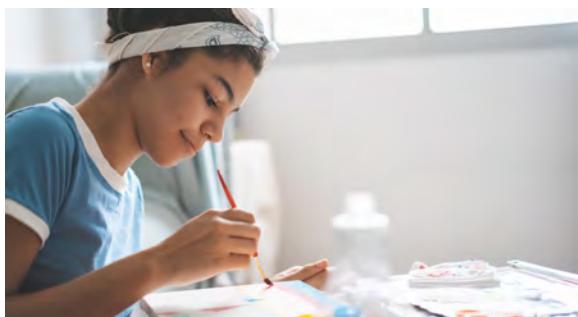




# SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

## Strategic Plan for Alternative Provision

2025 to 2027



South East London

[www.bromley.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer)

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# FOREWORD

This document sets out our strategic plan for supporting children and young people attending alternative provision, including those children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or receive SEN support. This aligns to the Department for Education's (DfE) Arranging Alternative Provision: A guide for Local Authorities and Schools (updated February 2025).

The Strategic Plan includes our local area vision and priorities for supporting children and young people attending alternative provisions and their families and how we will work together to deliver these over the next 3 years.

This document applies to all children and young people attending alternative provisions including those children with SEND who have an EHC Plan or receive SEND support. It is set within the context outlined in the Department for Education's (DfE) SEND Review: Right Support, Right Place, Right Time published in March 2022 following a national SEND review and the 2025 Guide for Local Authorities on Arranging Alternative Provision.

We are committed to supporting all of our children and young people to have the best possible outcomes so that they go on to have fulfilling lives, living healthily and as independently as possible.

We recognise that many of the young people that use alternative provisions will have SEND which is why we have unified our approach in this strategy to key SEND policies.

This strategy will sit alongside:

- Bromley SEND Local Offer
- Bromley SEND Strategic Vision & Priorities 2025-26
- Preparing for Adulthood Strategic Priorities 2025-26
- Bromley All Age Autism Strategy 2022-27
- Education Commissioning Plan 2025-31
- Making Bromley Even Better 2021-2031

It also aligns with our SEND Statement of Intent outlining our approach to supporting children and young people within the borough.

# STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Under Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 local authorities are legally required to arrange suitable education for pupils who are unable to attend school.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (Section 19) sets out:

“Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education, or education suitable to age, aptitude and ability for permanently excluded pupils, and for other pupils who because of illness or other reasons would not receive suitable education without such provision. This applies to all children of compulsory school age resident in the borough, whether or not they are on the roll of a school, and whatever type of school they attend.”

The Council defines AP in line with the DfE 'Arranging Alternative Provision: A guide for Local Authorities and Schools' (February 2025):

“Education arranged by local authorities for children of compulsory school age who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; alternative provision can also be used by schools for children on a suspension (fixed period exclusion); and for children being directed by schools to offsite provision to receive education intended to improve their behaviour.”

Alternative provision is where children and young people of compulsory school age can receive their education if they are unable to remain in their school some, or all of the time. This can be for health reasons, exclusion, or because they need some additional support beyond that which can reasonably be offered by their school.

For the Section 19 duty to be satisfied, it is important to ensure that the Council, families, health, community groups and education settings work together in the best interests of all children within an inclusive education system.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

The Education Act 1996 makes local authorities responsible for securing sufficient school places for children of compulsory school age in their local area, and for ensuring that provision should be diverse and increase opportunities for parental choice. This includes ensuring that there is sufficient alternative provision to meet local needs.

Planning for alternative provision is more challenging than planning for mainstream school places. The need for different types of alternative provision has changed over time. Most recently following COVID-19 there was an increase in pupils that struggled in mainstream provision.

In Bromley senior officers from across the Education Department meet regularly to discuss the need for alternative provisions and to plan how alternative provision academies and commissioning arrangement will meet need.

To meet local need for alternative provision the Council delivers and commissions a range of alternative provision:

- Places at our local alternative provision academies including the delivery of outreach support.
- Directly delivered tuition support via the Council's Inclusion Service.
- College placements.
- Vocational learning.
- Third party tuition.

## Graduated approach

The Graduated Approach involves all partner agencies, in and around Bromley, who have responsibilities for commissioning and providing services for children and young people in alternative provisions including education settings and Council services.

It sets out a step-by-step way of making sure children with emerging needs as well as SEND get the right support at the right time.



# VISION

In Bromley, we are ambitious for all children and young people to thrive, to feel healthy and happy and maintain positive physical and mental health.

Where additional support is required, we aim to meet their needs locally, enabling them to live, learn, and work as independently as possible in their local community, empowered by sustainable and inclusive support.

This Strategic Plan sits under **SEND Strategic Priority 2: Children and young people receive early support through universal and targeted provision, reducing reliance on specialist provision**

## Shared principles

Underpinning our vision is a set of jointly agreed principles. We want all children and young people attending alternative provision to:



Feel welcomed, included and valued.



Have a voice, are listened to, have choice and control and are equal partners in decision-making about their own lives.



Have their needs identified early and accurately, with effective support put in place quickly.



Benefit from joined up support from staff who have the right knowledge and skills and are clear about what they can ordinarily expect from their local services and education setting.



Have access to high-quality education locally, have high aspirations for their future with a clear focus on life outcomes across education, health and care.



Have access to the right information at the right time.

# ALTERNATIVE PROVISION COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS FOR CHILDREN WITHOUT AN EHC PLAN

The Council commissions Bromley Trust Academy (BTA) on behalf of its school community in a collaborative arrangement with a memorandum of understanding that allows a broad range of support services to flex with the changing needs of the school cohorts. Our unique arrangement has only been possible because of excellent practice and trust in our partners to target activity and resources to where the demand is most prevalent. The resources at our disposal are accessed through a Multi-Agency Gateway Panel which ensures the offers of support are needs driven, appropriate and most suitable within the available resource.

This panel oversee fair & equitable access to provision and advice for students who are unable to access their mainstream education. This panel sits separately from SEN decision making panels but has SEN representatives as standing members.

Resource available to panel comprises of placements at our commissioned partner schools, BTA. BTA Hayes serves our secondary pupils who have been permanently excluded or need a “respite” placement; BTA Midfield serves our primary cohort for the same purpose. BTA Blenheim serves a small number of pupils whose mental health has stopped them from attending; and BTA provide an outreach service to all schools in the borough who require support to maintain a pupil’s placement.

Gateway also hold resource from the Personalised Education Service which provides education to pupils who are unable to attend school due to medical need.

In determining the most appropriate education offers schools are well versed and supported in the delivery of a three-tiered approach.

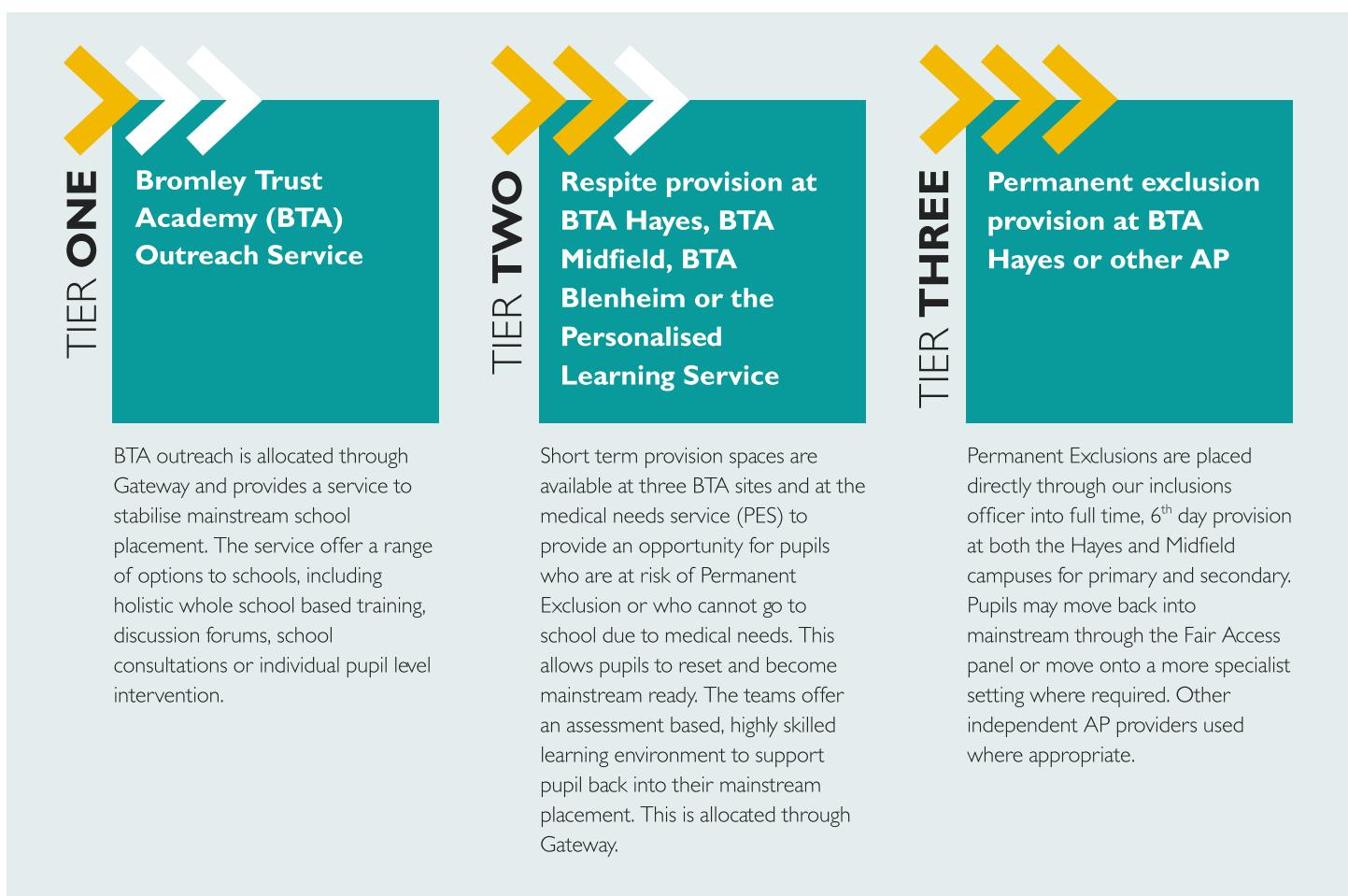


# Our three-tiered alternative provision offer

We work hard in Bromley to support schools to avoid permanent exclusions of pupils, this is achieved through the work undertaken through:

- a) Our dedicated Inclusion officer who is our front line to all advice, guidance and administering of suspensions and exclusions.
- b) Our quality assurance and placement officers, who advise and support schools, families and pupils to help stabilise placements or help to support pupils be guided to a supportive alternative provision placement for respite.
- c) The Bromley Trust Academy primary and secondary outreach team working with pupils referred through Gateway to prevent exclusion.

Through proactive use of dual registered placements, the Council can deliver a significant reduction in the number of permanent exclusions.



Our offer must:

- Provide access to full-time education and entitlements or as much as the child can manage.
- Be integrated within the core offer.
- Be cost-effective and offer value for money.
- Be accessed through transparent referral systems.
- Children, young people and their families are involved in decision making and their plan.
- Offer personalised learning opportunities which are tailored to meet a young person's individual needs, abilities, and interests.
- Include access to a range of appropriate vocational and accreditation opportunities.
- Include positive links and liaison between providers.
- Be alert to gaps in provision.
- Be delivered through clear and formal contracting arrangements.
- Incorporate stringent safeguarding principles and practice.
- Result in clearly defined, positive outcomes.

Arrangements for the oversight of the memorandum of understanding with BTA sits with the Bromley Inclusion Partnership, a body made up of Headteachers, inclusion professionals and chaired by the Director of Education. It includes half termly monitoring meetings, school visits, reviews of destinations and performance progress data and the evaluation of the outreach services received by schools.

## Quality assurance of provision

The Council maintains a robust Alternative Provision Quality Assurance Framework 2025 – 2026 as a tool for monitoring consistency and quality in the leadership, management and delivery of alternative provision.

It provides criteria against which the various aspects of alternative provision can be assessed and covers six themes:

1. Quality of Education
2. Safeguarding
3. Health and Safety
4. Personal Development and Behaviour
5. Leadership and Management
6. Student Entitlement



The Council undertakes a set programme of visits to local alternative provision to ensure that our pupils receive the very best education they can whilst in alternative provision. It remains in our core values that pupils' time in alternative provision should be effective, efficient and expose pupils to the best transitional educational package available whilst we strive to reintegrate them back to a mainstream education where possible.

The framework was designed in discussion with the pan London Alternative Provision Group of which Bromley is an active member. We are now carrying out monitoring visits and will strive to quality assure new alternative providers who emerge in Bromley and the surrounding boroughs.

## **The role of alternative provision in Bromley**

Bromley is committed to early identification and intervention, and alternative provision forms a fundamental element of the Council's whole system approach to meeting needs.

Our high-quality alternative provision, including for social, emotional, and mental health needs, creates additional capacity for mainstream school leaders and staff to identify and support a child's needs earlier, re-engaging pupils in education and empowering them to be a success. In Bromley, alternative provision is an intervention, not a destination.

What our three-tier support looks like in practice:

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### **Tier 1 – Universal provision**

Universal behaviour outreach support available to mainstream settings to help at risk pupils stay in mainstream school.

Includes both whole school approaches that encourage trauma-informed practice in responding to behaviour as well as individual support for pupils who are at risk of exclusion through use of relational approaches to support the emotional development of children and young people.

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### **Tier 2 – Targeted provision**

Short term time limited placements in alternative provision to assess and address pupil's needs before returning to mainstream provision.

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### **Tier 3 – Specialist provision**

Longer term placements for pupils who need support to move onto new mainstream setting or progress to a sustainable post-16 destination.

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## Transition planning

It is expected that all children attending BTA alternative provision will be supported to return to mainstream provision where it is reasonable to do so.

Once a pupil is placed at BTA a reintegration plan will be established.

Reintegration is a supported process whereby pupils move from a period of support and intervention or a permanent exclusion in an alternative provision, back into mainstream education. The process is coordinated by the alternative provision and the receiving school. The chair of the Gateway Panel also forms part of the borough's Fair Access Panel so that the support can also support transition for vulnerable learners into new settings where they have been hard to place to give them the best possible chance of a successful move into a new school.

Where pupils are on single registration, following successful intervention and when a pupil is ready to return to a mainstream school setting pupils are placed through the Fair Access Panel. The views of the child are considered to give the best possible chance of engagement, and accessibility is considered alongside any safeguarding concerns which may present. The Fair Access arrangements are embedded and mature and schools will work with professionals to design packages of support and integration to give placements the best possible chance of success.

BTA will present an honest appraisal of the child needs and challenges and demonstrate to the receiving school pupil progression from their base line assessment. They will have had a discussion with the pupil and their parent and will arrange the planning meeting for the 6-week reintegration process to begin.



# **Commissioned alternative provision will be quality assured**

All commissioners will carefully consider what providers are available that can meet the needs of their pupils, including the quality and safety of the provision, costs, and value for money. Commissioners will maintain ongoing contact with the provider and pupil, with clear procedures in place to exchange information, monitor progress and provide pastoral support.

Schools and other commissioners should ensure appropriate quality assurance is undertaken of all Off Site and/or alternative provision accessed by pupils. The school commissioning the placement should maintain a full record of all placements they make, including a pupil's progress, achievements and destination following the placement. This should also include the pupil's own assessment of their placement.

## **Unregistered alternative provision**

The Council commissions alternative provision via the BTA Academies, free schools, registered independent schools and independent providers, it also operates an in-house Personalised Education Service.



# CHILDREN WITH EHC PLANS ACCESSING ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Sometimes there is a need for shorter term or more specialist interventions that require bespoke education packages delivered through alternative provision providers on a spot purchase basis or as a temporary measure until a suitable placement is found. Where this provision is used, it will be monitored by the commissioning officer, including attendance and where possible always through agencies that have had an appropriate quality assurance exercise undertaken.

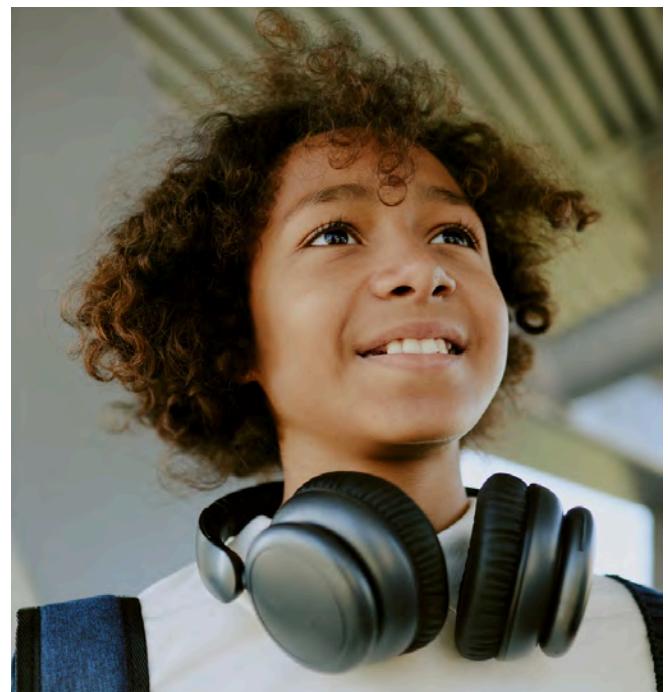
Where children with EHC Plans secure such support, it is invariably part of a wraparound support offer, including therapeutic input from speech and language and occupational therapists, providing a holistic approach to meeting needs. Increasing demand for mental health support is particularly true in alternative provision schools.

In Bromley there is a range of provision to meet needs of children to meet social, emotional and health needs commissioned by the Council and the South East London Integrated Care Board delivered by the voluntary sector and NHS provider network.

## Unregistered schools

Unregistered schools present a safeguarding risk because they are not regulated. Any information about premises that appear to be educational establishments is passed to the Head of Access to Education & Inclusion. If the establishment is not known, this will be referred to the Director of Education to report to Ofsted for their investigation.

All education settings are strongly encouraged to use registered alternative provision. The Council has implemented processes across the EHC Planning Team and Virtual School to monitor any children or young people using unregistered provision.



# KEY PRIORITIES



## Priority 1

### Sustainable transitions into post 16 and preparation for adulthood

#### What we plan to do:

- Strengthen the young person's voice in their own transition planning.
- Local authority officers work with students in year 11 to support them to make appropriate post 16 applications and then monitor these students once they have transferred in the autumn term to their post 16 destinations.
- Transfer all details of leaving year 11 to the local authority Targeted Youth Service who will monitor onward destinations and work with students at risk of Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) to ensure next steps are coordinated.

#### How we will know we are making progress:

- Pathways for children and young people attending alternative provision will be clear and show the different options and access arrangements.
- Children, young people and their families will experience greater choice and control over decisions, and their journey will be in line with their aspirations.
- Young people will have been actively involved in their holistic plan with greater parental confidence in mainstream schools, more children transfer to mainstream secondary and further education colleges.





## Priority 2

### Excellent attendance for all children and young people attending alternative provision

#### What we plan to do:

- Ensure robust use of part time timetables.
- Continue to embed our recently developed quality assurance framework for monitoring and evaluating the quality and suitability of alternative education provision.
- Embed School Attendance Officers practice alongside commissioned alternative provision to ensure compliance with regulations and raise the attendance profile across Children's Services.
- Produce a policy and practice documents to support children and young people identified with Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

#### How we will know we are making progress:

- Attendance for children and young people attending alternative provision is above national comparators.
- Attainment of children who have been supported through alternative provision is improved to ensure they leave school with the best possible results.
- Suspensions and exclusions are reduced.





## Priority 3

### Embed a high quality behaviour outreach service

#### What we plan to do:

- Review in partnership with schools and SEND Inclusion Support Advisory Team (ISAT) & BTA the social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) outreach provision.
- Develop a remodelled early intervention model that has a well-defined graduated approach to supporting children to be successful in their mainstream setting for implementation from September 2025 and beyond, including pre-Gateway support to offer advice and guidance to schools regarding their inclusion practice and processes in schools in line with [State-funded school inspection toolkit version 1.1](#).

#### How we will know we are making progress:

- Attendance of pupils is in line with or better than national averages during and up to 6 months post support.
- Performance will be tracked and trends monitored through data held by the DfE as per below:

Term		Attendance %	Absence %	Unauthorised absence %
Autumn	2024-25	69.7%	30.3%	14.6%
<b>Autumn</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
Trend		▲	▼	▼
Spring	2024-25	66.8%	33.2%	16.8%
<b>Spring</b>	<b>2025-26</b>			
Trend				
Summer	2024-25	63.3%	36.7%	13.5%
<b>Summer</b>	<b>2025-26</b>			
Trend				
Overall	2024-25	69.7%	30.3%	14.6%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>2025-26</b>	<b>74.1%</b>	<b>25.9%</b>	<b>13.0%</b>
Trend		▲	▼	▼

# MEASURING SUCCESS

As part of this three-year strategy, we have identified performance areas against each priority which will be set and reviewed at least annually. We have co-produced our [SEND Outcomes Framework](#) with key stakeholders.

SEND and alternative provision systems can be complex and make it difficult to see whether the changes in the system are making a difference for children and young people. We will be using a range of information including audit, data, and stakeholder feedback to tell us how well we are performing, what's working well and where we need to act to achieve change.

We will refine our baseline data which is made up of information from:

- Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).
- Our local area SEND self-evaluation (SEF).
- Stakeholder feedback.
- Coproduction activities.
- Relevant Bromley datasets.
- Regional and national benchmarking.

Work is underway across the partnership to build on our existing datasets and develop a set of agreed success measures for incorporating within our SEND Data Dashboard.

## Funding

Alternative provision in Bromley is funded via the Council's High Needs Budget, top-up funding and school contributions. Use of funding and the effectiveness of services is reviewed regularly to ensure that commissioned services meet local needs.

Following our strategic review of alternative provision local schools agreed to the design principle of money following the child and the Council has since implemented a collaborative process with schools for recouping Age-Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) pro-rate for pupils accessing provision funded and/or delivered by the local authority. This has helped to ensure that there is sufficient funding to ensure pupils receive appropriate provision.

Funding for the 3-tiered alternative provision service provided by the BTA is delivered via a Memorandum of Understanding with the Trust. The original 5-year agreement ceased at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. The current agreement is for 2 years (to the end of 2026/27 academic year) to provide flexibility to respond to any new requirements in the upcoming White Paper.

The Memorandum of Understanding created a combined budget for all setting based alternative provision services delivered by BTA as well as their outreach service. This has enabled the Trust to have a clear understanding of any changes to volume or service delivery within the terms of the agreement and provided the flexibility to prioritise areas of investment to support current needs. The aim has been to support our vision of shifting resources to increase early intervention and outreach.

Alternative provision outside of this agreement, including for pupils with an EHC Plan, is spot purchased from quality assured providers. Individual placement costs are based on the individual needs of the pupil and any specific interventions required in their EHC Plan (where appropriate).

Funding is benchmarked regularly with a neighbouring borough and from 2026 will be benchmarked with a wider group of South East London authorities to ensure value for money and to explore any cost saving opportunities.

## **Governance**

Day-to-day oversight of alternative provision is overseen by the Education Inclusion and SEND Leadership Team within the Council. Any queries regarding alternative provision should be directed to them in the first instance.

## **Oversight**

Oversight is provided by the SEND Governance Board, the Bromley Inclusion Partnership and the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) which spans the range of local area partners involved in all aspects of the work to ensure children and young people in Bromley thrive. The SEND Governance Board will consider a report on alternative provision at least once per year.





## **Making Bromley Even Better -**

we want Bromley to be a fantastic place to live and work, where everyone can lead healthy, safe and independent lives.



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