

## **Statement: PS13.01**

**Cabinet – 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

**Re: Agenda item 13 - Quarterly Performance Progress Report (Q3 - 2020/21)**

**Statement submitted by: Jen Smith**

Bristol City Council's Quarterly Performance Progress Report states under 'Fair and Inclusive' that 'the percentage of Education Health Care Plans that are issued within timescales continues to improve steadily. Early indications are that this will continue to improve into Q4.'

This achievement, highlighted in a heartening green colour, shows that 19.3 per cent of EHCPs were completed on time.

But what this actually shows is a continuing celebration of failure, with more than 80 per cent of EHCPs not completed on time and therefore unlawful.

This somewhat disingenuous presentation of data does not include Quality Control information, nor how many EHCPs will be taken to SENDIST.

None of this can be described as particularly 'fair' nor 'inclusive'. Three years' after it took me a year to get two EHCPs, only now lawfully completing 20 per cent on time is dismal. And, not even making the 20 per cent agreed with Ofsted and the CQC is dismal on dismal.

I'm still trying to get clear facts about Bristol City Council's spend on barristers against parents appealing assessment and finalised plans at SENDIST, something which is predicably difficult.

So far, I've found that a minimum of £3,330 was spent on Local Authority engaged barristers against parents who were trying to navigate the EHCP process last year. How wonderful for the Local Authority to have this time and money available to throw around. Although Appendix A in Agenda Item 9 for this same meeting shows that they don't.

This paper shows a High Needs Block (HNB) in-year overspend of £8.2m, with top-up funding being a 'major area of budget pressure'.

Bristol City Council is failing to get to grips with the High Needs Block overspend. It doesn't get to set weak, unlawful targets because it is SO bad and then colour them in green – even when the full 20 per cent target has not been met.

The now favourite refrain of Education Transformation Programme and Belonging Strategy still shows no accountability or responsibility at the very heart of the Bristol SEND Crisis.

This is a mess further obstructed and compounded by education officers withholding important independent findings from People Scrutiny Commission, Bristol Schools Forum and Bristol residents (by delaying the publication of the outcome of the Alternative Learning Provision Review). It is also aided by a political campaign team hiding important questions raised by Send parents and carers to Mayor Marvin Rees on Facebook.

Ofsted and the CQC stated in their inspection that 'The lack of accountability of leaders at all levels' was a significant concern. These concerns are still valid 18 months later.