



Stakeholder briefing: Bradford District special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Responding to the outcomes of our inspection

Between 7 and 11 March 2022, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Bradford to judge the effectiveness of how we are implementing the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

Following this inspection the local area was asked, in June 2022, to make improvements in five areas which would be regularly monitored. The local area is committed to work with children and families to get this right.

The inspection gave us the opportunity to have honest conversations with partner agencies, Children, young people and families to see how we can work together to respond to the assessment and how we can provide timely updates on our progress. This is our first stakeholder briefing that is designed to do just that.

Following that inspection, we were asked to produce a [written statement of action](#) outlining how we would make improvements to five areas requiring improvement.

In our most recent monitoring visit from Ofsted and CQC, our progress has been noted by inspectors as well as our openness to describing where progress has been slower than expected.

Ofsted and the CQC recognise that:

- our written statement of action is clearly written and well organised;
- we have detailed plans for the five areas of weakness identified by inspectors;
- we have local monitoring arrangements for the plan in place;
- we know when different stakeholders will check the progress of your planned improvement work; and
- we have clear performance indicators that will show how we are doing.

We hosted our most recent monitoring visit on 3 May and wanted to provide you with an update after this visit. At a later date we will publish the outcomes of the monitoring visit, once made available, on our [Local Offer website](#).

In this briefing you'll find out more about the work we've been doing, including how we've worked with all our partners, including parents/carers, young people, health services, social care and school leaders, to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Marium Haque, Director for Children's Services, Bradford Council



Listening, learning and implementing

At the heart of all our work that we're doing is an unwavering commitment to co-producing solutions with children and their families as well as our colleagues working to deliver services. This helps us address one of our areas for improvement that will help us develop better communication between stakeholders across education, health and care.

Since the inspection we have been working with children and families, with the support of the PFBA - The Parents' Forum for Bradford and Airedale, to develop shared solutions by listening and learning to what people tell us. Our developments are outlined below.

- A revised service level agreement, so that people can understand the help they can receive and how quickly people will be able to support them. The service level agreement describes how people can share their experience if the expected levels of service that we've jointly agreed and produced are not being met.
- Progress is being made on redeveloping our Local Offer website so that it is based on insight, user experience and the latest best practice for online channels. While we continue to work on a revised site, we have ensured that we maintain the current website so that people can continue to access support and be signposted to services.
- We have listened to feedback on our SEND newsletter so that it continues to help children and families as well as frontline professionals across all our partner organisations.
- We have been collecting and sharing the experience of children with SEND and their families with people - often referred to as commissioners - who make decisions on how services are funded and delivered.
- We are developing an easier to read version of the principles that form part of our strategic partnering agreement. This agreement describes how partners across the Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership will work together so that we Act as One to help keep people 'happy, healthy at home'.

We were delighted to recruit Matthew as our participation officer and will shortly be recruiting for a communications and insight manager, both will work alongside Sally Skipper so that we continue to embed co-production, insight and democracy in how we work with children and their families.

Areas for development. We recognise that we still have areas where we can strengthen our approach to involving people effectively and will work with our networks to see how we can do this. Recent feedback from families has highlighted that we need to provide information in an easier to read format to describe how we're doing against our Written Statement of Action. We also acknowledge that the responsiveness of services at times is not in line with our co-produced service level agreement.



Supporting people waiting to be seen

We have openly acknowledged that people wait longer than we would like them to for assessments, treatment and diagnosis when accessing SEND services especially for those areas where there are national challenges. This includes child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), speech, language communication needs (SCLN), autism and annual health checks. Working with children and families, we understand that people need information on what to expect and what they can do while they are waiting for any assessments, treatments or specialist equipment. We are sharing below what we've done to address this.

- We have co-designed and co-produced a welcome to CAMHS booklet to help people understand what they can expect from the service and some of the professionals who will be looking after them. The foreword for the booklet has been written by a former patient from CAMHS and includes links to the involvement networks to encourage people to share their experience as well as helping shape services.
- With significant demand on autism services, we have developed an information leaflet for people waiting to be seen so they know what to expect and what they can do while they are waiting for support including any specialist equipment.
- Bradford District Care NHS Foundations Trust's speech and language service [launched a new website](#) in November 2022, which includes a wealth of advice, information for parents of all age groups, plus sign posting, support for referrals, including training videos, screening tools, referral criteria advice and training for professionals.

Areas for development. We will be producing information for people referring in to CAMHS as our latest data shows that around one in two referrals should not have come through to the service. Reducing incorrect referrals will help increase the availability of our workforce to support people needing CAMHS. We are developing our pre referral offer to families of children and young people with SCLN, including drop-ins and online workshops for parents.

Improving access to services

We know, like many areas across the country, our efforts to provide the best possible services are affected by limitations in the availability of people to carry out key roles. Despite this challenge we have committed to increasing our teams. This includes increasing the size of the SEN assessment team, recruiting to a dedicated annual review team, a dedicated complex and vulnerable team, additional casework officers and additional functions within the business support team. We are also recruiting to two SEND auditing roles, two social care assessors and a designated social care officer role. Additional steps we have taken are listed below.

- We are now achieving our target of completing annual health checks for at least three in four children with SEND.
- We are reviewing our dynamic support register, so that we are confident that young people can access the support services they need.
- We recognised that people's experience of education, health and care plan (EHCPs) has been variable. To tackle this we're piloting a new annual review pathway with primary and secondary schools. This includes mediation support to resolve challenges earlier and a new quality tool to assess the quality of advice provided.



- We have now met the national target for wheelchair provision, the challenge now is to maintain and improve on our performance.

Areas for development. We will continue to work with children and families to understand any access issues they're having and how we can work together to address any gaps.

Planning and delivering as one

Our inspection report has highlighted areas for development when we work between agencies across health, care and education. To improve this, we are strengthening our approach to planning and funding (commissioning) services together. We have highlighted below our key responses to this area for improvement.

- We are using what people are telling us to inform our work on planning and delivering services, with co-production and engagement at the heart of all that we do.
- We have established the SEND joint commissioning group and reviewed and updated the governance arrangements
- The SEND Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) was published in April 2023. This is an important document that provides a wide range of data about the number of children with SEND in Bradford and how their needs are changing. The Council and NHS will use this information to plan the services we deliver for children with SEND in Bradford.
- Parents in Bradford told us that they want to see the Council and the NHS improve how we work together to deliver services jointly for children with SEND. To help us do this we share our funding through something called Section 75 Agreements. In March 2023 the Council and the NHS reviewed and extended these agreements.
- We have commenced conversations with system partners to support the development of future commissioning intentions

Areas for development. The Council and the NHS are continuing with plans to develop more joined up services for children with SEND. We plan to publish a Joint Commissioning Strategy by December 2023 which describes how we will develop services together.

Getting the information you need

- Bradford's Local Offer is designed to provide information for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families and local professionals on services and support available in the Bradford District. [Bradford Local Offer | SEND Provision in Bradford](#)
- The Bradford SEND Local Offer newsletter is an e newsletter shared every month with over 7,000 families and professionals involved with families across the district. Please encourage staff working with families and families to sign up to the newsletter; [City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council \(govdelivery.com\)](https://govdelivery.com)