

Guidance about the Local Area SEND Inspection – Health Services.

The Local Area SEND Inspection is undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, it is not an inspection of the SEN Service but of the whole SEND system across Hampshire, including our operational health services. Inspectors are aiming to evaluate how well the local authority and health partners work together to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND (0-25). Health providers and settings are sampled as part of the evidence-gathering process.

Health providers are sampled to look at practice across the local area.

The focus is always on:

- Experiences of children and families
- Impact of support

Health setting should be ready to:

- Talk about what you do including the impacts
- Show how you are working effectively with others
- Discuss their current wait times and how children and young people are supported while they wait.

The Hampshire Local Area Partnership draws together organisations that work with children and young people with SEND in Hampshire. This includes Education, Health, and Social Care, as well as voluntary sector organisations and those representing children, young people and families. These organisations are represented on Hampshire's Local Area Partnership Board. The Board ensures all those organisations work together to deliver high quality, joined up care, education and health services across the Local Area in order that that children and young people with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.

Find out more about the Local Area Partnership and resources to support the Local Area SEND Inspection: [Local Area Partnership - Hampshire | Hampshire CTSH](#)

1. What the Inspection is About

This Local Area SEND Inspection is about impact

Inspectors will focus on:

- Children and young peoples lived experiences
- Timely access to support
- Quality and consistency of provision
- How well partners work together

Health providers and setting should be able to clearly explain how your work improves outcomes for children and families, and how you effectively work together with education and social care to achieve this.

2. Your Role as Operational Health Professionals

This includes all community health services, primary care, public health, general and specialist health services up to the age of 25 years.

During inspection you may:

- Be asked about the Local Area Partnership, and the work going on to strengthen multi-agency working
- Be asked to contribute, in a timely way, to case sampling for selected tracked learners providing insight into current pathways and impacts
- Be invited to meetings or case discussions about tracked learners, that you work directly with, selected by Inspectors
- Be asked to explain your service and pathways to inspectors remotely or during a planned site visit
- Respond to data and performance questions

Inspectors can visit or contact any service working with children and young people across Hampshire to ensure that the work and values of the Local Area Partnership are embedded.

3. What You Must Be Ready to Demonstrate

A. Access to Services

Inspectors will ask:

- What are your waiting times?
- Do these include assessment and intervention?
- What are you doing about delays?
- What are you doing to ensure impacts of delays are mitigated, and children and young people can 'wait well'?

Inspectors repeatedly test understanding of waiting times and their impact on children and young people's lives

Be ready to explain:

- Current position
- Impact on children
- What support is in place while waiting

B. What Happens While Children Wait

Be prepared to tell inspectors, "What happens for families while they are waiting?"

You should be able to describe:

- Interim support or advice
- Signposting
- Risk management
- Communication with families

C. Quality of Practice

You must show:

- Person-centred practice and evidence of how you listen to children, young people and families with SEND
- Evidence-based interventions
- Good record keeping

Ensure documentation is up to date and reflective of practice

D. Multi-Agency Working

Inspectors will explore:

- How well health works with education and care including joint planning and reviews and escalation routes
- Communication and coordination

E. Impact on Outcomes

Not just “what you do” but:

- What difference has it made?
- How do you know?

4. Tracked Learners (children and young people audits)

You may be asked to contribute to a deep dive into individual cases, including practitioners' meetings with inspectors about individual children and young people.

Tracked learner case are led by a named professional who will coordinate evidence, a NHS health lead will request information with a very short turn around about individuals to coordinate a multi-agency review.

Be prepared to:

- Attend in-person and online meetings with inspectors about your practice and individual children and young people known to you
- Share chronology of involvement
- Contribute clinical insight
- Explain decisions and outcomes

5. Surveys & Engagement

During week 1:

- Staff, parents, and young people receive surveys

You should:

- Encourage participation by children, young people and families by including information on noticeboards and in public spaces

- Directly email links to the surveys to children and young people with SEND and their families.
- Support families to understand the process, there are a range of tools you can signpost them too on the Local Offer
- Complete professional surveys honestly and share with colleagues

6. Practical Expectations During Inspection

You must:

- Respond quickly to information requests
- Be available for meetings if invited
- Ensure records are accessible

You should:

- Speak confidently and honestly
- Be confident in redirecting questions to someone better placed to respond
- Use real examples
- Be solution-focused

7. Likely Questions You Will Be Asked

Inspectors will ask a range of questions, mostly focusing on the experiences of children and young people with SEND, and how well Hampshire works together to meet needs, they may also ask about:

Access & Waiting Times

- What are your waiting times?
- How do they vary across groups?

Impact

- What is the impact of waiting on children?
- How do you monitor this?

Support While Waiting

- What do families receive before intervention?

Escalation & Risk

- What happens if a child's needs increase?

Equipment & Provision

- Are there delays in access to equipment?
- What is the impact?

8. Top Tips for Staff

- Keep it simple and child-focused
- Use examples, not jargon
- Be honest – inspectors value transparency
- Know your data but explain the story behind it
- Focus on impact and improvement

9. Key Messages

- We are a partnership system. Health, social care and education work together with children, young people and families to improve services (the SEND Local Area Partnership) – no one service works alone
- Inspection is about continuous improvement, not perfection.
- Inspectors want to know about the impact of your work on children and young people with SEND.
- Your voice, and the voice of children and young people, is critical evidence
- Every interaction contributes to the overall judgment
- Be clear, be honest, and keep the child at the centre of every answer.