“Settings need to be better funded, estates and facilities must be fit for purpose and multi-agency support and engagement must be improved”

“I feel that secondary school especially for children with additional needs are not set up in the correct way This can cause a whole host of problems that were not an issue”

“Children with profound and complex needs and with lots of medical needs, need a safe place to go to be given fun learning experiences and not have the expectations that all other children have with regards to learning objectives”

“Schools are very result driven but for some children they will never achieve GCSE's there should be better provision available”

Question 9 and 10 – SEND Strategy Objective 5

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Focus on effective collaboration, co-production and communication”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	72.31%	47	Total agree	92.31%
Agree	20.00%	13	Neither agree nor disagree	1.54%
Neither agree nor disagree				
	1.54%	1	Total disagree	6.16%
Disagree	1.54%	1		
Strongly disagree	4.62%	3		
	Answered	65		
	Skipped	14		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- Services must work together, too many do individualised separate assessments.
- There is a challenge of getting all services to EHCP meetings and annual reviews.
- We need better home-school communication across all settings.
- There needs to be more reasonable adjustments/options available around hospital appointments.
- Different thresholds can be a barrier to multi-disciplinary working.
- There is a complexity of what trusts deliver and boundaries are a problem.
- The strategy needs to pull communication from all agencies together, with a greater knowledge of SEND.
- There is a real need for a multi-disciplinary workforce reform strategy.
- Some professional reports are difficult to understand and use complicated and complex language, reports need to be in laymans terms.
- Social care/education do not work together “on the ground”.
- The local offer is poor.
- It is perceived that criteria on how to access services is not clear and accessing CAMHS was mentioned regularly by many groups as being difficult.
- We must use the experience and expertise of parents more effectively.
- The parent carer dialogue with the LA is getting better.
- The EHC Plan assessment requires a report from the statutory NHS service, regardless of whether an independent specialist therapeutic service can provide that report as this service may be
- There have been strong comments from some parents about the lack of coproduction
- There were concerns regarding knowledge, and consistency of and changing of SEND case workers
- The importance of multi-disciplinary working with LINS.
- The local offer is poor in terms of highlighting assessments by whom and when.
- There should be a focus on multi-agency mentoring of all children and young people with SEND and challenging the data and provision if they are not making sufficient progress ie challenging schools.

- Need to ensure that parents with children and young people who have low incidence needs are engaged fully.
- There are some good links between the low incidence needs service, social care, health and Beaumont Hill.

“CAMHS assessment is a battle!”

“some services are a law unto themselves”

“sounds good, but from experience communication is not shared and often a parent has to repeat information”

“professionals want to do this but need time to make this meaningful and achievable”

“consultation and engagement must be genuine with stakeholders being listened to and their views acted upon”

“Collaboration is imperative. Equally important is that the schools who have proven their dedication to SEND, who have the skills, the local offer and the credibility in SEND have the opportunity to do more for the children of Darlington”.

Question 11 and 12 – SEND Strategy Objective 6

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the SEND Draft Strategy objective of

“Achieving Best Value (human, physical and financial resources) from all our services”.

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	63.49%	40	Total agree	87.30%
Agree	23.81%	15		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	6.35%
	6.35%	4		
Disagree	3.17%	2	Total disagree	6.34%
Strongly disagree	3.17%	2		
	Answered	63		
	Skipped	16		

Summary of Feedback

Overall strong agreement with this objective. Consistent messages included:

- We need to try pooling more resources across agencies.
- We need to look at innovative ways of using resources.
- Agreement that services need to review to ensure that we have the right expertise.
- Networking and the SEND ranges can support providing the right expertise.
- Provision map should be used so that schools are held accountable.
- Need to review early years inclusion budget and the budget for low incidence needs and those children who have significant equipment needs for their disabilities.

- This objective needs to encompass a review of service and develop mechanisms for joint commissioning.
- There should be more reference to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as a local partner and to consider where the CCG priorities and strategic plans work alongside the Strategy.
- Need to make better use of council owned buildings for SEND provision.
- Ensure that we have accurate data on LINS so that we can future proof services.
- Consideration to a Tees joint arrangement for LINS to achieve specialist input for a small number of CYP.
- There is some concern over the funding of radio aids for early years.

“Is there a clear view of where the waste is in the system? Parents find it very frustrating to see how much equipment is laid around and not used or re-used effectively”

“economies of scale Seems the way to go ... we can do more for less by collaborating and sharing resources and training” (school)

“mainstream schools should be helped to become more inclusive eg publicising and sharing of good practice locally in Darlington and the North East to encourage schools to think if they can do it, we can too”

“if greater forward planning was in place to ensure appropriate and adequate provision is available this would save money in the long term”

“more investment is needed in existing local settings”

“commissioning needs to be SMARTer and make full use of local capacity for instance only about a quarter of available places at Marchbank Free School have been commissioned by DBC yet primary aged children with SEMH have been placed out of area”

Question 13

If you have any other comments, suggestions or feedback on our proposals on the six objectives, please tell us:

- Workforce should be a key objective – staff training is vital to the success.
- How effectively will the objectives be implemented?

“I think if this is done properly with consultation not just with the public with the staff already delivering services and their views on improvement are also taken into consideration then Darlington will become a great place for a child with SEN to live and grow and develop”

“I don’t think anybody can disagree with the 6 objectives, it is the cost that is the issue”

Questions 14-16 Provision and SEND Capital Funding

To help develop educational provision for children and young people with SEND Darlington Borough Council will receive funding from the Government each year, from 2019 to 2021. This funding has to be used to increase the number of places for children and young people with EHC Plans and improve facilities for children and young people with EHC Plans.

We have identified in our Strategy that provision may need to be commissioned to support children with Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties, and Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), in the Primary phase for pupils with SEMH and in the secondary phase for pupils with SEMH and for those with MLD. We have also identified that we have gaps in our provision for those young people who find the demands of the curriculum difficult and for whom a more practical and vocational route is more appropriate.

Do you agree that we need to develop provision in these areas of need?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	88.71%	55
No	4.84%	3
Don't know	6.45%	4
Answered		62
Skipped		17

There was strong agreement however with the caveat that Darlington needs to ensure that other gaps that have been identified are not prejudiced. There have been specific comments regarding provision for ASD in respect to the role and function of the secondary resource base.

“some of the funding should be for this purpose but some of it should be used to ensure existing accommodation and facilities are wholly fit for purpose and sustainable in the long term particularly for our CYP with the most complex needs eg PMLD”

Darlington Association on Disabilities (DAD) consultation response especially noted that specialist provisions, including alternative education establishments and out of area placements are essential to meet the needs of children and young people in Darlington because there is a lack of high quality local provision.

“DAD supports the principles of inclusion and inclusive education with children and young people attending local schools within their community and local area but acknowledge that currently this is not possible and that specialist provisions, including alternative education establishments and out of area placements are essential to meet the needs of children and young people in Darlington.” (DAD)

Do you agree this is an appropriate use of the money?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	75.81%	47
No	8.06%	5
Don't know	8.06%	5
Other (please specify)	8.06%	5
Answered		62
Skipped		17

Summary of Feedback

There was strong agreement with the commissioning proposals. Consistent messages included:

- Surveys and meetings agreed on clarity and more use of resource bases.
- There was agreement that there is insufficient provision for children with SEMH and MLD.
- Agreement that more provision for children with ASD with nurture in secondary schools supported by multi agency working is required.
- Outreach behaviour support was mentioned as a gap.
- It was felt a larger EP service was required.
- There were both positive and negative comments made by parents following experience of access to resource bases.
- A strong feeling that some mainstream schools need to do more to support SEND and there needs to be more high quality workforce training.
- Early Years hub was seen to be a good idea.

“ensure that outreach services are accessible and appropriate”

“resource bases should not be the only areas of expertise and that outreach and expertise/training of mainstream is still a priority”

“they should not become an easy answer for schools who are failing to meet needs that they should be able to meet”

“the provision in Darlington for autism high achievers is poor”

“I think if schools offered better alternative qualifications and a curriculum”

Questions 17-23 Funding

Darlington Borough Council are proposing to provide funding to schools that is directly related to the assessed and identified needs of the child/young person. This funding is used for the provision of resources for that individual child (a needs based approach of money following the child/young person). This will allow for a clear, transparent and consistent approach by primary and secondary educational settings across the Borough. Darlington Borough Council’s funding model is currently a combination of a delegated lump sum payment and top up to the notional fund.

Questions 17 and 18 – system change

“To what extent do you agree with the proposals to move from the current system, which is varied across the Borough, to a consistent and applied approach for all primary and secondary educational settings?”

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	53.23%	33	Total agree	88.71%
Agree	35.48%	22		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	6.45%
	6.45%	4		
Disagree	4.84%	3	Total disagree	4.84%
Strongly disagree	0.00%	0		
	Answered	62		

Skipped 17

Overall there was strong agreement on the model to be linked to the SEND ranges and the principles to ensure funding 'follows the child' and is needs led. There was strong agreement with the proposals to move to a new system, because it is seen as positive in transparency and accountability, however some points were made about application in practice, for example

- If funding follows the child, this may be an issues for forward planning
- There was some concern that some children not on an EHC Plan do loose out because they do not have a formal recognition of an EHC Plan.
- General consensus that the model was fair and knowing the proposed bandings was a positive move forward.

“we need to be fair and transparent to ensure that the money does follow the child”

Both DAD and the Parent Carer Forum (PCF) highlighted their concerns as to how attaching the funding model to the ranges will work in practice. It was raised during the consultation that there was no information provided on the differences in the funding model or the impact it would have upon children both with EHCPs and at SEN support. In response to this, a funding briefing document was produced and made available on the consultation website, this issue has been addressed in the Equality Impact Assessment.

It is not clear from the supporting documents and the consultation what the impact of the proposed funding model will be, although DAD is supportive of the principle that funding should 'follow the child'. The supporting documentation states that the previous and proposed model can not be compared 'like to like' and does not indicate if the proposed model represent and increase or decrease in funding available per pupil

We ask for further transparency and consultation in this area so that respondents are able to make more informed decisions and comments. (DAD)

Question 19 and 20 – ranges and bandings

“Darlington Borough Council has put in place the SEND ranges which cover the four areas of the Code of Practice. There are ranges of need between 1 and 7. To what extent do you agree with these bandings?”

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	3.45%	2	Total agree	32.76%
Agree	29.31%	17		
Neither agree nor disagree	29.31%	17	Neither agree nor disagree	29.31%
Disagree	29.31%	17		
Strongly disagree	8.62%	5	Total disagree	37.93%
		Answered		
		Skipped	21	

The majority either disagreed, or did not agree or disagree with the ranges and bandings.

The Parent Carer Forum raised during consultation that it was difficult to answer this question because the previous funding model was not available. These comments were also made on the survey monkey. This was addressed through the publication of an additional consultation paper.

When explained in the consultation meetings respondents indicated the new proposals were easier to understand than the previous model.

Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) also commented that the SEND Ranges may provide a useful mechanism to support the identification of need and the development of supporting provision map, however, had reservations about linking the funding to the SEND ranges.

As noted above and below there was a larger number of other responses that disagreed with linking the funding to ranges. The particular comment from DAD was: *“particularly for children and young people who would be identified as being in range 3. It is within this range particularly, that in some schools, they may be fully using the notional budget to support children and young people, evidenced through a costed provision map, but may still not be able to meet the needs of the pupil, increasing the attainment gap at a point where they may not be eligible for Education Health and Care Plan.”*

Comments were made on the bandings:

- There is a large jump between 4a and 4b which appears to be significant and could potentially skew funding.
- Bands 5a and 6a for sensory should mention consideration of a resource provision.
- Would like consideration for top up funding for Deaf children who do not have an EHC Plan.
- A query was raised whether the bandings allowed for discretion in allocation of actual amounts.
- Concerns was raised about the comparability between ‘old’ bandings and new ranges, would the funding give the right level of support.
- There was some concern about the application of the notional SEND budget as some comments were around the fact that schools rely too heavily on it for their general school budget.
- There was some concern that schools would inflate children’s needs in order to get funding.
- In both surveys and the meetings, there was a consistent concern about the impact of the new funding model i.e. will the money actually be sufficient.
- Some parents expressed concern and worry about any reduction of funding.
- Bandings need to be flexible to respond to individual needs
- The SEND ranges are helpful in education settings but the ranges do not reflect health care “episodes of care” and the impact of a condition on learning.

“academies will suffer in the main through job cuts is my fear immediately upon introduction of these relevant and needed changes”

“there are some big gaps between some of the bandings and I wonder if school will interpret the level with the amount of money in mind”

“as a parent with a disabled child I should not have the extra worry of funding for my child, my child's EHC Plan should be detailed enough to cover what my child needs to enrich his/her education and wellbeing”

“not able to determine appropriateness of levels, recognising that any health needs and interventions will be in addition to the monies/resources allocated in these blocks”

“the ranges will support to bring consistency across education settings and enable services to better evidence interventions”

“the number of bands are too few and the funding levels are too low to meet the needs of all learners”

Questions 21 and 22 – simpler model

“The funding proposals are designed to create a clearer and simpler model that is more easily understood by parents, carers, young people (where appropriate) and professionals. To what extent do you agree that the proposals will create a clearer and simpler system?”

Answer Choices	Responses			
Strongly agree	34.48%	20	Total agree	68.96%
Agree	34.48%	20		
Neither agree nor disagree			Neither agree nor disagree	18.97%
	18.97%	11		
Disagree	8.62%	5	Total disagree	12.07%
Strongly disagree	3.45%	2		
Answered		58		
Skipped		21		

- The majority of respondents believed that this model is easier to understand and appropriate. The feedback was that the current model is not fit for purpose and the complicated application of top ups in Darlington is difficult to understand however, there was agreement that for the model to work the SEND ranges need to be consistently applied and workforce development was crucial to ensure this. The LA can then hold settings to account. Funding covers all schools, maintained and Academies.

However, various issues and other related concerns were raised:

“just because its easier to understand does not mean the right amount of support is being provided”

- There must be equitable funding, funding must not be a post code lottery
- There was a general concern that resources were scant anyway and funding is being reduced generally in schools
- There was concern that EHC Plans would rise if funding reduces.

- There was concern that the notional SEND formula does not meet the needs of children and young people.
- There was confusion and a lack of knowledge of personal budgets and direct payments.

“Help/support in managing systems to access support and equipment would be good”

“you are asking us to agree/support an unknown proposal”

“there has been a through consultation with stakeholders over the past few months”

“I am very anxious of my son’s future and it is good that you have been honest and highlighted all the areas of concern, however, there is a lot to implement and I hope you have the resource and funding to enable this to happen and in a short timeframe so we will see change in the near future”

“I am very worried that the banding changes are a smokescreen for DBCs past lack of accounting”

“any new funding model will only work if the assessment system including the award of EHC Plans is fit for purpose”

5. Consultees

Summary

Responses from the 11 consultees (as presented below) are presented in **Annex C** of this document.

Response Type	Numbers
Total survey responses (including hard copy survey's received)	79
Public Events (including open health, social care and school meetings) number of attendees	99
Children and Young People Events – number of attendees	50
Total number of detailed written responses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teachers of Deaf and Visually Impaired, Darlington Low Incidence Needs Service - National Deaf Children Society - Federation of Mowden Schools - Traveller Education and Attainment Service, Darlington - Parent/Carer - The Federation of Darlington Nursery Schools - Darlington CYP Scrutiny Committee - Carmel Education Trust - Darlington Association on Disability - Parent Carer Forum 	11

Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation theme	Consultation type	Date	Numbers
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Monday 5 November	8
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Monday 5 November	11
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Monday 5 November	6
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Tuesday 6 November	6
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Tuesday 6 November	2
All consultations	Open Health meeting	Wednesday 14 November	2
All consultations	Open Social Care meeting	Wednesday 14 November	10
All consultations	Public event	Tuesday 20 November	5
SEND Strategy and Funding	Public event	Wednesday 21 November	16
SEND Travel Assistance Policy	Public event	Wednesday 21 November	5
All consultations	Open Schools meeting	Thursday 22 November	28

Children and Young People Consultation

Consultation Theme	Consultation details	Date	Numbers
All consultations	<p>Voices C:TheBox A social group for young people aged between 15 and 25 who are on the Asperger's & Autistic spectrum</p>	Thursday 15 November	3 CYP
All consultations	<p>Next Steps Darlington College A group of 16 plus young people who attend Darlington college to social and learn life skill all of whom are on the ASD spectrum</p>	Thurs 15 November	3 CYP
All consultations	<p>Darlington Association on Disability provide a number of young people focused groups.</p> <p>Young Leaders is a group for young people with disabilities aged between 14 and 25.</p> <p>M.F.I (Mentoring For Independence) works with older young people and aims to improve independence.</p> <p>DASH Play Scheme offers 3 playgroups for children aged 3 to 15.</p>	<p>Wednesday 7 November</p> <p>Thursday 15 November</p> <p>Wednesday 31 October & Thursday 1 November</p>	<p>7 CYP</p> <p>14 CYP</p> <p>12 CYP</p>
All consultations	<p>Primary School Council March Bank School Meeting with the school council and talking to children aged between 5 and 11</p>	Wednesday 7 November	6 CYP
All consultations	<p>Primary & Secondary School Council Beaumont Hill Academy A specialist provider for children aged 2 -19 with special educational needs. Meeting with both the primary and secondary aged School Council</p>	Wednesday 14 November	5 CYP