

Better Together

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

You Said, We Did: Highlights October-December 2019

Introduction

Bromley Council, Bromley Parent Voice and NHS Bromley Clinical Commissioning Group 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.

This report will focus on the Ofsted and CQC [Local Area SEND Inspection recommendations](#) which were published on 23 December 2019. We are pleased that Inspectors recognised areas of strength but acknowledge that some families are not confident that their children's needs are identified accurately and in a timely way. We also acknowledge that some families do not feel that they are fully included in decisions about their child and we are working to address this. We accept the Inspectors' recommendations which align to the areas for improvement we had already identified through our SEND action plan. Our SEND Reform work will continue in partnership with children, young people and their families, with oversight from the SEND Governance Board.

Our promises

The report is shaped around our five ‘user voice promises’:

Promise 1

You will be able to influence how we support you

- We will actively engage with you in our case work to help you shape our decision making and planning so that we improve things for you

Promise 2

You will be able to influence our processes and systems

- We will actively engage with you to help you influence improvements to our systems, services and processes so that we can use your experiences to improve things for all our service users

Promise 3

You will be able to influence ‘Bromley the place’

- We will actively engage with you to help you influence ‘Bromley the place’

Promise 4

We will involve and engage with your support network

- We will actively engage, when appropriate, with your support network (including family members, friends, community groups and elected members) so that they can influence our services

Promise 5

We will build our own skills and improve our learning

- We will build our skills across the department to engage in good quality, ethical and impactful user voice activities and we will make sure that the learning from this is shared with all stakeholders, including you

These promises mean that we will:

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- 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 Bromley Parent Voice to
 - provide our parent carer forum to facilitate information exchange
 - contribute to shaping our developing vision and priorities for SEND
- Report in accessible formats on 'You said, we did, we will'.

Promise 1 - You will be able to influence how we support you. We will engage you in our case work to help you shape planning and decisions so that we improve things for you

You said...

- You would like the timeliness and quality of EHC plans to improve so that they tell the whole story of the child or young person with special educational needs reflect their hopes for the future and the views of their families.

“Most EHC plans that have been produced do not set out the expected educational, health and care outcomes for each child or young person clearly enough. Too few meet the statutory 20 week timescale.”

We did...

- We have introduced monthly EHC Information sessions for parent carers.
- The SEN Service has been continuing to review the ways that it works, through conversations with families, multi-agency professionals and colleagues in schools and settings.
- We recognise that the EHC needs assessment process can often be the first part of the journey for families, where relationships are established. We have therefore made the decision to realign how the Statutory Assessment team is configured and to create a distinct EHC Needs Assessment Team.
- The new team will be responsible for the entire EHC needs assessment process. Where the Local Authority has agreed to issue an EHC Plan, the assigned EHCP Coordinator will complete the consultation for education placement before handing it over to the teams that manage case work, including annual reviews.
- We have listened carefully to feedback around how the cases are allocated and have concluded that allocations by school and locality will enable a more consistent and responsive level of service to both families and schools.

We will...

- We will ensure that the EHC online portal is embedded within all areas of our practice and will further improve our transparency and identification processes.
- The Director of Education will continue to scrutinise and monitor the timeliness and quality of the EHC plans.
- We will improve the quality of our EHC plans converted from statements through the annual review cycle.

You said...

The Short Breaks arrangements support your children and young people and families well.

“The local area’s short breaks arrangements support children young people and their families effectively Short breaks provide high quality care and nurture relationships.”

We will

- Review our [short breaks statement](#) annually, in co-production with parents and carers and disabled children and young people in Bromley. The review process will provide an opportunity for parents and carers and disabled children and young people to express their views and shape Short Break services.

You said...

- Waiting times are too long for children of school age who need assessment for autism spectrum disorder.

“Waiting times are too long for children of school age who need assessment for autism spectrum disorder.”

We did...

- We have established an Autism Partnership Board with representatives from Education, Health, Social Care, voluntary sector and parent carers.
- We consulted with over 300 parents and practitioners across Bromley and developed an ASD Action Plan.
- Through our Autism 100 Day challenge we have coproduced a ‘Do you know guide’ for families with Children and teenagers who have social and communication difficulties including Autism in Bromley. This guide has been designed by parents, carers and other professionals across Bromley Local Area as part of the Bromley 100 day challenge to share helpful hints and tips for other families in Bromley which they have found useful.
- Parents have set up two peer support groups in the borough.

Promise 2 - You will be able to influence our processes and systems so that we can use your experiences to improve things for all our service users

You said...

- Some parent/carers tell us that improvements in the lived experience have not been felt consistently by all families across the local area..

“Leaders have begun to instil a culture change that aims to make sure that parents are included fully in decisions about their children. However not all parents recognise this change. Some parents feel that their children’s needs are not identified and met effectively.”

We did...

- We held two parent engagement sessions in January in partnership with Bromley Parent Voice. The purpose of these sessions was to share feedback from the SEND Local Area Inspection with families and to gather their views.
- Through conversations with families and young people, we are continuing to review the way we communicate and engage with our children, young people and families.

You said...

- The local offer includes information about activities, opportunities and services for children and young people with SEND but much of the information is out of date.
- The Local Offer website is not well used.

“The local offer and its website are not fit for purpose. Information on the website is often out of date or inaccurate services listed are not always available . Parents do not routinely make use of the website.”

We did...

- The Bromley Local Offer web pages are currently undergoing a full review to make them more comprehensive, more relevant and easier to use.
- We have established a Local Offer Parent Steering group so that will allow you to share your thoughts and ideas about the way that your services are represented and directly influence the way that services spanning Education, Health, Social care and Leisure are developed and linked together.

You said...

“There are some examples of co-production (a way of working where children and young people, families and those who provide services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all. Bromley Parent Voice is under used.”

We did...

- Engaging with children, young people and their families remains one of the five key priorities in Bromley’s SEND Strategic Vision and Priorities.
- A recent example of coproduction is our 100 Autism Day Challenge. We consulted with over 300 parents and practitioners across Bromley and identified training as a priority area for development.
- Through our Autism 100 Day challenge we have coproduced a ‘Do you know guide’ for families with Children and teenagers who have social and communication difficulties including Autism in Bromley. This guide has been designed by parents, carers and other professionals across Bromley Local Area as part of the Bromley 100 day challenge to share helpful hints and tips for other families in Bromley which they have found useful.

We will...

- Review our Parent Engagement service so that families with lived experience from a wide range of communities and networks including those which are seldom heard, are involved in decisions about their individual support and developing the Local Offer as equal partners.
- Make sure that young people, and their parents and carers, are an integral part of commissioning of services.
- Improve communication with children and young people and their parents and carers to demonstrate that we are listening.
- Monitor engagement and report to the SEND Governance Board.

Promise 3 - You will be able to influence ‘Bromley the place’

You said...

- Parents appreciate the work of children and family centres and the opportunity to access therapies and health assessments close to where they live.

“Where possible, children and their families access therapies and health assessments close to where they live. Parents appreciate the work of children and family centres. Children and family centres are developing as hubs of good practice in the early identification and assessment of need.”

We did...

- We are developing children and family centres as hubs of good practice in the early identification and assessment of need.

We will...

- Continue to develop a Multi-Agency Centre of Excellence which will have at its heart a high quality special school (KS2) on the Hawes Down Centre site in West Wickham. We are working with Bromley Parent Voice and CASPA to ensure that families and young people shape the range of support and activities for children and young people with ASD and their families.
- Seek to create additional local provision to meet the needs of our children and young people so that they achieve good educational and wider outcomes.

Promise 4 - We will involve and engage with your support network so that they can influence our services

You said...

- Please listen to our issues as a parent/carer of children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities.
- You are concerned about the number of exclusions and children and young people with SEND who are missing out on their education.
- Some parents and carers have not had a positive lived experience around Transition.

“Parents are frustrated by the occupational therapy commissioned service. It does not meet the needs of children and young people in a timely way.”

“The rate of permanent and fixed term exclusions is reducing However, there are still too many instances where are still too many instances where children and young people children and young people with SEND are with SEND are excluded from education.”

“Children and young people are effectively supported when they transfer from one provider to another. Professionals work together to ensure that education care and health needs continue to be met. Young people who attend London South East College have access to a multi-disciplinary team of health professionals who are based on site. This personalised care supports them when they start at the college and throughout their ongoing education.”

We did...

- Bromley Council and NHS Bromley CCG are undertaking a review of local Occupational Therapy (OT) services in order to improve joint working and to meet the increased demands on this provision.
- Through our strategic review of our Alternative Provision and Social Emotional Mental Health support offer we are working with our schools, families and young people to reduce exclusions and ensure that the menu of support commissioned creates better outcomes for children and young people.
- We have a parent representative on our Transition Strategy board.

We will...

- Make sure that young people, and their parents and carers, are an integral part of commissioning of services.

Promise 5 - We will build our own skills and improve our learning using good quality, ethical and impactful user voice activities

You said...

- You value the range of training that is available to parents.

“Leaders ensure that a very broad range of training is available for professionals and parents. This has a positive impact on the local area’s ability to identify, assess and meet needs. Strong partnerships with training providers including the teaching school collaborative and representatives from local voluntary organisations contribute to the varied and relevant training offer.”

We did...

- We launched our SEND Network Champions in September 2019 across the local area. The role of an SEND Network Champion is extended to parent carers.
- Through the SEND Training Collaborative we have developed high quality, evidence-based SEND training and development opportunities for Bromley Schools and Early Years settings.
- We are developing our parent training offer based upon the SCERTS Model

We will...

- Continue to listen carefully to feedback from families to develop training around key topics that are important to your children, young people and families.
- Work with our partners to co-ordinate the training that is available to families and share information in a clear and accessible way.