

## **Cabinet**

**11 September 2019**

**Children and Young People's Services  
Commissioning Plan 2019-21**

**Ordinary Decision**



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### **Report of Corporate Management Team**

**John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services**

**Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Councillor Lucy Hovvels, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult and Health Services**

#### **Electoral division(s) affected:**

Countywide

#### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the Durham County Council Children and Young People's Services Commissioning Plan for 2019-2021 for the consideration of Cabinet.

#### **Executive summary**

- 2 Strategic commissioning is the process of identifying and analysing the current and future needs and demands of the local population; working with relevant stakeholders to design and develop the most appropriate and cost-effective services to meet those needs and monitoring and evaluating those services to secure the desired outcomes and impact.
- 3 The purpose of the commissioning plan is to set out Durham County Council's key strategic commissioning priorities and activities for children and young people's services over the next two years. The plan also incorporates commissioning activity that is being undertaken jointly with Durham's Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
- 4 The plan builds upon the vision set out in the County Durham Children and Young People's Strategy (2018/19 - 2020/21):

*County Durham will be a great place for children and young people to grow up in and for Durham to be a place where all children are healthy, happy and achieving their potential.*

- 5 The commissioning priorities and activities are structured across the four key aims developed within the above strategy:
  - All children and young people have a safe childhood
  - Children and young people enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing.
  - Young people gain the education, skills and experience to succeed in adulthood.
  - Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) achieve the best possible outcomes.
  
- 6 In addition, the plan incorporates commissioning priorities and activities developed through consultation within the following strategic plans:
  - County Durham Children and Young People’s Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Transformational Plan 2015-2020.
  - County Durham Public Health Vision and Strategic Plan
  - North East and Cumbria Transforming Care Model for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism.
  - County Durham Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022.
  - Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Care Leavers 2018-2021
  - ‘Think Autism’ in County Durham – Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2018/19 – 2020/22.
  - Durham Health and Wellbeing System Plan 2019 – 2020
  
- 7 The plan incorporates activity that is underway to address the findings of the inspection of the local areas’ effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is specifically focused upon addressing the limitations in our understanding of the impact of local services and how these contribute to children and young people’s outcomes alongside the need to join up commissioning activity across the local education, health and care system to secure the benefits of an integrated approach across County Durham. Both of these developments have been informed by a recent visit to Lincolnshire County Council to understand emerging best practice relating to integrated commissioning and governance arrangements for SEND.

- 8 The plan proposes that the performance and impact of commissioned services should be monitored through the development of service level impact and evidence statements and that these should be considered by the Integrated Steering Group for Children on a quarterly basis to identify areas of support and challenge and any remedial activity required.

### **Recommendation(s)**

- 9 Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (a) Consider the Children and Young People's Services Commissioning Plan 2019-21.

### **Background**

- 10 Whilst many children across County Durham have a happy and healthy childhood where they grow and develop into independent adults, with support from their families, primary health care services, schools/colleges and their communities, the local needs analysis provided within Durham Insight highlights that inequalities, linked to children's wider circumstances, persist for several key performance measurements and indicators.
- 11 For a good proportion of these children the support of their families, a good experience in school and their own resilience will be enough to ensure that they have happy and fulfilled childhoods; despite adversity. However, where services fail to identify and respond appropriately to children, young people and their families who are vulnerable and who need additional support, problems can become more serious, more damaging and more difficult and costlier to address.
- 12 The education, health and care system that supports children, young people and their families is complex and can be fragmented. Many different organisations and services are involved in the day to day delivery of services; identifying children's and young people's needs; helping them and their families to access additional services and support and providing specialist care and treatment where necessary.
- 13 Recent inspections and reviews highlight that there remains variation in the quality of local support and care available across County Durham; that there are limitations in our understanding of the impact of services and that different parts of the education, health and care system do not always work together in a 'joined-up' way.
- 14 In response, joint reporting arrangements have been developed to ensure performance across the education, health and care system can be considered jointly by the Integrated Steering Group for Children and concerns can be escalated swiftly at a senior level. Similarly, health

needs assessments are being reviewed jointly with Public Health colleagues in relation to both children looked after and children with SEND to support the further development of joint commissioning intentions across education, health and care.

- 15 The commissioning plan incorporates further activity that is underway to address additional identified areas for improvement. This is specifically focused upon addressing the limitations in our understanding of the impact of local services and spend and how these contribute to children and young people's outcomes alongside the ambition to join up commissioning activity and service delivery via a 'place-based approach' to secure the benefits of an integrated education, health and care system across County Durham.
- 16 The plan also references the strategic planning activity that is underway to develop local options for an Integrated Strategic Commissioning function across Durham County Council and Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- 17 The plan proposes that the performance and impact of commissioned services should be monitored through the development of service level impact and evidence statements and that these should be considered by the Integrated Steering Group for Children on a quarterly basis to identify areas of support and challenge and any remedial activity required.

## **Main Implications**

### ***Financial***

- 18 Services commissioned by Durham County Council to support children, young people and their families total in excess of £65 million. Recent reports to cabinet have highlighted service pressures across Children and Young People's Services linked to increases in the numbers of Children Looked After and their placement needs alongside growing pressure on the local High Needs Funding Block which supports all children with special educational needs from early years through to age 25.
- 19 In response, there is a need to re-evaluate the capacity, strengths and limitations of local services and provider markets to ensure that services remain evidence based, able to demonstrate impact, are improving outcomes locally and are delivered in the most efficient way to offer value for money.

## **Conclusion**

- 20 Recent inspections and reviews highlight that there remains variation in the quality of local support and care available across County Durham;

that there are limitations in our understanding of the impact of services and that different parts of the education, health and care system do not always work together in a 'joined-up' way.

- 21 A strategic commissioning approach will support the transformation that is required through the development of a joint understanding of what generates change, what makes a difference for vulnerable children, young people and their families and how we will measure service impact to secure improved outcomes and value for money.

### **Background Papers**

- Appendix 2: Durham County Council Children and Young People's Commissioning Plan 2019/21.
- Appendix 3: Durham County Council Children and Young People's Commissioning Action Plan 2019-2020

### **Other Useful Documents**

- County Durham Children and Young People's Strategy (2018/19 – 2020/21)
- County Durham Children and Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Transformational Plan 2015-2020.
- County Durham Public Health Vision and Strategic Plan
- North East and Cumbria Transforming Care Model for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism.
- County Durham Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022.
- Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Care Leavers 2018-2021
- 'Think Autism' in County Durham – Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2018/19 – 2020/22.
- A Review of High Needs Provision for Children and Young People with SEND in County Durham.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

Commissioning activity enables the Local Authority to fulfil a number of statutory duties through securing services and undertaking activities specified within the following acts:

Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Children and Families Act 2014

Care Act 2014

### **Finance**

Services commissioned by Durham County Council to support children, young people and their families total in excess of £65 million. Recent reports to cabinet have highlighted service pressures across Children and Young People's Services linked to increases in the numbers of Children Looked After and their placement needs alongside growing pressure on the local High Needs Funding Block which supports all children with special educational needs from early years through to age 25.

There is a need to ensure that services remain evidence based, able to demonstrate impact, are improving outcomes locally and are delivered in the most efficient way to offer value for money.

### **Consultation**

The commissioning plan incorporates commissioning priorities and activities developed through consultation within the following strategic plans:

- County Durham Children and Young People's Strategy (2018/19 – 2020/21)
- County Durham Children and Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Transformational Plan 2015-2020.
- County Durham Public Health Vision and Strategic Plan
- North East and Cumbria Transforming Care Model for people with Learning Disabilities and Autism.
- County Durham Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy 2019-2022.
- Sufficiency and Commissioning Strategy for Looked after Children and Care Leavers 2018-2021

- ‘Think Autism’ in County Durham – Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2018/19 – 2020/22.
- A Review of High Needs Provision for Children and Young People with SEND in County Durham.

The commissioning activity highlighted within the Commissioning Plan will adhere to the consultation requirements established at a local level via the:

- SEND Participation Strategy
- Children and Young People’s SEND Promise for County Durham
- Durham Children in Care Council: Our Promise to Looked After Children and Young People

This will ensure that services continue to make improvements based on the experiences of children young people and their families.

We are committed to listening to children and young people and have embedded this practice across our commissioning activity. We work in partnership with a social enterprise called ‘Investing in Children’ who deliver a range of children’s participation services on our behalf and implement several schemes through a contract arrangement:

- Facilitation of young people’s participation / reference groups;
- Facilitation of the eXtreme group to ensure that the voice of children and young people with disabilities are listened to and acted upon;
- Coordination of the Children in Care Council;
- Management and facilitation of the Investing in Children Membership Programme – services are reviewed annually to ensure that they meet investing in children criteria.

### **Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Children and Young People’s Services Commissioning Plan fully acknowledges and seeks to address the vulnerabilities associated with children with a disability, ill health or developmental difficulties – including mental ill health and SEND; children who are vulnerable or of concern by virtue of their identity or nationality or children who care for others.

### **Human Rights**

There are no implications in relation to human rights at this stage.

### **Crime and Disorder**

There are no implications in relation to crime and disorder at this stage.

### **Staffing**

There are no implications in relation to staffing at this stage.

### **Accommodation**

There are no implications in relation to accommodation at this stage.

### **Risk**

There are risks associated with the quality of local support and care available across County Durham alongside the current limitations in our understanding of the impact of services across the education, health and care system. This has contributed to poor outcomes from inspections and variable outcomes for local children, young people and their families.

These risks can be mitigated through a strategic commissioning approach that will support the development of a joint understanding of what generates change, what makes a difference for vulnerable children, young people and their families and how we will measure service impact to secure improved outcomes and value for money.

### **Procurement**

All commissioning activity will continue to remain compliant with Corporate Procurement regulations and European Union Procurement Law with all contractual considerations developed jointly with Durham County Council procurement colleagues.