

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Board

Date: 17th May 2024

Wards affected: All Wards

Report Title: Update on Co-production of the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) of Torbay Local Area for Special Educational Needs (SEND) Provision and Report of the SEND AREA Engagement Meeting with Ofsted on 27th February 2024.

When does the decision need to be implemented? N/A

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1. Purpose of Report

Following the SEND Local Area Inspection in November 2021 a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was produced which was reported to Overview and Scrutiny in October 2023 and subsequently in April 2024. The written Statement of Action related directly to the outcomes of the November inspection. It is now almost 3 years since that inspection and as inspections are intended to be within 3 years of the previous inspection then Torbay Local Area can expect to be visited again within the near future.

A key element within an inspection is the Local Area's self-evaluation of their current position. Work has been undertaken on a self-evaluation and is currently being developed. Given that the new inspection arrangements would likely mean a full re-inspection later on in 2024 it is important for us to give due regard to the current results of the self-evaluation as we update this board.

As part of the follow-up by Ofsted on the previous inspection, an engagement meeting was held with Ofsted at the Offices in Bristol. A review of the feedback received from them is included in this report, following the discussion of the Self Evaluation Form.

2. The Local Area Self Evaluation Form

Work was started in the co-production of the SEF in January 2024. The Local Area SEND Inspection Framework is divided into two parts:

1. The impact of the local area partnership's SEND arrangements on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.
2. How the local area partners work together to plan, evaluate and develop the SEND system.

As can be seen, the first part is very much concerned with the impact of the various processes on outcomes for children, young people and their families. The second part is much more concerned with how the partners in the Local Area; Education, Health and Social Care plus other agencies in

the community, function for the benefit of those with special educational needs and disabilities from ages 0 to 25.

The first area is further subdivided into 5 areas which the Local Area partners have to address. These are:

- 1.1 Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way.
- 1.2 Children, young people and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans and support.
- 1.3 Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time.
- 1.4 Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes.
- 1.5 Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities.

The second area is subdivided into 6 areas which the Local Area partners have to address. These are:

- 2.1 Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND.
- 2.2 Leaders actively engage and work with children, young people and families.
- 2.3 Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of children and young people in their local area.
- 2.4 Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people.
- 2.5 Leaders evaluate services and make improvements.
- 2.6 Leaders create an environment for effective practice and multi-agency working to flourish.

Since the original inspection there have been a series of national developments. These include the new SEND reforms (green paper) recommending a new Local Inclusion Plan (LIP), a SEND National Change programme with several Pilot schemes around the country, as well as the changed Ofsted Inspection Framework for SEND Local Area Inspections. This now sees areas being judged within three categories for all future inspections:

Outcome 1 - The local area partnership's 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. The next full area SEND inspection will be within 5 years. Ofsted and the CQC ask the local area partnership to update and publish its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Outcome 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. The next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately 3 years. Ofsted and the CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Outcome 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. A monitoring inspection will be carried out within approximately 18 months. The next full area SEND inspection will take place within approximately 3 years. HMCI requires the local area partnership to prepare and submit a priority action plan (area SEND) to address the identified areas for priority action.

3 The Co-production Process

At the beginning of the process 4 meetings were held starting on 31st January 2024. Panels were assembled related to the contents of the framework. Two of the meetings were related to Section 1 of the Framework and two to the second part. The meetings consisted of representation from SEND Services, Family Hub representation, ICB, Devon Health, Children's Social Care, SEND Family Voice Torbay, School representatives. SEND Family Voice were unable to attend but a separate meeting was convened to gather their views. Analysis was undertaken of the workstream outcomes from the Written Statement of Action, Partnership Surveys, Data Dashboard, SEND Strategy, as well as a range of other reports.

From the range of comments, findings and reports a range of strengths and areas for development were gathered and entered into the first iteration of the SEF. This was then circulated to the participants of the first meetings, to those who had been invited but could not attend, and a range of other people, including the wider group of Parent members of Family Voice Torbay. The responses were then set against the original statements and the SEF was modified into a second version.

This version was formatted to include the following headings:

- SEND and Inclusion Vision,
- How the Strategy Was Produced,
- Our SEND Strategy Partnership Pledge,
- Local Area Governance Structure
- Executive Summary and
- The SEND Self Assessment.2024.

An analysis of the content of the strengths and weaknesses provided an overview of the main areas within the Draft SEF. These very preliminary findings were:

IDENTIFICATION & INCLUSION

Improve identification of needs through greater use of the Graduated Response and increase the ordinarily available provision, through increased training opportunities, to allow more pupils to remain in their home school without the need for an EHCP. Improve both attendance and exclusion rates. Review Social care thresholds in both Children's Disability and Adult Social Care for access to a range of support processes. Explore the culture change necessary to maintain children and young people in their communities and help them feel part of their community. Improve the role of Health in identification processes.

ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Continue to implement and embed new EHCP and AR formats that are quality assured and receive advice in timescales to improve timeliness. Ensure that Health funding is identified and accessed along with reductions in waiting times for services and health checks. Improve attendance at, or reports for, Annual Review processes.

PARENTAL CONFIDENCE

Provide rapid communication with parents, carers and young people around developments and improvements so that they understand clearly what is happening and their confidence in the system improves. Support parent/carers, children, and young people with conversations regarding the transition to adulthood so that their voice in the amended plan is reflective of preparing for adulthood outcomes and the local offer.

SUFFICIENCY

Ensure that there are places for those who need specialist provision through the development of locality hubs linked with the Family Hubs to provide joined approaches through education, social care and health. Develop provision for those at Post 16 transition providing for increased attainment at Level 2 and 3 and also support 3d internships and apprenticeships. Review transitional arrangements in health where there are congenital issues.

JOINT WORKING

Use the Single Point of Contact for Health and Single Point of Contact for Social Care to support joined up working at the amended plan stage. Remove the opportunities for silo working by reviewing working and office practices across local partners. Review the meeting culture to ensure that meetings are effective and influence practice without duplication where possible. Work to fully develop the joint commissioning opportunities.

DATA

Conjoin the JSNA and data dashboard information and increase the specificity of demographic location against more specific need types, ensuring that the SEND data is used across the partnership to aid planning and delivery to meet the needs in the Local Area and that the impact of interventions can be judged.

Since the first versions of the SEF were produced further work has been done towards tidying the descriptors and combining into more cohesive statements and adding a further detailed section to show the comparative figures for Torbay against National and Local outcomes for SEND.

4 Next Steps

Since the original inspection a range of national developments have been introduced. These include the new SEND reforms (Green Paper) which recommends a new Local Inclusion Plan (LIP), a national Change programme for SEND as well as the Ofsted Inspection Framework for SEND Local Area Inspections which now sees areas being judged within three categories for all future inspections:

In order to meet the increased demands of the new inspection regime, as well as the increased expectations of the newly introduced programmes, including the Safety Valve in which Torbay is participating and the demands on Health, through the changes resulting from the introduction of the Integrated Care System (ICS), it is essential that the Local Area has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development. The document that is expected to summarise these is the SEF.

We will continue to develop the SEF, which is a live and developing document. From the latest version an Action Plan will be produced. This will amalgamate the workstream actions from the Written Statement of Action to prevent duplication of effort.

The latest version of the SEF has been distributed to a wide range of partners across the whole of the Local Area. They have been asked to submit comment, observations and potential changes. The reason that this stage is being undertaken this way is to reduce the demand on partners to have to attend meetings, which is a drain on their time and increases meeting fatigue. This is such an important document that it is essential that we obtain the widest range of responses possible.

The final version of the SEF will be complete by the end of June and will then be an ongoing process of updating, linked to the associated Action Plan. This will be monitored through the SEND Strategic Board.

5 The Area Engagement Meeting with Ofsted

As stated previously in the report members of the Local Area Partnership were invited to Ofsted Offices in Bristol on the 27th February 2024 to review the progress that had been made since the SEND Local Area Inspection in November 2021. Representation included those from Education, health and Social Care. Parent and Family representatives joined on a video link so that they could participate in the presentation.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss SEND provision in the area and how the area partnership is meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, how we are improving services for children and young people with SEND and their families, to identify any issues of concern and how the partnership is keeping up to date with any changes in the local SEND system.

Various members of the partnership presented their views of the work that had been done in Torbay since the inspection. The main points covered, and featuring in the response from Ofsted were as follows:

- Services for children are at the top of the council's list of priorities although it was explained that we are not seeing the impact of development work as fast as we would wish. We explained that the partnership is determined to explore different options for improving services, including independent oversight of all development work.
- There is now a much greater commitment to partnership work from leaders in each aspect of education, health and social care as well as an increased commitment to services for children and young people with SEND from the council.
- The partnership has a better understanding of the impact of its work on children and families through the partnership with SEND Family Voice Torbay.
- The partnership plans to strengthen the work of family hubs by collocating educational psychologists within them as well as including them in the recently established 'first step' groups to look at the needs of children in the early years and their families in order to build strong and sustainable foundations for the future.
- A quality framework was introduced last year to drive up the quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans but that there is a tension between quality and timeliness of EHC plans but have brought in more people and adopted a project approach to successfully clear any backlog.
- the partnership needs to do more work to ensure that children's health needs are appropriately incorporated into their EHC plans and so have instigated a pilot project in Torbay.
- We have changed the way our family hubs work. Each of the five hubs now has an outreach worker attached. This is proving to be a popular and effective approach.

- Outreach work is now being directed by the 'at risk' panel and the level of intervention for children with social, emotional and mental health needs and children who need speech and language therapy is increasing because of this. We hope that it will soon start to have an impact on the high rate of school suspensions and permanent exclusions in the Torbay area.
- We have developed a 'graduated response roadshow' which has visited all schools in Torbay. This has significantly raised the profile of the partnership's work with schools with increased attendance of school staff at the regular SENCO network meetings and Parent representatives sensing the higher profile of local SEND services.
- We stated that we are committed to more face-to-face work with families with a recent 'spotlight on CAMHS' day generating a lot of interest, despite messages being hard for staff to hear. Despite this, we believe that a big shift in parents' views is taking place.

APPENDICES

Torbay new version SEF V.1.pdf

Ofsted SEND Local Area Framework

Ofsted letter re: Area SEND Engagement meeting 27th February 2024.