

## PaCC's Experience of the Brighton & Hove Local Area SEND Inspection by OFSTED and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) 23-32 March 23

PaCC are sharing this feedback with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) and our parent carer community.

We hope this feedback helps with identifying whether aspects of the new inspection framework need adapting and information about the inspection process to be revised.

PaCC are concerned about the impact the current inspection process may have on other parent carer forums (PCF). The resilience of PCFs and the wellbeing of forum leads, and parent carer reps, must be considered as part of the inspection process.

Click on the links below for more information about the inspection framework and process:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspections-information-for-families?fbclid=IwAR0cB7bGLxpdtZOdjOMowl7IUVEqvXeAJ2jWf4bV6JLyPsR22L2q8qPZbiU#full-publication-update-history>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/area-send-framework-and-handbook>

### **The Inspection Guide and Handbook**

- A guide for inspectors on how to carry out area SEND area inspections has been created and made available for children and young people, parent carers, local area leaders etc to help inform them of the inspection process and framework.
- The handbook, and other information created for parent carers and children and young people, doesn't contain enough information. There needs to be more specific guidance for each stakeholder about the inspection process.

### **Parent Carer Survey**

- It needs to be clearly stated that the survey replaces the meetings that parent carers previously had with inspectors during a local area SEND inspection.
- The survey closing at 9am meant that some parent carers weren't able to fill it in as they presumed, like with most other surveys, that the deadline was later on in the day.
- There needs to be a summary report released to parent carers which outlines the themes from the survey. The inspection process is flawed without this process.

### **Information About Meetings Between Parent Carers, Parent Carer Forums and Inspectors**

- PaCC feel strongly that parent carers should be given the opportunity to meet with the inspectors in specific parent carer meetings, if they would like to.

- PaCC hold a position that the inspection process allowed insufficient contact time for the PaCC steering group and parent carers with inspectors.
- References to parent carers contacting their local PCF (within links above) requesting to meet with inspectors need to be removed. During the Brighton & Hove inspection, the inspectors requested a meeting with a small number of forum representatives, which meant there was no additional space for non-steering group parent carers.
- There needs to be transparency with parent carers about the information PCF's will be providing during the inspection process – ie more focus on partnership working etc than parent carer themes/issues as these are gathered through the survey.
- Create a mechanism within the process to take away the pressure put on PCFs to be the bridge between parent carers who want to feedback to the inspectors directly and the impossible position it puts us in.

### **Contact With Parent Carer Forums and Information Provided About the Inspection**

- Consistency is needed across all areas as currently it is inconsistent as to whether the lead inspector will contact the Chair/lead of a PCF on the day it's announced that the inspection will be happening. Additionally, it is varied with what information is shared with the Chair/lead of the PCF and what is discussed.
- There was very little information available for us as a forum, and we had to second guess things based on the experiences of other areas and the information in the handbook. Most of the information we did receive came from the Local Area Nominated Officer (LANO) rather than the inspectors. It would have been helpful to have known more about: what information to provide to the inspectors, what would be covered in the meeting with inspectors so we could prepare, clarification around contact between inspectors and PCFs during the process.
- We decided to create a presentation as the time we had with inspectors was short and we didn't know what the focus of the meeting would be on – with the remit and range of issues relevant to a PCF vast.
- As there were no meetings between parent carers and inspectors, it put a huge pressure on us to represent parent carers as fully as we could. We thought the broad presentation, including information from our partner groups and steering group members, was the best way of doing this.

### **Meetings During the Inspection**

- The time allocated to PaCC in meetings was limited but we did our best to get the parent voice heard, in order to share family's experiences accurately and highlight where there is a need for service or provision improvement.
- For the 'set' meetings, attendance needs to be confirmed a lot earlier. PCFs are made up of people who have caring responsibilities and we need notice so we can make arrangements for our children and young people.
- More than one member of a PCF must attend all meetings. The responsibility of being the only person in the room who is representing parent carers weighs heavy. You also need someone to debrief with afterwards.
- It needs to be made clear in the guidance what the participation role of PCFs is for each meeting.
- We would've valued a meeting with the inspectors to discuss their key lines of enquiries and information they had gained from meetings etc. A touch base phone-call with them would've been helpful too.
- Briefing papers were sent to inspectors during the inspection by the LA and NHS, in response to queries inspectors were raising in the key lines of enquiry being explored. It wasn't explained to us what they contained or what reassurances were provided as a

result of inspectors receiving these briefing papers– leaving questions unanswered for the PCF about the evidence provided to the inspection.

- PaCC didn't attend the Question & Answer meeting and would have really valued the space with the inspectors to discuss our experience too. We have outstanding issues we would like to discuss with the inspectors but there was no opportunity to do this.

### **Post Inspection**

- There is no clear timeframe with dates for the process after the inspection.
- There is inconsistency with whether PCFs are shown the draft outcome letter or not. We were told by BHCC and NHS Sussex that the inspectors told them that they weren't authorised to share the document with us but we believed in other areas the draft report has been shared.
- There is no information available explaining how the inspection was scored.
- It isn't clear how national key issues eg social care, lengthy neurodevelopmental assessment waiting times, factor into the overall outcome of an inspection – are they considered as part of the inspection process or is it inconsistent between areas?
- The final outcome letter being released during half term shows little consideration of the impact this will have on parent carers.

PaCC welcome a reply from OFSTED and the CQC as to how our feedback, alongside other forums, will be used to improve the inspection process and achieve consistency going forward.