



Durham Local Area SEND Partnership Action Plan

Autumn 2024



Our updated SEND partnership plan

- Earlier this year we developed a self evaluation to reflect what we are doing together across our SEND system in County Durham to understand and improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- From this, we produced a summary version to describe our area, our aspirations for children and young people with SEND, the growth in demand for services, how we support the use of alternative provision, our strengths, our areas of focus and key priorities.
- This was considered as part of our inspection of SEND across County Durham in June 2024. The findings of the inspection and our work prior to it have informed our latest partnership action plan.



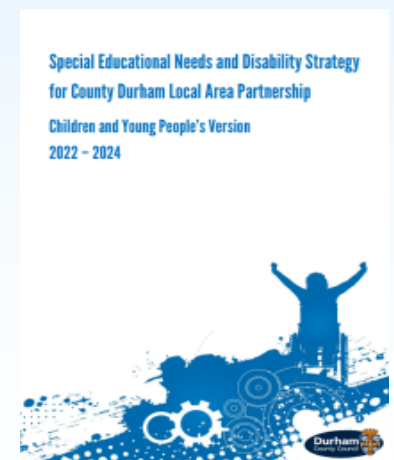
SEND Strategy for County Durham

Our vision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as it is for all children and young people in County Durham:

- that they are safe and part of their community,
- have the best start in life,
- have good physical and mental health, and
- gain the education, skills, and experiences to prepare them for adulthood.

Our current strategy is now ready for review and this is one of our agreed next steps.

We feel the overall vision still reflects what we strive to achieve.



Key Findings: Ofsted / CQC SEND Inspection report

- Collaborative leadership is strong. Partnership leaders prioritise SEND.
- CYP feel valued, visible, included in their communities and listened to.
- CYP build transferable skills so that they can participate in wider activities.
- There is improvement in the length of time taken to complete new assessments, the result of the LAP recovery plan.
- Most CYP have their needs identified and met early.
- CYP with SEND have good attendance and this is improving further.
- Persistent absence from school is reducing, preparing young people well in education, training and employment.
- Parents and carers state that their voice is mostly heard well, some have seen improvements to support and services as a result.



Inspectors concluded there were four main areas we should make further improvements on over the next three years:

1. Intensify work to further improve **EHC plan quality** and **assessment timeliness**. Ensure that EHC plans consistently and accurately reflect the needs of children and young people. Ensure all partner agencies **contribute comprehensively** with high-quality information, and that all plans detail children and young people's voice and needs, aspirations and next steps effectively.
2. Continue to strengthen work to **further reduce delays** to access CAMHS and neurodevelopmental pathways across the age range of children and young people.



3. Ensure that children and young people and their families can **access easily identifiable needs-led services**. Informed practitioners should direct families to services that provide support, guidance and intervention at the earliest opportunity.
4. Further strengthen the **monitoring and impact** of strategic plans and policies to ensure that **support and resources are consistently targeted** to the children and young people and families that need it most.



How our partnership will help us further improve SEND support in County Durham

We will build on how we monitor our partnership progress and ensure that we target support to those who need it most.

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We will make it easier for people to find and get help and support quickly. We will also offer more resources for those working in education, health, and care to make this happen.

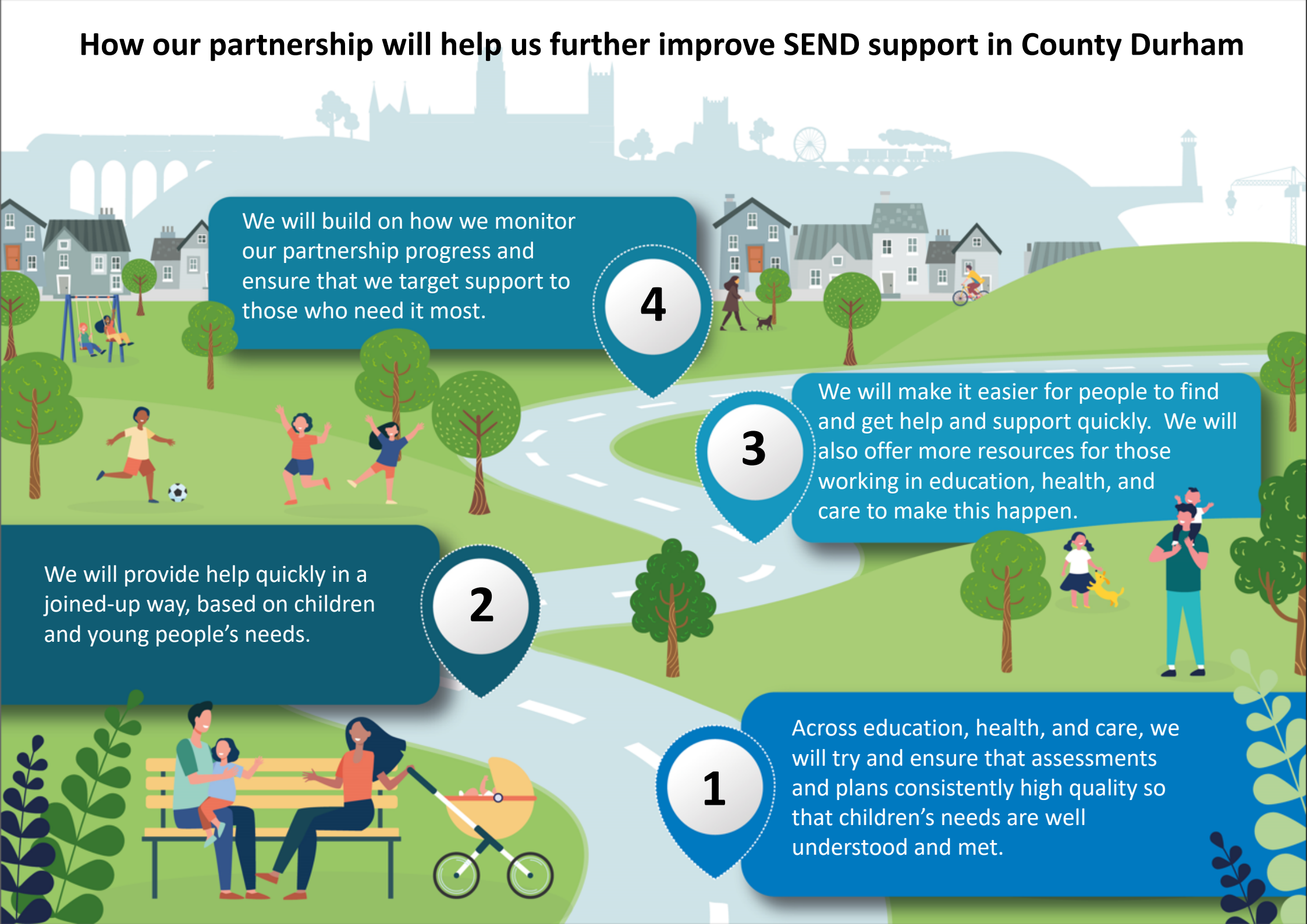
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We will provide help quickly in a joined-up way, based on children and young people's needs.

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Across education, health, and care, we will try and ensure that assessments and plans consistently high quality so that children's needs are well understood and met.

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Key Milestones

Spring 2025:

- More support is in place for CYP waiting for neurodevelopmental assessments with an extra focus on needs led approaches, ensuring any priority cases are progressed to assessment more swiftly.
- A Local Area Partnership survey measuring self-reported confidence in education, health and care advice writing will have been developed and implemented to support quality improvement work for EHCPs.

Autumn 2025

- Additional specialist education provision in place in North and East Durham.
- Our updated SEND local offer webpages will make it easier for people to find and get help and support quickly. More resources will also be available for those working in education, health and care to make this happen.



Spring 2026

- The number of children waiting 2 years for a neurodevelopmental assessment is back in line with national guidance with ongoing reductions for the longest waiters.
- Timeliness for new EHCPs back in line with national average.
- Refreshed workforce training and development programmes, focussing on known shared areas for improvement, will be in place. Impact on confidence in practice will be measured across our workforce.

Further details on the LAP action plan:

- Our full partnership action plan is summarised [here](#).
- This will be periodically updated and shared across the local partnership.

