

Appendix 1

Developing A Self Evaluation Document for Local Area SEND Partnerships

January 2023

Background

In the next round of SEND area inspections the local area self-evaluation is likely to take on a more central role in ongoing quality improvement activity and it will be important for each local SEND partnership to have a regularly reviewed and updated co-produced self-evaluation for SEND services. The key difference going forward is the self-evaluation and supporting action plan will not only be requested ahead of a full inspection, as previously, but will also be required for the new annual engagement meetings with Ofsted and CQC and for any monitoring inspections required. **This means that every Local SEND Partnership needs to have a current self-evaluation and action plan in place from the start of the new inspection programme.**

This extract from the Area SEND Inspection Framework and Handbook published by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission in November 2022 explains the role of the self-evaluation within the annual engagement meeting.

Self-evaluation in advance of engagement meetings

182. Local area partnerships will be asked to provide a self-evaluation before the engagement meeting. This should draw on existing documentation and activity. It should reflect the local area partnership's business as usual. We do not expect local areas to carry out additional work specifically for the purpose of the meeting. We will ask the local area partnership to provide the self-evaluation early enough for us to analyse its content, but not so far in advance that the information becomes out of date by the time of the engagement meeting.

183. There is no prescribed format for the self-evaluation, but it should be kept concise and include information about recent developments to the local SEND system. It should also include any improvements to areas of weakness identified by Ofsted and the CQC (for example, at a previous inspection) or by the local area partnership. The local area partnership's self-evaluation should:

- *address the 3 questions set out below*
- *make sense as a stand-alone document (appendices can be included, but should be kept to a minimum)*
- *be succinct, focused and evaluative*

184. The 3 questions for local area partnerships to cover in their self-evaluations are:

- 1. What do you know about the impact of your arrangements for children and young people with SEND?*
- 2. How do you know what impact your arrangements for children and young people with SEND are having?*
- 3. What are your plans for the next 12 months to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND?*

185. During engagement meetings, Ofsted and the CQC will explore how the local area partnership evaluates the SEND system and what evidence it has used to make its assessment, particularly in relation to the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

Evaluation Criteria

In addition to the three questions the handbook advises the self-evaluation should cover, it also sets out eleven evaluation criteria (paragraphs 50-60) that will be used by inspectors to assess the effectiveness of the Local Area SEND system and Alternative Provision. These

evaluation criteria apply across education, health and care, and to all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25 covered by the SEND code of practice, including those receiving SEN support, those with EHC plans, **and those children attending alternative provision in placements directly commissioned by the Local Authority**. Please remember that the inspection coverage will include pupils who live in the local area but attend a setting or receive services outside the area. A full summary of the criteria with supporting statements taken from the handbook is included as Appendix 1.

The eleven criteria:

1. Children and young people's needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way
2. CYP and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans/support
3. Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time
4. Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes
5. Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities
6. Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND
7. Leaders actively engage and work with CYP and families
8. Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of CYP in their local area
9. Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people
10. Leaders evaluate services and make improvements
11. Leaders create an environment for effective practice and multi-agency working to flourish

Creating a Self-Evaluation

The Self-Evaluation is a chance for the SEND partnership to reflect on provision and services in the local area and their impact. This means shared development and ownership of the SEF across all key education, health and care partners, including provider representatives and service user representatives. It should be an honest account of what the area does well, what impact this has had, and what needs to be improved, as well as plans for further development to build on strengths and address weaknesses. It is essential to focus on how actions have impacted outcomes for children and young people.

There is no set format or approach to developing a self-evaluation document, but the following pointers may help:

- **Co-produce the content** – the process of evaluation is as important as the end result, some areas have workshops or surveys to help gather a wide range of views to inform the self-evaluation
- **Keep the document concise** – aim for a maximum of 20 pages – 10 is even better. If it is too long it will not be read widely and it will be very challenging to keep up to date
- **Keep the introduction / context sections to a minimum** – what are the most important things that need to be communicated about your area? There are other documents that can provide more detail/ context. This is not the place to give an account of all your services.
- **The document should stand alone** – but you can hyperlink to other documents where you want to provide the reader with an opportunity to access more detail

- **Cover all eleven of the evaluation themes** that make up the new inspection framework and use the evaluation criteria to ensure all aspects are covered for children with SEN support needs, those with EHC plans and those attending alternative provision. (see above and Appendix A)
- **Consider using tables or bullet points** to help present your information with greater clarity
- **Avoid descriptions** of services and provision – the focus should be on evaluation – *judgement* -> *evidence* -> *impact* (see below). Make sure that all your sentences are evaluative, and none are purely descriptive. Keep in mind the purpose of the document is a summary of what the area does well and what needs to be improved – make sure this stands out clearly to the reader and does not become buried amongst lengthy description.
- **Use plain language and avoid abbreviations**, the document should be co-produced with and accessible to service users.
- **Focus on impact ...use the following questions to help you demonstrate impact**
 - How has your local area/service/provision changed because of the action taken?
 - How have the experiences of children and young people and their families changed?
 - What do children/young people/families/staff do differently now?
 - What does success look like?
 - Who has benefited from this?

Writing evaluative statements

The main part of your document should be the evaluation statements you have made, supported by evidence to back them up. Ideally each evaluative statement whether a strength or an area for improvement should be structured as follows:

Judgement Evidence Impact

Examples of evaluative statements are provided below demonstrating this approach:

The current SEND governance arrangements are not effective, this has meant that the priorities set by the SEND Partnership Board have not been delivered. While there is an established SEND Partnership Board, with commitment from all key partners, members have identified that its operation and the area's strategy need to be refreshed to enable it to provide effective governance.

The Local Authority and its partners provide a broad range of services that provide good support to children and their families in their early years enabling children to make a good start in life. Service user feedback indicates high levels of satisfaction with children's centres and early years services (x%); parents say "xxxxx" and the proportion of children achieving a GLD in reception is above national averages at x%.

This model can be adapted for either a narrative style of document or a tabular format.

Further Advice and Support

Ask your SEND Adviser for further help and advice as you develop your SEF.

APPENDIX A: Summary of the Evaluation Framework Set Out in the Draft Local Area SEND Inspection Framework and Handbook – June 2022	
Aspect	Inspectors will take account of the extent to which:
Children and young people’s needs are identified accurately and assessed in a timely and effective way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children and young people are accurately identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities • children and young people’s needs are identified in a timely way, so as to prevent needs from escalating • practitioners assess the strengths and determine the aspirations of the child or young person alongside their individual needs • the criteria for carrying out assessments of need and for accessing services and support are understood, and the application of these criteria improves outcomes • timely referrals are made to other services and agencies, where necessary.
CYP and their families participate in decision-making about their individual plans/support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children/young people access impartial information, advice and support that enable them to make informed choices about their future • children/young people/families are supported to understand their rights, make choices and contribute to decision-making about their plans and support • children/young people understand their plans and support, including intended outcomes, and why some changes are not possible.
Children and young people receive the right help and support at the right time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plans are developed and support is provided in a timely way, and meet children and young people’s needs • children and young people receive support based on their identified needs when they are awaiting assessment • plans and support are coordinated within and, where necessary, across providers and services, and are based on a shared understanding of the child or young person. • plans and support are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in children and young people’s skills, independence, understanding and other factors in their lives, including reduced support in line with reduced need where appropriate • the wider needs of the child or young person’s family are considered, and barriers to learning and participation are addressed.
Children and young people are well prepared for their next steps and achieve strong outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the outcomes that are the most important to children, young people and their parents and carers are understood and planned for • support and plans reflect children and young people’s ambitions, and extend beyond required levels of support (such as the number of hours of support from a particular service) to focus on the planned outcome • children/young people are supported before & during any point of transition, including when they will no longer be eligible for a service • from an early age, children and young people develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours necessary to prepare for greater independence and adulthood, including in the areas of further and higher education, employment, more independent living, good health, positive relationships and participation in society.
Children and young people with SEND are valued, visible and included in their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children/young people and parents/carers understand what community activities are available • children/young people are supported to participate, where appropriate, in activities, and to make friends/ develop positive relationships • children and young people are supported to develop their confidence, resilience, and knowledge, so that they can participate in universal and specialist activities as appropriate.
Leaders are ambitious for children and young people with SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders have an ambitious strategy that defines the shared outcomes they will work collectively to achieve for all children and young people with SEND, and they embed an aspirational culture of high expectations and quality across services and provision. • leaders understand their responsibilities and accountabilities, including their statutory duties and their individual responsibilities in the wider area strategy • responsibilities are delegated in line with leaders’ legal duties and there is strong oversight of these resulting activities • processes for making decisions are structured so that the leaders responsible can swiftly agree to the changes that are required to improve services • leaders challenge themselves and each other to improve experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND
Leaders actively engage and work with CYP and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders consider the specific needs of groups of children and young people with SEND, and how best to engage them in co-production • leaders ensure that decisions relating to services are appropriately shaped by children and young people’s needs, experiences, ambitions and outcomes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders give feedback to children, young people and parents on changes they have made to their area's services, and explain where change is not possible and why
Leaders have an accurate, shared understanding of the needs of CYP in their local area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders gather accurate, timely information about children and young people with SEND in their local area and monitor the changing needs of the population, including using the perspectives of children, young people and families • leaders understand the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND in their area; their backgrounds and identities, including any barriers to them accessing support; and their needs and strengths • leaders share information across education, care and health services so they can learn from different perspectives and approaches
Leaders commission services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • services and systems have been designed around the needs of children and young people, and are informed by evidence of what works in achieving good outcomes • joint commissioning arrangements enable partners to make best use of all the resources available to improve outcomes for children and young people in the most efficient, effective, equitable and sustainable way • joint commissioning arrangements meet the local area's statutory responsibilities for identifying, assessing and meeting needs • leaders understand that children and young people with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse, and ensure that this is carefully considered when commissioning and evaluating services • the local authority identifies children and young people's needs accurately and arranges suitable full-time educational provision to meet the needs of children or young people who require alternative provision as early as possible, for example, ensuring that full-time education for children and young people who have been excluded begins no later than the sixth day of the exclusion • the local authority ensures that there are intervention plans for each child and young person in alternative provision, including clear objectives and plans for their next steps, such as returning to mainstream education
Leaders evaluate services and make improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaders jointly evaluate whether their services and provision are improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND, not only whether children and young people have received the services • leaders monitor whether there are sufficient services and provision to meet the needs and aspirations of the children and young people in their area and take appropriate action as a result • leaders use information from a range of sources in their evaluation, including feedback from representative groups, children and young people using services and data relating to outcomes to improve their services and provision • leaders have established clear processes to enable services and providers to evaluate and improve their provision regularly • the local authority evaluates how well the alternative provision it commissions is improving outcomes for children and young people, and takes action if needed • the local authority maintains strong oversight arrangements for alternative provision it commissions, including oversight of each alternative provision's safety and suitability, and in particular of alternative providers that are not registered as schools
Leaders create an environment for effective practice and multi-agency working to flourish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • processes and systems are set up to support practitioners to work together and share appropriate information in a timely manner, including strong systems for identifying and responding to risks to children and young people with SEND • leaders ensure that practitioners are clear on their individual roles and how they can best work together to improve outcomes for children and young people • leaders ensure that practitioners have the appropriate skills to understand children and young people's needs and aspirations, and to create an inclusive environment • leaders encourage practitioners working together to focus on the child or young person, identifying alternative solutions when existing options do not meet needs and aspirations effectively • leaders ensure that practitioners working with children and young people with SEND have the right knowledge and skills to reduce the risk of harm, and understand that children and young people with SEND may be more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation