



Cumberland Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy 2024 to 2028



**Cumberland
SEND
Partnership**

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Foreword

This SEND and Alternative Provision (AP) strategy has been developed by **Cumberland's Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board**. This includes Cumberland Council, North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC, our Parent Carer Forum), children and young people with SEND (including those who's needs would be best met by accessing Alternative Provision), education and health providers, and links with Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board which commissions health services for the Millom area of Cumberland's local authority footprint.

We believe that children and young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision in Cumberland deserve high quality, local support, services and provision. Cumberland is a new local authority area, established in April 2023 when Local Government Reform ceased the previous arrangements and set up two new local authorities in the previous Cumbria County Council footprint. Cumbria as a Local Area delivered a significant improvement programme for our children and young people with SEND between 2019, when Ofsted and CQC Inspectors found nine areas of significant weakness during a local area visit, and December 2022, when inspectors revisited and found improvements in all areas, with seven of the nine areas of weaknesses judged to have made sufficient progress.

However, we are ambitious and know that there is still much to do to ensure children and young people with SEND and who's needs are best met by accessing Alternative Provision have the best possible outcomes and experiences, which we are determined to deliver for our children and young people and their families.

This strategy sets out our collective vision, ambitions and priorities for the next four years as we continue to make the improvements we know we need to deliver, and build on the progress of the previous local area Partnership as we move into the future.





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Chair of SENDAC



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Non Statutory Deputy Leader
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Our Vision

We believe that all children and young people deserve and should receive access to excellent services, a fulfilling and well-rounded education, and the chance to reach their full potential. We believe children with SEND and those whose needs would be best met by accessing Alternative Provision in Cumberland deserve high quality, local support, services and provision.



Getting it right for our children and young people in Cumberland

It is essential that there is a clear focus on providing the right support at the right time and in the right place. This is in line with the national SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan.

Our local area has undergone many changes both in local government and in the Integrated Care Board that oversees commissioning of health services for our children and young people. Whilst this has undoubtedly created some challenges, it also presents us with an opportunity to build cross agency relationships, refocus our plans and efforts, and come together to deliver the inclusive, local services and provisions we know our children and young people and their families need.

Central to this, is ensuring our children and young people have a sense of belonging and feel safe in their identity. They should be supported to lead healthy, happy lives, and feel valued and visible in their communities, and that we provide services that prepare them to live as independently as possible as they prepare for their future. It is essential that those preparations provide lots of opportunities to shine, and that the aspirations that we have for them, and that they have for themselves are high.

We can only do this by listening to and understanding what life is like for our children and young people and their families now, and working with them in partnership to make the improvements needed to ensure their experiences and outcomes are as positive as possible for each and every family. Central to our work is embedding a co-production approach across education, health and social care, so that young people and their families are included at the heart of our decision-making processes.

Achieving our Vision

We will achieve our vision by:

- Delivering the priorities set out in this Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision strategy
- Capturing and utilising high quality local area data from across education, health and social care to inform our decision making, particularly around ensuring there is sufficient, high quality local services and education provision
- Valuing our relationships with each other as stakeholders, particularly with young people and their parents and carers with lived experience, working in Partnership to plan high quality, timely support
- Working with SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC), our parent carer forum, as an equal partner in the Partnership and its governance structure
- Ensuring intervention at the earliest possible point by supporting early years settings and schools to have confidence in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, and ensuring pathways to support are clear and accessible



The Current Position in Cumberland

72,313 children and young people 0-25 in Cumberland

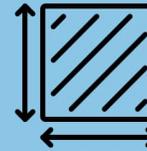
26.4% of the total Cumberland population



There are **41,559** school-aged children in Cumberland (ages 5 - 18)*



Cumberland covers an area of **3,012** square km: covering just over one fifth (21%) of the Northwest region of the UK



5223 children and young people (13.6%) are in receipt of SEN Support in Cumberland

Nationally this figure is 13.6%



2721 children and young people (6.5%) have an EHCP in Cumberland

Nationally this figure is 4.8%



58.6% of children/young people with an EHCP are educated in a mainstream school in Cumberland



428 new EHCPs were issued in 2023

This is an increase of 14.4% from 2022



35.96% of EHCPs support children with a primary need of autism



Cumberland has **172** schools. Of those, 3 are special schools



Cumberland had a High Needs Budget of **£35.480m** in 23/24



336 Children with an EHCP are known to Social Care services in Cumberland



253 Children with SEN Support are known to Social Care services in Cumberland



What is it like to be a child or young person with SEND and/or accessing Alternative Provision in Cumberland in 2024?

Listening to and understanding children and young people's lived experiences, and those of their families is central to our strategy and the continuous improvement approach which we must take to make the improvements we know are needed. To do this, co-production with young people and families must be embedded across services and central to everything we do.

Working with children, young people and their parents and carers

In Cumberland we know that co-production and putting the lived experience of families at the heart of decision making is something we must improve. We are working with SENDAC, our parent carer forum, to develop this as a strength for our local area, and have several workstreams ongoing around this including:

- Our Co-production Stakeholder Group, working to develop a Co-production charter, with associated multi-agency training and a plan to embed across services
- Supporting SENDAC to increase their reach and membership across Cumberland, with the forum growing rapidly in the past year
- Working with Children's Participation Officers in the Children and Families Team at Cumberland Council and their newly established SEND Youth Voice Group, Unique Voices, as part of the wider Youth Voices group work across the local area



What children and young people and their families have told us about SEND and Alternative Provision:



M is autistic and had not been able to attend school for almost 4 years. M was struggling to leave their home and engage with friends. A multi-agency approach saw CAMHS, school and the SEND team work together to support M back into school and provided therapeutic intervention to help them re-engage with family and friends, and spend time doing things which they enjoyed.

M is now 17, has sat A levels and feels they can enjoy life again.

"I have been to see Taylor Swift in Barcelona. Thinking back to how things were before I wouldn't have believed I could do that."

K is a parent carer of a 9 year old autistic boy L. K applied for an EHCP for L prior to receiving a diagnosis. The request for an EHCP was declined and K took this decision to mediation. K found the number of processes around EHCP application and the diagnosis pathway confusing, not transparent and emotionally challenging. The EHCP was granted following mediation – L had received an autism diagnosis by this time, and following mediation K was told that this provided more evidence of need and the diagnosis was a factor in changing the decision. K found this infuriating as professionals had said that the diagnosis would make no difference and that the need for an EHCP would be decided solely on L's needs.

"Why is everything so secretive and such a fight?"



What children and young people and their families have told us about SEND and Alternative Provision:

J is a young person with a hearing impairment. J attends a mainstream school and was finding differing approaches by teachers to communicating with her was negatively affecting her learning. Working with J and a specialist advisory teacher, school put in place a consistent approach to supporting J in lessons, using a radio aid, a communication support worker providing BSL and other support, and a consistent approach by teachers to ensure an appropriate learning environment (e.g. waiting until the class is quiet and still before delivering verbal information/instructions). This approach is working well and J is working at a high level in many subjects.

"I can learn at the same time as everyone else now. I have more energy for friends and extra-curricular activities."

"It feels really good to have learnt new skills and achieved a job well done."

- Young person attending alternative provision setting

"It is good that places like this exist that are accepting and understanding of people and their own specific needs."

- Young person attending alternative provision setting

"I have learnt more in Drop Zone than anywhere else!"

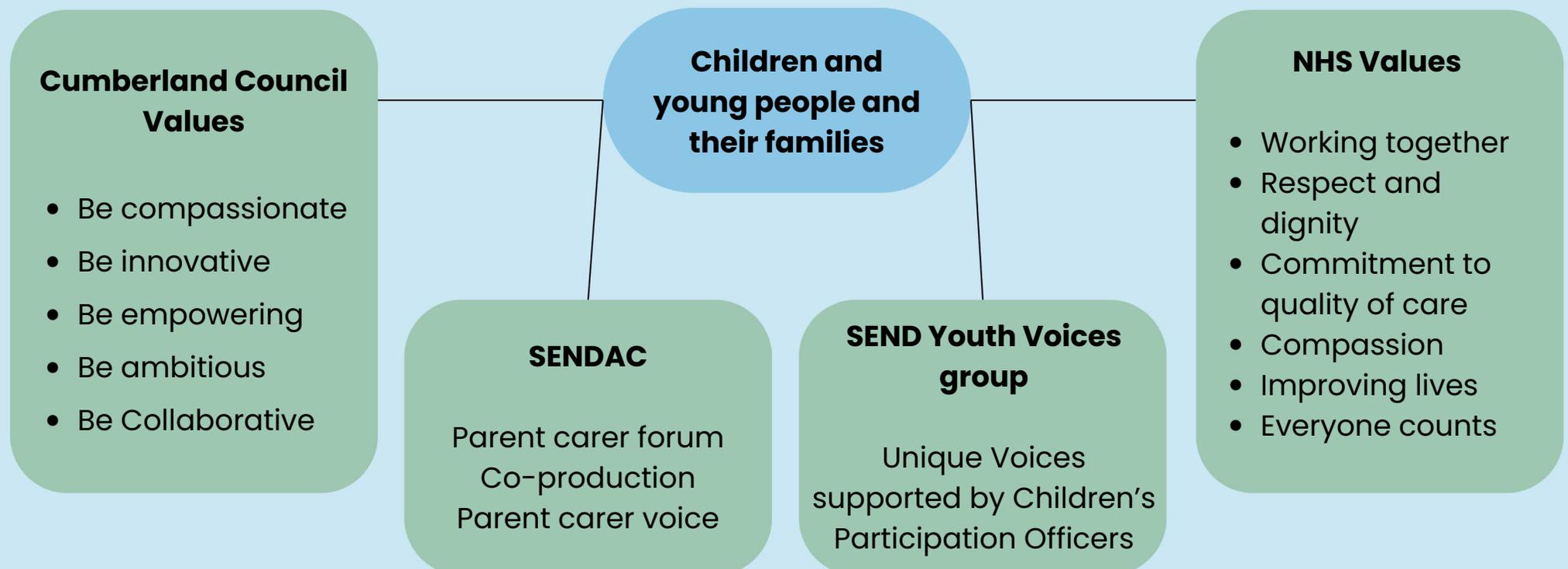
- Young person attending alternative provision setting



Our Ambition for children and young people with SEND and/or accessing Alternative Provision and their families in Cumberland

Working together, Cumberland Partnership's ambition for children and young people with SEND, those who accessing Alternative Provision, and their families is to **improve outcomes** by ensuring they receive **high quality, local support, services and provision at the right time.**

The values of key partners, shown below, are in synergy with feedback from our children and young people and their parents and carers, enabling us to work together effectively to plan and drive the improvements we need to make to achieve our vision of improving outcomes through high quality, local support, services and provision.



Our Ambition for children and young people with SEND and/or educated in Alternative Provision and their families in Cumberland

This ambition extends to all our children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 years, and children and young people accessing Alternative Provision, whether they have identified SEND or not.

We are committed to improving outcomes by providing sufficient, high-quality support services across education, health and social care to better meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and those requiring access to alternative provision. This includes access to provision for our children and their families from the early years right through to early adulthood, ensuring individual needs are met. We know that to improve the lived experience and outcomes of our children and young people, services across the whole Partnership must be accessible locally, of high quality, and that information about them must be transparent, accessible and easy to find.

Partnership stakeholders from early years, education, health, social care, and adult services are committed to working together with children and young people and their parents and carers to deliver the priorities set out in the next section of this plan.

The diagram on the next page shows how this Local Area Strategy links with, and is supported by, detailed and specific action plans across the Partnership, with robust governance arrangements in place to facilitate and ensure the multi-agency working needed to deliver this strategy and its associated plans, and bring about the high-quality local support, services and provision that our children and young people deserve.



Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy

Our Priorities:

- Working together and building trust
- High Quality Local Provision and Services
- Improving Outcomes
- Preparing for and moving into adulthood
- Supportive, effective Alternative Provision
- Achieving best value

Supported by communications and engagement

Continuous Improvement Plan

Joint Commissioning Approach

Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for SEND

SEND and AP Sufficiency Strategy

SEND High Needs Provision Capital Plan

Delivering Better Value in SEND Plan

Preparing for Adulthood Route Planner

Priorities

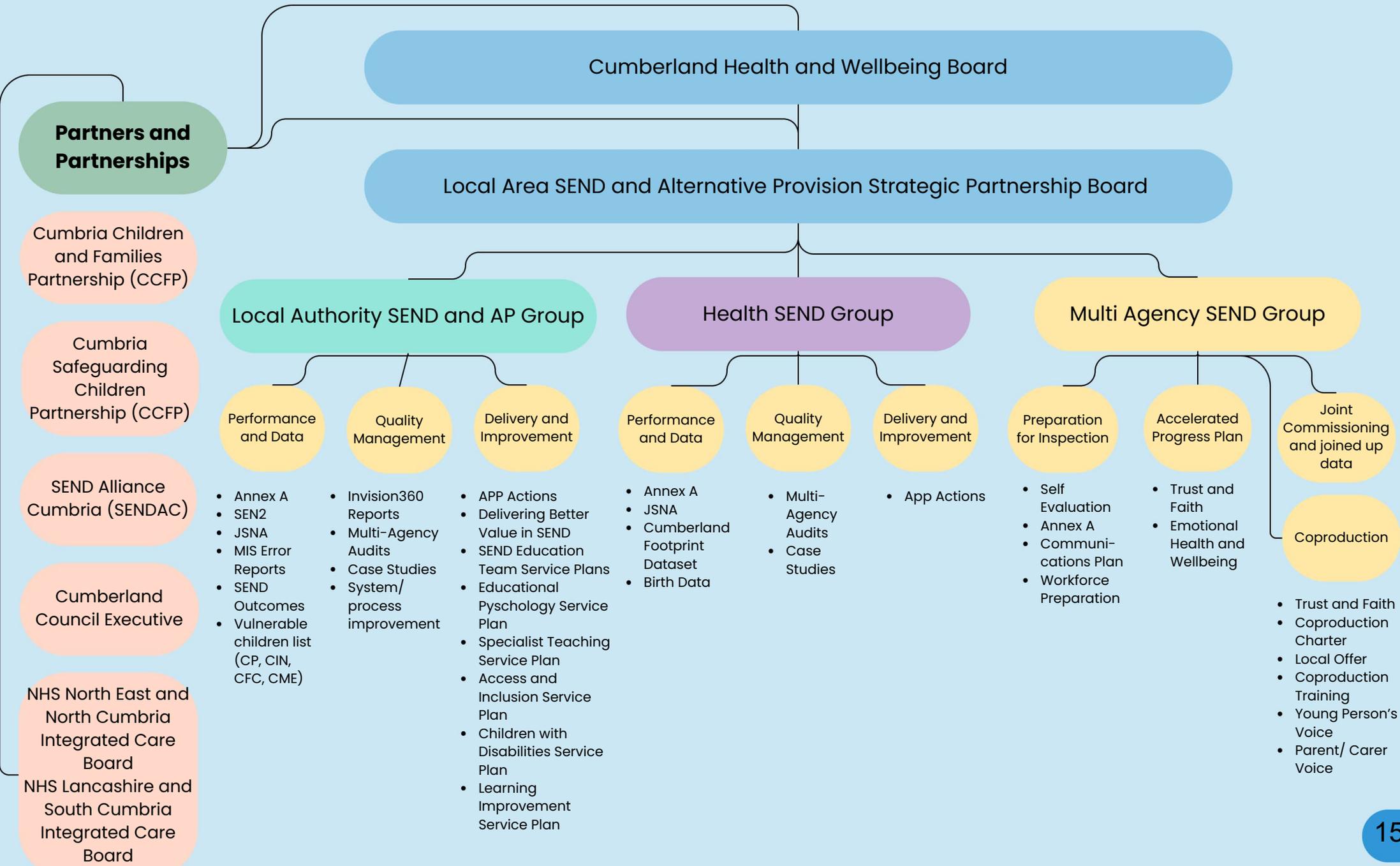
Working with stakeholders, the following priorities have been developed to improve the outcomes and lived experiences of children and young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision in Cumberland. There are many interdependencies between these priorities, and as such it is important that we work effectively as a Partnership to deliver them. For example, early identification of needs spans all priorities, as does co-production and working in partnership across multiple agencies. There are aspects of the Delivering Better Value in SEND plan across all priority areas, and delivery of all the priorities will be essential to improving outcomes and ensuring sufficient, high-quality provision.



To manage this interdependence and ensure progress is made quickly and effectively, we will need to work together as a Partnership to deliver the vision and ambitions set out in this Strategy, and have robust, effective governance arrangements in place.

The diagram on the next page shows these governance arrangements, with the Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board having oversight of the multi-agency plans, as well as those of the local authority, and health-commissioned providers. In turn, the Partnership reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, and links with various other partners and partnerships, including Children's Safeguarding, Cumberland's Executive and the Children and Families Partnership.

Governance – Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board



Partners and Partnerships

Cumbria Children and Families Partnership (CCFP)

Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership (CCFP)

SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC)

Cumberland Council Executive

NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board

NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Cumberland Health and Wellbeing Board

Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board

Local Authority SEND and AP Group

Health SEND Group

Multi Agency SEND Group

Performance and Data

Quality Management

Delivery and Improvement

Performance and Data

Quality Management

Delivery and Improvement

Preparation for Inspection

Accelerated Progress Plan

Joint Commissioning and joined up data

Coproduction

- Annex A
- SEN2
- JSNA
- MIS Error Reports
- SEND Outcomes
- Vulnerable children list (CP, CIN, CFC, CME)

- Invision360 Reports
- Multi-Agency Audits
- Case Studies
- System/process improvement

- APP Actions
- Delivering Better Value in SEND
- SEND Education Team Service Plans
- Educational Psychology Service Plan
- Specialist Teaching Service Plan
- Access and Inclusion Service Plan
- Children with Disabilities Service Plan
- Learning Improvement Service Plan

- Annex A
- JSNA
- Cumberland Footprint Dataset
- Birth Data

- Multi-Agency Audits
- Case Studies

- App Actions

- Self Evaluation
- Annex A
- Communications Plan
- Workforce Preparation

- Trust and Faith
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing

- Trust and Faith
- Coproduction Charter
- Local Offer
- Coproduction Training
- Young Person's Voice
- Parent/ Carer Voice

Working Together and Building Trust – Priority one



What we want to change or improve

- Develop trust in the Partnership from children, young people and their families
- Embed co-production in service planning and delivery across the Partnership
- Improve communication across the Partnership with families and practitioners
- Develop a Joint Commissioning approach to ensure services are joined up and meet need

What that will look like for our children and young people and their families

- Children, young people and their parents and carers trust that the Partnership will support them well to achieve good outcomes and live happy and healthy lives
- Children, young people and their families are central to service development and delivery, and agree they influence decisions made about the support and services they use
- Families feel well informed and agree that information and processes are clear and transparent
- Children and young people can access services that work effectively together to support them and meet their needs

How we will make the changes needed:

Develop co-production charter in partnership with young people and parents/ carers

Develop and deliver a joined up approach to data management and sharing across the Partnership

Develop and deliver a communications plan and associated training to improve accessibility and transparency of written and verbal communications

Agree a Joint Commissioning approach and deliver an associated plan to improve joint commissioning and planning

High Quality Local Provision and Services – Priority two

What we want to change or improve

- Children and young people can access education that meets their needs locally, whether that is at a special school, resourced provision, mainstream setting, or access to Alternative Provision through agreed arrangements commissioned by their school or the local authority where appropriate
- Provide a comprehensive Post 16 offer for young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision
- Reduce waiting times for health services, including mental health support
- Review Targeted Short Breaks and respite services to ensure they meet the needs of families in Cumberland
- Families of children and young people with SEND can access the support and information they need easily and in a clear and transparent way; they are supported to access this information where appropriate

“Knowing there is someone I can ring when I’m at a loss as to what to do that can either help me, or point me in the right direction is very helpful.”

– SENDIAS Service user



What that will look like for our children and young people and their families

- Children and young people are educated close to their families and in their communities where appropriate
- Babies and children can access local nurseries and early years provision which meets their needs well
- Support and services across education, health and care are available locally and are accessible when children and families need it (right support, right place, right time)
- Children and young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision are supported to access mental health support that is appropriate for their needs in a timely way
- Children and young people with SEND are supported to enjoy a range of activities, enabling their families to have a break from caring
- Children and young people with the highest levels of need are supported to access overnight breaks, providing a respite break for their families
- Family Help provide SEND sessions where families can access information and support from a range of services such as SENDIASS, autism pathway navigators, SENDAC, health visitors and children's specialist and mental health therapists during a single visit whilst their children are supported to enjoy the Family Hub facilities
- Families and practitioners use the SEND Local Offer and SEND Professionals websites to provide them with clear, accessible information that is useful to them
- Young people and their parents and carers use the Cumberland SENDIAS Service to provide them with information, advice and support that is impartial, clear and useful

How we will make the changes needed:

Use our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to inform decision making around what type of provision and services are required and in which locations

Develop and deliver a SEND Sufficiency Plan, informed by the JSNA to develop additional specialist provision

Reduce waiting times across health and mental health services, and develop processes to ensure young people are supported while they wait for support

Co-produce improvements to the SEND Local Offer website so families and practitioners can access clear, useful information easily and quickly

Improving Outcomes – Priority three

What we want to change or improve

- Improve early identification of need so that children and young people have their needs met at an earlier stage
- Improve access to Health Visiting services, particularly for children from vulnerable groups
- Increase understanding of SEND for practitioners across education, health and social care, and increase their confidence in identifying needs early
- Improve education outcomes for children and young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision
- Build on the success of the high numbers of young people aged 16+ in education, training and employment
- Produce high quality Education, Health and Care plans on time
- Deliver timely, effective Annual Reviews of EHCPs that support children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes



What that will look like for our children and young people and their families

- Children and young people have their SEND needs identified early and have access to support to meet their needs at the earliest point
- There is sufficient Health Visiting capacity to comply with our statutory duties to identify and share the SEND needs at the earliest point with partners (where they are apparent in very young children)
- Practitioners across education, health and social care are confident in identifying SEND in the children and young people they work with, and know how to support them
- Children and young people with SEND and those accessing Alternative Provision have good educational outcomes, are happy and healthy and as independent as possible
- Young people aged 16 to 25 can access high quality further education, training and employment locally and are supported to do so where necessary
- EHCPs are of high quality, are issued on time, and Annual Reviews are timely and effective

How we will make the changes needed:

Develop and deliver a recruitment and retention plan to increase Health Visitor numbers

Develop and deliver training for practitioners across the partnership to increase confidence in identifying and supporting children and young people with SEND

Develop and deliver a plan to increase the quality and timeliness of EHCPs and Annual Reviews



Preparing for and Moving into Adulthood – Priority four

What we want to change or improve

- Improve support for young people preparing for adulthood through consistent use of the Route Planner at EHCP Annual Reviews from school year 9 onwards
- Develop a Preparing for Adulthood support offer for young people in receipt of SEN Support and those accessing Alternative Provision
- Develop a plan to better identify and support young people likely to be eligible for Continuing Health Care from year 9 onwards
- More effectively communicate the living and housing options available for young people to promote independence
- Build on the success of the high numbers of young people aged 16 to 25 in education, training and employment



What that will look like for our children and young people and their families

- Young people and their parents and carers are supported to follow the Preparing for Adulthood Route Planner at Annual Review from school year 9 onwards
- Young people aged 16 to 25 have choices about what they want to do when they leave school, and are fully supported to access further education, training and employment locally
- Young people on SEN Support and those accessing Alternative Provision have access to consistent and effective support to prepare for their next steps via a comprehensive support offer
- Young people likely to be eligible for Continuing Health Care into adulthood are supported effectively with transition arrangements from children's to adult health services
- Young adults understand the housing and living arrangement options available to them and they and their families are supported to make good choices

How we will make the changes needed:

Develop and deliver a plan to increase use of the Preparing for Adulthood Route Planner at Annual Review from year 9 onwards

Develop a comprehensive Preparing for Adulthood support offer for SEN Support and those accessing Alternative Provision

Further develop supported internships and apprenticeships

Work with local FE providers to improve and increase the Post 16 offer for young people with SEND



'I wasn't given any information specific to my child. The school & social worker are not very sure themselves. I don't know what options are available.'

'It would be useful to have more information about mental capacity and how to support my daughter with finance, health and welfare. It would also be useful to understand the local options for housing and support.'

A Supportive, Effective Alternative Provision – Priority five

What we want to change or improve

- Work with local area partners to implement a consistent and equitable approach to Alternative Provision that includes mainstream education, SEND provision and services, Early Help, social care, and local health services
- Work with education providers to support the development of relational approaches including 'Positive Regard', alongside quality-first teaching to better meet the needs of all children and young people educated in a mainstream setting
- Develop a graduated approach where use of Alternative Provision is seen firstly as a temporary arrangement, where the goal is always to reintegrate the young person back into the school community where/ when appropriate

What that will look like for our children and young people and their families

- Children and young people have access to appropriate Alternative Provision which meets their needs locally
- More children and young people have their needs met within school, with fewer requiring Alternative Provision to meet their needs
- The majority of children and young people accessing Alternative Provision do so for a time limited, targeted period, and are successfully reintegrated back into their school setting where/ when appropriate

How we will make the changes needed:

Develop and deliver an Alternative Provision strategy and associated plan

Provide more AP places via the new Cumbria Education Trust free school

Deliver and evaluate the StudyBugs AP attendance pilot with a view to supporting national roll-out if successful



Valuing our Children and Young People and Achieving Best Value in Cumberland – Priority six

What we want to change or improve

- We will always put the needs of children at the centre of everything we do. This includes in development work, local initiatives, and ongoing workstreams
- Deliver the best value possible for our children and young people with SEND and their families using £1m DBV funding to support transformation activity in education across Cumberland
- Support settings with lower inclusivity to become more inclusive, ensuring that every child and young person can access a positive learning environment where they have a sense of belonging which supports their self-esteem, increasing aspirations and leading a happy and healthy life
- Supporting settings to be more inclusive and to identify and meet needs earlier
- Reducing and removing barriers to accessing high-quality information, advice and support for families and practitioners
- Developing a Local Area SEND and AP data dashboard, drawing on multi-agency data, to support leaders across the partnership to identify gaps, and inform joint-commission decisions

What that will look like for our children and young people and their families

- Children, young people and their families can access education provision locally which meets their needs
- Fewer children and young people are excluded (both fixed term and permanently)
- More children and young people will be supported in settings/ schools that understand and meet their needs at the earliest opportunity
- The process for requesting an EHCP has been simplified and will continually be reviewed and improved

How we will make the changes needed:

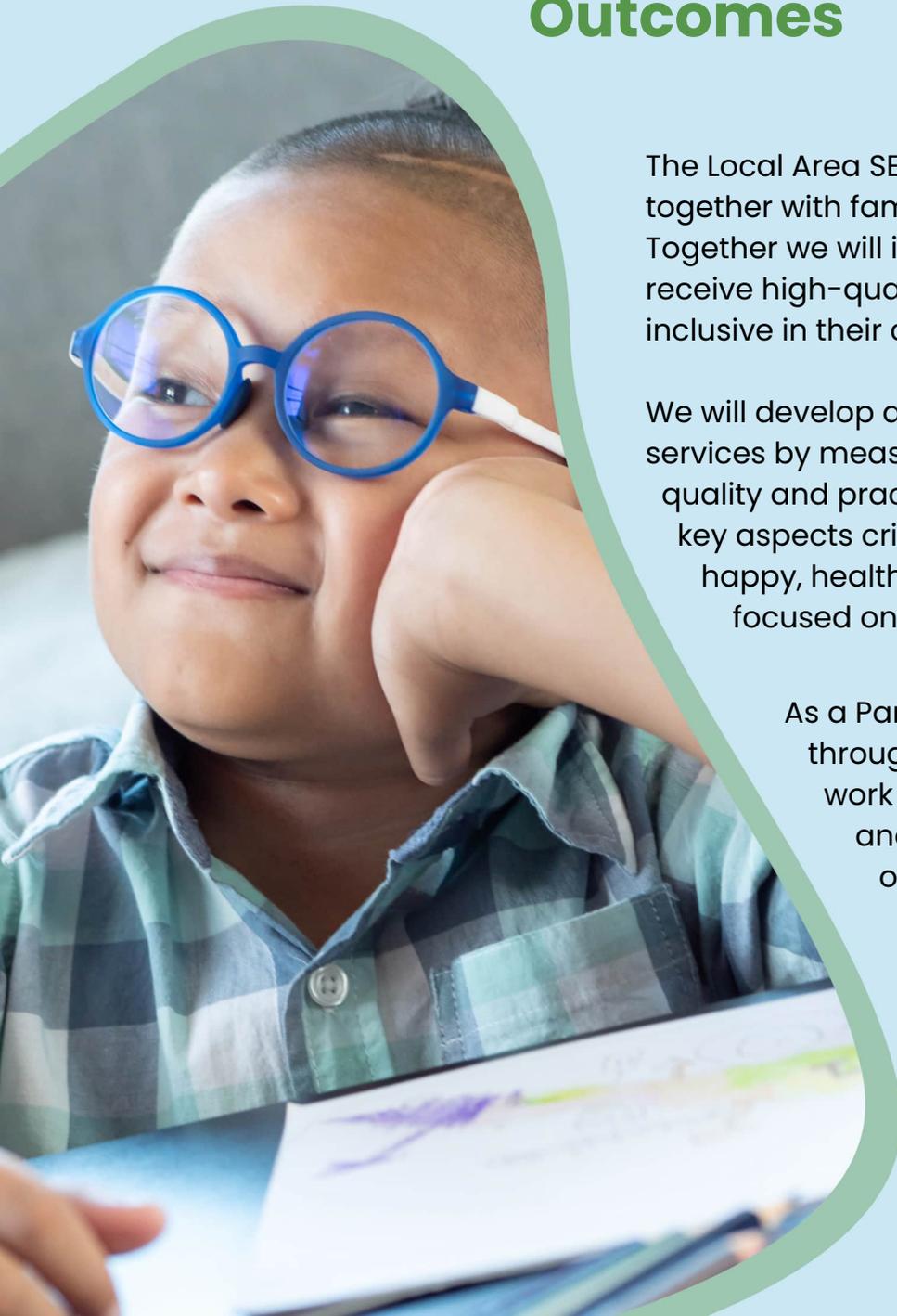
Complete the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme

Deliver a comprehensive workforce training plan across the area for practitioners. The SEND and Inclusion team to ensure children and young people receive high-quality support

Develop and deliver a multi-agency Quality Assurance plan for EHCPs and Annual Reviews



Outcomes



The Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Strategic Partnership Board will work together with families and all partners to deliver the priorities set out in this Strategy. Together we will improve outcomes for our children and young people by ensuring they receive high-quality, local support, services and provision, which feel welcoming, safe and inclusive in their communities.

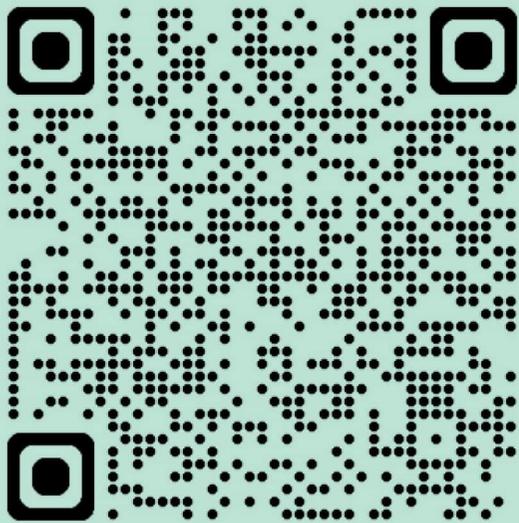
We will develop a Joint Outcomes Framework to help drive improvements to the quality of services by measuring our local area performance using a range of indicators, including quality and practice. We will work with children, young people and their families to identify key aspects critical to supporting them to have good experiences, outcomes and to lead happy, healthy lives. We will include these in the Outcomes Framework to ensure we are focused on the things that matter most to them.

As a Partnership we will review this strategy and the supporting plans regularly throughout its' four year span to ensure progress and measure impact. We will work with young people and their parents and carers to review the priorities and make sure we are working on the things that matter to them, and that our arrangements to support them lead to positive outcomes and experiences.

We will tell families and practitioners about the work that we are doing and our progress through open and effective communication, and keep up to date a 'You said, we did, we're listening' approach to feedback, including being transparent about any challenges we may face to the delivery of our plans.

Cumberland's Local Offer

On the Local Offer website you can find information and advice about services, support, and activities for children and young people aged 0 - 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) all in one place.



Directory of local services, leisure activities, social care and more



Specialist services; including education, health and care plans



Cumberland's Local Offer

Where to get support; local services, charities, and support groups



Information about health services, transport, education and more

