

## Context for review and change

The latest OFSTED Area SEND Inspection framework came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023. The main aim of the new framework is to

- provide an independent, external evaluation of the effectiveness of the local area partnership's arrangements for children and young people with SEND
- where appropriate, recommend what the local area partnership should do to improve the arrangements

Note that the inspection is **not** of the LA, but of the local area partnership arrangements. A further change is that inspection now covers alternative provision arrangements.

It follows, therefore, that each areas local partnership(s) should reflect the new arrangements. The Framework gives some detail as to what it means by "partnership arrangements".

*12. 'Local area partnership' refers to those in education, health and care who are responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of arrangements for children and young people with SEND who live in a local area. A local area is the geographic footprint of a local authority. When evaluating the local area partnership, inspectors focus mainly on how effectively the local authority and integrated care board (ICB) jointly plan, evaluate and develop services for children and young people with SEND. However, they also consider the duties of other area partners, which are set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and described further in the SEND code of practice.*

*13. Inspections evaluate arrangements for all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25 covered by the SEND code of practice, including those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and those who receive special educational needs (SEN) support.*

*14. The inspection will consider whether local authorities' approach to commissioning and overseeing alternative provision arrangements for children and young people in the local authority area meets their duties as set out in section 19 of the Education Act 1996 and in statutory guidance*

As the inclusion of alternative provision in area inspections is new, the Framework gives specific details of what is being looked at

*61. Inspectors will use the evaluation criteria to evaluate the local authority's commissioning and oversight of alternative provision for all children and young people in placements directly commissioned by the local authority. This includes evaluating how the local authority ensures that placements: meet the needs and aspirations of children and young people; provide the support they need; prepare them for their next steps; and enable them to feel valued and included in their community. Inspectors will consider whether the local authority's use of unregistered and online provision is lawful and appropriate to children and young people's needs.*

*64. When evaluating the local authority's commissioning and oversight of alternative provision, inspectors will:*

- *meet local authority leaders to understand their strategy for alternative provision commissioning and oversight*
- *review information provided to Ofsted by the authority about its alternative provision arrangements*
- *have discussions with senior leaders and special educational needs coordinators to understand the authority's processes and decision-making*
- *review the fair access protocols*
- *carry out sampling in one or more alternative provision settings*

Perhaps the main thing to note here is the stress placed on commissioning arrangements, as much as delivery and outcomes.