



**Getting It Right Together  
Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)  
Strategy for Newcastle upon Tyne Local Area**

**2023-2028**



# Foreword

We are delighted to introduce our new co-produced SEND Strategy. In the last few years, significant work has been undertaken in relation to our improvement journey within Newcastle and we are clear that SEND is everyone's business. This Strategy comes at a time of unprecedented challenge for all services that work with children, young people, and families in Newcastle, however, Newcastle remains ambitious for all children and young people to achieve their potential and have the best start in life.

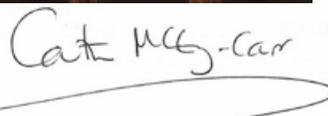
The Newcastle Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy recognises that children and young people have different strengths and needs, and that services and provision need to be differentiated so that all children and young people have their needs met. Our approach is grounded in what works best to improve outcomes for children and young people so that they can have the best future possible and thrive as part of our local community.

In Newcastle we work with and listen to our children and young people, parents and carers and other stakeholders as equal partners to ensure our values are shared values. We are all committed to putting transparency, honesty and integrity at the heart of everything we do.

This strategy was developed following a series of consultation events including focus groups, workshops and events held in Spring 2023.



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# What are we trying to achieve together?

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**Our ambition** is that we work together to create an inclusive city to ensure children and young people with SEND get the right support at the right time so that they go on to live their best lives.

This means that they will be:



Safe

Happy and feel included

Ready for their next steps

Healthy and well cared for

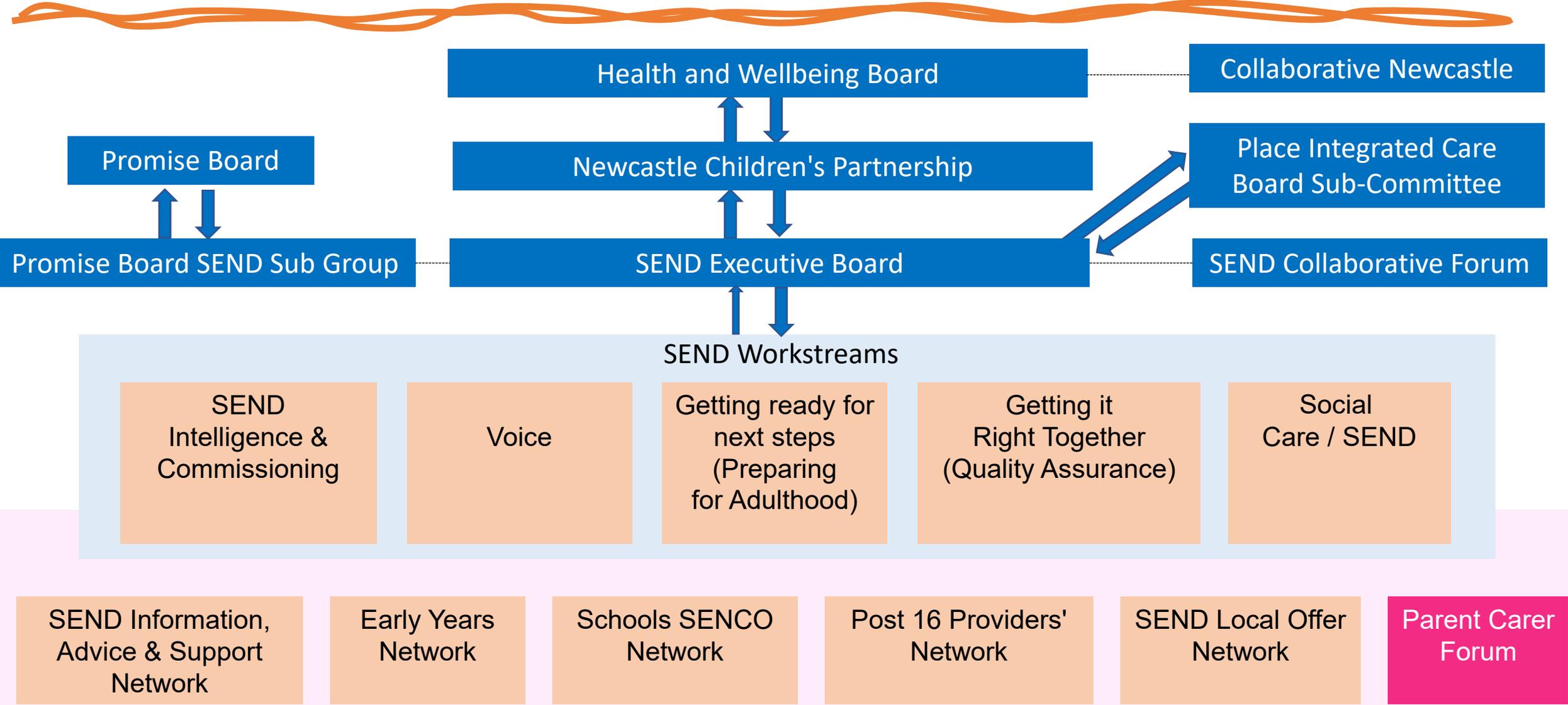
Heard in decisions

# Why are we doing this?

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- We commissioned the Council for Disabled Children to help us work out what we need to do to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND in Newcastle.
- In February 2023 over 70 people attended a meeting with representatives from:
  - Schools
  - Colleges
  - Early years
  - Parent/Carers
  - Local Authority Education Service
  - Voice Trainees
  - Health Services
  - Social Care
- We agreed that we want to own this strategy together.
- The next page sets out our governance arrangements and the workstreams working to implement this strategy. Further details about the terms of reference of the groups overleaf can be found on our local offer: [SEND related policies and strategies \(newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk\)](https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk)

# Where we make decisions and implement our strategy



Representatives from these networks raise issues with the SEND Executive Board where appropriate.

# What does this SEND strategy mean for you?

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- For children and young people and parents and carers this strategy will show how different people and services should be working together to help give everyone a good experience.
- For practitioners this strategy will help you understand how your work contributes to the 'big picture' in Newcastle.
- This strategy will help everyone to understand what will be happening in Newcastle in relation to SEND.



# Quick recap on what we have achieved

- Investment in Quality Assurance system tool to continue to improve the quality of EHCPs.
- Introduced travel training.
- Co-produced descriptors of need.
- Increased capacity in our Communication and Interaction (C&I) Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs).
- Increased capacity for specialist schools.
- Agreed ambitious outcomes for our children and young people.
- Embedding relational practice.
- Improved support for mainstream schools e.g., team around the school, locality improvement panels and SEND advice and support allocation panel (ASAP).
- Co-produced one EHCP template (0-25 years).
- Strengthened leadership and workforce and created a committed partnership.



# Growing need for our services

At the end of July 2023, **2,611** children and young people had an EHC Plan. This compares to **1,292** in 2017 – an overall increase of 102%.

- The population aged 0-25 years has increased by **3.8%** whilst other local authorities in the North-East region have seen a decline.
- The number of new assessment requests increased significantly from **448** in 2021 to **658** in 2022 (46.9%). With monthly average increasing from **38** to **55** respectively.
- Over the same period, new assessment requests for early years children also increased significantly, accounting for **15.2%** of requests in 2022 compared with **0.4%** in 2021. In 2023 (January to July) they account for **22.2%**.



# Growing need for our services cont.

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- In 2022, **491** new EHC Plans were issued to children and young people living in the local area, compared with **262** in 2021 – an increase of **87.4%**.
- The numbers of children and young people in specialist places is increasing despite increasing numbers and proportions of pupils with EHCPs being educated in mainstream schools.
- The number of children and young people with an EHCP in state-funded special schools increased from **821** in 2020 to **981** in 2023 – an increase of **19%**.
- Other specialist settings, including resourced provisions in mainstream schools, independent schools and alternative provisions are also increasing.

# Growing need for our services cont.

- The number of pupils diagnosed with autism has doubled from **604** (1.5% of all pupils) to **1,224** (2.9%) over the last five years to 2022-23. And our forecasts suggest further growth.
- Pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs and Social, Emotional and Mental Health have also seen larger increases of over 30% in the last 5 years.
- There has been a significant (112%) increase in referrals into the neurodevelopmental pathway (Newcastle and Gateshead as a whole) from 834 in 2019/20 to 1,771 in 2022/23. Of all those waiting for assessment 75% have been waiting over 18 weeks.
- We have growing numbers of children and young people who are waiting for support from occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and mental health services.

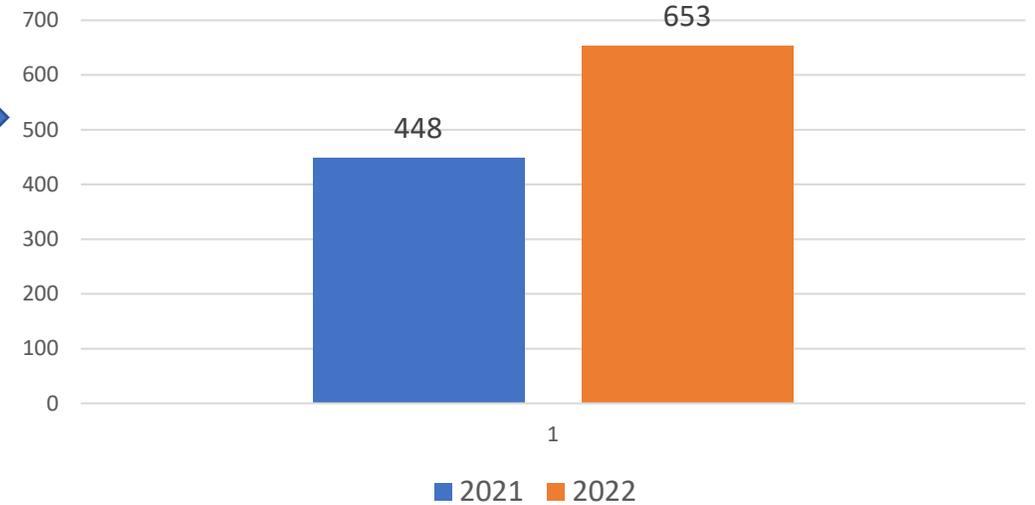


# About Newcastle

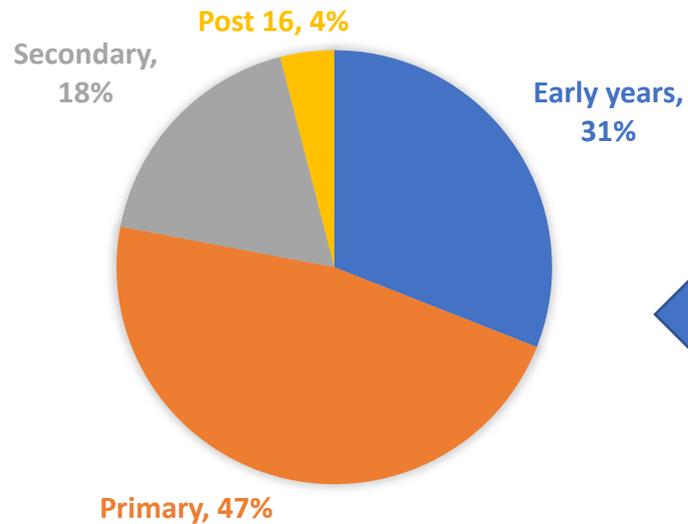
Newcastle's population 0-25 year olds has increased MORE THAN the North East Region and English average  
(Source: 2021 Census)

Requests for EHC assessments have increased by 46.9%

### Requests for EHC assessments



### EHC requests by age phase



31% of all EHC requests (2022-23) are for pre-school children.  
Source: Local data, 2022-23 academic year

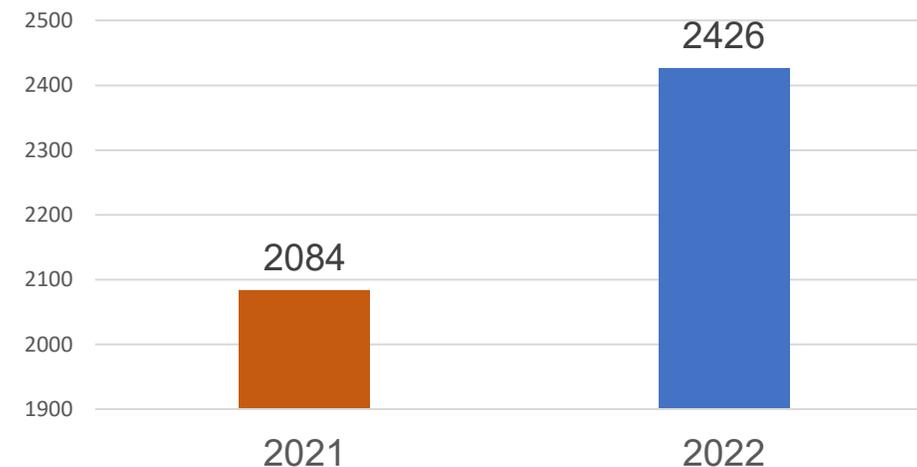
Source: Local data, 2022-23 academic year

# About Newcastle cont.

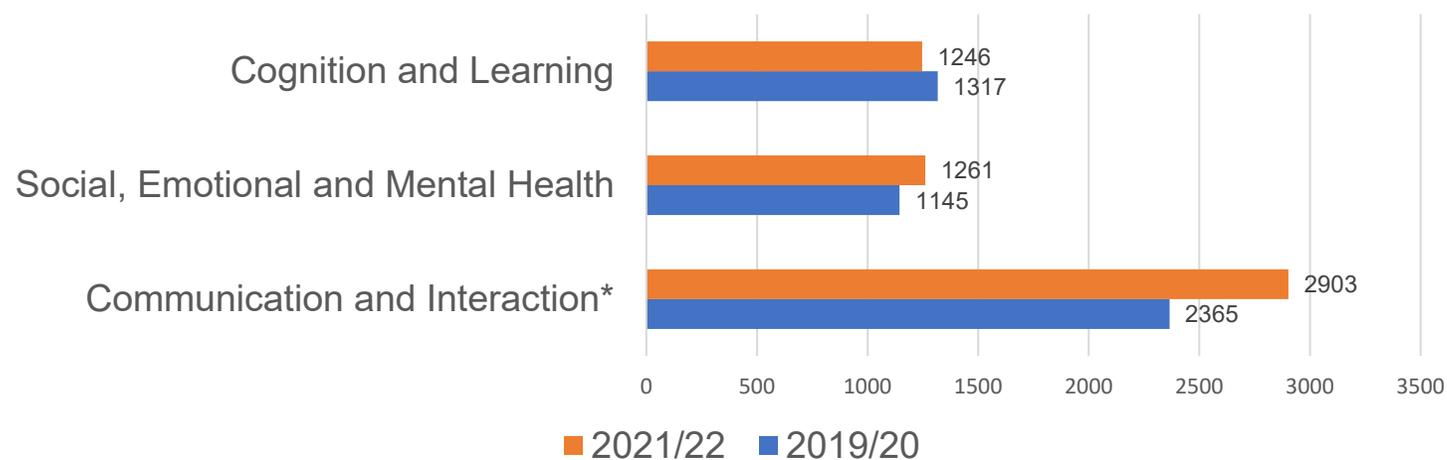


The number of CYP with an EHC plan has increased by 16.4%

### Number of CYP with an EHC plan



### Top 3 Needs

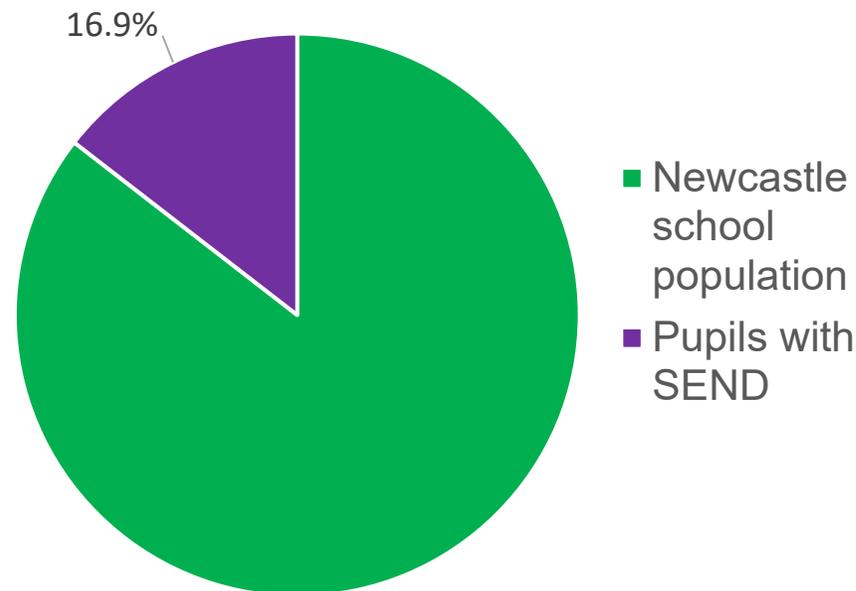


Top 3 Needs Children and Young People with SEND: Schools census

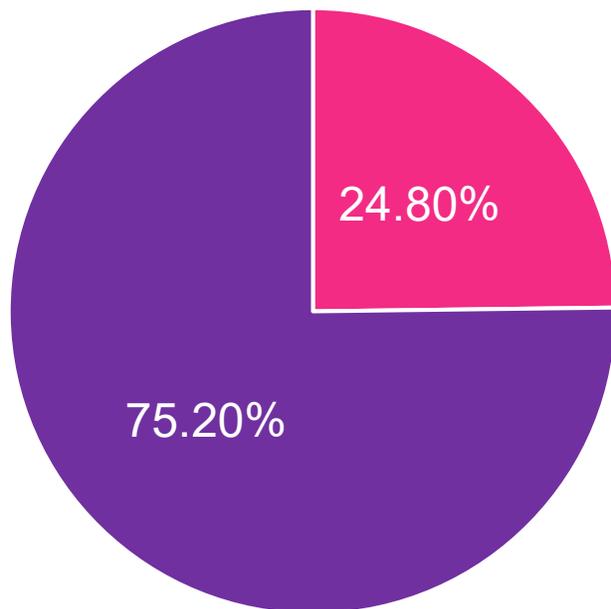
\*Speech, Language and Communication, Autism Spectrum Disorder

# About Newcastle cont.

In 2022-23 academic year, there was a total of 46,706 children in Newcastle educational settings. **7,915 Newcastle pupils were reported by schools to have a SEND** (16.9% compared with 17.3% nationally).



- EHC Plan
- SEN Support

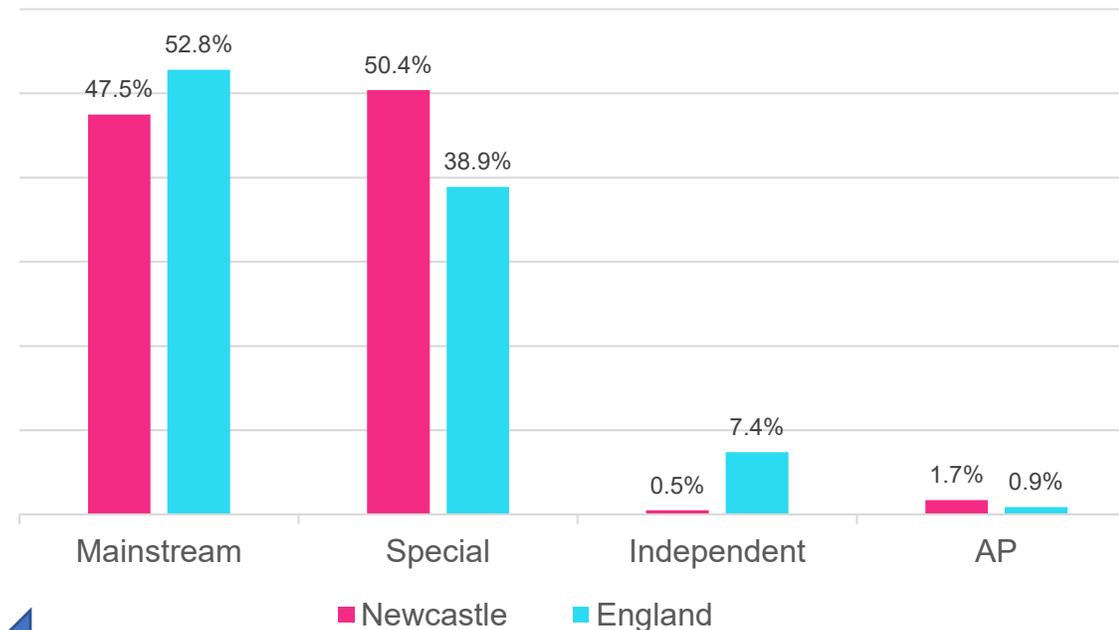


Of these, **24.8%** had an **Education, Health and Care Plan** (24.7% nationally) and **75.2%** had **SEN support** (75.3% nationally).

# About Newcastle cont.

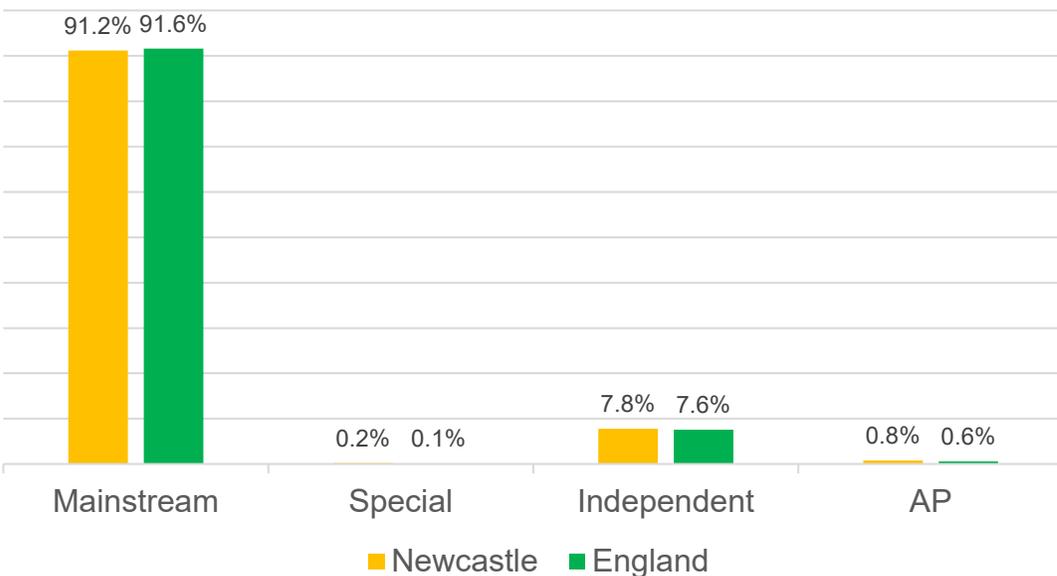
In 2022-23 academic year, **47.5%** of pupils with an EHCP were educated in mainstream schools (52.8% nationally) and **50.4%** in specialist schools (38.9% nationally)

% of EHCP pupils by type of school 2022-23



**91.2%** of pupils with SEN Support were educated in mainstream schools (91.6% nationally) and a further **7.8%** in independent schools (7.6% nationally)

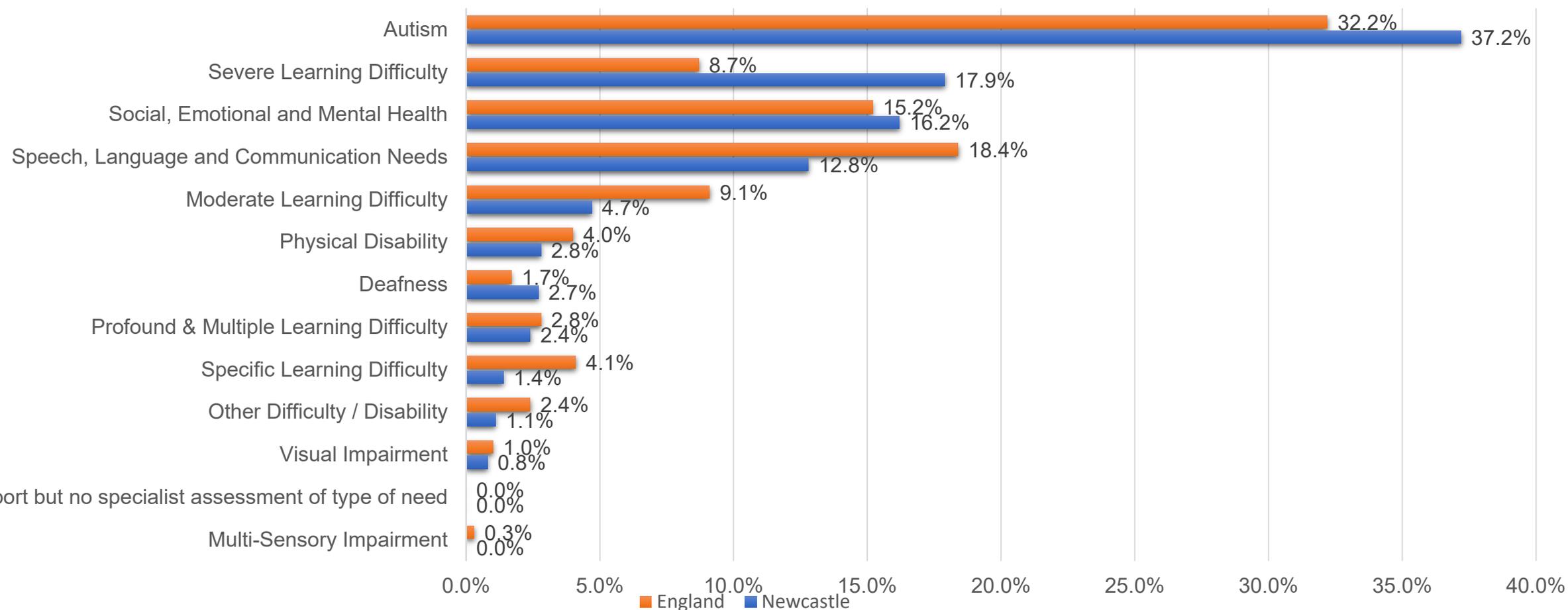
% of SEN Support pupils by type of school 2022-23



# About Newcastle cont.

Top 3 primary needs for pupils with EHCP are Autism (37.2%), Severe Learning Difficulty (17.9%) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (16.2%)

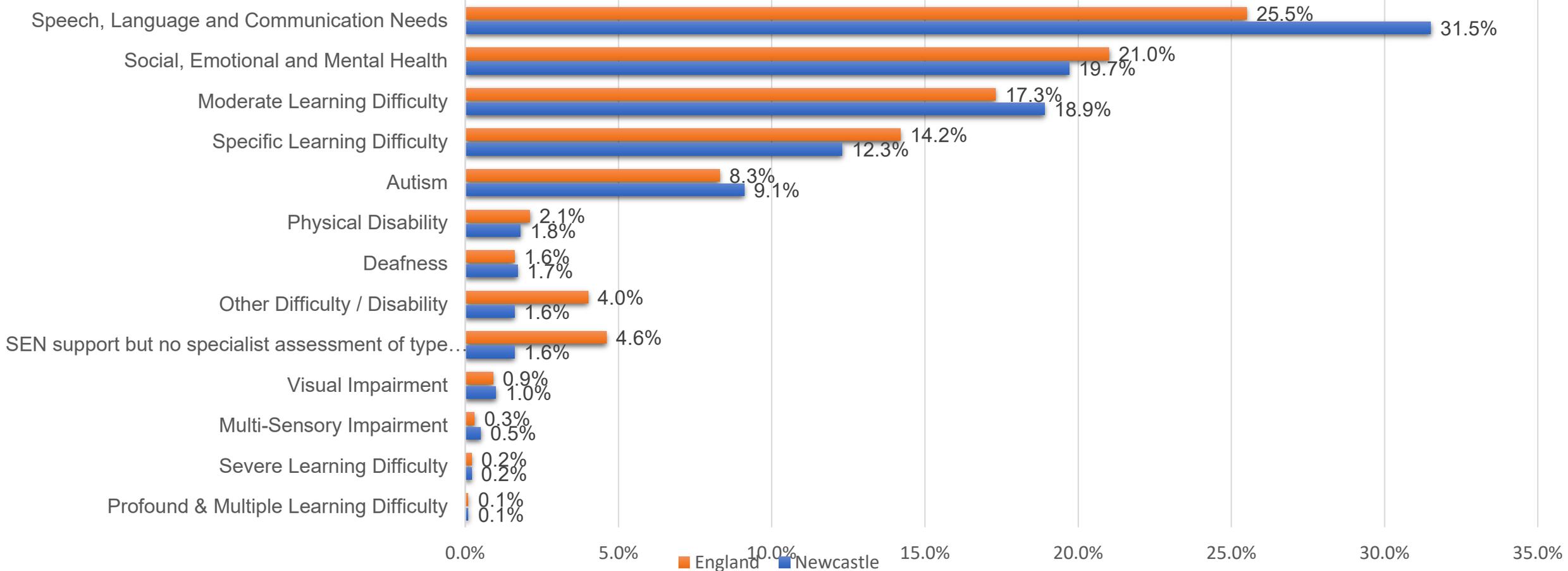
EHCP pupils by primary need 2022-23



# About Newcastle cont.

Top 3 primary needs for pupils with SEN Support are Speech, Language and Communication Needs (31.5%), Social, Emotional and Mental Health (19.7%) and Moderate Learning Difficulty (18.9%)

SEN Support pupils by primary need 2022-23



# Our Priorities moving forwards

## 1. Making sure children and young people get the right support at the right time

This means that children and young people will have an equitable approach to having their needs identified and met as early as possible. We are committed to creating inclusive and accessible environments that support our children and young people at every stage and that this approach is well understood by families and professionals.



## 2. Making sure we are getting it right together

This means that we are committed to having a strong partnership where families are placed at the heart of everything we do and together we develop high quality, inclusive and accessible services.



# Priority 1: Making sure children and young people get the right support at the right time



What we need to work on?	When we get this right.....
1.1 Universal guidance for schools and settings will be co-produced and adopted across the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteachers and Parents/Carers will have confidence that reasonable adjustments and Quality First Teaching takes place in every lesson / school / setting at all age stages.</li> </ul>
1.2 Strengthening investment across all educational settings to further develop a joint universal offer of support from education, health and care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children and young people will be supported in their local school and community.</li> <li>• Suspensions, exclusions and absence will reduce and be in line or better than national levels.</li> </ul>
1.3 Continue to raise awareness about the Local Offer website to ensure parents and carers know how to access support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents and carers will tell us that they are aware of the Local Offer website and how to access support.</li> </ul>
1.4 Descriptors of need will be used in all schools and settings to ensure early and appropriate identification of needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment requests and requests for support will demonstrate that the descriptors have been understood and used.</li> <li>• Parent/Carers will have confidence that needs are identified early and are met.</li> </ul>
1.5 Create an easy and accessible way for schools and settings to access support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will have a single referral route for mainstream schools and settings to access support or additional funding.</li> </ul>
1.6 Continue to develop more specialist provision for those that need it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will have created more capacity in Additional Resourced Provisions (ARPs) and in the specialist sector to educate and support children and young people.</li> </ul>

# Priority 1: Making sure children and young people get the right support at the right time



What we need to work on?	When we get this right.....
1.7 Further investment to provide support and improve confidence in the SEN Support process. This will include improving the quality and implementation of SEN Support plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers will feel confident that their children and young people needs are being met at SEN Support.</li> </ul>
1.8 Making sure that transition arrangements across education, health and care work well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The voice of our children and young people and parents and carers will show that they have had a good transitions experience.</li> </ul>
1.9 A new co-produced therapy offer for speech and language, physio and occupational therapy will be agreed and implemented. This will be used to develop the wider workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waiting times are reduced and families are supported if they do need to wait.</li> </ul>
1.10 A new short break offer will be commissioned for those eligible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will have a wide-ranging short breaks offer, which includes improving access to mainstream activities. Feedback from children, young people and families confirm it meets needs.</li> </ul>
1.11 We will develop a broader post 16 local offer which includes employment, education and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be an increase of young people, post 16, with SEND who are in education, employment or training (EET).</li> </ul>
1.12 We will expand our travel training offer to develop independence and access.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be an increase in the number of young people who can travel independently.</li> </ul>
1.13 Transform the autism and neurodevelopmental pathway.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people with autism and neurodevelopmental needs will be able to access help and support when they need it, including pre and post diagnosis support.</li> </ul>

# Priority 2: Making sure we are getting it right together



What we need to work on?		When we get this right.....
2.1	Further investment across education, health and social care to improve timescales and quality of plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The timescales for finalising EHCPs will improve and be in line with at least national average. Quality of plans will also continue to improve.</li> </ul>
2.2	Continue to develop innovative approaches to gathering feedback from all parents, carers, children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will have a SEND Voice Network around schools which will be used to improve and inform the commissioning of services.</li> </ul>
2.3	How we work and act are embedded throughout all parts of the SEND system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children, young people, parents, carers and staff will tell us that they feel supported and listened to.</li> </ul>
2.4	Develop an Accessibility Strategy to ensure all children and young people with SEND can access schools and settings and feel welcome wherever they go.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people with SEND will be able to access education, health, care, transport and leisure settings across Newcastle.</li> </ul>
2.5	Continue to improve how we communicate with <b>all</b> children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers and gain their feedback at reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People will know how to access help and support and feel informed about what is going on in the City.</li> <li>Children and young people with SEND and their families will tell us at their reviews that their outcomes have improved.</li> </ul>

# Priority 2: Making sure we are getting it right together



What we need to work on?	When we get this right.....
<p>2.6 Join up offer of support for children and young people who have SEND with the early help offer including SEND Networks in schools and the locality family hubs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families will be able to access support in their local communities.</li> </ul>
<p>2.7 Further develop relational practice to co produce SEN Support plans and EHCPs with children, young people, their parents and carers and schools and settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children, young people and their parents and carers will have confidence in their plans.</li> </ul>
<p>2.8 Review the EHCP Annual Review process to encourage involvement, participation and improve the quality of current plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All EHCPs will be produced on the new template and the quality of EHCPs will improve.</li> </ul>
<p>2.9 Roll out the inclusion quality framework across schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will understand where excellent inclusive practice is across the city. We will share and learn from this and provide additional support where needed.</li> </ul>

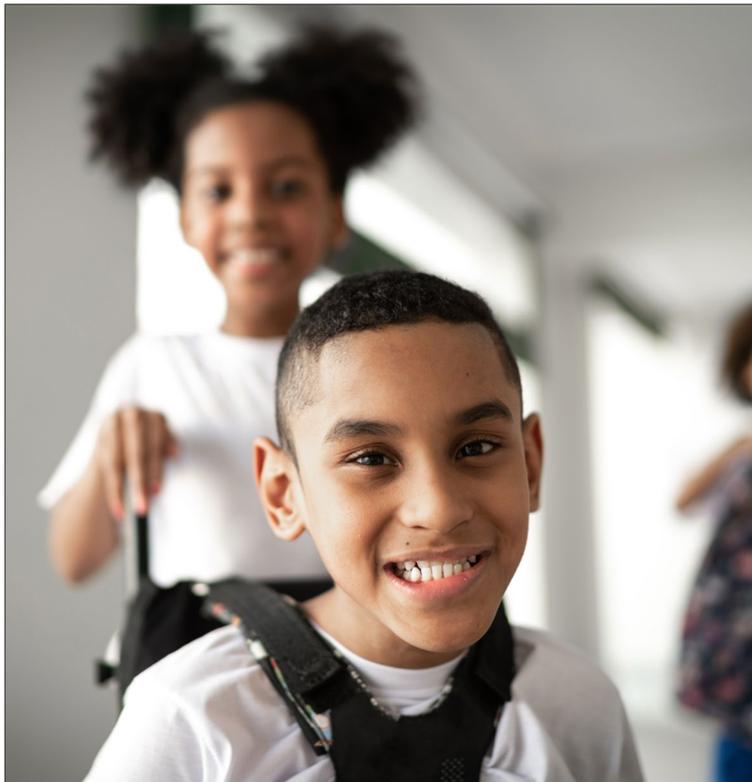
# Priority 2: Making sure we are getting it right together



To ensure these actions are taken forwards, detailed plans will be co-produced within the various groups in Newcastle as shown on page 6.

Overall responsibility for this strategy will be held at SEND Executive Board where regular reporting from each of the SEND workstreams will occur. The chair of each of the SEND workstreams will present regular progress reports to the SEND Executive Board. They will also escalate any issues or barriers to making progress.

When we get this right our children and young people with SEND will be:





Thank you!

# Glossary

## **Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP):**

Specialist provisions based in a mainstream school. They provides teaching and support staff with specialist knowledge, skills and expertise in a particular area of SEND.  
[Newcastle Schools Provision](#)

## **Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans:**

A legal document which describes a child/young person's needs, what provision will meet those needs and which school or education setting they should attend.

[Requesting a new Education, Health and Care Plan](#)

## **Core offer:**

Council services such as educational psychology, specialist teacher time and training, that schools can access for free.

## **Descriptors of Need:**

A framework for all practitioners working with children and young people to help assess and identify the needs of children and young people, and to put in place appropriate support.  
[SEND Descriptors of Need](#)

## **SEND ASAP:**

This stands for Advice and Support Allocation Panel. Schools can make requests to this panel for specialist teacher support or individual pupil support funding:

[Newcastle SEND Advice and Support Allocation Panel \(SEN ASAP\)](#)

## **Quality First Teaching:**

High quality, inclusive teaching for all pupils in a class: 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review'.

## **Universal Guidance:**

Sets out how children and young people who have SEND should be provided with SEN support in mainstream schools and settings. See our School effectiveness page:  
[School Effectiveness SEN \(newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk\)](#)

## **Locality inclusion panel (LIP):**

One role is to support schools with those pupils presenting the greatest barriers and whose needs would not sit within the SEND pathway. Schools can request support for those children and young people who, despite all their efforts, struggle to manage the school environment and are at risk of exclusions.

## **Co-production:**

Means parents/carers/children and young people have an equal and active role in designing services that affect them.

## **SEND Outcomes framework:**

This sets out the measures that we are monitoring to check we are making progress against the outcomes that we have agreed we want to see for children and young people.  
[SEND related policies and strategies](#)