

CUMBRIA HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Meeting date: 10 March 2023

From: Executive Director - People (Cumbria County Council)

OUTCOMES FOLLOWING THE OFSTED/CQC SEND INSPECTION REVISIT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 *This report provides the Health and Wellbeing Board with an update on the outcomes following the recent Ofsted and Care Quality Commission joint revisit inspection of SEND services in our local area.*
- 1.2 *The report also provides information on Cumbria's SEND Partnership response to the findings and the next steps to secure continuous improvement.*

2.0 LINKS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

- 2.1 Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims to improve the quality of services, a person's experience of the system and to reduce inequalities. The local area joint SEND inspection revisit focused on the experiences of children with SEND and their families when engaging with services in our local area, the quality of those services and equity of access.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 *That the Board note the findings of the local area SEND Inspection revisit and the next steps to build on and continue improvement in the local area services for SEND.*

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A joint Ofsted/CQC inspection of SEND services in our Local Area in 2019 raised concerns around nine areas of significant weakness and determined that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) be produced.
- 4.2 The Cumbria SEND Partnership Board has been responsible for overseeing the programme of improvement for SEND across the local area and reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board on a regular basis, highlighting progress and continued areas of challenge.

- 4.3 Between 5 December and 8 December 2022, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission revisited the local area to consider whether sufficient progress had been made in addressing the nine areas of significant concern identified during the full inspection in 2019, with a formal letter summarising their findings published on the Ofsted website and attached as Appendix A.

5.0 THE PROCESS OF THE REVISIT INSPECTION

- 5.1 The inspection re-visit took place between 21 November and 8 December 2022. The purpose of the revisit was for the inspection team to assess whether sufficient progress had been made in addressing each of the nine areas of concern raised at full inspection in 2019.
- 5.2 During the process more than 200 pieces of evidence were shared with the inspection team; 28 meetings involving 94 representatives from across the SEND Partnership were facilitated. Reflecting the way we work as partners, these meetings included partners from education, health and social care services, young people and parent carers.
- 5.3 The process was well led by the inspection team who took into consideration all aspects from the initial findings to produce a thoughtful and considered report, which partners feel is a fair and accurate assessment.

6.0 FINDINGS

- 6.1 The inspection team determined that the local area has made sufficient progress in improving seven of the nine concerns identified in 2019, with further work to do on the remaining two, as described in their letter dated 20 January 2023 Appendix A.
- 6.2 The seven concerns judged by the inspector where sufficient progress to improve has been made are:
- **A lack of a deep understanding of the needs of the SEND population in the local area**
'...there has been considerable progress in planning services that meet local need. 'Leaders have a data set that is refreshed regularly.' 'Leaders also use a range of national comparative data effectively.'
 - **A lack of a clear understanding among leaders across the partnership of the strengths and weaknesses of their respective areas of responsibility**
'Leaders across the area now accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility.'
 - **Limited joint working, including the planning and commissioning of services to meet the needs of those with SEND, between education, health and care**
'Many professionals, including school leaders, and parents and carers, reported that joint working has improved significantly.'

- **Limited involvement of children, young people and their families in the coproduction of the services, resources and support they need**

'Parents and carers are listened to and treated as equal partners on several working groups.... Many parents, carers and professionals reported that children and young people are benefitting from improved co-production.'

- **Inconsistent application of the local area's strategy for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people at the SEN support stage**

'Children and young people with SEND, including those at the SEN support stage, have their needs more accurately identified and met.'

- **Weaknesses in the local area's systems for ensuring a smooth transition between children and adult services and preparing children and young people for adulthood**

'Leaders have improved health systems for transition from children's to adults' services.'

- **Inequities that exist in access to, and performance of, services between different geographical areas within Cumbria**

'Leaders use data effectively in order to evaluate the performances of services across different geographical areas within Cumbria. Leaders continue to use data effectively so as to analyse changing needs across Cumbria.'

6.3 In the two remaining areas it was judged that there is further work to do to secure the trust and faith parents and carers have in our services and the provision of support for emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. The inspectors found

- **A lack of trust and faith in the local area's work from too many parents and carers**

'Leaders have a better understanding of needs in the local area. They understand what should happen to improve the experience of children and young people with SEND and their families. However, Parents and carers throughout the inspection reported that the pace of change has been too slow. They do not feel the impact of these changes on their day to day lives.'

- **Weaknesses in the approach to supporting the emotional health and well-being of children and young people with SEND, particularly those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who face challenges in relation to their social, emotional and mental health**

'Leaders provide an improved offer to help school leaders to meet the social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs of children and young people with SEND. However, there are shared significant concerns about limited support for children and young people's SEMH needs and Senior leaders are aware of a significant gap in support that children and young people with complex autism require following a diagnosis.'

6.4 Following the publication of the letter from Ofsted/CQC the DfE wrote to the local area on 13 February 2023 to advise that given the amount of progress highlighted in the revisit report, it will now provide support and challenge, through the Department's Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) process, rather than through statutory intervention, for the two areas described in 6.3.

7.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT – NEXT STEPS

7.1 The SEND Partnership is now working with the Department for Education and NHS England to agree a formal Accelerated Progress Plan for the two areas where further work is required. This action plan and supporting analysis will help the DfE and NHS England assess the action being taken to achieve the required improvement. This must be submitted by 20 March 2023, with a progress review within six months of the revisit report being published.

7.2 All partners, including both new councils, share the commitment to continuously improve services for children with SEND and their families and have a Continuous Improvement Plan in place focusing on four areas. These areas will be updated and strengthened to respond to the findings from the recent revisit inspection and include the actions set out in the Accelerated Progress Plan (APP).

7.3 The SEND Partnership will continue to have oversight of the Continuous Improvement Plan, including the APP, regularly monitoring progress at Partnership Board meetings and through organisational management structures. The SEND Partnership Board will remain pan Cumbria during the transition to the two new unitary authorities to ensure continuity through this significant period of change.

7.4 From April 2023 representatives from Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness unitary councils will work alongside both integrated care boards operating across Cumbria, SENDAC (Cumbria's Parent Carer Forum) and health and Education providers to implement the actions in the Continuous Improvement Plan including the APP.

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APPENDICES

Cumbria Local Area SEND Inspection Revisit Findings Letter
Cumbria Local Area SEND Inspection Follow Up Letter

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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