

SEND NEWS

UPDATE
January
2023

Supporting children
and young people with
special educational needs
and disabilities (SEND)

Dear parent/carers

A re-inspection of arrangements to support children and young people with SEND by Ofsted took place between 14-16 November 2022. This followed the initial inspection report published in March 2020.

► This inspection looked at how well Leicestershire County Council, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and a range of stakeholders including parents and carers,



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schools and other education, health and social care professionals and providers work together. During their inspection, the inspectors spoke directly with children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, school leaders and parent carers.

The final report has been published today (10 January) and we wanted

to update you on the findings.

In the report, inspectors found that agencies in Leicestershire have made sufficient progress in one of two areas identified in the initial inspection, which was around joint commissioning, but have not yet made sufficient progress in the second area, the quality of EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans). ■

Joint Commissioning Strategy

We are pleased to say that the re-inspection found sufficient progress has been made into formalising joint commissioning and working relationships between the ICB and the council. This includes significant investment of resource over the past two years.

► Ofsted inspectors found that leaders had:

“demonstrated their commitment, ambition and willingness to improve commissioning arrangements across the local area and have significantly expanded the workforce for health professionals working with children and young people with SEND”.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) **Joint Commissioning Strategy 2021-2024 for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland** is now in place. There is also

a visible commitment at all levels of the ICB and here at the county council to continue to work ever more closely with you for continuous improvement around joint commissioning arrangements in the local area.

We acknowledge that not all parents/carers are aware of the strategy and, as a result, partners will continue to promote and raise awareness of it and the impact it's having in the local area.

The Leicestershire SEND Hub are represented on the SEND and Inclusion Board, and there

are regular meetings to develop effective co-design of service improvements. The SEND Hub are also fully engaged with the Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire (TSIL) programme.

In the last two years we have successfully jointly commissioned a number of activities in Leicestershire including the Leicestershire Key Worker Programme, the development of a Neurological Pathway and a Children and Young Persons Integration Project which gives access to speech and language and occupational therapy. ■

Education Health and Care Plans

It was recognised during the re-inspection that a number of positive steps had been taken around plans, including that the format for EHCPs has been improved to better reflect the needs and provision for children and young people with Plans.

► It was also recognised that the views of parents, carers and young people are now better reflected in plans and social care contributions are carefully checked alongside clear quality assurance framework.

Inspectors did, however, identify that the proportion of children and young people with EHCPs has increased significantly over the past three years. This has led to a decline in the number of new plans completed in statutory

timescales, as well as an impact on the ability of the Local Area Partners to update Plans following annual reviews. The quality of content of EHCPs also still requires improvement. Therefore inspectors were not satisfied that sufficient progress has been made on improving the quality of EHCPs, the quality assurance of EHCP and the timeliness of assessments and issuing EHCPs.

The inspectors were satisfied that local area leaders are

strongly aware of these pressures and noted that in order to address this we have invested in the Transforming SEND and Inclusion (TSIL) programme.

This will include work with partner agencies and the SEND Hub to address the overall pressures upon the system and to ensure that statutory duties are fully met. These plans have been welcomed by professionals working in education, health and social care. ■

SEND in the local area

The Transforming SEND and Inclusion (TSIL) Programme is now in place and this will identify further opportunities for joint working to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. More information on this programme is available on our website.

► The positive progress we make on the TSIL programme and the local area accelerated action plan will be reported regularly to councillors, the SEND and Inclusion Board, the local SEND Hub and the DfE.

Whilst we are pleased to see recognition where improvements have been made, we are also very aware that at the moment there are significant pressures upon

SEND Services and that this is resulting in delay and anxiety for too many families.

We'd like to thank you for taking part in this process and giving your views to the inspectors. We are committed to securing better outcomes for children and young people with SEND despite the overall funding pressures for public services both in our area and nationally.

This report has highlighted the significant progress we have made in the Joint Commissioning Strategy and pinpointed where we need to continue our improvement. We will be tireless in our efforts to continue our improvement in the identified areas as quickly as possible.

If you'd like to read the Ofsted/ CQC report you can do so on the **Ofsted website**. ■



Transforming SEND and Inclusion in Leicestershire

