

REPORT TO: Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 11 September 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO: Children Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disability for Halton

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Board with the outcome of the Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disability for Halton and agree the arrangements for the development of a joint Local Area Action Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Outcome of the Joint Local Area SEND inspection is noted;**
- (2) Approval is given to the development of a Joint Action Plan to address the areas of development identified by the inspection; and**
- (3) Request a report on progress in six months.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In May 2016 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission commenced joint area inspections on the effectiveness of local areas in implementing the SEND reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. Under the inspection arrangements each local area would be inspected over a 5 year cycle.

3.2 Between 27th March and 31st March 2017 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission conducted a joint inspection in Halton. They spoke to children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, parents and carers, local authority and National Health Service (NHS) officers. They also visited a range of health and education providers including schools, Children's Centres, Early Years settings and Riverside College. Inspectors spoke to leaders, staff and governors about the implementation of the reports. In addition the inspectors considered a range of information about the performance of the local area including the local area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with the leads for health, social care and education in Halton. Finally they reviewed performance data and evidence including the local offer and joint commissioning.

3.3 The inspection focused on the following three areas:

- The effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities;
- The effectiveness of the local area in meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; and
- The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and or/disabilities.

3.4 The final letter providing the outcome of the inspection was scheduled for publication in May 2017, however, due to political sensitivity Ofsted advised that it would not be issued until 9th June 2017 and that it would be published on 16th June 2017. Please see Appendix A for the full letter.

3.5 The inspection was led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted, Jonathan Jones and his letter sets out both the strengths of the local area and a number of areas for further development. The main findings of the report include the following:

- The children and young people spoken to say they are happy and feel safe in school and college.
- Children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and are looked after receive effective support. The needs of these children and young people are well met as a result of early identification and appropriate and timely assessment.
- The achievement of children and young people shows secure signs of improvement across all key stages. Most rapid improvements can be seen in early years as a result of early identification and intervention.
- The work of the visual impairment services, audiology, teachers of the deaf and school nurses are strengths in the local area. The quality of the support and provision that these services offer makes a positive difference to children and young people.
- Young people in Halton are being prepared well for adulthood.
- The achievement of young people in post-16 provision is continuing to improve so as to be closer to the national average.
- The proportion of young adults in independent living and those in paid employment is much higher than the national average.
- Leaders work with children and young people is beginning to improve and there are some strong examples of co-production, for example, on short breaks.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of what is working well and what needs to improve.
- The local area is on track to complete all transitions from statements of

special educational needs to education, health and care (EHC) plans by March 2018.

- The majority of plans are completed within the expected 20 week timescale.
- Staff vacancies in a number of services impact negatively on the length of waiting times and the ability of services to meet the needs of children and young people.
- There is still some way to go until outcomes for children and young people area similar to national averages but there have been sustained improvements.
- The Action plan for the implementation of the strategy is not sufficiently robust. Joint plans and evaluations do not incorporate well enough aspects of health services and consideration is not always given to how actions will impact on outcomes for children and young people. The lack of sharp focus and joined-up thinking is also reflected in the quality of some EHC plans.
- Leaders do not have a thorough understanding of the range of parental views. A number of parents do not feel that there is transparency regarding identification, assessment and the rationale for decisions being made. Co-production is not firmly embedded and there is no shared understanding of how it should look in Halton.
- The local offer is extensive and up to date. Nonetheless, it is used by too few parents and some told inspectors they had never heard of it. A number of schools' websites do not provide the link to the local area's offer.
- There has been a sharp increase in the proportion of children and young people with social, emotional and mental health issues. This is increasing the number of children and young people who are persistently absent and/or being excluded from school. Leaders are working with schools and child and adolescent mental health services but it is too soon to see the impact on outcomes for these children and young people.

3.6 The report acknowledged that that there was an accurate understanding or what is working well and what needs to improve, however, emphasised the need for increased joint planning. Therefore, in order to respond to the areas for development and to further improve the outcomes for children and young people, NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, the Local Authority, Impart (parent and carer organisation) and other partners have developed a local area joint Action Plan.

3.7 This Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed by the SEN Strategic Partnership Board and a progress report will be provided to this Board in six months.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Through implementing the Action Plan we aim to strengthen our joint working arrangements and better meet the needs of our children and young people with

with special educational needs and disabilities.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

5.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

Improve outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/ or disabilities

5.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Improve education and employment opportunities for children and young people with SEND

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Support children and young people so that they can be as healthy as possible in adult life

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

Ensure children and young people with SEN feel safe

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 The report identified that there was not a local understanding of the range of parental views. To respond to this area of development a detailed review of parental engagement will be commissioned.

7.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Children and Families Act 2014	Rutland House Runcorn	Ann.McIntyre@halton.gov.uk
Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years	Rutland House Runcorn	Ann.McIntyre@halton.gov.uk
The framework for the Inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities	Rutland House Runcorn	Ann.McIntyre@halton.gov.uk
Joint Local Area SEND Inspection in Halton 25 th May 2017	Rutland House Runcorn	Ann.McIntyre@halton.gov.uk