

Children and Young People's Plan

2021 to 2024

**For all children, young people and
families in Bromley**

About us

This Children and Young People's Plan has been written by the Bromley Children's Executive Board.

The Children's Executive Board is a partnership of the following organisations in Bromley:

- Bromley Healthcare
- Bromley Parent Engagement SEND Service (Your Voice in Health and Social Care)
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership
- London Borough of Bromley
- London South East Colleges
- Metropolitan Police Service (Bromley)
- NHS South East Clinical Commissioning Group
- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Primary and Special Schools Head Teachers' Forum
- Secondary Schools Head Teachers' Forum

It brings those organisations together so that they 'co-operate' at a strategic level to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The Children's Executive Board has the responsibility for developing, producing, publishing, reviewing and monitoring this Children and Young People's Plan.

This Plan is the joint strategy of the partners on how they will work together to improve children's wellbeing and ensure their safety.

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Foreword

The partners of the Children's Executive Board are committed to improving the life chances for all children and young people in Bromley through the joint planning, commissioning and delivery of services.

As a partnership we are passionate about and remain jointly accountable for, improving outcomes and challenging the barriers children and young people face. We are seeking to address the disproportionality that is evident for some children and young people and to ensure our children and young people have the best chance to flourish.

In times of continuing funding pressures and increasing demand on children's services, the effective use of resources through strategic and operational collaboration is key to providing timely and appropriate help and support for all children and young people, ensuring a focus on those in particular need or facing additional challenges.

We recognise the importance of the combined workforce of the partnership to move us along the journey of continued improvement towards excellence. The creativity and innovation that is possible through the skills and commitment of the workforce is essential for enhancing the life chances of our children and young people.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be felt by all and across all services. Whilst many working practices have adapted to the challenges of the pandemic, the effects on children, young people and their families will remain. For all partners, recovery from this will be paramount, enabling the continued provision of early help and prevention, targeted and specialist services for children and families as required.

The commitments in this Children and Young people's Plan will be monitored by the Children's Executive Board and by achieving what we have set out to do we will make Bromley a place for:

“children and young people to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home”

Janet Bailey

Chair of the Children's Executive Board and Director of Children's Services London Borough of Bromley

National and local context

Bromley has high ambitions for all children and young people. This is reflected in the Borough plan, Making Bromley Even Better, in the first of five key ambitions:

“children and young people to grow up, thrive and have the best life chances in families who flourish and are happy to call Bromley home”

It is also reflected in the core vision of Bromley’s Children’s Social Care Roadmap to Excellence through:

“working together with agency partners, we will ensure that every child in Bromley has the right help at the right time to keep them safe, and to meet their needs, so that they achieve, thrive and reach their full potential”

Building strong services - for now and the future

Following a two year intensive journey, Bromley’s Ofsted inspection of children’s services in 2018 confirmed we are providing ‘Good’ services enabled by ‘Outstanding’ leadership. Our effective committed joint working was reaffirmed through a positive Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection of our services for children with special educational needs in October 2019. We are proud to be one of the few boroughs across the country who did not receive a formal letter of action.

As part of Bromley’s continuous improvement, the Council is now leading on a whole system ‘Transformation’ agenda exploring how we work, to deliver our services and embrace new ideas. Early intervention and whole systems thinking is at the centre of our approach, recognising that partnerships continue to be the key to our success.

An unprecedented year

2020 saw an unprecedented year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected all people and all services across the country.

The impact of this pandemic will continue to be felt for a considerable time to come, through national and local budgets, through the mental, emotional and physical toll and through new and revised ways of working. Children and young people have faced many challenges including remote education, isolation, anxiety, digital and physical poverty. Parents and carers have also shared the challenges, balancing work and home schooling, trying to meet the needs of their children, whether educationally, emotionally,

or physically. For those children with special educational needs, the lack of access to the normal specialist help and care their children received has led them to stress and burn out.

For those children at risk of harm, the removal of the line of sight from schools, youth clubs and children's centres has potentially hidden issues, whilst gang-related activity has increased.

The impact on children looked after and care leavers has also been significant, with restrictions on face to face visits, increased demands on social care resources and social workers finding and embracing new ways of working.

Educational and developmental disadvantage will no doubt become more apparent once pupils return to school, from Early Years through to Further and Higher education, and there continues to be much debate on how to help children 'catch up', whilst also managing the fallout of the pandemic on mental health. Young people in the youth justice system are similarly impacted, with those in custody particularly isolated.

Bromley, like all boroughs, continues to manage ongoing change on a national and local level. Alongside the financial challenges, now exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the increasing numbers and complexities of challenges faced by children, young people and families mean an ever-increasing need to use resources more creatively but still effectively.

Collaboration between local partners, as represented on the Children's Executive Board, is more crucial than ever, as we seek to provide excellent services for our residents.

Effectively reducing the need for statutory intervention

In Bromley, the early intervention and support offer is a significant strength, providing a preventative service that successfully reduces the need for statutory intervention.

The six Children's centres in Bromley offer multi-agency services including health and therapy services, parenting support, housing advice and domestic violence support, enabling families to receive advice and support where they need it.

For families with multiple needs, the Supporting Families initiative continues to provide support through a multi-agency approach leading to significant and sustained improvements for families. The national programme has been extended until 2022 with a further review of its future due.

Safeguarding children

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provided flexibility around local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and in Bromley, this was reflected in the establishment of the Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) in 2019. The role of the partnership is to co-ordinate local arrangements for the protection and promotion of the welfare of children and young people in Bromley, and to monitor the effectiveness of these arrangements. The partnership includes early years and education establishments, health commissioners and providers, the police, probation, family courts, voluntary and community sector alongside the local authority.

The vision of the Partnership was refreshed in 2019 and reinforced by a renewed pledge in 2020 to ensure that:

“Children and young people in Bromley are seen, heard and helped; they are effectively safeguarded, properly supported and their lives improved by everyone working together”

Children in care and leaving care

For children who looked after by the Council and those leaving care, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 set out the legal duties for Corporate Parents to enable children to be heard, achieve the best outcomes, be safe, have stability and be prepared to live independently. This includes providing a local offer for care leavers up until the age of 25.

Our Corporate Parenting Board brings together senior leaders and partners alongside children and young people to discuss and review the services provided to children looked after and care leavers. We have an active Living in Care Council (LinCC) and a care leavers forum (Change for Care Leavers). Our Corporate Parenting Pledge was launched in 2019 and our Corporate Parenting Strategy is being refreshed in 2021.

Children who have special educational needs and disabilities

The Children and Families Act 2014 established a programme of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reforms to offer simpler, improved and consistent help for children and their families delivered through the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plans and the requirement for education, social care and health partners to link up and jointly plan services for children and young people.

In Bromley in March 2019, the SEND Vision and Priorities Strategy set out a 3-year plan for ensuring that SEND services meet the needs of children and their families.

During 2019, Bromley received a positive CQC and Ofsted inspection in relation to services for children with special educational needs. A number of strengths were identified but also recognising areas requiring development, which are reflected in the annual action plan underpinning the SEND Strategy. Engagement with children and families remains a key priority in this service.

Quality of learning

The Education Inspection Framework revised in September 2019 focuses on the quality of education, training and care provided by education provisions and assures that the minimum standards of education, skills and childcare are being met. The framework encompasses safeguarding and equality throughout, with particular reference to disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEND.

Of the state-funded schools in Bromley, 97% are currently rated good or outstanding and pupils overall attain very highly, above national averages. Narrowing the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers remains a priority, but also recognising that other pupil groups may be disproportionately at risk of lower attainment. The focus of the Head Teachers' Conference sessions in 2020/21 is on achievement in the light of equality and diversity. For pupils at risk of exclusion from school, the Timpson Report on school exclusions (2019) has informed a comprehensive external review of Alternative Provision in Bromley with recommendations implemented through the Bromley Inclusion Partnership.

Pupil place planning is also a key area, with an increase in the number of places required nationally at secondary and an increase in the number of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan requiring specialist placements. Bromley's Place Planning Strategy was approved in 2020 and work continues towards the opening of the new Special Free School planned for September 2023.

Education, employment and training

With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment, the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) has begun to increase, with the latest NEET figures showing the highest quarterly rise in a decade. The impact has been recognised in reports from London Councils, the Sutton Trust and the Nuffield Foundation in 2020, with the situation unlikely to improve in the near future.

Bromley has a two-year Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Strategy outlining the priorities and measures being taken to support children looked after and care leavers as specific at risk groups, but also encompassing other young people also at risk of becoming NEET.

Youth justice

Following the Taylor review in 2016, the youth justice system has been going through a period of reflection and review.

One impact of the review nationally was the split of the bodies responsible for the commissioning and delivery arms of youth custody services, with commissioning moving into the Ministry of Justice and custody under Her Majesty's Prison and Probation service.

In Bromley the three-year youth justice strategy was published in 2020, focusing on improving the life chances and outcomes of children and young people in contact with the youth justice system or at risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour. The strategy aims to fulfil this vision by recognising the principles of enhancing desistance and investing in early intervention and diversion activities to stop young people entering the youth justice system.

Mental health and wellbeing

The Children's Mental Health Taskforce report from 2015 (Future in Mind) set out a clear direction for mental health services for children and young people. The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 set out an ambition to establish a 0-25 Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) offer across England, with the Five-Year Forward View for Mental Health report in 2016 outlining the expansion of service for children and young people.

In Bromley, the CAMHS Transformation Board was established to review and consider the offer across the borough. Bromley Council and the NHS South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (SELCCG) work closely together to explore and monitor the development of mental health and wellbeing services for children and young people through the CAMHS Transformation Plan. One of the key project areas was the joint commissioning of CAMHS services, leading to the commissioning of the Bromley Wellbeing Service with effect from April 2021.

Within schools, the Bromley Wellbeing in Schools service has been established, alongside additional work taking place across social care, youth justice and SEND to ensure the appropriate help and support is available for children, young people and their families.

About Bromley

- 330,000+ people live in Bromley
- Largest London borough by area
- 4th least deprived London borough

Our children and young people

78,500 are aged from 0 to 18 years old:

- 29% are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups
- 1,828 receive services from children's social care
- 237 are on a child protection plan
- 328 children are in care
- 246 children are care leavers
- 2,000+ receive an emotional wellbeing or mental health service
- 6,550 pupils require support for Special Educational Needs
- 2,944 have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan

Understanding need

Borough profile - Bromley the Place

Bromley is the largest London Borough covering 150km². Bromley is diverse in its geography, with 51% of the land designated as green belt land and 129 open spaces and parks. The density of population varies dramatically between the north and south of the borough. There are also large variations in the levels of deprivation across the borough.

Bromley ranks 206 of 317 local authorities in the 2019 Indices of Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) where 1 is the most deprived. Six of the wards in Bromley are ranked as more deprived than the England average in the IDACI rankings, represented by the darker blue colours on the chart below.

Proportion of areas in Bromley in each decile of the IDACI index (where decile 1 is the most deprived 10% of areas in England)

- Decile 1 - 7%
- Decile 2 - 7%
- Decile 3 - 7%
- Decile 4 - 5%
- Decile 5 - 7%
- Decile 6 - 10%
- Decile 7 - 10%
- Decile 8 - 15%
- Decile 9 - 12%
- Decile 10 - 19%

The Greater London Authority (GLA) population estimates to 2026 show a decrease in the number of under 5s and an increase in 11 to 18 year olds. This projection is also reflected in projected school roll numbers, whereby primary and secondary populations could show a 16% (7,400+ pupils) increase between 2014 and 2026.

There are 101 state-funded schools in Bromley, attended by 52,800 children. 97% of these schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, placing Bromley in the top 5 local authorities in the country. Educational attainment of children and young people in Bromley remains good at all stages, although there continues to be a gap in attainment for disadvantaged children and young people and those who have SEND.

The employment rate in Bromley is higher than the national and London average, with a 78 per cent employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 compared to 74 per cent in

London during 2017. Gross annual pay in Bromley was over £40,400 in 2017, the ninth highest in London.

Bromley's housing profile is more in line with the South East than London with approximately 72 per cent being owner- occupiers, 12 per cent social renters and 16 per cent private renters.

Bromley, in common with London and the South East, struggles to provide affordable accommodation for its residents.

More than 5,500 households approach the Council for housing advice each year. However, the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased to 1,795 and nearly 80% of these households include dependent children. In 2019 almost 500 young people aged 16-24 approached the council for housing advice. Bromley is responding to all of these challenges through our Housing and Homelessness strategies.

The health profile of Bromley residents shows that in year 6, 17.1% (605) of children are classified as obese, better than the average for England. The rate for alcohol-specific hospital admissions among those under 18 is 16 per 100,000 population, also better than the average for England. This represents 12 admissions per year. However, levels of admissions for substance misuse for 15-24 year olds remains higher than the London and England averages. These areas are identified in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Bromley, supported by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

Our priorities

In the context of national policies and priorities and the needs of the most vulnerable children and young people in Bromley, this Children and Young People's Plan for 2021 to 2024 is focused on the following priorities:

- Targeted early intervention and good universal services
- Safeguarding children and adolescents
- Being the best corporate parent
- Challenging disproportionality
- Engaging with children, young people and families

For each priority, the following chapters outline:

- Why it is important
- What it looks like in Bromley
- What we are going to do next

Priority 1 - Targeted early intervention and good universal services

Why is this important?

Ensuring all children and families are able to thrive and equipping them to adapt positively to changing life experiences underpins happy, healthy and positive outcomes. Whilst many children and families in Bromley will not need help beyond universal services, some will experience greater difficulties and Bromley and its partners will strive to provide targeted early interventions to ensure the needs of each child and family are met and appropriate support is provided.

Addressing a child or family's needs early on can reduce risk factors and increase protective factors in a child's life. Protective factors are likely to increase a child's wellbeing and include:

- developing strong social and emotional skills
- having a strong social support network for the family
- good parental mental health
- financial support, benefits and advice
- good community services and facilities

Providing timely, tailored and holistic support is vital in supporting children and their families. In Bromley, we believe that investing to meet the needs of children and their families earlier is more effective; preventing and identifying problems as early as possible should be the core business of universal services; when the need arises, targeted and specialist services should be readily available.

What does it look like in Bromley?

Bromley has well-established and mature early help arrangements in place which make a difference to children and families. Our Early Intervention and Family Support Services (EIFS) focus on understanding needs and context well so that our help is purposeful and achieves the best outcomes for children. We believe that our continued investment in our early intervention and family support services is critical to successfully diverting children away from statutory intervention. The five key elements our EIFS early help offer are:

1. use of the multi-agency Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

2. targeted support delivered by the Bromley Children Project's (BCP) Family Support and Parenting Practitioners
3. six Children and Family Centres, all of which hold a Silver Healthy Early Years London Award
4. specialist SEND support for families through Bromley Information Advice and Support Service (IASS Bromley)
5. the Family Contact Centres enabling supervised contact

EIFS is the recognised step-down route for families out of statutory children's social care.

Early Help and Family Support services link into the Children and family Centres together with services such as the Family Nurse Partnership for first-time teenage parents and other vulnerable women under 25 years, Mindful Mums for pregnant and new mothers experiencing mental ill-health, and Health Visitors. These provide support to ensure that babies and toddlers are developing physically and emotionally.

Evidence-based parenting programmes, speech and language therapy drop-ins and sessions to support a child's development are also based at the Centres. These universal and targeted programmes enable families to access information and advice, support and training to overcome issues and learn new skills before problems escalate.

There is a large network of early years providers, and support for early years practitioners is well established. A high percentage (96%) of early years providers are rated as Good or Outstanding by Ofsted, in line with national. Take up of the early years core and extended funded hours is high (98% compared with 93% nationally), as is the early Years Pupil Premium funding.

The majority of state funded schools in Bromley are academies.

97% of Bromley Schools have been judged by Ofsted to be either Good or Outstanding and consequently 96% of Bromley pupils are able to attend a Good or Outstanding School.

This is reflected in the achievements in national tests and public examinations, but in line with the rest of England, there continues to be a disparity between vulnerable groups and their peers. The Closing the Gap project continues with collaboration between the Council and school leaders to improve outcomes for these children. For those children who are at risk of becoming disengaged with education, often because of a wide range of issues, the Access and Inclusion Service takes a multi-agency approach to find solutions to ensuring continued educational stability for these children. Successful partnership working has led to a reduction in permanent exclusions from Primary schools (zero in 2019/20) and the review of Alternative Provision in 2020 alongside continued collaboration between the Council and schools will lead to changes to the provision and support available to children at risk of exclusion.

The Local Area Ofsted Inspection focussing on children with Special Educational Needs highlighted a number of areas of good practice and the 2020 SEND Vision and Priorities strategy outlines the ongoing plans for improving the experience of families and children who have SEN.

For families experiencing additional difficulties, the Supporting Families programme provides multi-agency support aimed at achieving significant and sustained improvements for these families, with over 3,200 families supported up to 31 March 2020.

As part of the mental health transformative work, the Bromley Wellbeing in Schools service is established across half of schools in Bromley. Work is underway and continuing on the development of a single health and social care commissioned service for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing in Bromley.

What are we going to do next?

- Continue to ensure children, young people, parents and carers are able to find relevant information, advice and guidance at the right time
- Support families to develop the skills they need to thrive and flourish through the work of the Bromley Children's Project and the Supporting Families programme
- Through greater multi agency collaboration, provide earlier and improved identification and support for children who have SEND
- Continue to develop our joint and innovative NHS/voluntary sector partnership across Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) enabling children and young people to access the support that they need in the places they would wish to get this help
- Working with schools through the implementation of the Alternative Provision review recommendations, reduce permanent exclusions and prevent multiple placements for young people
- Further strengthen relationships between schools and partner agencies providing support and advice to staff, children and young people and families so that children's needs can be met within a school setting
- Promote healthy living for all children and young people through and including the uptake of immunisations, reducing obesity and tackling substance misuse

Priority 2 - Safeguarding children and adolescents

Why is this important?

Safeguarding children is everyone's business. Every child and young person has the right to feel safe, be protected from neglect or abuse and be free from exploitation. By ensuring effective arrangements are in place to respond to safeguarding risks we want to ensure children are safe and less likely to require statutory intervention. The Working Together 2018 guidance specifies that in order to safeguard children and to achieve the best possible outcomes, children and families should receive services in a co-ordinated way and that working together, local authorities and partner organisations and agencies have specific duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their own family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; domestic abuse, including controlling or coercive behaviour; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take. A child centred approach means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

In 2019, following the publication of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and the Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance, the Bromley Children Safeguarding Partnership set out how safeguarding partners and other organisations, including schools, will work together to safeguard children and young people in the London Borough of Bromley, with the overarching aim that:

“Children and young people in Bromley are seen, heard and helped; they are effectively safeguarded, properly supported and their lives improved by everyone working together”

Bromley and its partner agencies aim to help children and young people in Bromley feel safer by:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

What does it look like in Bromley?

In 2019 an Ofsted inspection graded safeguarding arrangements delivered by the local authority and partners as Good, delivered through Outstanding leadership.

Where there are concerns about a child or family, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the single point of contact for the various child protection and safeguarding services within Bromley, in partnership with the Council, the police, and probation and health services. Its main aim is to ensure different organisations work together to deliver effective and focused services to young people and their families in the borough.

Following the MASH process, once a referral is made to children's social care, some children and young people may be assessed by a social worker to determine whether they are a 'Child in Need'. These children will require longer term interventions from specialist and/or statutory services or their families may benefit from a short break or respite. 91% of all children in need were visited every 20 days. We are working collaboratively to ensure that all partner agencies understand our wellbeing model and ensure that the right children receive the right services at the right time.

Some children and young people with acute additional unmet needs may need a Child Protection Plan. This could be due to child protection issues where there is actual or likely significant harm and the child may be in need of protection or where there is no risk of actual or likely significant harm, but needs are acute and multi-agency plans are not effective.

Bromley's rate of 114 Section 47 assessments undertaken per 10,000 of the under 18 population undertaken in the last six months is slightly higher than pre Covid levels (from 95 per 10,000 in February 2020), but in line with our understanding of the complexity of cases we managed during this period. 31% of these Section 47 investigations resulted in an Initial Child Protection Conference, which is in line with the London benchmark 29%. We continued good timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences with 82% being held within 15 days of the strategy discussion (better than the England benchmark 79%, 2019/20). 84% of Initial Child Protection Conferences resulted in a child protection plan. A rate of 32 per 10,000 keeps our levels of children on a Child Protection Plan in line with pre-Covid levels. Contact has been maintained with 94% of children on a child protection plan visited every 10 days and 73% of all those over the age of 4 were seen alone. 100% of child protection plans have been reviewed within timescale in the last six months, which is better than the England (92%) and London (96%) averages. In addition, even during the pandemic we have retained 99% of reviews conferences as quorate.

In Bromley all children and young people known to be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, County Lines activity, gang affiliation or those missing from home or care are regularly tracked through the MEGA (Missing Exploitation and

Gangs Affiliation) panel. The criteria for making a referral to the MEGA panel requires the level of risk to be medium to high as identified through the relevant risk assessment. The MEGA panel supports risk management and risk reduction through strategic and operational oversight. The shared intelligence and partnership arrangements support joined up planning and interventions.

What are we going to do next?

- Ensure children are effectively protected from harm by robust and coordinated multi-agency assessment, intervention and support
- Ensure that children and young people at risk of specific vulnerabilities in Bromley are seen, heard and helped
- Raise awareness of children and adults safeguarding across all partners and agencies, promoting best practice and where required challenging partners' safeguarding practice
- Further improve our support for domestic abuse victims through our new strategy
- Further support vulnerable adolescents, especially those vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (CSE), going missing and/or from gangs

Priority 3 - Being the best corporate parents

Why is this important?

The children and young people in care and care leavers are among the most vulnerable in Bromley. As corporate parents the Council and its partners want all children and young people in its care to be safe, happy and healthy with access to all possible opportunities to fulfil their potential and to move successfully into adult life with the skills necessary to live independently.

While children are looked after in local authority care it is important that they are in safe and stable homes where they are able to achieve in school, be supported to maintain health and emotional wellbeing, enjoy activities with their peers and develop skills for independence. This can be through a range of options from living with family or friends, with foster carers or in residential placements. It is important that a child or young person remains in the same home or placement as long as is needed and stays close to their original home when appropriate.

Children who are looked after often struggle to achieve good educational outcomes and it is the work of the Virtual School to assess their needs and ensure that they receive the additional support they need. Similarly, the health of children looked after is often poorer than for their peers as physical health may have been neglected and their emotional wellbeing is impacted by the disruption, and possible trauma, in their lives previously.

For care leavers the most pressing challenges are that too many are not in education, employment or training whilst too few attend higher education. There are also too many who become young parents.

What does it look like in Bromley?

As a corporate parent, Bromley works hard to provide the best possible care, support and education to its looked after children and young people to enable them to reach their full potential and lead a safe, happy and healthy life. We ensure there is a strong commitment from everyone who works with our looked after children and young people, to give them the same care, security and stability as any parent would give to their child. Bromley's Pledge to children and young people in care and care leavers outlines what will be done to help them achieve these outcomes.

Bromley's rate of children looked after per 10,000 (43) is within range of comparable boroughs and in line with London (37 per 10,000 in quarter 1 of 2020/21).

We know that our strong early help offer to children aged between 4 and 10 is effective and reduces the numbers that come to the attention of children's social care, and subsequently into care. The majority of our children looked after population are between the ages of 10 and 15, and we know that some of these children enter care late, which impacts on our Not in Education, Employment or Training rates. We have reviewed our early help offer for older teenagers to reduce late entrants. The Early Intervention and Family Support service delivers a specialist evidence-based parenting programme for parents of teenagers, 'Strengthening Families Strengthening Communities' accredited by the Race Equality Foundation, and in 2018 added to this the delivery of 'Teen Talk' accredited by Family Links. Take up of both is high, and feedback is very positive. We have also trained practitioners in a Mental Health First Aid Course in order to further equipped them to assisting this age group that are experiencing mental health difficulties.

At the very heart of our Corporate Parenting Strategy we have the views of our children and young people who shared their experience of being looked after with us. Their views help us to improve the stability in their placements and support them to develop good relationships with people. 71% of our looked after children sustain long term placements, far better than the London (64%) and England (68%) average, likewise only 4% experience three placement moves or more, better than the experience of their London (10%) and England (10%) peers. The Living in Care Council (LinCC) and Change for Care Leavers (CfCL) forums are key mechanisms for children and young people to share their views and experiences of care and influence improvements. LinCC and CfCL members meet directly with senior managers and elected members to do this on a regular basis.

In November 2018 we launched the Staying Together Team to strengthen our intervention and support for children and families on the edge of care. We work with those at immediate risk of entering care today or tomorrow, those identified as being at risk of entering care in the near future without increased intervention and a third cohort which comprises children who are currently in care with a contingency plan for reunification with birth families. The aim is to work with and support such children and their families to pave the way for seamless and smooth reunification when possible. Workers proactively deliver an intensive crisis-led short term intervention to try to stabilise them in the community and prevent them from coming into care. They also help support children returning home. Feedback from parents and children is extremely positive - the majority of the children we have worked with have successfully remained with their families. For those children who do need to live away from their families we have improved our range of in-house foster carers and access to a range of agency foster carers when required. We have developed our in-house foster carers' skills and offer so that they are now able to receive placements of some of our most complex children.

What are we going to do next?

We will continue to work closely with the Children in Care Council and our Care Leavers to ensure that we continue to provide appropriate and relevant support that meets the expressed needs of our children and youth people. Through continued engagement activities, such as the Bright Spots survey, we will capture a wide range of young people's views about their experiences of being looked after and as care leavers to inform service improvement.

We will continue to review our pledges to Looked After Children and young people, taking into consideration any changes that may occur locally or nationally, so that the service we offer meets our statutory duties whilst being innovative and aspirational.

We will provide better support for Children in Care and Care Leavers by:

- Providing or commissioning services or settings which are independently judged good or outstanding
- Improving outcomes and closing gaps, particularly for vulnerable children and young people, through the Virtual School and by close partnership working with the special educational needs services and the youth offending service
- Ensuring easy access to Bromley health services where every child has a named specialist nurse, has their health plan regularly reviewed and has regular health-related checks and immunisations
- Through an enhanced specialist mental health assessment and review service provide improved access to mental health services to help each child and young person to build resilience, self-regulation and stress-management skills and have good access to support for emotional wellbeing where needed
- Further developing the local offer for care leavers covering health and wellbeing, education, training and employment, accommodation, relationships and participation in society
- Working with care leavers through the provision of advice and support to ensure and maintain suitable housing

Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality

Why is this important?

Disproportionality occurs when the number of individuals present in a specific category is greater than/less than the number of those individuals typically found in the general population. In this instance, overrepresentation/underrepresentation is said to occur.

The Lammy Review was conducted in 2017 by an independent authority in the UK into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals in the Criminal Justice System. The Youth Justice system had identified BAME disproportionality as a problem for some time, but too little has been done to draw together the lessons of promising early work. The review concluded that the Youth Justice Board should address this with some urgency.

However, the ambitions of this priority reach wider than the youth justice system and align with supporting and challenging effective multi agency working to address disproportionality across all areas of children's services. Disproportionality can be seen not only in the over-representation of BAME young people in the youth justice system, but across vulnerable children populations and their outcomes across other protected characteristics. This may include, but is not limited to, those with complex needs and disabilities, pupils identified as disadvantaged whether through deprivation, digital poverty, by virtue of being looked after or a care leaver, or as a child in need or on a child protection plan. Disproportionality may also be reflected in outcomes for children by gender, nationality or first language.

In identifying this priority, Bromley wants to improve outcomes by narrowing the disparities seen for those at higher risk of poor outcomes and ensuring the best possible future for all children and young people.

What does it look like in Bromley?

The Bromley Youth Justice Strategy describes a commitment to recognising the principle of enhancing desistance and focusing on early prevention and diversion to: stop children and young people from entering the youth justice system; reduce first time entrants; reduce reoffending and, as such, improve life chances for young people. One of the key priorities of the strategy is to address ethnicity disproportionality and the overrepresentation of other protected characteristics and vulnerable groups.

A variety of support is provided through the Bromley Youth Support Programme and Bromley Education Business Partnership to engage young people, especially those who are vulnerable, to participate in education, employment and training.

The 'Closing the Gap' project in schools remains a priority with close partnership working between schools and the Council communicated through briefings, training, conferences and other activities to school leaders, governors and teachers.

To support care leavers in remaining in education, employment or training, a NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) worker is based in the Leaving Care service and the Education, Training and Employment (ETE) Strategy seeks to address some of the challenges experienced by Care Leavers.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy includes as one of its overarching aims that in partnership working, all our services make the right provision and support available for children and young people who have SEND so that they make good progress and achieve good outcomes.

What are we going to do next?

- Enable all children and young people to achieve positive and successful outcomes by reducing inequalities for vulnerable children
- Monitor and review the priorities and actions of the Bromley Youth Justice Strategy to ensure improved outcomes and life chances for children and young people in contact with the youth justice system or at risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour
- Bromley School Standards Team will work with and support schools to develop a curriculum with a strong focus on Closing the Gap for disadvantaged children
- The Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership will seek to better understand vulnerabilities that can impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people and wherever possible, work to mitigate and prevent that harm, and we will seek to develop a more complete understanding of what vulnerability for families and their children looks like in Bromley.
- Through the SEND Strategic Vision, ensure our children and young people with SEND have their needs met locally, as far as possible, growing up alongside their peers and able to live, learn and work in their local community
- Through the mental health transformation plan, ensure children and young people are able to access mental health services within an appropriate time period and receive a high quality of care, leading to improved pathways and better outcomes which will enable children and young people to overcome their vulnerabilities

Priority 5 - Engaging with children, young people and families

Why is this important?

Children and young people have a right to take part in and influence how services are planned and run for them in the areas where they live and learn. All partners and agencies should consider how they do this with children and young people as active partners, so that they are involved all the way through planning, delivering and reviewing services. This should be undertaken in a consistent and continuous way, so that those with decision making powers develop relationships with children and young people in their geographic areas to:

- Gain a better understanding of services from the child/young person's point of view
- Use this understanding to improve service commissioning and delivery
- Keep children and young people informed of changes to service delivery and what actions have occurred as a result of their feedback

What does it look like in Bromley?

In Bromley the engagement of children, young people and parent carers is promoted through strategic boards and by senior leaders across the local authority and partner organisations. The User Voice Framework was introduced in 2018 and continues to be embedded across all services. The Children's Executive Board agreed to the following five key promises:

- Promise 1 - You will be able to influence how we support you
- Promise 2 - You will be able to influence our processes and systems
- Promise 3 - You will be able to influence 'Bromley the place'
- Promise 4 - We will involve and engage with your support network
- Promise 5 - We will build our own skills and improve our learning

Since then we have published evidence of engagement with children, young people and their families and outcomes through our annual "You Said, We Did" reports.

We know that the involvement of the Living in Care Council and the Change for Care Leavers Forum in the strategic boards, and in working closely with members and senior leaders, is crucial in ensuring the right priorities are identified and responses to feedback are scrutinised. We want this engagement to be meaningful, so when we engage children and young people we do it in a way that is appropriate to them.

In March 2019, the SEND Governance Board adopted the 'Better Together' engagement strategy, the framework for improving how we ask for, collect and use feedback from children and young people. In June 2020 Your Voice in Health and Social Care (YVHSC) launched the Bromley Parent Engagement SEND Service (BPES), engaging with children, young people and carers to ensure they have a voice to improve and shape services.

What are we going to do next?

- Ensure full engagement of all service users in improving and shaping services, and in the commissioning of new services
- Continue to deliver the SENDMatters Live events, led by senior leaders across the Council and health, providing parents with an opportunity to meet these leaders to talk about issues that they have raised, face to face
- Strengthen links with the Youth Council and the Living in Care Council to increase engagement with children and young people who have SEND
- Keep the Local Offer under review to ensure it remains relevant and meets the needs of users, retaining usage and interactive engagement
- Seek out and reflect the voice of the child in the review of social care cases, policies and practices and via the communication opportunities the wider partnership creates as part of the Pledge from the BSCP, which will include engaging directly with children and young people

Delivering this Plan

This Children and Young People's Plan does not exist in isolation. It brings together the strategies of all its partners to deliver and support its priorities. This is shown below:

Early Help Strategy 2021 to 2031

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019 to 2023

- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership Pledge 2020

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021 to 2024

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Education, Training and Employment Strategy 2020 to 2022

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Homelessness Strategy 2018 to 2023

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality

- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Housing Strategy 2019 to 2029

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Intergenerational Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy 2021 to 2024

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2020 to 2025

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Safer Bromley Partnership Strategy 2020 to 2023

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

SEND Strategic Vision and Priorities 2019 to 2022

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Youth Justice Strategy 2020 to 2023

- Priority 1 - Early help and universal services
- Priority 2 - Safeguarding children
- Priority 3 - The best corporate parents
- Priority 4 - Challenging disproportionality
- Priority 5 - Engaging with our families

Partnership governance and structure

The Bromley Children's Executive Board is the mechanism by which partners 'co-operate' at a strategic level to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The Children's Executive Board has the responsibility for developing, producing, publishing, reviewing and monitoring the Children and Young People's Plan which is the joint strategy of the partners on how they will work together to improve children's wellbeing and ensure their safety.

The Children's Executive Board will monitor progress on the extent to which the partners act in accordance with the Children and Young People's Plan.

Key partners of the Children's Executive Board are:

- Bromley Healthcare
- Bromley Parent Engagement SEND Service (Your Voice in Health and Social Care)
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership
- London Borough of Bromley
- London South East Colleges
- Metropolitan Police Service (Bromley)
- NHS South East Clinical Commissioning Group
- Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust
- Primary and Special Schools Head Teachers' Forum
- Secondary Schools Head Teachers' Forum

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