

# **NEWCASTLE LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-22**

**Summary report of consultation feedback  
received for the draft SEND Strategic Plan  
and 3-year SEND Capital Fund Plan**

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This report is a brief summary of responses to the SEND Strategy & Capital Plan consultation.

A full report is available which also includes:

- A breakdown of responses by different stakeholder groups
- An analysis and summary of all comments made by respondents
- Appendices providing greater detail of the consultation process and responses from groups

The full text of the over 200 comments made by respondents is available on request.

Please email [ann.banks@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:ann.banks@newcastle.gov.uk) for further information.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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Overall, 129 responses were recorded as part of the Local Area SEND Strategy and Capital Fund consultation (including some responses made on behalf of groups of schools). The largest respondent group was Headteachers/Senior School Leaders (29%). This was followed by parents of children or young people with special needs (24%).

Overall, more than 90% of respondents agreed with the first three recommended priorities identified by the SEND Executive Board, which were:

- Sufficient and appropriate specialist (secondary) places
- early intervention and specialist support
- developing expertise for ASD and SEMH.

More than 80% also agreed with the fourth recommended priority:

- to address the gap in mental health support for young people aged 16+.

Support for the focus on ASD in year 1 and SEMH in year 2 of the SEND Strategic Plan was lower, but still more than 60%. Where there was disagreement, this tended to be because respondents felt SEMH was too high a priority to leave until Year 2. Headteachers and Senior School Leaders (the largest respondent group) were most likely to disagree out of all the respondent groups. More than 80% of respondents agreed with the proposed focus for year 3 (sensory and physical, communication and interaction, cognition and learning).

Despite the lower levels of support for the year 1 and 2 focus on ASD and SEMH, more than 80% of all respondents agreed fully or partially with the actions outlined in the plan to address these needs. In their comments, some respondents made reference to the links between the two and their preference that they be addressed concurrently.

The most prevalent themes emerging from comments provided by respondents were:

- The significant waiting times for assessment and diagnosis
- Higher prioritisation for improving / expanding SEMH provision
- Capacity, roles and responsibilities and communication with the LA around SEND
- The importance of comprehensive staff training and knowledge sharing
- How the strategic priorities have been identified and how the SEND Strategic Plan will be implemented, monitored and communicated
- Role and funding of ARCs and ARPs
- Quality assurance of current provision and investment to compete with independent sector
- Consistency, accessibility and transparency of EHCP processes and decision making
- Involvement of other services (particularly Health) and effective multi-disciplinary working.

Around 80% of respondents agreed with the proposals to use SEND Capital Funds for the creation of additional specialist places in secondary provision and in meeting the needs of ASD pupils. (It should be noted that a small proportion of these respondents indicated that they only partially agreed). 70% of respondents agreed that the remaining funds should be used to facilitate meeting the needs of children and young people with SEMH.

Overall, a greater proportion of respondents who identified their primary role as SENCO or Health Professional agreed fully with more of the proposals than any other respondent groups - though the numbers of respondents in these groups (10 in each) was far fewer than the number of Headteachers/School Leaders (37) and Parents/Carers (31) who responded.

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## Context and Background

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The Local Area SEND Strategy was agreed by Newcastle City Council's Cabinet and Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS) in January 2019. The Strategy includes the overarching approach to SEND for Newcastle and the response to the Local Area SEND inspection.

In July 2019, headteachers and other key stakeholders were provided with the current profile of SEND pupils by age and primary need in Newcastle schools, along with five questions to understand what respondents see as the main priorities for future SEND provision within mainstream and specialist schools and settings.

These priorities have been used to draft a Newcastle Local Area SEND Strategic Plan for 2019-2022, including proposals for the use of the city's SEND Capital Fund. In October, these proposals were shared with all stakeholders with an interest in SEND provision in Newcastle seeking their views and feedback.

### The Consultation - 22<sup>nd</sup> October to 28<sup>th</sup> November 2019

The consultation was circulated to a broad spectrum of stakeholders: via email; via social media channels and also published on the Council's 'Let's Talk' page. Materials included:

- an explanatory letter about the purpose of the consultation
- a paper describing the background to the development of the proposals
- a copy of the draft 'Newcastle Local Area SEND Strategy Overview Plan 2019-2022'
- a copy of draft Capital Plan proposals for 2019-2022.

More details about the consultation process and the questionnaire shared with stakeholders can be found in the full report.

The following report summarises the responses to the consultation and any additional comments and suggestions received from respondents.

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## Summary of Respondents

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A total of 104 individual responses were received, 99 submitted using the questionnaire (either on-line or hard-copy) and 5 responses were received in another format. However, three of the individual responses were made on behalf of groups of schools, either in trusts or other collaborations (8 schools and an academy trust, 8 schools and their multi-academy trust and 9 schools and their foundation trust). These responses have therefore been counted in the final results according to the number of schools represented 1 response for each school and 1 for the trust itself. The total response count has therefore been adjusted from 104 to 129.

Stakeholder Group	No.	%
Parent / Carer of child(ren) with special needs	31	24.0%
Headteacher/Senior School Leader	37	28.7%
Governor or Trustee	2	1.6%
SENCO	10	7.8%
Other education professional	10	7.8%
Health professional	10	7.8%
Social care professional	4	3.1%
Care provider	1	0.8%
Other	11	8.5%
Role blank or recorded as not applicable	13	10.1%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Responses by type of organisation represented</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Early Years provider	1	0.8%
Mainstream school or academy	40	31.0%
Special school or academy	7	5.4%
Post-16 provider	2	1.6%
Health organisation	7	5.4%
Local Authority	2	1.6%
Voluntary sector organisation	4	3.1%
Trust	4	3.1%
Not responding on behalf of organisation or N/A	27	20.9%
Other	2	1.6%
Not stated / blank	33	25.6%
<b>Total Respondents</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Consultation Responses - Summary

Overall, responses were largely in favour of the priorities identified in the SEND Strategic Plan. Of the 124 respondents who completed the actual questionnaire (5 respondents did not), more than 90% agreed with the three key priorities of: sufficiency of specialist (secondary) places; early intervention and specialist support and developing expertise for ASD and SEMH. Support for the proposed prioritisation of delivery of the plan was more mixed (though a larger proportion were still in favour of the focus for each year than were not). Where there was disagreement, this tended to be because respondents felt SEMH was too high a priority to leave until Year 2 and, with its links to ASD, should be looked at concurrently or even before. A number of queries and comments were made that reflected some partial agreement. The responses received can be found in the tables below and a summary of comments that follow.

### 1) Do you agree with the following identified priorities for the SEND Strategic Plan?

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
a) Ensure sufficient and appropriate (secondary) places	117 (94.4%)	6 (4.8%)	1 (0.8%)
b) Develop and deliver early intervention with specialist support for SEND	121 (97.6%)	3 (2.4%)	-
c) Develop expertise to enable all settings to meet the needs of children with Autism (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health difficulties (SEMh)	116 (93.5%)	8 (6.5%)	-
d) In 2019/20, focus on ASD	83 (67.0%)	33 (26.6%)	8 (6.5%)
e) In 2020/21, focus on SEMh	84 (67.7%)	32 (25.8%)	8 (6.5%)
f) In 2021/22, focus on sensory and physical, communication and interaction, cognition and learning	102 (82.3%)	9 (7.3%)	13 (10.5%)
g) Address the gap in mental health support for young people aged 16+	108 (87.1%)	7 (5.6%)	9 (7.3%)

**Note:** The above numbers do not include the information from the 5 responses submitted in a different format, as these respondents did not answer these questions directly. Feedback from these respondents is incorporated into the summarised comments sections and in the full report.

## 2) Are there any key priorities that you think are missing or any other comments?

70 respondents made specific comments under this heading. A summary of the most prevalent themes emerging from these can be found below (*these are covered in more detail in the full report*):

- SEMH should be the focus in Year 1 or addressed alongside ASD
- Other concerns about addressing SEMH (e.g. support across age ranges; transition between phases/provisions and gaps in the support available)
- Concerns about LA capacity, roles and responsibilities and communication around SEND
- Lack of appropriate training and support for school staff working with children and young people with additional needs, including knowledge sharing and advice and support from specialist provisions to mainstream schools
- Capacity, role and funding of ARCs, especially regarding SEMH and ASD
- Lack of detail regarding what addressing priorities means in practice (including impact) and how delivery of the SEND Strategic Plan will be monitored and communicated
- Challenges involved in the EHCP process and the consultation with / support for families
- Focus on behaviour leads to failure in addressing children's primary and specific needs
- Gap in involvement and sufficient provision from other services, particularly Health – CYPS, speech and language – but also early help and social care
- Waiting times for assessment and diagnosis and lack of practical support following this
- Need for more early years intervention and support
- Insufficient specialist resources, capacity and expertise in mainstream schools
- Poor support for children and young people with behavioural issues leading to overuse of exclusions and detentions
- Clarity and consistency regarding admissions to/placements in ARCs.

## 3) **The SEND Strategy Overview Plan sets out proposed actions for 2019/20 in relation to ASD. Please tick the box below to tell us whether you agree, partially agree or disagree with the proposed actions and whether you have any other suggestions or comments?**

Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	No Response
59 (47.6%)	46 (37.1%)	18 (14.5%)	1 (0.8%)

**Note:** The above numbers do not include the information from the 5 responses submitted in a different format, as these respondents did not answer these questions directly. Feedback from these respondents is incorporated into the summarised comments sections and in the full report.

## 4) **Do you have any other suggestions or comments regarding the 2019/20 proposed actions in relation to ASD?**

45 specific comments were made relating to the proposed actions to address **ASD priorities in 2019/20**. A summary of the most prevalent themes emerging from these responses can be found below (*these are covered in more detail in the full report*):

- Concerns over length of time for assessment and diagnosis and lack of practical support
- Concerns about how CYPS is functioning and the need for investment and restructure
- Clarity wanted about what actions have been/will be carried out when as part of the SEND Strategy and how implementation will be managed and achieved
- More training needed for staff in mainstream schools working with children with SEND, alongside outreach support / learning from specialist provision

- Queries about the new specialist capacity proposed, clarity about their role and responsibilities, how they will be accessed and sufficiency to meet increasing SEN needs
- Pros and cons of Early Years support and diagnosis for ASD
- Concerns about availability of appropriate therapies for ASD pupils (in particular speech & language support)
- Concerns regarding sufficiency of ASD places for September 2020
- Limited review of changing needs for ASD pupils and adaptations to the support provided
- Consistency and responsiveness of support, diagnosis and Health involvement across the age ranges for children and young people with ASD
- Need for clearer pathways of provision which are easily understood by those who use them

**5) The SEND Strategy Overview Plan sets out proposed actions for 2019/20 in relation to SEMH. Please tick the box below to tell us whether you agree, partially agree or disagree with the proposed actions and whether you have any other suggestions or comments?**

Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	No Response
56 (45.1%)	48 (38.7%)	16 (12.9%)	4 (3.2%)

**Note:** The above numbers do not include the information from the 5 responses submitted in a different format, as these respondents did not answer these questions directly. Feedback from these respondents is incorporated into the summarised comments sections and in the full report.

**6) Do you have any other suggestions or comments regarding the 2020/21 proposed actions in relation to SEMH?**

33 specific comments were made relating to the proposed actions to address **SEMH priorities in 2020/21**. A summary of the most prevalent themes emerging from these responses can be found below (*these are covered in more detail in the full report*):

- Concerns over length of time for assessment and diagnosis
- Concerns about how CYPS is functioning and the need for investment and restructure
- Families reaching crisis point before they are able to access the support they need
- Limited practical support available and strategies to improve outcomes following diagnosis
- Exploration needed of disparity in numbers of SEMH children and young people between primary and secondary age ranges to inform where actions / support should be focused
- Queries regarding potential SEMH specialist, their role and responsibilities and how they will be deployed / accessed
- How and by who will existing provision, including that which is working well (e.g. Nurture ARCs), be monitored and supported centrally?
- Alternative proposals regarding use of funding (e.g. as a transformation fund which schools can bid for; ensuring SEMH resources for secondary mainstream provision etc)
- Concern over high exclusion rates and how this is linked to undiagnosed (or late diagnosed) needs

**7) Do you have any other suggestions or comments about the 2021/22 focus on sensory and physical, communications and interaction, cognition and learning?**

26 comments were made in total relating to proposed actions to address **sensory and physical, communications and interaction, cognition and learning priorities in 2019/20**. A summary of the most prevalent themes emerging from these responses can be found below (*these are covered in more detail in the full report*):

- This priority should be addressed sooner / timescales are too long, which risks the quality and sustainability of existing provision. Should be addressed alongside ASD and SEMH (as there are links)
- Need to build capacity and resources in mainstream schools; in specialist services and for EHCP assessment and monitoring
- Clarity about relationships; better dialogue between services, and commissioning / audit of required support from different agencies (e.g. Health and Occupational Therapies)
- Need for investment in specialist provision in order to compete with independent sector

**8) Please tell us whether you agree or disagree that we should use SEND Capital Funding for the following:**

Priority	Agree	Disagree	No Response
To create additional specialist places in the secondary phase to meet the needs of children progressing through the system	104 (83.9%)	5 (4.0%)	15 (12.1%)
To facilitate meeting the needs of children and young people with ASD, including additional places	98 (79.0%)	3 (2.4%)	23 (18.5%)
Use of remaining capital funding to facilitate meeting the needs of children and young people with SEMH	87 (70.2%)	12 (9.8%)	25 (20.2%)

**Note:** The above numbers do not include the information from the 5 responses submitted in a different format, as these respondents did not answer these questions directly. Feedback from these respondents is incorporated into the summarised comments sections and in the full report.

**9) Please let us know any comments or other suggestions that you may have regarding the use of the SEND capital funding:**

32 specific comments were made regarding the use of the SEND capital funding. A summary of the most prevalent themes emerging from these responses can be found below (*these are covered in the full report*):

- Quality assurance of current provision and investment to compete with independent sector
- More details about financial risk, breakdown of costs and updates/overview of expenditure
- Overall sufficiency of capital funding to meet future needs, especially additional places and proposed areas of focus in later years of plan
- Retain some capital funds to support mainstream developments (as previously proposed) or as a transformation fund that schools can bid for
- Urgency regarding sufficiency and suitability of places to meet growing needs / cohorts

**Notes:** Some respondents indicated that they **partially agreed** with one or more of the above proposals by noting this in their comments.

A number of comments recorded against this question did not relate to capital funding specifically. These have been split out in the analysis of comments and in the full report.

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## Consultation Outcomes & Next Steps

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Since completion of the SEND Strategy consultation, a revised Special Provision Capital Plan has been submitted to the Department for Education (DfE), which provides them with an outline of potential capital projects, and details of who has been consulted about proposals to date. The DfE has confirmed that this outline meets their requirements, which facilitates the release of the first tranche of SEND Capital Funds for 2019/20. This Capital Plan will need to be further updated and resubmitted in March 2020 for the next tranche of funding to be released to the Local Authority for allocation.

An initial summary of the outcomes of the SEND Strategy consultation was shared with the SEND Executive Board in December 2019. Following this, a more detailed analysis of feedback has been completed and a full report produced (aspects of which are reflected in brief in this summary report). The full consultation report will now be shared with the SEND Executive Board, who will review the findings and agree proposed refinements to the SEND Strategic Plan in light of these.

The following actions will be undertaken to finalise and then implement the SEND Strategy:

- The consultation report and revised high-level SEND Strategic Plan will be considered by the SEND Executive Board, with any clarifications addressed (mid-February 2020)
- Subject to final agreement with the Executive Board, both documents will be then be shared with stakeholders in the local area; published on the Local Offer website and shared across SEND networks (in late February / early March 2020)
- The Local Authority will engage with partners and key stakeholders to identify and assign the tasks for implementation of the SEND Strategic Plan
- The SEND Executive Board will monitor delivery of the SEND Strategic Plan and will hold partners to account throughout its implementation, as well as agreeing the means for keeping stakeholders informed of progress and impact.