
Better Together

Engaging children and young people with SEND, and their parents and carers

You Said, We Did: Highlights October-December 2020

Introduction

Bromley Council, South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (Bromley), Bromley Parent Voice and Your Voice Health and Social Care are strongly committed to improving education, health and well-being outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities. We recognise that effective engagement and coproduction rest on an organisational culture which values the voice of service users and fosters systems which give service users ways to share their thoughts and experiences. This is a way of working that enables children and young people, their families and those that provide services to work together to plan or create services which work for everyone.

As we look back at the past three months, it our response to the Covid 19 pandemic that has continued to be a key focus of our engagement work. As children and young people returned to school or college at the start of the Autumn term, life began to settle and feel more 'normal'. We have been able to listen and engage with our children, young people and their families to inform the planning and delivery of other aspects of support and services.

We want to acknowledge that the demands on families with children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have been greater and more sustained than ever before.

We want to thank you for you for sharing your views and experiences with us.

Our priorities

The report is shaped around our five strategic priorities:

Priority 1

The right provision at the right time is available for children and young people who have SEND, accessing universal and targeted services.

Priority 2

There is good local specialist provision and support for Children and young people who have SEND.

Priority 3

We have Consistent, Transparent, Timely and Co-ordinated services across Education, Health and Care.

Priority 4

We are delivering effective coordination of SEND Services 0-25.

Priority 5

We are effectively engaging Children, Young People and their families.

There is a strong commitment across Education, Health and Social Care to work closely with parents and carers to ensure that individual needs are met and that children and young people make good progress and achieve good outcomes. This commitment is encapsulated in the Bromley SEND Strategic Vision and Priorities and the extended strategy for 2019-22.

This means that we will:

- Engage with you in decisions relating to your education, support and care so that you can shape decisions to improve your personal experiences and life outcomes.
- Provide opportunities for you to share your views and hopes for the future.
- Listen to your feedback about your experiences to date and your aspirations for the future to influence improvements to our systems and services.
- Keeping working to improve the clarity and accessibility of information.
- Promote access to Information, Advice and Support (IASS), local advocates and our complaints and compliments processes.
- Embed a culture of engagement and co-production across the network of services for children in Bromley (including our commissioned services), supported by SEND champions in services.

- Contract with Your Voice Health and Social Care to widen our engagement reach and to:
 - facilitate information exchange
 - contribute to shaping our developing vision and priorities for SEND
- Continue to work with Bromley Parent Voice parent carer forum.
- Report in accessible formats through the use of children, young people and family friendly storyboards.

Priority 1 – The right provision at the right time is available for children and young people who have SEND, accessing universal and targeted services

Our promise: You will be able to influence ‘Bromley the place’

You said...

- Differentiation of work and virtual support is difficult; this is having an impact on your child's learning.
- Some pre-school children's needs may not be identified before they start school.
- Some families who have children with social communication difficulties or autism are not aware of the Autism Family Support service in Bromley.
- Communication and information is really important. Please provide information in an accessible way and remember the pressures families are facing when communicating with us.

We did...

- We recognise that the pandemic has had an impact on the early identification and intervention for pre-school children. If parents have concerns about their child's development they can make a referral to the Early Years SEN Advisory Team

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/file/4771/referrals_from_parents_of_lb_bromley_resident_children_and_professionals_outside_lb_bromley_referring_lb_bromley_resident_children

- We have developed an Autism Diagnostic Process pathways overview which sets out the different routes families may take towards an assessment for their child or young person.
- We held Zoom sessions to hear families' views on the Autism Family Support service which is due to be retendered in 2021. We want parent/carer's views to help shape how the new service should be delivered. We also ran a short survey to hear parent/carer's views on the current service including what things are working well and what should be included in the new contract.
- From 22-25th October the Bromley Autism Partnership hosted a learning space in the Glades shopping centre to raise awareness of Autism in Bromley. The aim of this work is to ensure that with Autism and hidden disabilities feel safe, welcome and supported in their local community.

Priority 2 – There is good local specialist provision and support for Children and young people who have SEND

Our Promise: We will build our own skills and improve our learning

You said...

- You would like your child or young person to access good local provision and high quality support across Education, Health and Care.
- Some families have expressed concerns that children and young people with a learning disability or special educational needs may find it difficult to access their GP practice.
- Some families have expressed concerns that children and young people may struggle to access their therapy support if it is not delivered face to face.

We did...

- Bromley Children's Disability Service provided additional activities breaks during the October half term holidays for children and young people with a range of disabilities.
- We held Zoom sessions to hear families' views on the current Short Breaks offer. Parent/carer's views will be used to help shape the 0-25 Short Break strategy and commissioning of services.
- Bromley has launched a new questionnaire tool to help families and young people who may have a learning disability think about whether they might be eligible for the learning disability annual health check.
- Parent representatives and the Autism Awesome Advisers were involved in the evaluation process for applications to run the new special free school. We plan to invite the Trusts with the strongest bids to a joint interview with Department for Education early 2021 and will be announcing the successful Trust shortly.
- We are aware of the impact that current lockdown is having on families and children with SEND. We are working with Bromley Healthcare to provide more up to date information on children's services. Clinicians are working hard to continue to support children and young people in accordance with national guidance.

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children_and_young_adults_with_disabilities_and_learning_needs/1419/sendmatters_coronavirus_covid-19/3

Priority 3 – We have Consistent, Transparent, Timely and Co-ordinated services across Education, Health and Care.

Our Promise: You will be able to influence our processes and systems

You said...

- You value the specialist advice received from professionals (SENCOs, Health professionals/therapists and Social Care) about your child or young person's specific needs as part of the EHC Needs assessment.
- We need to do more to ensure the smooth transition of children into adult services for young people/adults with complex needs and their families.
- You would like more information and support regarding the preparing for adulthood pathways.

We did...

- We continue to work in a co-ordinated way to monitor and improve our timeliness in respect of the EHC Needs Assessment process. During this reporting period 62% of EHCP's were issued within the 20-week timeframe.
- As part of the Council's Transformation programme, we have created a Head of Service, 0-25 Transformation Project Lead role. The 0-25 Transformation Project Lead will consider how the Council can best integrate services, social care (children and adults), SEN and health.
- The 0-25 Transformation Project Lead role will also focus on improving the transition experience for young people with SEND and their families. A key aim is to provide a service/offer which provides the right support at the right time with the child/young person at the centre of what we do.

There will then be a period of co-production, working with children, young people, families, colleagues, and the local area to gain people's views on what is working well and what needs to change to improve outcomes for young people and their families.

Priority 4 – We are delivering effective coordination of SEND Services 0-25

Our Promise: You will be able to influence how we support you.

You said...

- Key transition points can be difficult for children and young people with SEND and their families especially at the moment.
- Parent carers value the travel assistance arrangements for children and young people with SEND.
- Parents want to support their children to develop their independence but are worried about safety in the local community.

We did...

- We have held virtual information sessions for parents who children are starting school or transferring to secondary school in September 2021.
- We are developing parent information guides for key transitions in partnership with families.
- We held two engagement sessions with families to seek feedback on the Council's plan to develop a more flexible approach to transport assistance for families; this includes the Personal Transport budgets and Independent Travel Training.

We will be consulting on the Travel Assistance policy in due course.

Priority 5 – We are effectively engaging Children, Young People and their families

Our promise: We will involve and engage with your support network

You said...

- **You would like your children or young person to have a voice and to be heard.**
- **You would like parent carers to feel well supported to have their voices heard.**

We did...

- We have created a range of resources to support young people with SEND in Bromley to share their views about the Local Offer.
- We are also running a survey for young people to tell us what they would like us to include in a new “hub” on the Local Offer especially for Children and Young People.
https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children_and_young_adults_with_disabilities_and_learning_needs/1300/better_together_-_share_your_views
- We continue to meet regularly with IASS Bromley, Bromley Parent Voice, Your Voice Health and Social Care and parent groups to listen to the issues those families are facing during the pandemic and to work together to address them.
- Through our Measuring Impact project we are developing a way to measure if parent carers feel well supported and have the opportunity to share their views.