

Appendix A4 SEND Strategy Overview

Need for Change

Bristol City Council recognise that although there are pressures within the local systems of High Needs, children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) deserve to have better experiences to enrich their lives. As a local authority, our aim is to reform SEND services by listening to partners, leaders and families and implementing an effective plan, rapidly whilst creating a sustainable financial future for children, young people (CYP) and families.

We know to achieve a sustainable future it will take good partnership and leadership that is both ambitious and bold in its plans to reform SEND services in Bristol. Through genuine collaboration across Education, Health, Care and Finance we will be able to identify innovative and appropriate solutions to the ever-growing deficit within the dedicated schools grant (DSG). To tackle the deficit, it is important to understand that a multi-faceted approach is needed, SEND systems need to be consistent, high quality, integrated, co-produced, shared and financially sustainable. Bristol's approach is outcomes focused, evidence based and rooted in co-production.

We want to ensure our local offer meets the needs of all our children and young people with SEND, in the right provision, at the right time. This means working collaboratively across all phases from Early Years through to Post – 16 and then into adulthood. Support needs to be available to ensure early systematic identification of need, effective use of resources for children and young people in mainstream settings and equitable experiences for families. We value the voices of families, partners and most importantly CYP.

By galvanising the leadership through a city wide SEND Inclusion Strategy, Bristol City Council will be able to ensure there is full, unwavering support and commitment to address the high needs deficit. Our vision of genuine reform and improvement to services will enable us to successfully collaborate, innovate and change the future of SEND for the benefit of all CYP.

Strategy for Change

To be successful we must make decisions that require courage, creativity, and resilience. The scale of the problem is huge, but it is not insurmountable. Successful SEND systems require a culture of shared responsibility, accountability, and learning – underpinned by trust. We intend to build a system where good education outcomes and sustainable finances are balanced.

As outlined in our Safety Valve application and Deficit Management Plan our aim is to:

1. Create a SEND system where more CYP with SEND can remain in mainstream provision for longer, by providing schools with the support to strengthen practice and improve physical spaces.
2. Ensure we have the right mix and level of provision to meet the needs of all children and young people when a specialist place is required.
3. Design efficient and effective systems ensuring CYP with SEND receive timely support, and that schools receive the right level of funding to meet those needs.
4. Continue to build, strengthen, and sustain relationships with key stakeholders engaging them in genuine collaboration and co-design.

We will achieve this for Bristol by focusing on the following four themes, which have influenced our mitigations as outlined in our Safety Valve application.

Demand

- Focus on early identification and prevention – starting in early years working and with all of our partners,

- Target timebound funding into evidence and outcome-based interventions – to support more C&YP in mainstream schools,
- Provide supportive and challenging outreach services, and training to develop practice in schools,
- Provide families with the support to help their children become independent adults,
- Create a school improvement offer which supports schools to provide consistent and high quality ordinary available provision.

Sufficiency

- Build enough provision to meet current and future demand,
- Capital investment in mainstream schools to improve accessibility and inclusion (DfE Capital Investment Application Submitted)
- Reduce the need for out of authority placements and independent non-maintained special schools (INMSS)
- Create a flexible education estate that can adapt to changes in need.

Efficiency

- Improve the EHCP process speeding up time taken for assessments, plans and reviews,
- Align EHCP funding with decision making,
- Ensure effective use of High Needs Block funding,
- Improve quality and use of data for management performance and service planning,
- Implement a new operating model reducing case transfers and putting staff closer to children, young people, families, and carers.

Partnerships

- Coproduce and implement a city wide SEND Inclusion Strategy to improve partnership working joint/coordinated accountability, planning, commissioning, and delivery,
- Ensure effective joint governance of SEND improvement across the city improving accountability and speed of change,
- Co-produce services ensuring they are needs led.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Over the next 7 years more children and young people with EHCPs will be attending mainstream settings and receive an inclusive education.
2. Over the next 6 months, we will work with families, partners and young people to develop and publish our new co-produced local area SEND strategy.
3. We will work with partners and Bristol Parent and Carer Forum to complete our co-produced charter that will make clear what coproduction looks like. This will provide the basis for a refreshed approach to a way of working together for the benefit of children and young people with SEND.
4. In line with our 'Test and Learn' approach with Delivering Better Value we will support creative and dynamic approaches to retaining young people in quality mainstream provisions whilst meeting their needs and reducing the risk of exclusion and improving their educational outcomes.
5. Over the next 12 months, we will continue to develop an agreed rigorous and robust process following the non-statutory top-up funding consultation; and implement an Exceptional Needs Grant for children and young people in Bristol mainstream schools where their needs have been well identified and they are eligible.
6. We will co-design, with schools, a standard practice of excellence in supporting children and young people with SEND through LA-commissioned SEND School Improvement Officers.