

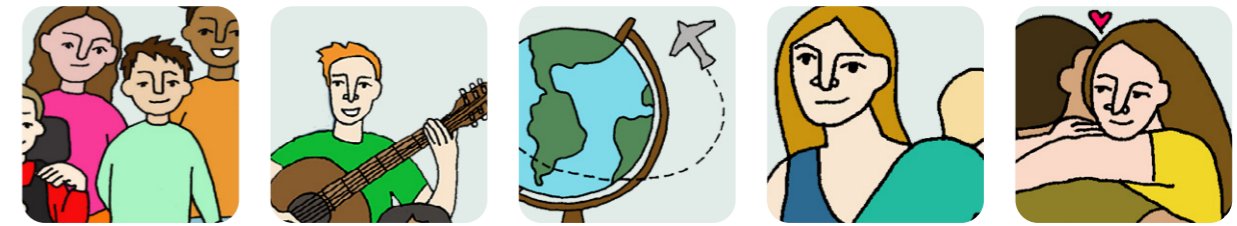


Bristol SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 2028



In this strategy we set out how our partnership will make things better for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) over the next four years.





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Introduction

Welcome to Bristol’s SEND and Inclusion Strategy. In this strategy we set out how our partnership will make things better for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) over the next four years. Our partnership has worked together to develop this strategy. The partnership is made up of education, health and social care, as well as **Bristol Parent Carers, The Listening Partnership** and organisations working in our local communities. The strategy has been written for children and young people with SEND and their families. Lots of different people were involved in writing the strategy and making sure it focuses on the things that are important **to** children and young people with SEND and important **for** children and young people.

The strategy has been written with people living in our city, for our city. It is based on the SEND self-evaluation that we completed in 2023 and will update every year. Our SEND self-evaluation helped us understand what is going well and what needs to improve.

We listened to more than **1,500** responses from children and young people, **2,000** responses from parent carers and **750** responses from our schools. We also heard from all of our teams who support children and young people with SEND.

Our **last SEND strategy** was written in 2019. We have made progress, but we know we still have more to do. Our local area SEND inspection in 2019 was followed by the Covid pandemic in 2020, which had an impact on our progress and meant that we weren’t able to achieve everything we set out in our strategy. Not every child, young person and family living in the city has always felt welcomed and supported in all aspects of education and community life.

As a local area partnership, we are committed to changing this so everyone feels valued and included, and children and young people can reach their full potential.

The **Listening Partnership** are a group of children and young people with SEND aged from 13-25. We asked them to tell us their vision for SEND in Bristol. They told us:

- ‘We have the same hopes and aspirations for our future as all children and young people in Bristol.’
- ‘We experience many of the same challenges and struggles as other children and young people.’
- We want and have the right to the same opportunities in our lives.’

This strategy sets our priorities for the next four years and how we are going to deliver them. We set out the outcomes we are trying to achieve, and how we will know if we have fulfilled them. We will also develop a detailed Action Plan. The Action Plan will set out everything we will do to achieve the outcomes under each priority.

All of our priorities are based on a good understanding of what we are doing well and what we know needs to improve. Some of the things we are going to do are based on what children and young people with SEND and their parent carers have told us, and some are what we have to do because of the law.

We have also made sure that the strategy links with other work we are doing in Bristol:

- Our **Belonging Strategy** describes our approach to making sure all children and young people grow up in a city where they feel at home, where they feel they belong, and where they and their families can thrive.
- Our **Integrated Care System Strategy** focuses on improving the lives of neurodivergent children and young people as well as those with mental health needs and learning disabilities.
- Our **Corporate Parenting Strategy** describes how we support children in care and care leavers to reach their full potential.

Recent years have been very hard for some of our families. We are doing some things well but there are lots of things we need to get better at, so that more children and young people with SEND have the opportunities they want, need and deserve.

We are committed to making improvements even though we know that making things better is not going to be easy and requires the hard work of all partners, working together. In recent years we have found it harder to make sure enough children and young people with SEND have their needs understood at an early stage and get the right support at the right time. As a result, sometimes there is a long wait for help and sometimes, children and young people with SEND have to go to a school away from their local community. We are dedicated to addressing these issues and ensuring better outcomes for children and young people with SEND.



SEND in Bristol

There are over 13,000 children and young people living in Bristol with SEND. All children and young people with SEND have a barrier to learning which means they need additional support in an educational setting to ensure they can fully participate in and benefit from their education. Children and young people do not need to have a diagnosis to be identified as having a special educational need.

Children and young people with SEND have needs in the following areas:

- Cognition and learning: how children and young people think about and learn new information
- Communication and interaction: how children and young people express themselves, understand language and interact with others
- Social emotional and mental health: how children and young people manage relationships and their emotions and how they behave
- Physical and sensory needs: for example children and young people with a hearing or visual impairment, or a physical disability.

Here are some facts about SEND in Bristol. You can find out more on [Bristol City Council's website](#).

Numbers of children and young people with SEND

- The number of children and young people with SEND is increasing nationally and this is also the case in Bristol. 70,635 children and young people are on roll in Bristol schools. 15.6% (10,944) receive SEND support. 4.1% (2,877) have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
- The number of children and young people with an EHCP in Bristol increased by 18% between 2023 and 2024, compared to an increase of 11% nationally.
- Bristol has more pupils receiving SEND support than the national average.
- Bristol has fewer pupils with an EHCP than the national average (2.6% compared to 3.3% nationally).
- Speech language and communication needs is the most common type of SEND in Bristol. This includes children and young people who are awaiting an autism assessment. For pupils with an EHCP, it is Autism Spectrum Condition.

- In 2023, 48.4% of Education Health and Care Needs Assessments were carried out in 20 weeks, compared to 50.3% nationally.

Differences in identification across the city

- Children and young people are more likely to be identified as having SEND in some communities. 26% of pupils living in Hartcliffe and Withywood have SEND compared to 12% in Redland.
- 27.5% of Gypsy Roma pupils in Bristol receive SEND support. This is higher than the national average of 22.2%. 26.5% of Black Caribbean pupils receive SEND support. This is also higher than the national average of 16.5%.

Attendance, engagement and suspensions

- In 2023, 8.1% of 16-17 year olds with an EHCP are recorded as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or 'Not Known'. This is below the national average of 10.1%.
- In 2021/22 the suspension rate for pupils with an EHCP was 24.7 (compared with 17.6 nationally). For pupils with SEND support, the Bristol suspension rate was 24.9 (18.6 nationally). The suspension rate is calculated as the total number of fixed-period exclusions, divided by the total number of pupils x 100.
- In 2021/22 the absence rate for pupils with SEND support and EHCPs in Bristol was higher than the national average. For SEND support it was 10.9% compared to 10% nationally. The rate was 14.8% for EHCPs compared to 12.1% nationally.

Academic achievement and progress

- Children with SEND in Bristol achieve well in the Early Years. In 2023, 25.6% of children receiving SEND support achieved a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage, compared to the England average of 24.3%. 6% of children with an EHCP achieved a good level of development at Early Years Foundation Stage, higher than the England average of 3.8%.
- In 2022 7% of pupils with an EHCP (equal to the national average) and 25% of pupils with SEND support (slightly above the national average) met the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at KS2.
- In 2023, the average attainment 8 score for KS4 pupils with SEND support was 34.4, compared to 33.2 nationally. However, the average score was 9.4 for pupils with an EHCP, below the national average of 14.

What have children and young people with SEND told us about their lives?

Over the last two years, children and young people with SEND have told us about their lives at groups such as [The Listening Partnership](#) and [Barnado's HYPE project](#). We have also heard from children and young people with SEND as part of our [Healthy Schools Pupil Voice Survey](#) and from Children in Care in their [Personal Education Plans](#). Pupils in some local schools also told us about their lives so we would know what to include in this strategy.

Children and young people with SEND have told us:

We want to be understood and valued in our communities.

We want help for us to prepare better for moving onto our next school including college.

We want schools to understand us better, to see us as a whole person and know our history.

We want you to spend time with us on a regular basis, ask us how things are going and listen to what we say.

Being in education and the support we receive there, is important to us.

We take part in lots of activities in the community, like taking part in sport, spending time with friends and the performing arts. We want to take part in more activities.

We want more community venues and spaces to be accessible for CYP with physical disabilities. We want places that are clean quiet and safe.

We want you to encourage us to be as independent as possible if we go to a special school.

In school we want more movement breaks, more time to have fun and do the things we enjoy and more support from adults in the subjects we find difficult.

We don't feel always feel safe in our schools or communities. We would like schools to be better at dealing with bullying.

Some of us talk about things going well in our lessons, our friendships and our participation in sport.

Our priorities

As a partnership we recognise that we must work together across all services that support children and young people to deliver this strategy. We have set out six priority areas that we will focus on together:

1. Work with children and young people with SEND and their parent carers so we understand what they are good at, what they find difficult and what they need to thrive.

2. Listen to what children and young people with SEND and their parent carers tell us so we can make decisions together as equal partners.

3. Provide our children and young people with SEND with the right help at the right time so they can achieve good outcomes.

4. Develop more high-quality and inclusive educational provision.

5. Prepare our children and young people with SEND for changes in their lives and their futures so they can reach their potential.

6. Work together so children and young people with SEND feel safe and included in their educational settings and their communities.

The next pages explain why we are focusing on these priorities and the outcomes we are trying to achieve over the next four years. Each of the priority areas will have specific actions which will be set out in the detailed Action Plan.



Priority 1: Understanding needs

Work with children and young people with SEND and their parent carers so we understand what they are good at, what they find difficult and what they need to thrive:

What is our aim?

We want to identify and assess children and young people's needs quickly and accurately so that they can receive the right support at the right time. This needs to include a focus on children and young people's strengths, the context in which they need support, and the things they find difficult.

What is going well?

Schools report that they have got better at assessing SEND and there have been year on year improvements in the percentage of Education Health and Care Plans issued within 20 weeks since 2020. The timeliness of reviews for children from 2 to 2.5 is good and waiting times for physiotherapy and speech and language therapy generally meet NHS targets. Child in Need assessments and reviews are typically timely.

Why is this a priority?

For some children and young people, it can take a long time for their needs to accurately identified. The quality of children and young people's plans and who is involved in reviewing and keeping them up to date is sometimes a concern.

How will we know if we have improved?

We will know we have improved if more children and young people's needs are identified and assessed accurately when they are first starting to have difficulties. Identification and assessment will involve the right professionals and will meet our timeliness targets. We will keep our assessments up to date through regular reviews. Children and young people's and family's experience of identification and assessment will be positive, and they will be involved at every stage.

What are we going to do?

- Reduce the time taken for assessments such as autism and ADHD as well as Education Health and Care Needs Assessments, and make sure that more children and young people with SEND receive help while they wait.
- Make sure that Education Health and Care Plans and other types of plans are kept up to date and are good quality.
- Review and improve annual reviews including timeliness, decision making and multi-agency contributions.

- Agree how we will keep track of children and young people with social emotional and mental health difficulties and provide support earlier so we can help stop things in their lives from becoming more challenging.
- Improve how we work together across services to identify and assess SEND needs before children start school.
- Use digital technology so that everyone can contribute to plans online.
- Include changes to the children and young people's environment in their plans rather than just focusing on what they need to learn or do differently.



Priority 2: Listening to families

Listen to what children and young people with SEND and their parent carers tell us so we can make decisions together as equal partners.

What is our aim?

We want children and young people with SEND, along with their parent carers, to play an active role in shaping their individual plans and support. To make this happen, we need to view families as equal partners, ensure effective communication, and work together to create changes to our practices or support for individual children and young people.

What is going well?

Schools work hard at communication with families and involve parent carers and children and young people in decision making. Health teams have a culture of 'nothing about me without me' that guides their communication and decisions. Social care give children and families choice and control around how short break support is delivered.

Why is this a priority?

Positive relationships with parent carers and coproduction are key to an effective SEND system. We have been working on this through our **Accelerated Progress Plan** and are committed to continuing to deliver improvements in partnership with all families. Communication from some Council and Health teams needs to get better and parent carers need to know who they can talk to if they have concerns about their children's educational progress or health. Some families face extra challenges with communication and being involved in decisions. Our **guidance for schools on supporting children and young people from Black and Minoritised Communities** explores one aspect of this further.

How will we know if we have improved?

We will know we have improved if parent carers and children and young people with SEND tell us that they are involved in all decisions and plans that affect them. This will be true for all families including those with English as an Additional Language and those that are new to the country. We will have improved our communication so families understand what is happening and know who they can talk to if they have a question. We will work together with children and young people and parent carers as partners when we improve the way we do things as coproduction will be a core part of our practice across all our local area partners.

What are we going to do?

- Agree a communication charter which sets out how we will communicate with and be available to talk to children and young people with SEND and their parent carers.
- Improve our Local Offer so that it is easy to use for all families and includes the information that children and young people with SEND and their parent carers need. Make sure that we know our Local Offer well so we can signpost families effectively.
- Closer working with the Listening Partnership, Bristol Parent Carers and other groups to ensure the views of children and young people and their families influence the work we do with 'you said, we did' feedback as part of all co-production activity.
- Make sure that coproduction with parent carers happens in all teams and educational settings in line with our agreed ways of working with **Bristol Parent Carers** via the coproduction charter and memorandum of understanding.
- Agree how we will work with the **Listening Partnership** and other groups to ensure that the views of children and young people with SEND influence our way of doing things.
- Make sure that we hear and act on the views of children and young people and parent carers who we don't usually hear from, recognising the additional things we need to do to build trust and keep people safe during these conversations.
- Encourage all schools to take part in the Bristol Healthy Schools' Programme and Bristol Pupil Voice Survey to improve their work on hearing the voices of children and young people with SEND.
- Work with the Listening Partnership and other groups of children and young people with SEND to launch a 'Talk to me, Listen to me' campaign.
- Ensure that parent carers are well-supported and have access to valuable peer support opportunities.
- Make sure leaders and people who work directly with children and young people and families spend time in local communities and educational settings, so they understand what life is really like for children and young people with SEND and their parent carers to inform their decisions.
- Make sure that feedback from children and young people with SEND and their parent carers is understood by all staff and is used to improve individual performance.

- Include 'you said we did' reporting as part of all co-production so that it is clear how we have acted on the views of service users.
- Agree the SEND training needed across the partnership for successful delivery of this strategy with parent carers. Consider when this training could be coproduced and co-delivered with parent and carers and/or children and young people with SEND.



Priority 3: Right help right time

Provide our children and young people with SEND with the right help at the right time so they can achieve good outcomes.

What is our aim?

We want to provide children and young people with SEND with the support they need as early as possible. If we provide the right support at the right time and work together across teams to do so, outcomes for children and young people with SEND will improve. We also want to make sure the support we provide meets the needs of children and young people with SEND who are facing additional challenges in their lives, such as being in care or coming from a Black or Minoritised Community. This includes ensuring our children with SEND are attending, making progress and attaining in school to enable them to prepare for independent futures.

What is going well?

We have some high-quality services in Bristol which provide excellent support. Some of our outcomes for children and young people with SEND show we are doing better than other areas. For example, in the Early Years, more of our children with SEND achieve a Good Level of Development than nationally and more of our 16 and 17 are in Education Employment and Training. Some teams work well together with other teams to improve support for children and young people with SEND. For example, our Children and Young People's Network collaborates to ensure that local play and youth opportunities are inclusive, and our Youth Justice Service works closely with Speech and Language Therapists to ensure they understand young people's needs.

Why is this a priority?

Families sometimes wait a long time to get support. Sometimes they can't access services they have been told they need. There are times when our services don't work well enough together to provide support to families. We also know that the communities that children and young people come from affects how likely they are to be identified as having SEND and the support they receive.

How will we know if we have improved?

We will know we have improved if children and young people with SEND wait less time for support and this makes a positive difference to their outcomes, regardless of any additional challenges they may face. For example, we want to close the gap between how well children and young people with SEND do in school compared to their peers who do not have additional needs. Teams and educational settings will work together effectively so support to families is joined up and is a positive experience for children and young people with SEND and their parent carers.

What are we going to do?

- Make referrals to services easier. Improve multi-agency working, commissioning, information sharing and co-ordination between services.
- Reduce the time children and young people with SEND have to wait before they receive support. This may be from their education setting or from a targeted or specialist service.
- Agree a partnership approach to recruiting and keeping staff based on a strong understanding of the things which make people want to work in Bristol and the improving the things that make people want to leave.
- Identify where better multi-agency working, commissioning and service organisation would improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and agree actions to achieve this.
- Identify how support from multiple agencies can be better coordinated for parent carers with children and young people with complex SEND.
- Identify improvements needed in information sharing between services and possible digital solutions.
- Make sure that all education settings are aware of and using our **SEND guidance on Supporting children and young people with SEND from Black and Minoritised Communities**.
- Provide support to ensure that all **Children in Care** with SEND can attend an educational setting every day and maintain positive relationships with staff and peers.
- Agree how we will support children and young people with SEND and their parent carers to understand and use the Local Offer where this is particularly challenging (for example families with English as an additional language).
- Agree how we will meet our **extended duties for children and young people with SEND who are known to social care**.
- Make sure that our approach to supporting our Children in Care with SEND who live in other local areas is agreed and clear.
- Spend money fairly and equitably so children and young people with SEND and their parent carers get the right support at the right time.

- Have a strategy in place for how we will spend the High Needs Funding given to Bristol City Council. This strategy will ensure we meet our statutory duties and achieve good outcomes for children and young people with SEND in a financially sustainable way. This is described in our **Safety Valve** agreement.



Priority 4: Inclusive educational provision

Develop more high-quality and inclusive educational provision.

What is our aim?

We want to have an education system where the majority of children and young people with SEND can thrive in their local mainstream early years setting, school or college. We want children and young people who need a place in specialist provision to be able to access this quickly and close to their community. We want all of our education settings to be skilled and confident that they can meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

What is going well?

Many educational settings provide high quality effective support for children and young people with SEND. As of January 2024, 91% of resource bases and 91% of special schools in Bristol were rated by Ofsted to be good or outstanding.

The support and guidance that schools receive from teams is seen to be helpful. Some teams such as the Inclusion Hub are changing the way they do things to provide support earlier to educational settings. Parent carers rate the support they receive from social care positively.

Why is this a priority?

Support from educational settings for children and young people with SEND is inconsistent and sometimes needs are not being met effectively or at the earliest possible stage. This means that more children and young people with SEND require specialist placements or Alternative Learning Provision. There are not enough local specialist places currently to cope with the demand and developing local sufficiency would reduce our spend on much more costly independent specialist settings.

How will we know if we have improved?

We will know we have improved if we have sufficient places locally to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who require a specialist placement. This will mean that fewer children and young people have to travel long distances to go to school or will need to go to independent special schools. Mainstream schools will have the skills and understanding needed to meet the needs of the majority of children and young people's SEND. Families will say they are confident and satisfied with the support being given.

What are we going to do?

- Strengthen our support offer to educational settings to improve their **work with children and young people with SEND** including supporting schools' understanding of the graduated response, ordinarily available provision and reasonable adjustments.
- Ensure we have the right mix and level of provision to meet the needs of all children and young people. To do this we will create sufficient specialist and ALP placements locally, (as part of an inclusive approach), to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. This will include children and young people who historically have been hard to place.
- Introduce a new approach to providing funding to schools to support children and young people with SEND who do not have EHCPs.
- Develop outreach support to schools to support them to meet the emerging learning needs of children and young people that need support.
- Agree how we will support educational settings to meet the needs of children and young people with EHCPs who have social emotional and mental health difficulties working in partnership with key agencies and other local areas.
- Agree and share an improvement plan for Alternative Learning Provision (ALP) in the city (including settings which children and young people attend part time and may not be registered with Ofsted) based on **national good practice guidance** and the findings of our SEND self-evaluation.
- Make sure processes for applying for and receiving funding are simple, timely and transparent and allow education settings to plan ahead.
- Make sure that SEND support and provision are provided at the right time and make a difference for children and young people who are unable to go to school or ALP and need different arrangements.
- Create ways for educational settings and MATs to share good practice and identify and implement ways to incentivise strong inclusive practice in education settings. This should include a focus on evidence based best practice within and beyond the city.



Priority 5: Preparing for the future

Prepare our children and young people with SEND for changes in their lives and their futures so they can reach their potential.

What is our aim?

We want children and young people with SEND to be prepared and feel ready to take their next steps at every stage. This means encouraging them to be as independent as possible from the start, planning transitions well and having an understanding and effective approach to helping young people prepare for adulthood including, wherever possible, employment, independent living and participation in the community.

What is going well?

Around 2/3 of the children and young people with SEND we talked to as we developed this strategy told us that the adults in their lives help them prepare for changes in the future including when they leave school and are adults, however 1/3 told us this only happens sometimes. Some educational settings prepare children and young people well for transition to their next settings. Services such as the Sensory Support Service focus on developing children and young people's independence. We recognise the need for improvements to transitions between children's and adults' health services and are investing in capacity to support this.

Why is this a priority?

Transitions between some educational settings and between children's and adults' services can be challenging. We don't yet have a clear and well communicated offer for young people with SEND once they reach 16, 18 and 19 which describes the services and support they can expect and might need. Not all young people with SEND are referred to services which can support them to find employment and learn new skills when this would be helpful. The new approach to identifying and planning for young people who may need support from adult social care from the Young Adults' Team is not yet fully embedded.

How will we know if we have improved?

We will know we have improved if transitions between educational settings and between children's and adults' services are a positive experience for families. Children and young people will increasingly feel prepared for their next steps as there has been a focus on their independence. The local offer for young people with SEND at 16, 18 and 19 will be clear about their options and the pathways into employment, further education and independent living.

What are we going to do?

- Improve children and young people's experiences of moving between educational settings including into college or post-16 and between children's and adults' services through well thought out transition planning.
- Be clear how we will help young people with SEND prepare for being an adult and being as independent as possible. This includes getting around, working, living independently and being active in their community.
- Ensure that annual reviews from Year 9 have a clear focus on preparation for adulthood and Education Health and Care Plans are updated in a timely way annually to reflect young people's changing aspirations and needs.
- Improve the range of options available to young people with SEND at 19 once they leave education (particularly if they are leaving a special school).





Priority 6: Feeling safe and included

Work together so children and young people with SEND feel safe and included in their educational settings and their communities.

What is our aim?

We want our children and young people with SEND to feel safe, valued, visible and included in their educational settings and communities. School should be a place of belonging and joy for all children and we want our children to feel part of their local community.

What is going well?

Many schools pride themselves on the inclusive welcome they give children and young people with SEND and their families. We know that children and young people with SEND take part in a lot of activities in the community. Families are positive about the help that social care give to some children to enable this to happen. Community youth and play providers support and challenge each other to be inclusive and ensure that children and young people can participate in activities.

Why is this a priority?

Families would like more support and more choice about the activities and short breaks on offer. Parent carers also worry about whether housing on offer is suitable for children and young people with SEND. Children and young people have told us that they don't feel as safe as they should in their school or in the community and would like to feel understood and valued.

How will we know if we have improved?

We will know we have improved if children and young people with SEND tell us they are able to participate in a range of activities and feel safe in their local communities. Fewer children and young people with SEND are being bullied in their local schools, and they will be satisfied with their school's response if bullying does happen. Our city has a common understanding and language around inclusion. Awareness of and community support for SEND will improve so that children and young people so they feel heard, valued and understood.

What are we going to do?

- Make sure our Local Offer is easy to access, navigate and includes up-to-date and accessible information about community activities and resources available to children and young people with SEND.
- Provide community short breaks based on the experiences of children and young people and parent carers who use them and make sure we understand how helpful they are to families.
- Work with all children and young people to understand diversity and what they can do to ensure their peers with SEND feel valued and a sense of belonging in education settings using resources such as The Brainbow.
- Increase the range of community activities available (including targeted and inclusive sessions) and make sure different groups of children and young people with SEND can take part.
- Ask Keep Bristol Safe Partnership to agree a strategy and actions to keep children and young people with SEND safe in our communities.
- Set up an anti-bullying good practice group for education settings and encourage schools to take part in the Healthy Schools Programme.
- Improve the understanding amongst our children and young people of positive friendships and the importance of peer support.
- Increase opportunities to volunteer in communities to make sure enough support is available for children and young people with SEND.
- Improve the Council's approach to working with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations, learning from the health-led approach already in place.

How will we make sure that this strategy makes a difference?

Leaders responsible for SEND in Bristol meet regularly at the SEND and Alternative Provision Executive Board and will support and challenge each other to deliver this strategy. The Board will oversee our progress against the strategy through the detailed Action Plan. They will make sure it has a positive impact by collecting information about our services and hearing the voices of our children and young people with SEND and their families.

We will share our progress on our **Local Offer** and invite children and young people with SEND, parent carers and professionals to let us know what difference the strategy is making to them. We will also invite people to challenge us to do better if things are not changing in the way they need to.

Documents available in other formats:

You can request alternative formats of this document by contacting: inclusion@bristol.gov.uk



We experience many of the same challenges and struggles as other children and young people.



We want, and have the right to, the same opportunities in our lives.



give us a voice



We have the same hopes and aspirations for our future as all children and young people in Bristol.

