

Briefing Paper: SEND Area Inspection

Context

The Children and Families Act was introduced in September 2014, and the implementation of part 3 of the Act has been progressing since then. The Children and Families Project Board has overseen implementation and includes representation from Learning and Skills, Children's Social Care, Adult's Social Care, Health, and Commissioning. The Project Board reports to the SEND Strategy Group. In addition to these representatives, this Group also includes parent/carer representatives, and colleagues from the Voluntary Sector.

The Implementation Plan is linked to the SEND Code of Practice 2014 Part 3, and details all activity so far, its impact, and areas for development. Work streams have focused on specific areas of development work:

- The Child and Family Centred Approach
- Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), and statutory process
- Preparing for Adulthood (14 – 25)
- The Local Offer.

SEND Area Inspection

From May 2016, and over the next five years, all Local Authorities will be subject to an area inspection. This inspection will focus on:

- An evaluation of how effectively the local area identifies disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs
- An evaluation of how effectively the local area meets the needs and improves the outcomes of disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs.

Early guidance suggests that a wide range of information will be used in this evaluation process, alongside methods to gather the views of identified children and young people, parents and carers, leaders within the local area, and then providers (through visits).

Proposed Inspection Arrangements

Inspection teams will include an HMI (lead), a CQC inspector and a Local Authority inspector. Inspectors will review available national data as part of their preparation, including within area inspection outcomes from CQC and Ofsted. There will be a narrative evaluation report following the inspection, but not an overall effectiveness grade.

The fieldwork will include discussions with elected members, key local area officers from health, education and social care, and meetings with leaders of Early Years settings, schools and colleges, and specialist services. Visits will be made to a range of providers and services. These visits will not inspect the provision, but focus on their understanding of and participation in meeting the areas' responsibilities. Inspectors will look at children and young people's files to contribute to their evaluations. There will be a strong emphasis on gathering the views of young people, and parents and carers, including meetings during

visits to Early Years settings, schools and colleges, meeting with established parent and carer groups, meeting with any reference groups established in the area, a webinar for parents and carers during the inspection.

Evidence of Successful Implementation

Inspectors will be looking for the following:

- How we work in partnership with children and young people, and their parents and carers to understand their needs so that outcomes can improve
- How Early Years providers, schools and colleges work in partnership with the local authority and social care and health services to identify and meet these needs effectively
- How education, health and social care services work together to jointly commission the support and services their children and young people require, including out of area support
- That focusing on the needs of children and young people who have an EHCP is not at the expense of providing for those others who require support but do not need a plan
- Evidence of early intervention and support activities that prevent some children and young people from needing an EHCP at a later stage
- An accessible Local Offer that sets out the support it expects to be available.

Above all, local areas must know whether their provision is improving outcomes for children and young people or not. They must agree aspirational yet realistic targets for young people and monitor their progress towards achieving them. The setting and reviewing of goals or targets must involve children and young people, and their parents and carers.

Preparation For Inspection

The Project Board has developed a Self- Evaluation Form as an overarching statement of our position. This is supported by a detailed Implementation Plan and further supporting evidence trails.

There will be a series of briefings in the next few weeks for staff across the Council and Health. Updates for schools and settings will be delivered through head teacher meetings and networks.

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13.5.16