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# Better Together

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

### You Said, We Did: Highlights July-September 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 enables children and young people, their families and those that provide services to work together to plan or create services which works for everyone.

The past three months have continued to be challenge for us all. During this quarter we have captured the individual experiences of our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families through surveys and online forums. We are acutely aware that many families continue to experience significant pressures and anxiety as a result of the Pandemic. We continue to work together across Education, Health and Social Care to ensure a continuation of SEND services in line with published guidance. We continue to work closely with our parent carer and young people representative groups and wider partners to listen to and address the concerns that children and young people with SEND and their families have raised at this difficult time.

## 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...**

- You were worried and anxious about your child returning to school and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on your child’s mental wellbeing. This is particularly difficult for children and young people with Autism.
- You have all had different experiences, thoughts and feelings due to the Pandemic.

### **We did...**

- We are excited to be working in partnership with the Anna Freud Centre for children and families (a registered mental health charity) who have been contracted by the Department for Education to implement locally *Wellbeing for Education Return*.
- We are providing tools to enable education staff to protect and strengthen their Whole School/College’s resilience to the wellbeing and mental health impacts of Covid-19.
- The Bromley All Age Autism Partnership (BAAP) has developed the Bromley Autism Quality Mark and promise. The aim of this work is to ensure that with Autism and hidden disabilities feel safe, welcome and supported in their local community.
- Our Children and Families Centres are becoming Autism Centres of Excellence. The staff teams are receiving training on ASC awareness, behaviour and inclusion to support, help and encourage families.
- As children and young people return to their education settings, we continue to follow Government guidance.

## **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.
- You have struggled without access to your normal support networks.
- Some families have expressed concerns that children and young people with a learning disability or special educational needs may not be given appropriate care in the event of testing positive COVID 19.

#### **We did...**

- We have shared with families planning tools that enable families and children and young people to plan for an episode of urgent care such as being admitted to hospital with COVID 19.

[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children\\_and\\_young\\_adults\\_with\\_disabilities\\_and\\_learning\\_needs/1419/sendmatters\\_coronavirus\\_covid-19/3](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children_and_young_adults_with_disabilities_and_learning_needs/1419/sendmatters_coronavirus_covid-19/3)

- The new satellite site for Riverside Community Special School opened in September site at the Hawes Down Centre, West Wickham. The expansion of Riverside School is helping Bromley Council to meet the increase in need for specialist provision.
- We continue to work with families and young people to inform our work with the Department for Education to open a free school. The school will support children who have social communication difficulties (which may include a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder) with co-presenting social and emotional mental health needs, including high levels of anxiety.  
[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/news/article/470/bromley\\_free\\_special\\_school\\_bid](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/news/article/470/bromley_free_special_school_bid)
- Bromley Children's Disability Service provided additional activities breaks during the summer holidays for children and young people with a range of disabilities. Initial feedback from families was very positive and the opportunity to have a short break was very welcomed.

## 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 would have liked more specialist advice from professionals (SENCOs, Health professionals/therapist) about your child or young person's specific needs and/or education during the Lockdown.

#### **We did...**

- During the Pandemic, the government issued a notice under the Coronavirus Act 2020 confirming that local authorities and health commissioning bodies (e.g. Clinical Commissioning Groups) must use their **reasonable endeavours** to secure the provision set out within a child or young person's EHC plan. This legal change was in force until 31st July 2020. We have worked with our partners to ensure that where possible a child or young person's provision set out in their EHC plan has continued.
- We have continued to receive high levels of EHC Needs Assessment referrals throughout the pandemic. We have reintroduced our EHC Needs Assessment Information sessions for parents/carers which are currently being delivered virtually.
- Annual Reviews have still been going ahead, although in a different format. We have seen an increase in the number of children and young people who have been engaging in their annual reviews.
- We have developed *My Life, My Review* resources which provide useful tools for practitioners and families when engaging with children and young people with special educational needs (SEND). The resources will enable practitioners and families to turn good intentions into effective practice, enabling children and young people with SEND to be involved in discussions and decisions about their individual support. [https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children\\_and\\_young\\_adults\\_with\\_disabilities\\_and\\_learning\\_needs/1300/better\\_together\\_-\\_share\\_your\\_views/3](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children_and_young_adults_with_disabilities_and_learning_needs/1300/better_together_-_share_your_views/3)

## **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...**

- You want all services who work with your child or young person to support their individual needs across education, health and care.
- For some children and young people they have enjoyed learning at home during the Pandemic.
- You welcome clear, accessible and timely information particularly at a time of uncertainty.

### **We did...**

- Our 'virtual' SEND Network Champion Event held in September focused on Autism. Presentations included *Covid and Autism: What is it really like?* Where practitioners from across Education, Health and Social Care heard about the lived experience of people with Autism from representatives from CASPA.
- The Local Offer continues to be a source of helpful information and resources for families and young people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.  
[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children\\_and\\_young\\_adults\\_with\\_disabilities\\_and\\_learning\\_needs/1419/sendmatters\\_coronavirus\\_covid-19](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children_and_young_adults_with_disabilities_and_learning_needs/1419/sendmatters_coronavirus_covid-19)
- We have delivered the first multiagency training on Preparing for Adulthood as part of a full workforce development programme with over 35 professionals from across Education, health and social care attending.
- In response to the increase in the number of requests for Elective Home Education (EHE) we are reviewing the information available on the Local Offer so that families can make an informed decision

## **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...**

- Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic children, young people and their families have been supported with information and resources that are appropriate to their needs.

[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children\\_and\\_young\\_adults\\_with\\_disabilities\\_and\\_learning\\_needs/1419/sendmatters\\_coronavirus\\_covid-19](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/10122/children_and_young_adults_with_disabilities_and_learning_needs/1419/sendmatters_coronavirus_covid-19)

- We have asked what it has been like for children and young people who have SEND during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We have held regular meetings with IASS Bromley, Bromley Parent Voice and Your Voice Health and Social Care to listen to the issues those families are facing during the pandemic and to work together to address them.
- We are using the lived experiences to inform further plans as we face a second wave and Tier 3 restrictions.
- We continue to feedback to children, young people and their families so that they know their voice has been heard and acted upon.
- Finally, we want to acknowledge the important role that our voluntary sector partners have played in supporting children and young people with SEND and their families at this time.