

An update on Local Area Inspections

NNPCF steering group members have recently had a series of conversations with leaders from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, and with officials from the Department for Education about the regulatory framework for SEND. Here are the key points we have discussed.

Local Area Inspection Webinars

Local Parent Carer Forums have consistently raised concerns about the timing and accessibility of webinars for parent carers at the start of local area inspections. We have raised these concerns with the Local Area Inspection leadership group.

In response, the joint inspectorate is planning to introduce a new recorded webinar that will be available to view by parent carers as soon as the inspection is notified and will remain available into the middle of the week of the actual inspection. This means that parent carers will be able to view the webinar at a time that is convenient for them and the inspection team can start gathering the views of local families much earlier on and build them into the key lines of enquiry for the inspection.

As with the current webinar, participants will not be able to ask questions of the inspectors but they will be able to post comments that the inspectors can see. In the longer term, the joint inspectorate is looking into new technology to further improve the webinar. We will keep you informed as this work develops

We are also working with the joint inspectorate to improve the survey that is put out to families as a part of the webinar.

“Closure” Written Statements of Action

In recent months parent carer forums have reported concern and confusion about the process of “closing off” a written statement of action (WSOA). Many local areas have regarded the letter from the Minister one year after the written statement of action as effectively “signing off” an area.

The Department for Education and the joint inspectorate have clarified that this is **not** the case. The letter from the Minister to a local area represents an assessment by the DfE of their progress against the points raised in the WSOA at a point in time.

The DfE have stressed that they have no powers to close a written statement of action. This can only be done by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector at Ofsted.

Until now there has been no process to do this. However, in his speech to the ADCS conference on the 5 July 2018, Damian Hinds, the Secretary of State for Education, announced the following:

"I will be asking Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.... for their advice on further inspection or monitoring of those areas required to produce a 'Written Statement of Action'"

Ofsted and CQ are in the process of designing what this might look like.

Again, the NNPCF will continue to work with the Department for Education, Ofsted and CQC and we will keep you informed of progress.