



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

Ofsted and CQC carried out a revisit to Southend SEND services in May 2021 due to the failings found in their initial inspection in 2018.

To remedy these failings a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was produced, and services were found to need significant improvement in four areas, which were:

1. Partnership Working & Joint Commissioning
2. The Local Offer & Co-Production
3. Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans & Process
4. High quality assured Provision

Your voices were shared directly with Inspectors through the 366 surveys that were completed prior to the re-visit. It's encouraging that so many SEND families spoke up to get their views and experiences heard and considered.

The report has now been published, finding three out of four areas of concern have improved, those being: The Local Offer & Co-Production, EHCP Plans & Process, High quality assured Provision.

As the Ofsted visit was conducted in 2018 and we have been in place since the Winter of 2020, some of the progress made and reviewed has been made without our contribution or consultation. Since forming SSIF have been heavily involved in workstreams around The Local Offer and EHCPs and can attest to the fact that improvements are being made in these areas or that plans are in place to ensure there is a continued improvement. Although these areas have made the improvements that were required for the re-visit, we want the SEND community to know that the work on both these areas will continue, along with support from the LA, NHS, CCG & partner services within the community. Further work is being done on the Local Offer with the Local Offer Review Group (LORG) and the EHCP Quality Assurance Forum has been set up to review and monitor the quality of EHCPs – both of which SSIF are involved with and are we are committed to having your experiences fed through to these ongoing workstreams and that the outcomes will provide the changes needed.

SSIF have yet to be involved in the Provision area so cannot indicate the changes made here, although we believe the Ofsted & CQC's investigation was rigorous. We believe this is one of the areas that needs most focus and a shift in the approach to why children and young people struggle in school needs to be undertaken. The child or young person needs to be placed front and centre to see what the school and supporting adults can do to help them access a good quality education.

The area found NOT having made the necessary improvements was Joint Commissioning as many of the projects to have come out of this area are still 'in progress' and so the benefits of these changes have yet to be felt by our families. However, it is coming..... a prime example of which is the Neu Approach Pathway, which SSIF have been integral to – this is a complete restructuring of the current pathway to diagnosis of Neurodevelopmental conditions, due to launch in Autumn 2021.



We acknowledge that OFSTED have passed 3 out of 4 of the highlighted areas on the WSOA, but these areas still have a long way to go until they completely meet the needs of all Southend SEND Parents & Carers and Children & Young People (CYP) and it is our aim to ensure that this remains on the agenda.

We agree with the inspector's findings that there has been a culture change within Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, NHS Southend Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) in recognising the importance of the parent/carer, child and young person's voice and that 'they are the experts' in regard to services and support needed.

SSIF have been invited as valued partners and given the platform at strategic meetings with the LA, NHS & CCG to be the conduit for parents/carers and children and young people of Southend to have their voices heard, so that the experts (YOU!) are the ones directing the much-needed changes. Your support is vital to our work at Southend SEND Independent Forum (SSIF). There are many ways you can contribute and every little helps.

Our aim is to represent all SEND children, young people, and their families, whatever the disability or need.

To find out more about the new, up and coming projects and ensure your families voice is heard, membership to SSIF can be found on our website:

<https://www.southendsendindependentforum.co.uk/join-us>

If you wish to read the full report it can be found on the Ofsted website:

<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/44/80559>