

BCP SEND & Alternative Provision Strategy 2026–2029

Building belonging, growing confidence, thriving together

1. Our vision

We belong. We are listened to. We can thrive.

In Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, every child and young person with SEND should feel seen, valued, and supported to be who they are. Together, we're building a more inclusive BCP, where children and young people with SEND are heard, valued and supported to thrive, through strong partnerships, honest listening, and continuous improvement.

We are committed to making sure every child and young person:

**Feels they truly belong in their community
Is understood, listened to, and respected
Gets the right support at the right time
Can thrive in education and in life**

Through our co-production work across BCP, children and young people told us clearly:

"It's okay to be different here"

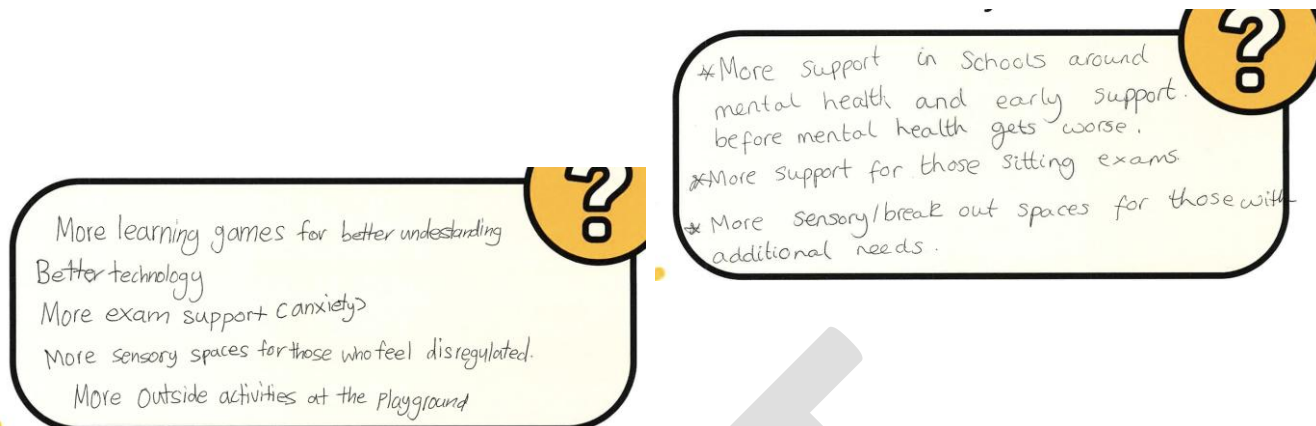
"We like to have help before things go wrong"

We want settings to be:

- Calm
- Flexible
- Welcoming
- Designed around how we learn best



When we asked children and young people how things could be different in three years' time, they told us:



Parents and carers shared their thoughts with us also:



We share this vision.

This Strategy sets out our strong commitment to making this a reality – working together with children, young people, families, and partners to create a more inclusive, supportive, and empowering future for all.

2. Our story so far

We are proud of the progress we have made together. Across education, health and care, there is **strong partnership working**, **committed leadership**, and a **shared ambition** to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. We have built solid foundations for co-production and a clear focus on inclusion and belonging.

However, we know that too many children and families are **not yet experiencing this consistently**.

Support is often provided **too late**, after needs have escalated. Experiences **vary too much** between schools and settings, and families continue to face **unclear pathways and communication**. At the same time, **demand is growing rapidly**, with increasing levels of need and rising numbers of EHCPs.

Children, young people and their families are clear about what needs to change: support must happen **earlier**, practice must be more **consistent**, and services must **work better together**.

3. What you told us

This Strategy has been shaped directly by children, young people, parents and carers.

Children and young people told us:

WE LEARN BEST WHEN...

- teaching is clear and adapted for us
- learning is practical and engaging
- we have time, space and flexibility
- adults know and understand us

WE FEEL INCLUDED WHEN...

- we are listened to
- adults take time to understand us
- we feel safe to be ourselves

WE STRUGGLE WHEN...

- environments are noisy or overwhelming
- learning is rushed or unclear
- adults don't understand our needs

Parents and carers told us:

THEY SUPPORT THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL, PARTICULARLY..



- early intervention
- inclusive schools
- partnership working

HOWEVER, THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT...



- waiting times and backlogs
- workforce capacity
- whether change will be consistent across all settings

THEY WANT...



- clear information about support
- better communication
- confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously the first time

Our schools and settings told us:

OUR APPROACH SHOULD BE...



- “a preventative, person-centred model built on trust, with the child at the heart.”
- “visible, with a consistent ‘village’ across schools, families, and services.”

OUR SUPPORT SHOULD BE...

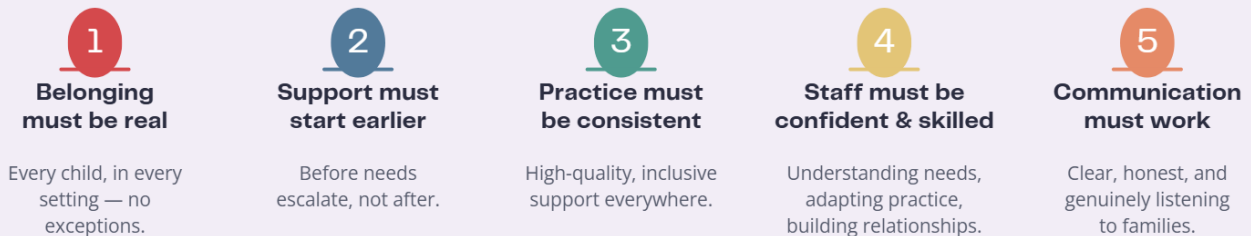


- “joined-up and accessible through a single front door, with early help not dependent on diagnosis.”

4. What needs to change

5 THINGS THAT MUST CHANGE

For every child, in every setting



How we will work together

We will work as one partnership, guided by shared principles:

- Work together openly and honestly
- Listen to children, young people and families
- Focus on strengths and what matters to each individual
- Act early and prevent problems from escalating
- Take shared responsibility for outcomes

These principles are outlined in more detail in our partnership Memorandum of Understanding ([link](#)).

5. Our priorities for the next three years

Our priorities for the next three years reflect a clear, shared ambition: to create a system where every child and young person feels they belong, receives the right support at the right time, and is well prepared for their future. Co-production underpins every element of this strategy, with children, young people and families actively shaping design, delivery and review at all levels of the system across every priority:

1. Inclusive practice and belonging in every setting
2. Earlier help through a locality model
3. The right support in the right place
4. A strong and purposeful alternative provision (AP) offer
5. Preparation for Adulthood
6. Trust, communication and co production

Priority 1: Inclusive practice and belonging in every setting

"I feel like I belong when teachers support us early and give us clear expectations. Good inclusive practice is help before things go wrong, not just after"

Year 11 pupil

We will embed consistent inclusive practice through our BCP Graduated Approach to Inclusion. The Local Area Partnership will implement a clearly defined strategy to introduce the Universal Offer and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) [Universal | BCP GATI](#), ensuring consistent communication, stakeholder engagement, and equitable access to support for all children and young people with SEND.

A strong Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) baseline within our settings and schools is the cornerstone of an inclusive system, ensuring that high quality, adaptive teaching and support are consistently in place for all children and young people. By clearly defining and embedding our shared universal practices, we can meet a wide range of needs early and promote equity and belonging. Our robust OAP baseline will strengthen our universal offer and provide clarity, consistency, and confidence for practitioners, families, and partners.

We want to build capacity, confidence and sustainable expertise within schools and settings rather than dependency.

We will ensure all schools and settings:

- understand and meet a wide range of needs
- create calm, flexible learning environments
- deliver strong, inclusive everyday practice

This model will:

- improve consistency across all settings
- strengthen teaching approaches and environments
- ensure children experience inclusion every day

This means that: children will feel safe, included and able to succeed wherever they are.

Priority 2: Earlier help through a locality model

“belonging comes from staff understanding needs, and quietly adapting so support feels normal, not different”

BCP Parent

The BCP Inclusion Support Partnership is a place-based, early intervention approach designed to strengthen inclusive practice across schools and settings. It works by bringing together education, health and care partners to provide timely, coordinated support at the earliest point of need, through a clear graduated approach. At its core, the model focuses on working alongside practitioners to build their confidence, skills and capacity, ensuring that children and young people with SEND are supported effectively within their everyday environments.

We will introduce a new way of working that:

- brings specialist support directly into schools and settings
- provides one clear route for help
- works alongside staff and families

This model will:

- build confidence and capability in schools
- provide timely, practical support
- reduce the need for escalation to specialist services

The approach will be delivered through our cluster-based locality model, ensuring support is rooted in communities and consistent across BCP.

This means that: children will get help earlier, in the right place.

Priority 3: The right support in the right place

“It is a priority to make children and young people feel validated whilst providing a safe space for them to learn at different paces”

BCP Teacher

We will ensure that the right help is in place at the right time by strengthening the teams around the school and securing a graduated approach platform that enables schools and settings to confidently “self-serve” support within their everyday practice. This will build practitioners’ knowledge, skills, and confidence to meet a wide range of needs, supported by high-quality specialist and Alternative Provision (AP) outreach and other services. Learning will be rooted in real examples, including case studies and live practice from settings and schools, creating opportunities for colleagues to learn alongside one another. Through this shared approach, school and setting staff will grow in expertise together, embedding inclusive practice and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

We will:

- increase inclusive provision in our local family of mainstream schools
- expand specialist support where needed
- reduce reliance on distant or high-cost placements

This includes:

- developing specialist bases and outreach
- strengthening inclusion in mainstream settings
- improving local capacity to meet need

This will be aligned to our cluster model and targeted funding approach, ensuring provision develops in response to local need. Genuine co-production will be part of service design and frontline practice, not just strategy.

This means that: more children will be supported successfully within their community.

(Link to SEND Sufficiency Strategy)

Priority 4: A strong and purposeful Alternative Provision (AP) offer

"I used to go to a different place and now I just have the help of my team in school. I understand that it is important for some students to have help from other people. That is good."

Year 6 Pupil

We are committed to developing a high-quality, inclusive alternative provision system that keeps children and young people engaged in learning and achieving positive outcomes. Through a locality-based, cluster model informed by national best practice, we will work in partnership to intervene early, reduce lost learning and prevent escalation of need. We will strengthen pathways into and out of AP, supporting reintegration to mainstream where appropriate and ensuring all provision is purposeful, time-limited and outcomes-focused. Our ambition is that AP is a targeted intervention, not a destination, enabling every child and young person to progress and succeed.

We will:

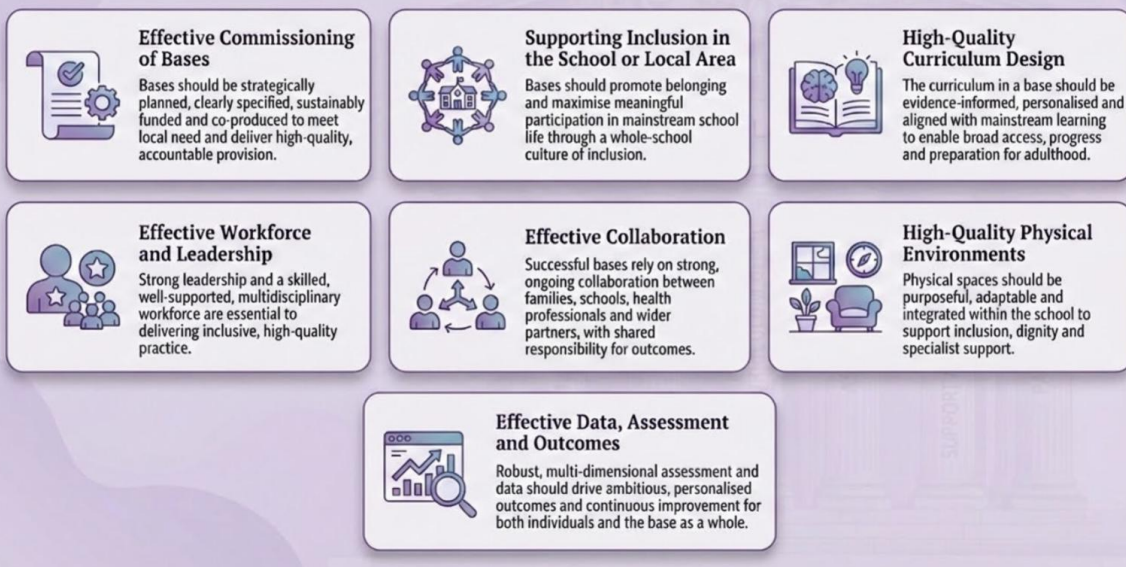
- strengthen early support to prevent lost learning
- improve reintegration back into mainstream education
- ensure AP is high quality and focused on outcomes

Our Alternative Provision will operate in a cluster based locality system, and taking learning from national best practice.

This ensures children and young people receive the right level of support at the right time:

- **Tier 1** – strong inclusive support within schools and clusters to prevent escalation
- **Tier 2** – targeted intervention, supported through our Inclusion Support Partnership
- **Tier 3** – specialist Alternative Provision for those who need it

What's coming down the track?



Our approach:

- focuses on early intervention and prevention
- supports children to stay connected to education
- ensures successful reintegration wherever possible

So that the return to a child/young person's home school :

- is successful and measured through sustained attendance, engagement, and reduced reliance on alternative provision.
- includes phased transitions and ongoing targeted support
- ensures children, young people, and families shape reintegration plans and goals.
- has regular review through multi-agency check-ins to maintain progress and prevent re-escalation.

This means that: children will stay connected to education and achieve positive outcomes.

(Link to three tier AP model)

Priority 5: Preparation for adulthood

"We have mentors support and careers guidance. We are supported to pursue our goals and are involved in try outs for our futures"

Year 10 Pupil

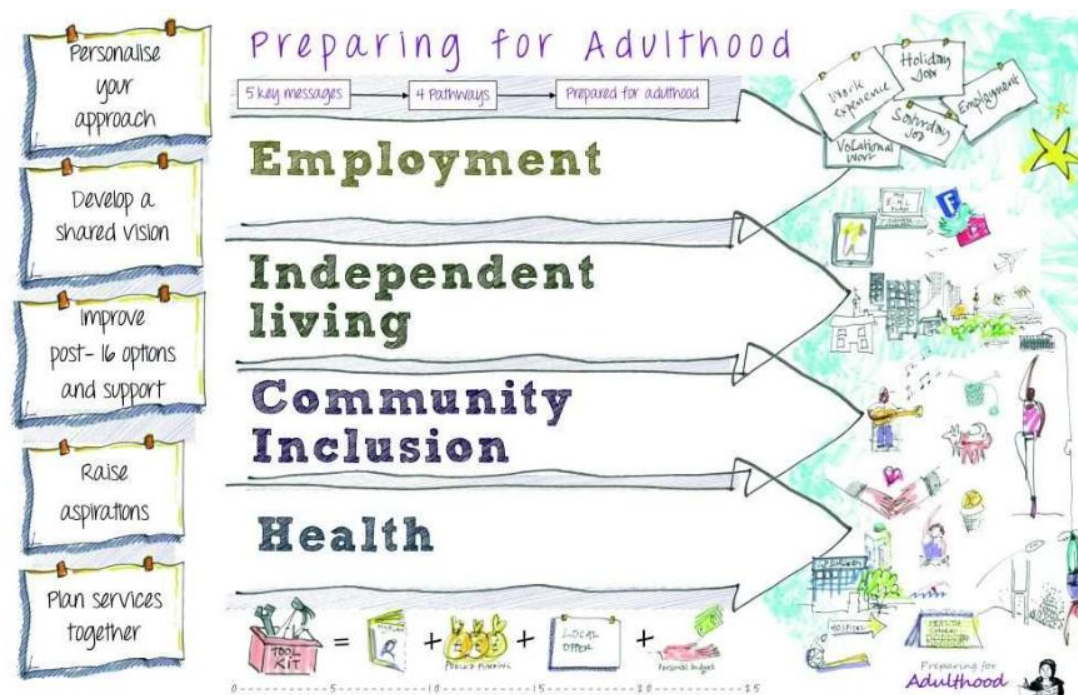
We are committed to embedding a whole system approach to Preparation for Adulthood, ensuring that children and young people with SEND are supported from the earliest years to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to lead fulfilling adult lives.

Our ambition is that every child and young person is supported on a clear pathway from cradle to career, with high aspirations, coordinated support and meaningful opportunities at every stage.

We will:

- Strengthen transitions at all stages, ensuring planning is timely, person-centred and outcomes focused
- Embed Preparation for Adulthood from the earliest years, with a consistent focus on the four PfA outcomes
- Improve post-16 pathways and opportunities, working collaboratively with education providers, training services and employers to increase access to inclusive education, supported internships, apprenticeships and employment
- Support the development of independence and life skills, including communication, decision-making, travel training, financial capability and self-advocacy
- Raise aspirations for all children and young people with SEND, ensuring exposure to real-life experiences, careers education and positive role models throughout their education
- Strengthen partnership working across education, health, social care, families and the voluntary sector to deliver a coordinated and joined up approach
- Ensure person-centred planning is embedded, with clear, ambitious and measurable outcomes reflected in EHC plans and support arrangements
- Equip the workforce with the skills, knowledge and shared understanding needed to support long-term outcomes for adulthood

The PfA Outcomes



This means that:

- Children and young people with SEND will develop early independence, resilience and aspiration
- Families will be informed, engaged and confident in planning for their child's future
- Transitions will be well planned, coordinated and ambitious, reducing uncertainty and improving continuity of support
- Young people will have increased access to high quality post-16 and post-19 opportunities, including education, training and employment
- More young people with SEND will progress into sustained employment, independent living and active participation in their communities
- Young people will be well-prepared for adulthood, with the confidence, skills and support they need to achieve positive outcomes and lead meaningful lives



Priority 6: Trust, communication and co-production

This priority is an anchor to our strategy and not the only place our co production sits

“Belonging is important because when anxiety led to school refusal, my child couldn’t access education at all. Belonging started with staff who listened, were patient and rebuilt trust”

BCP Parent

We are committed to building strong, trusting relationships with all partners, especially children and young people (CYP) with SEND and their families rooted firmly in [Our Co-Production Pledge](#). We will work in genuine partnership through co-production, ensuring that their voices are heard, valued and influence decision-making from the earliest stages. By sharing, listening to lived experience and working collaboratively across education, health and care, we aim to design and deliver services that better meet local needs and improve outcomes. Our approach is rooted in openness, respect and a belief that meaningful involvement of CYP and families leads to stronger, more effective and inclusive services.



We will:

- Improve communication with families by providing clear, consistent and accessible information across all services
- Strengthen the SEND Local Offer by ensuring it is up to date, easy to use and reflects the full range of local support
- Ensure families are listened to and involved by embedding co-production and acting on feedback to drive meaningful change

SEND co-production charter

BCP Council and NHS Dorset are committed to working in partnership with parents, carers, young people and children to co-produce SEND services. Co-production means that everyone works together on an equal basis. This charter sets out the values that we have agreed together. These underpin all our co-production work.

We co-produce from start to finish.



This approach ensures that belonging is not just an aspiration, but a consistent experience across every setting. As a result, families will understand the system and feel confident in it. This shows that lived experience informs day-to-day decision making and support pathways.

This means that:

- Families will receive clear, consistent and accessible information about support, services and pathways
- Parents and carers will know where to go for help and feel confident navigating the system
- The SEND Local Offer will be widely used, trusted and reflective of the lived experience of families
- Families will feel heard, valued and actively involved in decisions that affect their children
- Feedback from families will lead to visible improvements in services and provision
- There will be stronger relationships between families and professionals, built on trust and transparency

- Children and young people will benefit from better coordinated, responsive support as a result of improved communication and co-production

6. How support will work

A locality-based, cradle-to-career approach

Our system is built around a locality model, where support is organised through school clusters that work together to meet the needs of children and young people from early years through to adulthood.

This means:

- support is rooted in local communities
- schools, services and partners work together around shared groups of children
- children and families experience a more joined-up and consistent system

A range of connected workstreams is in place to support a strong and consistent graduated approach across BCP. These focus on helping schools identify needs early, strengthen inclusive practice in the classroom, and provide the right support at the right time. Together, they are designed to build confidence across the workforce, improve the universal offer, and ensure children and young people with SEND get the support they need as early as possible, reducing the need for more specialist interventions later.



The foundation: The Graduated Approach to Inclusion (GATI)

Everything in this Strategy is built on our Graduated Approach to Inclusion, which sets clear expectations for how needs are identified early and supported in everyday practice.

Our approach is a place-based, early intervention model rooted in our commitment across BCP to secure inclusive, thriving communities. We want to work alongside schools and settings at the earliest stage, strengthening inclusive practice so children and young people with SEND are identified early, supported quickly, and enabled to succeed.





Our Graduated Approach has been designed and created alongside settings and schools, children, young people and families, reflecting genuine collaboration and meaningful engagement to ensure it is practical, relevant, and embedded in everyday practice.

This is so it:

- ensures all schools and settings provide strong, inclusive support as part of their everyday practice
- focuses on understanding need early, adapting teaching, and responding quickly
- sets a shared standard for support across BCP

You can explore our approach here:

[BCP Graduated Approach to Inclusion \(GATI\)](#)

This means that:

- every child should receive high-quality support without needing to escalate
- specialist support builds on strong everyday inclusive practice
- support is consistent, clear and easy for families to understand

Clusters as the engine of delivery

Clusters are at the heart of our model. Each cluster brings together:

- schools and settings
- education, health and care professionals
- local intelligence about need

Clusters will:

- identify emerging needs early
- share expertise and good practice
- coordinate support across settings
- act as the point where decisions and support come together

This creates a system where support is local, consistent and responsive.



The Inclusion Support Partnership (Experts at Hand)

Building on this foundation, our **Inclusion Support Partnership** has been co-produced through a multi-agency partnership model and shaped by lived experience. It provides:

- specialist expertise across clusters
- a clear and simple “request for help” pathway
- timely, coordinated support

This model:

- works *alongside* schools and families
- builds capability, not dependency
- provides support earlier, before needs escalate

Access to specialist support when needed

Our Local Area Partnership will deliver a coherent strategy to embed the Universal Offer and Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) through strong, cluster-based partnerships that know their schools and settings well, enabling proactive planning of support as needs emerge.

This will be underpinned by accessible, responsive “soft triage” support, ensuring timely advice and guidance without always requiring escalation, and promoting early intervention, inclusion, and shared responsibility across the system.

Through the Inclusion Support Partnership:

- there will be a clear “Request for Help” process
- support will be coordinated and timely
- specialists will work alongside schools and families

The system will work in a more joined-up and coordinated way, with partners working closely together across local areas. By building a shared understanding of each setting’s context, strengths and needs, services can respond more consistently and effectively. Strong relationships and shared accountability will help ensure support is well coordinated and delivered at the right time. This collaborative approach will make it easier to plan ahead, respond to emerging needs, and provide support that is tailored to local communities, improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.



Aligning support with targeted funding

Support is strengthened through our targeted funding model, which is aligned with clusters.

This means:

- funding decisions are informed by local need
- resources can be used flexibly
- support can be tailored to:
 - individual children
 - groups
 - whole-school or cluster-wide priorities

This ensures resources are used effectively and fairly.

7. How we will know it is working

Lived experience will be central to measuring success and Critical for demonstrating that feedback leads to action and system improvement. We will measure this in two ways:



Our quality assurance

We will:

- establish a robust and transparent quality assurance and governance framework across the SEND and AP system.
- build shared understanding across the local area of the graduated approach and the layers of support available.
- strengthen frontline quality assurance through Inclusion Lead roles (0–25).
- introduce a structured review model through the BCP Inclusion Partnership
- embed co-production and clear, transparent feedback loops.
- ensure quality assurance drives continuous improvement and accountability.

This means that:

- Clear oversight will be provided through the SEND Strategic Board, Inclusion Partnership Board (0–25), and BCP Inclusion Partnership, with regular reporting on performance data and lived experience.
- There will be clear standards for the universal, targeted, and specialist offer, with reviews to ensure consistency across schools and services.

- Inclusion Leads will support and challenge schools, carry out practice reviews, and quality check the universal offer to reduce variation and strengthen inclusive practice.
- Schools and services will be reviewed by multi-agency peers, including parents, carers, and young people, to assess how inclusive and welcoming they are and identify improvements.
- Parents, carers, and young people will play an active role in monitoring progress through surveys, forums, and reviews, supported by clear processes for reporting, action, and escalation.
- QA findings will directly inform action plans, service improvements, and commissioning decisions, with clear accountability and regular public reporting of progress and impact.

8. Our commitment

Together, across the BCP partnership, we make this commitment:

- We will work openly, honestly and with integrity, holding ourselves accountable for the difference we make.
- We will listen carefully to children, young people and their families, and more importantly, we will act on what they tell us.
- We will keep learning, challenging ourselves, and improving so that every experience of support is better than the last.
- We will stay focused on what matters most: the lives, hopes and futures of children and young people with SEND.

Together, we will build a system that is inclusive, ambitious and responsive, where every child and young person feels valued, understood and supported to thrive and succeed.

IN 3 YEARS' TIME, WE WANT OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO SAY..

- “School works for me.”
- “People understand me.”
- “I feel like I belong.”