

Supporting Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Our Local Area Vision and Strategy for Dudley 2019-21

Prepared on behalf of Dudley Children & Young People's Alliance & SEND Improvement Board



Children and
young people's
alliance



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Executive summary

Welcome to our strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This document sets out in straightforward terms our vision for the Dudley area SEND offer to children and young people (up to age 25) and their families. The strategy highlights our main priorities to help us all to plan and work together over the next two years to secure good outcomes for local children, young people and their families.

There are positive things we are already doing that will help us to deliver our strategy

- Our whole system of support for vulnerable children and young people is getting better. Our strategy for special educational needs and disability is a key element of this, supported by our multi-agency SEND Improvement Board which includes our partners in Health, Education, Social Care, the Voluntary Sector and representatives of parents and carers
- There is an impressive range of skills, experience and resources within local education, social care and health provision to help us achieve our ambitions. Parents, children and young people have shared positive stories about help received, but we can do better
- Parents, carers, children and young people have a voice and influence on the SEND system, but we need to grow greater opportunities for them to inform and influence local services, sometimes referred to as co-production

We have identified our three strategic priorities

- Priority 1: Working in partnership with families - Growing a way of working with families and individual young people as the basis for how we plan, deliver and review local provision
- Priority 2: Planning and working together to make the best use of all of our resources – At the heart of this is a stronger approach to joint commissioning and the sharing of ideas, resources and supporting innovation across health, local authority and other partners
- Priority 3: Simplifying help and support so that it is more accessible – This means we will build on the strengths of our local provision to offer the best mix of specialist and mainstream support that reflects the diversity of children and young people's needs

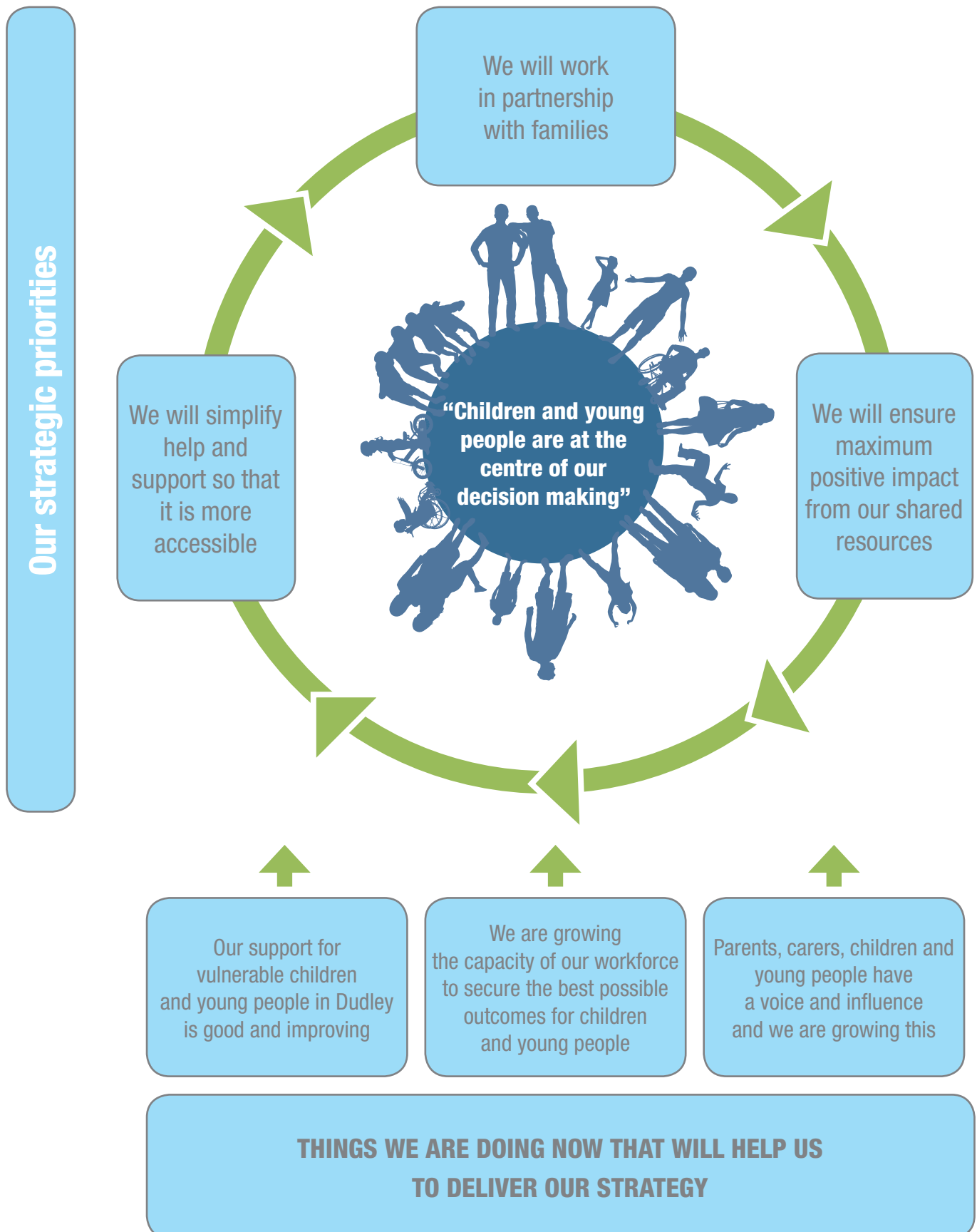
Delivering Our Strategy

An early draft of this strategy was shared with all of our partners including the families, children and young people that we are working with. We got a lot of feedback – some positive and some heartfelt and strongly worded contributions that challenge us to do better. That feedback is reflected in this strategy and in the delivery plans that will ensure we turn our strategy into action. These plans include:

- Our SEND Improvement Plan
- The SEND Commissioning Strategy
- Development plans for Health services
- The review of SEND school places
- The reshaping of our SEND operational teams that work directly with children and families.

Our multi-agency SEND Improvement Board will work with our partners, stakeholders and local communities to ensure that these plans, supported by our overall SEND strategy, will deliver all of our ambitions for children with special educational needs and disabilities

Dudley Area SEND strategy 2019-21



INTRODUCTION

OUR VISION FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES IN DUDLEY

“Our vision is to support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Dudley to have high aspirations and to reach their full potential. We will achieve our ambitions in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers, professionals and our local community”

Welcome to our Dudley area strategy for children with special educational needs and disabilities. This document sets out in straightforward terms our vision for the Dudley area SEND offer to children, young people and their families. We describe the things that we are already doing to make a positive difference, and our strategic priorities which will determine where we need to focus our energy and resources.

This strategy provides a guiding framework for more detailed plans and actions across our whole system of support for vulnerable groups in Dudley. This includes our early help arrangements, more intensive intervention and support and our safeguarding and child protection arrangements.

Our ambition is that this strategy is owned at the highest level of every organisation and stakeholder group within the Dudley area. This will provide a strong and determined platform for driving forward the positive changes and improvements that we are all seeking.

To fully realise the vision and priorities set out in this strategy, we face significant challenges, but we are building from a positive base with strong partnership arrangements, increasingly well-developed and pro-active groups driven by parents, carers and young people, a rich resource of specialist experience and skills within our shared workforce, and a valued range of local education provision across the full spectrum of our special and mainstream schools, colleges and other providers.

Importantly, we have positive momentum behind our improvement journey within Children’s Services. Whilst this has mainly focused on children’s social care provision, the Council and partners in Health, Education, Social Care, the Voluntary Sector and representatives of parents and carers have agreed that the development of effective SEND provision is a critical area for focusing our improvement action. This has ensured an increasingly clear focus on developing the quality and impact of support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This has included an independently commissioned review by the Local Government Association (LGA) and work with local partners to progressively improve our local area offer, in parallel with wider improvements to Children’s Services.

Our strategy is focused on the age spectrum up to 25, and on the critical transition to adult services where support is still needed. We are building on the implementation of the all-age Dudley Disability Service. This reflects our local commitment to focusing first and foremost on individual children, young people and their families, on their needs, on their experience of accessing support, and on minimising transition points and changes of worker across the system.

The delivery and realisation of this strategy can only be secured in a close partnership between local agencies and stakeholders. This includes the commissioners and providers of services, schools, colleges, community groups and, most importantly, with children, young people and their families. Thank you for taking the time to read through and consider our strategy. We are really very excited about taking this forward in partnership with you.

Councillor Sue Ridley, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services

THINGS WE ARE DOING NOW THAT WILL HELP US TO DELIVER OUR STRATEGY

“Our support for vulnerable children and young people in Dudley is getting better. Our strategy for special educational needs and disability is an important part of this”

Our Strong Partnerships

Dudley Council and its partners within Health, Education and the wider community are working together across the whole system of support for children and young people - from our early help arrangements through to more intensive intervention and support - to progressively improve outcomes for individual children and local communities. Our SEND offer is a core element of our strengthened and improved system of support for all vulnerable children in Dudley.

Our SEND Improvement Board

Our SEND Improvement Board is well-positioned to bring together all of the organisations and representative groups for parents and young people to focus on driving change and improved outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We are working with our partners to strengthen the governance, oversight and impact of the Board.

Independent Review & Challenge

We have commissioned an LGA Peer Review and other independent challenge and support to help us shape our SEND offer in the Dudley area. This has given us a robust evidence-base for planning long-term sustainable improvements to the local area offer. Now we are clear about what needs doing and we are focused on the actions that will ensure we deliver. The wider improvement programme for Children’s Services in Dudley has led to an increasingly self-aware organisation with a sharp focus on quality, performance and outcomes for local people. We are applying the learning from this experience to our leadership of improvements to the SEND system.

Working together to develop **strong partnerships to improve outcomes** for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities

Source: Dudley Short Breaks event 2017



THINGS WE ARE DOING NOW THAT WILL HELP US TO DELIVER OUR STRATEGY

“Our staff are determined to get the best possible outcomes for children and young people. We are growing our capacity within local services to help us achieve our ambitions for children and young people”

Our Workforce

Frontline staff, managers and strategic leaders working together across the full range of local SEND support are bringing a wealth of specialist experience, skills and knowledge to our support for children, young people and their families. Our workforce is at the heart of our offer to local people. At a time of reducing resources across the public sector we are working across all of our services to recruit and retain a high calibre of staff and to develop a model of service delivery that makes the best possible use of our shared resources.

Our Education Offer

Our education offer in the Dudley area for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities includes a well-developed and impressive range of specialist provision alongside a continuum of support within mainstream settings. This extends into post-16 college and training opportunities, and in the transition to adult learning. It is a priority for us to continue to strengthen SEND support in mainstream settings across the whole age range. This will ensure that we secure the maximum benefits from our specialist schools and settings, whilst building the confidence and capacity of mainstream provision where this is appropriate.

Our Leadership of the SEND system

A period of significant change and improvement across the system in Dudley has seen a number of changes in key SEND and education leadership roles, We have undertaken a high-level review of the governance and leadership of the SEND system in Dudley and are strengthening and stabilising the strategic leadership of our support for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Permanent appointments to key and influential positions offers stability of expertise and commitment to drive through sustainable change. Our partners, our staff and local people have highlighted this as a critical area for improvement.

Outstanding or Good schools in Dudley (Ofsted ratings)

Primary Schools 71% rated Outstanding or Good



Secondary Schools 57% rated Outstanding or Good



Special Schools 100% rated Outstanding or Good



Source: Ofsted Tracker September 2018 (Overall Effectiveness Rating)

THINGS WE ARE DOING NOW THAT WILL HELP US TO DELIVER OUR STRATEGY

“Parents, carers, children and young people have a voice and influence and we will grow this further”

Engaging Parents as Partners

Dudley has a well-developed and effective parent & carer forum which is driven by a collective passion and commitment for securing a strong voice for children, young people and their families. This forms part of a wider network of participation and service-user voice in the Dudley area. We will build on the strengths of current arrangements by increasing the range of parent/carer representative bodies at both a strategic and operational level. This reflects strong feedback from parents and carers during the development of our SEND strategy.

The Voice of Children and Young People

There are increasing examples of where the voice and active participation of children and young people has informed and influenced policy, procedures and practice in Dudley. The Youth Council provides a strong voice for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities with dedicated representatives. Individual schools, colleges and specialist services are able to evidence the impact of active participation on the planning, review and shaping of local services. However, we recognise that embedding the voice of children and young people in everything we do and evidencing impact from this requires a relentless and determined push by all partners at all levels of the system.

Direct work with Children Young People and their Families

We are slowly but steadily getting better at ensuring the voice of children and young people is evidenced in our direct practice, informing our assessment, planning and delivery of individual support from all of our services. For children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities this is of particular importance with Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP's). We have made some slow but steady improvement to our direct work with parents, carers, children and young people with the EHCP process. However, the consistency, quality and positive impact of EHCP's remains a critical improvement priority.

The Voice of Children, Young People and Families



Source: focus group feedback of children and young people attending the Dudley Aspire events at the Brier and Dudley College

OUR SEND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We have identified three strategic priorities which provide a focus for driving system-wide change and improved outcomes for local people. The supporting plans that will ensure we deliver our strategic priorities are set out in Appendix 1.

PRIORITY 1:

WE WILL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILIES

“Embedding a culture of collaboration and partnership with parents, carers, children and young people to inform and influence how we plan, deliver and review local provision”

Priority 1 Outcomes

1. Children, young people and their parents and carers are equal partners in reviewing and shaping local services. A more collaborative partnership approach to working with parents and carers will be embedded across the local area
2. The voice of parents, carers, children and young people is central to how we do business at all points in the process from early thinking and ideas generation, through to the evaluation, review and shaping of provision.
3. The direct involvement of local people informs and drives frontline practice across all of our support, education and community services

PRIORITY 2:

WE WILL ENSURE MAXIMUM POSITIVE IMPACT FROM OUR HEALTH, EDUCATION, LOCAL AUTHORITY & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

“We will work in close partnership across the whole system of SEND support to align our resources and commissioning arrangements”

Priority 2 Outcomes

1. Leadership and governance of the SEND agenda is owned at the highest level across our partner agencies and this is reflected in organisational priorities and decisions about resources
2. We have an integrated approach to strategic planning, commissioning and resource management for SEND and disability provision, building on the foundations of the Dudley Disability Service. Our action is driven by more robust analysis and interpretation of our shared data, performance and quality outcomes and feedback from children, young people and families
3. Our local provision is progressively reshaped to offer the best possible mix of individually tailored support and learning opportunities across social care, health and education

PRIORITY 3:

WE WILL SIMPLIFY HELP AND SUPPORT SO THAT IT IS MORE ACCESSIBLE

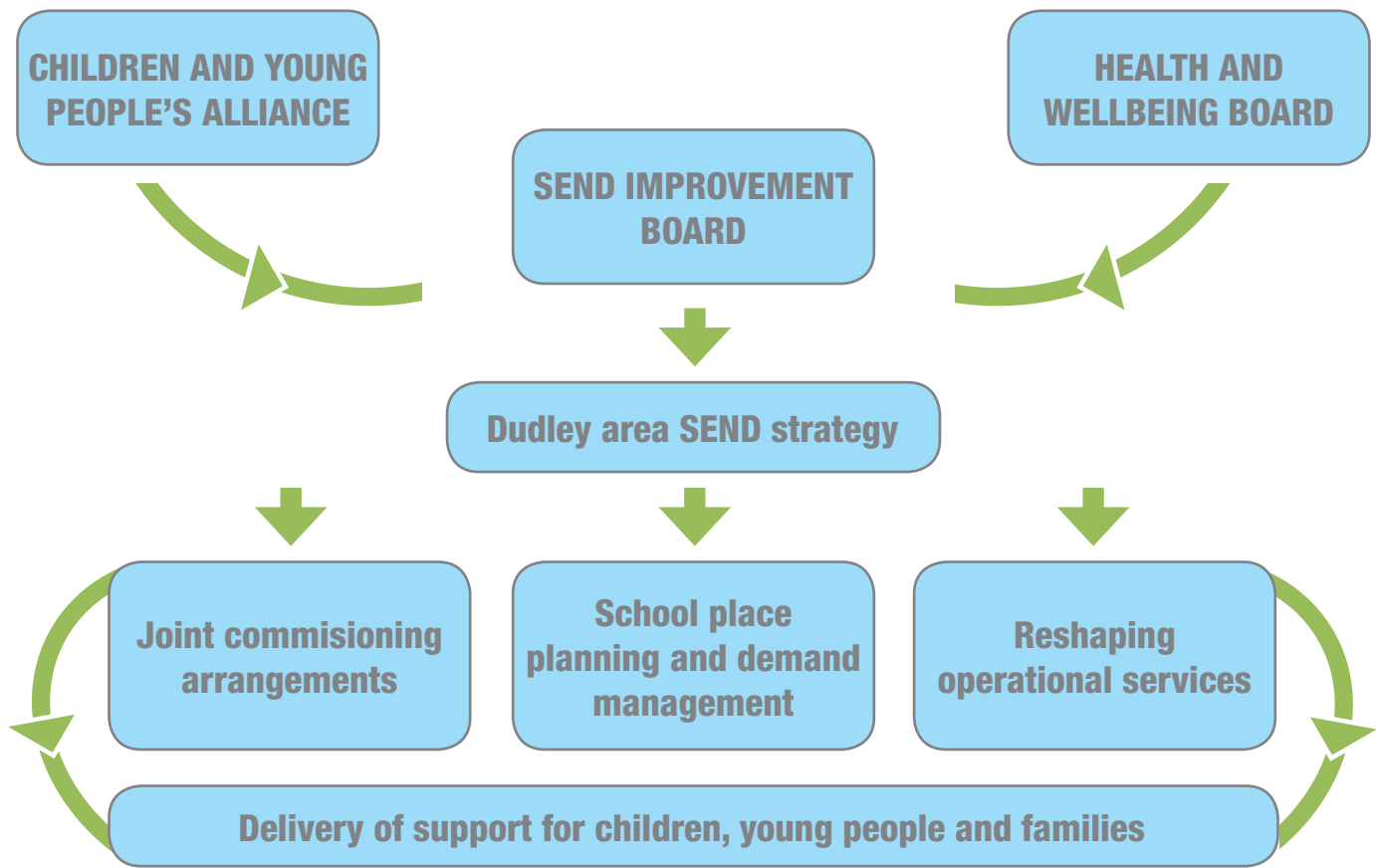
“With the child and young person at the centre of our decision-making, we will focus at point of delivery on creating a more straightforward and integrated experience”

Priority 3 Outcomes

1. Assessment and planning for individual children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities is integrated and high quality across education, health and social care provision
2. Our multi-agency workforce and the families we are working with are equipped with the skills, knowledge and capacity to identify and meet individual needs in a timely and effective way
3. The local area education offer to children and young people offers a continuum of support that is first and foremost driven by individual children and young people’s needs



DELIVERING OUR STRATEGY



Governance

- Our multi-agency SEND Improvement Board will own strategic accountability for the implementation of our Dudley strategy for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. This will form a critical element of the wider framework of support for vulnerable children and young people in Dudley. The SEND Improvement Board will work with all partners, stakeholders, families and local communities to ensure that ownership of delivery is secured at the highest level and that obstacles to delivery are identified quickly and tackled on a collaborative basis.

Action Planning

- Delivery of our SEND strategy will be secured through a number of detailed action plans:
 - Our SEND Improvement Plan
 - The SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy
 - The review of SEND school places
 - The reshaping of our SEND operational teams that work directly with children and families.

Inspection and Review

- In Dudley we welcome the challenge and opportunities presented by independent review and inspection of our SEND offer. The Ofsted/CQC framework and SEND Code of Practice provide a framework for informing and driving the quality and impact of local services. We will continue to complement regulatory visits with peer review and other sector-led improvement opportunities as part of our wider local framework for driving improvements to quality and frontline practice.

APPENDIX 1

SUPPORTING PLANS THAT WILL ENSURE WE DELIVER OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

| Action Plan | |
|--|-----------------|
| SEND Improvement Plan | |
| SEND Commissioning Strategy | Completion Date |
| SEN/Specialist Education Services (SES) Review of Operational Model | |
| Dudley Disability Service Implementation Plan https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/care-and-health/dudley-disability-service/ | |
| Early Help Strategy http://safeguarding.dudley.gov.uk/child/work-with-children-young-people/dudley-early-help-strategy/ | |
| Local Transformation Plan for Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Dudley CCG 2015- 2020 http://www.dudleyccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/CAMHS-Transformation-Plan-Final.pdf | |
| Children and Young People Continuing Care Policy Dudley CCG March 2017 http://www.dudleyccg.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Childrens-and-Young-Peoples-Continuing-Care-Policy.pdf | |
| Dudley Borough Vision https://www.dudleyboroughvision2030.org.uk/ | |
| Dudley Council Plan https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/plan/plans-policies-strategies/council-plan/ | |
| DMBC Housing Strategy https://www.dudley.gov.uk/residents/housing/plans-policies-strategies/ | |
| Dudley Health & Wellbeing Strategy https://www.dudleyhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/health-wellbeing-strategy | |

APPENDIX 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

| LANGUAGE IN THE STRATEGY | WHAT THIS MEANS |
|--------------------------|--|
| Commissioning | Commissioning is a term used to describe the whole process of deciding what local services are needed, looking at how we might most effectively deliver these services (within available resources), planning how to deliver – either directly or by bringing in other service providers and then maintaining a focus on the performance and review of these services in the longer-term |
| Co-Production | This refers to an approach to planning, reviewing delivering services in partnership with parents, carers, children and young people – so that the SEND system is not just designed and driven by professionals, but is jointly developed and informed by the local people that are using these services |
| CQC | The Care Quality Commission are the inspection and regulatory body for adult social care services |
| DDS | Dudley all-age Disability Service |
| LGA | Local Government Association |
| Ofsted | Ofsted are the national inspection and regulatory body for SEND services as well as wider Children’s Services, Schools and Education |
| SEND | Special Educational Needs and Disabilities |
| Stakeholders | This refers to any organisation or individual who has a professional or personal interest in supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities |

LINKS TO USEFUL FURTHER READING

| DOCUMENT | LINK (click on the link or copy & paste into your browser) |
|--|---|
| SEND - Guide for Parents and Carers | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-parents-and-carers |
| SEND support - Easy Read Guide for Children and Young People | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-support-easy-read-guide-for-children-and-young-people |
| Ofsted & Care Quality Commission Inspection Framework for children with special educational needs and disabilities | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-framework |
| SEND Code of Practice (Statutory Guidance) | https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf |
| SEN Support - research evidence on effective approaches and examples of current practice (2017) | http://www.sendgateway.org.uk/resources.send-support-research-evidence-on-effective-approaches-and-examples-of-current-practice-in-good-and-outstanding-schools-and-colleges.html |
| A comprehensive jargon buster is also available at: www.dudley.gov.uk/LocalOffer | |