

Better Together

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

You Said, We Did: Highlights January 2024 - March 2024

Introduction

Bromley Council, SEL Integrated Commissioning System (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 are invited to share views in a range of ways. Your feedback helps us to plan local support and services.

Our approach centres around [four principles](#) which will result in continuous improvement across all our SEND services:

Shaping our casework
Shaping our place

Shaping our systems
Corporate Intelligence

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 good progress and achieve good outcomes. This commitment is encapsulated in the [Bromley SEND Strategic Vision and Priorities](#).

We contract with [Your Voice and Social Care](#) (YVHSC) to widen our engagement with parent and carers and work in partnership with the Bromley Parent Carer Forum which funded by the Department for Education.

Why are we doing this?

- We want all children and young people with SEND in Bromley and their families to feel valued, empowered and included in their communities.
- We want to continually improve our support and practice.
- We are doing well for many of our children and young people with SEND but we can do more to make our services more inclusive.
- We must address demand pressures for which Bromley is an outlier. The number of children and young people with EHC plans is rapidly increasing in Bromley, significantly faster than nationally.
- We want to make sure that multi-agency decision making ensures we have the best possible arrangements in place across the SEND Partnership to make the right plans for our children and young people.
- This includes working openly and collaboratively with children, young people, and their families to support and guide them through their education and care pathways to achieve strong outcomes and become independent adults.
- We need to make the best use of the resources to make a difference. As costs and demand are continuing exponential increase, we need to develop more local and inclusive provision, supporting more children and young people at universal and targeted level and reducing the dependence on specialist provision.

This report is also available in accessible formats using children, young people and family friendly storyboards on the [Bromley Local Offer website](#).

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

You Said...

- Parent/carers would like to see greater transparency around effectiveness of SEND provision in Bromley and the outcomes that children and young people are achieving.
- Parent/carers would like someone early in the process to help them navigate the SEND system, providing information, consistent advice, support.
- Parents would like everyone to use and understand the Local Offer more, including children and young people.
- The response time for inquiries or concerns raised by parents regarding our children's SEND provision are too long. How can we work together to streamline communication processes to address concerns promptly?

We did...

- Established an Engagement and Communications workstream which reports to the SEND Governance Board. A priority for the workstream is to coproduce a communication strategy for SEND to improve communications with our families.
- Commenced the planning of the Bromley Matters Live to be hosted in on 18th April. Senior Leaders will present the SEND priorities which will be followed by Q & A session by parent and carers.
- Attended parent coffee mornings at CASPA Tots and Petts Wood Special Needs Playgroup with the Early Years Inclusion Lead to hear lived experiences and offer SEND information and support. These opportunities support parents getting access to information at the earliest point.
- Facilitated two sessions on the first phase of 'Project ME' for parent/carers from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The workshops are designed to inform and empower parent carers living in Bromley who may experience isolation and stigma.
- Delivered EHCP annual review information sessions to parent and carers for young people in year 8 and year 9, followed by a Q & A session. The sessions shared the process of annual reviews and information for families of children transitioning to the next key stage.
- Commenced discussions with SEND professionals to understand what is already provided and what next to offer parent and carers who have had their

application for an EHCP declined following a needs assessment. The intention is to share and inform parents of the support that there is available to them through the graduated offer.

- Attended CASPA Autism Event on 26th March. Provided an overview of SEND Programmes, including the Local offer.
- Had a SEND Programme Stand at the Autism CASPA event signposting parent/carers to services and signing them up to the BAAB database.
- Local Offer focus groups held with parent-carers and a LO survey widely circulated to seek parental views on the next stage of the LO development.
- Monthly EHC needs assessments information sessions delivered and participation on the delivery team expanded to include a health partner. Positive feedback received about having health professional presence.
- Met with Young People with autism to provide them with networking opportunity and a voice. This was fed into the Bromley Autism for All Board.
- Monthly Engagement Matters Group meetings involving parent/carers and a range of professionals. RAG rated report shows progress against matters raised.

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

You said...

- Parent/carers would like to have a better understanding of what can be expected of mainstream schools in supporting all children and young people with SEND. What specific resources and support systems are in place within mainstream schools to ensure the child's individual educational needs are being met effectively, and how regularly are these provisions reviewed and evaluated?
- Where parents have raised concern about a school's provision, how are concerns addressed by SEND Partnership?
- Parent/carers would like to see more training in schools as to the needs and behaviours of children and young people who are experiencing high levels of anxiety and are struggling to attend school.
- Some parent/carers report that waiting times for some services could be further improved.

We did...

- Our monthly Engagement Matters reference group brings together representatives from the Parent Carer community and the voluntary sector. The aim is to identify current issues that families are experiencing to improve support available to them.
- Where our parent engagement and voluntary sector partners are made aware of concerns about the SEND support within a particular school or setting, this information is shared with the single point of contact with the SEND Advisory and Inclusion Support Advisory teams for that school or setting.
- Met with parents to discuss the Autism diagnosis experience. Feedback will be used to inform the review of the diagnostic pathways for autism assessments and the support available for families whilst on waiting list for assessment which is offered through the Autism Family Support service.
- Hosted SEND Network Champion event which is open to all professionals working with children and young people with SEND in the borough and parent carers. Please email SENDMatters@bromley.gov.uk if you would like to join this network.
- Co-presented with Bromley Mencap to parent and carers how to navigate Bromley SEN Services and promoted the local offer so parents have a better understanding of how to obtain support and services.

Priority 3 – Increase local capacity across education, health and social care for children and young people with more complex needs

You said...

- You are concerned that there is insufficient specialist provision to be able to meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs in the borough.
- Parent/carers value greatly the short breaks that they receive, but some parents are unable to access the short breaks offer (HAF or Specialist).
- You would like more employment opportunities and support for your young people.

We did...

- The needs for specialist placements and provision are kept under review. The Council's school places commissioning plan provides analysis of need and develop plans for increasing capacity.
- Monthly virtual EHC Needs assessments information workshops held with the purpose of informing parent/carers of the needs assessment process and provide opportunities to ask questions.
- Focus group to inform the Short Breaks Offer and statement attended by Bromley Parent Carer Forum, Your Voice Health and Social Care and parent representatives across the 0-25 age range. The views and experiences shared are informing commissioning priorities and next steps.
- Currently organising an event for 1st July for Young People to meet with Bromley senior leaders to share what is important to them, keeping it outcomes focussed.
- Through the Internships Work programme, the SEN Service has worked closely with our SEND Programme team to review the planning that takes place from Year 9 for children and young people with EHCPs. This has resulted in Annual Review training for schools in setting outcomes linked to preparing for adulthood so that PFA Outcomes are considered at all age phases.
- Through the [Good Work Bromley Project](#) we are working in collaboration with London Southeast College, CASPA and Bromley Mencap to support young people to gain employment.
- We continue to develop our local Supported Internship offer and are working with colleagues in our Human Resource team to develop a Supported Internship programme in the Council.

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.

The overarching aim of our SEND Strategic Vision and priorities is to improve the outcomes for children and young people with disabilities and those with special educational needs.

In reviewing our vision and priorities, we asked children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) about their experiences of growing up and going to school in the local area and what they think their future might look like.

You said...

- When a child is out of school through no fault of their own, how does health and education work together to support the child's mental health? Where can parents get the necessary support for their child?

We did...

- Through our Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement work we have undertaken a multi-agency audit of EHC Plans where the primary need of the child is Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH). This identified a number of improvements that we are seeking to make including the requirement that schools complete the Emotional Based School Avoidance toolkit (EBSA) as part of the evidence required to support the EHC Needs Assessment referral.
- We have increased the input of children and young people into the [Young People Local Offer](#). A specific children and young people's section has been developed, which includes resources and contributions from local children and young people including information and resources of mental health and wellbeing.

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.

You said...

- Parent/carers would like greater understanding about how Further Education Colleges can meet the needs of young people with complex needs and associated medical conditions.
- Parent/carers would like to see strengthened post 16 outcomes, building on consistent Year 9 reviews and Preparation for Adulthood.
- Response times for inquiries or concerns raised by parents regarding key transitions should be improved.

We did...

- We are working with our parent engagement partners to improve our information sharing and communication processes to address the concerns raised.
- Employed a new Employment Office who is working on the establishment of new pathways to employment for young people with SEND, including a local Supported Internship offer.
- Delivered a webinar to Post 16 and Career Leads on Post 16 Education and Training options and Parents, carers, young people, and the professional that support them have told us that all they wanted more information about the education, training and routes to employment for young people as they consider their Post 16 options.
- In response the SEND Programme team developed and delivered two post 16 Education, Training and Employment information workshops in January and March 2024. 8 local providers of skills development and training programmes presented information to professional colleagues from our Bromley SEND departments, local and careers leads from our 6th form setting, schools and colleges. Feedback from this session has suggested that our professionals learned a lot and felt empowered to make the appropriate referrals to our providers and to talk with greater confidence to parents, carers and young people looking for support.
- The same Information Workshop was delivered to parents, carers and young people in March with 85% saying that the workshop was relevant to them and that they would recommend it to other parents and carers.

A schedule of similar presentation workshops will be planned and delivered across 2024.

- updated the information on the [Bromley Local Offer](#) around:
 - Bromley Local Authority internship programme
 - Employment for YP with SEND
 - Help to find a job
 - Employment Rights

- Added a range of employment and Post 16 Padlets on the Local Offer.