

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Children's Young People and Education

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Children's Services and Education

DATE: 12 September 2019

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Children's Young People and Education and Prevention Adult Services

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT:
Blackburn with Darwen's Joint Local Areas SEND Inspection Outcomes

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the key lines of enquiry undertaken by the inspectorates, the subsequent areas of strength and those identified as areas for improvement and recommendations for next steps.

The golden thread running through the inspection was to 'start with the end in mind'. Inspection lines of enquiry were based on demonstrating impact against the local area SEND strategy's overarching objective, which is to secure the best outcomes for children and young people with SEND to support them to achieve well in their early years, at school and at college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives.

Main inspection themes included:

- What demonstrable difference/improvements have the reforms made since their introduction in September?
- Focus on outcomes – children and young people's aspirations, educational attainment, further education, employment, independent living and community participation
- Strong focus on co-production, the views of parents/carers, children and young people
- Strength of strategic leadership, joint working and understanding of the local area
- Strength of joint commissioning
- Sufficiency of support from health provision – particularly 'hidden needs'
- Effectiveness of transition from children's to adult services
- Range and sufficiency of provision, employment and housing for young people – post 16 and post 19

- Emphasis on attendance, exclusions, off-rolling/pupil movement

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

Note the information contained within this report and comment on recommendations made.

3. BACKGROUND

Between 17 June 2019 and 21 June 2019, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Blackburn with Darwen to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The inspection was led by Pippa Jackson Maitland, Her Majesty's Lead Inspector from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors including Phil Harrison, Ofsted Inspector, and Louise Holland, a Children's Services Inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Inspectors spoke with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), parents and carers, local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they are implementing the SEND reforms. Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of the local area, including the local area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with leaders from the local area for health, social care and education. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.

The published inspection letter (appendix A) outlines the inspectors' findings which includes areas of strength and areas for further improvement. The areas identified for further improvement did not result in a Written Statement of Action. (A written statement is required when findings present a significant concern).

The Director for Children's Services must provide annual progress updates to Ofsted against areas identified for improvement.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Findings of the inspection

Key areas of strength

Inspectors reported that provision for SEND is a key priority for all partners and that there is a real enthusiasm, and can do attitude, to work closely together to make sure children and young people get the best possible support.

The inspection outcome letter recognised that since 2014 the local area has made considerable progress in implementing the SEND reforms and that recent changes to leadership and governance of SEND has accelerated this.

Inspectors reported that families in Blackburn with Darwen are listened to and the majority feel that their children receive the help and support they need.

The findings from the independent SEND review commissioned in 2018 provided the catalyst for further change and leaders have ensured that recent actions build on these foundations, with the local area demonstrating a clear capacity for improvement.

It was recognised that leaders have an in-depth knowledge of the local area and that this has been reflected in the coproduced SEND Strategy. As a consequence, leaders have made considerable progress in addressing issues.

Inspectors reported that provision for SEND is a key priority for all partners and that there is a real enthusiasm, and can do attitude, to work closely together to make sure children and young people get the best possible support.

Key areas for improvement

Leaders' and managers' accurate knowledge of the local area is not fully reflected in improvement plans. Too much emphasis is placed on parents' and children and young people's experience of the processes rather than the positive differences the provision makes to their lives.

Better use of data, in relation to patterns and trends of need, is required to inform and evaluate commissioning of services and strategic planning.

The local area's provision for young people when they leave school is not sufficiently well developed, consequently young people do not benefit as well as they should from the good start they've made. While the quality and range of educational provision post-16 and post-19 is improving, the opportunities for employment and independent living are limited. Parents have concerns about their child's transition into adulthood and feel anxious about their future.

Parents tell us they are not listened to when their children's needs are less obviously visible. Parents describe having to 'fight' for professionals to recognise their child's needs. This means that for this group of children and young people there can be delays in accurately identifying their needs.

Current demand for psychological services for children and young people with lower-level mental health needs is exceeding capacity. This means that children and young people experience lengthy waits in having their needs met. This situation exacerbates the risk that children and young people's needs escalate in the meantime.

Lack of clear targets in EHC plans reduces the ability of professionals, parents and children to measure, monitor and evaluate improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

The full inspection letter provides significant detail, which includes information on the strengths and areas for improvement at service level. The full letter is included as a background document to this briefing paper and is available to view on the council website and Blackburn with Darwen's Local Offer site.

Recommendations

1. Areas that have been identified for further improvement will form the basis of the revised SEND Strategy action plan for the local area. This plan will be coproduced with stakeholders and co-owned between Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and Blackburn with Darwen Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

The SEND Partnership Board (led by the Director for Children's Services and represented by senior leaders from across education, health, children's and adult's services) manages progress against the action plan. The SEND Partnership Board is accountable to the Health & Well-being Board.

2. That the plan will be developed using an outcomes based accountability process. This will ensure that senior leaders can evidence the positive difference and best value that our

services/support have made to the life chances and achievements of our children and young people.

3. Expand the local area's workforce development programme to better identify and address need through the development of professionals and families across the local area.
4. Joint commissioning is strengthened between the Council and CCG to secure best value and improve accessibility to services locally.
5. Deliver the local area's ambitious plans for adult services to improve pathways to adulthood.
6. Improve engagement with families to better inform strategic decision making.

The detail

The full inspection letter provides significant detail, which includes information on the strengths and areas for improvement at service level. The full letter is included as a background document to this briefing paper and is available to view on the [council website and Blackburn with Darwen's Local Offer site](#).

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no new policy implications as a result of this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this stage, however the department will be revising the SEND Strategy action plan, and depending on the outcome of that process, there may be financial implications at a later date. Where this is the case these would be reported on as and when they arise.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Children and Families Act 2014 (and relevant statutory guidance) Local Authorities and CCGs have duties regarding the provision of support for children and young people with SEND, including implementing the disability and SEN reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. Guidance on these duties can be found in the [SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 years](#). Under s.20 of the Children Act 2004, OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) have the duty of inspecting and reporting on the effectiveness of local areas in fulfilling those duties. The joint local area review covers other bodies in the area besides the Local Authority (i.e. CCGs, public health and education providers). The final inspection report (published in the form of an inspection letter) is sent to the Local Authority, the CCG and the Secretary of State. Under the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, the Local Authority must publish this report on its website, circulate it to the local media and supply a paper copy of the report to any member of the public who requests it.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Effectively addressing areas identified for improvement will require a review of service delivery and responsibilities across children's services.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Revised SEND Strategy Action Plan and proposed developments will be informed in consultation with key stakeholders, including families.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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DATE:	20/08/2019
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	Appendix A – Ofsted Outcome letter
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