



Report of Margaret Whellans, Corporate Director of Children and Young Peoples Service, Durham County Council

Electoral division(s) affected: Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report presents the refreshed strategy for supporting work across local partners for children, young people and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Executive summary

- 2 This report provides an update on the joint strategic approach to SEND in County Durham across the 0-25 age range involving Health, Social Care, Education and other partners.
- 3 The report and strategy has been presented for approval at the Integrated Steering Group for Children, Durham County Council Corporate and Children and Young People Management Teams as well as to the Clinical Commissioning Group Executive.
- 4 The report reflects the work undertaken by multi-agency planning groups, including engagement with stakeholders such as Making Changes Together (the recognised parent and carer partnership for SEND provision) and the eXtreme group (a group of young people with SEND who help to inform services of their experiences of life with SEND in County Durham).
- 5 This strategy is aligned to the new Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) strategy which was recently approved at Cabinet in February 2019. It updates the strategic direction and action of the local area partnership against the key SEND priorities and provides an update of progress of actions taken in response to the Ofsted and CQC local area inspection in late 2017.
- 6 The refreshed strategy replaces the existing SEND Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities 0-25.

- 7 The implementation of the SEND strategy vision is guided through a working strategic action plan, which is monitored and updated as required through the work of the Integrated Steering Group for Children and the updated governance structures for SEND.

Recommendation(s)

- 8 Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board are recommended to:
- (a) Approve the refreshed SEND Strategy;
 - (b) Note that the SEND Strategy will be updated later in 2019/20 following completion of an in depth health needs analysis which is currently underway.

Background

- 9 The Integrated Steering Group for Children County Durham SEND Strategy (appendix 2) is an update of the existing SEND Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities 0-25. The document considers what life is currently like for people with SEND in County Durham, based on feedback from people and analysis of their needs.
- 10 This strategy has been prepared jointly by Durham County Council, the North Durham CCG and DDES CCG, wider health partners, parents of young people with SEND represented by the Parent Carer Forum Making Changes Together (MCT) and feedback from the eXtreme group.
- 11 The updated strategy is also one part of the response to the written statement of action required following the Ofsted and CQC local area inspection in late 2017. The strategy acknowledges progress made across the local area which was detailed in a 'one year on' report.
- 12 This refreshed strategy aligns with the Children and Young People's Strategy aim to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- 13 The refreshed strategy is informed by the findings of the High Needs Review and the Social Communication and Interaction Review, the Children and Young People's SEND Promise and the Local Area Participation Strategy. It is also informed by the initial work produced from health needs analysis work covering an updated SEND factsheet which is now published on <https://www.durhaminsight.info>

Main Implications

- 14 The Refreshed SEND Strategy sets out a shared aim for all children and young people with SEND to achieve the best possible outcomes. To realise this vision the Strategy provides three objectives:
 - i. Provide better coordinated services for children and young people with SEND across the local area
 - ii. Children and young people with SEND have high quality support which meets their needs
 - iii. Ensure that young people with SEND are well prepared for adult lives and can live independently
- 15 The Strategy will be steered by the Governance and Accountability Framework illustrated in appendix 1 of the strategy. This framework has been further refined one year on from the Local Area SEND Inspection. Progress will also receive continued political oversight to ensure we further monitor progress, quality improvements and evidence impact for children and young people. In addition to reports to Cabinet and regular meetings with the portfolio holder a further example of this would be the report, presentation and discussion at Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2019. Further consideration is also being given to the governance arrangements for work on supporting 14-25 year olds to ensure this links into both children's and adult services governance arrangements.
- 16 This refreshed strategy and the accompanying action plan was approved at the Integrated Steering Group for Children on March 18th 2019, Durham County Council Corporate Management Team on March 20th and from the CCG Executive on 9th April.
- 17 The current draft of the strategy and the latest action plan are published on the Local Offer website as a draft pending political approval. Following Cabinet approval the Strategy will be promoted through a Durham County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group joint communication plan to support wider communications across the County.
- 18 It is planned to further update the strategy following the completion of comprehensive health needs assessment work which is underway as indicated above. This will ensure the strategy and its accompanying action plan remains informed by accurate and up to date information about the changing needs of children and young people with SEND in County Durham.

Conclusion

- 19 Durham wants to do the best it can for children and young people with SEND within the resources available across the partnership. We are seeking to build on recent progress captured in the one year on report since the SEND Inspection. The refreshed strategy and updated action plan seek to set this out in an accessible way with revised partnership governance arrangements to help us focus on key partnership actions and continuous improvement.

Background papers

- (a) SEND Strategy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities 0-25.
- (b) Children and Young People's Strategy
- (c) Children and Adults Autism Strategy 'Think Autism in County Durham'

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The requirement to have a strategy to provide support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, including joint commissioning arrangements, was set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Finance

Resource challenges are referred to in the strategy and there is related work taking place on High Needs Block Sustainability; ongoing consideration of resources across the partnership and across commissioners will be required.

Consultation

Engagement with a range of partners and stakeholders took place as part of the development of the refreshed strategy. Further engagement and consultation will take place as part of implementation of actions.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

SEND work has to take account of Equality Act 2010, Children and Families Act 2014 and other relevant legislation.

Human Rights

None

Crime and Disorder

None

Staffing

The updated strategy will guide resource decisions and priorities.

Accommodation

None directly

Risk

Key risks relate to resource pressures and the risk of not making sufficient progress across the partnership on SEND reforms which could result in poor outcomes or poor service delivery to children and young people with SEND.

Procurement

The updated strategy will guide resource decisions and priorities.