

BRISTOL PARENT CARER EXPERIENCE WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION UPDATE

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WHAT IS THE WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION?



In 2019 SEND services in Bristol were inspected. 5 areas of weakness were identified and the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) was created to plan improvements in these 5 areas. We ran 5 surveys in January 2022 to help us understand how families have experienced the improvements.

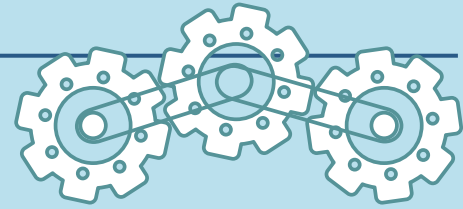
AREA 1: ACCOUNTABILITY

Bristol City Council and Health services have worked together to develop a strong data and governance structure. But families told us that when things go wrong, answers on how to solve problems aren't always available, they don't know whom to contact for help and it can take a long time for urgent issues to be resolved.



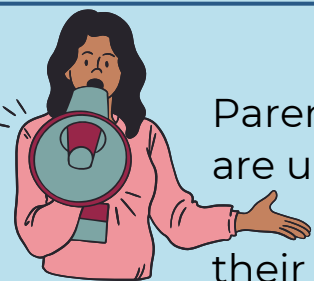
AREA 2: IDENTIFICATION OF SEND

Health services have begun to implement support for those on the autism waiting list and Bristol City Council has set up SENDCo cluster meetings to share good practices in SEND identification. Families told us that support is often delayed, especially around mental health, and getting others to see children's behaviours as communication is often difficult.



AREA 3: EHCP PROCESS

Bristol City Council has increased the number of plans issued on time but did not reach its timeliness target and produced fewer plans overall. The EHCP template has been reviewed but it is not in use and families are still unclear about the EHCP process. Health advice does not always identify the needs of children during the assessment stage.



AREA 4: PARENT-CARER RELATIONSHIP

Parents and carers are sympathetic to the pressures that services are under, especially post-pandemic. But families are frustrated by a lack of communication. They do not feel that services take their concerns seriously or explain processes clearly and they do not always get the help they need or the correct advice.

AREA 5: UNDERACHIEVEMENT & INCLUSION

Most families felt that the education their child attends did not meet their needs and that support was not offered at the right time. Families feel that their children faced discrimination and that schools were reluctant to use reasonable adjustments.



WHAT YOU TOLD US BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL AND HEALTH SERVICES COULD DO TO HELP:

- ♥ Greater accountability when things go wrong, for example, an agreed response time for emails from the SEND team
- ♥ Families should be kept up to date on delays with EHC needs assessments and be provided with support information whilst waiting
- ♥ Families need clear information about the EHCP process which corresponds with their actual experiences, mirroring the same phrases and terms
- ♥ Ensuring mediation is effective by sending a decision maker - this will avoid expensive and stressful appeals
- ♥ Continuing to work with schools to standardise early support, for example tying ordinarily available provisions and target plans together
- ♥ Ensuring all needs, including health needs are identified at Education Health Care Needs Assessment stage

HOW WE THINK BRISTOL PARENT CARERS CAN HELP:

- ♥ Develop the above points with service providers to achieve meaningful and positive changes that resonate with families in Bristol
- ♥ Support families and schools to connect with and navigate local services
- ♥ Work with organisations to provide families with advice and support on all issues connected to SEND such as wills, benefits and other social support
- ♥ Share with families early SEND support improvements