

Special Educational Needs & Disability

Joint Local Area SEND Inspection Torbay



TORBAY COUNCIL

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Inspection Overview

- Inspection took place between 15th November 2021 and 19th November 2021.
- Inspection team was lead by a HMI from Ofsted and supported by a team of inspectors including additional Ofsted Inspectors and Inspectors from the CQC.
- The report of their findings is being published on 13th January 2022.
- In reaching their findings the inspection took into consideration the work of SEND partnership and their response to children.
- The inspection framework answered the following three lines of enquiry
 - ❑ **The effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities**
 - ❑ **The effectiveness of the local area in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities**
 - ❑ **The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

Who are the SEND Partners?

Inspectors spoke with

- ✓ children and young people with SEND
- ✓ parents and carers
- ✓ Local Authority
- ✓ NHS
- ✓ CCG
- ✓ School staff and governors
- ✓ Leaders from health, social care and education
- ✓ Operation staff and managers from across the partnership



Outcome of the Ofsted/CQC Send inspection – Main findings

- Leadership challenges and lack of joint working
- Children young people and parent carers are not at the forefront of planning
- Lack of co-production
- Inequality and varied access for children with SEND
- Quality of EHCP
- Joint commissioning under developed
- Exclusion of pupils with SEND is high
- Lack of early support for children needing emotional and well being support
- Lack of opportunities post 16 and limited transition opportunities
- Entrenched cultural issues

Outcome of the Ofsted/CQC Send inspection – Main findings

- Recent improvements in the effectiveness between CCG and Children's services
- Recognition from front line providers that area leaders are looking to promote joint working
- Some strong professionals who are considered “brilliant”
- 0 to 19 joint commissioning is positive

The effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- Early Years services are effective
- There is a active and well attended SENCO network
- Speech and language therapists in YOT are strong

The effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for development

- Many children do not have their needs identified early enough
- Area leaders do not have a understanding of those children who receive support via SEN but do not have a EHCP
- Neurodevelopmental pathways (including ASD) is not effective
- Effectiveness of early identification in schools is varied

The effectiveness of the local area in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- Services in early years work together to provide a joined-up service for children and families
- The SEND information, advice and support service (SENDIASS) in Torbay is a well-led, effective service. SENDIASS staff advocate exceptionally well for children, young people and their parents and carers.
- The designated clinical officer (DCO) and designated medical officer (DMO) are making a difference. They work together effectively to provide strategic and operational oversight of SEND across clinical networks.
- Some schools in the area are highly committed to the reforms and make excellent provision for children and young people with SEND.
- Specialist school settings provide a strong service for children and young people and their families. Many go the extra mile to advocate for the families
- The short break offer in Torbay, including what is provided through the voluntary sector, is well regarded by those who access it. There is an appropriate range of opportunities for children and young people with SEND and their families.

The effectiveness of the local area in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Development

- The quality of EHC plans needs improving. Weaknesses in joint working across education, health and care, and the systems and processes for assessing children's and young people's needs are not strong enough.
- The implementation of the graduated response reflects the lack of consistency in the area.
- There is variability in the implementation of the SEND reforms across health and care services.
- Area leaders have failed to sustain effective ways of engaging with parents and carers.
- Opportunities and choices for children and young people in the area when they reach 16 significantly reduce. This worsens the older young people get and the more complex their needs are.
- The online local offer has a range of useful information about the services available to support children and young people with SEND and their families.

The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Strengths

- The effectiveness of joint working in early years supports timely and accurate identification of young children's needs.
- Collaboration between services means that children with SEND often have their needs met well in early years settings.

The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Areas for Development

- A legacy of mistrust and poor identification and meeting of needs means that many families still feel that they need to fight for their children's rights.
- The achievement of children and young people with SEND at the end of key stage 4 is poor in Torbay. Following the strong start children make in early years, variations in the quality of identification and in meeting needs lead to a slowing of progress.
- Children and young people with ASD, SEMH difficulties or similar associated needs do not experience improved outcomes as a result of the reforms. Poor timeliness in identification and variability in inclusive practice mean that many wait a long time before their needs are met
- There is too little opportunity for young people to achieve positive outcomes as they transition to adult services. Provision post-19 is particularly limited.
- Area leaders' work to improve the life chances of young people with SEND as they move into adulthood has had limited impact.
- The proportions of children and young people excluded from school in the area are high and much higher than is typical. Leaders recognise this weakness. However, there is not a strategy in place to address this as robustly as is needed.
- The outcomes for children and young people with SEND are not improving as a result of the implementation of the SEND reforms by area leaders. The system in Torbay remains disjointed.

As a result of the findings of this inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has determined that a **Written Statement of Action (WSOA) is required because of significant areas of weakness in the area's practice.** HMCI has also determined that the local authority and the area's CCG are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted.

Next steps

- Publication date **13th January 2022**
- Working Statement of Action (WSOA) – within 70 working days
- SEND Improvement Partnership Board