

Dear Parents/Carers

Manchester local area hosted a visit from Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspectors in late March 2021. The purpose of the Ofsted/CQC visit was to support the local area to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people with SEND and their families, learn from what has happened and identify opportunities for improvement. This was not an inspection; it was one of ten visits that inspectors have carried out across the country. The overall learning from the visits will be published on Ofsted and CQC websites.

The inspectors met local area leaders from education, health, care and parent carer organisations as well as some families and front line staff. They thanked leaders, families and staff for the information they provided and for the resilience, innovation and commitment to Manchester children they have shown during the pandemic. Inspectors also issued a survey for parents/carers and young people aged over 15 to complete. 506 parents/carers and 122 young people filled in the survey and we would like to thank all those who took time to provide inspectors with this information.

Inspectors described how Manchester's approach to strategic co-production has strengthened during the periods of national restrictions. The alternative summer short breaks offer was a direct impact of this good collaborative working.

Inspectors noted that children and young people with SEND have struggled particularly with the loss of informal support from their friends and families during the restrictions. Some young people with SEND have felt isolated and anxious about their futures. Schools have played a significant role in supporting children and young people with SEND and their families during the pandemic. However, the disruptions to learning will have an impact on some children and young people. The local area recognises the need to commission and provide education, health and care services that are responsive to new and emerging needs.

Inspectors also recognised that practitioners in the local area have adapted their working practices during the pandemic and have worked together to respond to and support children, young people, and their families. The most effective multi-agency practice has demonstrated listening to children, young people, and their families, understanding families' experiences, building trust and working together keeping children, young people, and their families at the centre.

As a result of what we have learned from the visit leaders have reviewed our SEND priorities:

We will

1. Evaluate the impact and success of Manchester Local Area against outcomes related to the ambition for all children and young people to be 'safe, happy, healthy, successful, and independent' by developing measurable outcomes for our 16-25 population.

2. Ensure that the Local Area systematically captures the voice of children and young people in both strategic planning and their individual plans by broadening engagement opportunities and through workforce development.
3. Build on the strength of the Local Area's work on co-production with parents/carers at a strategic level to ensure co-production impacts on families' lived experience and parental and carer voice is reflected in planning and reviews.
4. Improve experience of transition especially from children's to adult services and ensure a holistic approach is taken in all transition planning by developing pathways.
5. Ensure the principles of excellent multi agency practice in the identification and response to children's needs are shared across the Local Area by using a case study approach

We are grateful for the contributions parents, carers and young people made to the local area visit. We particularly want to thank Manchester Parent Carer Forum, Manchester Parent Champions and the Changemakers for ensuring inspectors heard the perspective of families on what is going well and how we are working in partnership to improve things in Manchester.

Yours sincerely

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