



Northumberland
County Council



DRAFT Northumberland Local Area Strategy

for Children, Young People and their
families with Special Educational Needs
and / or Disabilities

2021-2024



Northumberland
Clinical Commissioning Group

Foreword

This 2021-2024 Northumberland Strategy for Special Educational Needs sets out our local partnership's vision for developing and improving the support provided for the children and young people with additional needs and their families. It details our aspirations and priorities for the county and the improvements to our provision that we plan to make in a time of unprecedented demand for specialist support. We want to give parents the confidence that their child is receiving the best educational support possible and is achieving good outcomes through high quality, inclusive practice in our schools.

Since this strategy was drafted, the COVID-19 pandemic has gripped the world necessitating lockdown and national closures of schools, colleges and settings with far reaching changes to all aspects of daily life. As yet, it is difficult to fully understand the long term implications of these changes on society and on our children and young people, however there is an even greater need for a clear strategy on how to support children and young people with SEND and their families.

Re-reading this strategy in the light of the pandemic it is clear that the ambition and principles within it continue to apply in these uncertain times. It is the way that we will do things and move forward that might look and feel different in the initial stages of how we move into a recovery and restoration phase.

This Strategy also reflects the priorities outlined in our emerging Children and Young People's Plan. We want our children to have the best start in life and to have access to a good education that prepares them for their adult life. We want them to feel safe and supported and to stay healthy. Most importantly, this strategy will ensure that local services across education, health and social care work together to tackle any disadvantage or prejudice that negatively impacts upon our children and young people with additional needs.

For this Strategy to work, we need to recognise the role and responsibility that parents and carers have to influence and shape the experiences of their children and young people. By working together, particularly during these times, all of our children



and young people with additional needs will receive the support and encouragement they need in order to reach their full potential and live independent lives.

Audrey Kingham
Service Director, Education and Skills

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Introduction and Context

In October 2018, the Northumberland local area underwent an Ofsted / CQC inspection of the arrangements for children and young people with SEND in the county. The report highlighted strengths in the provision across Northumberland and stated, 'Frontline staff in education, health and care services, and in schools, work hard and are making a valued difference to children and young people with SEND and their families'.



There were, however, areas that needed to improve, and a Written Statement of Action was required as an outcome of the inspection. Northumberland County Council and Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have responded to this requirement and the subsequent improvement plan was approved by Ofsted and NHS England in March 2019.

An improvement plan was developed that focussed on a Local Area approach to supporting children and young people with SEND by Northumberland County Council and Northumberland CCG, alongside leaders from education, health and social care to drive forward the identified developments. Our progress against this plan has been monitored by the Department for Education and NHS England where we have been able to demonstrate that progress has been consistently made on all our targets. You can see the progress that has been made in our SEND inspection section on the Local Offer.

In early 2020, the pandemic changed our world. The way we lived, spent time with friends and family, the way we worked and our children's education all changed.

This strategy sets out what we will do to develop and improve provision for children and young people with SEND in Northumberland. It is built upon

- Data and information about children and young people with SEND living in Northumberland
- Progress that we have made on our written statement of action following inspection
- And most importantly, built upon the experiences of families and their children with SEND during the pandemic, and on what families told us would make a positive difference to their daily lives in the future

This strategy is now ready to be shared for formal consultation and we are seeking your views to help shape the strategy and the future direction of development work for children and young people with SEND.

Who is our strategy for?

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SEND encompasses children and young people who have a broad range of needs. For some, the focus of support will be mainly educational. Other children and young people and their families will need support from several services, and this may continue throughout their childhood and, for some, into adulthood. A child or young person may have special educational needs or a disability or both. The SEND Code of Practice sets out the definition of SEND, linking it closely to the Equality Act (2010) and is for children and young people aged 0-25 years.

SEND is defined as:

A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child or young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- Has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- Has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream Post 16 institutions.

(SEND Code of Practice 2015, DfE, DHSC)

For children age two or more, special educational provision is educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age. For a child under two years old, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

Children and young people may have needs in one or more broad areas of need including:

- Communication and interaction including children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health difficulties
- Sensory and physical difficulties

Most children and young people will have their needs met with support from their school or setting. This is called the SEN Support stage. The children and young people with the most significant needs will have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) setting out the child's or young person's special educational needs and the provision they need to help them to overcome any barriers to learning (SEND Code of Practice January 2015).



Vision

Our vision for children and young people with SEND builds on plans from both Northumberland County Council and Northumberland CCG and is the same as our vision for all children and young people.

We want children and young people with SEND in Northumberland to have the best start in life, be safe, happy, healthy, confident, successful and be well prepared for adult life. For this to be achieved we will ensure that all children, young people and their families have the fullest range of support and opportunities available to them in order to improve their life chances and realise their aspirations.



Our Principles

- Placing the safety, wellbeing and views of children, young people and their families at the heart of our services;
- Focusing on improving outcomes for our children, young people, families and communities;
- Education, health, social care and other partners working together with families to help children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes;
- Identifying needs as early as possible;
- Developing high quality inclusive provision with every child/young person having access to a good school that is as close to home as possible;
- Effectively supporting children and young people to prepare for adulthood, including employment and independent living.

We will know that we are making progress when:

- Children, young people and their families with SEND have confidence in the support they receive from education, health and social care staff;
- Our schools can consistently support children and young people with SEND and children and young people make positive progress with their learning;
- Education, health and social care teams work together to effectively coordinate support;
- Young people and their families feel supported to make decisions about moving into adulthood and understand what opportunities, pathways and support are available.

SEND in Northumberland

What do we know about our County?

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The following highlights some key facts about SEND in Northumberland

- **11.4%** of our school population is at **SEN support**, compared to **12.2%** nationally. There is a higher % of children at SEN Support in primary schools (**12.4%**) than at secondary schools (**10%**).
- Just over **3.5%** of school aged children and young people have **Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)**. Of the total number of plans
 - **4%** are under 5
 - **33%** are aged 5-10
 - **35%** are aged 11-15
 - **27%** are 16 or over

The percentage of children and young people at SEN support and with EHCPs in Northumberland is lower than that seen nationally. However, the number of children and young people with EHCPs in the county is **rising**, while those at SEN support is **falling**. In January 2020 there were **2174** children and young people with an EHCP and this is predicted to continue to rise on a yearly basis.

In 2020, at **SEN Support**, the top three primary needs are:

- Speech, language and communication
- Social emotional and mental health
- Moderate learning difficulties

In 2020, for children and young people with an **EHCP**, the top three primary needs are:

- Autism
- Social emotional and mental health
- Speech, language and communication



Specific learning difficulties are under-identified in mainstream schools as an area of need.

Children and young people access many different health services including CYPS (Northumberland CAMHS Service), Primary Mental Health Team, Therapies, Community Paediatrics, Health Visitors, Nurses and GPs. The time it takes to access health services once a child has been referred are within national guidelines, and for some services such as CYPS, much earlier.

In 2020, **30%** of pupils with an EHCP are Looked After Children or Children in Need.

In 2020, for children and young people supported by Social Work or an Early Help Assessment, the top three primary needs are.

- Autism
- Social emotional and mental health
- Speech language and communication needs

Northumberland is a large county and there are challenges in providing equitable services across all areas and, in particular, in the north and west.

How children and young people learn at school?

The percentage of SEN children reaching a good level of development in the Early Years in Northumberland is above the national average and is showing a rising trend.

Performance at Key Stage 1 and 2 for reading, writing and maths is showing improvement for SEN Support learners and is above the national average for this group.

There is a significant gap between all learners and SEND learners in writing standards in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

In July 2020, attainment across eight GCSE subjects (Attainment 8) shows an improvement for both SEN Support and EHCP learners.

16.6% of children receiving SEN Support and **11.1%** of pupils with an EHCP had a Fixed Term Exclusion during the 2017-18 academic year. **0.7%** of pupils with an EHCP and **0.4%** of those receiving SEN Support were permanently excluded during the same period. Numbers of exclusions of pupils with special educational needs have been **falling** over the past two years.

Where do children and young people go to school?

42% of Northumberland children and young people with EHCPs attend special schools.

15.2% attend mainstream schools and **13.5%** are in a mainstream academy.

Numbers of learners with EHCPs are **falling** in mainstream schools and **rising** in specialist provision.

13.1% of children and young people with an EHCP attend educational provision outside of Northumberland.

Northumberland places more children and young people in special schools than the national average. More specialist provision is being sought for children and young people than the current capacity is able to support, necessitating an increase in the number of children and young people having to travel long distances to access provision that may be outside of Northumberland.

SEND in our localities

What do we know about the different areas in the County?

During the work we have done to refresh the strategic plan, people have told us that it is important to consider the different areas of the county when we are planning support for children and young people with SEND. Northumberland is one of the largest counties in England and there is, therefore, a need to ensure we understand the similarities and differences across our localities. Our localities are:



This section illustrates what we know about these local areas.



Central

In 2019 there were **12.5%** of children and young people with SEND at **SEN support**. Their top three identified needs are

- Speech language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)

For those with an **EHCP**, the top three identified needs are

- Autism (ASD)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Over the past five years, Central has seen

- The second highest decrease in SEN Support numbers
- The highest increase in EHCPs

Central has 3 Special Schools, Collingwood, The Castle School and Cleaswell Hill School. There are three Independent Special Schools, Get U Started Training (GUST), Buzz Learning and Nunnykirk School.





North

In 2019 there were **12.8%** of children and young people with SEND at **SEN support**. Their top three identified needs are

- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Speech language and communication needs (SLCN)

For those with an **EHCP**, the top three identified needs are

- Autism (ASD)
- Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)

Over the past five years, the North has seen

- The third highest decrease in SEN Support numbers
- The lowest increase in EHCPs

The North has 2 Special Schools, Barndale and The Grove.



South East

In 2020 there were **12.6%** of children and young people with SEND at **SEN support**. Their top three identified needs are

- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)
- Speech language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)

For those with an **EHCP**, the top three identified needs are

- Autism (ASD)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)

Over the past five years, the South East has seen

- The lowest decrease in SEN Support numbers
- The second highest increase in EHCPs

The South East has 3 Special Schools, The Dales, Hillcrest and Atkinson House Schools.

West

In 2020 there were **7.8%** of children and young people with SEND at **SEN support**. Their top three identified needs are

- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Speech language and communication needs (SLCN)
- Moderate learning difficulties (MLD)

For those with an **EHCP**, the top three identified needs are

- Physical Disability (PD)
- Autism (ASD)
- Social emotional and mental health (SEMH)

Over the past five years, the West has seen

- The highest decrease in SEN Support numbers
- The second lowest increase in EHCPs

The West has one Special School, Hexham Priory School.



What does information about the different localities tell us?

There is an ongoing need to support inclusive educational practice in mainstream schools to identify and effectively meet the needs of all children and young people in mainstream schools, particularly in the west and the north.

There are fewer children and young people with Autism at SEN Support being included in mainstream schools. There is inconsistent identification of children and young people with specific learning difficulties.

Children and young people with social, emotional and mental health needs and children with speech, language and communication needs are high in number across both SEN Support and EHCPs.

Moderate learning difficulties is one of the top three areas of need across all localities at SEN Support indicating that mainstream schools are successfully meeting this level of need.

Analysis of locality SEN Support and EHCP numbers indicates that there is a need for additional specialist provision in the south east and central localities.



SEND in Northumberland

What you have told us

We carried out a survey to understand the impact that the pandemic was having on children and young people with SEND and their families. The survey was co-produced with the Northumberland Parent Carer Forum and was live in July and August 2020. A total of 426 families responded, the largest response to any SEND survey carried out in Northumberland. Thank you.

The findings of the survey showed that

- Lockdown impacted negatively on the mental health and wellbeing of most parents and carers as well as that of their children with SEND. Families also reported having to decrease their spending in order to manage and some reported struggling financially.
- Home schooling was difficult for many families, particularly when combined with working from home. The nature of their child's needs, a lack of routine, the number of children and adults in the household and the support the family received from school impacted significantly on a family's ability to home school.
- The majority of children in this report did not attend school during the period of the survey. A small number of children did not receive any schooling at home and their physical and mental health became worse. Parents reported their child missed family and friends and not being able to go outside. Conversely, some children thrived away from the pressures of school.
- For some families, school provided good support to families around their learning and support for their wellbeing. For others, parents reported a lack of communication and support, with work being sent home that their child found too difficult to do.
- Many children and young people with SEND continued to receive more or the same level of health and social care support as before lockdown, while others reported they received less or no support. A group of children and young people reported their assessments went ahead, while for the remainder it was delayed or cancelled.
- Two thirds of children and young people undergoing an education assessment to determine if they needed additional support reported the communication around the process was not enough.
- Families were worried and anxious about their children returning to school and concerned how their children would catch up on their learning, reintegrate back into school, manage social interactions, cope with transitions and stay safe from the coronavirus.
- Looking to the future, families wished for more staffing, training and funding for schools, increase support for mental health and plans for how their children will catch up on any missed learning. Families wanted improved communication with their schools, extra activities available for weekends and holidays and more advice and support if their child needed help at school.

You can read more about the findings of the survey on our Local Offer in the 'Have your say' section.



We have combined the data and information available on children and young people with SEND and the things that you told us would make a difference to your daily lives if they improved. These fall into the following themes

More training and support to develop inclusive mainstream schools

Listening to children, young people and their families

Importance of early identification

Increased support for mental health and anxiety in schools

Improved communication with parents and carers from all parts of the system

More advice and support about SEND for parents and carers on what help, advice and support is available

Effectively preparing children and young people for adulthood

Delivering the curriculum which suits a wide range of learners

Extra activities for the holidays and the weekends that are available locally

We are now seeking comments on this strategy to determine if these themes are representative for all children, young people and their families and professionals working within SEND.

What are our priorities?



Northumberland SEND Strategy Priorities 2021 - 2024



What actions will we take?



In response to the pandemic and beyond

We will continue to respond to national guidance around measures we need to take in response to the pandemic to keep everyone safe – our children and young people with SEND, their families, our schools and settings and the workers who support them.

Although the current situation is changing rapidly, sometimes on a daily basis, we are committed to achieving the improvements that you have told us would make a difference to your daily lives. So while the way in which we deliver improvements may change according to national guidance, our focus will remain on the key areas and actions detailed in our plan.

We will be posting details of these on social media and on our Local Offer, so please look out for them and tell us what matters to you. Don't forget at any time you can go to the Local Offer and share your ideas or concerns with us.





your say



Over the next three years we will:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Working Together | Deliver the DfE 'Wellbeing for Education Return' training across schools and colleges in Northumberland to support children and young people with mental health and anxiety (Mar 2021) |
| | Work with the new Parent Carer Forum to develop a number of different systems to enable the experiences and views of children, young people and their families are heard and can support and inform improvement (Mar 2021) |
| | Work with the Parent Carer Forum to co-produce and improve the information on the Local Offer, initially focussing on transition into adulthood, social care and education (Mar 2021) |
| | Review effectiveness of existing therapy and nursing support for children and young people and agree how these will be funded co-produce how services will work in the future (Sep 2021) |

| | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Provide clear online information on support for mental health that is available for children and young people so that families and professionals know who to contact for support (Dec 20) | Right support at the right time |
| Carry out a review of Short Breaks in Northumberland and identify the next steps to co-producing an equitable county wide offer (Jan 21) | |
| Review and improve the effectiveness of the system where schools can apply for additional funding to support inclusive practice and support the graduated approach in mainstream schools (April 2021) | |
| Increase specialist provision in the south east and central to support the increase in demand for specialist provision (December 2022) | |





Inclusive education: Achievement for all

Co-produce a 'Northumberland Inclusion Charter' with parents, carers, children and young people, schools, settings, health and social care partners to strengthen communication and co-production between families, schools, settings and colleges (Aug 21)

Support 15 schools / settings to obtain the charter mark (Aug 22)

Deliver a training framework to schools, SENCos, Governors, settings and professionals to support the teaching and learning of learners with additional needs, particularly those with autism and social, emotional and mental health needs and specific literacy difficulties (July 2021)

Increase the number of schools participating in SEND Peer Reviews so that 50 schools will have participated by (July 2022)

Improve the attainment of young people with SEND at Key Stages 3 and 4 (Aug 22)

Co-produce person centred planning best practice guidance for annual reviews for SEN Support and EHCPs (April 2021)

Embed the voice of children and young people within the outcomes framework to measure how effective the local area is in supporting children and young people into adulthood. (July 21)

Increase the number of young people who access a supported internship, carved job or volunteering after school (September 2021)

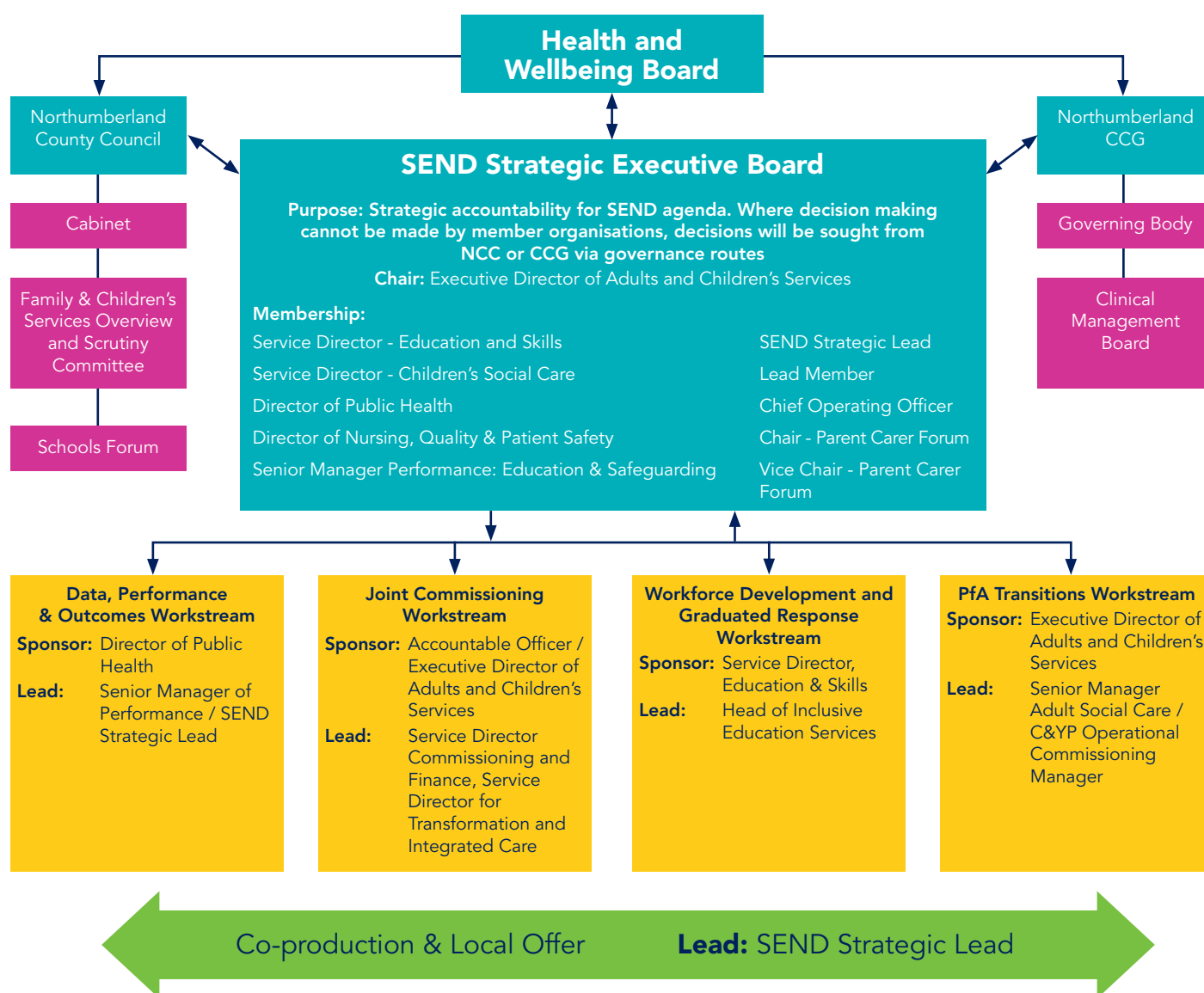
Increase the number of programmes available to Post 16 learners in that focus on preparing for adulthood (August 2022)

Effectively prepare
children and
young people for
adulthood

How will we monitor progress?

There are many improvements and developments we want to make over the next three years and it is important that there are robust monitoring arrangements in place. This strategy is supported by an action plan which is available on our Local Offer which is being monitored through governance arrangements in each organisation. Progress is monitored monthly across the local area through the SEND Strategic Executive Board.

Governance Structure



KEY: BLUE Strategic Planning Assurance and Accountability PINK Decision Making YELLOW Operational Reporting GREEN Parent Carer Forum



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