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Guidance

# Joint inspections of local area SEND provision

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In May 2016, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission started a new type of joint inspection to hold local areas to account and champion the rights of children and young adults.

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Under the [Local area SEND inspection framework](#) inspectors review how local areas fulfil their responsibilities to children and young people aged 0 to 25 who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.

# 1.

## Background

Children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities often receive a variety of services. These could be provided by nurseries, schools or colleges, specialist therapists, and professionals in education, health and social care.

Under the [Children and Families Act 2014](#), the government placed new duties on the local health, social and education services that provide for those with SEN and/or disabilities. The [Special Educational Needs Code of Practice](#) was updated to reflect these new duties.

In particular, the local area has to:

- publish an accessible 'local offer' detailing the support and services available in the area
- work with children/young people and parents/carers, to ensure SEN and/or disabilities are identified in a timely manner
- assess the needs of children and young people who may need an education, health and care (EHC) plan in discussion with them and their parents/carers
- work with all relevant agencies, children/young people and their parents/carers to produce an EHC plan
- provide children and young people with the support agreed in their EHC plan, and keep the plans under review.

# 2.

## Inspection teams

The inspection teams will include:

- one of Ofsted's Her Majesty's Inspectors with a SEN specialism
- a CQC specialist children's services inspector
- a specially recruited and trained SEN Ofsted Inspector, usually a serving practitioner in another local authority

These inspectors have been fully trained for this type of inspection.

# 3.

## How will services and users be notified of an inspection?

Five working days before an inspection, Ofsted will inform the director of children's services from the local authority and the CQC will contact the chief executive(s) of the clinical commissioning group(s) to give notice of the inspection.

The local area will share details of meetings that the inspection team will hold with interested parties.

Staff and users of services and parents/carers are welcome to attend one of these meetings to share views about their experience of support for SEN and/or disabilities in the local area.

# 4.

## The inspection process

Over the course of the 5-day inspection, inspectors will meet managers and leaders from the area's education, health and social care services and look at young people's case files.

They will review the support provided by the local area for some individual children and young people to better understand how well the local area meets its responsibilities overall.

Inspectors will visit early years settings, schools, further education providers and specialist services.

During these visits, they will also spend time speaking to children, young people and their parents or carers.

# 5.

## What do inspectors look for?

Inspectors will look for evidence of how children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities are identified, how their needs are assessed and met, and how they are supported to progress to their next stage of education, transition to the world of work and wider preparation for adulthood.

The inspections take place in line with the [inspection framework](#) and [handbook](#).

The inspections are carried out under section 20 of the [Children Act 2004](#) [↗](#). The inspectors will also look at the way in which local areas are complying with their duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) [↗](#).

# 6.

## What can't inspectors do?

Inspectors will not inspect individual education, social care or health services or providers.

They will not make any judgements on the decisions made about providing support services or the quality of support for individual children or young adults.

Inspectors will also not investigate complaints about the support received by individual children or young people or their families. They do not have the power to change or overrule decisions about assessment or support that have been made by agencies and service providers in the local area.


# 7.

## How will inspectors report the findings?

At the end of the inspection, all the evidence gathered will be evaluated by the inspection team.

Ofsted and the CQC will write a joint inspection outcome letter. The letter will explain the main findings and make recommendations for improvement.

It will also highlight any strengths that are identified by inspectors to help other services and areas develop and improve.

These letters will be published on the [Ofsted website](#) and on the [CQC website](#) .

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