

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

20 September 2024

**Special Educational Needs and
Disabilities (SEND) Update**



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

Purpose of the Report

- 1 This report provides an update following the special meeting of Children and Young People's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in January 2024. In addition to the update this report summarises the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) local area inspection of Durham which took place in June 2024 and the response to the inspection.

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 25th birthday.
- 3 To support Scrutiny 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.
- 4 The accompanying slide pack at Appendix 2 covers:
 - (a) The Local Area SEND Inspection which took place between June 10th and June 28th 2024 - methods, areas of focus, outcome and next steps;
 - (b) Update on Education Health and Care needs assessment demand and the timeliness of issuing plans;
 - (c) Practice Spotlight – Early Years Speech Language and Communication and Peer Review;

(d) Upcoming steps for County Durham's SEND offer.

- 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

- Special Children & Young People's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Overview of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) 25 January 2024 - Cover Report and presentation.

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) report to Special CYPOSC 25 January 2024](#)

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) Presentation to Special CYPOSC 25 January 2024](#)

- Area SEND inspection of Durham Local Area Partnership - Local Area Partnership report

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50255956>

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

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

- SEND inspection framework

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook>

- Cabinet report on High Needs Block December 2023
[High Needs Block Funding for SEND and Inclusion Support.pdf \(durham.gov.uk\)](#)
- 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>
- DfE SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-and-alternative-provision-improvement-plan>

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Appendix 1: Implications

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.

Appendix 2: Overview of SEND

Presentation attached as a separate document.