**CQC/Ofsted Local Area Inspection – An Overview**

This article provides an overview of the CQC/Ofsted Local Area Inspection, which form part of the implementation of the SEND Reforms.

**Background**

New duties regarding disability and special educational needs (contained in the Children and Families Act 2014 – explained in the SEND Code of Practice) came into force in September 2014. These duties place responsibilities on a local area, which includes the local authority and health commissioners and providers, together with all the all the area’s early years settings, schools and post 16 further education sector, to identify and meet the needs of disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs aged 0-25.

**Inspection Scope**

The inspection will evaluate how effectively the local area meets its responsibilities for disabled children and young people and those who have special educational needs. **This includes children and young people both with and without education, health and care plans**.

While the local authority has the key leadership role within its area, **the inspection will not simply evaluate the effectiveness of the local authority**. The local authority cannot on its own implement successfully the reforms. Success requires full involvement of the local area. The inspection will, therefore, **evaluate the effectiveness of the local area as a whole**. The local area includes -

* Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).
* Early year’s settings.
* Further education sector.
* NHS England (for specialist services).
* NHS provider organisations including Trusts and GPs.
* Schools.
* The Local Authority.

Inspectors will look at a **wide range of groups of children and young people**, including those with different disabilities and special educational needs, those of different ages and those attending different settings, for example those in youth justice provision and those not attending school.

The evaluation of **social care and health responsibilities** will focus on how these services have contributed to meeting the needs of **children and young people** who are **being assessed for, or are subject to, education, health and care plans**.

**Scope of Inspection for Partners**

* The **Local Authority** will be inspected in relation to its **provision for all children and young people with SEND.**
* **Health and social care** inspection will focus on those **children and young people with, or applying for, EHC Plans.** The inspection of health and social care will also assess services’ overall contribution and ability to work collaboratively to effectively meet the needs of children and young people.
* **Schools and other education sector settings** will be visited to assess the fulfillment of their **statutory responsibilities for children and young people with SEND**. If bad practice is identified by inspectors, a **section 5 Ofsted inspection** could be triggered.

**Local Area Inspection Framework**

The inspection will evaluate against three national outcomes:

* Positive experience of the SEND system for children, young people and families.
* Positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.
* Effective preparation for adulthood.

The following questions will form the basis of the inspection:

*How effectively does the local area identify children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?*

*How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?*

*How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities?*

**Key Facts and Figures on the Local Area Inspection**

* The local area will be given five working days’ notice, and the inspection can only take place during term time.
* The inspection will last five days.
* Professionals from across the city will be involved in the inspection and around 12 schools may be visited.
* Visits to schools are on SEND, however if inspectors have concern about the quality of inclusive practice, this could trigger a full Ofsted inspection of the school.

**Preparation**

* The multi-agency Inclusion Programme Board is overseeing the preparation for inspection.
* Briefings are underway with partners from across the city, including health, social care and schools.
* If you have any questions on the inspection please contact tim.bowman@sheffield.gov.uk

**Essential Reading**

* [SEND Local Area Inspection Framework.](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/521609/The_framework_for_the_inspection_of_local_areas_effectiveness_in_identifying_meeting_needs_children_who_have_special_educational_needs_andor_disabilities.pdf)
* [SEND Local Area Inspection Handbook.](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/521612/The_handbook_for_the_inspection_of_local_areas_effectiveness_in_identifying__meeting_needs_of_children_who_have_special_educational_needs_andor_disabilities.pdf)