

**Special Children & Young People's  
Service Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**



**25 January 2024**

**Overview of Special Educational Needs  
and Disabilities (SEND)**

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

**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 This report provides a range of information on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to support the dedicated session at Scrutiny on this topic.

**Executive summary**

- 2 Around 1 in 6 of our children and young people in County Durham have a recognised additional need and rely on specialist support to help them with their needs and prepare them for adulthood. Our support regarding SEND covers from pre-birth up to a young person's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- 3 To support Scrutiny with this focused session on SEND this brief covering report is accompanied by a slide pack which covers key areas relating to SEND and has sought to capture particular areas of interest highlighted by scrutiny members in recent months.
- 4 The accompanying slide pack at Appendix 2 covers:
  - (a) County Durham's strategic context for SEND;
  - (b) Prevailing national legislation which applies to the SEND system and the current Inspection Framework;
  - (c) Our graduated approach to supporting young people's needs – SEND support, SEND support with additional funding and Education Health and Care Plans;
  - (d) The Education Health and Care Assessment and Plan process;

- (e) Education Health and Care Demand Increases and Timeliness, Quality and Assurance;
- (f) Resources particularly in relation to the High Needs Block of the Designated Schools Grant and the Delivering Better Value Programme;
- (g) Transformation and Partnership including Department for Education (DfE) SEND and Alternative Provision Change Programme.

5 It is recognised that SEND covers many areas of support provided by a range of services across the local education, health and care system and has a number of inter-dependencies. Whilst the accompanying slide pack has sought to provide a comprehensive overview, it is recognised there may be areas members of scrutiny may wish to explore in more detail during the session or at subsequent meetings of the Committee. A range of links to local and national background papers which may be helpful to scrutiny members is also listed below to support preparations for the session.

### **Recommendation**

6 Members are asked to note this report and use the content of the attached presentation and background papers to support discussions at the special session.

### **Background papers**

- County Durham SEND strategy and children and young people's version

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/22438/Strategies-plans-policies-and-inspections>

- Cabinet report on High Needs Block December 2023

[Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday 13 December 2023, 9.30 am - Durham County Council](#)

- Recent papers on High Needs Block to School Forum

<https://www.durham.gov.uk/schoolsforum>

- County Durham SEND local offer  
<https://www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer>
- SEND inspection framework  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook>
- DfE SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan>

**Author**

Martyn Stenton

Tel: 03000 268 067

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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### **Legal Implications**

The Children and Families Act 2014 covers the SEND reforms and is accompanied by statutory guidance for organisations to follow through the SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015).

### **Finance**

There are a range of financial implications on education, health and care services. The presentation particularly highlights the current position and forecasts regarding the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant which is a key resource to support children and young people with additional needs.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

Section 19 of the Children and Families Act 2014 makes clear that local authorities must ensure that children, young people, parents and carers are involved in decisions about local provision.

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

The Equality Act 2010 details the requirement when taking decisions to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity for people with protected characteristics, foster good relations between such groups and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

### **Climate Change**

Through our SEND strategy we seek wherever possible to support children and young people to attend local schools and provision, rather than travel to provision which is further away or out of county.

### **Human Rights**

None directly.

### **Crime and Disorder**

A disproportionately high number of young people and children who commit crime and / or disorder have SEND. Through our programmes of work we aim to support children and young people with SEND in achieving their best outcomes in life. Early intervention and support for children and young people with SEND and inclusion needs, should have a positive impact on crime and disorder by helping to prevent offending and / or reoffending.

## **Staffing**

A range of staff across education, health and care services support children and young people with their additional needs up to the age of 25.

## **Accommodation**

None directly.

## **Risk**

The presentation highlights a number of areas of risk and current mitigations. This includes risks regarding recent sustained increases in demand for additional EHCPs and capacity issues in the system along with risks regarding demand on resources and the forecast funding expected to be available in coming years.

## **Procurement**

Commissioning and procurement implications are considered for each strand of work related to SEND and there is a multi-agency SEND commissioning group to support integrated commissioning activity.

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## Appendix 2: Overview of SEND

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