



Bromley Special Education Needs and /or Disability (SEND)

Local Offer Annual Survey 2025

Introduction

Each year, Bromley Council issues the SEND Local Offer survey to parents and carers, children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This annual initiative aims to gather direct feedback from families and young people about their lived experiences with local SEND services. The insights help shape service development, improve outcomes, and ensure that support systems remain responsive to the needs of the community.

Purpose of the survey

The core purpose of the SEND Local Offer survey is to:

- ***Celebrate what's working well:*** Identify services and practices that are positively impacting children and young people with SEND.
- ***Highlight areas for improvement:*** Listen to parent, carer, children and young people's concerns about what could be better, ensuring continual service development and better alignment with families' needs.

Key findings

Demographics

- Most responses came from parents and carers of children aged 4 to 10, and 11 to 15.
- The primary needs identified included:
 - Social communication needs including Autism
 - Social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH)
 - Learning disabilities or difficulties
 - Speech and language challenges

What is working well

- Some families highlighted individual professionals (e.g. teachers or therapists) making a difference.
- Access to specific therapies, such as speech and language therapy (SALT), when provided, was appreciated.
- One-to-one support in schools was mentioned as effective for some children.
- Positive experiences with specific schools demonstrates that good practice does exist within the system and can be built upon.

Areas for improvement

Voice and participation

- A significant number of respondents felt their views (and their child's) were not listened to.
- Feedback efforts were viewed by some as tokenistic or not followed up with meaningful actions.

Support and skill development

- Parents called for:
 - More practical support to build everyday life skills, such as cooking, managing money, or social interaction, not just during term time but consistently throughout the year.
 - Consistency in service provision, particularly SALT and mental health support.
 - Better communication and follow-up from professionals.

Health services and information access

- Many parents reported difficulty in:
 - Finding relevant health services through the SEND Local Offer.
 - Navigating the b-Hive website, with several stating it was either unclear or unhelpful.
- Families expressed a need for more accessible and centralised information. Many reported struggling to navigate existing platforms like the SEND Local Offer website and b-Hive, saying it's hard to find relevant services or understand what support is available and how to access it.

Travel and independence

- Very few families reported accessing travel training or support with schemes like the Blue Badge, though it's unclear whether this reflects a lack of need, awareness, or availability. Further exploration may be needed to understand how well these services are known and promoted.

Support while waiting for assessments

- Whilst most families waiting for assessments had at least some access to support, a significant minority reported gaps that increased pressure at home and school.

Transition support

- A common concern was lack of preparation for key transitions, especially:
 - Moving from school to adulthood or employment.
 - Navigating the post-16 options, with calls for more detailed guidance and workshops.

Targeted support

- There is a growing gap in support for 'inbetweeners' (children and young people who struggle in universal services but don't qualify for specialist provision). Targeted support has declined, with proposed closures of Youth Centres and oversubscribed voluntary providers like CASPA. A broader, more inclusive offer is needed, including for those with Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) profiles and those who are not neurodiverse.

Recommendations from families

- Better listening: Embed authentic co-production by meaningfully involving families in decision-making.
- Improve communication: Respond to emails, provided clearer updates, and close feedback loops.
- Invest in consistency: Ensure therapeutic and educational support is continuous and reliable.
- Expand support offers: Broaden out-of-school and holiday provision.
- Enhance the SEND Local Offer website: Make it easier to use, with intuitive search and clearer pathways.
- Strengthen transition planning: Create structured, practical resources to support life after school.

Next steps

In response to the valuable feedback from families, children, and young people, the SEND Partnership will take the following actions to address the key themes and recommendations raised in the 2025 survey:

1. Strengthen Co-Production and Listening Mechanisms

Establish regular forums and focus groups with parents, carers, and young people to co-design services and provide ongoing feedback.

2. Improve Communication and Information Access

Redesign the SEND Local Offer and b-Hive websites to be more user-friendly, with intuitive navigation, clearer service pathways, and improved search functionality.

Develop a centralised digital hub with up-to-date information on services, eligibility, and how to access support.

3. Enhance Support While Waiting for Assessments

Create a structured interim support offer for families awaiting assessments, including access to practical resources, peer support, and professional advice.

Monitor and report on waiting times and interim support uptake to ensure accountability.

4. Expand Practical Life Skills and Year-Round Support

Partner with local providers to deliver consistent, year-round life skills programmes (e.g. cooking, budgeting, social skills) for children and young people with SEND.

Explore funding opportunities to expand out-of-school and holiday provision.

5. Ensure Consistency in Therapeutic and Educational Support

Work with health and education partners to review and stabilise the delivery of key services such as speech and language therapy (SALT) and mental health support.

6. Improve Transition Planning

Develop and distribute practical transition toolkits for families and professionals to support key life stages, especially post-16.

Host annual transition fairs and workshops to help families explore education, employment, and independent living options.

7. Promote Travel and Independence Services

Launch a targeted awareness campaign to promote travel training, Blue Badge schemes, and other independence-building services.

Gather feedback to understand barriers to access and improve service visibility.

8. Rebuild Targeted Support for 'Inbetweeners'

Map current gaps in provision for children and young people who do not meet thresholds for specialist services.

Conclusion

While there are positive experiences to celebrate, many families still face challenges in accessing and navigating SEND services in Bromley. There are encouraging signs of progress with several parents praising individual staff efforts and the dedication of services like CASPA.

Progress is happening, but families are asking for more action.

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