



To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 5th October 2023

Subject: Local Area SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and AP (Alternative Provision Framework)

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To brief the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) on the new Local Area SEND and AP Inspection framework; and provide assurance that the Council and partners are engaged in a collaborative planning and preparation process to ensure inspection readiness.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
 - 1) Note the report and appendix.
 - 2) Identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 The current legislative framework for children with special educational needs is set out in The Children and Families Act 2014 – Part 3. The Act sets out the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to identify, assess and make provision for children and young people with special educational needs. It also introduced the Education Health and Care Plan as a replacement for the previous Statement of Special Educational Needs and extended the age range of children who fell into its scope from 2-19, to birth up to 25.
- 3.2 It is nationally accepted that the implementation of the new framework was challenging for Local Authorities and partners, in terms of the pace of transition timescale, resources and costs. Ofsted and the CQC (Care Quality Commission) were jointly commissioned by the Government to conduct an inspection of all Local Areas within a five-year period, predominately to assess whether or not the arrangements in place evidenced statutory compliance. The focus was on processes and procedures rather than outcomes. Whilst this one round inspection framework did not result in a 'judgement', each inspection was followed by a detailed letter that was published on the OfSTED and CQC website. If a local area was deemed to be failing it was required to publish a 'written statement of action' setting out how it would address each of the identified weaknesses.

- 3.3 The inspection round began in September 2016 and was completed in 2021. In the West Midlands local areas were inspected at a rate of one per term. Coventry was the 11th local area to be inspected. Coventry's positive inspection, which took place in October 2019 confirmed that Coventry did not require a written statement of action. The report is available at: [Coventry Local Area SEND Inspection](#)
- 3.4 In January 2023 a new inspection framework was implemented. Ofsted and CQC will now jointly inspect local area partnerships, to see how well they work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The inspections will follow a continuous cycle. Local area partnerships can therefore expect to be inspected at least once every 5 years.
- 3.5 The inspection is similar to an ILAC inspection (local authority children's services) and takes place over a three-week period. Inspectors will arrive at one of three judgements:
1. The local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed – next inspection within 5 years.
 2. The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements – next inspection within 3 years.
 3. There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently – next inspection within 18 months
- 3.6 In preparing for the SEND and AP Local Area Inspection, it is necessary to co-produce/review the joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA), which underpins the evidence base for commissioning across the partnership. This action has been led by public health in full partnership with all partners including families. The JSNA is on target to be completed by December 2023.
- 3.7 The local partnership is required to co-produce a self-evaluation (SEF) against the inspection framework and a supporting action plan. This work is at an advanced stage and will be completed by December 2023. Taking into account the findings of the JSNA and SEF, the local area partnership will review the current SEND and AP strategy, to ensure that priorities are highlighted and addressed. The review will begin in October and be co-produced with all partners including children, young people and their families.
- 3.8 Coventry local area is preparing to be constantly inspection ready throughout the next round of inspections. However, it is noted that the historic pattern of inspection within the West Midlands, was one area per term (3 inspections per year). At this point in time Telford and Wrekin and Sandwell have both been re-inspected, having last been inspected in 2017, suggesting that areas may be reinspected broadly in the original order.

4 Health Inequalities Impact

4.1 The inspection framework is designed to look at a range of outcomes for children and young people with SEND, including health outcomes. The CQC will lead the enquiry into joint commissioning, identification of need, waiting list and provisions for all with a focus on inequalities and entitlement.

Appendix 1: Local Area SEND and AP Inspection Readiness

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