

TORBAY COUNCIL

Highlight Report

Production of the SEND Local Area Written Statement of Action

Version:1.1

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Authors: Graham Pirt, Kate Reynolds, Hannah Baker

Client: Torbay Council

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Highlight Report

Torbay Local Area SEND Inspection took place in November 2021. The inspection report was published in January 2022, with an outcome of a request for a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to be produced to address the serious weaknesses identified across the local area in order to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix 1.

The purpose of this document is to report on progress towards completing the WSoA. The WSoA has to be submitted to the DfE by 14 April 2022

Reporting Period

From:	21 ST February 2022	To:	14 th March 2022
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1. Schedule status

The Written Statement of Action is due to be submitted on the 14th April 2022. The schedule of activities (see appendix 1) are all on track for completion by this deadline.

2. Activities completed during this period

- Since mid-February 2022, two strategic leads have been appointed to coordinate and push forward the work needed to produce the WSoA in readiness for its implementation.
- There are two distinct phases of work; firstly, the production of the WSoA with submission to Ofsted for sign off by the 14th April 2022 and secondly the implementation of the Statement of Action over the following 18 months that the local area will carry out and against which they will be regularly monitored.
- A Project Manager was appointed and started work in the week commencing 28th February.
- To ensure effective co-production of the written statement of action, workshops have been organised focused on each of the four pillars identified in the Local Government Association peer review undertaken in July 2021.
- These workshops started in mid-February and will be completed by the end of March 2022.
- The first workshops took place in the week commencing 28th February exploring the key issues and very early identification of actions following a series of prompts where the strategic leads facilitated a discussion examining some of the key issues in each pillar and possible solutions and actions.
- Given the importance of cultural change as identified by the inspection report a separate workshop has been held with this as the main focus. As well as

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having its own action plan, the issue of cultural change will be woven throughout all elements of the WSoA to ensure a fundamental shift in approach that enables and supports co production and has children and young people with SEND and their families at the centre of everyone's work.

- In addition to the formal meetings others were held with:
 - SEND Family Voice Torbay (two meetings thus far with a weekly update meeting scheduled until submission of the WSOA),
 - “First Steps” Health Initiative with Lisa Teoh (Consultant Paediatrician, Torbay Hospital),
 - Further Health Update meetings have been scheduled for the coming weeks to ensure this sector is fully integrated into the Creation of the Written Statement of Action (Hannah Pugliese, Head of Women’s and Children’s Commissioning, NHS).
 - “Turning Heads” with Alan Tilley (parent of SEND child and Director and Chief Executive of Turning Heads),
 - School Improvement Meeting (with Debbie Horn, Torbay Council).
 - The Director of Children’s Services is also being regularly updated.
 - An Advisers meeting with the DfE and CWC has occurred with a further two meetings also scheduled before the submission (Keith Thompson, SEND and Disability Professional Adviser and Marc Tucker, Care Quality Commission Adviser)
 - One of the strategic leads has also attended Torbay Schools Forum.
- Regular reporting of progress to the SEND Strategic Board is in place.
- A working draft of an action plan has been formulated from all these meetings and will be further developed at the second WSoA meetings this week (see Appendix 2).

3. Activities expected in the next period

- Second round of WSoA Workshops (Week commencing 14th March) –
 - Building on the work in the first workshop a series of potential actions has been drafted. This workshop will look at refining those actions ensuring they meet the weakness is identified in the report.
 - Define the expected outcomes of the actions.
 - State the desired impact to maximise the changes in outcome for children and young people and their families.
- Lead Officers in Health, Social Care and Education will provide the introductory paragraphs, including governance structures to hold the work accountable.
- Third round of WSoA workshops (Week commencing 28th March) -
 - These will finalise the actions ensuring they have the maximum impact and that the timelines for achievement are realistic and attainable.
 - An accountable officer will be identified for each action, reporting monthly to the lead for each pillar who will in turn report to the SEND partnership board.

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- Outcomes and impact will be fully clarified.
- Director Children's Services will provide a joint introduction with Health to the WSoA.
- To ensure that the voices of children and young people with SEND and their families drive the written statement of action, the strategic leads are holding regular weekly keep in touch meetings with SEND Family Voice Torbay and will continue to add their input into the process.

4. Key issues

- The increased recognition of the importance of cultural change has been addressed by providing extra workstreams for this area for improvement.
- It will be important to ensure this strand is exhibited through each workstream as the Written Statement of Action is created.

5. Key risks

- A key risk is that the voices of young people are not fully embedded within the developmental process. This is being mitigated by:
 - A Participation Plan to gather the views of young people and their families. The participation plan on young peoples' voice closes on 30th March. The views will be collated and included into the final Written Statement of Action workshops.
 - Continued close work with the Torbay youth Trust (Director Joanna Morrell)
 - The "First Steps" health initiative which aims to collect young peoples' views.
- Because of potential issues arising from the forthcoming Ofsted inspection there may be increased difficulty in representatives attending meetings. This will be mitigated by alternative routes for input being created based on the strong groundwork already in place.

6. Decisions required

- Receive this report for information.
- A further update on the progress will be given at the Interim SEND Strategic Board on Wednesday 23rd March 2022.

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Appendices

APPENDIX 1 – Schedule of Meetings for the WSoA

APPENDIX 2 – Draft template of the WSoA to date with a summary of key issues.

The inspection raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of the area.

The area is required to produce and submit a WSOA to Ofsted that explains how it will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:

- the lack of a suitably ambitious SEND strategy based on robust self-evaluation, and open co-production, and with the buy-in of all services across education, health and care and that includes measurable criteria for success
- the deep cultural issues leading to weak co-production and the inability of children and young people with SEND and their parents and carers to be equal partners in strategic and local decision-making
- the lack of joint working between services, which prevents area leaders working collaboratively to secure more consistent outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families
- the variability in the implementation of the graduated response, leading to slow identification, high levels of exclusion, some poor inclusive practices, and inequitable access and experience of the system across education, health and care
- the poor range of opportunities and choice for children and young people with SEND when they reach 16 or transition to adulthood
- the wide variances in the quality of EHC plans caused by weaknesses in joint working, fair access and the timeliness of assessments
- poor joint commissioning arrangements that limit leaders' ability to meet area needs, improve outcomes and achieve cost-efficiencies
- the lack of impact and of resilience to sustain improvement of recent initiatives due to low capacity in area teams.