

## **Statement: PS10.01**

**Cabinet – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020**

**Re: Agenda item 10 – Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency and Capital Proposals**

**Statement submitted by: Jen Smith**

The SEND Sufficiency & Capital Proposals report states that there are currently 190 children and young people with EHCPs entitling them to specialist provision. It says: 'The council have not got spaces for these young people as the current SEND capacity is full.'

This is nearly 200 Bristol children right now with no school place and all because they have special educational needs and or a disability. Imagine a whole year 7 of mainstream pupils with nowhere to go in this September term, no school, not even in a temporary building, because this is what we have here.

The proposals go on to say that 'the council will fail in its statutory obligation to provide them appropriate education provision.'

This is newspeak. The council won't fail, it has already failed and this is an issue Bristol Send parents and carers have been raising for years. What we have here is institutional disability discrimination. It's systemic barriers to education created by Bristol City Council and education officers now spinning words to detract from this fact.

In a question to Marvin Rees at Full Council in July 2019, I said: 'Special school places in the city are of massive concern, with a historic trail of worry through Council and forums about provision in the city needing to be 'local' and East Central being of concern for several years.'

There hasn't been and continues to be a lack of concern and public discussion about the current numbers of children and young people who are out of education due to a lack of special school places in Bristol.

There are potentially 250 more pupils coming into this situation next year, adding to the chaos.

At Cabinet in July, more millions was sunk into funding Bristol's Alternative Provision, a spend that is incredibly high due to unacceptable numbers of Fixed Term Exclusions, poor inclusion in some Bristol schools, Send pupils being forced into inappropriate mainstream due to a lack of special school places and deliberate off rolling of Send pupils by mainstream schools who do not want them.

I expect this ask to be passed through Cabinet because the additional places are desperately needed, but again, the human cost behind these numbers is not considered and Bristol families are continuing to suffer.

More robust questioning should be asked by Cabinet members about these high spends for SEND which are firefighting projects rather than a reflection of long term strategic direction over the years, which has resulted in pupils having no access to education, no access to qualifications and whose future has been impacted by the systemic barriers Bristol City Council continues to put up.