



Southend SEND Independent Forum statement on the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Re-Visit of Southend Local Authority May 2021

Summary

In October 2018 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission undertook the local area SEND inspection in Southend. As a result, significant areas of weakness were identified and the inspectors required Southend Local Authority, the CCG, Public Health and school to produce a Written Statement of Action (WSOA). The areas of weakness are as follows:

1. Joint Commissioning

The leadership did not act quickly enough to jointly commission services to improve outcomes for children and young people;

2. Local Offer

The Local Offer is not easily accessible or well publicised. Importantly the views of children, young people and their parents and carers were not listened to;

3. EHCPs

EHCPs to support children and young people with SEND were not good quality, did not include sufficient information to help the child or young person and were not reviewed regularly;

4. Quality Provisions

Leaders have not worked closely enough together to ensure that schools and other places children and young people learn are of good quality. This was especially important where CYP are educated in places other than at a Southend school

Family Voice, the previous Parent Carer Forum was in place at the time of the previous inspection, (Autumn 2018) and participated and represented their members experiences. As of Spring 2020, Family Voice stepped down as the parent carer forum for Southend and Southend SEND Independent Forum (SSIF) were formed in November 2020 as the new Parent Carer Forum for Southend. We commenced work with Southend Local Authority, CCG and other Southend partners in January 2021 and in that time, we have seen a clear collective understanding of the issues, prioritisation of actions and the pace of change has improved dramatically. Meetings in the Borough now have a culture of collective responsibility, purpose and coproduction that was so evidently lacking in 2018. We have put together the below breakdown of our involvement in the four areas of the WSoA since January 2021.

WSOA Area 1. Joint Commissioning

We have been working with the Local Authority and Southend CCG on several different groups to influence the decision-making process for SEND families in Southend. We sit on several groups, which we have simplified below:

- SEND Strategic Board SEND Operations
- Joint Commissioning Board (Health)
- SBC -Local Offer Review group
- CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) Neurodevelopmental - Neu Approach pathway
- CCG-Neurodevelopmental Family Resource Guide - New! see press!
- SBC -Educational Psychologist SEND process
- SBC - Voice of the Child
- CCG - Therapies
- CCG - Transformative Care



These groups generally meet on a 6-weekly basis. We attend these groups and are able to influence projects at the very early stages and steer potential outcomes.

WSoA Area 2. Local Offer

The Local Offer review group are undertaking a review of both the LO provision and the website itself. This was deemed not fit for purpose in the Ofsted report so there is a lot of work to do here. This group will not only aim to ensure there are no gaps in services but that all services are represented and involved. The functionality of the website must improve dramatically

A task and finish group was initially set up by Southend Borough Council to review both the Local Offer website and the Local Offer provision in Southend. When SSIF attended these meetings, we identified that these two separate work streams should be reviewed together rather than individually. Our Vice Chair will now be Chairing this review group alongside our Communications Lead.

We have attended and participated in two co-production training sessions with Jessica Russell from SAVS on the 26th February and 12th March. These sessions were joint training between the parent carer forum, Southend Borough Council and Southend CCG to explore and discuss ways of working co-productively.

The Neu Approach Pathway – we have been involved in the development of the new neurodevelopmental pathway for families in Southend. This is called the Neu Approach and we have been fully included and involved in the writing of the referral forms for parents, schools and health professionals will use.

ND Packs – as part of the Neu Approach pathway we are putting together a parent and carers guide to Neurodevelopmental Conditions. It will include a wide range of information including the following: different ND conditions, the health professionals that families will encounter, an EHCP hub guide, breakdown of SEND services and therapies and an explanation of the Neu Approach Patchway.

Educational Psychology – we are in the very early stages of co-producing an information guide for parents and carers around the Educational Psychology service and their input with SEND families, including the EHCP process.

WSoA Area 3. EHCPs

We have just joined the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Quality Assurance Forum with the LA. The forum will meet termly and take a small sample of plans that were issued the previous term. The forum will collectively review the contents of these plans to ensure they meet the needs of the child as well as identifying any strengths and areas for development.

WSoA Area 4. Quality Provision

SEND Strategic Board - We attend and have two seats on the SEND Strategic Board which oversees the SEND decisions and work undertaken by the Joint Commissioning and SEND Operations boards. We have been a key partner in the development of the SEND Strategy for Southend for the next three years. As part of this we have taken part in the Southend SEND Summit and Self Evaluation Framework. SSIF's view and feedback from our member families were gathered as part of a Parents Views session on the Self Evaluation Framework and much of feedback and responses have been incorporated into the Self Evaluation Framework.