

Area SEND inspection of the Greenwich Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 11 to 19 May 2023

Dates of previous inspection: 10 to 14 July 2017

Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately 5 years.

Ofsted and CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Information about the local area partnership

The Royal Borough of Greenwich local authority and the South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Greenwich.

The commissioning of health services changed across England in 2022. On 1 July 2022, South East London ICB became responsible for the commissioning of health services in Greenwich.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich commissions a range of alternative provision (AP). This offers an educational setting for children or young people who have, for example, been unable to attend a school due to their social, emotional or medical needs, and for those who have been or may be at risk of being permanently excluded. The local area partnership publishes a directory of AP that they have checked for suitability. This includes 15 providers, such as a local authority pupil referral unit for secondary-aged pupils and a number of independent providers.

What is it like to be a child or young person with SEND in this area?

Children and young people with SEND and their families in Greenwich are front and centre of the local area partnership's work. Everyone has the best interests of the children and young people at heart. The culture here is one of working together to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Area leaders model best practice and this cascades down to practitioners across education, health and care.

The voice of children and young people, parents and carers is heard loud and clear in Greenwich. Members of the Greenwich parent carer forum are valued and listened to by leaders across the partnership. They said that they feel leaders walk with them on their journey. They are involved at all strategic and operational levels in the co-production (a way of working where children, families and those that provide the services, work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) of services.

Children and young people with SEND influence decision-making in Greenwich. This is because leaders provide a wealth of opportunities for them to get involved. Leaders have set up the Action, Change, Equality (ACE) network. The ACE network consists of groups of children and young people with SEND who work with leaders to make positive changes for themselves and their wider community. Careful thought and planning enable children and young people with a vast range of needs to communicate and be involved in service review and transformation. For example, inspectors met a group of young people who influenced the design of a leisure centre to ensure better accessibility and inclusivity.

Children and young people's needs are consistently identified in a timely way across education, health and care. Education providers often act as a lynch pin for coordinating support from different services. Many of the support services for schools, such as educational psychology, outreach services, and speech and language therapy, have a named professional linked to each school. This strengthens relationships and improves equity across the local area.

Practitioners know children and young people well and understand how to best meet their needs. This is because they share expertise and contribute to one another's training. Professionals regularly go the extra mile to make sure that children and young people's needs are met effectively.

Children and young people with SEND receive the right support at the right time and in the right place to meet their needs. This is because services and professionals think creatively and work together. One example is the integration of school nurses into the youth service, Young Greenwich. School nurses and youth workers work together in local communities outside of school hours. This improves young people's access to support and advice.

AP in Greenwich enables children and young people with SEND who have experienced

trauma or time away from formal education to rebuild confidence and get back on track to live an independent and enjoyable adult life.

Young people with SEND are helped to learn about opportunities open to them as they move into adulthood. For example, some young people attending college learn business skills which lead to them running an enterprise stall at Greenwich Market.

Children and young people with SEND access a comprehensive range of co-produced short break services. This means that children and young people with SEND can enjoy an active social life within their local communities.

What is the area partnership doing that is effective?

- Leaders in Greenwich are determined that every child or young person with SEND should have their needs identified accurately and met consistently. The local area partnership in Greenwich is mature and fully integrated. Jointly commissioned services are well established. Leaders across education, health and care know exactly what is working well, and which aspects of work could be even better.
- Children and young people with SEND and their families receive timely, specialist and bespoke early help support from the Family and Adolescent Support Service (FaASS). This means that the majority of children and young people with SEND achieve positive outcomes.
- Thresholds for children and young people with SEND to access statutory support from social care are appropriate. When children and young people are no longer in need of this help, targeted support continues, including from FaASS. Similarly, the care needs of children and young people known to the Disabled Children's and Young People's Service (DCYPS) are identified accurately. Their experiences are thoughtfully captured through a strengths-based approach and they receive effective support.
- The SEND Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) provides an effective service supporting children and young people with SEND and their families. SENDIASS practitioners have taken a thoughtful approach to making their service both accessible and impartial. Parents, carers, children and young people do not need to wait for support from the SENDIASS team, as practitioners get in touch straight away.
- Schools and nursery settings have access to a wide range of professionals to support them in identifying and meeting needs. School leaders have swift access to support services for children and young people with SEND. Strong and embedded relationships with services across education, health and care mean that children and young people's needs are met effectively.
- EHC plans are typically produced with careful thought given to the integration of children and young people's health and care needs. Leaders have invested significantly in an expansion of the SEND assessment and review service so that the proportion of education, health and care (EHC) plans completed within the expected 20-week timescale has increased. These improvements are sustainable.

As a result of these improvements, most EHC plans are completed within the expected timescale.

- Leaders and practitioners involved in the fair access panel and behaviour support services take a child-focused approach. They work closely with schools and other partners to do the right thing for each individual and their family. They deal with some challenging situations but persist until there is a positive outcome. They find creative and innovative ways to do the right thing for a child or young person.
- When children and young people with SEND are out of school and missing out on education, professionals link effectively with other agencies within the partnership and beyond. They investigate fully, remove barriers to attendance and encourage children and young people to return to education. This ensures that there are positive outcomes for children and young people.
- Leaders have secure oversight of the quality of AP. They use this knowledge to identify further improvements. Professionals in education and health work together to commission changes to AP that reflect current needs. For example, leaders have recently extended the capacity for supporting children and young people with SEND who need clinical support for their mental health.
- Nursing support for children and young people with complex medical health needs is provided to the child or young person whether they are in an education setting or at home. Some children and young people benefit from packages of care delivered by carers who sit within the school nursing team, demonstrating innovative and effective joint working between health and social care providers.
- The dynamic support register is well established in Greenwich, with clear processes and services to support children and young people with complex needs at times of emerging crisis.
- Leaders make sure that young people receive effective advice and support as they enter adulthood. Practitioners, including social prescribers, ensure that young people are able to be active members of their community, accessing financial benefits, improving their independence skills and finding suitable accommodation to help them achieve good outcomes. Young adults also get the right help in readiness for adulthood through effective joint working between services such as the health and adult complex care team, the community learning disability team and the DCYPS.
- Leaders' monitoring arrangements for those placed in residential special schools outside of Greenwich are robust. Social workers visit children and young people in line with their needs and vulnerability and demonstrate professional curiosity to help to ensure their safety and well-being.

What does the area partnership need to do better?

- Amendments to EHC plans at key transition points are not as comprehensive as they could be. Too many EHC plans contain outdated objectives relating to a previous key stage, or a one-page profile that represents a much younger child. Leaders have a credible plan to improve this. They are consulting with parents and

carers, children and young people. They want to make the process more accessible. They are prioritising the right cohorts of children and young people. However, there is still work to do to make sure that the annual review process ensures that children and young people have EHC plans that reflect their current needs and objectives.

- There are challenges in some areas of work that are resulting in longer waiting times. In Greenwich, only a few expectant mothers receive the mandated ante natal contact from health visiting services. Currently, only those identified as having a high level of need receive this contact. This means that many women do not have a holistic health visitor assessment of their health needs prior to having their baby and a key opportunity to identify potential needs is missed.
- Some children and young people with possible autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) wait too long for a diagnosis. Currently, these children and young people sit on separate waiting lists before they are seen for an assessment. Leaders have designed a new integrated neurodevelopmental diagnostic pathway which will introduce a single point of access for either ASD or ADHD diagnosis or for when both diagnoses are needed. A number of improvements are also in place to reduce current waiting times before the new pathway is in place. A wide range of services is available for these children and young people while they wait, offering direct interventions and useful support.
- Some children and young people with SEND experience delays in receiving their initial assessment from occupational therapy and/or speech and language therapy. However, practitioners provide support while children and young people are waiting. Leaders within therapies teams are using creative methods to secure recruitment, including apprenticeship programmes, skill mixing and working with university partners as well as having a strong social media presence.
- Children and young people with SEND who are referred to the child and adolescent mental health services also experience long wait times. The local area partnership is addressing waits and looking at innovative ways to identify need and provide support earlier.

Areas for improvement

Areas for improvement
Leaders across education, health and social care should ensure that the annual review process results in EHC plans that reflect the child or young person's current needs, aspirations and objectives.
Children's NHS and local authority integrated commissioners should ensure that expectant mothers receive the mandated ante natal contact in line with the healthy child programme.

Local area partnership details

Local Authority	Integrated Care Board
The Royal Borough of Greenwich	South East London Integrated Care Board
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Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including: two HMIs from education and social care; a lead Children's Services Inspector from Care Quality Commission (CQC); and another Children's Services Inspector from the CQC.

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