

Briefing Note

Title: SEND Self Evaluation

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Job Title: Head of SEND

Intended Audience: Joint Education and Children's Leadership

Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

1. Purpose

1.1 Over the last two months there has been a significant redevelopment of the SEND (Special Educational Needs) self-evaluation designed to link it more directly to the area inspection framework. This paper is intended to inform members of the panel about the revised self-evaluation for SEND in the city of Wolverhampton. The members of the panel are requested to:

- Note the breadth and purpose of the SEND Area Inspection.
- Note the self-evaluation and the key areas of strength and development identified.
- Note current work underway and plans to address areas for development

2. Overview

2.1 The SEND Area Inspection is an inspection of the local area's effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special education needs and/or disabilities. The framework for inspection was published in April 2016. Inspections are undertaken jointly by OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) who provide an external evaluation of the local area to review how well it carries out its statutory duties and consider whether children and young people achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes such as being able to live independently, secure meaningful employment and be well prepared for their adult lives.

2.2 The inspection leads to a report which:

- provides children and young people, parents, elected council members, providers and local leaders an assessment of how well the local area is doing against the framework criteria
- provides the Secretary of State for Education information about well the local area is performing its role in line with the statutory responsibilities in the Code of Practice
- promotes improvement in the local area, its education, care and health provision

- Where relevant, requires the local area to consider the actions that it should take in light of the report and prepare a written statement that sets out those actions and the timetable for them.
- 2.3 It should be remembered that the inspections under the framework will evaluate how the **local area** meets its responsibilities, and not just the local authority. The local area includes the local authority, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early years settings, schools and further education providers.
- The starting point for inspection is an expectation that the local area should have a good understanding of its own effectiveness. Leaders are required to accurately assess how well the local area meets its responsibilities, including an understanding of areas of strength and those requiring further development. This is the local area's self-evaluation. In reaching judgements inspectors will pay attention to the rigour and accuracy of the self-evaluation.

3. Background and context

- 3.1 In order to ensure the information required by Ofsted and CQC is clear and readily available in a format that matches the areas of focus covered in the inspection framework, a significant change to the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) format has been made. This has been done deliberately to ensure that the SEF maps across to the Joint Area Inspection Handbook more directly and to ensure that the evaluative nature of the SEF is robust and consistent.
- 3.2 It should be remembered that the self-evaluation is intended to be a living document and as such should be regularly revisited, monitored, updated and refined. Monthly SEF and inspection preparation meetings are planned until the end of 2019. As the inspection framework covers the local area and it is not an inspection of the local authority the SEF is jointly owned and developed by the members of the SEND Commissioning and Partnership Board.
- 3.3 The new document and the evaluations made within it will require a process of co-produced validation. This is being undertaken during the "Spotlight of SEND" visioning day on the 4 October 2019 by parents, carers, young people and a broad range of professionals from across the system.
- 3.4 As the inspection framework considers three overarching questions for children and young people who have special educational needs and /or disabilities the revised self-evaluation is organised into these three aspects.
1. How effectively does the local area identify children and young people who have SEND?
 2. How effectively does the local area assess and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND?
 3. How effectively does the local area improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND?

3.5 Against each of the three inspection aspects, 1,2 and 3, the revised self-evaluation enables leaders from across the partnership as well as parent/carers and other stakeholders to:

- review effectiveness and evaluate its current position
- analyse the evidence base and ensure a robust range of evidence is used to inform the evaluation process
- consider the impact of its strategies and actions on children and young people
- assess the next steps required to further improve outcomes for children

4. Strengths and Areas for Development

4.1 The SEF identifies some key strengths and areas for development in Wolverhampton. Among the strengths are:

- Senior leaders are committed to the reforms.
- Close working partnerships between health, social care and education
- A SEND Data Dashboard
- Joint commissioning (though needs underpinning)
- There is a strong multi-agency approach particularly in the early years
- EHCP quality is good and timeliness is in-line with national average. In addition, Wolverhampton has a self-imposed 16-week timescales for EHCPs for children and young people who are looked after.
- Wolverhampton Impartial Advice and Support Service (WIASS) is well regarded nationally.

4.2 Identified Areas for Development are:

- Co-production both at a strategic and an individual level.
 - In response a co-production charter is being developed to demonstrate the city's commitment to working with children, young people and families.
 - The charter contains a toolkit to support professionals to understand what co-production is, what its benefits are and how to do it effectively.
- The Local Offer is still not used by parents, professionals, or commissioners as intended.
 - In response a promotion and marketing campaign including posters and flyers is being undertaken over the next six months to raise awareness.
 - This will be accompanied by another round of awareness raising for professionals.
 - Parent feedback and audit sessions are scheduled to understand the barriers to use as part of the annual improvement cycle.
- Outcomes for children with an EHCP
 - Strategic moderation of EHCPs is undertaken to ensure that outcomes are appropriate and "school friendly".

- SENCO Network meetings are being revised to focus on understanding and sharing of good practice.
 - There is an ongoing commitment to increase the proportion of children and young people with an EHCP in mainstream schools which increases educational opportunity.
- The City's Short Breaks offer is under review in response to concerns raised by parents.
 - The interim review of short breaks was presented to the SEND Commissioning and Partnership Board on the 11 September 2019 and recommendations are being considered.
- High rates of exclusions in the city which disproportionately affects children and young people with SEND needs.
 - The inclusion Service have developed school inclusion dashboards to understand and challenge as appropriate practice in the city's secondary schools.
 - Through the SENCO networks (as above) we will be able to promote good inclusive practice more successfully
 - New peer to peer challenge and support processes are being established in order to allow earlier and more effective intervention where appropriate.
- Tell it once approach not embedded in all areas
 - Work to be undertaken to build on areas of joint assessment and effective team around the family practice in the early years
 - Future procurement of information and case management systems will need to support a more integrated approach.

4.3 The areas for development are monitored by the SEND Commissioning and Partnership Board and progress is reported to the board as part of the overall reporting on delivery of the city's strategic priorities for SEND.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The reformatting of the SEF highlighted a number of evidence gaps which are being worked on currently by all partners. The Area SEND Self Evaluation is due to be formally signed off by the SEND Commissioning and Partnership Board in October 2019.
- 5.2 The self-evaluation along with the SEND joint strategic needs analysis, parent carer surveys and input from the "Spotlight on SEND" co-production and visioning day will be used as the basis for the development of the 2020-2025 SEND Strategy and our understanding of Wolverhampton's priorities for the next five years.
- 5.3 A progress report on actions will be shared with the scrutiny panel before the end of November 2019.