



Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
Clinical Commissioning Groups



Bristol Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Written Statement of Action Update: November 2020

Background

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a joint inspection of Bristol Local Area in autumn 2019. The inspection is designed to check how well health, education and social care partners work together to identify and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

- Bristol's [inspection letter](#) identified five 'significant concerns' which meant we had to produce a 'Written Statement of Action' (WSoA) that sets out our plans to tackle all the areas of weakness set out in the inspection letter and what we hope to have improved at the end of each four month period.
- The end of each of these periods is called a 'milestone'. Advisors from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England (NHSE) meet with leaders from Bristol at each of these milestones to check on progress and report back to Ofsted and CQC. The first of these milestones was July 2020 and the progress report for July is available on Bristol's [Local Offer website](#).
- The second monitoring meeting with DfE and NHSE was on the 16th November. This report gives a summary of progress from July to November.

Summary of progress made against the November Milestones

The Written Statement of Action (WSoA) identifies 66 milestones to be achieved by November 2020. Of these, 89% have been achieved or are on track to be achieved during December / January:

- 33 (50%) have been largely achieved
- 26 (39%) have been partially achieved and are on track for December / January
- 7 (11%) have not yet been achieved and there are ongoing issues preventing achievement by the end of this year

The DfE and NHSE advisers were really pleased with the way partners across the local area are working together and described the progress made as “really encouraging”. However we know that there is still much to do before parent carers and children and young people with SEND see improvements in their day to day experiences of Bristol’s SEND system.

The following pages provide an overview of progress in November 2020 with actions completed, delayed actions and actions not yet achieved.

If you would like more explanation or information on anything on the actions, please contact BristolLocalOffer@bristol.gov.uk

Priority 1: Accountability

Actions completed

Data

We now have reliable data and evidence which is used by partnership leaders to check progress against the Written Statement of Action

- Managers are using high quality data reports to plan for peaks in demand and monitor statutory processes
- Analysis of data, including parent carer feedback is used to make improvements
- A local data set is updated monthly and available on-line for public scrutiny

Joint commissioning

- A shared commissioning framework has been agreed and is part of the local NHS Sustainability and Transformation Plan

Complaints

- Complaints processes have been improved and complaints being responded to in a timely way.
- Issues raised are added to staff training so that poor service and mistakes are not repeated

Delayed actions

Clear Funding Arrangements

- We have not yet published the criteria for allocating funding because we are currently consulting on the criteria for a new High Needs Block (SEND Funding) matrix.
- A video explaining Education Health and Care Plan funding is available on the Local Offer

Joint commissioning

- Contracts will be reviewed within the new commissioning framework
- BAME research almost complete and will be used to plan services to meet need

Priority 2: Identification and Assessment

Actions completed

Training for education settings

- There are regular SENDCo communications and best practice information is shared

- Early Years SEND training is in place
- Health training for education settings is in place
- Schools are receiving training on identification and support for social, emotional and mental health needs in children and young people

Graduated Response

- The Bristol Support Plan is widely used by education settings
- Ordinarily Available Provision guidance developed and being consulted on

Early Identification

- Early Identification register and disabled children's register are aligned

Delayed actions

Wider Workforce Training

- The workforce development plan has been agreed and will be rolled out from the spring term 2021

Sharing Health Visitor information

- A system has been developed to enable the sharing of data from Health Visitor assessments. This is due to be rolled out in 2021

Shared Outcomes Framework

- The roll out of the framework was delayed, but a re-launch is now underway and training for staff across the partnership is in place from January to March

Actions not achieved

Health Visitor Reviews

- The target uptake of 2yr old Health Visitor reviews has not been met due to Covid-19

Community paediatrics transformation

- This was delayed due to Covid-19 but is now underway

Priority 3: Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)

Actions completed

EHCP Quality

- QA Framework is in place and EHC Plan audits are happening
- Quality Assurance (QA) activity is informing staff training
- A single template is in place for health contributions to assessments and a professional portal is in development to support a joined up assessment

Timeliness

- ECH Plan timeliness is improving month on month
- The 2019 backlog of EHC needs assessment requests cleared

Delayed actions

- The improved EHC template that has been co-designed with parents and professionals across the partnership is being consulted on and roll out planned from January 2021
- The statutory letters have been rewritten in plain English and will be used from January 2021
- The Annual Review processes and paperwork have been reviewed and improved and these will be rolled out from January 2021
- Joint operational arrangements with health will be in place from January.
- We do not yet have the data needed to effectively monitor SEN staff retention and sickness levels, but this is in development
- Partnership wide quality assurance audits are planned from January
- There are still have some Education Psychologist (EP) vacancies, but the timeliness of EP reports has improved

Priority 4: Inclusion

Actions completed

Specialist Provision

- The review of Alternative Learning Provision and resource bases has happened and the findings will be used to plan more effective use of these provisions

Transitions

- Support from Early Years to the end of reception year is now consistent and there is a clear transition path from reception year to year 1
- The health autism pathway and autism hub developed
- The Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care transition pathway is now supported by robust data

Delayed actions

Inclusion

- The Belonging in Education Strategy is out for consultation
- Toolkits for education staff and an education portal are in development
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) aware training is being rolled out
- A SEND school improvement lead is due to take up this new post in January 21

- Risk register for Autism and Learning Difficulties to be rolled out with CAMHS Jan.21

Actions not achieved

Covid-19 has impacted on:

- additional specialist places
- attendance and exclusion mapping and a co-produced assessment tool

Priority 5: Relationship with Parents

Actions completed

Local Offer

- We have successfully raised awareness and increased the use of the Local Offer website (90% increase in hits since August 2020)

Delayed actions

Parent Carer Survey

- Decision taken to defer autumn parent carer survey until January to improve likelihood of greater response rate
- Survey questions have been agreed with parent carers

Actions not achieved

Co-production Charter and training of Local Area leaders

- Co-production workshops were delayed due to Covid-19 but the first took place for partnership leaders in early December
- This will be followed by a co-produced programme of workshops / training for all staff in 2021
- The workshops will lead to the co-production and publication of Bristol's co-production charter later in 2021

Improvement Headlines

Clear information for parent carers

- Bristol's Local Offer website is greatly improved and includes helpful information for [young people](#), and [families](#).
- Website 'hits' have increased by 90% since August
- The Local Offer now has a [Facebook](#) page, which is updated daily and reaches over 3000 people per month
- The Facebook page includes videos e.g. one about the new Top Up funding consultation to help families understand the process.
- There is also a fortnightly community newsletter for parent carers to sign up to
- Guidance has been drafted on what should be 'ordinarily available' in all schools to support children and young people with additional educational needs. This is being consulted on and will then be published so parent carers, as well as schools, understand about the provision available without the need for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or additional funding.
- Work is also going on to make sure the allocation of High Needs Block (SEND) funding is clear and fair. A document has been developed, which sets out the criteria for the next level of school based support in the SEND Code of Practice – often called 'Top Up' funding. This document is also out for consultation and the new process will be rolled out in 2021.
- We have recently published the first [set of data](#) relating to statutory processes. This will be updated monthly. The published data set will be extended over the next year in response to feedback and as our confidence in the wider data increases.

Improving the EHC Plan process

The EHC Plan and Process improvement work is called the 'Time for Change' project and has five areas of focus:

- Co-designing a new EHCP template
- Improving children and young people's voice
- Improving professional contributions through a new Professional IT Portal

- Improving family access to their children's SEND files through a Family Portal
- Improving annual review – process and paperwork

Five multi-agency working groups, each including parent carers have been meeting over the past few months, co-designing and testing new ways of working and the results of this work are being brought together now:

- The draft proposed EHCP template is going through final testing
- The working group have designed a matrix to support families and schools to obtain the child and young person's voice. All children and young people will be asked five key outcomes questions at the start of the needs assessment or annual review process. This will link directly into the new EHC plan template and can be visual as well as in words.
- Children and young people and their families' hopes, dreams, strengths and aspirations will be obtained from a person centred planning meeting and / or directly from the child's voice. To support this, three days of Person Centred Planning (PCP) training took place this autumn with staff from across the local area. The training is also available on-line. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and the PCP training is being embedded in EHCNA processes.
- The child's voice will be shared through a 'professional' portal' so that professionals all have the same information on which to base their contribution to the needs assessment. This means that the family will only provide their story once.
- A family portal is also in development. Twenty parent carers attended several workshops and their feedback is helping to ensure the portal uses family friendly language and is easy to use. This will enable parent carers to access their child's EHCP files and documents on-line and see the progress of the EHC process.
- Work has almost finished on improving annual review paperwork, rolling out training for staff in the SEND team and in schools that will improve the quality of annual reviews and thereby the final EHC plan.

All of these changes will need everyone involved in EHCPs and annual reviews to be trained and supported in the new ways of working. So the new ways of working will rolled out steadily from January to June 2021:

- January 2021: The new Annual Review package, including training will be rolled out with schools: paperwork, statutory duty, person centred planning meetings, improved timeliness

- March 2021: Launch the new EHC plan template, children and young people voice matrix and new Professional Portal. A new suite of letters will also be available
- June 2021: Family Portal introduction. This has a later start date so we can make sure that the other parts of the new system are all working properly and allow plenty of time for full testing to try to make sure any teething troubles have been sorted out before launching with parent carers.

Additionally, a pilot of Joint Assessment Meetings (JAM) with the child/young person/ family/ SENDCo/ Education Psychologist/ SEND Caseworker, started in October 2020. For those EHC Needs Assessment (EHCNA) requests where JAM cannot be offered, an Assessment Coordinator is being allocated at the triage stage and is offering to meet families to discuss the assessment process, and obtain their responses to the EHC outcomes questions.

Overdue EHC Needs Assessments and plans from 2019 and Timeliness in 2020

- To clear the overdue cases from 2019, SEND assessment coordinators have been working on a larger proportion of overdue cases than new Needs Assessments.
- This was recognized as a fair and sensible approach by Bristol's DfE adviser, given the volume of backlog cases and the length of time some families have been waiting.
- This means that, although timeliness has improved, we won't see the full effect of improved timeliness until the number of overdue cases is reduced to a level that lets the team to increase the balance of new needs assessments being worked on.
- We are on track to have cleared the 2019 overdue cases by the end of December.

We now have confidence in our data reliability, and have published a statutory [data set on the Open Data website](#). The data is updated monthly, so that service users can hold the council to account for our performance. Central Government publishes the annual figures for all local authority areas in May each year, so we will be able to publish a comparative (benchmarked) report for 2020, following the data release in 2021.