



Title of Paper:	<b>Accelerated Progress Plan - update</b>
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Date of Board meeting:	<b>13<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>
Purpose:	information and discussion

## 1. Executive Summary

Between 30 September and 4 October 2019, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) jointly inspected the effectiveness of Bristol’s approach to implementing the special educational needs and disability (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014. The specific focus was on how effectively the local area identified the needs of children and young people with SEND, assessed and met those needs, and improved their education, health, and care outcomes. As a result of the inspection findings, Inspectors determined that a Written Statement of Action was required to address five areas of significant weakness:

1. The lack of accountability of leaders at all levels, including school leaders
2. 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
3. The dysfunctional EHC plan process, and inadequate quality of EHC plans
4. The underachievement and lack of inclusion of children and young people with SEND, including the high rates of persistent absenteeism and fixed-term exclusions
5. The fractured relationships with parents and carers, lack of co-production and variable engagement and collaboration.

Between 3 and 7 of October 2022 Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission reinspected Bristol to understand whether sufficient progress had been made in addressing each of the five areas of significant weakness. The revisit report found that the local area had made sufficient progress in addressing four of the five areas. It also told us that the difficult relationships with parents and carers found at the last inspection had continued and that this still affected the quality of co-production that takes place between area leaders and parent and carers. This Accelerated Progress Plan sets out how we aim to address this area of weakness and how Bristol’s local area SEND governance can assure itself and the Department for Education that progress is being made at a sufficient pace and delivering the necessary impact. We will also continue to make progress in all five areas identified in 2019 as requiring improvement. We continue to be passionate about improvements in this area and we are ambitious about what can be achieved for our children and young people.

## 2. Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of the paper is to provide the board with an assurance that the outstanding item from the Written Statement of Action is in flight and progress is being made to ensure relationships are being repaired, developed and future proofed. The report will outline how Bristol City Council and Bristol Parent Carer Forum are working together to co-produce impactful plans to improve the experience of stakeholders who are invested in SEND.

### 3. Background, evidence base, and what needs to happen

We are ambitious and want to reset relationships with our parents and carers. BCC and BNSSG ICB and our local area partners are jointly responsible for delivering this plan.

The plan sets out:

- Our vision for improvement and the values that will drive the required change
- The governance structure to provide strategic oversight of improvements
- The high priority actions we will take to address the weaknesses identified by inspectors and to work towards continuous improvement

- How we will measure progress and understand the impact of changes we are making

Improvement identified in this action plan will be delivered with operational oversight by the SEND Partnership Group. The SEND Improvement Board will monitor and will be accountable for overall progress.

The plan has been informed by three focus groups with parents and carers. A total number of 24 parents and carers attended the 3 focus groups alongside colleagues from education, health, and care. Feedback from Bristol parent carers and quotes from our children and young people are included in the plan.

This action-oriented plan links to the Bristol' Belonging in Education priorities:

1. Building trusting relationships
2. Learning from one another
3. Creating an effective structure.

Parents and carers tell us that improving trust and relationships across the local area goes hand in hand with developing SEND services and improving local area responses to statutory time frames and expectations. There has been significant improvement in SEND services, and we will continue to improve and monitor progress in our statutory processes.

In order for the Accelerated Progress Plan to be successful it was key that:

- The APP was developed in collaboration with parents / carers and key partners
- There was clear governance of the strategy to support and hold colleagues / partners to account; achieved via the SEND Partnership Group and SEND Improvement Board involvement
- There was Local Area commitment for delivery
- The plan underpins the Belonging Strategy intent
- The 4 themes are in line with service delivery and transformation priorities

There are four objectives in the plan:

#### **1. Formalised strategic parent carer forum (PCF) arrangements**

To have formal strategic parent carer forum arrangements in place that represent the diverse communities of Bristol. The parent carer forum will be working in collaboration with local area partners with agreed ways of working and incorporated into formal local area SEND governance.

#### **2. Co-production and communication with parents and carers**

There will be clear shared approaches to co-production, participation, engagement, and collaboration with parents and carers across the local area.

All future policy and service changes will give the opportunity for children and young people with SEND and parent carer representatives to be part of the process.

### **3. Listening to and working with parents to improve SEND services and the experiences of parents, carers and children**

The views and experiences of parents and carers are understood and, alongside available business intelligence, are used to improve the quality of SEND services

### **4. Workforce and culture**

Local area partners have embedded ways of working and continuous improvement arrangements that prioritise relationships with children with SEND and their families.

During the 6-month progress review meeting with the Department for Education BCC have been able to demonstrate progress against the majority of the actions within each objective. In May 2023, the Bristol Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) were formally appointed as the Bristol Parent Carer Forum to work alongside the Local Authority. To date, we have worked together alongside *Genuine Partnerships* to work on co-producing a charter to outline our ways of working as well as co-creating a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise our relationship. BPCF are also part of the governance structure to support, co-produce, influence and hold partners to account with the actions in the SEND partnership plan. BPCF colleagues attend both the SEND Partnership Board and the SEND Improvement Board co-chaired by the Executive Director for Children's and Education, Abi Gbago and Director of Performance and Delivery and named Director for SEND, Lisa Manson.

The co-production and communication targets have started before the APP came into fruition as BCC recognised that BPCF are integral to improving the SEND service. This includes improvements in our letters communicating with families and a review of the EHCP process. BPCF represent a broad and diverse demographic of families; their voice and perspective will be vital in making the necessary improvements.

Local area partners have embedded ways of working and continuous improvement arrangements that prioritise relationships with children with SEND and their families. Key actions regarding workforce and culture demonstrate that continuous professional development will be key to sustained change and growth across all local partners. Trauma informed practices are being disseminated across the area and informing commissioning processes; the LA is committed to developing trauma informed practices and learning from emerging and better practices from all partners.

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

Stakeholder engagement is fundamental to the success of the APP. The strengthening of the relationship with the BPCF, educational settings, health and children's social care will ensure sustainability of relationships thus positively impacting the lives of children, young people and their families.

#### **5. Recommendations**

To continue to support and actively engage with the Accelerated Progress Plan and wherever there are opportunities to further strengthen the relationship with local area partners and BPCF, to facilitate and advocate for this.

#### **6. City Benefits**

The APP has been designed to strengthen relationship and repair any fractured relationships with the BPCF. By working together and co-producing systems, processes, strategies, and action plans it will enable us to work together to remove any disproportionalities and inequalities that currently exist within the SEND system.

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

£28,000 contribution to support co-production work in addition to the £18,000 awarded to the BPCF