
Better Together

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

You Said, We Did: Highlights January 2023 to March 2023

Introduction

Bromley Council, SEL Integrated Commissioning Board (Bromley) and Your Voice Health and Social Care are strongly committed to improving education, health and well-being outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities. We recognise that effective engagement and coproduction rest on an organisational culture which values the voice of service users and fosters systems which give service users ways to share their thoughts and experiences. This is a way of working that enables children and young people, their families and those that provide services to work together to plan or create services which work for everyone.

Collecting views of our children and young people with SEND and their families is important but ensuring that these views are listened to and acted upon is at the heart of what we do in Bromley. We want to inform parent carers and young people about how their views and opinions have influenced change. This *You Said, We Did* report gives examples of the difference their feedback has made to Education, Health, and Care services across Bromley.

Parent carers were invited to share their views in a range of ways. Your feedback helps us to plan local support and services.

Our priorities

The report is shaped around our five strategic priorities:

Priority 1

Embed effective engagement with parents, children and young people and all partners as central to the delivery of better outcomes

Priority 2

Children and young people receive early support through universal and targeted provision, reducing reliance on specialist provision

Priority 3

Increase local capacity across Education, Health and Social care for children and young people with more complex needs

Priority 4

Ensure robust multi-agency decision making processes are embedded across the SEND Partnership enabling sustainable, timely integrated support for children and young people with more complex needs and their families

Priority 5

Enable all our children and young people to transfer successfully to the next stage of their education or into employment, and to transfer to an independent adult life in their local community

There is a strong commitment across Education, Health, and Social Care to work closely with parents and carers to ensure that individual needs are met, and that children and young people make timely progress and achieve good outcomes. This commitment is encapsulated in the Bromley SEND Strategic Vision and Priorities and the extended strategy for 2022-23.

This means that we will:

- Engage with you in decisions relating to your education, support, and care so that you can shape decisions to improve your subjective 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.

*You Said, We Did: Embedding our User Voice Framework
SEND Quarter 4, 2022-23*

- Promote access to Information, Advice and Support (IASS), local advocates and our complaints and compliments processes.
- Embed a culture of engagement and co-production across the network of services for children in Bromley (including our commissioned services), supported by SEND champions in services.
- Contract with Your Voice Health and Social Care to widen our engagement reach and to:
 - facilitate information exchange
 - contribute to shaping our developing vision and priorities for SEND
- Establish a new parent carer forum funded by the Department for Education
- Report in accessible formats using children, young people, and family friendly storyboards.

Priority 1 – Embed effective engagement with parents, children and young people and all partners as central to the delivery of better outcomes

Our promise: We will involve and engage with your support network

You said...

- Early identification and recognition of difficulties is vital to enable support to be in place prior to starting school.
- Waiting times for therapies such as occupational therapy, speech and language and physiotherapy are extremely high making it extremely difficult to access quickly.
- Access to current information is limited for parents who have English as an additional language. Parents feel isolated.
- We need to develop a better understanding of the diverse culture and ethnicities in Bromley to enable us to bridge the gap with services and support for ethnic minority families.
- Create the right support for ethnic minority families in Bromley.

We did...

- Pre-school engagement event held at Blenheim Children's Centre. Opportunities were available for parent carers to talk to and receive advice from speech and language therapists. In addition, the newly appointed SEND health visitor was in attendance to share information alongside, LA Officers, and the early years funding team.
- Engagement event held at Petts Wood Playgroup's parent/carer coffee morning. Information shared regarding the Local Offer, B-Hive, and the new Bromley parent carer forum.
- Engagement event held at CASPA Tots to gather parent carer views and share information regarding the Local Offer, B-Hive, and the new parent carer forum.
- Ongoing development of the Embracing Diversity Project to expand to include a wider range of cultures/ethnicities to better represent the diverse population and demographic of the local area.

- Support to access the Local Offer and the B-Hive website using the translate button. Current information via leaflets and tools which can be accessed to translate information to be shared in additional languages.

Priority 2 – Children and young people receive early support through universal and targeted provision, reducing reliance on specialist

Our Promise: We will build our own skills and improve our learning

You said...

- Children not being identified as having additional needs in primary school leading to missed opportunities to provide targeted support thus enabling successful transition to secondary school.
- Lack of early identification and support in school can impact on mental health and lead to Emotional Based School Avoidance leading to a long and enduring need. This is of note following primary to secondary transition.
- Parents feel blamed for low attendance and schools are not always sensitive or understanding of this issue. Parents frequently receive attendance letters which can be worrying. Attitudes to EBSA have been noted to change if a mental health primary worker or establishment such as the Maudsley send a letter outlining and confirming the difficulties. Parents are often unable to provide proof as they are unable to access mental health services quickly. This leads to an inconsistency in approach to children/young people. Those who are unable to provide evidence do not get the same level of intervention and support as those who have provided evidence.
- Lack of communication between school staff and external agencies.
- Speech and Language therapists are an excellent resource to support understanding of difficulties however this service can be underutilised.

We did...

- Ongoing training and support offered to staff in schools, colleges and the Education and Welfare officers relating to Emotional Based School Avoidance.
- Emotional Based School Avoidance webinars offered by Bromley y.

- EHC Needs Eligibility Criteria guide for parents to ensure understanding of levels of SEND support offered in schools, who to contact and next steps to ensure best outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- Continuous professional development for staff through the SEND Training Collaborative.
- Engagement events for parents to continue to be held in school settings to listen to parent carer views on what is working/not working. Continued sharing of information, support networks and signposting to the Local Offer.

Priority 3 – Increase local capacity across Education, Health and Social care for children and young people with more complex needs.

Our Promise: You will be able to influence ‘Bromley the place’

You said...

- You did not always have access to a Health Visitor and, when you have concerns you would like a named person to share these with.
- ADHD is not given the recognition or the support as a standalone diagnosis. ADHD is not given the prominence it deserves. The co-morbidity factor with ASC tended to lean more toward ASC difficulties and support offered for this. Limited resources or support offered for ADHD- medication is the usual response. Masking is common in ADHD and is not recognised widely in schools.
- Lack of understanding of ARFID (Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder) and the impact on the child/young person. Limited support for this condition. Parents worry that nutritionally their children and young people are not getting the nutrients they need.
- School midday meals supervisors have limited knowledge and training for this. ARFID can cause great distress and discomfort.

We did...

- Newly appointed Health Visitor SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). Information regarding Health visiting support and 0-4 services can be found [0-4 years: Bromley 0 to 19 Public Health Service](#)

- Continuous professional development for school staff. Updates resources and current practice shared via the SENCO e-Bulletin and through the Bromley Education Matters Website.
- Continued engagement events with both parents and young people to hear their voice. Views shared at a strategic level to inform ongoing practice.
- Shared concerns regarding ARFID and the impact it has on children, young people, and their families, at the April All-Age Autism board so that the difficulties faced by families are acknowledged at a strategic level.

Priority 4 – Ensure robust multi-agency decision making processes are embedded across the SEND Partnership enabling sustainable, timely integrated support for children and young people with more complex needs and their families

Our Promise: You will be able to influence how we support you.

You said...

- CASPA Café is closing which will mean job losses for young autistic adults and in addition, a significant safe meeting space.
- Housing issues and support for housing is extremely limited if not eligible for supported living. There should be a SEND champion in housing who can understand in depth the issues young people with SEND face and target the appropriate action to support.
- Parents would like more opportunities for access to clubs and activities which are not solely for children and young people with SEND. Parents feel leaders and support staff at Scouts, for example, could be trained to enable children and young people with SEND to access these activities.
- Parents would like more opportunities for peer support groups in school. Some young people have shared that they can feel socially isolated if they feel they do not fit the perception of ASC. Clubs such as CASPA are not appealing to them, and they would like the opportunity to access clubs which are offered to children and young people who are not neurodiverse.
- In addition, parents feel buddy systems could be put in place and/or at key transition points for example when entering moving from key stage 2 to key stage 3 or when entering 6th form.

We did...

- Young people's Teams meeting held to hear to what is working/not working in Bromley. Concerns raised and positive feedback will be fed back to Bromley All Age Autism Board. The feedback enables us to share the collective views on areas of local need to the board, where there are not actions within the board's action plan, specific points will be discussed, to understand what the current offer is and if we can create actions to improve the specific need within our services and resources. Therefore, the children and young person's voice is directly influencing positive change to service provision, improving pathway's and potentially how we commission specific services.
- Ongoing engagement events to share information regarding the Bromley Local Offer and in particular the support/ information regarding Housing enquiries and options.
- Continued development of the young people's area on the Local Offer to encourage ownership, independence regarding the information they wish to receive and young people's views and wishes.

Priority 5 – Enable all our children and young people to transfer successfully to the next stage of their education or into employment, and to transfer to an independent adult life in their local community

Our promise: You will be able to influence our processes and systems

You said...

- Difficulties not being picked up in Primary school and opportunities missed to provide support in the secondary placement
- Information regarding next steps for preparing for adulthood must be shared in a timely fashion at Annual Review sessions. Schools should share information at the earliest opportunities to ensure parents and young people have enough time to explore all options.
- Clear information regarding post 16 options for further education, training, and employment opportunities.

We did...

- Acknowledged the need to develop training for annual reviews at key transition stages such as Primary to Secondary transition.
- Anxiety webinars offered by Bromley Y.
- Continue to offer Annual review information sessions at Year 9 with the focus on Preparing for Adulthood (PFA).
- Engagement with young people in school to share current opportunities available in further education, supported internships or apprenticeships and paid employment. The young person's voice will be used to share views and ideas via the Children and Young People's area on the Local Offer.
- Engagement events have been planned, for the summer term, across Bromley special schools to share key information regarding Supported Internships, employment opportunities as well as support and information for those who wish to remain in education.
- Young people's Teams meeting held to hear to what is working/not working in Bromley. This will be fed back to Bromley All Age Autism Board.
- Wider opportunities to share information regarding the Bromley Local Offer to support Housing enquiries/options and post 16 colleges and placements.