



Northumberland

County Council

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2ND SEPTEMBER 2021

SEND Revisit May 2021

Report of Cath McEvoy-Carr, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Children's Services

Cabinet Members: Councillor Guy Renner Thompson and Cllr Wendy Pattison

Purpose of report

This report informs the committee of the findings of the SEND Revisit from Ofsted and CQC and outlines next steps to be taken.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Note the contents of the report;
- 2) Support next steps to be taken

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the 'We want you to achieve and realise your potential (Learning)' and 'We want you to feel safe, healthy, and cared for (Living)' priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021.

SEND Revisit

NCC and Northumberland CCG were given notification of a SEND revisit by Ofsted and CQC on 5th May 2021 to identify whether the local area had made sufficient progress on the areas of improvement identified by the SEND inspection in October 2018. The area was required to submit written evidence within four working days to the Ofsted portal and to CQC and informed which focus groups should be arranged and their focus.

The inspection was led by an Ofsted HMI Lead Inspector with an inspector from CQC and two shadow inspectors. The inspection commenced on 19th May with presentations from the Executive Director for Childrens and Adult Services and leads for each areas of weakness. In addition, both inspectors met with the regional leads from NHSE and DfE

who have monitored progress in Northumberland since the SEND inspection in October 2018.

Detailed position statements for the three areas of weakness were submitted alongside 94 pieces of evidence that detailed the actions taken, progress made and the impact on children and young people with SEND and their families.

Inspectors spoke with parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and met with local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They spoke with frontline practitioners from education, health and care services in the area and reviewed a range of performance data and information, including the area's SEND strategy, self-evaluation, joint commissioning strategy and outcomes framework.

Inspectors reviewed a sample of education, health and care (EHC) plans, as well as education, health and care advices relating to these plans. Inspectors considered 558 responses to the online survey for parents and carers.

During the revisit inspectors commended professionals they met for their openness, honesty and their passion for the work being undertaken in improving support for children, young people with SEND and their families.

Outcome of revisit

The outcome of the SEND revisit was published on the 13th July 2021. Inspectors found that the area has made sufficient progress in addressing the three areas of significant weakness identified at the initial inspection. As such, it is no longer subject to the formal quarterly support and challenge visits from the DfE and NHS England which will cease.

Inspectors found there has been significant improvement with a seismic change in leadership and culture since Northumberland was inspected in October 2018. The following strengths were highlighted

- Collegiate approach to the delivery of SEND developments
- Revitalised strategy for children and young people with SEND
- Improved quality Of Education Health Care Plans
- Strong waiting times for children and young people to receive support for mental health
- Good understanding of the importance of early identification and the graduated approach from SENCOs with needs being met more consistently across schools
- Strong Parent Carer Forum providing challenge to the SEND Partnership
- Academic outcomes are improving and exclusions for learners with SEND have reduced year on year for three years

While the outcome is positive, it is important to note the context. The revisit inspected whether the improvements the SEND Partnership committed to make detailed within the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) Plan were delivered and whether they are improving experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families. The SEND Partnership while wishing to demonstrate positive progress also acknowledged to the

inspectors that there is more to do, particularly in relation to Preparation for Adulthood and supporting inclusive educational practice in mainstream schools.

Continuing improvement and development within SEND

SEND Strategy

Following a period of consultation, Northumberland’s SEND Strategy 2021 - 2024 was published in early June and can be accessed [here](#).

The strategy details four key priorities

1. Working together
2. Delivering the right support at the right time (including therapy services and support for those with sensory processing difficulties)
3. Inclusive education and success for all learners
4. Effectively prepare children and young people for adulthood

The workstreams that supported the written statement of action have now been aligned with the priorities to enable the effective delivery of the strategy. An action plan will be published in the Autumn Term 21 detailing what actions will be taken to address the four priorities that will enable improvement and development work within SEND to continue.

Policy	Developments detailed within the report outline steps being made towards strategic objectives.
Finance and value for money	Efficient systems and processes within SEND underpin the transparent and equitable allocation of SEND finances. Currently there is no need for additional funding.
Legal	The SEND Code of Practice places a number of statutory requirements on Local Authorities and CCGs. These are detailed within the Children and Families Act 2014 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulation 2014.
Procurement	n/a
Human Resources	n/a
Property	Capacity planning for the provision of specialist educational placements may involve capital development.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached)	SEND promotes the inclusion of children and young people within their schools and communities.

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Risk Assessment	There is a risk that services will not be effective or efficient if the governance and strategy is not robustly monitored.
Crime & Disorder	Youth Offending and SEND populations overlap.
Customer Consideration	The views of children, young people and their parents / carers are central to developments and improvements within SEND.
Carbon reduction	SEND school transport arrangements are linked.
Health and Wellbeing	Supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 is a core component of the SEND Code of Practice and associated legislation.
Wards	n/a

Report sign off

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full Name of Officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Masson
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Jan Willis
Relevant Executive Director	Cath McEvoy-Carr
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Guy Renner-Thompson/Wendy Pattison

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