

CABINET
12 JULY 2018**JOINT LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND
DISABILITY (SEND) INSPECTION - LOCAL AREA ACTION
PLAN**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr M J Hart

Relevant Officer

Director of Children, Families and Communities

Recommendation

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) notes the Joint local area SEND Inspection that took place 5 – 9 March 2018 and the consequent Ofsted/CQC letter to the CCGs and the Council dated 16 May 2018;**
 - (b) acknowledges that progress is underway on the Written Statement of Action (Action Plan) to show how the agencies will tackle areas for improvement identified by that letter in order to improve outcomes for all children and young people with SEND, by helping them to achieve their full potential; and**
 - (c) authorises the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills, in the light of the required timescales, to approve the Action Plan on behalf of the Council for sending to Ofsted/CQC.**

Background

2. A Joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) local area¹ Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) inspection took place 5 – 9 March 2018. The inspection of the Local Area¹ involved an evaluation of the commissioned services of the CCG and the Council, provider services, schools and education providers. It should be noted that it was an inspection of the work of the Council on SEND and also that of our key strategic partners for this work, the three Clinical Commissioning Groups in Worcestershire. The findings of the Inspection were published on 16 May 2018 (attached as an Appendix).

3. The inspection raised concerns about the effectiveness of the local area¹, and the issues identified included:

¹ The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early years settings, schools and further education providers.

- Safeguarding concerns around:
 - children and young people from London boroughs who are housed locally
 - the use of long-term part-time timetables
 - children taken off roll and missing education
- the CCGs' lack of strategic leadership in implementing the SEND reforms
- the current poor quality of the existing SEND Strategy action plan the lack of joint commissioning arrangements
- the variation in the skills and commitment of some mainstream schools to provide effective support for children who have SEN and/or disabilities
- the lack of suitable specialist provision to meet the identified needs of children and young people
- the fragile relationships with parents and carers and the lack of meaningful engagement and co-production and collaboration
- the poor quality of EHC plans including the limited contributions from health and social care and the processes to check and review the quality of EHC plans
- the lack of systems to track outcomes for children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities in special schools, post-16 provision, young people who are NEET and youth offenders effectively
- the disproportionate numbers of children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities who have been permanently excluded from school
- the quality of the Local Offer
- academic outcomes, behaviours and attendance of children and young people who have SEN and/or disabilities.

4. Improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people, which includes those with a special educational need and/or a disability (SEND), is a key priority within the Children and Young People's Plan and is dependent on, and expected of, effective partnership collaboration between strategic health bodies and the Council.

5. The Local Area¹ Inspection resulted in the request that a Written Statement of Action (Action Plan) be prepared by the Local Area¹ and submitted to OFSTED/CQC within 70 days of the publication of the report. Work is taking place to produce this Action Plan, demonstrating how we will tackle areas for improvement identified by the Joint Local Area¹ SEND Inspection. The plan is currently in draft form and includes actions and tasks to ensure there is a single implementation plan that responds to the findings of the SEND local area¹ inspection, the recent Peer review carried out at the request of the Council by the Local Government Association (LGA) in December 2017 (Appendix 2) and ensures effective implementation of the SEND strategy actions. The primary aim of this plan is to build trust and confidence in the system that supports parents, carers and children and young people with SEND.

6. On 20 June the SEND Improvement Board met to discuss the draft Action Plan. The Board includes representation from the CCGs, Families in Partnerships, Special Schools, WH&CT, Babcock, Ourway Advocacy, Youth Justice and SENDIASS and officers from the SEND Services within the Council. The SEND Improvement Board gave constructive feedback and it was agreed that over the next 6 weeks work with all key partners will continue to ensure we have a comprehensive and multiagency

response, which is fit for purpose and has full support from stakeholders including parents / carers, children and young people.

7. The action plan will have resource implications for workforce and finance. Cabinet will already be aware of the pressures on the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools grant, which is an allocation specifically to fund those children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. In 2017/18 the High needs block faced an additional cost pressure of £3.4million which was funded from centrally held school reserves. This is not sustainable in the long term. The HR and financial implications will be considered as part of the action plan development.

8. Given the timescales required for return of the Action Plan and the timing of Cabinet meetings, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Education and Skills be given delegated authority to approve the Action Plan on behalf of the Council. From the CCGs' perspective, it is intended that the Action Plan will be approved by the CCG Governing Body for final submission to CQC/OFSTED by 20 August 2018.

Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments

9. Screenings will be carried out for both Privacy and Public Health Impacts and if appropriate, more detailed assessments will be done on individual workstreams.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. The overarching objective of the proposed action plan is to improve education opportunities for Children with SEND and support for them and for their families/carers. Proposed change will have positive Equality Impact. More detailed equality assessment will be carried out for individual work streams, where appropriate.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

Appendix 1- OFSTED/CQC Joint Local Area SEND Inspection in Worcestershire

Appendix 2 – Local Government Association - Peer Review

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20546/news_and_updates_the_local_offer/1614/s_end_inspection_and_peer_review