

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	<b>Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection Report</b>
Meeting date	10 March 2026
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>The local area partnership SEND inspection took place in November 2025 and the final report was published by Ofsted on the 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The report concludes that the local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND, and that partners must work jointly to secure the necessary improvements.</p> <p>Inspectors recognised clear progress and strengthened foundations since the previous inspection. The report highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased stability in leadership and a strong shared vision across education, health and care.</li> <li>• Improving lived experiences for many children and young people with SEND, with tangible examples of better multi-agency working and strengthened workforce capacity.</li> <li>• More responsive health support, better partnership functioning, and growing opportunities for children and young people to have their voices heard.</li> </ul> <p>Inspection findings also reaffirm that improvement work since 2021, such as the strengthened SEND partnership structures, the development of the Belonging Strategy and improvements in communication and co-production, has set a strong platform for continued change.</p> <p>Overall, the inspection confirms that the partnership is moving firmly in the right direction and must now embed improvements so that positive experiences become the norm across the BCP area.</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p>The Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the improved outcome of the November 2025 Ofsted and CQC Area SEND Inspection and ensure, via the committee's forward plan of activity, that the actions now required of the partnership are delivered and impact positively on children and families.</p>

Reason for recommendations	<p>The recommendations enable the Committee to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Provide formal democratic oversight</b> of the inspection outcome.</li> <li>• <b>Ensure transparency and accountability</b> regarding the actions the partnership is taking, including publication of the report and the required update to the strategic plan within the statutory timeframe.</li> <li>• <b>Support the continued pace and focus of the SEND Improvement Programme</b>, ensuring that the progress recognised by inspectors is consolidated and that better experiences become consistent for all children, young people and families.</li> <li>• <b>Strengthen scrutiny of the partnership’s response</b>, ensuring that Members are fully sighted on the improvement journey and able to challenge and support progress as required.</li> </ul>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Richard Burton
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley
Report Authors	Lisa Linscott, Director of Education and Skills
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For recommendation

## Background

1. Since the SEND inspection of 202 which resulted in an inadequate judgement, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council and its partners have been on an improvement journey to strengthen SEND services across the local area. This work was initially driven by the Written Statement of Action and reinforced by the Statutory Direction issued in February 2024, following which the partnership established strengthened governance through the SEND Improvement Board to provide system leadership, challenge, and accountability for delivering lasting change.
2. Over this period, the partnership has focused on building the stable foundations required for improvement, including strengthened leadership, clearer governance arrangements, improved multi-agency working, and a greater emphasis on children’s lived experiences.
3. These actions have enabled the partnership to make demonstrable progress, as recognised through the recent Ofsted/CQC inspection, which highlighted improved workforce stability, stronger partnership functioning, and increasing opportunities for children and young people to share their views. While further work is required to secure consistency across all services, the inspection confirmed that the partnership is moving firmly in the right direction and that foundations for long-term improvement are now in place.

## Summary of financial implications

4. The financial context for SEND remains significantly challenging. The High Needs Block continues to experience substantial pressure, with the most recent forecast showing a further significant overspend. To mitigate the continued growth of the deficit, the local area partnership is implementing a range of measures, with oversight from a new Partnership High Needs Block Management Board. Overall, the inspection outcome reinforces the need for continued financial discipline, stronger systems, and targeted investment to secure both improved outcomes for children and sustainable management of the High Needs Block and use of central council funds.

## Summary of legal implications

5. There are no direct legal implications arising from the submission of the inspection report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee. There are no additional legislative duties created by the Ofsted/CQC inspection outcome itself; however, the findings reinforce the necessity of continued compliance with statutory responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, and associated regulatory frameworks. Ongoing monitoring and timely implementation of improvements will be essential to demonstrate the Council's adherence to these duties.

## Summary of human resources implications

6. No HR implications arise directly from the presentation of the inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, as improvement work continues, particularly in areas such as sufficiency, data and IT transformation, Educational Psychology resource, and commissioning, ongoing workforce development and capacity monitoring will remain essential to ensure the partnership can deliver required improvements effectively.

## Summary of sustainability impact

7. There are no direct sustainability impacts arising from the presentation of the SEND Inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. As this report provides an update on the inspection findings and the partnership's improvement activity, it does not in itself introduce new policies, programmes, or operational changes that would affect environmental sustainability.

## Summary of public health implications

8. There are **no direct public health implications** arising from presenting the SEND Inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. However, public health considerations remain closely connected to SEND outcomes across the local area. Public Health colleagues are actively involved in the SEND Improvement Plan, ensuring that health inequalities, access to services, and population-level health needs are appropriately considered in the partnership's improvement activity.

## Summary of equality implications

9. An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report. This paper presents the findings of the Ofsted/CQC Area SEND Inspection and does not propose any new policy, service change or decision that would have a direct impact on individuals or groups with protected characteristics. Therefore, no EIA is necessary at this stage.

## **Summary of risk assessment**

10. There are no direct risks arising from the presentation of the Ofsted/CQC SEND Inspection report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This report is for information only and does not introduce new decisions, operational changes, or resource commitments that would alter the Council's risk profile. The broader risks associated with the SEND system—such as financial pressures, workforce capacity, and variability in service quality—are already recognised within the Council's existing governance and performance frameworks and are being managed through the SEND Improvement Plan and associated oversight

## **Background papers**

BCP Area Partnership SEND inspection report on Ofsted website: [10364968\\_24-Nov-2025\\_08-16-21 - 083526 Final clean-182018.docx](#)

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Letter accompanying Local Area Partnership SEND Inspection report

Appendix 2 - Local Area Partnership SEND inspection report