

## 0-25 Special Educational Needs & Disability Service

Commissioning, Inclusion and Learning Services

People Portfolio

Website: [www.sheffield.gov.uk](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk)



### **Briefing note: Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection, Sheffield.**

As part of the national framework for inspecting local areas, Sheffield was inspected between 12 and 16 November 2018. The inspection is of the entire local area, including of practice across frontline Education, Health and Care provision to meet needs of those with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). It is the responsibility of the Local Authority and CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) to progress and lead the inspection and response but the inspection considered how everyone in Sheffield is identifying and meeting SEND needs. The inspection was completed by Ofsted and the CQC (Care Quality Commission).

The inspectors held 20 focus groups and visited 12 settings (11 education settings plus Ryegate respite provision). They met with parents and with young people. Parents were also able to contribute directly to the inspectors and participate in a webinar.

The inspectors provide a written report which can be viewed online here: <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/373>. (The report is published today, 25 January 2019.)

The inspection identified that the local area has not implemented national reforms consistently or swiftly enough - meaning that children and young people with SEND and their families have widely different experiences of how their needs are identified and met.

Whilst the inspectors identified that frontline professionals in education, health and care work hard to make a positive difference to children and young people with SEND, they recognised that too many children and young people do not have their needs assessed accurately or in a timely way. The findings by the inspectors confirmed issues that had been identified locally and plans are already being progressed to make further improvements.

Unlike other inspections, a judgement is not provided, however, where inspectors find areas of significant weakness, they can require the local area to complete a written statement of action (WSOA). The WSOA must be submitted to Ofsted within 70 working days of the publication of the report, no later than 30 April 2019. This must be agreed by the inspectors as being suitable. The local area is supported by the Department for Education and NHS England in completing this. Inspectors will return to complete a monitoring visit within 18 months of the publication of the WSOA. Around 45% of Local Areas inspected to date have been required to produce a WSOA.

Inspectors have required the Sheffield local area to produce a WSOA to tackle the following areas of significant weakness:

- The lack of a co-produced, coherent vision and strategy for SEND in Sheffield.
- Communication, clarity and consistency in the relationship between the local area leaders, parents, carers, children and young people.

- Poor strategic oversight of SEND arrangements by the CCG. This results in unacceptable waiting times for access to specialist equipment and appropriate pre- and post-diagnosis support and children and young people's needs not being met.
- Weakness in commissioning arrangements to remove variability and improve consistency in meeting the education, health and care needs of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND.
- The quality and timeliness of education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Inconsistencies in identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND in mainstream primary and secondary schools.
- Weaknesses in securing effective multi-agency transition arrangements for children and young people with SEND.

Work has already begun on identifying and defining the actions that will be included in the WSOA and the local area's response. This will focus on intended impact and outcomes. This work will be completed jointly between the LA and CCG. Parents and young people representatives will be included in the process as well as other key partners. A lead has been identified for each of the 7 areas from across the LA and CCG and the full response will be coordinated by the LA.

The WSOA will be monitored by the Inclusion Improvement Board, who hold accountability for SEND and improvements. The board reports to the Children's Health and Wellbeing transformation board. The board has representation from all key partners invited. The WSOA will also be discussed through scrutiny committee in February and will be discussed by CCG board. Information about the WSOA must be published on both LA and CCG websites.

Whilst the outcome of the inspection is disappointing, it is a fair reflection on support for children with SEND in the Sheffield local area at this time. The inspection did identify a number of strengths, particularly in regards to emerging work and good practice, but reflected the lack of consistency within the city in embedding these improvements. The Local Authority and CCG with partners, recognise that there is much work to do in order to ensure consistent outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children and young people against a backdrop of increased financial pressure and a lack of embedded consistent practice across Sheffield provision.

This is a crucial time for the city in how we support children and young people with SEND. The inspectors recognised the progress being made in the city as well as the challenges. We will continue to work in partnership to ensure that we meet the challenges we face and are committed to continually improving. We know that staff across the city are working hard to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND and want to thank everyone who supports them.

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