

Record of Decisions

Written Statement of Action following SEND Inspection

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 12 April 2022

Decision

That Cabinet give delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, to sign off the final version of the Written Statement of Action in response to Torbay's SEND local area inspection, prior to submission on 14 April 2022.

Reason for the Decision

The inspection found significant weaknesses and, as a result, the inspectors requested that a Written Statement of Action be developed by the local area for formal submission to the DfE for approval.

Implementation

The decision in respect of the Written Statement of Action following the SEND Inspection will come into force immediately as the decision maker has decided that any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would prejudice the Public's and Council's interest. The Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinator was consulted on 4 April 2022.

Information

The provision of services to support children and young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) is a statutory duty for the local area (local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)). Provision of such services is a cornerstone of enabling the local community to thrive, and to support children and young people in having high aspirations. For cared for and care experienced children with SEND, such services play an integral role in the Council delivering its duties as a corporate parent. As a statutory service, it is regularly inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). If local areas are not providing suitable and sufficient support for children and young people with SEND and their families, the local area is required to submit a Written Statement of Action showing how they intend to address any weaknesses.

Torbay Local Area was inspected in November 2021. The inspection found significant weaknesses and, as a result, requested that a Written Statement of Action be developed by the local area for formal submission to the Department for Education for approval by 14 April 2022. This was a joint co-designed response between partners such as Children's Services, health, schools, Family Voice Torbay, community and voluntary sector as well as having direct input from families, children and young people to help embed different ways of working and changes in culture required to make the required improvements.

The Written Statement of Action will be submitted to the Department of Education, who will then respond within 10 working days to say whether the Statement is 'fit for purpose' or if it requires further adjustment. Roughly half of all Statements require further adjustments, usually in respect of the timescales for implementation. Once the final Statement has been agreed it will

be made public. Given the importance of improving the provision and approach to children and young people with SEND, we are already implementing some of the actions within the Statement.

At the meeting Councillor Law proposed and Councillor Morey seconded a motion, that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

The requirement to respond to weaknesses in a SEND review is statutory and the local area is obligated to submit a Written Statement of Action, therefore no other options were considered.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

No

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

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