

Committee(s)	Dated:
Community and Children's Services	14/10/2016
Subject: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection Framework and CoL Draft SEND Strategy	Public
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Summary

The purpose of this Committee Report is to update Members regarding the publication of a new Ofsted/CQC Inspection Framework for the provision of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) which was published in May 2016. This inspection framework has prompted an internal review of the current SEND Strategy and Policy (2013–17) which was ratified at Community and Children's Services Committee in July 2013.

The new inspection framework is an 'area' inspection with the local authority as the hub of each area. The Draft SEND Strategy, which is appended to this report, is aligned to the themes for inspection articulated within the newly published framework.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.
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Main Report

Background

1. The 2014 Children and Families Act introduced a number of reforms to the way children and young people and their families receive services to support them. The reforms brought about a cultural shift in which children and their families became the architects of the design and delivery of services available to them rather than recipients of them. It required the local authority and health services to place children and their families at the heart of planning and provision for themselves and others, and introduced the Education Health and Care Plan, a multi-agency planning system for children and young people to replace the existing Statement of Special Educational Needs.
2. It also required:
 - the increased engagement and participation of young people and families so that they have greater choice and control, are listened to and their concerns are resolved swiftly;
 - a published Local Offer of support, services and provision, how to access it and how to raise concerns or seek redress;
 - the use of effective practice, data and wider intelligence and independent assessment to drive improvement;
 - clearly defined and understood roles and responsibilities;
 - increased integration of services and joint commissioning across the local authority and Health.
3. There are currently 19 children and young people who have a statutory plan for support with their SEND needs in the City of London. They range from 5–24 years old. All of the children and young people are in receipt of full-time education or training and each of the schools/colleges is rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' where they are subject to Ofsted inspection. Satisfaction rates are consistently high across children and family stakeholders. There are an estimated 250+ children receiving lower levels of support within City of London schools. The Strategy must address their needs too.

Current Position

4. The new inspection framework differs from others in that:
 - it is an area-wide and joint inspection with the local authority considered to be the area 'hub' in each inspection;
 - the partnership between relevant Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and local authority Children's Services is an important area of scrutiny;

- there are no judgements within the SEND Inspection Framework. Instead, inspections so far have recognised the journey of each local area and recommended next steps/areas for improvement;
 - each local area is given five working days of notice for an imminent inspection.
5. The recently published SEND inspection framework has three main themes for inspection:
- early identification of need;
 - assessing and meeting needs;
 - impact of services on life outcomes.
6. The 2014 reforms call for co-creation of a strategy between partners and the inclusion of families at the heart of the team. The City of London Draft SEND Strategy is a preliminary draft which captures some of the needs and aspirations for the service based on a self-evaluation of services currently provided. Areas of strength and themes for improvement are identified within the Draft Strategy. The Draft Strategy is currently in circulation with key officers and partners for comment and contributions. The City of London is also participating in Tower Hamlets' and Hackney's work on SEND as many City children are educated in neighbouring boroughs.

Proposals

7. A series of workshops and meetings with key partners are being programmed for the coming months to secure equal ownership of all parties. These include:
- joint meetings with Tower Hamlets and City and Hackney CCGs;
 - multi-agency away-day (with parents and young people in attendance) to work through the Strategy and develop a new draft which comprehensively reflects current needs;
 - awareness-raising session at multi-agency forum;
 - a SEND Implementation Board which includes membership of young people with additional needs and parents;
 - communications work to raise the profile of work on SEND;
 - external audit of case files of children and young people with SEND;
 - mock SEND inspection through an external consultant.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

8. The work on SEND is high priority, high profile and subject to external scrutiny in the same way as safeguarding work is, although the inspection regime is less onerous and there is no judgement awarded to local authorities. The City of London will receive an area inspection at some stage over the next three years but the work towards excellence in outcomes remains core business within the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan. The forthcoming inspection is a lever towards improving standards and achieving excellence.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft SEND Strategy.

Background Papers

None.

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