



Bristol Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Written Statement of Action Update – August 2020

Background

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out a joint inspection of Bristol Local Area between the 30th of September and 4th October 2019 and the inspection findings were detailed in a letter published by Ofsted in December 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' and required us to produce a 'Written Statement of Action' (WSOA) that explains how we plan to improve on all the areas of weakness set out in the inspection letter.
- We had already started working on many of the areas of weakness. The WSoA helps us to bring all the improvement activity together and make sure health, education and care partners across Bristol are joined up and working really well with each other, and with parents and carers, towards the same goals.
- Parents' and carers' views and ideas were included in our WSoA, which was signed off by the multi-agency, SEND improvement board at the end of February and sent to Ofsted in early March.
- Ofsted wrote to us on the 19th March to tell us they thought our WSoA shows that we are all committed to improve all the areas of concern. The [WSOA and Ofsted's letter](#) are published on the council's website.

We have also set up a [page on the Local Offer](#) to keep parents and carers updated about the inspection and next steps. This page also includes a plain English version of the WSoA.

What happens next...

- Bristol will have a full re-visit from Ofsted and CQC about 18 months after the inspection to check whether we have made the improvements in our plan.
- Our WSoA sets out 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' and advisors from the Department for Education (DfE) and NHS England 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.

Summary of progress made against the July Milestones

The Covid-19 pandemic meant that we didn't make as much progress as we had planned, but, as we were already working on many of the improvement actions before the lock down in March, good progress was made against most of the July milestones.

- 75% of the (more than 50) actions set out in the WSoA were achieved by July
- 13% were partly achieved
- 12% (6 actions) were delayed or paused due to Covid-19.

On the 9th July, DFE and NHS England advisers met with leaders from health and the council and the chair of Bristol's Parent Carer Forum and their note of meeting stated that:

'Despite the disruption caused by Covid, the local area has made good progress in implementing the WSoA during the past 3 months'.

'In the current Covid context, progress to date with the WSoA has been commendable. The focus has been on those areas that can be undertaken well during this period. Local SEND leaders across the statutory agencies are working effectively together and there are encouraging signs of wider involvement and engagement of education providers and parents/carers. Although the WSoA has only been in place for approximately three months progress in addressing the five priorities is well underway, with systems emerging to evaluate the impact of actions and a strong commitment to embed an enduring inclusive culture for CYP with SEND across the City'.

While we are pleased that our work to improve the areas of weakness has been recognised, we are very aware that we still have a very long way to go and most children and young people with SEND or their families will not yet notice any difference.

We ran a parent carer survey in the spring and one for children and young people. Many families reported positive experiences of SEND services in Bristol, but too many families continue to have poor experiences.

The [summary findings](#) from these surveys are published on the Local Offer. We are using what we have been told to learn what we still need to do to improve and will run another survey in the autumn, and twice a year, every year.

The following page provides a visual overview of progress in July 2020.

- Green means the action was completed
- Amber slightly delayed
- Red not achieved.

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

Bristol Local Area SEND Written Statement of Action - progress against July 2020 Milestones

Priority 1 – Accountability

Governance

We have a SEND Partnership Group and SEND Improvement Board and all partners are working together

Performance / data

-Data now reliable and being used to know how well we are doing

-EHCP processes closely checked by service managers and at boards and by elected members

-Research project started to understand BAME SEND data

Roles and responsibilities

-School SENDCo conference
-Weekly bulletins to schools and meetings with Director Education and Skills giving clear messages to school leaders

Decision Making

SEND funding review started

Joint-commissioning Plan

-Covid-19 delayed work with health on joint-commissioning plan.

-Partners meeting in July to agree priorities

Co-produce experience

measures with parent carers. Bristol Parent Carer Forum chair stepped down and due to Covid-19 this work had to be paused

Priority 2 – Identification and Assessment

Training for education settings

-SENDCo briefings and work with school clusters

- SEND training programme developed for Early Years settings and schools

Graduated Response

Evidence that more schools are using the Bristol Support Plan

EHCP Shared Outcomes

Local Area shared outcomes framework launched and training for all partners started

Health training offers

To education workforce paused due to Covid-19. Looking at developing on-line training

SEMH

Covid-19 delayed project but now back on track – Education Psychology Service working with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

'First Call' Service

Refocused temporarily to support families of children with EHCPs during Covid-19

Two year old Health Visitor

reviews Healthy Child Programme paused due to Covid-19

Community paediatrics

transformation paused due to Covid-19

Priority 3 – EHCP

SEND Team Capacity

-Recruited 24 new staff and being trained

-Restructured team - now dedicated Assessment Team

-Good supervision and performance management

-Standard operating procedures written so practice consistent

EHCP Processes

-‘Time for Change’ multi-agency project working with parent carers to redesign and improve EHCP template and statutory processes

-Standard letters for parents rewritten

-new guidance written

-Single template developed for health professionals to contribute to EHCPs

-More Education Psychologists (EPs) to speed up EP reports

Quality Assurance (QA)

-Framework agreed and EHCP audits started. Other QA tools being developed

-Data evidencing volume of EHCPs finalised and timeliness increasing month on month

Sustainable model for health

contributions in development but implementation delayed due to Covid-19

Priority 4 – Inclusion

Specialist Provision

-schools helped to identify additional specialist places for September

School Improvement Offer

-Reviewed the way Bristol supports school improvement to enhance offer including SEN

- working group led by Bristol Early Years Teaching School and Teaching & Learning Consultants for reading

- Draft of the ‘Ordinarily Available Provision’ for pupils with SEND written and out for consultation with schools.

Transitions

-Early years to school: working group established and research into issues started

-post-16: 14-25 service set up and linked to preparation for adulthood team

Attendance and Exclusion

- Task group meeting. Inclusion is critical to Belonging Strategy and Covid 19 recovery plan.

- Transition document written as guidance for pupils returning to school in September

Autism

Work to improve transition from children’s to adult services on hold due to Covid-19

Priority 5 – Relationship with Parents

Parent Carer Survey

- Parent Carer and young people survey undertaken. 370 parents and 60 young people took part.

-Findings shared to inform QA work and SEND team improvements.

-Reports published on Local Offer

Co-produced Local Offer

Website Development Plan

-Due to Covid-19, unable to meet parent carers to make an informed decision for the development, so focused on promoting the website.

- Revised plan to engage the whole community in the Local Offer website through promotion.

Co-production Charter and

training of Local Area leaders

-Workshop arranged for March cancelled due to Covid-19

-Development work stalled due to Bristol Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) chair stepping down.

-Interim BPCF chair 1 day per week from 1st May and planning strategic co-production developments.

Improvements to two of our weakest areas

Data reliability

One of the areas where we have seen the greatest improvement is SEND data reliability:

- It has taken many months of work to ensure the management information system is fit for purpose and the data held is accurate.
- We are confident that the data sent to the DfE for the 2019 calendar year (SEN2 data, which is published nationally) is accurate
- We now have the processes in place to make sure our data is accurate in the future.

Now that we have accurate, reliable data, a full data set is in development:

- EHCP data reports are readily available,
- This data is used by service and team managers to manage performance and make sure we have the right number of staff working in the right way
- There is also a monthly performance clinic, chaired by the Head of Service and a bi-monthly performance board, chaired by the Executive Director, People.
- We are planning to make data publicly available on the Local Offer in the autumn and will be working on different formats (from detailed to 'easy read' infographics) to make it accessible to all those interested.

EHC plan statutory process

- The SEND team employed 24 additional staff at the beginning of the year.
- The team has been restructured to improve the way they work
- All team members are going through a full training programme, including training on the SEND Code of Practice.
- All processes and ways of working have been reviewed and are being improved to ensure that they are compliant with statutory duties and the team provide good customer service.
- Some of the pace of change slowed during March as all staff started to work from home to protect them from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- This quickly picked up again and performance has improved month by month, both in the number of plans being finalised and the percentage on time.
- Although face to face contact with parents, carers and children and young people had to stop due to Covid-19, regular communication with parents and carers has been happening staff are doing all they can to work closely with parents to make sure plans are co-produced.
- Meetings between parents, SEND team staff and schools are taking place on-line and Education Psychologists (EPs), the autism team and health professionals are doing assessments virtually wherever possible.
- To date Bristol has not had to class any Education Health and Care Needs Assessments as exceptions under the Department for Education's (DfE) Covid-19 modifications to guidance.
- In the seven months to the end of July 2020 a total of 495 EHC Plans had been finalised, compared to a total of 410 for the whole of 2019.

- The table on the next page shows the number of plans finalised increasing each month from 38 in January 2020 to 101 in July.
- At the start of 2020 the backlog of overdue cases was in excess of 450.
- By the end of July the backlog of cases from 2018 had been cleared and 73 remained from 2019.
- The aim is to have cleared the 2019 backlog by the end of this year.

Backlog and timeliness

- To clear the backlog, SEND assessment coordinators are splitting their work on the basis of 2/3 backlog cases and 1/3 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 increase the balance of new needs assessments being worked on.

The table on the next page shows the percentage of plans on time month by month, reaching 27.7% in July, giving an average timeliness of 17.5% over the first seven months of the year.

Councils are not required to publish this level of detail, but, now we have confidence in our data reliability, we plan to publish this information regularly 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 that data release in 2021.

EHC Plans issued 2020

Calendar month	New Requests Received	Number finalised EHC Plans in month	Number finalised EHC Plans in month (accumulative from Jan 2020)	New EHC Plans finalised including within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)			Number finalised (accumulative from January 2020)
				Number finalised EHC Plans in month <i>(DFE cohort - excludes those with a decision at panel 2 NOT to proceed and then a plan issued)</i>	Number finalised EHC Plans in month within 20 weeks	% finalised EHC Plans in month within 20 weeks	
Jan-20	65	38	38	37	4	10.8%	37
Feb-20	62	51	89	48	4	8.3%	85
Mar-20	84	50	139	50	2	4.0%	135
Apr-20	52	77	216	76	11	14.5%	211
May-20	55	81	297	80	13	16.3%	291
Jun-20	71	97	394	94	23	24.5%	385
Jul-20	54	101	495	101	28	27.7%	486
Aug-20							
Sep-20							
Oct-20							
Nov-20							
Dec-20							
Total 2020	443	495		486	85	17.5%	

Autumn Priorities

- Establishing a full set of data and ensuring we are collecting all the information we need to understand and monitor performance against all the key performance indicators set out in the written statement of action
- Improving transparency - establish routine publication of data
- New fortnightly community newsletter for SEND
- Continue with phase 1 development for increasing specialist provision and development of long term strategy
- Embed the Quality Assurance framework
 - greater focus on the quality of EHCPs alongside timeliness
 - introduce ways to measure parent carers' experience as they progress through the statutory process
- Improve co-ordination of all engagement activity with parent carers and children and young people
- Time for Change Project: five projects to co-produce improvements to statutory processes:
 - the EHCP template
 - child and young person's voice
 - professionals' portal for contributions
 - family portal
 - and annual reviews
- Belonging Strategy: a wide reaching approach to inclusion and a key part of Bristol's Covid 19 'recovery to reform' plan, which aims to minimise the double disadvantage likely to be experienced by vulnerable children and young people.
- Co-production training and development
- Joint-Commissioning Plan