



## Bristol Health and Wellbeing Board

Title of Report:	<b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Overview of Progress against the Written Statement of Action</b>
Author (including organisation):	Alison Hurley, BCC Director Education and Skills
Date of Board meeting:	<b>20<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b>
Purpose:	Oversight and assurance

### 1. Executive Summary

Summary of progress made against the SEND Written Statement of Action and outline of the next phase in the Local Area's SEND improvement journey.

### 2. Purpose of the Paper

To provide the Board with assurance of the progress made in addressing the five areas of significant weakness identified by Ofsted and CQC inspectors in the Local Area SEND inspection September/October 2019.

### 3. Background and evidence base

The [Local Area SEND inspection](#) identified the following significant weaknesses, requiring a [Written Statement of Action \(WSOA\)](#), approved by Ofsted in March 2020:

- The lack of accountability of leaders at all levels, including school leaders
- The inconsistencies in the timeliness and effectiveness of the local area's arrangements for the identification and assessment of children and young people with SEND
- The dysfunctional EHC plan process, and inadequate quality of EHC plans
- The underachievement and lack of inclusion of children and young people with SEND, including the high rates of persistent absenteeism and fixed-term exclusions
- The fractured relationships with parents and carers, lack of co-production and variable engagement and collaboration

Improvements are driven by the multi-agency SEND Partnership Group and progress monitored by the SEND Improvement Board. The Board meets bi-monthly and has an independent chair from the Local Government Association. DfE and NHSE advisers provide external scrutiny via four-monthly monitoring meetings with leaders from health, and the council and have been positive about the progress made throughout the monitoring period. The WSoA reached its final set of 36 milestones in July 2021. Of these 89% were achieved or on target. The development of a culturally competent commissioning framework and Joint Commissioning Strategy had been delayed but is now underway.

DfE and NHSE advisers summarised their feedback in their note of the July monitoring visit:

*'Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19 restrictions (with the first lockdown coinciding with the approval of the WSoA), the local area continues to make good progress in implementing improvements to the local SEND system. It is evident that work associated with the WSoA has both stimulated and been supported by other improvements across the broader SEND system in Bristol.'*

Strengths highlighted in the feedback were:

- Strength of partnership and leadership
- Much stronger emphasis on performance
- Good understanding of ourselves

- Parents: moved from being defensive to reaching out to parents
- Acknowledged and dealing with all issues

The capture and availability of accurate and comprehensive data has seen significant improvement, enabling robust performance oversight and management across the SEND system as well as the publication of an updated SEND chapter to the JSNA which will facilitate insight and agreement around commissioning priorities. Key Health improvements include:

Paediatrician waiting times: % seen within 18 weeks is now more consistent at around 60-70% - a good improvement on figures reported last year which were as low as 14.2%

2- 2.5 year health visitor reviews: uptake at Q1 2021 is 90%

Specialist Health Advisers for SEND in post since March to improve the consistency of health advice for EHC Needs Assessments

The window for the Ofsted / CQC 're-visit' is October 2021 to March 2022. During the re-visit, inspectors will assess whether sufficient progress has been made against the five areas of weakness identified in the 2019 inspection. If they determine that the Local Area is making insufficient progress in addressing any of the areas of significant weakness, it is for the DfE and NHS England to determine their next steps.

Bristol Local Area partners are aware that there is still a long way to go before Bristol's children and young people with SEND, and their families, have consistently good experiences of education, health and care. A SEND Partnership Plan is in development and will sit across the four pillars of the 'Bristol Belonging Strategy' supporting the One City Plan and ensuring SEND is firmly embedded in Bristol. The plan will continue to tackle the areas of weakness identified in the inspection and include other areas that were not highlighted in the inspection findings, but that parent carers have told us are important to them. Further DfE and NHSE meetings have been arranged to continue an overview of progress until the re-visit.

#### **4. Community/stakeholder engagement**

Partners have engaged with parents and carers and children and young people throughout the SEND improvement journey, including co-production of the redesign of Bristol's statutory processes (Time for Change project) and development of the [Children and Young People's Outcomes Framework](#). A SEND Partnership Engagement Development Officer was appointed to improve consistency and co-ordination of engagement and co-production and extend the reach to those whose voices are seldom heard.

Knowing that coproduction and building trust with parent carers was needed from the earliest point, a project was commissioned to bring the Local Offer to life, hear directly from parent carers what they would like to see and help build inclusion and ensure children and families are linked with all that's available in the city and their local community. Through coproduction the FLORA Team was developed (FLORA stands for Family Local Offer Resources Advice). It operates proactively and has received positive feedback from parent carers and professionals alike.

Using data provided from the Early Years Team, FLORA has created an Early Identification Register. This will help us forecast need and plan future services that will provide what families need when they need it.

FLORA also processes and issues parent carer requests to join the Disabled Children's Register, thereby fulfilling the legal requirement to keep a voluntary register of children and young people from birth to 18 years old, who live in Bristol and have a disability or special

educational need. The Register helps the council and local health services understand how many children and young people with special educational needs live in Bristol and the types of needs they have and thus forecast for support and services

## **5. Recommendations**

All Board members to continue to actively contribute to and support the Belonging Strategy and SEND Partnership Plan.

## **6. City Benefits**

Ongoing improvements to the SEND system will benefit the 12000+ children and young people with SEND and their families, by improving inclusion, and reducing inequality.

## **7. Financial and Legal Implications**

## **8. Appendices**

none