

HIGH NEEDS REVIEW UPDATE – MARCH 2018

Foreward

Darlington Borough Council is committed to working with a wide range of partners to ensure that there is sufficient, high quality Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision to meet local demand. Our partners include:

- young people
- parents
- carers
- educational settings
- health and social care

SEN provision is required to meet the needs of Darlington's children and young people with complex special educational needs. Children and young people with complex needs in this context are those who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan that specifies a high level of additional support.

Schools also receive additional funding to support those pupils with low level SEN, this is known as 'SEN Support'.

Current Position

There is a shortage of specialist high quality provision in the local area to meet the increasing need for SEN placements. In addition, the funding received by the local authority to support our most vulnerable children with SEN is insufficient to meet demand. Therefore, the Council is undertaking an extensive review of SEN, working with partners, to establish:

- what additional educational provision is required to meet the increasing needs of learners with complex SEN
- what, if any, improvements or changes to current provision are required
- how best to get value for money from the limited resources available

Review Outcomes

The outcome of the review will be a strategic plan for high needs provision that makes sure there is a high quality offer to meet the needs of future cohorts, at a cost that is sustainable.

This might include:

- Measures to support mainstream schools through workforce training or clear routes to specialist expertise.
- Changes to the focus of existing specialist places to cater for different or more complex needs.
- The creation or expansion of specialist provision attached to mainstream schools (special units or resourced provision).
- Identification of the need to create or expand special schools.
- Strategic engagement with specialist providers in the non-maintained and independent sector.
- More standardised approaches to high needs top-up funding that facilitate better value for money and reductions in bureaucracy.

The review commenced in December 2016 and has a number of distinct phases. It includes a consideration of use of the Council's allocated [SEN Capital Funding](#). The Council will look at best ways to utilise the allocated funding and where possible link it to basic needs as part of the School Organisation Plan. However, the scope of any project to increase places will be limited due to the level of the funding allocated.

High Needs Review – Phases

Phase 1

December 2017 – March 2018

- Collection of data on the range of SEN in the area, recent trends and likely changes in the future.
- Review of all top-up rates across mainstream and specialist provision.
- Evidence for how effectively the current pattern of SEN provision meets needs in the area.
- A review of the SEND ranges that would generally be met by mainstream providers; including Early Years, mainstream schools and academies, and post 16 institutions. In Darlington this is set out through the SEND 'graduated response'.
- The range of SEN and disabilities which would be met by specialist providers, set out through the SEND Graduated Response.
- How best to address any gaps in provision identified by the review.
- How best to allocate resources to deliver this provision including through the SEN Capital Grant.

Analysis and Reports

The strategic analysis which sets out the background, contextual data and evidence for conducting a review of provision can be found on the Darlington [SEND Local Offer](#) webpage.

Outcomes of Phase 1

The following priorities were identified as key workstreams:

- A review of the methodology for assigning levels of need and funding allocations to ensure the money follows the child
- Provision review including Resource Bases and Outreach Services.
- Behaviour and Attendance including additional provision, PRU etc

Consultation/Joint working

Throughout this phase meetings were held with our partners, in addition all partners were invited to a 'high needs conference' on 22nd February 2018.

Meetings to develop the graduated response ranges included representation from Parent Carer Forums.

Peer review moderation on EHC Plans against the graduated response ranges taken place.

Phase 2

March 2018 – May 2018

- Continual review of data and updates where necessary.
- Develop a common understanding of provision requirements to meet needs identified in Phase 1.
- Identify opportunities for expanding provision.
- Development of criteria and process for use of capital grant linked to evidence of need identified in Phase 1.
- Seek the views of Parents and Carers on access to and quality of provision.
- Communication with all partners, parents and carers about rates of top up and provision consultation.
- Development of top up bandings and how they align with the graduated response.

- Agreement of top up bandings and rates.
- Continuation of specialist provider reviews

Phase 3

Summer – Autumn Term 2018

- Seek the views of Parents and Carers on access to and quality of provision.
- Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision for children who are, or are at risk of being, excluded from school.
- Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision for children who require special school provision, post-16.
- Review the current use, sufficiency and cost of provision for children who require special school provision, including those in Independent and Non-Maintained Special (INMS) schools.
- Communication with all partners, parents and carers and provision consultation.

This document was produced on 9 March 2018 and will be updated as the review proceeds.