

Department for Children, Adults and Health

**To:
Parents and Carers of Children and
Young People with Special Educational
Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)**

Date: 20 December 2017
Your Ref:
Our Ref: pm/ak/send inspection/send report
letter 20 december
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Dear Parent/Carer

We are writing to you following our letter in November thanking everyone for contributing to the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) inspection. Between November 6 and 10, a team of inspectors looked at how effectively services provided by the council, education settings and the NHS identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND, and how their outcomes can be improved.

The report of the inspection findings has come back to us earlier than expected and we have published it today. See www.southglos.gov.uk/SENDstrategy to view the report.

We have been working closely with South Glos Parents and Carers (who run the local Parent and Carer Forum) and listening to your concerns about local SEND services, as well as individual feedback from other parents.

Especially over the last 12 months, parent/carers have contributed their views through being involved in participation/engagement events, feedback, strategic meetings and joint working, and we have ensured continual internal monitoring of our SEND services to help bring about improved outcomes for families. External monitoring has also been carried out - such as the Ofsted inspection of children's services last year which, from a SEND point of view, covered the council's 0-25 social care service only. This has all helped validate that our planning and approach is along the right lines and identified any gaps to fill.

Because of this, we fully accept the overall findings of the report, which highlights strengths and areas where improvements need to be made. A lot of the work that's been happening in the last year, and is recognised by Ofsted and the CQC, has been 'behind the scenes' in planning, co-production and restructuring. We do appreciate that the majority of positives highlighted in the report aren't yet visible to families and how difficult this must feel, but we hope you'll begin to see the impact of those changes once they're implemented soon.

Here is a summary of some of the areas we've been working on locally:

- The council, Parent and Carer Forum and partners have co-produced South Gloucestershire's draft five year SEND Strategy 2018-2023 (have your say from 15 Jan by taking part in the 8 week consultation and check for updates at www.southglos.gov.uk/SENDstrategy)
- We recognise that communication is vitally important to get right – it will be a theme running through all the SEND priorities and activities. A communications strategy is being developed to set out clearly who does what, how it all works, what to expect and when, how we will keep each other informed and how we will know if it is working

- Co-production has significantly increased during 2017. A working group is co-producing SEND processes, systems and services across Education, Health and Social Care. The Parent and Carer Forum has helped rewrite all the standardised letters for EHC needs assessments and plans, so that they are clearer and more informative. A main focus in the New Year will be looking at the annual review process and personal budgets
- The timescale in which Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans are issued is greatly improved. Currently, 74.6% are completed and issued within the statutory 20 week period
- Over the past several months the 0-25 Service (Education) team has undergone a restructure to help ensure continuity, person centred planning and a 'tell it once' approach. As part of this, SEND Case Co-ordinators and Senior SEND Case Co-ordinators will allow improved communication with families. The restructure will be in place from January.
- By investing around £845,000 in the 0-25 Service, the council has been able to take on new staff and set up a transitions team. This service helps children and young people with SEND explore their options for further education, employment and training and has been received positively by the Parent and Carer Forum
- Along with the Regional Schools Commissioner (whose main responsibilities include taking action where academies and free schools are underperforming) and the Local Schools Standard Board, we are working with academies and maintained schools to develop inclusive practice, to ensure the needs of students are met and to support and challenge all schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is targeting waiting times in key therapeutic services and is investing in a waiting list initiative to reduce waiting times for assessment of children who may have Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The CCG is also working with South Gloucestershire Council's public health team to conduct an ASD needs assessment and help us to better understand the individual requirements of the local community.
- We continue to implement our agreed local action plan following assessment of our Local Offer. We are in the process of procuring a new IT platform for it and will raise awareness of the Local Offer as part of our ongoing communications with families in the meantime.

We will now develop a Written Statement of Action with partners in education, care and health to address the main findings of the report, which has to be published within 70 days.

Yours sincerely



Peter Murphy
Director for Children, Adults and Health



Anne Morris Director of Nursing and Quality
Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)