

Cabinet

18 March 2020



**County Durham Joint Commissioning
Strategy for Children and Young People
and their Families 2019-21**

Ordinary Decision

Report of Corporate Management Team

**John Pearce, Corporate Director of Children and Young People's
Services**

Jane Robinson, Corporate Director of Adult and Health Services

**Councillor Olwyn Gunn, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and
Young People's Services**

**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 County Durham Joint Commissioning Strategy for Children and Young People and their Families (2019-2021) for the consideration of Cabinet

Executive summary

- 2 Commissioning is the process that public bodies use to identify needs, secure new or transform existing services and pathways to meet those needs and then monitor their effectiveness. Joint commissioning represents a method for two or more partner agencies to commission collaboratively to secure better outcomes for a defined population than either can achieve on their own.
- 3 This joint commissioning strategy builds upon our existing joint commissioning arrangements and sets out the key joint commissioning priorities and activities required to support improvements in services for children and young people (aged 0-25 years) and their families that will be prioritised over the next two years by:

- Durham, Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group
 - North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Durham County Council
- 4 Whilst the majority of our joint commissioning activity focuses upon the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), ensuring compliance with the SEND Code of Practice, the strategy seeks to optimise all opportunities for joint commissioning relating to children, young people and their families.
- 5 The strategy draws upon several recent local health needs assessments and strategic reviews to support the development of a joint understanding of need and makes full use of Durham Insight (<https://www.durhaminsight.info/>) which provides commissioners with an evolving analysis of the local needs and pressures faced by children, young people and families across County Durham.
- 6 The plan identifies the following priorities that will facilitate our joint commissioning and how we will work together to understand, plan deliver and review as appropriate children's services in County Durham:
- Improve a range of local services to support the transformation of the local education, health and care system
 - Secure the provision of high quality, cost effective services
 - Ensure effective partnership working
 - Harness the views of children and young people, their families and carers
 - Develop integrated approaches across key pathways
 - Support arrangements for Personal Budgets
 - Understanding Outcomes and impact
 - Development of an integrated commissioning function
- 7 The strategy seeks to capture this activity via a 'Plan on a Page'. A detailed action -plan that sets out how each of the activities will be delivered over the coming two years is in development.
- 8 The SEND Joint Commissioning Group, which is made up of Education, Health and Local Authority colleagues, is responsible for this Strategy

including the overarching action plan. This group is accountable to the County Durham Joint Commissioning Group and the Integrated Steering Group for Children. The County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of the implementation of this strategy with regular reports submitted to County Durham CCG's Joint Executive Committee. This document will remain live and evolve in response to developments and findings as we implement it.

- 9 The review of the overall progress against each of the key priorities is scheduled to be monitored via the Durham Joint Commissioning Group and Integrated Steering Group for Children.

Recommendation(s)

- 10 Cabinet is recommend to:
 - (a) agree the County Durham Joint Commissioning Strategy for Children and Young People and their Families 2019-2021
 - (b) agree reporting, monitoring and governance arrangements for the plan to secure accountability, support and challenge.

Background

- 11 Durham has a strong history of collaborative activity and has long-standing joint funding arrangements across key services for children, young people and their families. The arrangements governing the use of joint funding, for individual children, young people and their families whose needs require support from more than one organisation to secure education, health and care outcomes are well established.
- 12 The joint inspection undertaken in late 2017 identified that the local area's arrangements for jointly commissioning services were at a very early stage of development and that there was a lack of precision about intended outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- 13 The inspection highlighted that poor strategic planning and joint commissioning arrangements have led to unacceptably long waiting lists for access to services, delays to treatment for some conditions, and variability of experience for children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- 14 In response a joint written statement of action (WSOA) was developed and work has been undertaken jointly to re-evaluate the capacity, strengths and limitations of local services and provider markets and identify the changes needed to respond to the pressures, challenges and expectations experienced across the local education, health and care system. Refining our joint understanding of the needs of local

children, young people and their families, what generates change and what makes a difference and how we will measure impact will be critical to understanding performance and informing joint funding and commissioning decisions going forward.

- 15 The strategy 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.

- 16 Whilst the majority of our joint commissioning activity focuses upon the needs of children and young people with SEND, the strategy seeks to optimise all opportunities for joint commissioning relating to children, young people and their families and therefore incorporates commissioning priorities and activities developed through consultation across a number of local strategic documents:

- 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 (updated June 2019)
- 'Think Autism' in County Durham - Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2018/19 – 2020/2
- Durham Health and Wellbeing System Plan 2019 – 2020

- 17 The strategy draws upon several recent local health needs assessments and strategic reviews to support the development of a joint understanding of need and the development of joint commissioning priorities:

- County Durham SEND Health Needs Assessment
- County Durham Social Communication and Autism Review

- Review of Accommodation Sufficiency for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
 - Strategic Review of Short Breaks
 - County Durham High Needs Review
 - Paediatric Therapies Review
 - County Durham Speech, Language and Communication Needs Analysis
- 18 The strategy makes full use of Durham Insight (<https://www.durhaminsight.info/>) which provides commissioners with an evolving analysis of the local needs and pressures faced by children, young people and families across County Durham.
- 19 The strategy incorporates the voice of children and young people and their parent/ carers who have participated in the Health Needs Assessment for Children and Young People with SEND in County Durham highlighting a number of services and aspects of service delivery that require further improvement.

Background papers

- County Durham Joint Commissioning Strategy for Children and Young People and their Families 2019-21 (Appendix 2)

Author(s)

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

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

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Care Act 2014
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015
- Future in mind 2015
- Building the Right Support 2015
- The NHS Long Term Plan 2019

Finance

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. Strengthening our existing joint commissioning arrangements will enable us to commission collaboratively to secure better education, health and care outcomes for local children, young people and their families than either organisation can achieve on their own.

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 joint commissioning strategy 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.
- SEND Health Needs Assessment 2020

The joint commissioning activity highlighted within the strategy 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 joint commissioning strategy 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.

Climate Change

There are no implications in relation to climate change at this stage.

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 to joint commissioning 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 and Durham Clinical Commissioning Group procurement colleagues.



North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group
Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group

County Durham Joint Commissioning Strategy for Children and Young People and their Families 2019-2021

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List of Contributors

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Introduction

Durham County Council and the County Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups are committed to improving and transforming our education, health and care services to ensure that 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, safe and achieving their potential.

To achieve this vision, the County Durham Children and Young People's Strategy (2019-2021) has developed four key aims:

- 1. All children and young people have a safe childhood**
- 2. Children and Young People enjoy the best start in life, good health and emotional wellbeing**
- 3. Young people gain the education, skills and experience to succeed in adulthood**
- 4. Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) achieve the best possible outcomes**

The education, health and care system that supports children, young people and their families is complex and consists of a wide array of providers. Our work to date demonstrates that joint commissioning can bridge the gaps between organisations and settings to ensure that our services and collective resources can be optimised to transform the experiences of children, young people and their families.

This strategy builds upon our existing joint commissioning arrangements and sets out the key joint commissioning priorities and activities required to support improvements in services for children and young people (aged 0-25 years) and their families that will be prioritised over the next two years by:

- Durham, Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Group
- North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group
- Durham County Council

The strategy acknowledges the contribution of local NHS Provider Trusts, NHS England, Education providers, the local voluntary and community sector and neighbouring clinical commissioning groups whose contribution remains vital to our joint commissioning activity.

The strategy describes how County Durham will build upon its strong foundation of joint commissioning to support the transformation necessary to further reduce inequalities for local children, young people and families; address gaps in services and improves education, health and care outcomes. The strategy recognises the cross-cutting nature of vulnerability and how the conditions and family circumstances into which children are born, grow, learn and develop can significantly affect their lives and determine variations in health, wellbeing, attainment and social mobility.

These circumstantial difficulties can be further compounded for children and young people with a disability, ill health or developmental difficulties – including mental ill health and special educational needs (SEND); children who are vulnerable or of concern by virtue of their identity or nationality or children who care for others. Whilst the majority of our joint commissioning activity focuses upon the needs of children and young people with SEND, to secure a system

wide approach to joint commissioning the strategy incorporates commissioning priorities and activities developed through consultation across a number of local 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 (updated June 2019)
- 'Think Autism' in County Durham - Autism Strategy for Children, Young People and Adults 2018/19 – 2020/2
- Durham Health and Wellbeing System Plan 2019 – 2020

Background and Context

Commissioning is the process that public bodies use to identify needs, secure new or transform existing services and pathways to meet those needs and then monitor their effectiveness. Joint commissioning represents a method for two or more partner agencies to commission collaboratively to secure better outcomes for a defined population than either can achieve on their own.

Successive governments have highlighted how joint commissioning arrangements can enable partners to meet local challenges by making the best use of all the resources available in an area to improve outcomes for children, young people and young adults in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way.

Joint commissioning arrangements are well-established in County Durham. We swiftly embraced the principles set out in the National Health Service Act 2006 relating to the delegation of NHS and local authority functions alongside the pooling of resources under Section 75 of the Act. We have built upon this strong foundation to meet the requirements for joint commissioning arrangements established within recent national legislation and guidance:

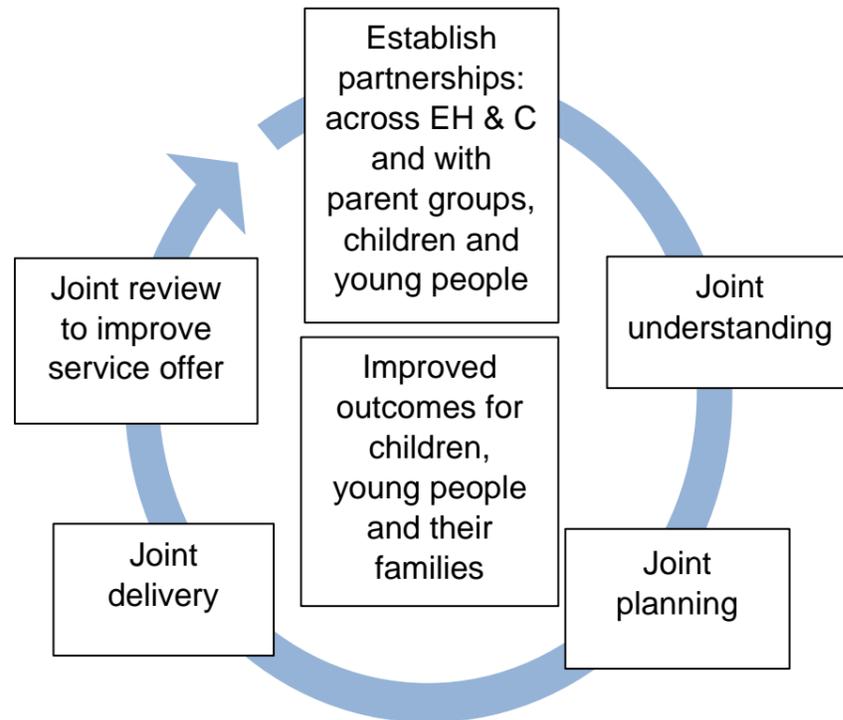
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Children and Families Act 2014
- The Care Act 2014
- SEND Code of Practice 2015
- Future in mind 2015
- Building the Right Support 2015
- The NHS Long Term Plan 2019

Joint Commissioning arrangements (including the pooling of financial resources) in County Durham have been established for a range of services (see Appendix 1). County Durham is scheduled to further build upon this strong foundation through the integration of commissioning teams and through an emphasis upon place-based commissioning.

Joint Commissioning

Joint commissioning provides a consistent approach to establishing a joint understanding of local need, agreeing priorities, designing, monitoring, and securing joint arrangements for managing performance and the quality of services and pathways.

This activity forms the basis of the joint commissioning cycle:



Joint Commissioning in Durham

Durham has a strong history of collaborative activity and has long-standing joint funding arrangements across key services for children, young people and their families. The arrangements governing the use of joint funding, for individual children, young people and their families whose needs require support from more than one organisation to secure education, health and care outcomes are well established.

A joint inspection of the local areas effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND undertaken in late 2017, identified that the local area's arrangements for jointly commissioning services were at a very early stage of development and that there was a lack of precision about intended outcomes for children, young people and their families.

The inspection highlighted that poor strategic planning and joint commissioning arrangements have led to unacceptably long waiting lists for access to services, delays to treatment for some conditions, and variability of experience for children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities.

In response a joint written statement of action (WSOA) was developed and work has been undertaken jointly to re-evaluate the capacity, strengths and limitations of local services and provider markets and identify the changes needed to respond to the pressures, challenges and expectations experienced across the local education, health and care system. Refining our joint understanding of what generates change, what makes a difference for children, young people and their families and how we will measure impact will be critical to understanding performance and informing funding and commissioning decisions going forward.

What have we done so far?

- We have strengthened governance through a thorough system review of governance which was implemented in April 2018 and reviewed again after our 'one year on' report to ensure the ongoing effectiveness of arrangements. This means that leaders have a clearer understanding of the needs of children, young people and their families and there are clearer lines of accountability. Regular attendance from key leaders with regular political oversight and a forward plan of activities has ensured the partnership has progressed actions, focused more on consistency and performance issues and maintained momentum to implement changes.
- Some key developments progressed include consulting on and agreeing a refreshed SEND strategy, all age autism strategy, publication of an improved JSNA SEND factsheet and comprehensive work on a health needs assessment, refresh of the local accommodation and sufficiency strategy for children looked after, drafting of a joint commissioning strategy, strengthening performance management and co-production arrangements and developing new website content for the SEND Local Offer.
- Across the partnership, including the council's cabinet, there is a focus on children's services and SEND which has been strengthened in the last 2 years. Since the last inspection the leadership of children's services in the council and across key partners has been transformed. Our strengthened leadership with new posts in the Local Authority and CCG is seeking to drive integrated whole system working across children's social care, education and health. The CCG have increased capacity with a dedicated Children's Services lead as well as a new Designated Clinical Officer who have been in post since Spring 2019. The council and CCG have agreed an integrated commissioning function to support this further and this is now being implemented. A jointly funded Head of Integrated Commissioning has recently been appointed with new structures due to go live in April 2020.
- Local leaders have had regular meetings to discuss progress across all WSOA areas with support and monitoring from DfE and NHS colleagues. The regularly updated action plan shows the progress with each action and evidence logs are maintained from across the partnership. The information attached to the position statement seeks to capture key intentions, implementation and impact to date for each of the 4 WSOAs.
- Stronger working relationships are supporting a better co-ordinated service for children, young people and their families. A greater number of young people, parents and carers have the opportunity to better understand SEND issues and have their say in decisions that affect their lives.
- Performance management, quality assurance and population needs assessment in support of SEND services have been a key and continual focus of our improvement work over the

last two years. We have worked with the new Integrated Steering Group for Children to completely redesign our approach to performance monitoring and analysis of outcomes, and this is a continuing journey. Our quality assurance process has been redesigned alongside.

- The new performance management and quality assurance frameworks include outcomes from across education, community health and acute services. Performance and quality assurance outcomes are being embedded in quarterly reporting to the SEND Strategic Partnership Group, with exception reporting on key issues and barriers to the Integrated Steering Group for Children. An action log captures agreed improvements and these are systematically followed up.
- This work is underpinned by monthly performance review at service level and regular reviews of workloads and caseloads in individual services. This work is complemented by a fortnightly multi-agency quality assurance meeting which looks at the EHCP process and takes a deep dive into cases. Through systematic scrutiny of performance senior leaders and service managers are delivering real change. For example, regular performance and quality assurance scrutiny has led to a reduction in EHCP request refusals and an agreement to recruit additional staff to meet increased demand for EHCP's. In terms of service impact it has supported a substantial improvement in ASD assessment waiting times, a reduction in waiting times for paediatric occupational therapy and improved use of mediation in relation to EHCP decisions.
- A further review of the performance management system in 2019 is now reshaping reporting around three focused high level performance questions, with the aim of driving a questioning and challenging mindset. The focus of reporting is moving towards more in depth analysis and to support this we have agreed resources for an additional performance analyst.
- Population needs assessment has improved and is improving our understanding of families' needs and informing changes to commissioning. A more comprehensive SEND factsheet and SEND landing page on Durham Insight were put in place in 2019. These have led us to develop new outcomes including commissioning of a new 8 bed residential and learning setting for young people aged 14 plus, and a strategic approach to reducing exclusions for children with SEND in line with the baseline data analysis within the needs assessment. Later in 2019 we completed a further in-depth health needs assessment which was a substantial work programme completed over a year including detailed data matching of individual child data across NHS and Council systems, stakeholder consultation, review of national evidence and mapping of local provision. We are currently considering the implications and developing recommendations to inform the future work programme, updated SEND strategy and joint commissioning work.
- Our strengthened leadership with revised governance and new posts in the Local Authority and CCG are seeking to drive integrated whole system working across children's social care, education and health. Building on our current significant joint and collaborative commissioning approaches, that are encapsulated in our new joint commissioning strategy, we are moving into an integrated commissioning function that will be led by the newly appointed Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning. A joint appointment, this post will oversee a single commissioning team for health and social care in County Durham.
- Work has also been undertaken to strengthen transactional commissioning activity including service specification development in co-production with children, young people and families

as highlighted in WSoA area 4 particularly in regard to the short breaks offer, and the introduction of clauses regarding the SEND Promise. More generally, user feedback mechanisms have been improved to inform strategic planning and commissioning, with individual therapy services collecting user feedback information.

- The completion of an improved needs assessment has informed the development of the revised County Durham SEND Strategy, and both have then informed our new joint commissioning strategy. The final draft of the new joint commissioning strategy will be considered by the Integrated Steering Group for Children in January 2020.
- Through this stronger strategic oversight, as identified in WSoA area 2, there has been considerable improvement in the performance of key commissioned services. Waiting times for key services have significantly improved as a result of performance scrutiny leading to additional resource investments for Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) and Autism Spectrum Disorder assessment. Other key services, Paediatric Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy are being closely monitored and average waiting times are being managed. Waiting times for equipment from referral to delivery have also significantly reduced. These service improvements mean that children's access to assessment, therapy and equipment services across the county have improved, and are more consistent.
- Information on services has also improved with a revised local offer co-produced with parents which was launched in November and has received positive initial feedback.
- A renewed emphasis on co-production has been evident since the last inspection and there are a number of examples where this is taking place which range from changes in the EHCP process to better capture 'my story' through to representatives from Making Changes Together (MCT), our parent carer forum, being involved in all SEND related governance groups. This is seeking to ensure there are a variety of ways for children, young people and families to be involved at individual service and wider service and partnership level.
- To support better engagement and co-production, MCT worked with local leaders to produce a participation strategy. This has since been cited as an example of best practice by the Local Government Association. A range of leaders and frontline staff have been trained on this by MCT and SENDIASS representatives.
- Other key developments include co-production of a SEND parents toolkit, with a number of parent-led sessions to help other parents determine what the Local Offer is for their children. The refreshed SEND strategy was developed in co-production with representatives from MCT, the eXtreme group of young people and partners. In recent months parents, carers and professionals have worked together to review and transform the Local Offer Web pages, prior to its wider launch this was tested and well received at the MCT conference in November 2019.
- Examples where co-production has informed strategic planning and service improvement include:
 - All age autism strategy and action plan, developed with the Autism Strategy Implementation Group and Children and Young People Autism Steering Group
 - Young people were involved in the co-creation and commissioning of Durham Resilience Project to improve independence and resilience of young people. This work is a finalist in the 2020 LGC Awards.

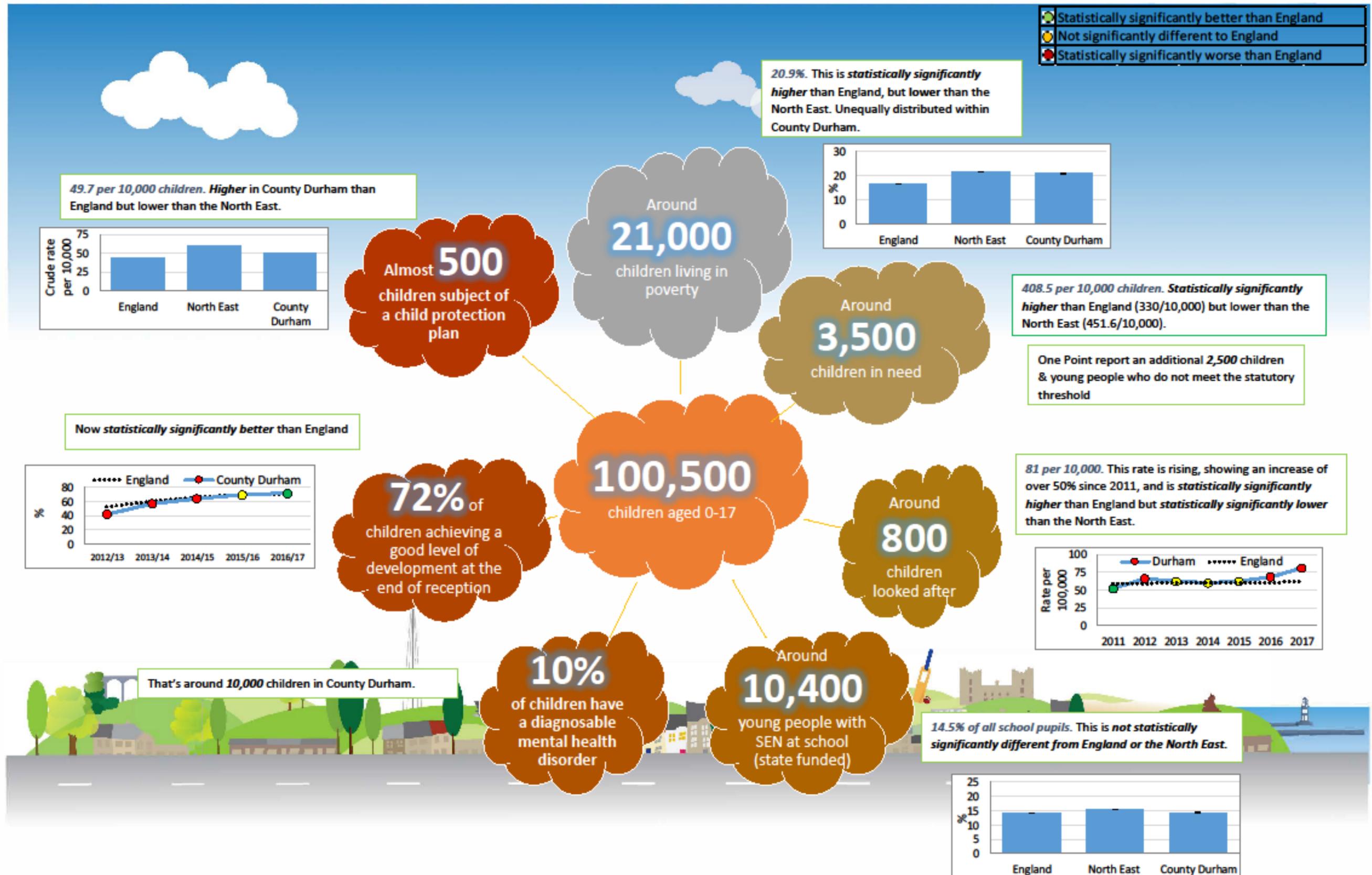
- Young people are involved in the review of children's therapies.
- Young people engage with the SEND Information Advice and Support Service to give their views in preparation for SEND meetings and for tribunal.

Joint Needs Assessment

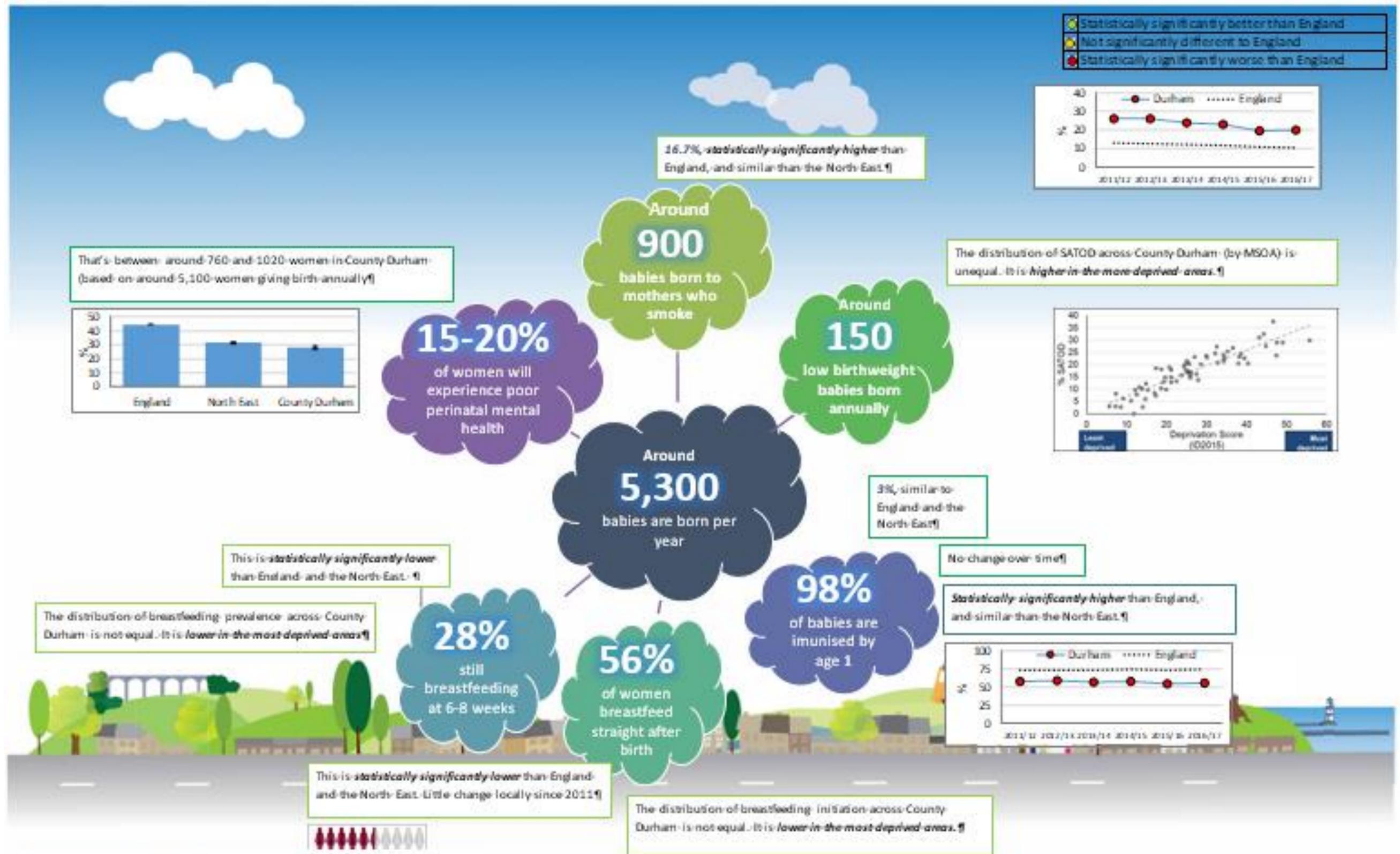
Durham Insight provides an evolving analysis of the local needs and pressures faced by children, young people and families across County Durham.

Durham Insight (<https://www.durhaminsight.info/>) is a shared intelligence, research and knowledge base developed to inform strategic planning and commissioning activity across County Durham. The platform provides commissioners with an easy way to access and share information, intelligence, research and knowledge to facilitate a deeper insight into the needs, requirements aspirations of local communities.

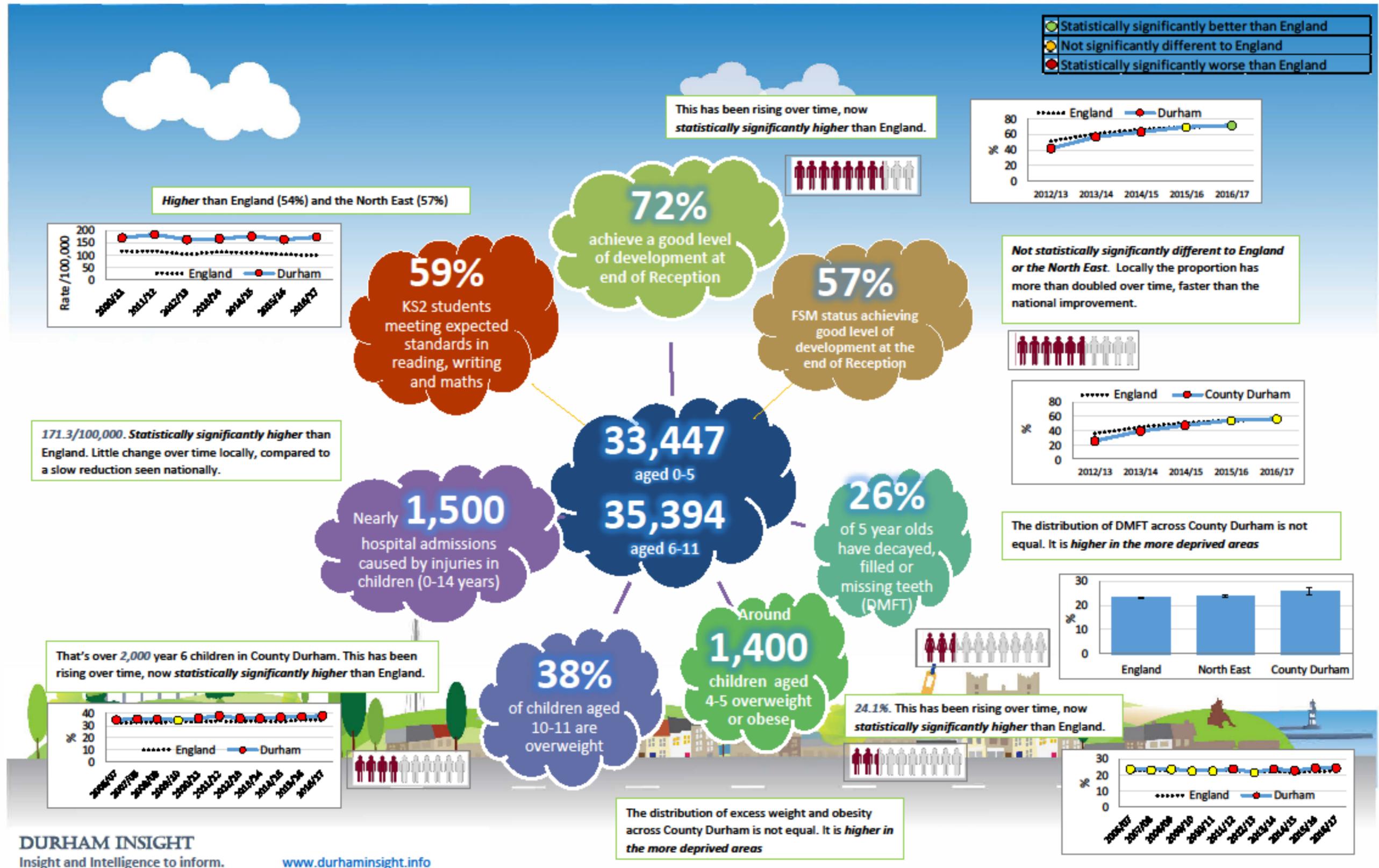
Durham Insight: Where we are now - Children and Young People in County Durham



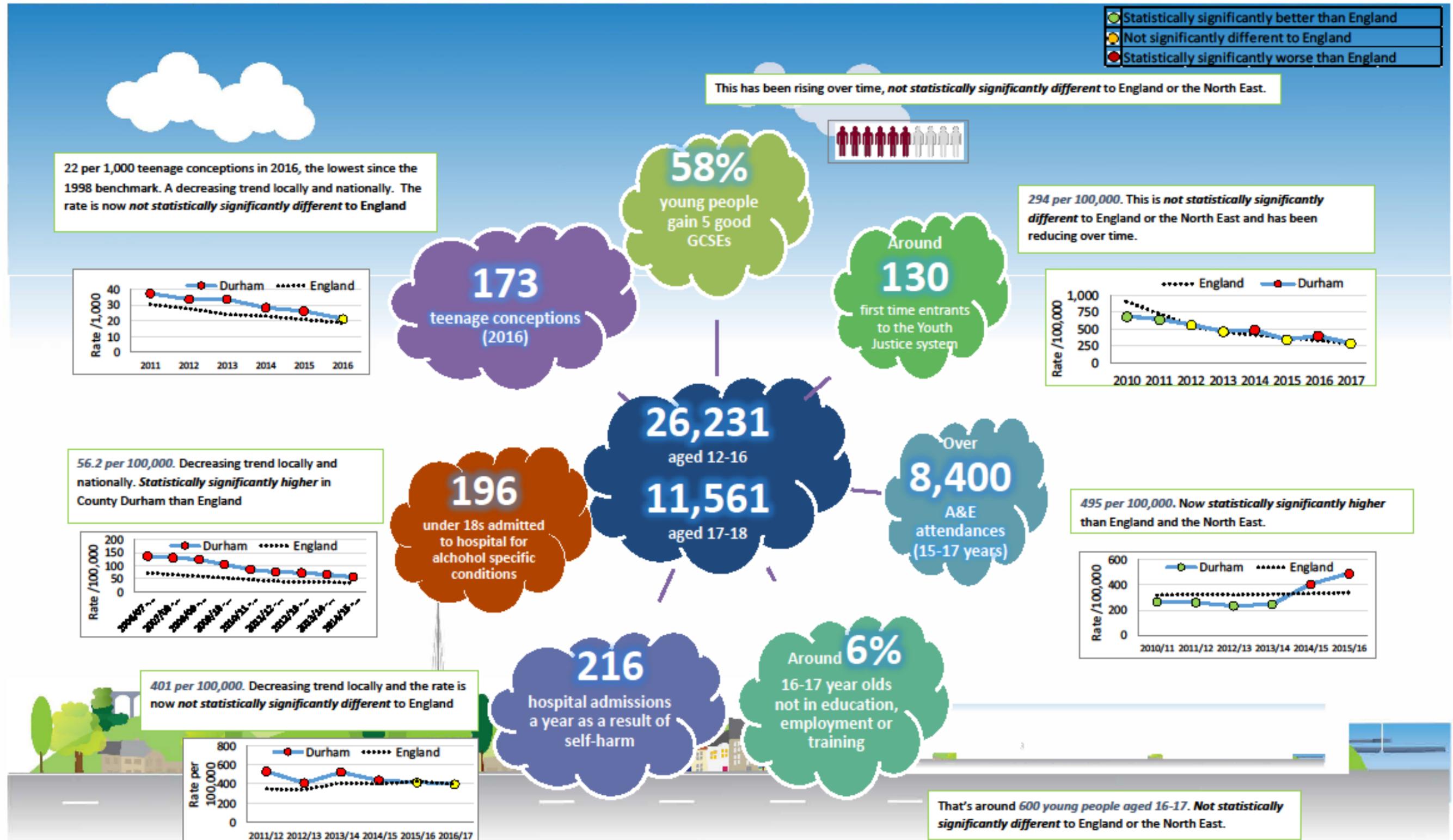
Pre and Post Birth



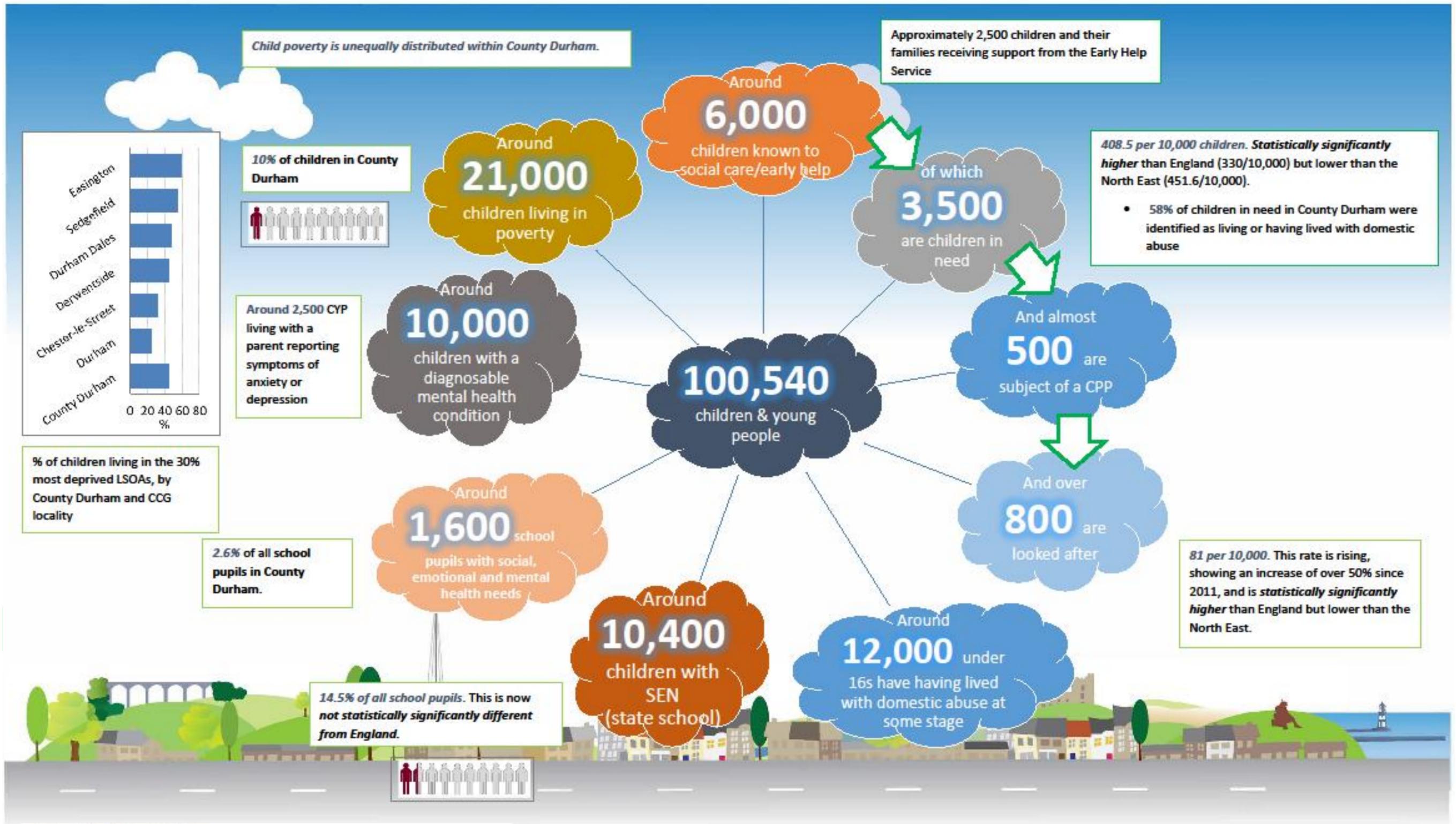
Early Years and Primary School



Secondary Schools and Transitions



Vulnerability: The Scale of the Challenge



DURHAM INSIGHT

Insight and Intelligence to inform.

www.durhaminsight.info

The info-graphics serve to highlight that a high proportion of children, young people and their families continue to face significant difficulties linked to overall deprivation, poverty and adverse childhood experiences that impact upon their broader education, health and care outcomes. County Durham remains in the top 30% most deprived authorities with an estimated 21,000 children resident across the county living in poverty.

Understanding the needs of children and young people who are vulnerable enables local systems to jointly commission more effective services and provision to meet need, improve outcomes and reduce inequalities. The County Durham Integrated Steering Group for Children has commissioned several health needs assessments and strategic reviews to develop a joint understanding of need and support the development of joint commissioning priorities:

- County Durham SEND Health Needs Assessment
- County Durham Social Communication and Autism Review
- Review of Accommodation Sufficiency for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- Strategic Review of Short Breaks
- County Durham High Needs Review
- Paediatric Therapies Review
- County Durham Speech, Language and Communication Needs Analysis

Findings highlight:

- The majority of children with special educational needs and disabilities across County Durham’s schools (8,256) had their needs met through Special Educational Needs support whilst 2,202 required an Education, Health and Care Plan. The prevalence of SEN, levels of support and EHCP’s have remained relatively constant in the past 3 years.
- It is estimated that there are 12,000 disabled children and young people in County Durham. The leading types of disability among children are social/behavioural (41%), learning disabilities (37%) and stamina/breathing/fatigue (26%).
- The number of children with autism across County Durham is estimated to have risen by 19.1% since 2015 and the last year alone, saw the numbers of children with autism (identified as their primary need via the School Census) rise from 980 children to 1,051.
- Analysis of calls from the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) team over a one-month period indicated that over 80% of the calls were from parents who had concerns relating to their child with complex social communication needs/autism diagnosis. Their issues related to both education and home-based concerns.
- Whilst there has been a slight growth (2%) in terms of the total school population in County Durham, between 2013/14 and 2017/18 the number of pupils in:
 - Pupil Referral Units increased by 51%
 - Special schools increased by 11.6%
- The majority of children with special educational needs and disabilities live with their families, who carry day-to-day responsibility for meeting the child’s care and support needs. Children with severe impairment(s) of all ages are highly dependent on their parents to meet their basic care and treatment needs and the demands placed upon parents/carers

and the broader family can be high. Analysis of the referrals/requests for short breaks to enable parents/carers to have a break from their caring responsibilities highlights that:

- 62% requested a service immediately.
- 31% of children were assessed as requiring 2:1 support to enable the parent/carer to receive a break
- The highest proportion of needs were 75% for children with behaviours that challenge, followed by 67% of children with communication needs including autism. Nearly half of children and young people referred for an assessed break have personal care requirements.

- In some education settings Fixed Term Exclusions are being used frequently for pupils with special educational need and disabilities (SEND). In many settings there does not appear to be a consistent approach to the effective management of pupils on return from exclusion. This is contributing to the disproportionately high and rising volume and cost of children with SEND with behaviour that challenges typically children with Social Emotional Mental Health needs and children with Social Communication and Interaction (including Autism).
- Over 6,500 children and young people in County Durham are estimated to have a mental health disorder. The most common mental health disorders for those aged 5-16 years in County Durham are conduct disorders. Around 4,000 young people are estimated to have a conduct disorder; around 2,500 young people are estimated to have an emotional disorder.
- A review of paediatric therapies highlighted that on a scale from 1 – 10, with 1 being extremely unhappy and 10 being extremely happy families who accessed the services rated services as follows:

Children’s Therapy Service	Number of respondents	Average score
Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)	165 respondents	3 / 10
Physiotherapy	131 respondents	2.7 / 10
Occupational Therapy (OT)	155 respondents	2.7 / 10

The key themes from the qualitative feedback included:

- Access to services
- Waiting times and timescales
- Feedback on the children’s therapy services teams
- Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)
- Communication
- Working Together
- Discharges / discharge processes

It is estimated that 10% of children and young people aged 5- 16 in County Durham may be experiencing a mental disorder associated with “considerable distress and substantial interference with personal functions”, such as family and social relationships, their capacity to cope with day to day stresses and life challenges, and their learning.

- 6% (just over 4,000) have a conduct disorder (e.g. troublesome, aggressive, antisocial behaviours)

- 3.9% (around 2,500) have an emotional disorder (e.g. anxiety, depression, and obsessions)
- 1.6% (around 1,080) have a hyperkinetic disorder (inattention and overactivity)

Some children and young people who are vulnerable for other reasons, such as those in care, those who have special educational needs and disabilities, and those with chronic or persistent physical ill-health, are also found to have a higher prevalence of mental health problems.

Whilst the number of children in need has increased by 25% from 3028 in 2014 to 3787 as at 31st of March 2019 and should not be overlooked, the number of children requiring a section 47 assessment, where Children and Young People's services consider they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, more than doubled from 1072 episodes in 2014 to 2374 in 2019.

- There has been a marked increase in the number of children looked after by the Local Authority which has risen by 38% from 605 in 2014 to 833 as at 31st of March 2019.
- During 2018-19, there has been an increase in demand for residential placements with external providers, with 28 external placements made in 2017-18 and 45 placements made in 2018-19.
- There has been a greater demand for solo or smaller residential homes during 2018-19. Identifying appropriate placements for these young people has been difficult and has sometimes resulted in unregulated provision being made as a last resort, as there was no in-house residential provision and there was a significant gap within the external market, which also requires further development.

The Voice of Children, Young People and their Parents/Carers

The voice of children and young people and their parent/ carers is key to driving forward change *'effective participation should lead to a better fit between family's needs and the services provided, higher satisfaction with services, reduced costs (as long-term benefits emerge) and better value for money.'* SEND Code of Practice.

In order to ensure that joint commissioning arrangements are based on evidence about which services, support and interventions are effective, we will seek the views and experiences of children and young people and their parents/carers.

Commissioning decisions will be guided by their experiences, ambitions and expectations and will steer service redesign and improve outcomes. It will also mean that we can ask children and young people whether the outcomes they have identified are being achieved.

Through engagement, parents and carers gave their views on communication and involvement and those have been used to co-produce the Participation Strategy for engaging and involving parents and carers. This strategy explains what participation is and how best to implement it in your setting/service, by giving useful tips and highlighting practical examples of good practice.

Children and Young People with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) facilitated by Investing in Children have developed the young people's charter the SEND Children and

Young People's 'Promise'. This is a revision of the two existing charters previously in place with the Local Authority and the former Primary Care Trusts, providing one document for all organisations and services within the local area, for children and young people in County Durham.

The promise which identifies how services can make positive changes based on the experiences of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The promise covers: education; health; activities and leisure; respite opportunities; transport; children in care; employment; access to information; having a voice.

Durham will continue to work closely with the Parent Carer Forum, Making Changes Together, and with the various groups representing children and young people such as the eXtreme group and the wider Investing in Children group. Current work will be built on the ensure that children, young people their parents and carers truly drive forward changes to the services they receive.

There has been work undertaken to inform the Health Needs Assessment for Children and Young People with SEND in County Durham which has captured the voice of the child/ family in relation to:

- Being educated in mainstream or enhanced provision inside the boundaries of County Durham is a priority for families;
- The distance that children and young people travel to and from educational settings and the impact on the physical health and wellbeing of children and young people transported.
- All settings becoming Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) Aware/ Trauma informed.
- High quality training for school staff.
- The ability for children and young people to access therapeutic support/services and/or interventions in their educational settings.
- Develop a more co-ordinated approach to the delivery of key health services in and through educational settings;
- Lack of understanding and stigma for those families on the Autism Spectrum leading to inequalities and exclusions from activities.
- Some concerns accessing mental health support.
- Specialists Dental Health Services in educational settings
- Provision of specialist dental health services in educational settings is seen as a high priority
- Social opportunities to ensure that children and young people feel connected to a community.
- Feel not listened to within Mental Health Services.
- Young people felt that they required more options for post 16 services
- The ability for parents to connect with each other through a digital platform including social media applications was seen as a priority.

A set of recommendations based on the findings will be co-produced with families.

Our Joint Commissioning Priorities

To jointly commission services between the local authority and CCGs we will agree joint funding, resources and outcomes and undertake joint planning and review processes.

To achieve this, we have identified several priorities to facilitate our joint working commitments to agree how we will work together to understand, plan deliver and review as appropriate children's services in County Durham.

Place Based Commissioning

There is an emerging consensus that a place-based approach provides the environment to develop joined-up local systems that are more flexible and responsive to the range of different and sometimes complex needs experienced by children, families and communities. The opportunities for integration, targeted joined up funding and cross sector collaboration that place based commissioning facilitates can result in improved access to services and a speedier, more coordinated response, better information and communication, increased involvement of service users and more supportive communities leading to improved outcomes and greater resilience across communities.

Personalisation

Personalised Care gives patients the same choice and control over their mental and physical health that they have come to expect in every other aspect of their life. It represents a new relationship between people, professionals and the system. It is based on 'what matters' to people and their individual strengths and needs. In line with The NHS Long Term Plan personalised care needs to be embedded across the health and social care system.

In Durham our vision for patient choice by 2020 is that:

- All patients are aware of the choices available to them, particularly where these are legal rights and have the information, they need to make meaningful choices.
- All GPs/referrers discuss the different treatment options available to patients, include them in shared decision making, and offer choice to patients.
- All providers make good quality, up to date information about their services available and accept all appropriate patient referrals in line with the NHS Standard Contract.
- All commissioners assess how well choice is working within their CCG and put improvement plans in place to address areas that need strengthening.
- All opportunities to extend the operation of choice beyond existing standards are explored and implemented.

Service Provision

Following our Joint Needs Assessment, we understand gaps and areas where improvement is required. We will continue to develop and work in partnership to develop the strategy involving education, health and social care.

Priority 1

Improve a range of local services to support the transformation of the local education, health and care system

Local Authority, Education and Health Partners will work together to ensure a whole system approach to the improvement of local services. This will include;

- Speech and language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Assistive technology, equipment and specialist equipment
- mental health services
- Wheelchair services and continence supplies
- Range of nursing support including the 0-5 health visiting service and school nursing service
- Short Breaks and Respite services
- Crisis accommodation

All services commissioned will include the consideration for delivery of medication and personal care to those children and young people who require this.

Highly specialist services needed by only a small number of children, for instance children with severe learning disabilities will be jointly considered through high cost complex case panel and through consultation with NHS England where appropriate.

Priority 2

Secure the provision of high quality, cost effective services

We want the funding that is available to provide personalised, integrated, high quality support that delivers positive outcomes from early childhood through to adult life.

Local Authority, Education and Health Partners will work together to:

- Provide alternatives to expensive out of area education and care placements so that good quality services are provided closer to home.
- Aim to pool or align budgets across education, care and health services where appropriate.
- Ensure commissioned and in-house services record whether a child or young person has a SEND support plan or an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- Take into account provision being commissioned by other agencies, such as schools, further education colleges and other education settings.
- Ensure outcomes are clearly articulated within contractual documentation.
- Ensure that performance indicators are clearly articulated within contractual documentation and that these are collated and reported back to Commissioners.
- Develop a standardised template to ensure consistent, quality feedback is received from services to inform the review of EHC plans.

- Identify the outcome tools that services use to assess the difference that services have made in improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Ensure the requirement to report back on outcomes specifically in relation to children and young people on a SEND support plan or an EHC plan is clearly articulated in contractual documentation
- Bi-annual refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Scope the processes by which funding decisions are made for education, health and social care.
- Ensure that at each point when a decision regarding funding is to be made outcomes and the potential for joint commissioning of service provision are considered.
- Review sign off of EHC plans across education, health and social care to ensure outcomes are collectively understood and that funding responsibilities are clear.

Priority 3

Ensure effective partnership working

We will work with children's and adult care services, health, education and other professionals in the public, voluntary and private sectors to ensure smooth, joined up processes for Children and Young People in County Durham.

Local Authority, education and health partners will work together to:

- Make joint commissioning arrangements for securing EHC assessments and for securing education, health and care provision specified in EHC plans.
- Consider what information and advice to provide about education, health and care provision for children
- Make arrangements for how complaints about education, health and social care provision can be made and are dealt with. Strengthening existing escalation procedures for jointly commissioned services.
- Ensure there are procedures so that disagreements between the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group (and NHS England for specialist services) are resolved as fast as possible.
- Consider aligning or pooling resources in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. We will consider the extent to which pooling our resources may:
 - Offer greater value for money
 - Improve outcomes
 - Better integrate services for children and young people

Other partners will be engaged who support children and young people with SEN and disabilities e.g. voluntary organisations, CAMHS, local therapists, Jobcentre Plus and their employment support advisers, training/apprenticeship/supported employment providers, housing associations, careers advisers, leisure and play services. Local authorities and CCGs will consider the role that private, voluntary and community sector providers can play in delivering services.

Priority 4

Harness the views of children and young people, their families and carers

In order to ensure that joint commissioning arrangements are based on evidence about which services, support and interventions are effective, we will seek the views and experiences of children and young people and their parents/carers .

Local authorities and CCGs will engage with local Healthwatch organisations, patient representative groups, Parent Carer Forums, groups representing young people and other local voluntary organisations and community groups.

On an individual level we will involve those affected in planning commissioning arrangements, in the development and consideration of proposals for change, and in decisions affecting the operation of commissioning arrangements where implementation would have an impact on the manner in which services are delivered or the range of services available.

Priority 5

Develop integrated approaches across key pathways

In order to make the best use of the resources across the system and promote the wellbeing of children and young people with SEN or disabilities, or improve the quality of special educational provision we will consider how an integrated approach can best support:

- Early help/intervention
- Early identification of needs
- Children and young people in preparing for adult life.
- Early years settings
- Schools and further education colleges
- adult care and support with health services.

We will identify scope for working more efficiently together across these areas, assess the extent to which activities contribute towards these priorities and, using this intelligence, we will make joint decisions about the commissioning of services. We will consider how support such as the Early Help Assessment (ENA) and SEND support in schools can be operationally and strategically aligned.

Local agencies will work together to assess the social care needs of individual children and young people who may benefit from early help, and for local authorities and their partners to have a clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services designed to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)*.

We will ensure that all joint commissioning is carried out in line with the participation strategy and SEND Children and young people's promise.

Priority 6

Supporting arrangements for Personal Budgets

Personal budgets can be bespoke depending on the child/young person's assessed needs but could include:

- Special Educational Needs Funding that is provided for individual support
- Continuing Health Care Funding
- Short Breaks Funding
- Home to school transport in the form of a 'Personal Travel Budget'

Joint Commissioning will support arrangements for Personal Budgets by:

- Jointly identifying and agreeing funding streams and services for inclusion, and develop the necessary infrastructure to support their inclusion
- Identifying how joint commissioning strategies will support greater choice and control for parents and young people
- Identifying and establishing the information, advice and support necessary to help families consider options for - and to take up and manage - Personal Budgets
- Working together to support the development of a Personal Budgets pathway within the process of EHC needs assessment, and EHC plan development

Priority 7

Understanding Outcomes and impact

Local Authority, Education and Health Partners will work together in developing tools to monitor outcomes and impact:

- Understanding the changing needs of the local population of children and young people in order to identify whether or not the provision has improved outcomes
- Use feedback from children, young people and families to identify gaps in provision, and shape and change our joint commissioning priorities accordingly
- For services that are jointly commissioned, we will jointly review performance data in order to identify strengths and areas where additional arrangements/resources are needed and use this to inform joint commissioning decisions
- The performance of joint commissioned services is monitored by the Integrated Steering Group for Children on a quarterly basis
- The impact of commissioned services is captured on an annual basis through the development of impact and evidence statements.

Priority 8

Development of an integrated commissioning function

Integration is going through the committee approval stage in the Council and CCGs at Governing Body and Cabinet level. A Director will be appointed in December 2019 to implement the plans. Plans are in place taking the work up to April 2020 to ensure progress during the recruitment and appointment process. Beyond that point, the new Director will be developing the structures and implementation plans.

Governance

The SEND Joint Commissioning Group, which is made up of Education, Health and Local Authority colleagues, is responsible for this Strategy including the overarching action plan. This group is accountable to the County Durham Joint Commissioning Group and the Integrated Steering Group for Children. The County Durham Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of the implementation of this strategy with regular reports submitted to County Durham CCG's Joint Executive Committee. This document will remain live and evolve in response to developments and findings as we implement it.

The review of the overall progress against each of the key priorities is scheduled to be monitored via the Durham Joint Commissioning Group and Integrated Steering Group for Children.

Joint Commissioning Plan on a Page

Vision: 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, safe and achieving their potential.

Key Outcomes

Developing independence ensuring that children and young people have the freedom to develop personal and social skills in their local school and community settings with the opportunity to develop friendships.

Experiencing Good Health through timely assessment and support from 0-25 years with all professionals using person centred approaches in their integrated support.

Building Resilience, receiving the right adaptations and support to develop personal strategies that secure inclusion in learning and community settings.

Achieving Employment (or life opportunities relevant to their needs) through providing pathways opportunities that support transition into adult life.

Aims

Provide better co-ordinated services for children and young people with SEND across the local area.

Children and young people with SEND have high quality support which meets their needs.

Ensure that young people with SEND are well prepared for adult lives and can live independently.

Key Actions and Core deliverables

- Embed and maintain joint commissioning cycle that improves access to integrated support in Education, Health and Care through a whole system approach to the improvement of local services, including: paediatric therapies, assistive technology, equipment and specialist equipment, mental health services, wheelchair services, continence supplies, nursing support and school nursing service, short break respite services, and crisis accommodation.
- Make joint commissioning arrangements for securing EHC assessments and for securing education, health and care provision specified in EHC plans.
- Develop guidance to take into account provision being commissioned by other agencies, such as schools, further education colleges and other education settings.

- Use available funding to provide personalised, integrated, high quality support that delivers positive outcomes from early childhood through to adult life.
- Improve a range of local services to support the transformation of the local education, health and care system.
- Provide alternatives to expensive out of area education and care placements so that good quality services are provided closer to home.
- Develop joint tools to monitor outcomes and impact which will:
 - Understand the changing needs of the local population of children and young people in order to identify whether or not the provision has improved outcomes
 - Use feedback from children, young people and families to identify gaps in provision, and shape and change our joint commissioning priorities accordingly
 - For services that are jointly commissioned, we will jointly review performance data in order to identify strengths and areas where additional arrangements/resources are needed and use this to inform joint commissioning decisions.
- Review sign off of EHC plans across Education, Health and Social Care to ensure outcomes are collectively understood and that funding responsibilities are clear.

- Explore integrated approaches towards key SEND pathways in order to make the best use of the resources across the system and promote the wellbeing of children and young people with SEN or disabilities, or improve the quality of special educational provision we will consider how an integrated approach can best support: early help/intervention;
 - early identification of needs; children and young people in preparing for adult life; early years settings; schools and further education colleges; adult care and support with health services.
- Support arrangements for Personal Budgets by:
 - Working in partnership to support the development of a Personal Budgets pathway within the process of EHC needs assessment, and EHC plan development.
 - Identifying and establishing the information, advice and support necessary to help families consider options for - and to take up and manage - Personal Budgets
 - Identifying how joint commissioning strategies will support greater choice and control for parents and young people.

Enablers

Voice of children, young people and their families

- Ensure that all joint commissioning is carried out in line with the participation strategy and SEND children and young people's promise.
- Local Authorities and CCGs will engage with local Healthwatch organisations, patient representative groups, parent carer forums, groups representing young people and other local voluntary organisations and community groups.
- On an individual level we will involve those affected in planning commissioning arrangements in the development and consideration of proposals for change and in decisions affecting the operation of commissioning arrangements where implementation would have an impact on the manner in which services are delivered or the range of services available.

Partnerships, Collaboration and Integration

- Development of an integrated commissioning function.
- Work with children's and adult care services, health, education and other professionals in the public, voluntary and private sectors to ensure smooth, joined up processes for Children and Young People in County Durham.
- Make arrangements for how complaints about education, health and social care provision can be made and are dealt with. Strengthening existing escalation procedures for jointly commissioned services.
- Ensure there are procedures so that disagreements between the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group (and NHS England for specialist services) are resolved as fast as possible.
- Consider pooling resources to offer greater value for money, improve outcomes, better integrate services for children and young people.
- Identify scope for working together efficiently across priority areas, assess extent to which activities contribute towards these and make joint decisions about commissioning of services. Consider how Early Help Assessment and SEND support in schools can be operationally and strategically aligned.

Performance Management and Governance

- Ensure the requirement to report back on outcomes specifically in relation to children and young people on a SEND support plan or an EHC plan is clearly articulated in contractual documentation.
- Ensure commissioned and in-house services record whether a child or young person has a SEND support plan or an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- The performance of joint commissioned services is monitored by the Integrated Steering Group for Children on a quarterly basis
- The impact of commissioned services is captured on an annual basis through the development of impact and evidence statements.
- Ensure that performance indicators are clearly articulated within contractual documents and these are collated and reported back to Commissioners.
- Develop a standardised template to ensure consistent, quality feedback is received from services to inform the review of EHC plans.
- Identify the outcome tools that services use to assess the difference that services have made in improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Bi-annual refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)
- Scope the processes by which funding decisions are made for education health and social care
- Ensure at each point when a decision regarding funding is to be made outcomes and the potential for joint commissioning service provision are considered

Appendix 1 - Current Joint Commissioning arrangements (including the pooling of financial resources)

Service	Joint Funding Arrangements	Lead Commissioner
Short Breaks and Respite arrangements for parents/carers of disabled children	✓	Durham County Council
Support for carers caring for children	✓	Durham County Council
Paediatric Speech and Language Therapy Service	✓	Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups
Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service	✓	Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups
Domiciliary Care services	✓	Durham County Council
Preventative Child and Adolescent Mental Health services (Tiers 1 and 2)	✓	Durham County Council
Parent/Carer support service (Rollercoaster)	✓	Durham County Council
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	✓	Durham County Council
Intermediate Care and Out of Hours Sitting Service	✓	Durham County Council
Post-trauma Therapeutic Service for children, young people, their families and carers (Full Circle)	✓	Durham County Council
Autism project in schools	✓	Durham County Council
Mental Health Support for young people who offend	✓	NHS England
Speech, Language and Communication support for young people who offend	✓	Durham Clinical Commissioning Groups
Individual education, health and care packages for children with complex needs (incorporating Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets)	✓	Durham County Council
Community Equipment	✓	Durham County Council