



**Dorset**  
Council



# **DORSET COUNCIL**

# **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES STRATEGY**

2021 – 2024

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## **Our Vision for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Dorset**

Our vision is clear and focused:

**“We want our children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to be healthy, happy and safe, and able to achieve their potential to lead a fulfilling life. We want them to have, and to expect, the same opportunities in life as other children and young people.”**

This vision is within the context of Dorset’s Children’s and Young Peoples plan 2020-25, which sets out that:

- We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and where our families are supported to be the best they can be. Our partnership has a bold and courageous vision to deliver the best education for all our children and young people;
- To prepare our young people for independence (adulthood); and
- For our children and young people to experience the best possible health and wellbeing.

## **Our Commitment**

Our work is shaped by the following commitments. We will:

- Embed co-production across all aspects of our work so that parent carers and children and young people with SEND are recognised as equal partners and are fully involved in decision making;
- Work in partnership to promote transparency and consistency in decision making and delivery of support;
- Embrace new ways of working to support and enable innovative practice;
- Commit to identify and understand the challenges faced by our families who have children with SEND;
- Commit to providing good quality services with clear and accessible information;
- Prepare young people for adult life and independence from the earliest years; and
- Ensure that moves between services or changes in provision and support across all ages are smooth, seamless and supportive.

## **Improving our Services – what our Children, Young People and Families say:**

We work in partnership with Dorset Parent Carer Council and listen to our families with children and young people with SEND. We will continue to be ambitious and continuously

improve our services so they can positively impact the lives of our children and young people.

In January 2021 we issued a SEND parent carer survey and families told us that:

**What we do well - our parents and carers have told us the following:**

- Families who are supported by locality teams have had positive experiences;
- Positive experience from families working with our wider SEND system including Education, Health and Care, who support SEND families;
- Families who are supported have had positive experiences through the EHC Plan process within their educational settings;
- Families have had positive experiences of the EHC Plan annual review process within their educational settings;
- Positive experiences from families through the graduated approach at SEN support within their educational settings;
- Positive experiences from families with their SEND travel arrangements; and
- Our newsletters and advice letters realise good take up and engagement from SEND families.

However, for others there are areas of our SEND system which can be difficult, and their experiences are that:

- understanding how the system works is difficult, this means that they can feel lost and sometimes find it difficult to find out what is available for their child
- they worry their child will struggle to 'fit in' or make friends and cannot always access services e.g. out of hours school provision or after school clubs
- there is too long a wait for some assessments and therapies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy and Educational Psychology and not enough of these services;
- some feel that getting an EHC Plan is the only way of accessing the support their child needs
- services are often not joined up, don't always work together and families have to give the same information repeatedly, to different teams
- they worry the County hasn't got the right range of educational provision to meet their child's or young person's needs, and sometimes that there is not enough of it;
- they worry about how their children are supported in mainstream schools;
- their child with SEND, their siblings and themselves as parent carers, are facing increasing levels of anxiety and poor mental health; and
- they are concerned about their child's future, and the 'cliff-edge' of adult services.

**Improving our strategy means that our children and their families in the future will say that:**

- we are listened to and respected;
- our needs are understood, acknowledged, and provided for;
- our voice and views are at the heart of all decision making for our child;
- we are involved in co-production of services and support at all levels of the system;
- we have access to good quality and impartial information, advice, and support;
- we have regular communication that is tailored to specific needs;
- our needs are identified early;
- the pathways to access help are transparent and equitable;
- we have more help from a range of agencies for our children and young people on SEN Support;
- we can access a variety of short breaks and after school activities;
- the professionals that work in partnership with parents are well trained and empathetic, and work flexibly around us with a person centred approach;
- we are welcomed and included, and we are accessing education, social and leisure opportunities within our local community;
- we are no longer excluded from schools; and
- we know what to expect and when moving from children's to adult's services; planning for adult life starts early is person-centred and aspirational.

### **The National Context**

Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act reforms in 2014, we have used data to better understand our SEND children and young people so that we are able to commission the right education, health and care services. New strategies have been formed to ensure that provision is improved and more of our children can and will remain in their local communities, an example of such is the Capital SEND strategy 2020-2025.

Dorset is committed to inclusion in mainstream and we firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs. Therefore, building the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities will ensure more children can attend a local school.

Strengthening the capacity of our whole school system, maintained and academies support more children in mainstream and meeting need at every is at the core of our strategy. However, we recognise that whilst most children and young people will be supported in a mainstream school, some need more specialist support in specialist provision.

The Dorset Council Plan 2020-2024 sets out that the Council will provide more specialist education for children with complex communication and learning needs. The published

Children and Young People Plan 2020-2023 develops the strategy further within its key priority area: Best Education for All. This priority area is supported by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Capital Strategy 2020-25, which will create approximately 500 places across Dorset, including 280 places at the former St Mary's site, places will start to be available from January 2022.

There are currently two Free School (Special School) projects underway with the Department for Education (DfE) to expand specialist provision for Dorset. The first of these is Harbour School, which is set to create 160 places for children and young people aged 9 – 19 years old. They plan to have 96 places for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and 64 places for children and young people with high functioning Social, emotional and mental health needs. The school is currently open with a small number of students in temporary accommodation while the DfE build a new school on the old Bovington Middle School site. The project has a planned completion date of September 2022.

The second project is a planned 75 place free school which was granted a capital allocation in 2019. The DfE have undertaken a long-term feasibility study on a site and are now working toward the opening of a new Special Free School in Osprey Quay in September 2023 which will support children and young people with SEND in the 14-19 age range.

Over the last 12 months we have worked with Dorset Parent Carer Council, our early years settings, schools, and other education providers to identify the changing needs of our SEND population. We have listened to what we need to improve in our local services so that we can meet the needs of our SEND children and families. The introduction of our Locality teams brings together colleagues from across Early Years, Early Help, Children's Social Care, Educational Psychology, SEND and Inclusion services under the leadership of new Heads of Locality and Strategy that link together with our CCG Health partners. We are explicit that "SEND is everyone's business".

Through the new integrated structure, colleagues work in multi-agency integrated teams with a line manager for their locality. Everyone in the team has access to the specialist expertise they need to support children and young people early. The key outcome for our SEND children and young people, is that the practitioner support they are receiving through our graduated approach is based locally, in a team that have closer familiarity with the educational settings, communities and with coordinated across education, health and care.

Specifically, within early years, we have recently changed our approach to Early SEND Support funding, and this is now open for all children not only those who are accessing 2, 3 or 4-year-olds funding.

Portage Consultants support children where concerns are related to social communication and associated difficulties that are not age appropriate, significant global developmental and / or physical delay or disorder, difficulties associated with a diagnosed medical condition or syndrome which may indicate long term, complex needs or continued lack of progress despite targeted interventions having been put into place.

Our approach allows us to understand more about children's needs earlier and to use that information to inform our planning for the next stage in the child's life in preparation for moving onto school.

This year, Adults and Children's Social Care in partnership with Dorset's Education Service commissioned a report into the Birth to Settled Adulthood offer (summer 2021). The review identified the need for an improvement programme. Activity to refresh the joint vision and priorities across the Dorset partnership, as well as focused work on earlier co-production to ensure that those young people who require support as they transition to adulthood are able to be fully involved in their journey.

### **Progress in Dorset since 2017**

Between 23 January and 27 January 2017, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the Dorset local area to judge its effectiveness in implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. As a result of the findings of the inspection, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) determined that a Written Statement of Action was required to address four areas of significant weakness in the local area's practice. The former Dorset County Council (DCC) and the NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement.

As part of Ofsted's revisit in February 2019, inspectors were of the opinion that local area had made sufficient progress in two of the four areas identified, however the local area had not made sufficient progress to improve the two remaining areas of weaknesses and sustained the Written Statement of Action.

The Department for Education met with the Local Area the on 11 January 2021 to discuss progress against the Local Area's Accelerated Progress Plan. In response to the progress made by the Local Area, the Department for Education stated that:

- "We are reassured that the strength and commitment of current leaders within the LA and CCG will continue improvements across the SEND system throughout Dorset."
- "Based on the evidence provided, the Department and NHS England have concluded that you have demonstrated clear and sustained progress. This means that Dorset no longer requires formal monitoring of its SEND system."

The consensus of the Department for Education's view with that of the Local Area's own self-assessment of the progress made since monitoring began, demonstrates the strength and commitment of the local area leadership to continue improvements across the SEND system throughout Dorset.

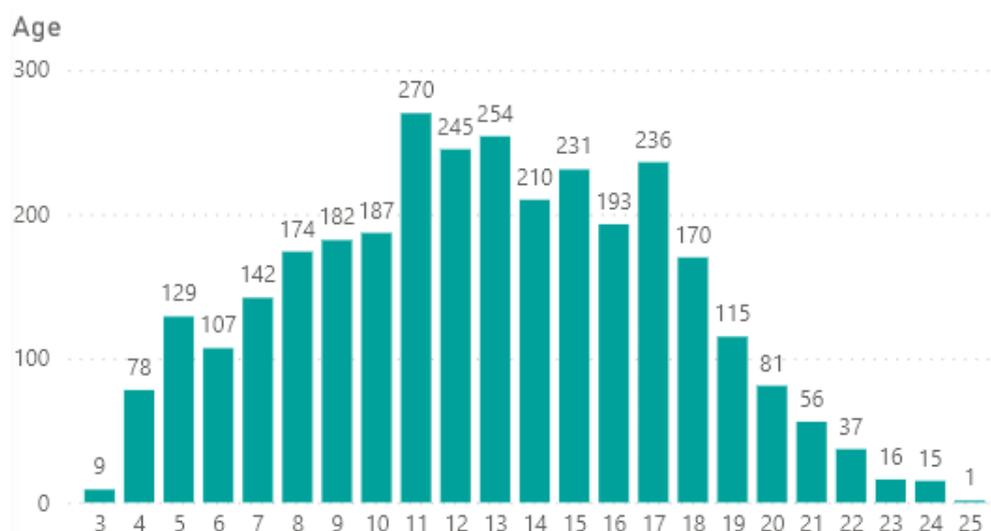
## The Local Context – SEND Statistics and Dorset

The total population of Dorset is 378,508 (2019 mid-year estimate), this includes 74,765 children and young people aged 0-19 representing 20% of the total population (89,573 aged 0-24).

We have 159 schools in Dorset - 1 All through School, 36 First Schools, 2 Infant Schools, 2 Junior Schools, 10 Middle Schools, 80 Primary Schools, 4 Pupil Referral Units, 15 Secondary Schools, 6 Special Schools and 3 Upper Schools. There are 34 different languages spoken in Dorset schools. 5% of school age children are from black and minority ethnic communities compared to 35% nationally.

## Early years age children – SEND profile (January 2020)

From school census data 2020/21 the most common primary need for children under 5 is speech, language, and communication needs (639 children, 10% have an EHCP in place) followed by Social, Emotional and Mental Health (102 children, 15% have an EHCP in place). The majority of these children receive SEN Support.



In the January 2021 early years census, 78 children under 5 were able to access further support through Disability Access Funding in their local setting. A total of 5,945 children accessed 2, 3 and 4-year-old early education funding.

In 2020-21, 205 children were supported to access early education and childcare through their early years setting applying for Early SEND Support funding. 29% of this cohort are boys who have communication and language needs and 7% are girls. 5% of the cohort are boys with PSED and 2.5% are girls.

## School Age children and Young People – SEND Profile Statistics (July 2021)

The profile of SEND and educational outcomes in Dorset shows that

4% of our children in Dorset Schools have an Education, Care and Health plan with a further 14% accessing SEN Support. These figures are in line with the National profile for EHCPs at: 4%, the SEN Support national average is 12% meaning that Dorset is slightly higher in this regard. The table shows how this picture has changed over time.

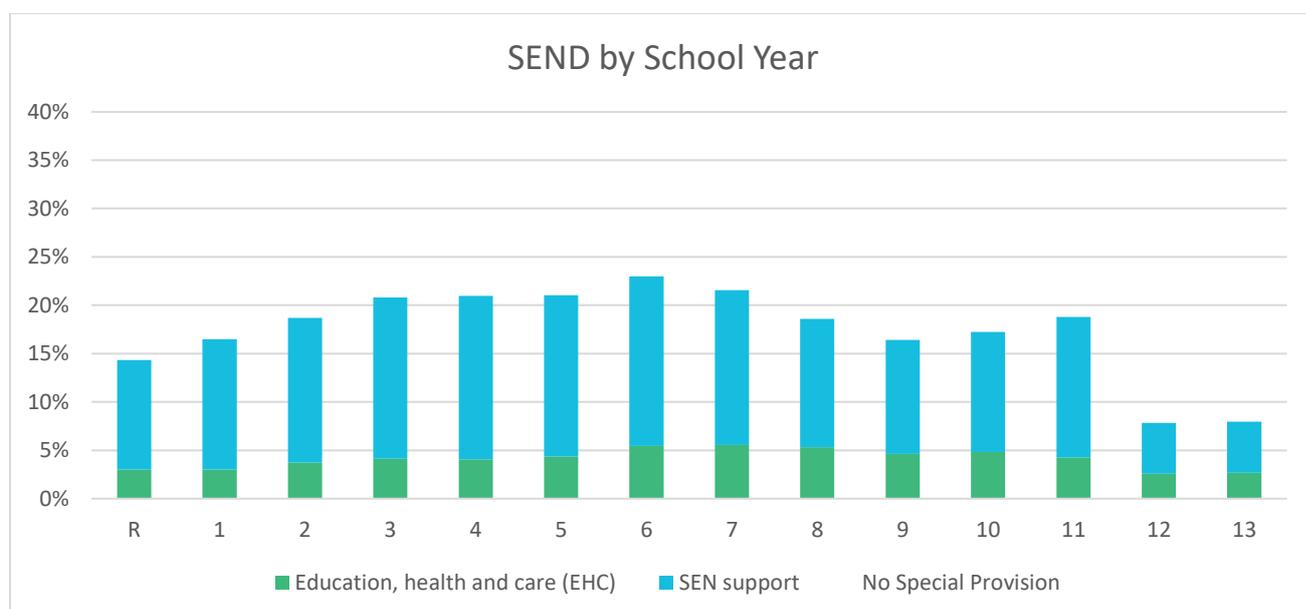
Total SEN	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Dorset	16%	16%	18%	17%	15%	18%
South West	15%	15%	16%	15%	16%	17%
National	14%	14%	15%	15%	15%	16%

**Gender:** Children with SEND are more likely to be boys; 64% of Dorset SEND are boys (62% SEN Support and 73% EHCP) – this is in line with National and South West. There are variations by primary need: for Autism Spectrum Condition it is 75% and for Speech and Language Difficulties it is 72%.

**Free School Meals:** 18% of children are FSM Eligible in Dorset, 30% of SEN Support are and 36% of EHC. As with Gender there are differences by primary need: 41% of SEMH children are eligible for FSM.

**Deprivation:** The Income deprivation indicator affecting children index (IDACI) splits all areas in the country into 10 deciles. Whilst Dorset is amongst the least deprived areas in the country there are areas of deprivation within the county. SEND children tend to come from areas with higher deprivation – 19% of PMLD children live in the 2 most deprived deciles, compared to 7% of non-SEND children; for SEMH children it is 13%.

The table below shows our SEND children and young people by school year.



For our Post 16 learners at FE College or Specialist post 16 institutions the following applies:

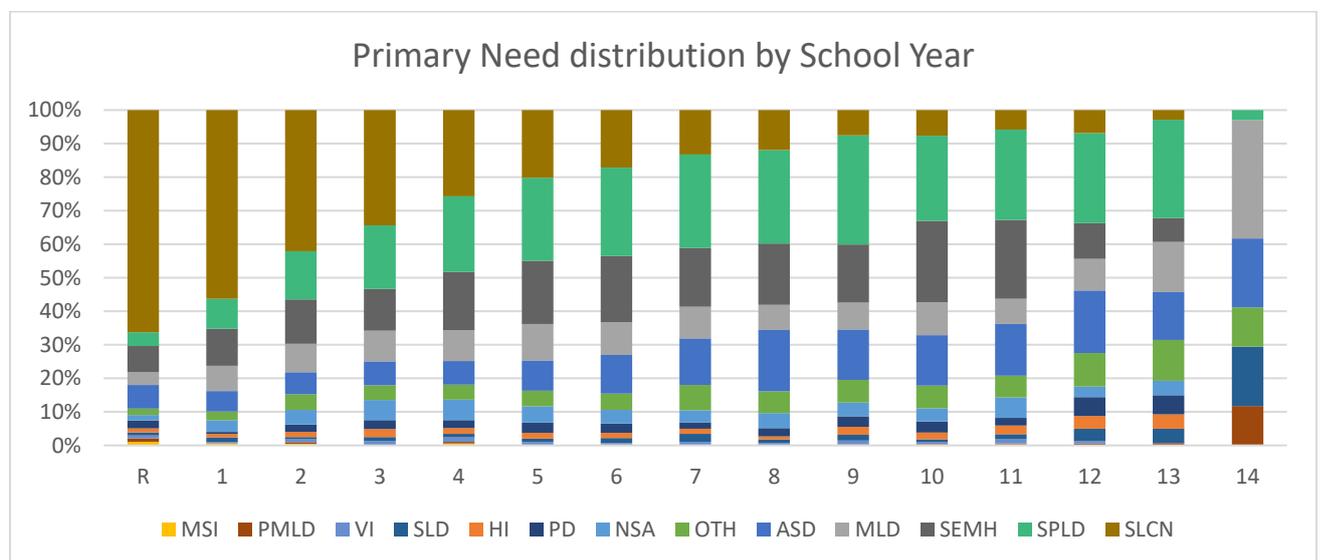
- Number 16-24 year old Dorset residents with EHCP learning at FE Colleges - 325
- Number 16-24 year old Dorset residents with EHCP learning at Special Post 16 institutions – 134.

We celebrate the work of our sixth forms and colleges and are continuing to build on our strong relationships with them to look at how we can enhance their provision.

### Areas of Need

The first most common primary need in Dorset is Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) (28% of the EHCP cohort); the national average is 30%. The second most common primary need is Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) at 21% of the EHCP cohort; the national average is 14%. The third most common primary need is Speech, Language and Communications needs (SLCN) - 16% of the EHCP cohort; the national average is 15%. Together these primary needs make up 65% of the cohort.

The table overleaf shows how primary need changes by school year. It demonstrates that Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) are distributed more towards primary years, whilst specific learning difficulties are towards the older years.



### Educational settings for children and young people with an EHCP

Dorset's profile for education placements for our children young people is broadly similar to the profile in the South West. We have 41% of our children and young people with SEND accessing education in mainstream settings, compared with 43% in the South West and 40% nationally. A further 34% are placed in special schools compared to 31% in the South West and 36% nationally. 13% of our young people are in receipt of education through

Further Education colleges compared to 16% in the South West and 17% nationally, Dorset currently has 3% accessing Alternative Provision which is a higher profile when compared with the South West at 1% and the national profile at 1%, our Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) cohort currently stands at 2% and is below the South West average at 4% and national average at 2.5%.

The remaining percentages constitutes those who are either within Early Years Provision or being Electively Home Educated or Educated Elsewhere. The profile for these placements follows national and South West trends.

This means that a focus is needed to reduce the number of children and young people in Alternative provision through an increase in focus on inclusive education in our mainstream settings. We must also focus on ensuring that more of our young people can access Further Education in their communities to support their future plans.

### **Educational Outcomes for children and young people with SEND (data is 2019 due to delays from COVID Education data sets)**

Nationally and in Dorset children and young people with SEND do not achieve academically in line with their peers across all phases of education. This is a key area of focus for the Council. The information below provides an overview of Dorset's current educational outcomes:

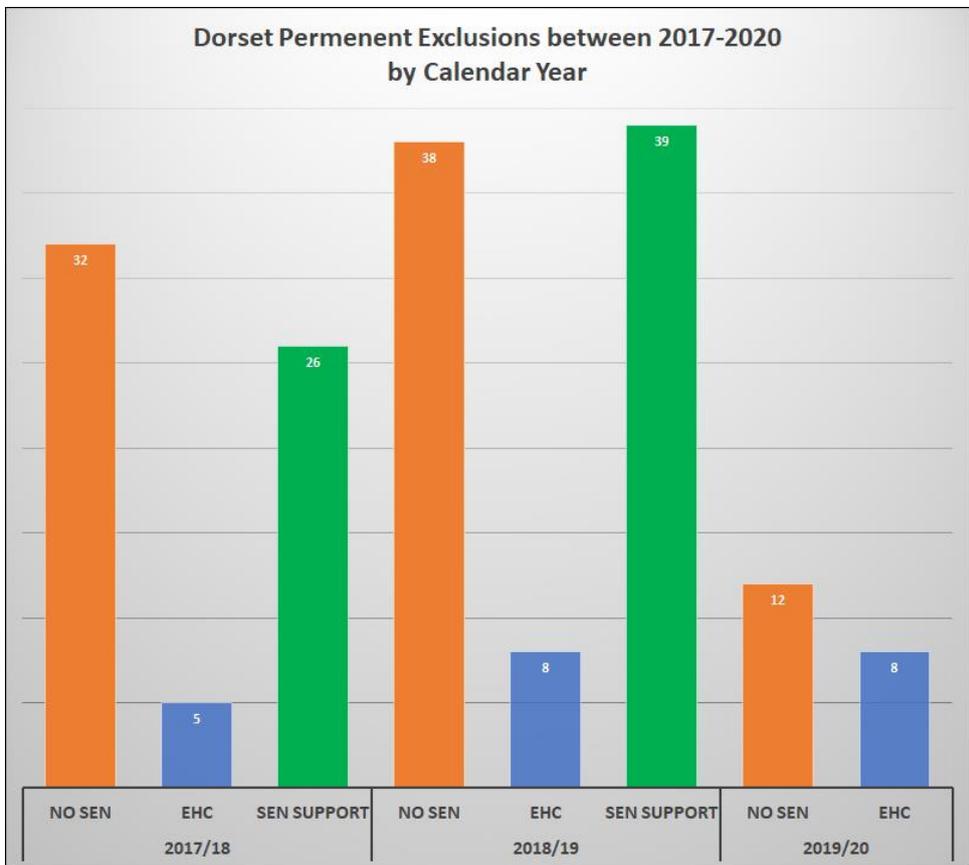
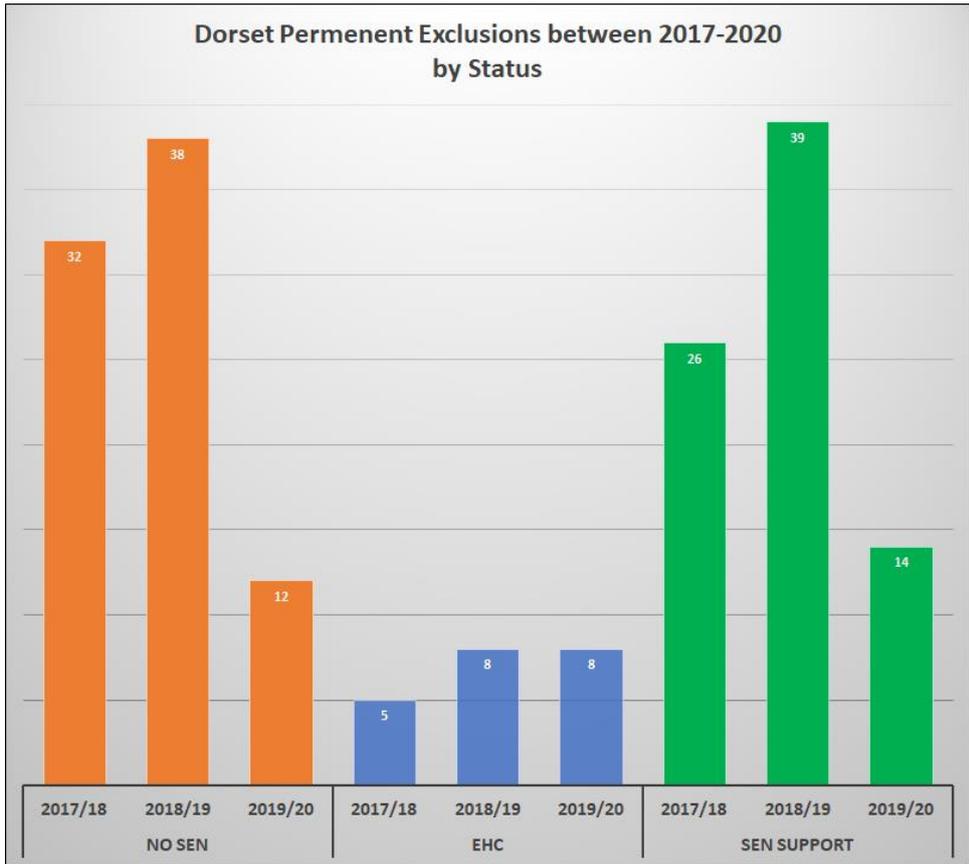
- At the end of reception year 4% of EHCP children achieve a 'Good Level of Development, this compares to 5% nationally. Positively 38% of our SEN Support children achieve this level, compared to 29% nationally.
- For the year 1 phonics assessment the pattern is similar. 13% of EHC children in Dorset (20% nationally) and 52% of SEN Support (48% nationally) achieve a pass.
- At Key Stage 1 both groups outperform the national picture, in Maths for example 18% of EHC and 40% of EHC achieve the expected standard; compared to 14% and 36% nationally.
- At Key Stage 2 All Dorset children tend to underperform compared to the national, and this is also true for SEND children. Progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 is below average and 20% of SEND children achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, compared to 20% nationally.
- Key Stage 4 based on centre assessed grades at LA level were released for 2020. These are detailed below. The table below shows percentage achieved for Any SEN at Grade 4 our higher and then provides the percentage achieved for our EHCP and SEN support cohort.

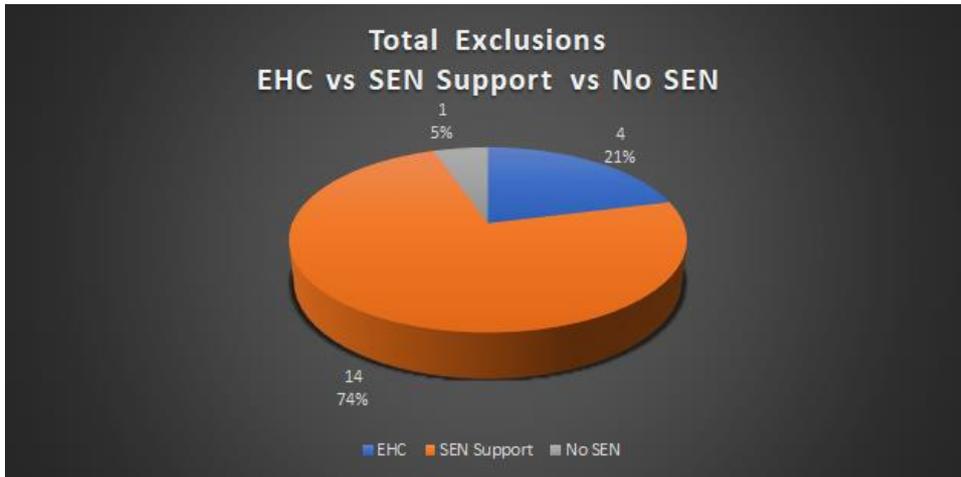
2020	Grade 4 or higher in GCSE English & Maths		
	Dorset	South West	National
No SEN	79%	79%	78%
Any SEN	31%	35%	33%
SEN State EHC	12%	15%	14%
SEN Support	37%	41%	40%

- Whilst non-SEN children achieved grade 4 or higher in GCSE English & Maths in line or higher than the national this is not matched by SEND pupils.
- Key Stage 5 performance (based on SEND status in year 11) based on the percentage of 19 year olds qualified to Level 2 with English & Maths shows that all SEN children overall outperform the national (37% compared to 31%), although this is driven largely by good performance of SEN Support children: EHC children in Dorset achieved 12% compared to national 15% have the highest rates of exclusion (DfE, 2016).

### Exclusion Data for Children with SEND

The tables below show the exclusion levels for children and young people with SEND in Dorset. Please note that this data covers the COVID period where many of our SEND children and young people were not at school and therefore this affects the numbers significantly.





It is clear from the information above that more must be done to support inclusive practice for our SEND children and young people as they are disproportionately over represented when compared with children without SEND.

## **Health's Commitment to Children and Young People with SEND in Dorset**

Dorset Clinical Commissioning Groups (DCCG) Statement of Intent commits to:

- Commissioning services in partnership with our Local Authorities for children and young people aged 0-25 years old with SEND.
- Contributing to the Local Offer to include information about health care services.
- Working in partnership with Parent Carer Forums, support groups representing young people with SEND, Health Watch, the voluntary sector and community groups.
- Ensuring there is health care provision as specified in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) as part of our commissioning role.

### **Our NHS Health organisations commit to:**

- Supporting the identification of children and young people requiring SEND provision.
- Responding to requests for advice for EHCPs within the required time frame and to review EHCPs when invited to.
- Work with the Local Authorities to contribute to the local offer of services available.
- Working closely with Parent Carer Forums, support groups representing young people with SEND, Health Watch, the voluntary sector and community groups.
- Contributing to regular reviews of children and young people with EHCPs.

Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group works in partnership with Local Authorities, providers and Parent Carer Forums to continually develop a shared vision and strategy to ensure the development of integrated, Child and young person focussed pathways. Our shared vision and strategy for children and young people with SEND are in line with the NHS long term plan and has a focus on improved outcomes for children and their families

The NHS long term plan sets out a vision for the future of the NHS noting that children and young people represent a third of our country. A key message from stakeholders during the development of the long-term plan was that the needs of children are diverse, complex and need a higher profile at a national level. Dorset CCG have heard similar messages from our local stakeholders, that the needs of Dorset CYP need a higher profile at a local level.

The national CYP transformation programme has been established to oversee the commitments of the NHS long term plan with a focus on integrating services, improving the quality of care to CYP with long term conditions, such as (obesity and asthma) identifying local system priorities and reducing inequalities.

Dorset CCG will work with partners to align areas of improvement, The NHS long term plan and the SEND reforms are interdependent, for example there is a higher percentage of SEND CYP seen in obesity groups in Dorset and by working together with partners the Dorset system can support inclusion and enable access for all, including supporting parents/carers.

Children with SEND are often supported by a variety of health professionals, including universal services available to all such as GP and pharmacies as well as specialised services that may include Paediatricians, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language Therapy. There is scope for improved joint commissioning, delivery of services and working between health and all partners to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Dorset CCG is committed to the development of our workforce who working directly with our children and young people. Additional training and support for health providers to understand the range of need and provide high quality, timely contributions to the EHC process has been developed with our partners and will contribute to improving outcomes.

Dorset CCG aims to support all people in Dorset to lead healthier lives, this reflects a need to prevent illness and also reduce health inequalities for our population. A key part of reducing health inequalities for our Children and Young People is via the Learning Disability register, which enables reasonable adjustments to be noted and the availability of Annual Health checks which are available to all people with a diagnosed Learning Disability from age 14 onwards.

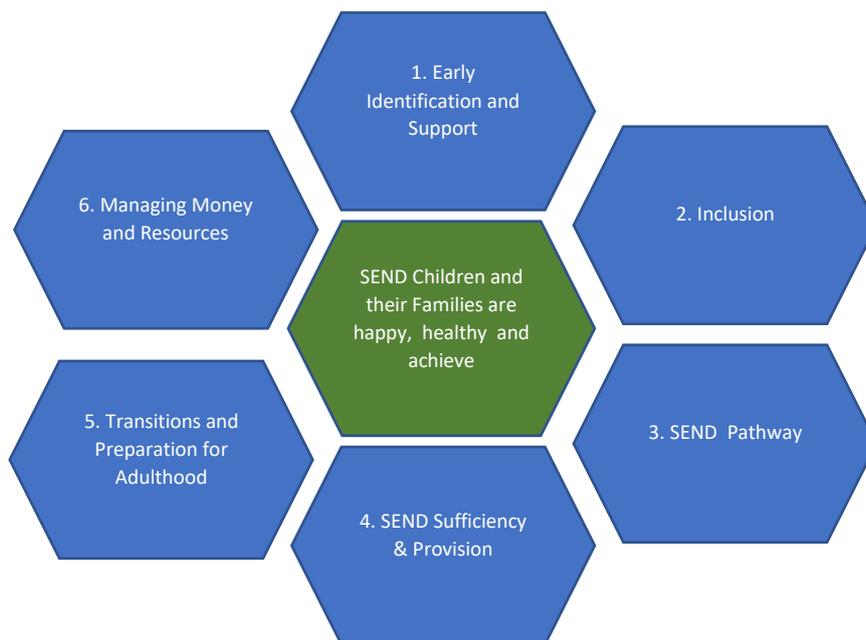
The 2021-22 data for quarters 1 and 2 indicates an increase in the uptake of Annual Health checks, compared to 2020-21. There is a Dorset wide commitment to further increase this uptake by raising awareness of the register and checks amongst young people, considering alternative ways of offering the checks, such as within the school setting for example and creating young people training and resources for GP practices.

## Our Priorities

Working with Dorset Parent Carer Council and Dorset's Strategic Alliance Group we have identified a set of strategic priorities for the next two years for the Local Area partners including Education, Health.

These strategic priorities build on the work and progress which has taken place over the last 18 months and are designed to strengthen our SEND system further, at pace.

Progress against the priorities and associated actions will be reported through the Best Education for All Sub-group of the Children and Young Peoples' plan. This will take the form of a quarterly report from the Local Authority and DCO from Health.



## Priority One: Early Identification and Support

### Vision:

We will ensure that children's needs are identified, assessed and supported both early in life and when issues arise.

### Outcomes:

- Our early help and intervention support results in families being supported at first need with fewer needing an Education Care and Health needs assessment.
- Parent carers and young people know when SEN Support is in place and are involved in creating and reviewing their SEN Support Plan.
- The Graduated approach is understood and used by all parents, carers and professionals when supporting families. Parents understand the system better and know how to access support.
- A Parent/Carer friendly version of the Graduated Approach in Dorset is in place.
- There will be an increased awareness of Early Help, intervention and inclusion across the county in all key professional roles.
- Children, young people and their families are able to access immediate advice and support.
- There will be a consistent offer and range of services and interventions for emotional health and wellbeing, applying the iThrive Framework. THRIVE is a framework for emotional health and Mental Health developed by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families and the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust. The THRIVE framework is an integrated, person centred, and needs led approach to delivering mental health services for children, young people and their families. It conceptualises need in five categories; **Thriving, Getting Advice and Signposting, Getting Help, Getting More Help and Getting Risk Support**. This approach has been used to develop whole school approaches for emotional health and wellbeing – I Can Problem Solve, Academic Resilience Approach, Mental health Support Teams in Schools

Priority Number	Action:
P1/001	Launch the Dorset Education and Advice Line so that children, young people and their families can access immediate support to discuss their worries and concerns. We will monitor key themes or concerns and adapt the Local Offer as required to improve access to support and advice.
P1/002	Ensure that all Education Health Care Needs Assessments are responded to within the statutory expected timeframes and that a tracker system is in place and consistently used keeping parents informed of progress.

P1/003	During Academic Year 2021/22 carry out regular SENCO briefings on the Graduated Approach and provide focused training support where needed for all Early Years, Schools and Further Education settings and use the Graduated Approach in their daily practice. This will mean that parents and carers feel better supported.
P1/004	Work with Early Years settings to develop guidance for applications for delayed entry to school and applications to place children out of year group that fully considers the longer-term implications for children with SEND.
P1/005	Work with Dorset Parent Carer Council to ensure that co-production takes place for all key services pertaining to early help and identification i.e. policy changes and is represented at all key decision-making points with a focus on improving the Local Offer.
P1/006	Achieve an increased awareness in early years, education, health and care settings of inclusion issues and strategies / interventions. This will support vulnerable children and young people and adults with LD. It will be delivered through an inclusion training offer from the Outreach Inclusion team alongside our education and early help teams and close working with the Paediatric Team, Mental Health Support teams in schools, ID-CAMHS (SWIFTS) and the Dorchester Opportunity Early Years Setting. Local data will be used to focus on high need areas,
P1/007	To ensure that all early years and school SENCOs and SENCO leads are aware of the need to review their SEN support plans as well as all Education Health and Care Plans; this will be delivered as part of SENCO support and Graduated Approach training.
P1/008	Utilising locality trend data on attendance, absence and exclusions we will work with schools to ensure that children's SEN and care status are fully considered in relation to school policies, including behaviour and safeguarding practice.
P1/009	All interventions and services that provide support for emotional health and wellbeing use the Thrive Framework in their approach and documentation.
P1/010	The Mental Health teams in Schools will work in partnership with education settings to meet the needs of children and young people with mild to moderate presentations via advice, support and whole school approaches in line with the Thrive Framework. Clear information is available on the service offer and pathways for access to CAMHS as well as referral criteria. Investment in expanding access to community based mental health services. View seeking work on mental health services for children and

	young people has been completed with stakeholders, including service users and parents/carers.
P1/011	A new model of speech, language and communication provision will be delivered in Dorset. The new model will promote improved early identification through the provision of high-quality materials and information to parents, carers and the wider workforce about general child development and specific speech, language and communication development. The model will also include strong universal and targeted provision to ensure that every child and young person receives the level of support matched to need.
P1/012	The All-age Autism Pathway review will bring about rapid improvement across the whole system, strengthening the pathways and support offer for children and young people with neurodevelopmental disorders. The outputs from the review will include a pathway that provides early assessment of need, rather than diagnosis, support, pre, during and post assessment, transition and an education and training model to support a better understanding of Autism across the system,
P1/013	To increase the uptake of Annual Health Checks for young people over the age of 14 years of age with a diagnosis of a learning disability by raising awareness of the register and checks amongst young people, considering alternative ways of offering the checks, such as within the school setting for example and creating young people training and resources for GP practices.
P1/014	To continue to develop high quality health pathways for Early Years to enable early identification of needs and improved outcomes for. Priority areas include continuation of partnership working between SALT, Public Health Nursing, (Health Visiting) Portage and all partners in Early Years settings.

## Priority Two: Inclusion

### Vision:

We will ensure that across Dorset that there is a commitment to deliver inclusive services and support for and with children, young people and adults with SEND.

Dorset is committed to inclusion in mainstream settings and we firmly believe every teacher is a teacher of special needs. Therefore, building the capabilities of our mainstream schools to support more children and young people with SEND will ensure more children can attend a local school. Strengthening the capacity of our maintained school system to support more children in mainstream and meeting need at the lowest level is at the core of our strategy.

### Outcomes:

- Working with our Early Years and Schools settings we will agree an approach for a future Inclusion Fund for Early Years and School settings to support practice innovation in increasing the numbers of our SEND children in mainstream settings.
- There will be a reduction in the number of children and young people with SEND placed in specialist provision and out of county high cost placements.
- Our early years, schools' and Further Education Colleges' confidence to work with and support our children and young people with SEND grows.
- We will focus on those children with a EHCP and without a school place and ensure provision is secured.
- We will realise a reduction in the number of children and young people accessing Alternative Provision arrangements and those who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET).
- There will be no permanent exclusions of children and young people with SEND and a reduction in fixed term exclusions.

Priority Number	Action:
P2/001	Working with Schools to develop and agree an Education and Inclusion strategy. To co-produce and promote, including with early years settings and schools, a Dorset wide self-assessment tool for Inclusion. This will cover best practice for children and young people with SEND and across all categories of need this will consider how health services can support inclusion.
P2/002	Ensure that 100% of Annual Reviews of Education Health and Care Plans take place each year and that there is an improved focus on co-produced SMART outcomes and that this is embedded across all key statutory partners. This includes the timeliness of any amendments within the plan.

P2/003	Introduce and embed a revised Multi-Agency Quality Assurance process across the partnership reviewing the quality of Annual Reviews so that each agency is held to account for local service improvements and that the experience of the child is understood.
P2/004	To embed processes and tracking systems to ensure that there are no children and young people with SEND without a school place or provision for more than 6 weeks and that those known to the service are reviewed through the Children Missing Out on Education processes.
P2/005	To co-produce a multi-agency training package for Social Care staff on SEND and Inclusion and for SEND teams on Social Care. This will enable better understanding and delivery of services to families across the system this will include all services from Early Years through to specialist services.
P2/006	To review the services to our NEET children and ensure that this priority group are supported within SEN services (Education and Advocacy) and Adult Social Care.
P2/007	To review the current use of Alternative Provision arrangements and reduce these where possible. To review the Alternative Provision framework and recommission this service with a revised framework.
P2/008	Working with Inclusion Teams to ensure that the voice and experience of the child is understood in the context of inclusion and share at the Best Education for All Board.
P2/009	To ensure that the Local Offer provides up to date, relevant information regarding universal and specialist services for parents and carers to easily access.
P2/010	To carry out SEN reviews in priority schools where the achievement gap for children with SEN is the greatest and higher levels of exclusion.
P2/011	Launch the Local Area Partnership agreement and ensure that all stakeholders are committed to this agreement and focus on ensuring the needs of our SEND children and young people are considered at key decision points.
P2/012	Set Up Innovation Inclusion Fund for SEND working in collaboration with Schools and EY settings.

### Priority Three: SEND Pathway

#### Vision:

We will ensure that children and young people with SEND, and their families can access the right support from services - easily and quickly.

#### Outcome:

- Joint working and joint commissioning arrangements are in place that recognises the value of working together to provide a seamless and effective service which will benefit the community and prevent children and young people falling through the gaps.
- We will have clear partnership and decision-making arrangements to jointly commission services for children and young people, with mechanisms for agreeing priorities for the commissioning of services.
- The Local Offer will be improved and enable families in understanding and navigating their needs.
- There will be a reduction in the duplication of meetings and families will only need to tell their story once using technology to broaden access and coordination of our work.
- Short break and respite opportunities for children and adults are available and meet the needs of families.
- Children and Young People with an EHCP will have their primary need clearly and accurately identified as a result of evidence gathered in professional advice.
- Health Advice will be high quality and provided in a timely way to contribute to the EHC process that includes the Annual Review.
- Health commissioned services for SEND will meet statutory requirements and the needs of the local area by delivering integrated effective and quality pathways. Children and Young People with SEND will have their health needs met at the right time, in the right place, by the right person through integrated pathways.
- There are clear pathways to support joint working between partner agencies and families to enable early and appropriate identification of SEND across all settings.
- The system will understand the impact of services/provision on the outcomes for children and young people through agreed system measures and outcomes across the partnership.

Priority Number	Action:
P3/001	A new model of speech, language and communication provision will be delivered in Dorset based on a joint commissioning strategy. The new model will promote improved early identification. The model will also include strong

	universal and targeted provision to ensure that every child and young person receives the level of support matched to need.
P3/002	We will review the Short Breaks offer that is available to Dorset families with the aim of increasing the amount and variety of provision to meet the individual needs of children.
P3/003	Working with Dorset Parent Carer Council and Dorset CCG to agree the necessary changes on the Local Offer. To relaunch the Local Offer and ensure that reach and performance data is reviewed quarterly at Best Education for All meeting. To ensure that the Local Offer remains well resourced, updated and is reported as high priority asset for our SEND parents and carers.
P3/004	Dorset Council to develop its Workforce strategy with partners, ensuring that all key delivery roles working with children and young people with SEND have access to and receive appropriate training.
P3/005	To ensure that Health are represented at key panels e.g., Locality and Multi Agency Resource Panel (MARP) so that joint decisions are made in a consistent, timely and efficient manner.
P3/006	Dorset Council's Getting to Good SEND plan is delivered against and key statutory measures and operational metrics are improved for each locality in Dorset.
P3/007	The profile of SEND in the wider community will be raised by developing a SEND Communications Strategy with partners. This will use a 'values'-based approach to engage with providers and the community on the positive impact disabled people can make on the workforce and society.
P3/008	All staff within the Virtual School will work closely with the locality SEND teams and Children in Care teams to ensure that all Children in Care are attending school and are appropriately supported.
P3/009	Every School will have a nominated Educational Psychologist to support each setting in identifying whole school and individual case specific approaches for supporting SEND pupils in their mainstream setting.
P3/010	We will ensure that we keep our SEND children at the heart of our decisions and that the local pathway and provision is understood across all services e.g. Early Help, Social Care teams. All new Social Workers and Early Help Workers will have an induction programme with the SEND teams.
P3/011	To deliver the Mental Health Teams model across all Schools, offering advice, support and whole school approaches to support Children and Young People with mild to moderate emotional and mental health needs.

P3/012	Analyse the high SEMH profile (primary area of need) in Dorset and review the pathway through focused audits to identify what areas of improvement are needed across the system and align with the Pan-Dorset Emotional Health and Wellbeing strategy.
P3/013	The CCG will improve its data systems to predict need and to plan effectively how we will meet the needs of children and young people in Dorset, considering both clinical and non-clinical factors.

## Priority Four: SEND Sufficiency and Provision

### Vision:

To ensure that the Education provision for all children and young people with SEND is increased so that our children can stay in Dorset and thrive in their local communities. This includes access to Health services, Early Years, Post-16, and adults with Learning Disabilities (LD).

### Outcomes:

- A joint commissioning strategy for children and young people with SEND and adults with LD will be in place.
- We will have a clear evidence base that supports the allocation of funding to further develop our specialist provision and services.
- There is a reduction of delays in families accessing Health services such as initial assessments for neuro diverse presentations.
- There is an improvement in the waiting times for specific health services where there is the greatest demand and a timely response for Children, Young People, their families and carers.
- More of our young people are accessing further education opportunities in mainstream settings.
- There is a reduction in the number of specialist out of county placements.

Priority Number	Action:
P4/001	Deliver against the Dorset Council SEND Capital Strategy 2020-2025 to ensure that there is an increase in local provision in key areas and that efficiencies of spend are realised.
P4/002	To open St Mary's and ensure that this new provision meets the expected service level standards and reduces the need for out of area placements with a reduction in the average placement cost for these children or young people.
P4/003	Dorset Council's Children's Commissioning team and Dorset CCG will contribute towards the Children's Chapter for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapter on Children with Disabilities. The chapter will be in place and linked to Health and Well Being Board, Strategic Alliance and Joint Commissioning Board.
P4/004	To develop our SEMH offer to support children to stay in mainstream provision. Working with Inclusion Leads and our Educational Psychologists we will engage specialist support to work at an earlier stage with children to stabilise placements and prevent exclusion.

P4/005	To develop the emotional health and wellbeing pathway in line with the THRIVE framework and the EHWP strategy, with a focus on expanding access to community based mental health services including the development of a Dorset Gateway Service, developing services to meet the needs of 16–25-year-olds and the development of a crisis offer to support admission avoidance.
P4/006	To conclude the Pan Dorset Health review of the specific Health services that are currently under pressure due to sufficiency issues e.g., Speech and Language Services and Autism Spectrum Condition diagnosis and support. Our future vision is for greater access and improved support for all, with or without a diagnosis (2022).
P4/007	Dorset Council to collate accurate data by locality for all SEND educational and/or residential packages to ensure analysis by setting or categorisation of need to drive improvement areas to reduce high cost and out of area placements.
P4/008	Dorset CCG to embed an agreed minimum data set for SEND Key Performance Indicators to ensure a clear line of reporting into the organisation, with clear links to future commissioning intentions
P4/009	For Health and the Local Authority to work together within and across partners, to secure cost-effective commissioning of placements outside of Dorset reviewing placement profiles to develop local provision where possible. With a recognition that placements outside of Dorset may still be required for a small number of children in exceptional circumstances.
P4/010	Services within Health, and particularly those significantly impacted by COVID, e.g., Direct Therapies such as Physiotherapy and Speech and Language, are undergoing Reset and Recovery programmes.
P4/011	To work with Adults Commissioning to support the birth to settled adulthood programme ensuring that tracking systems are in place across children's and adults services to ensure person centred support focused on outcomes.

## Priority Five: Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Vision:

### Transitions:

We will ensure that transitions between phases of education or changes in provision and support across all ages are smooth and supportive.

### Preparation for Adulthood:

We expect that young people with SEND should have **equal life chances** as they move into adulthood. This includes employment and higher education, housing options and independent living, good health, friends, relationships, community inclusion and choice and control over their lives and support.

### Outcomes:

- For children or young people moving from one phase of education to another transition will be timely, well planned and person centred.
- The Multi-agency independently led Dorset Birth to Settled Adulthood Board will lead the improvement programme that will deliver a vision and ambitious change for those young people who need additional support as they move into adulthood.
- A 14 to 25 co-produced pathway that includes Education, Health and Care will be in place which ensures a person-centred approach based on individual outcomes.
- We will have increased employment and training opportunities for young people and adults with SEND through improved engagement in our communities measured by a reduction of young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) with an EHCP.
- An increase of our young people accessing mainstream provision thereby increasing their potential to build strong community ties.

Priority Number	Action:
P5/001	To ensure that 100% of Annual Reviews for children in transition years are held by end of Autumn Term each year and are attended by a Provision Lead from the Council.
P5/002	To ensure that 100% of Year 9 Annual Reviews have taken place by end of Spring* term.
P5/003	To provide training to all SENCOs across Dorset for Year 9 Annual Reviews to ensure that School lead Annual Reviews are of high quality and focus on future goals and preparation for adulthood outcomes.

P5/004	To continue to build our strategic relationships with Further Education Colleges to ensure that more of our SEND young people can successfully access courses and independent learning in their local community and are engaged with their future plans by the end of the Spring term.
P5/005	To contribute towards the development of the birth to settled adulthood service review and ensure that key transition points are understood across SEND teams. We will ensure that Annual Reviews after year 9 focus on developing a young person's plan towards adulthood with a person-centred approach.
P5/006	Our SEND Services and Children who are Disabled (CWAD) Social Care services work together with Health and Adult Social Care to develop clear plans for the four key areas of Preparation for Adulthood through the Birth to Settled Adulthood Strategy; namely; Education and Employment, Independent Living, Community Inclusion and Health.
P5/007	To ensure that all young people are included in the Adult Social Care Transitions Tracker (as part of Preparation for Adulthood/ Birth to Settled Adulthood) mechanism to ensure that key parties are engaged at the earliest opportunity to support the pathway to adult life.

## Priority Six: Managing Money and Resources

### Introduction to Finance and the budget for supporting our SEND children in Dorset

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for 2021-22 for Dorset is £280.2m., this is the money we receive to support Education in Dorset. The DSG comprises four blocks of grant:

1. The Schools Block which is funding for mainstream schools;
2. the Early Years Block which is funding for 3 and 4 year olds and the 40% most deprived 2 year olds entitlement to 15 or 30 hours of free nursery education;
- 3. the High Needs Block, which for 2021-22 is £42.3m for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; and**
4. the Central Schools Service Block which provides funding of some local authority services for schools to support maintained schools.

The High Needs Block has been overspending for five years; this is a similar picture nationally. As at 2020-21 the cumulative deficit totalled £39.1m. Dorset Council has been spending a higher proportion of its budget on Independent or non-maintained special schools (INMSS) than its statistical neighbours. Despite this cost pressure, all statistical neighbours are incurring significant deficits.

This scenario has brought a continued focus and urgency to the implementation of Dorset Council's High Needs Block Management Strategy.

#### **Vision:**

To ensure the effective and efficient management of SEN funding available through the Dedicated Schools Grant, to maximise the impact of the available resource and the best outcomes for our children and young people.

#### **Outcomes:**

- To reduce the costs to the Dedicated Schools Grant and associated Council revenue budgets through the completion of the SEND Capital Strategy in partnership with all stakeholders.
- To establish a High Needs Block locality budget tracking system to support local teams in better understanding spend and subsequently to identify new opportunities for refocusing investment on early help or more local provision.
- Increased multi-agency oversight of transition to adulthood (including health, housing, education, community safety, children and adult social care).

Priority Number	Action:
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P6/001	Develop a joint commissioning protocol with Health that ensures commissioning decisions on specialist placements outside of the LA area will be made with all agencies supporting the child or adult with Learning Disabilities. These placements will only be made on the evidence that the child or adult's needs cannot be met locally and agreed at the Multi Agency Resource Panel.
P6/002	To work collaboratively with schools and colleges to agree a consistent way of funding schools/settings where the number of high needs pupils attending cannot be reflected adequately in their formula funding.
P6/003	To review the commissioning arrangements for Learning Centres and Resource provision to ensure cost efficiencies are realised.
P6/004	To refine the DSG forecasting processes to ensure that the system is dynamic and responsive to changes throughout the year.
P6/005	Place children in Coombe House School in Shaftesbury in order to support more local places and a reduction in associated high cost out of county placements.
P6/006	To deliver the expansion of Beaucroft Special School to realise an additional 80 places with a particular focus on those in post-16 education.
P6/007	To review future feasibility projects for the expansion of existing special schools and other specialist resource provision.
P6/008	To support the development of new Free School provision in the County for specialist provision e.g. Harbour School and future Free School applications.
P6/009	To establish a financial tracking system for SEND across the system at a localities level and to further explore alternative ways to manage the High Needs Block for EHC Plans.
P6/010	To introduce a new commissioning framework for Alternative Provision.
P6/011	Childrens and Adults to coproduce a financial dashboard to ensure robust transition planning for this cohort alongside clear financial forecasts.

## **How we will make sure this is delivered**

The progress of this strategy will be reviewed at the Best Education for All Steering Group and the Dorset Birth to Settled Adulthood Board. A quarterly progress report detailing evidence and impact of action points will be presented for each of the priority areas. This information will be presented by the Strategic Lead for SEND within Dorset and the Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) from the CCG.

A SEND performance dashboard will be created which will focus on quantitative measures such as timeliness of needs assessments, annual review and exclusion data and a place for discussion against progress against transformation processes, for example, All-Age Autism Review and Birth to Settled Adulthood process. The scorecard and reporting structure will be co-produced with Dorset Parent Carer Council to ensure that we are presenting the right level of information to our communities.

We will use the same indicators as in our Local Partnership Agreement to review progress and ensure continued co-production in the delivery of this strategy. We will also monitor and evaluate to ensure that effective co-production is happening:

- **Evidence**

All partners who have engaged in co-production should be able to see their work within whatever is produced or undertaken. This includes detailing the contributions in service specifications, policies and procedures.

- **Evaluate**

We will gather feedback to ensure that all stakeholders feel that their voices have been heard and that they have been able to make a difference. This will take the form of an Annual Conversation survey and focus group for SEND children, families and their carers.

- **Audit**

All services and teams working with children, young people and young adults with SEND will complete an annual participation audit with a focus on improving participation. We will also ensure that there is a clear audit trail of impact through the Multi-Agency Quality assurance processes for SEND.

## DORSET CHILDREN'S STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE

