

Health and Well Being Board

Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Introduction

- Between 25 September and 29 September 2017 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of Oxfordshire to judge our effectiveness in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 (covering children and young people aged 0 – 25).
- The [report](#) was published on December 4th and stated that the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group are jointly responsible for submitting a Written Statement of Action to Ofsted within 70 days of the published report (March 8th). The Written Statement of Action should explain how the local area will tackle the following areas of significant weakness and be published on the SEND Local Offer within Oxfordshire County Council's public website:
 - the lack of clearly understood and effective lines of accountability for the implementation of the reforms
 - the quality and rigour of self-evaluation and monitoring and the limited effect it has had on driving and securing improvement
 - the quality of EHC plans
 - the timeliness of the completion of EHC plans
 - the high level of fixed-term exclusion of pupils in mainstream secondary schools who have special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health needs in particular.

Oxfordshire's WSoA is included in appendix 1, it has been approved by the SEND Programme Board, published on the Local Offer and sent off to Ofsted for ratification.

National context

- The first local area SEND inspections took place in May 2016. By May 2017, Ofsted and CQC had completed 30 inspections. Just under a third of the local areas inspected (nine) were required to provide a written statement of action. The Ofsted and CQC report '[Local area SEND inspections: one year on', October 2017](#) highlights the main findings from the first 30 inspections. The first three key findings are:
 - Children and young people identified as needing SEND support had not benefited from the implementation of the Code of Practice well enough.
 - Children and young people who have SEND were found to be excluded, absent or missing from school much more frequently than other pupils nationally.
 - School leaders had used unofficial exclusions too readily to cope with children and young people who have SEND.

There have been 10 inspections between September and December 2017 and 7/10 have been required to produce a Written Statement of Action.

Actions taken in response to Oxfordshire's joint inspection

- Since the inspection there has been an opportunity to reflect and begin to implement the learning from the experience. The spot light on SEND has raised the importance of the

area's joint responsibilities and emphasised how austerity measures have been impacting on Oxfordshire's ability to deliver the SEND reforms. A further review of the use funding will drive improvements to processes alongside the post Ofsted action

- The Programme Board overseeing the implementation has been refreshed and is now chaired by the Cabinet member for Public Health and Education, Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles, and reports to the Children's Trust and this Board. There is strengthened internal governance from health through to the OCCG Quality Committee, and children and adult social care reporting on SEND to senior management teams.
- Some additional resources have been assigned to strengthen services and provision for children and young people with SEND to enable the local area to fulfil its duties. These includes additional staffing for the SEN casework team, more educational psychologists and a permanent Designated Clinical Officer for SEND, funded by OCCG. Additional resources to address the pressures in children's and adult social care services are also being explored, as well as an ICT case management system to improve processes and transparency for Education, Health and Care plans.
- Services have been evaluating processes, guidance for staff , quality assurance measures and making immediate improvements. An e-learning course on Education, Health and Care Plans has been produced and went live in January to support work force developments, and the Council for Disabled Children are providing multi-agency training in May.

Progress

- In terms of progress in relation to Education, Health and Care plans, Oxfordshire is on track to complete all transfers of statements to Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) by the statutory timeframe of March 31st (approximately 2,700 plans). Also all early years and primary to secondary EHCPs have been completed by the statutory timeframe of February 15th. Education, Health and Care plans are being sampled each week for quality assurance and there has been a 20% improvement since October.
- A performance dashboard containing targets across education, health and care is being developed and will be monitored monthly by the SEND Programme Board.

Risks

There are a number of risks identified with meeting the ambitious plan outlined in the WSoA. Risk management and mitigation will be managed on a multi-agency basis by the SEND Programme Board. Key risks to note include:

- Lack of capacity in CEF to meet demand and workload
- Lack of effective strategy and incomplete service restructure to provide efficient working practices
- Schools fail to cooperate with reforms and initiatives to improve inclusive practice.
- Failure to provide sufficient support and placements results in further exclusion
- Poor uptake on training resulting in slow progress with improving the quality of plans and therefore improving outcomes for children.
- Progress on reducing fixed term exclusions for children with SEND is slow because schools will struggle to address issues of inclusion and behaviour support within existing budgets.

- Waiting times for some services will increase, despite remedial action plans, as a result of recruitment difficulties across some specialisms e.g psychologists.

A risk register is being developed and will be presented to the SEND Programme board every month.

Conclusion

The board is recommended to consider the outcomes of Oxfordshire's inspection and its responsibilities in relation to the joint area accountability for the delivery of the Written Statement of Action.

Appendix 1 Written Statement of Action

Janet Johnson, Strategic Lead for Vulnerable Learners 08/03/18