

23 Stephenson St
Birmingham
West Midlands
B2 4BH

T 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/ofsted

E: james.mcneillie@ofsted.gov.uk
E: ann.pritchard@ofsted.gov.uk

Date: 18 March 2025

Chris Pollitt HMI

By email: ajohnston@worcestershire.gov.uk

Dear Adam

Thank you to your colleagues, including colleagues from the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Parent Carer Forum (PCF), for meeting with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on 21 February 2025. It was helpful to hear of the developments in the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision across Worcestershire and how you, the PCF, and the ICB are working together to enhance the provision for children and young people with SEND and their families.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the SEND provision in Worcestershire and how the local area partnership is meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, specifically:

- the local area partnership's views on what they know about the impact of local arrangements for children and young people with SEND and their families
- the local area partnership's recent developments and work undertaken to address areas for improvement and/or priority actions (where applicable) that have been identified by the LAP and/or by Ofsted and CQC at a previous inspection
- the local area partnership's plans to improve the experiences of and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

You told us that, as a partnership, your main focus over the past year has been on agreeing and developing the priority action and improvement plans to drive improvements across the SEND systems. However, you explained that significant and measurable improvements will take time to manifest across the partnership.

You told us how your work has been focused on two priority areas of action following the most recent area SEND inspection. You confirmed that one of these is based around the local area partnership addressing the long waiting times for community paediatrics, the neurodevelopmental pathway, occupational therapy, and physical therapy. You said your second area of focus is to develop co-production with children and young people with SEND at a strategic level. Within this work, you told us your next steps will include defining the measures for evaluating the impact of these priority action and improvement plans.

You told us that while waiting times for assessment and therapy have improved, more work remains. You explained how you have started insourcing assessments by bringing in providers to assist with evaluations for neurodevelopmental conditions such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and autism. You confirmed you are also implementing new ways of working, including piloting initiatives for children in care to streamline processes and free up capacity in community paediatrics. You told us that you have developed a monthly dashboard to monitor waiting times and explore progress in this area during partnership meetings. You also said that you have completed some work to enhance communication with families to provide updates on the waiting list status and to provide reassurance.

You told us that co-production is not yet strong enough with parents, carers and children and young people with SEND. You confirmed that the PCF are now involved with co-production at a strategic level. You told us that you are intending to appoint a co-production lead to ensure that feedback of children and young people are incorporated into decision-making processes and service improvements. The partnership aims to implement a 'hub and spoke' model to coordinate feedback and insights from existing groups of children and young people across different backgrounds and needs.

You told us about your ongoing work regarding education, health, and care (EHC) plans. You explained that you are currently completing multi-agency quality assurance audits on EHC plans to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. This includes monitoring the timeliness of advice submissions related to the plans. You plan to increase the number of casework officers within the SEND team to improve the timeliness and quality of responses to families needing assessments and services.

You talked about your plan to improve capacity in the partnership through training. You propose to develop a training package for all area partnership members to ensure that there is a better understanding of roles, expectations, and the SEND process among health, education, and social care professionals. You feel this will help professionals understand what is expected of one another and foster a more effective collaboration across different agencies. The training will include legal elements, such as the code of practice and various relevant expectations, to ensure that all professionals are aligned in their understanding and implementation of policies.

Finally, you told us about how you wish to develop data systems further so you can more accurately understand the impact of work across the partnership. For example, you identified that you are implementing more robust measures for assessing the impact of services and ensuring that they are held accountable for achieving desired outcomes. You feel you are in the process of enhancing data tracking capabilities, utilising a portal system to manage and streamline information sharing among health, social care and educational providers.

Thank you for your responses to the areas we discussed. I look forward to hearing about further developments in Worcestershire.

Yours sincerely

Chris Pollitt
His Majesty's Inspector