

2021-24

Special educational needs and disabilities (**SEND**) and inclusion strategy



PARENT CARERS TOGETHER

Bournemouth Christchurch Poole



Clinical Commissioning Group



Foreword



BCP Council is committed to ensuring that all children and young people in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole are fulfilled, happy, resilient and included.

They are connected to their communities with an outstanding quality of life where everyone plays an active role. This vision supports the scale and ambition set out in 'Our Big Plan' for the BCP city area of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole to be one of the best coastal areas globally for people to live, work, invest, and play where children and young people can live, learn and grow up with the best life chances. As Councillor and Portfolio Holder for COVID Resilience, Public Health and Education, I am determined to make this a reality for our children and young people.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy sets out how the council is working with local partners to achieve our collective vision for children and young people with additional or special educational needs. Children, young people, and their parent carers have told us that it is important they experience inclusion in every aspect of their lives, are included in decisions about provision and services and that they realise their aspirations.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are some of our most vulnerable young residents and should be provided with opportunities and rights to achieve their potential. Local partners across the council, health services, education, voluntary sector and parent carers are working with children and young people and their families to deliver this plan, achieve our aspirations and make the improvements needed. We are committed to improving outcomes for children and young people with additional or special educational needs and we will report back to you regularly on progress.



1 Our vision for children and young people with SEND



Children and young people with special educational needs have high aspirations for their future. In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP area) we want to support all children and young people to enjoy their childhood and develop the skills, confidence and resilience to achieve their goal of a positive and successful adult life.

This strategy focuses on children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) including those who are placed in alternative provision (AP).

Our vision is that all children and young people with SEND have brighter futures, fulfilled lives and are part of their local communities:

- experiencing inclusion in every aspect of their lives
- achieving their full potential
- being partners, alongside their families, in developing provision and services.

This vision has been developed from what children and young people with SEND and their families have told us is important to them – complemented by our knowledge of the outcomes and experiences of children and young people with SEND in the BCP area.

This strategy provides an overview of how we will achieve our vision in close partnership with children and young people, parents and carers, early years settings, schools, colleges, health, the council, other local services and providers working together to improve the outcomes for children and young people.

2. National context



In 2014, the Children and Families Act was introduced to reform the delivery of support and services for children and young people with SEND. The reforms were ambitious – placing children and young people at the heart of the system.

In October 2019, the Commons Select Committee for Education stated that “implementation has been badly hampered by poor administration and a challenging funding environment in which local authorities and schools have lacked the ability to make transformative change”

The Select Committee reported that aside from the funding shortfall from central government, the key requirements now for improving services to children and young people with SEND will be to ensure there is a culture change of empowerment and inclusion across local authorities, schools, colleges and other settings to increase accountability within the system.

National policies and guidance documents have supported the development of our vision and strategy including:

- SEND Inspection Framework 2016
- Rochford Report 2016
- Care Act 2014
- Think Autism 2014.

This plan has been created during the very time that the world has been plunged into a new pandemic – COVID-19 – with severe and far reaching effects that cannot yet be fully known.

As partners, we have worked together to understand and respond to the specific needs of children and young people with SEND and their families. We are using this learning to inform service planning and delivery.

The last word on COVID-19 and its demographic and economic effect won't be written for many years, as the mass of data accumulates. There will be impacts on employment and employment patterns and living arrangements even in relatively well-off areas in pockets of deprivation. The inability of many children to access full time school as a result of successive lockdowns is expected to be reflected in an increasing attainment gap. The £1 million Family Investment Fund being made available by the council will help children and families make up lost ground and go some way to restore 'lost childhoods'. Historically pandemics have been agents of great change. It is too early to say what kind of change COVID-19 will bring, but change there will be, for no society comes through an event like this unscathed, and the effects of change will be felt for many years and decades from now.



3. Local context



BCP Council was formed on 1 April 2019, bringing together the preceding authorities of Bournemouth, Dorset (Christchurch area only) and Poole, creating a new single council, a single parent carer forum and significant change to partnership working across the area. Such a complex re-organisation of local government has not taken place anywhere in the UK since 1974.

This of course brought some challenges including bringing together three different service offers, policies, procedures and budgets in BCP Council and forming new partnerships, working relationships and ways of working. It also brought many new opportunities including sharing learning and expertise across the area, a renewed vision and drive to improve outcomes and the potential to achieve more across a larger area.

BCP Council has launched 'Our Big Plan' which sets out multiple projects to deliver big changes across our whole area and support the creation of new jobs, growth for businesses, and livelihoods for our families, creating vibrant communities and outstanding quality of life for our residents.

The vision aims to create an outstanding quality of life for all our children, young people, parents and carers.

One of the driving ambitions of the council's Big Plan is to ensure that the BCP city region becomes one of the best places in which children and young people can live, learn and grow up, with opportunities in their adult life to stay in the area after they leave school, whether to go to university, further education, residential settings or to train or work. This means supporting the health, wellbeing and development of children from birth, through their early years, right through their education and into adulthood.

Our joint strategic needs assessment (JSNA) for SEND identifies the following key challenges locally:

- changing child demographics including an increasing population of young people approaching 16 years old
- high levels of speech, language and communication needs
- increasing complexity of need
- a medical model culture which persists in some local approaches
- increasing demand on our statutory services across the continuum of need
- supporting greater inclusion within schools
- improved understanding of the impact on outcomes for those pupils with education, health and care plans (EHCPs)
- increasing confidence in our 'Local Offer'.

The challenges have informed the development of this strategy and the response to them is embedded within the SEND Learning and Improvement Plan (our partnership delivery plan), with the overall aim of ensuring all children and young people are fulfilled, happy, included, and resilient.





4. What children, young people tell us is important



This strategy is driven by what's important to children and young people with SEND. Some of the key issues that they told us about are in this strategy.

Here are some of the things they told us they need so they can achieve their aims when they are older:



Children and young people with SEND have high aspirations that they want to achieve in their future – from travelling the world, writing songs, to making a difference in their community and having their own home; they want to be doctors, footballers, carpenters, youth workers and DJs – and some aren't sure yet.

Children and young people with SEND also told us what needs to change to make things better now – and so they aren't stopped from doing the things they want to do.



Children and young people with SEND identified these current barriers and challenges:





5. How we will achieve our vision



To achieve our vision, we have identified five priorities. These have been informed by what children and young people with SEND and their families have said needs to improve, local needs, our self-assessment, best practice elsewhere and national policy and guidance.

A. Strong leadership and governance across partners

To achieve this priority, we will:

- build trusted working relationships and multi-agency governance across the local area
- track progress in delivering against our priorities, review performance against a wide range of indicators and assess the quality and impact of our work focussing on the experience of children and young people and their families
- make effective use of external support and expertise, and evidence the difference and impact this achieves
- be the best corporate parents to our children and young people with SEND in care; we will set high expectations and promote their needs
- train and support those working with children and young people with SEND and their families to promote inclusion, support children and young people to achieve their full potential and to co-produce solutions.

- ensure education, health and care plans (EHCPs) are completed and reviewed in a timely manner and are both high quality and outcome focused
- identify needs early through the BCP Early Help offer, and put in place the right support.

B. Working together (co-production)

To achieve this priority, we will:

- ensure children and young people, their parents and carers have opportunities to participate as little or as much as they want
- communicate effectively with young people, parents and carers so that it is clear what is happening with their individual cases and about the opportunities to be involved in shaping services and outcomes
- build effective co-production into how we work and deliver services and support so that children and young people and their families experience it positively and service providers experience it adding value to their work
- make practical improvements (both big and small) to enable and encourage co-production:
 - better communication and information giving (both general/group and on an individual basis)
 - change templates, forms and process
 - have children, young people, parents and carers as part of the recruitment for key posts in the SEND system.

C. Young people are prepared for adulthood and achieve their full potential

To achieve this priority, we will:

- build a culture of high aspirations, creating opportunities for young people in their adult life to stay in the area, supporting them to achieve their aspirations
- have high quality information, advice and guidance on preparing for adulthood; support parents, carers and young people to understand their options, make decisions about their future, and seek help where required
- provide access to a variety of opportunities in school or college to promote high aspirations and prepare young people to move into adulthood as independently as possible
- ensure young people aged 18 – 25 who have EHCPs, will have access to a variety of community- based learning opportunities to support them to develop skills for independence
- create a seamless transition into adult social care and adult health services for those who need care and support in adulthood
- have supported housing options which will enable young people to live as independently as possible and get the most from life.

D. Inclusion in education and the local community

To achieve this priority, we will:

- promote and create inclusive cultures and practice across schools in the BCP area
- have a team of professionals working together around schools, with an extended specialist service offer for schools which will support inclusion
- make changes that young people have told us will help make them feel safe, included, and active members within their local community.

E. SEND Joint commissioning

To achieve this priority, we will:

- jointly commission education, health and care services to be joined up and responsive to need, so that they create better outcomes and experiences for children, young people, and their families
- shape services around the journeys of children and young people; supporting the health, wellbeing, and development of children – from birth, through their early years, right through their education and into adulthood
- develop local provision, particularly for children and young people (0-25 years) with autism, social, emotional, and mental health difficulties (SEMH) and physical disabilities, to meet the needs of young people.





6. Delivering our strategy



This strategy drives our plans and work. A SEND Learning and Improvement Plan (LIP) sets out in detail how the priorities will be delivered and how we will know we have been successful.

Delivery of the Plan is overseen by the multi-stakeholder BCP SEND Improvement Board which is independently chaired, with representatives from BCP Council, Parent Carers Together, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, the education sector, the voluntary and community sector, and health providers.

The Board meets every six weeks and is responsible for ensuring the Plan is robust, whole system and outcome focussed, reviewing and challenging performance and delivery against the Plan, agreeing remedial actions where outcomes are not being met and driving system wide improvement.

A partnership quality assurance framework, including performance management framework, is in place across partners to ensure there is a strong line of sight to practice at the front line and outcomes for children and young people.

Quality assurance activity, performance data, and progress against the LIP is tracked monthly and reported to the SEND Improvement Board. Every six months the SEND Multi Agency Quality Assurance Group reviews a wide range of quality assurance data and uses this to improve services, share learning and inform commissioning. On an annual basis, the SEND self-assessment is updated and annual performance reports are produced to assess progress, which in turn informs the Learning and Improvement Plan. We will report on progress through the Local Offer.

Resourcing this strategy over the next few years will be challenging. Council funding for high needs is through the high needs block (HNB) of the dedicated schools grant (DSG). At present BCP Council has a HNB which is anticipated to increase year on year in line with national trends; this is in part a reflection of increased complexity of need/demand, and proportionally high use of independent special and alternative provision.

It is well evidenced that exclusions and the use of independent schools rarely have a positive long-term impact. This practice can leave children and young people disengaged and isolated from their local community. Our strategy aims to increase inclusion in education and to embed early preparation for adulthood, alongside the council investing £10m in new capital projects.

A new High Needs Recovery Board will support the Council to address the year on year deficits in the High Needs Block and to ensure value for money within the approved level of budget.



This information is issued by BCP Council

Contact us: simon.mckenzie@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Simon McKenzie
BCP Council
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

Published March 2021

bcpcouncil.gov.uk

