

Supporting local areas to prioritise and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND

Ofsted visits in the autumn

Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) have been commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) to visit local areas to help improve their SEND systems following the COVID-19 disruption.

Ofsted and CQC will work collaboratively with local areas to understand the experiences of children and young people with SEND and their families during the pandemic, and to support local areas to prioritise and meet their needs.

The visits are not inspections, nor will they replace the current area SEND inspection cycle. They will give insights into how the SEND system is working from the autumn term, while the area SEND inspection cycle remains on hold. We will not give a formal judgement for a local area nor publish individual reports. We will share learning from these visits, alongside good practice and case studies, in national reports. This will help to strengthen the whole SEND system in a positive way.

Ofsted and CQC will return to complete the current inspection cycle when it is right to do so, and these visits will help us to determine when local areas will be ready for this.

A new framework

We are committed to promoting ongoing improvement in the SEND system beyond the current crisis, because we know that many of the problems we see now precede the pandemic. DfE, with the support of DHSC, has therefore formally commissioned Ofsted and CQC to develop a new area SEND inspection framework, with inspections beginning once the existing cycle finishes. This will be a regular cycle that will form a part of Ofsted and CQC's core inspection activity, continuing to hold areas to account for their SEND arrangements and promoting improvement.

[Ofsted has published a report that evaluates what has gone well](#) and what the new inspection framework could improve on.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said:

There is no doubt that children and young people with SEND and their families have been affected significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many hard-working professionals and organisations have responded admirably by finding innovative ways

to support children and families, we must not lose sight of the wide-ranging disruption to essential support and services still faced by many.

Our joint visits to local areas with CQC will be collaborative and supportive, designed to support the whole SEND system. I am also very pleased that Ofsted and CQC have been commissioned by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families to develop a new, ongoing area SEND inspection framework. This will continue to drive lasting and vital improvement in the whole SEND system.